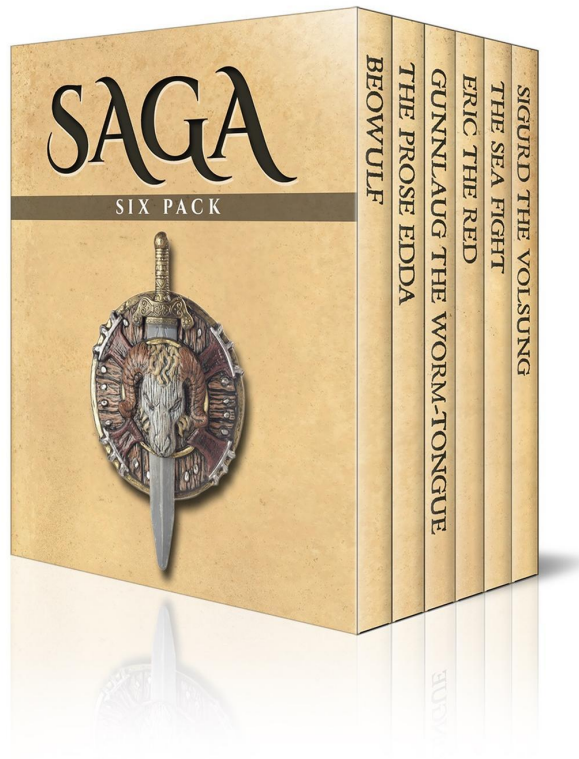


Saga Six Pack (Beowulf, The Prose Edda and More)

Anonymous, Snorri Sturluson, William Morris, Jennie Hall,
J. Lesslie Hall



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SAGA SIX PACK

BEOWULF

THE PROSE EDDA

GUNNLAUG THE WORM-TONGUE AND RAVEN THE SKALD

ERIC THE RED

THE SEA FIGHT

SIGURD THE VOLSUNG

Saga Six Pack – Beowulf, The Prose Edda, Gunnlaugh The Worm-Tongue and Raven the Skald, Eric The Red, The Sea Fight, Sigurd the Volsung.

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SAGA SIX PACK

INTRODUCTION: WHAT THE SAGAS WERE

Iceland is a little country far north in the cold sea. Men found it and went there to live more than a thousand years ago. During the warm season they used to fish and make fish-oil and hunt sea-birds and gather feathers and tend their sheep and make hay. But the winters were long and dark and cold. Men and women and children stayed in the house and carded and spun and wove and knit. A whole family sat for hours around the fire in the middle of the room. That fire gave the only light. Shadows flitted in the dark corners. Smoke curled along the high beams in the ceiling. The children sat on the dirt floor close by the fire. The grown people were on a long narrow bench that they had pulled up to the light and warmth. Everybody's hands were busy with wool. The work left their minds free to think and their lips to talk. What was there to talk about? The summer's fishing, the killing of a fox, a voyage to Norway. But the people grew tired of this little gossip. Fathers looked at their children and thought:

"They are not learning much. What will make them brave and wise? What will teach them to love their country and old Norway? Will not the stories of battles, of brave deeds, of mighty men, do this?"

So, as the family worked in the red fire-light, the father told of the kings of Norway, of long voyages to strange lands, of good fights. And in farmhouses all through Iceland these old tales were told over and over until everybody knew them and loved them. Some men could sing and play the harp. This made the stories all the more interesting. People called such men "skalds," and they called their songs "sagas."

Every midsummer there was a great meeting. Men from all over Iceland came to it and made laws. During the day there were rest times, when no business was going on. Then some skald would take his harp and walk to a large stone or a knoll and stand on it and begin a song of some brave deed of an old Norse hero. At the first sound of the harp and the voice, men came running from all directions, crying out:

"The skald! The skald! A saga!"

They stood about for hours and listened. They shouted applause. When the skald was tired, some other man would come up from the crowd and sing or tell a story. As the skald stepped down from his high position, some rich man would rush up to him and say:

"Come and spend next winter at my house. Our ears are thirsty for song."

So the best skalds traveled much and visited many people. Their songs made them welcome everywhere. They were always honored with good seats at a feast. They were given many rich gifts. Even the King of Norway would sometimes send across the water to Iceland, saying to some famous skald:

"Come and visit me. You shall not go away empty-handed. Men say that the sweetest songs are in Iceland. I wish to hear them."

These tales were not written. Few men wrote or read in those days. Skalds learned songs from hearing them sung. At last people began to write more easily. Then they said:

"These stories are very precious. We must write them down to save them from being forgotten."

After that many men in Iceland spent their winters in writing books. They wrote on sheepskin; vellum, we call it. Many of these old vellum books have been saved for hundreds of years, and are now in museums in Norway. Some leaves are lost, some are torn, all are yellow and crumpled. But they are precious. They tell us all that we know about that olden time. There are the very words that the men of Iceland wrote so long ago—stories of kings and of battles and of ship-sailing. Some of the more famous Icelandic stories are presented in this book, as well as examples from other Northern European countries like Denmark, Germany and England.

BEOWULF

By Anonymous

Translated by J. Lesslie Hall

I. THE LIFE AND DEATH OF SCYLD

The famous race of Spear-Danes

Lo! the Spear-Danes' glory through splendid achievements
The folk-kings' former fame we have heard of,
How princes displayed then their prowess-in-battle.
Oft Scyld the Scefing from scathers in numbers
From many a people their mead-benches tore.
Since first he found him friendless and wretched,
The earl had had terror: comfort he got for it,
Waxed 'neath the welkin, world-honor gained,
Till all his neighbors o'er sea were compelled to
Bow to his bidding and bring him their tribute:

An excellent atheling! After was borne him
A son and heir, young in his dwelling,
Whom God-Father sent to solace the people.
He had marked the misery malice had caused them,
That reaved of their rulers they wretched had erstwhile
Long been afflicted. The Lord, in requital,
Wielder of Glory, with world-honor blessed him.
Famed was Beowulf, far spread the glory
Of Scyld's great son in the lands of the Danemen.
The ideal Teutonic king lavishes gifts on his vassals.
So the carle that is young, by kindnesses rendered
The friends of his father, with fees in abundance

Must be able to earn that when age approacheth
Eager companions aid him requitingly,
When war assaults him serve him as liegemen:

By praise-worthy actions must honor be got
'Mong all of the races. At the hour that was fated
Scyld dies at the hour appointed by Fate.
Scyld then departed to the All-Father's keeping
Warlike to wend him; away then they bare him
To the flood of the current, his fond-loving comrades,
As himself he had bidden, while the friend of the Scyldings
Word-sway wielded, and the well-lovèd land-prince
Long did rule them. The ring-stemmèd vessel,
Bark of the atheling, lay there at anchor,
Icy in glimmer and eager for sailing;
By his own request, his body is laid on a vessel and wafted seaward.
The belovèd leader laid they down there,
Giver of rings, on the breast of the vessel,
The famed by the mainmast. A many of jewels,
Of fretted embossings, from far-lands brought over,
Was placed near at hand then; and heard I not ever
That a folk ever furnished a float more superbly
With weapons of warfare, weeds for the battle,
Bills and burnies; on his bosom sparkled
Many a jewel that with him must travel
On the flush of the flood afar on the current.
And favors no fewer they furnished him soothly,
Excellent folk-gems, than others had given him
He leaves Daneland on the breast of a bark.
Who when first he was born outward did send him
Lone on the main, the merest of infants:

And a gold-fashioned standard they stretched under heaven
High o'er his head, let the holm-currents bear him,
Seaward consigned him: sad was their spirit,
Their mood very mournful. Men are not able
No one knows whither the boat drifted.
Soothly to tell us, they in halls who reside,
Heroes under heaven, to what haven he hied.

II. SCYLD'S SUCCESSORS.—HROTHGAR'S GREAT MEAD-HALL.

Beowulf succeeds his father Scyld

In the boroughs then Beowulf, bairn of the Scyldings,
Belovèd land-prince, for long-lasting season
Was famed mid the folk (his father departed,
The prince from his dwelling), till afterward sprang
Great-minded Healfdene; the Danes in his lifetime
He graciously governed, grim-mooded, agèd.
Four bairns of his body born in succession
Woke in the world, war-troopers' leader
Heorogar, Hrothgar, and Halga the good;
Heard I that Elan was Ongentheow's consort,
The well-beloved bedmate of the War-Scylfing leader.
Then glory in battle to Hrothgar was given,
Waxing of war-fame, that willingly kinsmen
Obeyed his bidding, till the boys grew to manhood,
A numerous band. It burned in his spirit
To urge his folk to found a great building,
A mead-hall grander than men of the era
Ever had heard of, and in it to share
With young and old all of the blessings
The Lord had allowed him, save life and retainers.
Then the work I find afar was assigned
To many races in middle-earth's regions,
To adorn the great folk-hall. In due time it happened
Early 'mong men, that 'twas finished entirely,
The greatest of hall-buildings; Heorot he named it
The hall is completed, and is called Heort, or Heorot.
Who wide-reaching word-sway wielded 'mong earlmen.
His promise he brake not, rings he lavished,
Treasure at banquet. Towered the hall up
High and horn-crested, huge between antlers:

It battle-waves bided, the blasting fire-demon;
Ere long then from hottest hatred must sword-wrath
Arise for a woman's husband and father.
Then the mighty war-spirit endured for a season,

Bore it bitterly, he who bided in darkness,
 That light-hearted laughter loud in the building
 Greeted him daily; there was dulcet harp-music,
 Clear song of the singer. He said that was able
 To tell from of old earthmen's beginnings,
 That Father Almighty earth had created,
 The winsome wold that the water encircleth,
 Set exultingly the sun's and the moon's beams
 To lavish their lustre on land-folk and races,
 And earth He embellished in all her regions
 With limbs and leaves; life He bestowed too
 On all the kindreds that live under heaven.
 The glee of the warriors is overcast by a horrible dread.
 So blessed with abundance, brimming with joyance,
 The warriors abided, till a certain one gan to
 Dog them with deeds of direfullest malice,
 A foe in the hall-building: this horrible stranger
 Was Grendel entitled, the march-stepper famous
 Who dwelt in the moor-fens, the marsh and the fastness;
 The wan-mooded being abode for a season
 In the land of the giants, when the Lord and Creator
 Had banned him and branded. For that bitter murder,
 The killing of Abel, all-ruling Father
 The kindred of Cain crushed with His vengeance;
 In the feud He rejoiced not, but far away drove him
 From kindred and kind, that crime to atone for,
 Meter of Justice. Thence ill-favored creatures,
 Elves and giants, monsters of ocean,
 Came into being, and the giants that longtime
 Grappled with God; He gave them requital.

III. GRENDEL THE MURDERER.

Grendel attacks the sleeping heroes

When the sun was sunken, he set out to visit
 The lofty hall-building, how the Ring-Danes had used it
 For beds and benches when the banquet was over.
 Then he found there reposing many a noble
 Asleep after supper; sorrow the heroes,

Misery knew not. The monster of evil
Greedy and cruel tarried but little,
He drags off thirty of them, and devours them
Fell and frantic, and forced from their slumbers
Thirty of thanemen; thence he departed
Leaping and laughing, his lair to return to,
With surfeit of slaughter sallying homeward.
In the dusk of the dawning, as the day was just breaking,
Was Grendel's prowess revealed to the warriors:

Then, his meal-taking finished, a moan was uplifted,
Morning-cry mighty. The man-ruler famous,
The long-worthy atheling, sat very woeful,
Suffered great sorrow, sighed for his liegemen,
When they had seen the track of the hateful pursuer,
The spirit accursèd: too crushing that sorrow,
Too loathsome and lasting. Not longer he tarried,
But one night after continued his slaughter
Shameless and shocking, shrinking but little
From malice and murder; they mastered him fully.
He was easy to find then who elsewhere looked for
A pleasanter place of repose in the lodges,
A bed in the bowers. Then was brought to his notice
Told him truly by token apparent
The hall-thane's hatred: he held himself after
Further and faster who the foeman did baffle.
So ruled he and strongly strove against justice
Lone against all men, till empty uptowered
King Hrothgar's agony and suspense last twelve years.
The choicest of houses. Long was the season:

Twelve-winters' time torture suffered
The friend of the Scyldings, every affliction,
Endless agony; hence it after became
Certainly known to the children of men
Sadly in measures, that long against Hrothgar
Grendel struggled:—his grudges he cherished,
Murderous malice, many a winter,
Strife unremitting, and peacefully wished he
Life-woe to lift from no liegeman at all of
The men of the Dane-folk, for money to settle,
No counsellor needed count for a moment

On handsome amends at the hands of the murderer;
 Grendel is unremitting in his persecutions.
 The monster of evil fiercely did harass,
 The ill-planning death-shade, both elder and younger,
 Trapping and tricking them. He trod every night then
 The mist-covered moor-fens; men do not know where
 Witches and wizards wander and ramble.
 So the foe of mankind many of evils
 Grievous injuries, often accomplished,
 Horrible hermit; Heort he frequented,
 Gem-bedecked palace, when night-shades had fallen
 (Since God did oppose him, not the throne could he touch,
 The light-flashing jewel, love of Him knew not).
 'Twas a fearful affliction to the friend of the Scyldings
 The king and his council deliberate in vain.
 Soul-crushing sorrow. Not seldom in private
 Sat the king in his council; conference held they
 What the braves should determine 'gainst terrors unlooked for.
 They invoke the aid of their gods.
 At the shrines of their idols often they promised
 Gifts and offerings, earnestly prayed they
 The devil from hell would help them to lighten
 Their people's oppression. Such practice they used then,
 Hope of the heathen; hell they remembered
 In innermost spirit, God they knew not,
 The true God they do not know.
 Judge of their actions, All-wielding Ruler,
 No praise could they give the Guardian of Heaven,
 The Wielder of Glory. Woe will be his who
 Through furious hatred his spirit shall drive to
 The clutch of the fire, no comfort shall look for,
 Wax no wiser; well for the man who,
 Living his life-days, his Lord may face
 And find defence in his Father's embrace!

IV. BEOWULF GOES TO HROTHGAR'S ASSISTANCE.

Hrothgar sees no way of escape from the persecutions of Grendel

So Healfdene's kinsman constantly mused on
His long-lasting sorrow; the battle-thane clever
Was not anywise able evils to 'scape from:

Too crushing the sorrow that came to the people,
Loathsome and lasting the life-grinding torture,
Greatest of night-woes. So Higelac's liegeman,
Good amid Geatmen, of Grendel's achievements
Heard in his home: of heroes then living
He was stoutest and strongest, sturdy and noble.
He bade them prepare him a bark that was trusty;
He said he the war-king would seek o'er the ocean,
The folk-leader noble, since he needed retainers.
For the perilous project prudent companions
Chided him little, though loving him dearly;
They egged the brave atheling, augured him glory.
The excellent knight from the folk of the Geatmen
Had liegemen selected, likest to prove them
Trustworthy warriors; with fourteen companions
The vessel he looked for; a liegeman then showed them,
A sea-crafty man, the bounds of the country.
Fast the days fled; the float was a-water,
The craft by the cliff. Clomb to the prow then
Well-equipped warriors: the wave-currents twisted
The sea on the sand; soldiers then carried
On the breast of the vessel bright-shining jewels,
Handsome war-armor; heroes outshoved then,
Warmen the wood-ship, on its wished-for adventure.
The foamy-necked floater fanned by the breeze,
Likest a bird, glided the waters,
Till twenty and four hours thereafter
The twist-stemmed vessel had traveled such distance
That the sailing-men saw the sloping embankments,
The sea cliffs gleaming, precipitous mountains,
Nesses enormous: they were nearing the limits
At the end of the ocean. Up thence quickly
The men of the Weders clomb to the mainland,
Fastened their vessel (battle weeds rattled,
War burnies clattered), the Wielder they thanked
That the ways o'er the waters had waxen so gentle.
They are hailed by the Danish coast guard
Then well from the cliff edge the guard of the Scyldings

Who the sea-cliffs should see to, saw o'er the gangway
 Brave ones bearing beauteous targets,
 Armor all ready, anxiously thought he,
 Musing and wondering what men were approaching.
 High on his horse then Hrothgar's retainer
 Turned him to coastward, mightily brandished
 His lance in his hands, questioned with boldness.
 "Who are ye men here, mail-covered warriors
 Clad in your corslets, come thus a-driving
 A high riding ship o'er the shoals of the waters,
 And hither 'neath helmets have hied o'er the ocean?
 I have been strand-guard, standing as warden,
 Lest enemies ever anywise ravage
 Danish dominions with army of war-ships.
 More boldly never have warriors ventured
 Hither to come; of kinsmen's approval,
 Word-leave of warriors, I ween that ye surely
 He is struck by Beowulf's appearance.
 Nothing have known. Never a greater one
 Of earls o'er the earth have I had a sight of
 Than is one of your number, a hero in armor;
 No low-ranking fellow adorned with his weapons,
 But launching them little, unless looks are deceiving,
 And striking appearance. Ere ye pass on your journey
 As treacherous spies to the land of the Scyldings
 And farther fare, I fully must know now
 What race ye belong to. Ye far-away dwellers,
 Sea-faring sailors, my simple opinion
 Hear ye and hearken: haste is most fitting
 Plainly to tell me what place ye are come from."

V. THE GEATS REACH HEOROT.

Beowulf courteously replies

The chief of the strangers rendered him answer,
 War-troopers' leader, and word-treasure opened:

"We are sprung from the lineage of the people of Geatland,
 And Higelac's hearth-friends. To heroes unnumbered

My father Ecgtheow was well-known in his day.
 My father was known, a noble head-warrior
 Ecgtheow titled; many a winter
 He lived with the people, ere he passed on his journey,
 Old from his dwelling; each of the counsellors
 Widely mid world-folk well remembers him.
 Our intentions towards King Hrothgar are of the kindest.
 We, kindly of spirit, the lord of thy people,
 The son of King Healfdene, have come here to visit,
 Folk-troop's defender: be free in thy counsels!
 To the noble one bear we a weighty commission,
 The helm of the Danemen; we shall hide, I ween,
 Is it true that a monster is slaying Danish heroes?
 Naught of our message. Thou know'st if it happen,
 As we soothly heard say, that some savage despoiler,
 Some hidden pursuer, on nights that are murky
 By deeds very direful 'mid the Danemen exhibits
 Hatred unheard of, horrid destruction
 And the falling of dead. From feelings least selfish
 I can help your king to free himself from this horrible creature.
 I am able to render counsel to Hrothgar,
 How he, wise and worthy, may worst the destroyer,
 If the anguish of sorrow should ever be lessened,
 Comfort come to him, and care-waves grow cooler,
 Or ever hereafter he agony suffer
 And troublous distress, while towereth upward
 The handsomest of houses high on the summit."
 The coast-guard reminds Beowulf that it is easier to say than to do.
 Bestriding his stallion, the strand-watchman answered,
 The doughty retainer: "The difference surely
 'Twixt words and works, the warlike shield-bearer
 Who judgeth wisely well shall determine.
 This band, I hear, beareth no malice
 I am satisfied of your good intentions, and shall lead you to the palace.
 To the prince of the Scyldings. Pass ye then onward
 With weapons and armor. I shall lead you in person;
 To my war-trusty vassals command I shall issue
 To keep from all injury your excellent vessel,
 Your boat shall be well cared for during your stay here.
 Your fresh-tarred craft, 'gainst every opposer
 Close by the sea-shore, till the curved-neckèd bark shall
 Waft back again the well-beloved hero

O'er the way of the water to Weder dominions.
He again compliments Beowulf.
To warrior so great 'twill be granted sure
In the storm of strife to stand secure."
Onward they fared then (the vessel lay quiet,
The broad-bosomed bark was bound by its cable,
Firmly at anchor); the boar-signs glistened
Bright on the visors vivid with gilding,
Blaze-hardened, brilliant; the boar acted warden.
The heroes hastened, hurried the liegemen,
The land is perhaps rolling.
Descended together, till they saw the great palace,
The well-fashioned wassail-hall wondrous and gleaming:

Heorot flashes on their view.
'Mid world-folk and kindreds that was widest reputed
Of halls under heaven which the hero abode in;
Its lustre enlightened lands without number.
Then the battle-brave hero showed them the glittering
Court of the bold ones, that they easily thither
Might fare on their journey; the aforementioned warrior
Turning his courser, quoth as he left them:

The coast-guard, having discharged his duty, bids them God-speed.
"Tis time I were faring; Father Almighty
Grant you His grace, and give you to journey
Safe on your mission! To the sea I will get me
'Gainst hostile warriors as warden to stand."

VI. BEOWULF INTRODUCES HIMSELF AT THE PALACE.

The highway glistened with many-hued pebble,
A by-path led the liegemen together.
Firm and hand-locked the war-burnie glistened,
The ring-sword radiant rang 'mid the armor
As the party was approaching the palace together
They set their arms and armor against the wall.
In warlike equipments. 'Gainst the wall of the building
Their wide-fashioned war-shields they weary did set then,
Battle-shields sturdy; benchward they turned then;

Their battle-sarks rattled, the gear of the heroes;
The lances stood up then, all in a cluster,
The arms of the seamen, ashen-shafts mounted
With edges of iron: the armor-clad troopers
Were decked with weapons. Then a proud-mooded hero
Asked of the champions questions of lineage:

“From what borders bear ye your battle-shields plated,
Gilded and gleaming, your gray-colored burnies,
Helmets with visors and heap of war-lances?—
To Hrothgar the king I am servant and liegeman.
'Mong folk from far-lands found I have never
Men so many of mien more courageous.
I ween that from valor, nowise as outlaws,
But from greatness of soul ye sought for King Hrothgar.”
Then the strength-famous earlman answer rendered,
The proud-mooded Wederchief replied to his question,
We are Higelac's table-companions, and bear an important commission to
your prince.

Hardy 'neath helmet: “Higelac's mates are we;
Beowulf hight I. To the bairn of Healfdene,
The famous folk-leader, I freely will tell
To thy prince my commission, if pleasantly hearing
He'll grant we may greet him so gracious to all men.”
Wulfgar replied then (he was prince of the Wendels,
His boldness of spirit was known unto many,
His prowess and prudence): “The prince of the Scyldings,
Wulfgar, the thane, says that he will go and ask Hrothgar whether he will
see the strangers.

The friend-lord of Danemen, I will ask of thy journey,
The giver of rings, as thou urgest me do it,
The folk-chief famous, and inform thee early
What answer the good one mindeth to render me.”
He turned then hurriedly where Hrothgar was sitting,
Old and hoary, his earlmen attending him;
The strength-famous went till he stood at the shoulder
Of the lord of the Danemen, of courteous thanemen
The custom he minded. Wulfgar addressed then
His friendly liegelord: “Folk of the Geatmen
He thereupon urges his liegelord to receive the visitors courteously.
O'er the way of the waters are wafted hither,
Faring from far-lands: the foremost in rank

The battle-champions Beowulf title.
They make this petition: with thee, O my chieftain,
To be granted a conference; O gracious King Hrothgar,
Friendly answer refuse not to give them!
Hrothgar, too, is struck with Beowulf's appearance.
In war-trappings weeded worthy they seem
Of earls to be honored; sure the atheling is doughty
Who headed the heroes hitherward coming."

VII. HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.

Hrothgar remembers Beowulf as a youth, and also remembers his father

Hrothgar answered, helm of the Scyldings:

"I remember this man as the merest of striplings.
His father long dead now was Ecgtheow titled,
Him Hrethel the Geatman granted at home his
One only daughter; his battle-brave son
Is come but now, sought a trustworthy friend.
Seafaring sailors asserted it then,
Beowulf is reported to have the strength of thirty men.
Who valuable gift-gems of the Geatmen carried
As peace-offering thither, that he thirty men's grapple
Has in his hand, the hero-in-battle.
God hath sent him to our rescue.
The holy Creator usward sent him,
To West-Dane warriors, I ween, for to render
'Gainst Grendel's grimness gracious assistance:

I shall give to the good one gift-gems for courage.
Hasten to bid them hither to speed them,
To see assembled this circle of kinsmen;
Tell them expressly they're welcome in sooth to
The men of the Danes." To the door of the building
Wulfgar went then, this word-message shouted:

"My victorious liegelord bade me to tell you,
The East-Danes' atheling, that your origin knows he,
And o'er wave-billows wafted ye welcome are hither,

Valiant of spirit. Ye straightway may enter
Clad in corslets, cased in your helmets,
To see King Hrothgar. Here let your battle-boards,
Wood-spears and war-shafts, await your conferring.”
The mighty one rose then, with many a liegeman,
An excellent thane-group; some there did await them,
And as bid of the brave one the battle-gear guarded.
Together they hied them, while the hero did guide them,
'Neath Heorot's roof; the high-minded went then
Sturdy 'neath helmet till he stood in the building.
Beowulf spake (his burnie did glisten,
His armor seamed over by the art of the craftsman):

Beowulf salutes Hrothgar, and then proceeds to boast of his youthful achievements.

“Hail thou, Hrothgar! I am Higelac's kinsman
And vassal forsooth; many a wonder
I dared as a stripling. The doings of Grendel,
In far-off fatherland I fully did know of:

Sea-farers tell us, this hall-building standeth,
Excellent edifice, empty and useless
To all the earlmen after evenlight's glimmer
'Neath heaven's bright hues hath hidden its glory.
This my earls then urged me, the most excellent of them,
Carles very clever, to come and assist thee,
Folk-leader Hrothgar; fully they knew of
His fight with the nickers.
The strength of my body. Themselves they beheld me
When I came from the contest, when covered with gore
Foes I escaped from, where five I had bound,
The giant-race wasted, in the waters destroying
The nickers by night, bore numberless sorrows,
The Weders avenged (woes had they suffered)
Enemies ravaged; alone now with Grendel
He intends to fight Grendel unaided.
I shall manage the matter, with the monster of evil,
The giant, decide it. Thee I would therefore
Beg of thy bounty, Bright-Danish chieftain,
Lord of the Scyldings, this single petition:

Not to refuse me, defender of warriors,

Friend-lord of folks, so far have I sought thee,
 That I may unaided, my earlmen assisting me,
 This brave-mooded war-band, purify Heorot.
 I have heard on inquiry, the horrible creature
 Since the monster uses no weapons,
 From veriest rashness recks not for weapons;
 I this do scorn then, so be Higelac gracious,
 My liegelord belovèd, lenient of spirit,
 To bear a blade or a broad-fashioned target,
 A shield to the onset; only with hand-grip
 I, too, shall disdain to use any.
 The foe I must grapple, fight for my life then,
 Foeman with foeman; he fain must rely on
 The doom of the Lord whom death layeth hold of.
 Should he crush me, he will eat my companions as he has eaten thy thanes.
 I ween he will wish, if he win in the struggle,
 To eat in the war-hall earls of the Geat-folk,
 Boldly to swallow them, as of yore he did often
 The best of the Hrethmen! Thou needest not trouble
 A head-watch to give me; he will have me dripping
 In case of my defeat, thou wilt not have the trouble of burying me.
 And dreary with gore, if death overtake me,
 Will bear me off bleeding, biting and mouthing me,
 The hermit will eat me, heedless of pity,
 Marking the moor-fens; no more wilt thou need then
 Should I fall, send my armor to my lord, King Higelac.
 Find me my food. If I fall in the battle,
 Send to Higelac the armor that serveth
 To shield my bosom, the best of equipments,
 Richest of ring-mails; 'tis the relic of Hrethla,
 Weird is supreme
 The work of Wayland. Goes Weird as she must go!"

VIII. HROTHGAR AND BEOWULF.—Continued.

Hrothgar responds

Hrothgar discoursed, helm of the Scyldings:

“To defend our folk and to furnish assistance,
 Thou soughtest us hither, good friend Beowulf.
 Reminiscences of Beowulf’s father, Ecgtheow.
 The fiercest of feuds thy father engaged in,
 Heatholaf killed he in hand-to-hand conflict
 ’Mid Wilfingish warriors; then the Wederish people
 For fear of a feud were forced to disown him.
 Thence flying he fled to the folk of the South-Danes,
 The race of the Scyldings, o’er the roll of the waters;
 I had lately begun then to govern the Danemen,
 The hoard-seat of heroes held in my youth,
 Rich in its jewels: dead was Heregar,
 My kinsman and elder had earth-joys forsaken,
 Healfdene his bairn. He was better than I am!
 That feud thereafter for a fee I compounded;
 O’er the weltering waters to the Wilfings I sent
 Ornaments old; oaths did he swear me.
 Hrothgar recounts to Beowulf the horrors of Grendel’s persecutions.
 It pains me in spirit to any to tell it,
 What grief in Heorot Grendel hath caused me,
 What horror unlooked-for, by hatred unceasing.
 Waned is my war-band, wasted my hall-troop;
 Weird hath offcast them to the clutches of Grendel.
 God can easily hinder the scather
 From deeds so direful. Oft drunken with beer
 My thanes have made many boasts, but have not executed them.
 O’er the ale-vessel promised warriors in armor
 They would willingly wait on the wassailing-benches
 A grapple with Grendel, with grimmest of edges.
 Then this mead-hall at morning with murder was reeking,
 The building was bloody at breaking of daylight,
 The bench-deals all flooded, dripping and bloodied,
 The folk-hall was gory: I had fewer retainers,
 Dear-beloved warriors, whom death had laid hold of.
 Sit down to the feast, and give us comfort.
 Sit at the feast now, thy intents unto heroes,
 Thy victor-fame show, as thy spirit doth urge thee!”
 A bench is made ready for Beowulf and his party.
 For the men of the Geats then together assembled,
 In the beer-hall blithesome a bench was made ready;
 There warlike in spirit they went to be seated,
 Proud and exultant. A liegeman did service,

Who a beaker embellished bore with decorum,
The gleeman sings
And gleaming-drink poured. The gleeman sang whilom
The heroes all rejoice together.
Hearty in Heorot; there was heroes' rejoicing,
A numerous war-band of Weders and Danemen.

IX. UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF.

Unferth, a thane of Hrothgar, is jealous of Beowulf, and undertakes to twit him

Unferth spoke up, Ecglaf his son,
Who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings,
Opened the jousting (the journey of Beowulf,
Sea-farer doughty, gave sorrow to Unferth
And greatest chagrin, too, for granted he never
That any man else on earth should attain to,
Gain under heaven, more glory than he):

Did you take part in a swimming-match with Breca?
"Art thou that Beowulf with Breca did struggle,
On the wide sea-currents at swimming contended,
Where to humor your pride the ocean ye tried,
'Twas mere folly that actuated you both to risk your lives on the ocean.
From vainest vaunting adventured your bodies
In care of the waters? And no one was able
Nor lief nor loth one, in the least to dissuade you
Your difficult voyage; then ye ventured a-swimming,
Where your arms outstretching the streams ye did cover,
The mere-ways measured, mixing and stirring them,
Glided the ocean; angry the waves were,
With the weltering of winter. In the water's possession,
Ye toiled for a seven-night; he at swimming outdid thee,
In strength excelled thee. Then early at morning
On the Heathoremes' shore the holm-currents tossed him,
Sought he thenceward the home of his fathers,
Beloved of his liegemen, the land of the Brondings,
The peace-castle pleasant, where a people he wielded,
Had borough and jewels. The pledge that he made thee
Breca outdid you entirely.

The son of Beanstan hath soothly accomplished.
Then I ween thou wilt find thee less fortunate issue,
Much more will Grendel outdo you, if you vie with him in prowess.
Though ever triumphant in onset of battle,
A grim grappling, if Grendel thou darest
For the space of a night near-by to wait for!"
Beowulf answered, offspring of Ecgtheow:

"My good friend Unferth, sure freely and wildly,
O friend Unferth, you are fuddled with beer, and cannot talk coherently.
Thou fuddled with beer of Breca hast spoken,
Hast told of his journey! A fact I allege it,
That greater strength in the waters I had then,
Ills in the ocean, than any man else had.
We made agreement as the merest of striplings
Promised each other (both of us then were
We simply kept an engagement made in early life.
Younkers in years) that we yet would adventure
Out on the ocean; it all we accomplished.
While swimming the sea-floods, sword-blade unscabbarded
Boldly we brandished, our bodies expected
To shield from the sharks. He sure was unable
He could not excel me, and I would not excel him.
To swim on the waters further than I could,
More swift on the waves, nor would I from him go.
Then we two companions stayed in the ocean
After five days the currents separated us.
Five nights together, till the currents did part us,
The weltering waters, weathers the bleakest,
And nethermost night, and the north-wind whistled
Fierce in our faces; fell were the billows.
The mere fishes' mood was mightily ruffled:

And there against foemen my firm-knotted corslet,
Hand-jointed, hardy, help did afford me;
My battle-sark braided, brilliantly gilded,
A horrible sea-beast attacked me, but I slew him.
Lay on my bosom. To the bottom then dragged me,
A hateful fiend-scather, seized me and held me,
Grim in his grapple: 'twas granted me, nathless,
To pierce the monster with the point of my weapon,
My obedient blade; battle off carried
The mighty mere-creature by means of my hand-blow.

X. BEOWULF SILENCES UNFERTH.—GLEE IS HIGH.

“So ill-meaning enemies often did cause me
Sorrow the sorest. I served them, in quittance,
My dear sword always served me faithfully.
With my dear-lovèd sword, as in sooth it was fitting;
They missed the pleasure of feasting abundantly,
Ill-doers evil, of eating my body,
Of surrounding the banquet deep in the ocean;
But wounded with edges early at morning
They were stretched a-high on the strand of the ocean,
I put a stop to the outrages of the sea-monsters.
Put to sleep with the sword, that sea-going travelers
No longer thereafter were hindered from sailing
The foam-dashing currents. Came a light from the east,
God’s beautiful beacon; the billows subsided,
That well I could see the nesses projecting,
Fortune helps the brave earl.
The blustering crags. Weird often saveth
The undoomed hero if doughty his valor!
But me did it fortune to fell with my weapon
Nine of the nickers. Of night-struggle harder
’Neath dome of the heaven heard I but rarely,
Nor of wight more woeful in the waves of the ocean;
Yet I ’scaped with my life the grip of the monsters,
After that escape I drifted to Finland.
Weary from travel. Then the waters bare me
To the land of the Finns, the flood with the current,
I have never heard of your doing any such bold deeds.
The weltering waves. Not a word hath been told me
Of deeds so daring done by thee, Unferth,
And of sword-terror none; never hath Breca
At the play of the battle, nor either of you two,
Feat so fearless performèd with weapons
Glinting and gleaming .
I utter no boasting;
You are a slayer of brothers, and will suffer damnation, wise as you may
be.
Though with cold-blooded cruelty thou killedst thy brothers,
Thy nearest of kin; thou needs must in hell get

Direful damnation, though doughty thy wisdom.
I tell thee in earnest, offspring of Ecglaf,
Never had Grendel such numberless horrors,
The direful demon, done to thy liegelord,
Harrying in Heorot, if thy heart were as sturdy,
Had your acts been as brave as your words, Grendel had not ravaged your
land so long.
Thy mood as ferocious as thou dost describe them.
He hath found out fully that the fierce-burning hatred,
The edge-battle eager, of all of your kindred,
Of the Victory-Scyldings, need little dismay him:

Oaths he exacteth, not any he spares
The monster is not afraid of the Danes,
Of the folk of the Danemen, but fighteth with pleasure,
Killeth and feasteth, no contest expecteth
but he will soon learn to dread the Geats.
From Spear-Danish people. But the prowess and valor
Of the earls of the Geatmen early shall venture
To give him a grapple. He shall go who is able
Bravely to banquet, when the bright-light of morning
On the second day, any warrior may go unmolested to the mead-banquet.
Which the second day bringeth, the sun in its ether-robcs,
O'er children of men shines from the southward!"
Then the gray-haired, war-famed giver of treasure
Hrothgar's spirits are revived.
Was blithesome and joyous, the Bright-Danish ruler
Expected assistance; the people's protector
The old king trusts Beowulf. The heroes are joyful.
Heard from Beowulf his bold resolution.
There was laughter of heroes; loud was the clatter,
The words were winsome. Wealhtheow advanced then,
Queen Wealhtheow plays the hostess.
Consort of Hrothgar, of courtesy mindful,
Gold-decked saluted the men in the building,
And the freeborn woman the beaker presented
She offers the cup to her husband first.
To the lord of the kingdom, first of the East-Danes,
Bade him be blithesome when beer was a-flowing,
Lief to his liegemen; he lustily tasted
Of banquet and beaker, battle-famed ruler.
The Helmingish lady then graciously circled

'Mid all the liegemen lesser and greater:

She gives presents to the heroes.
Treasure-cups tendered, till time was afforded
That the decorous-mooded, diademed folk-queen
Then she offers the cup to Beowulf, thanking God that aid has come.
Might bear to Beowulf the bumper o'errunning;
She greeted the Geat-prince, God she did thank,
Most wise in her words, that her wish was accomplished,
That in any of earlmen she ever should look for
Solace in sorrow. He accepted the beaker,
Battle-bold warrior, at Wealhtheow's giving,
Beowulf states to the queen the object of his visit.
Then equipped for combat quoth he in measures,
Beowulf spake, offspring of Ecgtheow:

"I purposed in spirit when I mounted the ocean,
I determined to do or die.
When I boarded my boat with a band of my liegemen,
I would work to the fullest the will of your people
Or in foe's-clutches fastened fall in the battle.
Deeds I shall do of daring and prowess,
Or the last of my life-days live in this mead-hall."
These words to the lady were welcome and pleasing,
The boast of the Geatman; with gold trappings broidered
Went the freeborn folk-queen her fond-lord to sit by.
Then again as of yore was heard in the building
Courtly discussion, conquerors' shouting,
Heroes were happy, till Healfdene's son would
Go to his slumber to seek for refreshing;
For the horrid hell-monster in the hall-building knew he
A fight was determined, since the light of the sun they
No longer could see, and lowering darkness
O'er all had descended, and dark under heaven
Shadowy shapes came shying around them.
Hrothgar retires, leaving Beowulf in charge of the hall.
The liegemen all rose then. One saluted the other,
Hrothgar Beowulf, in rhythmical measures,
Wishing him well, and, the wassail-hall giving
To his care and keeping, quoth he departing:

"Not to any one else have I ever entrusted,

But thee and thee only, the hall of the Danemen,
Since high I could heave my hand and my buckler.
Take thou in charge now the noblest of houses;
Be mindful of honor, exhibiting prowess,
Watch 'gainst the foeman! Thou shalt want no enjoyments,
Survive thou safely adventure so glorious!"

XI. ALL SLEEP SAVE ONE.

Hrothgar retires

Then Hrothgar departed, his earl-throng attending him,
Folk-lord of Scyldings, forth from the building;
The war-chieftain wished then Wealhtheow to look for,
The queen for a bedmate. To keep away Grendel
God has provided a watch for the hall.
The Glory of Kings had given a hall-watch,
As men heard recounted: for the king of the Danemen
He did special service, gave the giant a watcher:

And the prince of the Geatmen implicitly trusted
His warlike strength and the Wielder's protection.
His armor of iron off him he did then,
His helmet from his head, to his henchman committed
His chased-handled chain-sword, choicest of weapons,
And bade him bide with his battle-equipments.
The good one then uttered words of defiance,
Beowulf Geatman, ere his bed he upmounted:

Beowulf boasts of his ability to cope with Grendel.
"I hold me no meaner in matters of prowess,
In warlike achievements, than Grendel does himself;
Hence I seek not with sword-edge to sooth him to slumber,
Of life to bereave him, though well I am able.
We will fight with nature's weapons only.
No battle-skill has he, that blows he should strike me,
To shatter my shield, though sure he is mighty
In strife and destruction; but struggling by night we
Shall do without edges, dare he to look for
Weaponless warfare, and wise-mooded Father

The glory apportion, God ever-holy,
 God may decide who shall conquer
 On which hand soever to him seemeth proper.”
 Then the brave-mooded hero bent to his slumber,
 The pillow received the cheek of the noble;
 The Geatish warriors lie down.
 And many a martial mere-thane attending
 Sank to his slumber. Seemed it unlikely
 They thought it very unlikely that they should ever see their homes again.
 That ever thereafter any should hope to
 Be happy at home, hero-friends visit
 Or the lordly troop-castle where he lived from his childhood;
 They had heard how slaughter had snatched from the wine-hall,
 Had recently ravished, of the race of the Scyldings
 But God raised up a deliverer.
 Too many by far. But the Lord to them granted
 The weaving of war-speed, to Wederish heroes
 Aid and comfort, that every opponent
 By one man’s war-might they worsted and vanquished,
 God rules the world.
 By the might of himself; the truth is established
 That God Almighty hath governed for ages
 Kindreds and nations. A night very lurid
 Grendel comes to Heorot.
 The trav’ler-at-twilight came tramping and striding.
 The warriors were sleeping who should watch the horned-building,
 One only excepted. ’Mid earthmen ’twas ’stablished,
 Th’ implacable foeman was powerless to hurl them
 To the land of shadows, if the Lord were unwilling;
 But serving as warder, in terror to foemen,
 He angrily bided the issue of battle.

XII. GRENDEL AND BEOWULF.

Grendel comes from the fens

’Neath the cloudy cliffs came from the moor then
 Grendel going, God’s anger bare he.
 The monster intended some one of earthmen
 In the hall-building grand to entrap and make way with:

He goes towards the joyous building.
He went under welkin where well he knew of
The wine-joyous building, brilliant with plating,
Gold-hall of earthmen. Not the earliest occasion
This was not his first visit there.
He the home and manor of Hrothgar had sought:

Ne'er found he in life-days later nor earlier
Hardier hero, hall-thanes more sturdy!
Then came to the building the warrior marching,
His horrid fingers tear the door open.
Bereft of his joyance. The door quickly opened
On fire-hinges fastened, when his fingers had touched it;
The fell one had flung then—his fury so bitter—
Open the entrance. Early thereafter
The foeman trod the shining hall-pavement,
He strides furiously into the hall.
Strode he angrily; from the eyes of him glimmered
A lustre unlovely likest to fire.
He beheld in the hall the heroes in numbers,
A circle of kinsmen sleeping together,
He exults over his supposed prey.
A throng of thanemen: then his thoughts were exultant,
He minded to sunder from each of the thanemen
The life from his body, horrible demon,
Ere morning came, since fate had allowed him
Fate has decreed that he shall devour no more heroes. Beowulf suffers from
suspense.

The prospect of plenty. Providence willed not
To permit him any more of men under heaven
To eat in the night-time. Higelac's kinsman
Great sorrow endured how the dire-mooded creature
In unlooked-for assaults were likely to bear him.
No thought had the monster of deferring the matter,
Grendel immediately seizes a sleeping warrior, and devours him.
But on earliest occasion he quickly laid hold of
A soldier asleep, suddenly tore him,
Bit his bone-prison, the blood drank in currents,
Swallowed in mouthfuls: he soon had the dead man's
Feet and hands, too, eaten entirely.
Nearer he strode then, the stout-hearted warrior
Beowulf and Grendel grapple.

Snatched as he slumbered, seizing with hand-grip,
Forward the foeman foined with his hand;
Caught he quickly the cunning deviser,
On his elbow he rested. This early discovered
The master of malice, that in middle-earth's regions,
'Neath the whole of the heavens, no hand-grapple greater
The monster is amazed at Beowulf's strength.
In any man else had he ever encountered:

Fearful in spirit, faint-mooded waxed he,
Not off could betake him; death he was pondering,
Would fly to his covert, seek the devils' assembly:

His calling no more was the same he had followed
Long in his lifetime. The liege-kinsman worthy
Beowulf recalls his boast of the evening, and determines to fulfil it.
Of Higelac minded his speech of the evening,
Stood he up straight and stoutly did seize him.
His fingers crackled; the giant was outward,
The earl stepped farther. The famous one minded
To flee away farther, if he found an occasion,
And off and away, avoiding delay,
To fly to the fen-moors; he fully was ware of
The strength of his grapple in the grip of the foeman.
'Twas a luckless day for Grendel.
'Twas an ill-taken journey that the injury-bringing,
Harrying harmer to Heorot wandered:

The palace re-echoed; to all of the Danemen,
Dwellers in castles, to each of the bold ones,
Earlmen, was terror. Angry they both were,
Archwarders raging. Rattled the building;
'Twas a marvellous wonder that the wine-hall withstood then
The bold-in-battle, bent not to earthward,
Excellent earth-hall; but within and without it
Was fastened so firmly in fetters of iron,
By the art of the armorer. Off from the sill there
Bent mead-benches many, as men have informed me,
Adorned with gold-work, where the grim ones did struggle.
The Scylding wise men weened ne'er before
That by might and main-strength a man under heaven
Might break it in pieces, bone-decked, resplendent,

Crush it by cunning, unless clutch of the fire
In smoke should consume it. The sound mounted upward
Grendel's cries terrify the Danes.
Novel enough; on the North Danes fastened
A terror of anguish, on all of the men there
Who heard from the wall the weeping and plaining,
The song of defeat from the foeman of heaven,
Heard him hymns of horror howl, and his sorrow
Hell-bound bewailing. He held him too firmly
Who was strongest of main-strength of men of that era.

XIII. GRENDEL IS VANQUISHED.

Beowulf has no idea of letting Grendel live

For no cause whatever would the earlmen's defender
Leave in life-joys the loathsome newcomer,
He deemed his existence utterly useless
To men under heaven. Many a noble
Of Beowulf brandished his battle-sword old,
Would guard the life of his lord and protector,
The far-famous chieftain, if able to do so;
While waging the warfare, this wist they but little,
Brave battle-thanes, while his body intending
No weapon would harm Grendel; he bore a charmed life.
To slit into slivers, and seeking his spirit:

That the relentless foeman nor finest of weapons
Of all on the earth, nor any of war-bills
Was willing to injure; but weapons of victory
Swords and suchlike he had sworn to dispense with.
His death at that time must prove to be wretched,
And the far-away spirit widely should journey
Into enemies' power. This plainly he saw then
Who with mirth of mood malice no little
Had wrought in the past on the race of the earthmen
(To God he was hostile), that his body would fail him,
But Higelac's hardy henchman and kinsman
Held him by the hand; hateful to other
Grendel is sorely wounded.

Was each one if living. A body-wound suffered
 The direful demon, damage incurable
 Was seen on his shoulder, his sinews were shivered,
 His body did burst. To Beowulf was given
 Glory in battle; Grendel from thenceward
 Must flee and hide him in the fen-cliffs and marshes,
 Sick unto death, his dwelling must look for
 Unwinsome and woeful; he wist the more fully
 The monster flees away to hide in the moors.
 The end of his earthly existence was nearing,
 His life-days' limits. At last for the Danemen,
 When the slaughter was over, their wish was accomplished.
 The comer-from-far-land had cleansed then of evil,
 Wise and valiant, the war-hall of Hrothgar,
 Saved it from violence. He joyed in the night-work,
 In repute for prowess; the prince of the Geatmen
 For the East-Danish people his boast had accomplished,
 Bettered their burdensome bale-sorrows fully,
 The craft-begot evil they erstwhile had suffered
 And were forced to endure from crushing oppression,
 Their manifold misery. 'Twas a manifest token,
 Beowulf suspends Grendel's hand and arm in Heorot.
 When the hero-in-battle the hand suspended,
 The arm and the shoulder (there was all of the claw
 Of Grendel together) 'neath great-stretching hall-roof.

XIV. REJOICING OF THE DANES.

At early dawn, warriors from far and near come together to hear of the night's adventures

In the mist of the morning many a warrior
 Stood round the gift-hall, as the story is told me:

Folk-princes fared then from far and from near
 Through long-stretching journeys to look at the wonder,
 The footprints of the foeman. Few of the warriors
 Few warriors lamented Grendel's destruction.
 Who gazed on the foot-tracks of the inglorious creature
 His parting from life pained very deeply,

How, weary in spirit, off from those regions
 In combats conquered he carried his traces,
 Fated and flying, to the flood of the nickers.
 Grendel's blood dyes the waters.
 There in bloody billows bubbled the currents,
 The angry eddy was everywhere mingled
 And seething with gore, welling with sword-blood;
 He death-doomed had hid him, when reaved of his joyance
 He laid down his life in the lair he had fled to,
 His heathenish spirit, where hell did receive him.
 Thence the friends from of old backward turned them,
 And many a younker from merry adventure,
 Striding their stallions, stout from the seaward,
 Heroes on horses. There were heard very often
 Beowulf is the hero of the hour.
 Beowulf's praises; many often asserted
 That neither south nor north, in the circuit of waters,
 He is regarded as a probable successor to Hrothgar.
 O'er outstretching earth-plain, none other was better
 'Mid bearers of war-shields, more worthy to govern,
 'Neath the arch of the ether. Not any, however,
 'Gainst the friend-lord muttered, mocking-words uttered
 But no word is uttered to derogate from the old king
 Of Hrothgar the gracious (a good king he).
 Oft the famed ones permitted their fallow-skinned horses
 To run in rivalry, racing and chasing,
 Where the fieldways appeared to them fair and inviting,
 Known for their excellence; oft a thane of the folk-lord,
 The gleeman sings the deeds of heroes.
 A man of celebrity, mindful of rhythms,
 Who ancient traditions treasured in memory,
 New word-groups found properly bound:

The bard after 'gan then Beowulf's venture
 He sings in alliterative measures of Beowulf's prowess.
 Wisely to tell of, and words that were clever
 To utter skilfully, earnestly speaking,
 Everything told he that he heard as to Sigmund's
 Also of Sigemund, who has slain a great fire-dragon.
 Mighty achievements, many things hidden,
 The strife of the Waelsing, the wide-going ventures
 The children of men knew of but little,

The feud and the fury, but Fitela with him,
When suchlike matters he minded to speak of,
Uncle to nephew, as in every contention
Each to other was ever devoted:

A numerous host of the race of the scathers
They had slain with the sword-edge. To Sigmund accrued then
No little of glory, when his life-days were over,
Since he sturdy in struggle had destroyed the great dragon,
The hoard-treasure's keeper; 'neath the hoar-grayish stone he,
The son of the atheling, unaided adventured
The perilous project; not present was Fitela,
Yet the fortune befell him of forcing his weapon
Through the marvellous dragon, that it stood in the wall,
Well-honored weapon; the worm was slaughtered.
The great one had gained then by his glorious achievement
To reap from the ring-hoard richest enjoyment,
As best it did please him: his vessel he loaded,
Shining ornaments on the ship's bosom carried,
Kinsman of Waels: the drake in heat melted.
He was farthest famed of fugitive pilgrims,
Mid wide-scattered world-folk, for works of great prowess,
War-troopers' shelter: hence waxed he in honor.
Heremod, an unfortunate Danish king, is introduced by way of contrast.
Afterward Heremod's hero-strength failed him,
His vigor and valor. 'Mid venomous haters
To the hands of foemen he was foully delivered,
Offdriven early. Agony-billows
Unlike Sigemund and Beowulf, Heremod was a burden to his people.
Oppressed him too long, to his people he became then,
To all the athelings, an ever-great burden;
And the daring one's journey in days of yore
Many wise men were wont to deplore,
Such as hoped he would bring them help in their sorrow,
That the son of their ruler should rise into power,
Holding the headship held by his fathers,
Should govern the people, the gold-hoard and borough,
The kingdom of heroes, the realm of the Scyldings.
Beowulf is an honor to his race.
He to all men became then far more beloved,
Higelac's kinsman, to kindreds and races,
To his friends much dearer; him malice assaulted.—

Oft running and racing on roadsters they measured
The dun-colored highways. Then the light of the morning
Was hurried and hastened. Went henchmen in numbers
To the beautiful building, bold ones in spirit,
To look at the wonder; the liegelord himself then
From his wife-bower wending, warden of treasures,
Glorious trod with troopers unnumbered,
Famed for his virtues, and with him the queen-wife
Measured the mead-ways, with maidens attending.

XV. HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

Hrothgar discoursed (to the hall-building went he,
He stood by the pillar, saw the steep-rising hall-roof
Gleaming with gold-gems, and Grendel his hand there):

Hrothgar gives thanks for the overthrow of the monster.
“For the sight we behold now, thanks to the Wielder
Early be offered! Much evil I bided,
Snaring from Grendel: God can e'er 'complish
Wonder on wonder, Wielder of Glory!
I had given up all hope, when this brave liegeman came to our aid.
But lately I reckoned ne'er under heaven
Comfort to gain me for any of sorrows,
While the handsomest of houses horrid with bloodstain
Gory uptowered; grief had off frightened
Each of the wise ones who weened not that ever
The folk-troop's defences 'gainst foes they should strengthen,
'Gainst sprites and monsters. Through the might of the Wielder
A doughty retainer hath a deed now accomplished
Which erstwhile we all with our excellent wisdom
If his mother yet liveth, well may she thank God for this son.
Failed to perform. May affirm very truly
What woman soever in all of the nations
Gave birth to the child, if yet she surviveth,
That the long-ruling Lord was lavish to herward
In the birth of the bairn. Now, Beowulf dear,
Hereafter, Beowulf, thou shalt be my son.
Most excellent hero, I'll love thee in spirit
As bairn of my body; bear well henceforward
The relationship new. No lack shall befall thee

Of earth-joys any I ever can give thee.
Full often for lesser service I've given
Hero less hardy hoard-treasure precious,
Thou hast won immortal distinction.
To a weaker in war-strife. By works of distinction
Thou hast gained for thyself now that thy glory shall flourish
Forever and ever. The All-Ruler quite thee
With good from His hand as He hitherto did thee!"
Beowulf replies: I was most happy to render thee this service.
Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's offspring:

"That labor of glory most gladly achieved we,
The combat accomplished, unquailing we ventured
The enemy's grapple; I would grant it much rather
Thou wert able to look at the creature in person,
Faint unto falling, the foe in his trappings!
On murder-bed quickly I minded to bind him,
With firm-holding fetters, that forced by my grapple
Low he should lie in life-and-death struggle
'Less his body escape; I was wholly unable,
I could not keep the monster from escaping, as God did not will that I
should.

Since God did not will it, to keep him from going,
Not held him that firmly, hated opposer;
Too swift was the foeman. Yet safety regarding
He suffered his hand behind him to linger,
His arm and shoulder, to act as watcher;
He left his hand and arm behind.
No shadow of solace the woe-begone creature
Found him there nathless: the hated destroyer
Liveth no longer, lashed for his evils,
But sorrow hath seized him, in snare-meshes hath him
Close in its clutches, keepeth him writhing
In baleful bonds: there banished for evil
The man shall wait for the mighty tribunal,
God will give him his deserts.
How the God of glory shall give him his earnings."
Then the soldier kept silent, son of old Ecglaf,
Unferth has nothing more to say, for Beowulf's actions speak louder than
words.

From boasting and bragging of battle-achievements,
Since the princes beheld there the hand that depended

'Neath the lofty hall-timbers by the might of the nobleman,
Each one before him, the enemy's fingers;
Each finger-nail strong steel most resembled,
The heathen one's hand-spur, the hero-in-battle's
Claw most uncanny; quoth they agreeing,
No sword will harm the monster.
That not any excellent edges of brave ones
Was willing to touch him, the terrible creature's
Battle-hand bloody to bear away from him.

XVI. HROTHGAR LAVISHES GIFTS UPON HIS DELIVERER.

Heorot is adorned with hands

Then straight was ordered that Heorot inside
With hands be embellished: a host of them gathered,
Of men and women, who the wassailing-building
The guest-hall begeared. Gold-flashing sparkled
Webs on the walls then, of wonders a many
To each of the heroes that look on such objects.
The hall is defaced, however.
The beautiful building was broken to pieces
Which all within with irons was fastened,
Its hinges torn off: only the roof was
Whole and uninjured when the horrible creature
Outlawed for evil off had betaken him,
Hopeless of living. 'Tis hard to avoid it
(Whoever will do it!); but he doubtless must come to
The place awaiting, as Wyrð hath appointed,
Soul-bearers, earth-dwellers, earls under heaven,
Where bound on its bed his body shall slumber
Hrothgar goes to the banquet.
When feasting is finished. Full was the time then
That the son of Healfdene went to the building;
The excellent atheling would eat of the banquet.
Ne'er heard I that people with hero-band larger
Bare them better tow'rds their bracelet-bestower.
The laden-with-glory stooped to the bench then

(Their kinsmen-companions in plenty were joyful,
 Many a cupful quaffing complaisantly),
 Doughty of spirit in the high-tow'ring palace,
 Hrothgar's nephew, Hrothulf, is present.
 Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Heorot then inside
 Was filled with friendly ones; falsehood and treachery
 The Folk-Scyldings now nowise did practise.
 Hrothgar lavishes gifts upon Beowulf.
 Then the offspring of Healfdene offered to Beowulf
 A golden standard, as reward for the victory,
 A banner embossed, burnie and helmet;
 Many men saw then a song-famous weapon
 Borne 'fore the hero. Beowulf drank of
 The cup in the building; that treasure-bestowing
 He needed not blush for in battle-men's presence.
 Four handsomer gifts were never presented.
 Ne'er heard I that many men on the ale-bench
 In friendlier fashion to their fellows presented
 Four bright jewels with gold-work embellished.
 'Round the roof of the helmet a head-guarder outside
 Braided with wires, with bosses was furnished,
 That swords-for-the-battle fight-hardened might fail
 Boldly to harm him, when the hero proceeded
 Hrothgar commands that eight finely caparisoned steeds be brought to
 Beowulf.
 Forth against foemen. The defender of earls then
 Commanded that eight steeds with bridles
 Gold-plated, gleaming, be guided to hallward,
 Inside the building; on one of them stood then
 An art-broidered saddle embellished with jewels;
 'Twas the sovereign's seat, when the son of King Healfdene
 Was pleased to take part in the play of the edges;
 The famous one's valor ne'er failed at the front when
 Slain ones were bowing. And to Beowulf granted
 The prince of the Ingwines, power over both,
 O'er war-steeds and weapons; bade him well to enjoy them.
 In so manly a manner the mighty-famed chieftain,
 Hoard-ward of heroes, with horses and jewels
 War-storms requited, that none e'er condemneth
 Who willeth to tell truth with full justice.

XVII. BANQUET (continued).—THE SCOP'S SONG OF FINN AND HNAEF.

Each of Beowulf's companions receives a costly gift

And the atheling of earlmen to each of the heroes
Who the ways of the waters went with Beowulf,
A costly gift-token gave on the mead-bench,
Offered an heirloom, and ordered that that man
The warrior killed by Grendel is to be paid for in gold.
With gold should be paid for, whom Grendel had erstwhile
Wickedly slaughtered, as he more of them had done
Had far-seeing God and the mood of the hero
The fate not averted: the Father then governed
All of the earth-dwellers, as He ever is doing;
Hence insight for all men is everywhere fittest,
Forethought of spirit! much he shall suffer
Of lief and of loathsome who long in this present
Useth the world in this woful existence.
There was music and merriment mingling together
Hrothgar's scop recalls events in the reign of his lord's father.
Touching Healfdene's leader; the joy-wood was fingered,
Measures recited, when the singer of Hrothgar
On mead-bench should mention the merry hall-joyance
Of the kinsmen of Finn, when onset surprised them:

Hnaef, the Danish general, is treacherously attacked while staying at Finn's castle.

“The Half-Danish hero, Hnaef of the Scyldings,
On the field of the Frisians was fated to perish.
Sure Hildeburg needed not mention approving
The faith of the Jutemen: though blameless entirely,
Queen Hildeburg is not only wife of Finn, but a kinswoman of the murdered
Hnaef.

When shields were shivered she was shorn of her darlings,
Of bairns and brothers: they bent to their fate
With war-spear wounded; woe was that woman.
Not causeless lamented the daughter of Hoce
The decree of the Wielder when morning-light came and
She was able 'neath heaven to behold the destruction

Of brothers and bairns, where the brightest of earth-joys
Finn's force is almost exterminated.
She had hitherto had: all the henchmen of Finn
War had off taken, save a handful remaining,
That he nowise was able to offer resistance
Hengest succeeds Hnaef as Danish general.
To the onset of Hengest in the parley of battle,
Nor the wretched remnant to rescue in war from
The earl of the atheling; but they offered conditions,
Compact between the Frisians and the Danes.
Another great building to fully make ready,
A hall and a high-seat, that half they might rule with
The sons of the Jutemen, and that Folcwalda's son would
Day after day the Danemen honor
When gifts were giving, and grant of his ring-store
To Hengest's earl-troop ever so freely,
Of his gold-plated jewels, as he encouraged the Frisians
On the bench of the beer-hall. On both sides they swore then
A fast-binding compact; Finn unto Hengest
With no thought of revoking vowed then most solemnly
The woe-begone remnant well to take charge of,
His Witan advising; the agreement should no one
By words or works weaken and shatter,
By artifice ever injure its value,
Though reaved of their ruler their ring-giver's slayer
They followed as vassals, Fate so requiring:

No one shall refer to old grudges.
Then if one of the Frisians the quarrel should speak of
In tones that were taunting, terrible edges
Should cut in requital. Accomplished the oath was,
And treasure of gold from the hoard was uplifted.
Danish warriors are burned on a funeral-pyre.
The best of the Scylding braves was then fully
Prepared for the pile; at the pyre was seen clearly
The blood-gory burnie, the boar with his gilding,
The iron-hard swine, athelings many
Fatally wounded; no few had been slaughtered.
Hildeburg bade then, at the burning of Hnaef,
Queen Hildeburg has her son burnt along with Hnaef.
The bairn of her bosom to bear to the fire,
That his body be burned and borne to the pyre.

The woe-stricken woman wept on his shoulder,
In measures lamented; upmounted the hero.
The greatest of dead-fires curled to the welkin,
On the hill's-front crackled; heads were a-melting,
Wound-doors bursting, while the blood was a-coursing
From body-bite fierce. The fire devoured them,
Greediest of spirits, whom war had off carried
From both of the peoples; their bravest were fallen.

XVIII. THE FINN EPISODE (continued).—THE BANQUET CONTINUES.

The survivors go to Friesland, the home of Finn

“Then the warriors departed to go to their dwellings,
Reaved of their friends, Friesland to visit,
Their homes and high-city. Hengest continued
Hengest remains there all winter, unable to get away.
Biding with Finn the blood-tainted winter,
Wholly unsundered; of fatherland thought he
Though unable to drive the ring-stemmèd vessel
O’er the ways of the waters; the wave-deeps were tossing,
Fought with the wind; winter in ice-bonds
Closed up the currents, till there came to the dwelling
A year in its course, as yet it revolveth,
If season propitious one alway regardeth,
World-cheering weathers. Then winter was gone,
Earth’s bosom was lovely; the exile would get him,
He devises schemes of vengeance.
The guest from the palace; on grewsomest vengeance
He brooded more eager than on oversea journeys,
Whe’r onset-of-anger he were able to ’complish,
The bairns of the Jutemen therein to remember.
Nowise refused he the duties of liegeman
When Hun of the Frisians the battle-sword Láfing,
Fairest of falchions, friendly did give him:

Its edges were famous in folk-talk of Jutland.
And savage sword-fury seized in its clutches

Bold-mooded Finn where he bode in his palace,
 Guthlaf and Oslaf revenge Hnaef's slaughter.
 When the grewsome grapple Guthlaf and Oslaf
 Had mournfully mentioned, the mere-journey over,
 For sorrows half-blamed him; the flickering spirit
 Could not bide in his bosom. Then the building was covered
 With corpses of foemen, and Finn too was slaughtered,
 The king with his comrades, and the queen made a prisoner.
 The jewels of Finn, and his queen are carried away by the Danes.
 The troops of the Scyldings bore to their vessels
 All that the land-king had in his palace,
 Such trinkets and treasures they took as, on searching,
 At Finn's they could find. They ferried to Daneland
 The excellent woman on oversea journey,
 The lay is concluded, and the main story is resumed.
 Led her to their land-folk." The lay was concluded,
 The gleeman's recital. Shouts again rose then,
 Bench-glee resounded, bearers then offered
 Skinkers carry round the beaker.
 Wine from wonder-vats. Wealhtheo advanced then
 Going 'neath gold-crown, where the good ones were seated
 Queen Wealhtheow greets Hrothgar, as he sits beside Hrothulf, his nephew.
 Uncle and nephew; their peace was yet mutual,
 True each to the other. And Unferth the spokesman
 Sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings:

Each trusted his spirit that his mood was courageous,
 Though at fight he had failed in faith to his kinsmen.
 Said the queen of the Scyldings: "My lord and protector,
 Treasure-bestower, take thou this beaker;
 Joyance attend thee, gold-friend of heroes,
 Be generous to the Geats.
 And greet thou the Geatmen with gracious responses!
 So ought one to do. Be kind to the Geatmen,
 In gifts not niggardly; anear and afar now
 Peace thou enjoyest. Report hath informed me
 Thou'lt have for a bairn the battle-brave hero.
 Now is Heorot cleansèd, ring-palace gleaming;
 Have as much joy as possible in thy hall, once more purified.
 Give while thou mayest many rewards,
 And bequeath to thy kinsmen kingdom and people,
 On wending thy way to the Wielder's splendor.

I know good Hrothulf, that the noble young troopers
 I know that Hrothulf will prove faithful if he survive thee.
 He'll care for and honor, lord of the Scyldings,
 If earth-joys thou endest earlier than he doth;
 I reckon that recompense he'll render with kindness
 Our offspring and issue, if that all he remember,
 What favors of yore, when he yet was an infant,
 We awarded to him for his worship and pleasure."
 Then she turned by the bench where her sons were carousing,
 Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the heroes' offspring,
 Beowulf is sitting by the two royal sons.
 The war-youth together; there the good one was sitting
 'Twixt the brothers twain, Beowulf Geatman.

XIX. BEOWULF RECEIVES FURTHER HONOR.

More gifts are offered to Beowulf

A beaker was borne him, and bidding to quaff it
 Graciously given, and gold that was twisted
 Pleasantly proffered, a pair of arm-jewels,
 Rings and corslet, of collars the greatest
 I've heard of 'neath heaven. Of heroes not any
 More splendid from jewels have I heard 'neath the welkin,
 A famous necklace is referred to, in comparison with the gems presented
 to Beowulf.
 Since Hama off bore the Brosingmen's necklace,
 The bracteates and jewels, from the bright-shining city,
 Eormenric's cunning craftiness fled from,
 Chose gain everlasting. Geatish Higelac,
 Grandson of Swerting, last had this jewel
 When tramping 'neath banner the treasure he guarded,
 The field-spoil defended; Fate offcarried him
 When for deeds of daring he endured tribulation,
 Hate from the Frisians; the ornaments bare he
 O'er the cup of the currents, costly gem-treasures,
 Mighty folk-leader, he fell 'neath his target;
 The corpse of the king then came into charge of
 The race of the Frankmen, the mail-shirt and collar:

Warmen less noble plundered the fallen,
When the fight was finished; the folk of the Geatmen
The field of the dead held in possession.
The choicest of mead-halls with cheering resounded.
Wealhtheo discoursed, the war-troop addressed she:

Queen Wealhtheow magnifies Beowulf's achievements.

"This collar enjoy thou, Beowulf worthy,
Young man, in safety, and use thou this armor,
Gems of the people, and prosper thou fully,
Show thyself sturdy and be to these liegemen
Mild with instruction! I'll mind thy requital.
Thou hast brought it to pass that far and near
Forever and ever earthmen shall honor thee,
Even so widely as ocean surroundeth
The blustering bluffs. Be, while thou livest,
A wealth-blessèd atheling. I wish thee most truly
May gifts never fail thee.
Jewels and treasure. Be kind to my son, thou
Living in joyance! Here each of the nobles
Is true unto other, gentle in spirit,
Loyal to leader. The liegemen are peaceful,
The war-troops ready: well-drunken heroes,
Do as I bid ye." Then she went to the settle.
There was choicest of banquets, wine drank the heroes:

They little know of the sorrow in store for them.
Weird they knew not, destiny cruel,
As to many an earlman early it happened,
When evening had come and Hrothgar had parted
Off to his manor, the mighty to slumber.
Warriors unnumbered warded the building
As erst they did often: the ale-settle bared they,
'Twas covered all over with beds and pillows.
A doomed thane is there with them.
Doomed unto death, down to his slumber
Bowed then a beer-thane. Their battle-shields placed they,
Bright-shining targets, up by their heads then;
O'er the atheling on ale-bench 'twas easy to see there
Battle-high helmet, burnie of ring-mail,
They were always ready for battle.
And mighty war-spear. 'Twas the wont of that people

To constantly keep them equipped for the battle,
At home or marching—in either condition—
At seasons just such as necessity ordered
As best for their ruler; that people was worthy.

XX. THE MOTHER OF GRENDEL.

They sank then to slumber. With sorrow one paid for
His evening repose, as often betid them
While Grendel was holding the gold-bedecked palace,
Ill-deeds performing, till his end overtook him,
Death for his sins. 'Twas seen very clearly,
Grendel's mother is known to be thirsting for revenge.
Known unto earth-folk, that still an avenger
Outlived the loathed one, long since the sorrow
Caused by the struggle; the mother of Grendel,
Devil-shaped woman, her woe ever minded,
Who was held to inhabit the horrible waters,
[Grendel's progenitor, Cain, is again referred to.]
The cold-flowing currents, after Cain had become a
Slayer-with-edges to his one only brother,
The son of his sire; he set out then banished,
Marked as a murderer, man-joys avoiding,
Lived in the desert. Thence demons unnumbered
The poet again magnifies Beowulf's valor.
Fate-sent awoke; one of them Grendel,
Sword-cursèd, hateful, who at Heorot met with
A man that was watching, waiting the struggle,
Where a horrid one held him with hand-grapple sturdy;
Nathless he minded the might of his body,
The glorious gift God had allowed him,
And folk-ruling Father's favor relied on,
His help and His comfort: so he conquered the foeman,
The hell-spirit humbled: he unhappy departed then,
Reaved of his joyance, journeying to death-haunts,
Foeman of man. His mother moreover
Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son.
Eager and gloomy was anxious to go on
Her mournful mission, mindful of vengeance
For the death of her son. She came then to Heorot

Where the Armor-Dane earlmen all through the building
Were lying in slumber. Soon there became then
Return to the nobles, when the mother of Grendel
Entered the folk-hall; the fear was less grievous
By even so much as the vigor of maidens,
War-strength of women, by warrior is reckoned,
When well-carved weapon, worked with the hammer,
Blade very bloody, brave with its edges,
Strikes down the boar-sign that stands on the helmet.
Then the hard-edgèd weapon was heaved in the building,
The brand o'er the benches, broad-lindens many
Hand-fast were lifted; for helmet he recked not,
For armor-net broad, whom terror laid hold of.
She went then hastily, outward would get her
Her life for to save, when some one did spy her;
She seizes a favorite liegemen of Hrothgar's.
Soon she had grappled one of the athelings
Fast and firmly, when fenward she hied her;
That one to Hrothgar was liefest of heroes
In rank of retainer where waters encircle,
A mighty shield-warrior, whom she murdered at slumber,
A broadly-famed battle-knight. Beowulf was absent,
Beowulf was asleep in another part of the palace.
But another apartment was erstwhile devoted
To the glory-decked Geatman when gold was distributed.
There was hubbub in Heorot. The hand that was famous
She grasped in its gore; grief was renewed then
In homes and houses: 'twas no happy arrangement
In both of the quarters to barter and purchase
With lives of their friends. Then the well-agèd ruler,
The gray-headed war-thane, was woful in spirit,
When his long-trusted liegeman lifeless he knew of,
His dearest one gone. Quick from a room was
Beowulf brought, brave and triumphant.
As day was dawning in the dusk of the morning,
He comes at Hrothgar's summons.
Went then that earlman, champion noble,
Came with comrades, where the clever one bided
Whether God all gracious would grant him a respite
After the woe he had suffered. The war-worthy hero
With a troop of retainers trod then the pavement
(The hall-building groaned), till he greeted the wise one,

Beowulf inquires how Hrothgar had enjoyed his night's rest.
The earl of the Ingwins; asked if the night had
Fully refreshed him, as fain he would have it.

XXI. HROTHGAR'S ACCOUNT OF THE MONSTERS.

Hrothgar laments the death of Aeschere, his shoulder-companion

Hrothgar rejoined, helm of the Scyldings:

“Ask not of joyance! Grief is renewed to
The folk of the Danemen. Dead is Aeschere,
Yrmenlaf's brother, older than he,
My true-hearted counsellor, trusty adviser,
Shoulder-companion, when fighting in battle
Our heads we protected, when troopers were clashing,
He was my ideal hero.
And heroes were dashing; such an earl should be ever,
An erst-worthy atheling, as Aeschere proved him.
The flickering death-spirit became in Heorot
His hand-to-hand murderer; I can not tell whither
The cruel one turned in the carcass exulting,
This horrible creature came to avenge Grendel's death.
By cramming discovered. The quarrel she wreaked then,
That last night igone Grendel thou killedst
In grewsomest manner, with grim-holding clutches,
Since too long he had lessened my liege-troop and wasted
My folk-men so foully. He fell in the battle
With forfeit of life, and another has followed,
A mighty crime-worker, her kinsman avenging,
And henceforth hath 'stablished her hatred unyielding,
As it well may appear to many a liegeman,
Who mourneth in spirit the treasure-bestower,
Her heavy heart-sorrow; the hand is now lifeless
Which availed you in every wish that you cherished.
I have heard my vassals speak of these two uncanny monsters who lived in
the moors.
Land-people heard I, liegemen, this saying,

Dwellers in halls, they had seen very often
A pair of such mighty march-striding creatures,
Far-dwelling spirits, holding the moorlands:

One of them wore, as well they might notice,
The image of woman, the other one wretched
In guise of a man wandered in exile,
Except he was huger than any of earthmen;
Earth-dwelling people entitled him Grendel
In days of yore: they know not their father,
Whe'r ill-going spirits any were borne him
The inhabit the most desolate and horrible places.
Ever before. They guard the wolf-coverts,
Lands inaccessible, wind-beaten nesses,
Fearfullest fen-deeps, where a flood from the mountains
'Neath mists of the nesses netherward rattles,
The stream under earth: not far is it henceward
Measured by mile-lengths that the mere-water standeth,
Which forests hang over, with frost-whiting covered,
A firm-rooted forest, the floods overshadow.
There ever at night one an ill-meaning portent
A fire-flood may see; 'mong children of men
None liveth so wise that wot of the bottom;
Though harassed by hounds the heath-stepper seek for,
Even the hounded deer will not seek refuge in these uncanny regions.
Fly to the forest, firm-antlered he-deer,
Spurred from afar, his spirit he yieldeth,
His life on the shore, ere in he will venture
To cover his head. Uncanny the place is:

Thence upward ascendeth the surging of waters,
Wan to the welkin, when the wind is stirring
The weathers unpleasing, till the air groweth gloomy,
To thee only can I look for assistance.
And the heavens lower. Now is help to be gotten
From thee and thee only! The abode thou know'st not,
The dangerous place where thou'rt able to meet with
The sin-laden hero: seek if thou darest!
For the feud I will fully fee thee with money,
With old-time treasure, as erstwhile I did thee,
With well-twisted jewels, if away thou shalt get thee."

XXII. BEOWULF SEEKS GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's son:

Beowulf exhorts the old king to arouse himself for action.

“Grieve not, O wise one! for each it is better,
His friend to avenge than with vehemence wail him;
Each of us must the end-day abide of
His earthly existence; who is able accomplish
Glory ere death! To battle-thane noble
Lifeless lying, 'tis at last most fitting.
Arise, O king, quick let us hasten
To look at the footprint of the kinsman of Grendel!
I promise thee this now: to his place he'll escape not,
To embrace of the earth, nor to mountainous forest,
Nor to depths of the ocean, wherever he wanders.
Practice thou now patient endurance
Of each of thy sorrows, as I hope for thee soothly!”
Hrothgar rouses himself. His horse is brought.
Then up sprang the old one, the All-Wielder thanked he,
Ruler Almighty, that the man had outspoken.
Then for Hrothgar a war-horse was decked with a bridle,
Curly-maned courser. The clever folk-leader
They start on the track of the female monster.
Stately proceeded: stepped then an earl-troop
Of linden-wood bearers. Her footprints were seen then
Widely in wood-paths, her way o'er the bottoms,
Where she faraway fared o'er fen-country murky,
Bore away breathless the best of retainers
Who pondered with Hrothgar the welfare of country.
The son of the athelings then went o'er the stony,
Declivitous cliffs, the close-covered passes,
Narrow passages, paths unfrequented,
Nesses abrupt, nicker-haunts many;
One of a few of wise-mooded heroes,
He onward advanced to view the surroundings,
Till he found unawares woods of the mountain
O'er hoar-stones hanging, holt-wood unjoyful;
The water stood under, welling and gory.
'Twas irksome in spirit to all of the Danemen,

Friends of the Scyldings, to many a liegeman
The sight of Aeschere's head causes them great sorrow.
Sad to be suffered, a sorrow unlittle
To each of the earlmen, when to Aeschere's head they
Came on the cliff. The current was seething
With blood and with gore (the troopers gazed on it).
The horn anon sang the battle-song ready.
The troop were all seated; they saw 'long the water then
The water is filled with serpents and sea-dragons.
Many a serpent, mere-dragons wondrous
Trying the waters, nickers a-lying
On the cliffs of the nesses, which at noonday full often
Go on the sea-deeps their sorrowful journey,
Wild-beasts and wormkind; away then they hastened
One of them is killed by Beowulf.
Hot-mooded, hateful, they heard the great clamor,
The war-trumpet winding. One did the Geat-prince
Sunder from earth-joys, with arrow from bowstring,
From his sea-struggle tore him, that the trusty war-missile
The dead beast is a poor swimmer
Pierced to his vitals; he proved in the currents
Less doughty at swimming whom death had offcarried.
Soon in the waters the wonderful swimmer
Was straitened most sorely with sword-pointed boar-spears,
Pressed in the battle and pulled to the cliff-edge;
The liegemen then looked on the loath-fashioned stranger.
Beowulf prepares for a struggle with the monster.
Beowulf donned then his battle-equipments,
Cared little for life; inlaid and most ample,
The hand-woven corslet which could cover his body,
Must the wave-deeps explore, that war might be powerless
To harm the great hero, and the hating one's grasp might
Not peril his safety; his head was protected
By the light-flashing helmet that should mix with the bottoms,
Trying the eddies, treasure-emblazoned,
Encircled with jewels, as in seasons long past
The weapon-smith worked it, wondrously made it,
With swine-bodies fashioned it, that thenceforward no longer
Brand might bite it, and battle-sword hurt it.
And that was not least of helpers in prowess
He has Unferth's sword in his hand.
That Hrothgar's spokesman had lent him when straitened;

And the hilted hand-sword was Hrunting entitled,
 Old and most excellent 'mong all of the treasures;
 Its blade was of iron, blotted with poison,
 Hardened with gore; it failed not in battle
 Any hero under heaven in hand who it brandished,
 Who ventured to take the terrible journeys,
 The battle-field sought; not the earliest occasion
 That deeds of daring 'twas destined to 'complish.
 Unferth has little use for swords.
 Ecglaf's kinsman minded not soothly,
 Exulting in strength, what erst he had spoken
 Drunken with wine, when the weapon he lent to
 A sword-hero bolder; himself did not venture
 'Neath the strife of the currents his life to endanger,
 To fame-deeds perform; there he forfeited glory,
 Repute for his strength. Not so with the other
 When he clad in his corslet had equipped him for battle.

XXIII. BEOWULF'S FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S MOTHER.

Beowulf makes a parting speech to Hrothgar

Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's son:

"Recall now, oh, famous kinsman of Healfdene,
 Prince very prudent, now to part I am ready,
 Gold-friend of earlmen, what erst we agreed on,
 If I fail, act as a kind liegelord to my thanes,
 Should I lay down my life in lending thee assistance,
 When my earth-joys were over, thou wouldst evermore serve me
 In stead of a father; my faithful thanemen,
 My trusty retainers, protect thou and care for,
 Fall I in battle: and, Hrothgar beloved,
 and send Higelac the jewels thou hast given me
 Send unto Higelac the high-valued jewels
 Thou to me hast allotted. The lord of the Geatmen
 May perceive from the gold, the Hrethling may see it
 I should like my king to know how generous a lord I found thee to be.

When he looks on the jewels, that a gem-giver found I
 Good over-measure, enjoyed him while able.
 And the ancient heirloom Unferth permit thou,
 The famed one to have, the heavy-sword splendid
 The hard-edged weapon; with Hrunting to aid me,
 I shall gain me glory, or grim-death shall take me.”
 The atheling of Geatmen uttered these words and
 Heroic did hasten, not any rejoinder
 Was willing to wait for; the wave-current swallowed
 He is a whole day reaching the bottom of the sea.
 The doughty-in-battle. Then a day’s-length elapsed ere
 He was able to see the sea at its bottom.
 Early she found then who fifty of winters
 The course of the currents kept in her fury,
 Grisly and greedy, that the grim one’s dominion
 Grendel’s mother knows that some one has reached her domains.
 Some one of men from above was exploring.
 Forth did she grab them, grappled the warrior
 With horrible clutches; yet no sooner she injured
 His body unscathed: the burnie out-guarded,
 That she proved but powerless to pierce through the armor,
 The limb-mail locked, with loath-grabbing fingers.
 The sea-wolf bare then, when bottomward came she,
 She grabs him, and bears him to her den.
 The ring-prince homeward, that he after was powerless
 (He had daring to do it) to deal with his weapons,
 But many a mere-beast tormented him swimming,
 Sea-monsters bite and strike him.
 Flood-beasts no few with fierce-biting tusks did
 Break through his burnie, the brave one pursued they.
 The earl then discovered he was down in some cavern
 Where no water whatever anyway harmed him,
 And the clutch of the current could come not anear him,
 Since the roofed-hall prevented; brightness a-gleaming
 Fire-light he saw, flashing resplendent.
 The good one saw then the sea-bottom’s monster,
 The mighty mere-woman; he made a great onset
 With weapon-of-battle, his hand not desisted
 From striking, that war-blade struck on her head then
 A battle-song greedy. The stranger perceived then
 The sword would not bite, her life would not injure,
 But the falchion failed the folk-prince when straitened:

Erst had it often onsets encountered,
Oft cloven the helmet, the fated one's armor:

'Twas the first time that ever the excellent jewel
Had failed of its fame. Firm-mooded after,
Not heedless of valor, but mindful of glory,
Was Higelac's kinsman; the hero-chief angry
Cast then his carved-sword covered with jewels
That it lay on the earth, hard and steel-pointed;
The hero throws down all weapons, and again trusts to his hand-grip.
He hoped in his strength, his hand-grapple sturdy.
So any must act whenever he thinketh
To gain him in battle glory unending,
And is reckless of living. The lord of the War-Geats
(He shrank not from battle) seized by the shoulder
The mother of Grendel; then mighty in struggle
Swung he his enemy, since his anger was kindled,
That she fell to the floor. With furious grapple
She gave him requital early thereafter,
And stretched out to grab him; the strongest of warriors
Faint-mooded stumbled, till he fell in his traces,
The monster sits on him with drawn sword.
Foot-going champion. Then she sat on the hall-guest
And wielded her war-knife wide-bladed, flashing,
For her son would take vengeance, her one only bairn.
His breast-armor woven bode on his shoulder;
It guarded his life, the entrance defended
'Gainst sword-point and edges. Ecgtheow's son there
Had fatally journeyed, champion of Geatmen,
In the arms of the ocean, had the armor not given,
Close-woven corslet, comfort and succor,
God arranged for his escape.
And had God most holy not awarded the victory,
All-knowing Lord; easily did heaven's
Ruler most righteous arrange it with justice;
Uprose he erect ready for battle.

XXIV. BEOWULF IS DOUBLE-CONQUEROR.

Beowulf grasps a giant-sword,
Then he saw mid the war-gems a weapon of victory,

An ancient giant-sword, of edges a-doughty,
Glory of warriors: of weapons 'twas choicest,
Only 'twas larger than any man else was
Able to bear to the battle-encounter,
The good and splendid work of the giants.
He grasped then the sword-hilt, knight of the Scyldings,
Bold and battle-grim, brandished his ring-sword,
Hopeless of living, hotly he smote her,
That the fiend-woman's neck firmly it grappled,
and fells the female monster.
Broke through her bone-joints, the bill fully pierced her
Fate-cursèd body, she fell to the ground then:

The hand-sword was bloody, the hero exulted.
The brand was brilliant, brightly it glimmered,
Just as from heaven gemlike shineth
The torch of the firmament. He glanced 'long the building,
And turned by the wall then, Higelac's vassal
Raging and wrathful raised his battle-sword
Strong by the handle. The edge was not useless
To the hero-in-battle, but he speedily wished to
Give Grendel requital for the many assaults he
Had worked on the West-Danes not once, but often,
When he slew in slumber the subjects of Hrothgar,
Swallowed down fifteen sleeping retainers
Of the folk of the Danemen, and fully as many
Carried away, a horrible prey.
He gave him requital, grim-raging champion,
Beowulf sees the body of Grendel, and cuts off his head.
When he saw on his rest-place weary of conflict
Grendel lying, of life-joys bereavèd,
As the battle at Heorot erstwhile had scathed him;
His body far bounded, a blow when he suffered,
Death having seized him, sword-smiting heavy,
And he cut off his head then. Early this noticed
The clever carles who as comrades of Hrothgar
Gazed on the sea-deeps, that the surging wave-currents
Were mightily mingled, the mere-flood was gory:

Of the good one the gray-haired together held converse,
The hoary of head, that they hoped not to see again
The atheling ever, that exulting in victory
He'd return there to visit the distinguished folk-ruler:

Then many concluded the mere-wolf had killed him.
The ninth hour came then. From the ness-edge departed
The bold-mooded Scyldings; the gold-friend of heroes
Homeward betook him. The strangers sat down then
Soul-sick, sorrowful, the sea-waves regarding:

They wished and yet weened not their well-loved friend-lord
The giant-sword melts.
To see any more. The sword-blade began then,
The blood having touched it, contracting and shriveling
With battle-icicles; 'twas a wonderful marvel
That it melted entirely, likest to ice when
The Father unbindeth the bond of the frost and
Unwindeth the wave-bands, He who wieldeth dominion
Of times and of tides: a truth-firm Creator.
Nor took he of jewels more in the dwelling,
Lord of the Weders, though they lay all around him,
Than the head and the handle handsome with jewels;
The brand early melted, burnt was the weapon:

So hot was the blood, the strange-spirit poisonous
The hero swims back to the realms of day.
That in it did perish. He early swam off then
Who had bided in combat the carnage of haters,
Went up through the ocean; the eddies were cleansèd,
The spacious expanses, when the spirit from farland
His life put aside and this short-lived existence.
The seamen's defender came swimming to land then
Doughty of spirit, rejoiced in his sea-gift,
The bulky burden which he bore in his keeping.
The excellent vassals advanced then to meet him,
To God they were grateful, were glad in their chieftain,
That to see him safe and sound was granted them.
From the high-minded hero, then, helmet and burnie
Were speedily loosened: the ocean was putrid,
The water 'neath welkin weltered with gore.
Forth did they fare, then, their footsteps retracing,
Merry and mirthful, measured the earth-way,
The highway familiar: men very daring
Bare then the head from the sea-cliff, burdening
Each of the earlmen, excellent-valiant.
It takes four men to carry Grendel's head on a spear.

Four of them had to carry with labor
The head of Grendel to the high towering gold-hall
Upstuck on the spear, till fourteen most-valiant
And battle-brave Geatmen came there going
Straight to the palace: the prince of the people
Measured the mead-ways, their mood-brave companion.
The atheling of earlmen entered the building,
Deed-valiant man, adorned with distinction,
Doughty shield-warrior, to address King Hrothgar:

Then hung by the hair, the head of Grendel
Was borne to the building, where beer-thaners were drinking,
Loth before earlmen and eke 'fore the lady:

The warriors beheld then a wonderful sight.

XXV. BEOWULF BRINGS HIS TROPHIES.—HROTHGAR'S GRATITUDE.

Beowulf relates his last exploit

Beowulf spake, offspring of Ecgtheow:

“Lo! we blithely have brought thee, bairn of Healfdene,
Prince of the Scyldings, these presents from ocean
Which thine eye looketh on, for an emblem of glory.
I came off alive from this, narrowly 'scaping:

In war 'neath the water the work with great pains I
Performed, and the fight had been finished quite nearly,
Had God not defended me. I failed in the battle
Aught to accomplish, aided by Hrunting,
Though that weapon was worthy, but the Wielder of earth-folk
God was fighting with me.
Gave me willingly to see on the wall a
Heavy old hand-sword hanging in splendor
(He guided most often the lorn and the friendless),
That I swung as a weapon. The wards of the house then
I killed in the conflict (when occasion was given me).
Then the battle-sword burned, the brand that was lifted,

As the blood-current sprang, hottest of war-sweats;
 Seizing the hilt, from my foes I offbore it;
 I avenged as I ought to their acts of malignity,
 The murder of Danemen. I then make thee this promise,
 Heorot is freed from monsters.
 Thou'lt be able in Heorot careless to slumber
 With thy throng of heroes and the thanes of thy people
 Every and each, of greater and lesser,
 And thou needest not fear for them from the selfsame direction
 As thou formerly fearedst, oh, folk-lord of Scyldings,
 End-day for earlmen." To the age-hoary man then,
 The famous sword is presented to Hrothgar.
 The gray-haired chieftain, the gold-fashioned sword-hilt,
 Old-work of giants, was thereupon given;
 Since the fall of the fiends, it fell to the keeping
 Of the wielder of Danemen, the wonder-smith's labor,
 And the bad-mooded being abandoned this world then,
 Opponent of God, victim of murder,
 And also his mother; it went to the keeping
 Of the best of the world-kings, where waters encircle,
 Who the scot divided in Scylding dominion.
 Hrothgar looks closely at the old sword.
 Hrothgar discoursed, the hilt he regarded,
 The ancient heirloom where an old-time contention's
 Beginning was graven: the gurgling currents,
 The flood slew thereafter the race of the giants,
 They had proved themselves daring: that people was loth to
 It had belonged to a race hateful to God.
 The Lord everlasting, through lash of the billows
 The Father gave them final requital.
 So in letters of rune on the clasp of the handle
 Gleaming and golden, 'twas graven exactly,
 Set forth and said, whom that sword had been made for,
 Finest of irons, who first it was wrought for,
 Wreathed at its handle and gleaming with serpents.
 The wise one then said (silent they all were)
 Hrothgar praises Beowulf.
 Son of old Healfdene: "He may say unrefuted
 Who performs 'mid the folk-men fairness and truth
 (The hoary old ruler remembers the past),
 That better by birth is this bairn of the nobles!
 Thy fame is extended through far-away countries,

Good friend Beowulf, o'er all of the races,
Thou holdest all firmly, hero-like strength with
Prudence of spirit. I'll prove myself grateful
As before we agreed on; thou granted for long shalt
Become a great comfort to kinsmen and comrades,
Heremod's career is again contrasted with Beowulf's.
A help unto heroes. Heremod became not
Such to the Scyldings, successors of Ecgwela;
He grew not to please them, but grievous destruction,
And dire death-woes to Danemen attracted;
He slew in anger his table-companions,
Trustworthy counsellors, till he turned off lonely
From world-joys away, wide-famous ruler:

Though high-ruling heaven in hero-strength raised him,
In might exalted him, o'er men of all nations
Made him supreme, yet a murderous spirit
Grew in his bosom: he gave then no ring-gems
A wretched failure of a king, to give no jewels to his retainers.
To the Danes after custom; endured he unjoyful
Standing the straits from strife that was raging,
Longsome folk-sorrow. Learn then from this,
Lay hold of virtue! Though laden with winters,
I have sung thee these measures. 'Tis a marvel to tell it,
How all-ruling God from greatness of spirit
Giveth wisdom to children of men,
Manor and earlship: all things He ruleth.
He often permitteth the mood-thought of man of
The illustrious lineage to lean to possessions,
Allows him earthly delights at his manor,
A high-burg of heroes to hold in his keeping,
Maketh portions of earth-folk hear him,
And a wide-reaching kingdom so that, wisdom failing him,
He himself is unable to reckon its boundaries;
He liveth in luxury, little debars him,
Nor sickness nor age, no treachery-sorrow
Becloudeth his spirit, conflict nowhere,
No sword-hate, appeareth, but all of the world doth
Wend as he wisheth; the worse he knoweth not,
Till arrant arrogance inward pervading,
Waxeth and springeth, when the warder is sleeping,
The guard of the soul: with sorrows encompassed,

Too sound is his slumber, the slayer is near him,
Who with bow and arrow aimeth in malice.

XXVI. HROTHGAR MORALIZES.—REST AFTER LABOR.

A wounded spirit

“Then bruised in his bosom he with bitter-toothed missile
Is hurt 'neath his helmet: from harmful pollution
He is powerless to shield him by the wonderful mandates
Of the loath-cursèd spirit; what too long he hath holden
Him seemeth too small, savage he hoardeth,
Nor boastfully giveth gold-plated rings,
The fate of the future flouts and forgetteth
Since God had erst given him greatness no little,
Wielder of Glory. His end-day anear,
It afterward happens that the bodily-dwelling
Fleetingly fadeth, falls into ruins;
Another lays hold who doleth the ornaments,
The nobleman's jewels, nothing lamenting,
Heedeth no terror. Oh, Beowulf dear,
Best of the heroes, from bale-strife defend thee,
And choose thee the better, counsels eternal;
Be not over proud: life is fleeting, and its strength soon wasteth away.
Beware of arrogance, world-famous champion!
But a little-while lasts thy life-vigor's fulness;
'Twill after hap early, that illness or sword-edge
Shall part thee from strength, or the grasp of the fire,
Or the wave of the current, or clutch of the edges,
Or flight of the war-spear, or age with its horrors,
Or thine eyes' bright flashing shall fade into darkness:

'Twill happen full early, excellent hero,
That death shall subdue thee. So the Danes a half-century
I held under heaven, helped them in struggles
'Gainst many a race in middle-earth's regions,
With ash-wood and edges, that enemies none
On earth molested me. Lo! offsetting change, now,

Came to my manor, grief after joyance,
When Grendel became my constant visitor,
Inveterate hater: I from that malice
Continually travailed with trouble no little.
Thanks be to God that I gained in my lifetime,
To the Lord everlasting, to look on the gory
Head with mine eyes, after long-lasting sorrow!
Go to the bench now, battle-adornèd
Joy in the feasting: of jewels in common
We'll meet with many when morning appeareth.”
The Geatman was gladsome, ganged he immediately
To go to the bench, as the clever one bade him.
Then again as before were the famous-for-prowess,
Hall-inhabiters, handsomely banqueted,
Feasted anew. The night-veil fell then
Dark o'er the warriors. The courtiers rose then;
The gray-haired was anxious to go to his slumbers,
The hoary old Scylding. Hankered the Geatman,
Beowulf is fagged, and seeks rest.
The champion doughty, greatly, to rest him:

An earlman early outward did lead him,
Fagged from his faring, from far-country springing,
Who for etiquette's sake all of a liegeman's
Needs regarded, such as seamen at that time
Were bounden to feel. The big-hearted rested;
The building uptowered, spacious and gilded,
The guest within slumbered, till the sable-clad raven
Blithely foreboded the beacon of heaven.
Then the bright-shining sun o'er the bottoms came going;
The warriors hastened, the heads of the peoples
Were ready to go again to their peoples,
The Geats prepare to leave Dane-land.
The high-mooded farer would faraway thenceward
Look for his vessel. The valiant one bade then,
Unferth asks Beowulf to accept his sword as a gift. Beowulf thanks him.
Offspring of Ecglaf, off to bear Hrunting,
To take his weapon, his well-beloved iron;
He him thanked for the gift, saying good he accounted
The war-friend and mighty, nor chid he with words then
The blade of the brand: 'twas a brave-mooded hero.
When the warriors were ready, arrayed in their trappings,

The atheling dear to the Danemen advanced then
On to the dais, where the other was sitting,
Grim-mooded hero, greeted King Hrothgar.

XXVII. SORROW AT PARTING.

Beowulf's farewell

Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's offspring:

“We men of the water wish to declare now
Fared from far-lands, we're firmly determined
To seek King Higelac. Here have we fitly
Been welcomed and feasted, as heart would desire it;
Good was the greeting. If greater affection
I am anywise able ever on earth to
Gain at thy hands, ruler of heroes,
Than yet I have done, I shall quickly be ready
I shall be ever ready to aid thee.
For combat and conflict. O'er the course of the waters
Learn I that neighbors alarm thee with terror,
As haters did whilom, I hither will bring thee
For help unto heroes henchmen by thousands.
My liegelord will encourage me in aiding thee.
I know as to Higelac, the lord of the Geatmen,
Though young in years, he yet will permit me,
By words and by works, ward of the people,
Fully to furnish thee forces and bear thee
My lance to relieve thee, if liegemen shall fail thee,
And help of my hand-strength; if Hrethric be treating,
Bairn of the king, at the court of the Geatmen,
He thereat may find him friends in abundance:

Faraway countries he were better to seek for
Who trusts in himself.” Hrothgar discoursed then,
Making rejoinder: “These words thou hast uttered
All-knowing God hath given thy spirit!
O Beowulf, thou art wise beyond thy years.
Ne'er heard I an earlman thus early in life
More clever in speaking: thou'rt cautious of spirit,

Mighty of muscle, in mouth-answers prudent.
I count on the hope that, happen it ever
That missile shall rob thee of Hrethel's descendant,
Edge-horrid battle, and illness or weapon
Deprive thee of prince, of people's protector,
Should Higelac die, the Geats could find no better successor than thou
wouldst make.

And life thou yet holdest, the Sea-Geats will never
Find a more fitting folk-lord to choose them,
Gem-ward of heroes, than thou mightest prove thee,
If the kingdom of kinsmen thou carest to govern.
Thy mood-spirit likes me the longer the better,
Beowulf dear: thou hast brought it to pass that
To both these peoples peace shall be common,
Thou hast healed the ancient breach between our races.
To Geat-folk and Danemen, the strife be suspended,
The secret assailings they suffered in yore-days;
And also that jewels be shared while I govern
The wide-stretching kingdom, and that many shall visit
Others o'er the ocean with excellent gift-gems:

The ring-adorned bark shall bring o'er the currents
Presents and love-gifts. This people I know
Tow'rd foeman and friend firmly established,
After ancient etiquette everywise blameless."
Then the warden of earlmen gave him still farther,
Kinsman of Healfdene, a dozen of jewels,
Bade him safely seek with the presents
His well-beloved people, early returning.
Hrothgar kisses Beowulf, and weeps.
Then the noble-born king kissed the distinguished,
Dear-lovèd liegeman, the Dane-prince saluted him,
And claspèd his neck; tears from him fell,
From the gray-headed man: he two things expected,
Agèd and reverend, but rather the second,
That bold in council they'd meet thereafter.
The man was so dear that he failed to suppress the
Emotions that moved him, but in mood-fetters fastened
The old king is deeply grieved to part with his benefactor.
The long-famous hero longeth in secret
Deep in his spirit for the dear-beloved man
Though not a blood-kinsman. Beowulf thenceward,

Gold-splendid warrior, walked o'er the meadows
Exulting in treasure: the sea-going vessel
Riding at anchor awaited its owner.
As they pressed on their way then, the present of Hrothgar
Giving liberally is the true proof of kingship.
Was frequently referred to: a folk-king indeed that
Everyway blameless, till age did debar him
The joys of his might, which hath many oft injured.

XXVIII. THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY.—THE TWO QUEENS.

Then the band of very valiant retainers
Came to the current; they were clad all in armor,
The coast-guard again.
In link-woven burnies. The land-warder noticed
The return of the earlmen, as he erstwhile had seen them;
No wise with insult he greeted the strangers
From the naze of the cliff, but rode on to meet them;
Said the bright-armored visitors vesselward traveled
Welcome to Weders. The wide-bosomed craft then
Lay on the sand, laden with armor,
With horses and jewels, the ring-stemmèd sailer:

The mast uptowered o'er the treasure of Hrothgar.
Beowulf gives the guard a handsome sword.
To the boat-ward a gold-bound brand he presented,
That he was afterwards honored on the ale-bench more highly
As the heirloom's owner. Set he out on his vessel,
To drive on the deep, Dane-country left he.
Along by the mast then a sea-garment fluttered,
A rope-fastened sail. The sea-boat resounded,
The wind o'er the waters the wave-floater nowise
Kept from its journey; the sea-goer traveled,
The foamy-necked floated forth o'er the currents,
The well-fashioned vessel o'er the ways of the ocean,
The Geats see their own land again.
Till they came within sight of the cliffs of the Geatmen,
The well-known headlands. The wave-goer hastened
Driven by breezes, stood on the shore.

The port-warden is anxiously looking for them.
Prompt at the ocean, the port-ward was ready,
Who long in the past outlooked in the distance,
At water's-edge waiting well-lovèd heroes;
He bound to the bank then the broad-bosomed vessel
Fast in its fetters, lest the force of the waters
Should be able to injure the ocean-wood winsome.
Bade he up then take the treasure of princes,
Plate-gold and fretwork; not far was it thence
To go off in search of the giver of jewels:

Hrethel's son Higelac at home there remaineth,
Himself with his comrades close to the sea-coast.
The building was splendid, the king heroic,
Great in his hall, Hygd very young was,
Hygd, the noble queen of Higelac, lavish of gifts.
Fine-mooded, clever, though few were the winters
That the daughter of Hæreth had dwelt in the borough;
But she nowise was cringing nor niggard of presents,
Of ornaments rare, to the race of the Geatmen.
Offa's consort, Thrytho, is contrasted with Hygd.
Thrytho nursed anger, excellent folk-queen,
Hot-burning hatred: no hero whatever
'Mong household companions, her husband excepted
She is a terror to all save her husband.
Dared to adventure to look at the woman
With eyes in the daytime; but he knew that death-chains
Hand-wreathed were wrought him: early thereafter,
When the hand-strife was over, edges were ready,
That fierce-raging sword-point had to force a decision,
Murder-bale show. Such no womanly custom
For a lady to practise, though lovely her person,
That a weaver-of-peace, on pretence of anger
A belovèd liegeman of life should deprive.
Soothly this hindered Heming's kinsman;
Other ale-drinking earlmen asserted
That fearful folk-sorrows fewer she wrought them,
Traacherous doings, since first she was given
Adorned with gold to the war-hero youthful,
For her origin honored, when Offa's great palace
O'er the fallow flood by her father's instructions
She sought on her journey, where she afterwards fully,

Famed for her virtue, her fate on the king's-seat
Enjoyed in her lifetime, love did she hold with
The ruler of heroes, the best, it is told me,
Of all of the earthmen that oceans encompass,
Of earl-kindreds endless; hence Offa was famous
Far and widely, by gifts and by battles,
Spear-valiant hero; the home of his fathers
He governed with wisdom, whence Eomær did issue
For help unto heroes, Heming's kinsman,
Grandson of Garmund, great in encounters.

XXIX. BEOWULF AND HIGELAC.

Then the brave one departed, his band along with him,
Beowulf and his party seek Higelac.
Seeking the sea-shore, the sea-marches treading,
The wide-stretching shores. The world-candle glimmered,
The sun from the southward; they proceeded then onward,
Early arriving where they heard that the troop-lord,
Ongentheow's slayer, excellent, youthful
Folk-prince and warrior was distributing jewels,
Close in his castle. The coming of Beowulf
Was announced in a message quickly to Higelac,
That the folk-troop's defender forth to the palace
The linden-companion alive was advancing,
Secure from the combat courtward a-going.
The building was early inward made ready
For the foot-going guests as the good one had ordered.
Beowulf sits by his liegelord.
He sat by the man then who had lived through the struggle,
Kinsman by kinsman, when the king of the people
Had in lordly language saluted the dear one,
Queen Hygd receives the heroes.
In words that were formal. The daughter of Haereth
Coursed through the building, carrying mead-cups:

She loved the retainers, tendered the beakers
To the high-minded Geatmen. Higelac 'gan then
Higelac is greatly interested in Beowulf's adventures.
Pleasantly plying his companion with questions
In the high-towering palace. A curious interest

Tormented his spirit, what meaning to see in
The Sea-Geats' adventures: "Beowulf worthy,
Give an account of thy adventures, Beowulf dear.
How throve your journeying, when thou thoughtest suddenly
Far o'er the salt-streams to seek an encounter,
A battle at Heorot? Hast bettered for Hrothgar,
The famous folk-leader, his far-published sorrows
Any at all? In agony-billows
My suspense has been great.

I mused upon torture, distrusted the journey
Of the belovèd liegeman; I long time did pray thee
By no means to seek out the murderous spirit,
To suffer the South-Danes themselves to decide on
Grappling with Grendel. To God I am thankful
To be suffered to see thee safe from thy journey."
Beowulf narrates his adventures.

Beowulf answered, bairn of old Ecgtheow:

"'Tis hidden by no means, Higelac chieftain,
From many of men, the meeting so famous,
What mournful moments of me and of Grendel
Were passed in the place where he pressing affliction
On the Victory-Scyldings scathefully brought,
Anguish forever; that all I avengèd,
So that any under heaven of the kinsmen of Grendel
Grendel's kindred have no cause to boast.
Needeth not boast of that cry-in-the-morning,
Who longest liveth of the loth-going kindred,
Encompassed by moorland. I came in my journey
To the royal ring-hall, Hrothgar to greet there:

Hrothgar received me very cordially.
Soon did the famous scion of Healfdene,
When he understood fully the spirit that led me,
Assign me a seat with the son of his bosom.
The troop was in joyance; mead-glee greater
'Neath arch of the ether not ever beheld I
The queen also showed up no little honor.
'Mid hall-building holders. The highly-famed queen,
Peace-tie of peoples, oft passed through the building,
Cheered the young troopers; she oft tendered a hero
A beautiful ring-band, ere she went to her sitting.

Hrothgar's lovely daughter.
Oft the daughter of Hrothgar in view of the courtiers
To the earls at the end the ale-vessel carried,
Whom Freaware I heard then hall-sitters title,
When nail-adorned jewels she gave to the heroes:

She is betrothed to Ingeld, in order to unite the Danes and Heathobards.
Gold-bedecked, youthful, to the glad son of Froda
Her faith has been plighted; the friend of the Scyldings,
The guard of the kingdom, hath given his sanction,
And counts it a vantage, for a part of the quarrels,
A portion of hatred, to pay with the woman.
Somewhere not rarely, when the ruler has fallen,
The life-taking lance relaxeth its fury
For a brief breathing-spell, though the bride be charming!

XXX. BEOWULF NARRATES HIS ADVENTURES TO HIGELAC.

“It well may discomfit the prince of the Heathobards
And each of the thanemen of earls that attend him,
When he goes to the building escorting the woman,
That a noble-born Daneman the knights should be feasting:

There gleam on his person the leavings of elders
Hard and ring-bright, Heathobards' treasure,
While they wielded their arms, till they misled to the battle
Their own dear lives and beloved companions.
He saith at the banquet who the collar beholdeth,
An ancient ash-warrior who earlmen's destruction
Clearly recalleth (cruel his spirit),
Sadly beginneth sounding the youthful
Thane-champion's spirit through the thoughts of his bosom,
War-grief to waken, and this word-answer speaketh:

Ingeld is stirred up to break the truce.
'Art thou able, my friend, to know when thou seest it
The brand which thy father bare to the conflict
In his latest adventure, 'neath visor of helmet,
The dearly-loved iron, where Danemen did slay him,

And brave-mooded Scyldings, on the fall of the heroes,
(When vengeance was sleeping) the slaughter-place wielded?
E'en now some man of the murderer's progeny
Exulting in ornaments enters the building,
Boasts of his blood-shedding, offbeareth the jewel
Which thou shouldst wholly hold in possession!
So he urgeth and mindeth on every occasion
With woe-bringing words, till waxeth the season
When the woman's thane for the works of his father,
The bill having bitten, blood-gory sleepeth,
Fated to perish; the other one thenceward
'Scapeth alive, the land knoweth thoroughly.
Then the oaths of the earlmen on each side are broken,
When rancors unresting are raging in Ingeld
And his wife-love waxeth less warm after sorrow.
So the Heathobards' favor not faithful I reckon,
Their part in the treaty not true to the Danemen,
Their friendship not fast. I further shall tell thee
Having made these preliminary statements, I will now tell thee of Grendel,
the monster.

More about Grendel, that thou fully mayst hear,
Ornament-giver, what afterward came from
The hand-rush of heroes. When heaven's bright jewel
O'er earthfields had glided, the stranger came raging,
The horrible night-fiend, us for to visit,
Where wholly unharmed the hall we were guarding.
To Hondscio happened a hopeless contention,
Death to the doomed one, dead he fell foremost,
Girded war-champion; to him Grendel became then,
To the vassal distinguished, a tooth-weaponed murderer,
The well-beloved henchman's body all swallowed.
Not the earlier off empty of hand did
The bloody-toothed murderer, mindful of evils,
Wish to escape from the gold-giver's palace,
But sturdy of strength he strove to outdo me,
Hand-ready grappled. A glove was suspended
Spacious and wondrous, in art-fetters fastened,
Which was fashioned entirely by touch of the craftman
From the dragon's skin by the devil's devices:

He down in its depths would do me unsadly
One among many, deed-doer raging,

Though sinless he saw me; not so could it happen
When I in my anger upright did stand.
'Tis too long to recount how requital I furnished
For every evil to the earlmen's destroyer;
I reflected honor upon my people.
'Twas there, my prince, that I proudly distinguished
Thy land with my labors. He left and retreated,
He lived his life a little while longer:

Yet his right-hand guarded his footstep in Heorot,
And sad-mooded thence to the sea-bottom fell he,
Mournful in mind. For the might-rush of battle
King Hrothgar lavished gifts upon me.
The friend of the Scyldings, with gold that was plated,
With ornaments many, much requited me,
When daylight had dawned, and down to the banquet
We had sat us together. There was chanting and joyance:

The age-stricken Scylding asked many questions
And of old-times related; oft light-ringing harp-strings,
Joy-telling wood, were touched by the brave one;
Now he uttered measures, mourning and truthful,
Then the large-hearted land-king a legend of wonder
Truthfully told us. Now troubled with years
The old king is sad over the loss of his youthful vigor.
The age-hoary warrior afterward began to
Mourn for the might that marked him in youth-days;
His breast within boiled, when burdened with winters
Much he remembered. From morning till night then
We joyed us therein as etiquette suffered,
Till the second night season came unto earth-folk.
Then early thereafter, the mother of Grendel
Was ready for vengeance, wretched she journeyed;
Her son had death ravished, the wrath of the Geatmen.
The horrible woman avengèd her offspring,
And with mighty mainstrength murdered a hero.
Aeschere falls a prey to her vengeance.
There the spirit of Aeschere, agèd adviser,
Was ready to vanish; nor when morn had lightened
Were they anywise suffered to consume him with fire,
Folk of the Danemen, the death-weakened hero,
Nor the belovèd liegeman to lay on the pyre;

She suffered not his body to be burned, but ate it.
She the corpse had offcarried in the clutch of the foeman
'Neath mountain-brook's flood. To Hrothgar 'twas saddest
Of pains that ever had preyed on the chieftain;
By the life of thee the land-prince then me
Besought very sadly, in sea-currents' eddies
To display my prowess, to peril my safety,
Might-deeds accomplish; much did he promise.
I sought the creature in her den,
I found then the famous flood-current's cruel,
Horrible depth-warder. A while unto us two
Hand was in common; the currents were seething
With gore that was clotted, and Grendel's fierce mother's
and hewed her head off.
Head I offhacked in the hall at the bottom
With huge-reaching sword-edge, hardly I wrested
My life from her clutches; not doomed was I then,
Jewels were freely bestowed upon me.
But the warden of earlmen afterward gave me
Jewels in quantity, kinsman of Healfdene.

XXI. GIFT-GIVING IS MUTUAL.

"So the belovèd land-prince lived in decorum;
I had missed no rewards, no meeds of my prowess,
But he gave me jewels, regarding my wishes,
Healfdene his bairn; I'll bring them to thee, then,
All my gifts I lay at thy feet.
Atheling of earlmen, offer them gladly.
And still unto thee is all my affection:

But few of my folk-kin find I surviving
But thee, dear Higelac!" Bade he in then to carry
The boar-image, banner, battle-high helmet,
Iron-gray armor, the excellent weapon,
This armor I have belonged of yore to Heregar.
In song-measures said: "This suit-for-the-battle
Hrothgar presented me, bade me expressly,
Wise-mooded atheling, thereafter to tell thee
The whole of its history, said King Heregar owned it,
Dane-prince for long: yet he wished not to give then

The mail to his son, though dearly he loved him,
 Hereward the hardy. Hold all in joyance!"
 I heard that there followed hard on the jewels
 Two braces of stallions of striking resemblance,
 Dappled and yellow; he granted him usance
 Of horses and treasures. So a kinsman should bear him,
 No web of treachery weave for another,
 Nor by cunning craftiness cause the destruction
 Higelac loves his nephew Beowulf.
 Of trusty companion. Most precious to Higelac,
 The bold one in battle, was the bairn of his sister,
 And each unto other mindful of favors.
 Beowulf gives Hygd the necklace that Wealhtheow had given him.
 I am told that to Hygd he proffered the necklace,
 Wonder-gem rare that Wealhtheow gave him,
 The troop-leader's daughter, a trio of horses
 Slender and saddle-bright; soon did the jewel
 Embellish her bosom, when the beer-feast was over.
 So Ecgtheow's bairn brave did prove him,
 War-famous man, by deeds that were valiant,
 He lived in honor, beloved companions
 Slew not carousing; his mood was not cruel,
 But by hand-strength hugest of heroes then living
 The brave one retained the bountiful gift that
 The Lord had allowed him. Long was he wretched,
 So that sons of the Geatmen accounted him worthless,
 And the lord of the liegemen loth was to do him
 Mickle of honor, when mead-cups were passing;
 They fully believed him idle and sluggish,
 He is requited for the slights suffered in earlier days.
 An indolent atheling: to the honor-blest man there
 Came requital for the cuts he had suffered.
 The folk-troop's defender bade fetch to the building
 The heirloom of Hrethel, embellished with gold,
 Higelac overwhelms the conqueror with gifts.
 So the brave one enjoined it; there was jewel no richer
 In the form of a weapon 'mong Geats of that era;
 In Beowulf's keeping he placed it and gave him
 Seven of thousands, manor and lordship.
 Common to both was land 'mong the people,
 Estate and inherited rights and possessions,
 To the second one specially spacious dominions,

To the one who was better. It afterward happened
In days that followed, befell the battle-thanes,
After Heardred's death, Beowulf becomes king.
After Higelac's death, and when Heardred was murdered
With weapons of warfare 'neath well-covered targets,
When valiant battlemen in victor-band sought him,
War-Scyfling heroes harassed the nephew
Of Hereric in battle. To Beowulf's keeping
Turned there in time extensive dominions:

He rules the Geats fifty years.
He fittingly ruled them a fifty of winters
(He a man-ruler wise was, manor-ward old) till
A certain one 'gan, on gloom-darkening nights, a
Dragon, to govern, who guarded a treasure,
A high-rising stone-cliff, on heath that was grayish:

A path 'neath it lay, unknown unto mortals.
Some one of earthmen entered the mountain,
The heathenish hoard laid hold of with ardor.

XXXII. THE HOARD AND THE DRAGON.

He sought of himself who sorely did harm him,
But, for need very pressing, the servant of one of
The sons of the heroes hate-blows evaded,
Seeking for shelter and the sin-driven warrior
Took refuge within there. He early looked in it,
when the onset surprised him,
He a gem-vessel saw there: many of suchlike
Ancient ornaments in the earth-cave were lying,
As in days of yore some one of men of
Illustrious lineage, as a legacy monstrous,
There had secreted them, careful and thoughtful,
Dear-valued jewels. Death had offsnatched them,
In the days of the past, and the one man moreover
Of the flower of the folk who fared there the longest,
Was fain to defer it, friend-mourning warder,
A little longer to be left in enjoyment
Of long-lasting treasure. A barrow all-ready
Stood on the plain the stream-currents nigh to,

New by the ness-edge, unnethe of approaching:

The keeper of rings carried within a
Ponderous deal of the treasure of nobles,
Of gold that was beaten, briefly he spake then:

The ring-giver bewails the loss of retainers.
“Hold thou, O Earth, now heroes no more may,
The earnings of earlmen. Lo! erst in thy bosom
Worthy men won them; war-death hath ravished,
Perilous life-bale, all my warriors,
Liegemen belovèd, who this life have forsaken,
Who hall-pleasures saw. No sword-bearer have I,
And no one to burnish the gold-plated vessel,
The high-valued beaker: my heroes are vanished.
The hardy helmet behung with gilding
Shall be reaved of its riches: the ring-cleansers slumber
Who were charged to have ready visors-for-battle,
And the burnie that bided in battle-encounter
O’er breaking of war-shields the bite of the edges
Moulds with the hero. The ring-twisted armor,
Its lord being lifeless, no longer may journey
Hanging by heroes; harp-joy is vanished,
The rapture of glee-wood, no excellent falcon
Swoops through the building, no swift-footed charger
Grindeth the gravel. A grievous destruction
No few of the world-folk widely hath scattered!”
So, woful of spirit one after all
Lamented mournfully, moaning in sadness
By day and by night, till death with its billows
Dashed on his spirit. Then the ancient dusk-scather
Found the great treasure standing all open,
He who flaming and fiery flies to the barrows,
Naked war-dragon, nightly escapeth
Encompassed with fire; men under heaven
Widely beheld him. ’Tis said that he looks for
The hoard in the earth, where old he is guarding
The heathenish treasure; he’ll be nowise the better.
The dragon meets his match.
So three-hundred winters the waster of peoples
Held upon earth that excellent hoard-hall,
Till the forementioned earlman angered him bitterly:

The beat-plated beaker he bare to his chieftain
And fullest remission for all his remissness
Begg'd of his liegeland. Then the hoard was discovered,
The treasure was taken, his petition was granted
The hero plunders the dragon's den
The lorn-mooded liegeman. His lord regarded
The old-work of earth-folk—'twas the earliest occasion.
When the dragon awoke, the strife was renewed there;
He snuff'd 'long the stone then, stout-hearted found he
The footprint of foeman; too far had he gone
With cunning craftiness close to the head of
The fire-spewing dragon. So undoomed he may 'scape from
Anguish and exile with ease who possesseth
The favor of Heaven. The hoard-warden eagerly
Searched o'er the ground then, would meet with the person
That caused him sorrow while in slumber reclining:

Gleaming and wild he oft went round the cavern,
All of it outward; not any of earthmen
Was seen in that desert. Yet he joyed in the battle,
Rejoiced in the conflict: oft he turned to the barrow,
Sought for the gem-cup; this he soon perceived then
The dragon perceives that some one has disturbed his treasure.
That some man or other had discovered the gold,
The famous folk-treasure. Not fain did the hoard-ward
Wait until evening; then the ward of the barrow
Was angry in spirit, the loath'd one wished to
Pay for the dear-valued drink-cup with fire.
Then the day was done as the dragon would have it,
He no longer would wait on the wall, but departed
The dragon is infuriated.
Fire-impelled, flaming. Fearful the start was
To earls in the land, as it early thereafter
To their giver-of-gold was grievously ended.

XXXIII. BRAVE THOUGH AGED.—REMINISCENCES.

The dragon spits fire

The stranger began then to vomit forth fire,
To burn the great manor; the blaze then glimmered
For anguish to earlmen, not anything living
Was the hateful air-goer willing to leave there.
The war of the worm widely was noticed,
The feud of the foeman afar and anear,
How the enemy injured the earls of the Geatmen,
Harried with hatred: back he hied to the treasure,
To the well-hidden cavern ere the coming of daylight.
He had circled with fire the folk of those regions,
With brand and burning; in the barrow he trusted,
In the wall and his war-might: the weening deceived him.
Beowulf hears of the havoc wrought by the dragon.
Then straight was the horror to Beowulf published,
Early forsooth, that his own native homestead,
The best of buildings, was burning and melting,
Gift-seat of Geatmen. 'Twas a grief to the spirit
Of the good-mooded hero, the greatest of sorrows:

He fears that Heaven is punishing him for some crime.
The wise one weened then that wielding his kingdom
'Gainst the ancient commandments, he had bitterly angered
The Lord everlasting: with lorn meditations
His bosom welled inward, as was nowise his custom.
The fire-spewing dragon fully had wasted
The fastness of warriors, the water-land outward,
The manor with fire. The folk-ruling hero,
Prince of the Weders, was planning to wreak him.
The warmen's defender bade them to make him,
Earlmen's atheling, an excellent war-shield
He orders an iron shield to be made from him, wood is useless.
Wholly of iron: fully he knew then
That wood from the forest was helpless to aid him,
Shield against fire. The long-worthy ruler
Must live the last of his limited earth-days,
Of life in the world and the worm along with him,
Though he long had been holding hoard-wealth in plenty.
He determines to fight alone.
Then the ring-prince disdained to seek with a war-band,
With army extensive, the air-going ranger;
He felt no fear of the foeman's assaults and
He counted for little the might of the dragon,

His power and prowess: for previously dared he
 Beowulf's early triumphs referred to
 A heap of hostility, hazarded dangers,
 War-thane, when Hrothgar's palace he cleansèd,
 Conquering combatant, clutched in the battle
 The kinsmen of Grendel, of kindred detested.
 Higelac's death recalled.
 'Twas of hand-fights not least where Higelac was slaughtered,
 When the king of the Geatmen with clashings of battle,
 Friend-lord of folks in Frisian dominions,
 Offspring of Hrethrel perished through sword-drink,
 With battle-swords beaten; thence Beowulf came then
 On self-help relying, swam through the waters;
 He bare on his arm, lone-going, thirty
 Outfits of armor, when the ocean he mounted.
 The Hetwars by no means had need to be boastful
 Of their fighting afoot, who forward to meet him
 Carried their war-shields: not many returned from
 The brave-mooded battle-knight back to their homesteads.
 Ecgtheow's bairn o'er the bight-courses swam then,
 Lone-goer lorn to his land-folk returning,
 Where Hygd to him tendered treasure and kingdom,
 Heardred's lack of capacity to rule.
 Rings and dominion: her son she not trusted,
 To be able to keep the kingdom devised him
 'Gainst alien races, on the death of King Higelac.
 Beowulf's tact and delicacy recalled.
 Yet the sad ones succeeded not in persuading the atheling
 In any way ever, to act as a suzerain
 To Heardred, or promise to govern the kingdom;
 Yet with friendly counsel in the folk he sustained him,
 Gracious, with honor, till he grew to be older,
 Wielded the Weders. Wide-fleeing outlaws,
 Ohthere's sons, sought him o'er the waters:

They had stirred a revolt 'gainst the helm of the Scylfings,
 The best of the sea-kings, who in Swedish dominions
 Distributed treasure, distinguished folk-leader.
 'Twas the end of his earth-days; injury fatal
 By swing of the sword he received as a greeting,
 Offspring of Higelac; Ongentheow's bairn
 Later departed to visit his homestead,

When Heardred was dead; let Beowulf rule them,
Govern the Geatmen: good was that folk-king.

XXXIV. BEOWULF SEEKS THE DRAGON.—BEOWULF'S REMINISCENCES.

He planned requital for the folk-leader's ruin
In days thereafter, to Eadgils the wretched
Becoming an enemy. Ohthere's son then
Went with a war-troop o'er the wide-stretching currents
With warriors and weapons: with woe-journeys cold he
After avenged him, the king's life he took.
Beowulf has been preserved through many perils.
So he came off uninjured from all of his battles,
Perilous fights, offspring of Ecgtheow,
From his deeds of daring, till that day most momentous
When he fate-driven fared to fight with the dragon.
With eleven comrades, he seeks the dragon.
With eleven companions the prince of the Geatmen
Went lowering with fury to look at the fire-drake:

Inquiring he'd found how the feud had arisen,
Hate to his heroes; the highly-famed gem-vessel
Was brought to his keeping through the hand of th' informer.
A guide leads the way, but
That in the throng was thirteenth of heroes,
That caused the beginning of conflict so bitter,
Captive and wretched, must sad-mooded thenceward
very reluctantly.
Point out the place: he passed then unwillingly
To the spot where he knew of the notable cavern,
The cave under earth, not far from the ocean,
The anger of eddies, which inward was full of
Jewels and wares: a warden uncanny,
Warrior weaponed, wardered the treasure,
Old under earth; no easy possession
For any of earth-folk access to get to.
Then the battle-brave atheling sat on the naze-edge,
While the gold-friend of Geatmen gracious saluted
His fireside-companions: woe was his spirit,
Death-boding, wav'ring; Weird very near him,

Who must seize the old hero, his soul-treasure look for,
Dragging aloof his life from his body:

Not flesh-hidden long was the folk-leader's spirit.
Beowulf spake, Ecgtheow's son:

Beowulf's retrospect.

"I survived in my youth-days many a conflict,
Hours of onset: that all I remember.

I was seven-winters old when the jewel-prince took me,
High-lord of heroes, at the hands of my father,
Hrethel the hero-king had me in keeping,
Hrethel took me when I was seven.

Gave me treasure and feasting, our kinship remembered;
Not ever was I any less dear to him
He treated me as a son.

Knight in the boroughs, than the bairns of his household,
Herebald and Hæthcyn and Higelac mine.

To the eldest unjustly by acts of a kinsman
Was murder-bed strewn, since him Hæthcyn from horn-bow
One of the brothers accidentally kills another.

His sheltering chieftain shot with an arrow,
Erred in his aim and injured his kinsman,
One brother the other, with blood-sprinkled spear:

No fee could compound for such a calamity.

'Twas a feeless fight, finished in malice,
Sad to his spirit; the folk-prince however
Had to part from existence with vengeance untaken.

[A parallel case is supposed.]

So to hoar-headed hero 'tis heavily crushing
To live to see his son as he rideth

Young on the gallows: then measures he chanteth,
A song of sorrow, when his son is hanging
For the raven's delight, and aged and hoary
He is unable to offer any assistance.

Every morning his offspring's departure
Is constant recalled: he cares not to wait for
The birth of an heir in his borough-enclosures,
Since that one through death-pain the deeds hath experienced.
He heart-grieved beholds in the house of his son the
Wine-building wasted, the wind-lodging places

Reaved of their roaring; the riders are sleeping,
The knights in the grave; there's no sound of the harp-wood,
Joy in the yards, as of yore were familiar.

XXXV. REMINISCENCES (continued).—BEOWULF'S LAST BATTLE.

“He seeks then his chamber, singeth a woe-song
One for the other; all too extensive
Seemed homesteads and plains. So the helm of the Weders
Hrethel grieves for Herebald.
Mindful of Herebald heart-sorrow carried,
Stirred with emotion, nowise was able
To wreak his ruin on the ruthless destroyer:

He was unable to follow the warrior with hatred,
With deeds that were direful, though dear he not held him.
Then pressed by the pang this pain occasioned him,
He gave up glee, God-light elected;
He left to his sons, as the man that is rich does,
His land and fortress, when from life he departed.
Then was crime and hostility 'twixt Swedes and Geatmen,
O'er wide-stretching water warring was mutual,
Burdensome hatred, when Hrethel had perished,
And Ongentheow's offspring were active and valiant,
Wished not to hold to peace oversea, but
Round Hreosna-beorh often accomplished
Cruellest massacre. This my kinsman avengèd,
The feud and fury, as 'tis found on inquiry,
Though one of them paid it with forfeit of life-joys,
Hæthcyn's fall at Ravenswood.
With price that was hard: the struggle became then
Fatal to Hæthcyn, lord of the Geatmen.
Then I heard that at morning one brother the other
With edges of irons egged on to murder,
Where Ongentheow maketh onset on Eofor:

The helmet crashed, the hoary-haired Scylfing
Sword-smitten fell, his hand then remembered
Feud-hate sufficient, refused not the death-blow.

I requited him for the jewels he gave me.
The gems that he gave me, with jewel-bright sword I
'Quited in contest, as occasion was offered:

Land he allowed me, life-joy at homestead,
Manor to live on. Little he needed
From Gepids or Danes or in Sweden to look for
Trooper less true, with treasure to buy him;
'Mong foot-soldiers ever in front I would hie me,
Alone in the vanguard, and evermore gladly
Warfare shall wage, while this weapon endureth
That late and early often did serve me
Beowulf refers to his having slain Dæghrefn.
When I proved before heroes the slayer of Dæghrefn,
Knight of the Hugmen: he by no means was suffered
To the king of the Frisians to carry the jewels,
The breast-decoration; but the banner-possessor
Bowed in the battle, brave-mooded atheling.
No weapon was slayer, but war-grapple broke then
The surge of his spirit, his body destroying.
Now shall weapon's edge make war for the treasure,
And hand and firm-sword." Beowulf spake then,
Boast-words uttered—the latest occasion:

He boasts of his youthful prowess, and declares himself still fearless.
"I braved in my youth-days battles unnumbered;
Still am I willing the struggle to look for,
Fame-deeds perform, folk-warden prudent,
If the hateful despoiler forth from his cavern
Seeketh me out!" Each of the heroes,
Helm-bearers sturdy, he thereupon greeted
His last salutations.
Belovèd co-liegemen—his last salutation:

"No brand would I bear, no blade for the dragon,
Wist I a way my word-boast to 'complish
Else with the monster, as with Grendel I did it;
But fire in the battle hot I expect there,
Furious flame-burning: so I fixed on my body
Target and war-mail. The ward of the barrow
I'll not flee from a foot-length, the foeman uncanny.
At the wall 'twill befall us as Fate decreeth,

Let Fate decide between us.
Each one's Creator. I am eager in spirit,
With the wingèd war-hero to away with all boasting.
Bide on the barrow with burnies protected,
Wait ye here till the battle is over.
Earls in armor, which of us two may better
Bear his disaster, when the battle is over.
'Tis no matter of yours, and man cannot do it,
But me and me only, to measure his strength with
The monster of malice, might-deeds to 'complish.
I with prowess shall gain the gold, or the battle,
Direful death-woe will drag off your ruler!"
The mighty champion rose by his shield then,
Brave under helmet, in battle-mail went he
'Neath steep-rising stone-cliffs, the strength he relied on
Of one man alone: no work for a coward.
Then he saw by the wall who a great many battles
Had lived through, most worthy, when foot-troops collided,
The place of strife is described.
Stone-arches standing, stout-hearted champion,
Saw a brook from the barrow bubbling out thenceward:

The flood of the fountain was fuming with war-flame:

Not nigh to the hoard, for season the briefest
Could he brave, without burning, the abyss that was yawning,
The drake was so fiery. The prince of the Weders
Caused then that words came from his bosom,
So fierce was his fury; the firm-hearted shouted:

His battle-clear voice came in resounding
'Neath the gray-colored stone. Stirred was his hatred,
Beowulf calls out under the stone arches.
The hoard-ward distinguished the speech of a man;
Time was no longer to look out for friendship.
The breath of the monster issued forth first,
Vapory war-sweat, out of the stone-cave:

The terrible encounter.
The earth re-echoed. The earl 'neath the barrow
Lifted his shield, lord of the Geatmen,
Tow'rd the terrible stranger: the ring-twisted creature's
Heart was then ready to seek for a struggle.

Beowulf brandishes his sword,
 The excellent battle-king first brandished his weapon,
 The ancient heirloom, of edges unblunted,
 To the death-planners twain was terror from other.
 and stands against his shield.
 The lord of the troopers intrepidly stood then
 'Gainst his high-rising shield, when the dragon coiled him
 Quickly together: in corslet he bided.
 He went then in blazes, bended and striding,
 Hasting him forward. His life and body
 The targe well protected, for time-period shorter
 Than wish demanded for the well-renowned leader,
 Where he then for the first day was forced to be victor,
 Famous in battle, as Fate had not willed it.
 The lord of the Geatmen uplifted his hand then,
 Smiting the fire-drake with sword that was precious,
 That bright on the bone the blade-edge did weaken,
 Bit more feebly than his folk-leader needed,
 Burdened with bale-griefs. Then the barrow-protector,
 When the sword-blow had fallen, was fierce in his spirit,
 Flinging his fires, flamings of battle
 Gleamed then afar: the gold-friend of Weders
 Boasted no conquests, his battle-sword failed him
 Naked in conflict, as by no means it ought to,
 Long-trusty weapon. 'Twas no slight undertaking
 That Ecgtheow's famous offspring would leave
 The drake-cavern's bottom; he must live in some region
 Other than this, by the will of the dragon,
 As each one of earthmen existence must forfeit.
 'Twas early thereafter the excellent warriors
 Met with each other. Anew and afresh
 The hoard-ward took heart (gasps heaved then his bosom):

The great hero is reduced to extremities.
 Sorrow he suffered encircled with fire
 Who the people erst governed. His companions by no means
 Were banded about him, bairns of the princes,
 With valorous spirit, but they sped to the forest,
 Seeking for safety. The soul-deeps of one were
 Blood is thicker than water.
 Ruffled by care: kin-love can never
 Aught in him waver who well doth consider.

XXXVI. WIGLAF THE TRUSTY.—BEOWULF IS DESERTED BY FRIENDS AND BY SWORD.

Wiglaf remains true—the ideal Teutonic liegeman

The son of Weohstan was Wiglaf entitled,
Shield-warrior precious, prince of the Scylfings,
Aelfhere's kinsman: he saw his dear liegelord
Enduring the heat 'neath helmet and visor.
Then he minded the holding that erst he had given him,
Wiglaf recalls Beowulf's generosity.
The Waegmunding warriors' wealth-blessèd homestead,
Each of the folk-rights his father had wielded;
He was hot for the battle, his hand seized the target,
The yellow-bark shield, he unsheathed his old weapon,
Which was known among earthmen as the relic of Eanmund,
Ohthere's offspring, whom, exiled and friendless,
Weohstan did slay with sword-edge in battle,
And carried his kinsman the clear-shining helmet,
The ring-made burnie, the old giant-weapon
That Onela gave him, his boon-fellow's armor,
Ready war-trappings: he the feud did not mention,
Though he'd fatally smitten the son of his brother.
Many a half-year held he the treasures,
The bill and the burnie, till his bairn became able,
Like his father before him, fame-deeds to 'complish;
Then he gave him 'mong Geatmen a goodly array of
Weeds for his warfare; he went from life then
Old on his journey. 'Twas the earliest time then
This is Wiglaf's first battle as liegeman of Beowulf.
That the youthful champion might charge in the battle
Aiding his liegelord; his spirit was dauntless.
Nor did kinsman's bequest quail at the battle:

This the dragon discovered on their coming together.
Wiglaf uttered many a right-saying,
Said to his fellows, sad was his spirit:

Wiglaf appeals to the pride of the cowards.
"I remember the time when, tasting the mead-cup,

We promised in the hall the lord of us all
Who gave us these ring-treasures, that this battle-equipment,
Swords and helmets, we'd certainly quite him,
Should need of such aid ever befall him:

How we have forfeited our liegelord's confidence!
In the war-band he chose us for this journey spontaneously,
Stirred us to glory and gave me these jewels,
Since he held and esteemed us trust-worthy spearmen,
Hardy helm-bearers, though this hero-achievement
Our lord intended alone to accomplish,
Ward of his people, for most of achievements,
Doings audacious, he did among earth-folk.
Our lord is in sore need of us.
The day is now come when the ruler of earthmen
Needeth the vigor of valiant heroes:

Let us wend us towards him, the war-prince to succor,
While the heat yet rageth, horrible fire-fight.
I would rather die than go home with out my suzerain.
God wot in me, 'tis mickle the liefer
The blaze should embrace my body and eat it
With my treasure-bestower. Meseemeth not proper
To bear our battle-shields back to our country,
'Less first we are able to fell and destroy the
Long-hating foeman, to defend the life of
Surely he does not deserve to die alone.
The prince of the Weders. Well do I know 't isn't
Earned by his exploits, he only of Geatmen
Sorrow should suffer, sink in the battle:

Brand and helmet to us both shall be common,
Shield-cover, burnie." Through the bale-smoke he stalked then,
Went under helmet to the help of his chieftain,
Wiglaf reminds Beowulf of his youthful boasts.
Briefly discoursing: "Beowulf dear,
Perform thou all fully, as thou formerly saidst,
In thy youthful years, that while yet thou livedst
Thou wouldst let thine honor not ever be lessened.
Thy life thou shalt save, mighty in actions,
Atheling undaunted, with all of thy vigor;
I'll give thee assistance." The dragon came raging,

Wild-mooded stranger, when these words had been uttered
(’Twas the second occasion), seeking his enemies,
Men that were hated, with hot-gleaming fire-waves;
With blaze-billows burned the board to its edges:

The fight-armor failed then to furnish assistance
To the youthful spear-hero: but the young-aged stripling
Quickly advanced ’neath his kinsman’s war-target,
Since his own had been ground in the grip of the fire.
Then the warrior-king was careful of glory,
He soundly smote with sword-for-the-battle,
That it stood in the head by hatred driven;
Naegling was shivered, the old and iron-made
Brand of Beowulf in battle deceived him.
’Twas denied him that edges of irons were able
To help in the battle; the hand was too mighty
Which every weapon, as I heard on inquiry,
Outstruck in its stroke, when to struggle he carried
The wonderful war-sword: it waxed him no better.
The dragon advances on Beowulf again.
Then the people-despoiler—third of his onsets—
Fierce-raging fire-drake, of feud-hate was mindful,
Charged on the strong one, when chance was afforded,
Heated and war-grim, seized on his neck
With teeth that were bitter; he bloody did wax with
Soul-gore seething; sword-blood in waves boiled.

XXXVII. THE FATAL STRUGGLE.—BEOWULF’S LAST MOMENTS.

Wiglaf defends Beowulf

Then I heard that at need of the king of the people
The upstanding earlman exhibited prowess,
Vigor and courage, as suited his nature;
He his head did not guard, but the high-minded liegeman’s
Hand was consumed, when he succored his kinsman,
So he struck the strife-bringing strange-comer lower,
Earl-thane in armor, that in went the weapon

Gleaming and plated, that 'gan then the fire
Beowulf draws his knife,
Later to lessen. The liegeland himself then
Retained his consciousness, brandished his war-knife,
Battle-sharp, bitter, that he bare on his armor:

and cuts the dragon.

The Weder-lord cut the worm in the middle.
They had felled the enemy (life drove out then
Puisant prowess), the pair had destroyed him,
Land-chiefs related: so a liegeman should prove him,
A thaneman when needed. To the prince 'twas the last of
His era of conquest by his own great achievements,
Beowulf's wound swells and burns.
The latest of world-deeds. The wound then began
Which the earth-dwelling dragon erstwhile had wrought him
To burn and to swell. He soon then discovered
That bitterest bale-woe in his bosom was raging,
Poison within. The atheling advanced then,
He sits down exhausted.
That along by the wall, he prudent of spirit
Might sit on a settle; he saw the giant-work,
How arches of stone strengthened with pillars
The earth-hall eternal inward supported.
Then the long-worthy liegeman laved with his hand the
Far-famous chieftain, gory from sword-edge,
Refreshing the face of his friend-lord and ruler,
Sated with battle, unbinding his helmet.
Beowulf answered, of his injury spake he,
His wound that was fatal (he was fully aware
He had lived his allotted life-days enjoying
The pleasures of earth; then past was entirely
His measure of days, death very near):

Beowulf regrets that he has no son.

“My son I would give now my battle-equipments,
Had any of heirs been after me granted,
Along of my body. This people I governed
Fifty of winters: no king 'mong my neighbors
Dared to encounter me with comrades-in-battle,
Try me with terror. The time to me ordered
I bided at home, mine own kept fitly,

Sought me no snares, swore me not many
 I can rejoice in a well-spent life.
 Oaths in injustice. Joy over all this
 I'm able to have, though ill with my death-wounds;
 Hence the Ruler of Earthmen need not charge me
 With the killing of kinsmen, when cometh my life out
 Forth from my body. Fare thou with haste now
 Bring me the hoard, Wiglaf, that my dying eyes may be refreshed by a
 sight of it.
 To behold the hoard 'neath the hoar-grayish stone,
 Well-lovèd Wiglaf, now the worm is a-lying,
 Sore-wounded sleepeth, disseized of his treasure.
 Go thou in haste that treasures of old I,
 Gold-wealth may gaze on, together see lying
 The ether-bright jewels, be easier able,
 Having the heap of hoard-gems, to yield my
 Life and the land-folk whom long I have governed."

XXXVIII. WIGLAF PLUNDERS THE DRAGON'S DEN.—BEOWULF'S DEATH.

Wiglaf fulfils his lord's behest

Then heard I that Wihstan's son very quickly,
 These words being uttered, heeded his liegelord
 Wounded and war-sick, went in his armor,
 His well-woven ring-mail, 'neath the roof of the barrow.
 Then the trusty retainer treasure-gems many
 Victorious saw, when the seat he came near to,
 Gold-treasure sparkling spread on the bottom,
 Wonder on the wall, and the worm-creature's cavern,
 The ancient dawn-flier's, vessels a-standing,
 Cups of the ancients of cleansers bereavèd,
 Robbed of their ornaments: there were helmets in numbers,
 Old and rust-eaten, arm-bracelets many,
 Artfully woven. Wealth can easily,
 Gold on the sea-bottom, turn into vanity
 Each one of earthmen, arm him who pleaseth!
 And he saw there lying an all-golden banner

High o'er the hoard, of hand-wonders greatest,
Linkèd with lacets: a light from it sparkled,
That the floor of the cavern he was able to look on,
To examine the jewels. Sight of the dragon
Not any was offered, but edge offcarried him.
Then I heard that the hero the hoard-treasure plundered,
The giant-work ancient reaved in the cavern,
Bare on his bosom the beakers and platters,
As himself would fain have it, and took off the standard,
The brightest of beacons; the bill had erst injured
(Its edge was of iron), the old-ruler's weapon,
Him who long had watched as ward of the jewels,
Who fire-terror carried hot for the treasure,
Rolling in battle, in middlemost darkness,
Till murdered he perished. The messenger hastened,
Not loth to return, hurried by jewels:

Curiosity urged him if, excellent-mooded,
Alive he should find the lord of the Weders
Mortally wounded, at the place where he left him.
'Mid the jewels he found then the famous old chieftain,
His liegelord belovèd, at his life's-end gory:

He thereupon 'gan to lave him with water,
Till the point of his word piercèd his breast-hoard.
Beowulf spake (the gold-gems he noticed),
Beowulf is rejoiced to see the jewels.
The old one in sorrow: "For the jewels I look on
Thanks do I utter for all to the Ruler,
Wielder of Worship, with words of devotion,
The Lord everlasting, that He let me such treasures
Gain for my people ere death overtook me.
Since I've bartered the agèd life to me granted
For treasure of jewels, attend ye henceforward
He desires to be held in memory by his people.
The wants of the war-thanes; I can wait here no longer.
The battle-famed bid ye to build them a grave-hill,
Bright when I'm burned, at the brim-current's limit;
As a memory-mark to the men I have governed,
Aloft it shall tower on Whale's-Ness uprising,
That earls of the ocean hereafter may call it
Beowulf's barrow, those who barks ever-dashing

From a distance shall drive o'er the darkness of waters."
The bold-mooded troop-lord took from his neck then
The ring that was golden, gave to his liegeman,
The youthful war-hero, his gold-flashing helmet,
His collar and war-mail, bade him well to enjoy them:

and last words.

"Thou art latest left of the line of our kindred,
Of Waegmunding people: Weird hath offcarried
All of my kinsmen to the Creator's glory,
Earls in their vigor: I shall after them fare."
'Twas the aged liegelord's last-spoken word in
His musings of spirit, ere he mounted the fire,
The battle-waves burning: from his bosom departed
His soul to seek the sainted ones' glory.

XXXIX. THE DEAD FOES.—WIGLAF'S BITTER TAUNTS.

Wiglaf is sorely grieved to see his lord look so un-warlike

It had wofully chanced then the youthful retainer
To behold on earth the most ardent-belovèd
At his life-days' limit, lying there helpless.
The slayer too lay there, of life all bereavèd,
Horrible earth-drake, harassed with sorrow:

The dragon has plundered his last hoard.
The round-twisted monster was permitted no longer
To govern the ring-hoards, but edges of war-swords
Mightily seized him, battle-sharp, sturdy
Leavings of hammers, that still from his wounds
The fier-from-farland fell to the earth
Hard by his hoard-house, hopped he at midnight
Not e'er through the air, nor exulting in jewels
Suffered them to see him: but he sank then to earthward
Through the hero-chief's handwork. I heard sure it throve then
Few warriors dared to face the monster.
But few in the land of liegemen of valor,
Though of every achievement bold he had proved him,

To run 'gainst the breath of the venomous scather,
Or the hall of the treasure to trouble with hand-blows,
If he watching had found the ward of the hoard-hall
On the barrow abiding. Beowulf's part of
The treasure of jewels was paid for with death;
Each of the twain had attained to the end of
Life so unlasting. Not long was the time till
The cowardly thanes come out of the thicket.
The tardy-at-battle returned from the thicket,
The timid truce-breakers ten all together,
Who durst not before play with the lances
In the prince of the people's pressing emergency;
But blushing with shame, with shields they betook them,
With arms and armor where the old one was lying:

They gazed upon Wiglaf. He was sitting exhausted,
Foot-going fighter, not far from the shoulders
Of the lord of the people, would rouse him with water;
No whit did it help him; though he hoped for it keenly,
He was able on earth not at all in the leader
Life to retain, and nowise to alter
The will of the Wielder; the World-Ruler's power
Would govern the actions of each one of heroes,
As yet He is doing. From the young one forthwith then
Could grim-worded greeting be got for him quickly
Whose courage had failed him. Wiglaf discoursed then,
Weohstan his son, sad-mooded hero,
Looked on the hated: "He who soothness will utter
Can say that the liegelord who gave you the jewels,
The ornament-armor wherein ye are standing,
When on ale-bench often he offered to hall-men
Helmet and burnie, the prince to his liegemen,
As best upon earth he was able to find him,—
Surely our lord wasted his armor on poltroons.
That he wildly wasted his war-gear undoubtedly
When battle o'ertook him. The troop-king no need had
To glory in comrades; yet God permitted him,
He, however, got along without you
Victory-Wielder, with weapon unaided
Himself to avenge, when vigor was needed.
I life-protection but little was able
To give him in battle, and I 'gan, notwithstanding,

With some aid, I could have saved our liegeland
Helping my kinsman (my strength overtaxing):

He waxed the weaker when with weapon I smote on
My mortal opponent, the fire less strongly
Flamed from his bosom. Too few of protectors
Came round the king at the critical moment.
Gift-giving is over with your people: the ring-lord is dead.
Now must ornament-taking and weapon-bestowing,
Home-joyance all, cease for your kindred,
Food for the people; each of your warriors
Must needs be bereaved of rights that he holdeth
In landed possessions, when faraway nobles
Shall learn of your leaving your lord so basely,
What is life without honor?
The dastardly deed. Death is more pleasant
To every earlman than infamous life is!"

XL. THE MESSENGER OF DEATH.

Wiglaf sends the news of Beowulf's death to liegemen near by

Then he charged that the battle be announced at the hedge
Up o'er the cliff-edge, where the earl-troopers bided
The whole of the morning, mood-wretched sat them,
Bearers of battle-shields, both things expecting,
The end of his lifetime and the coming again of
The liegeland beloved. Little reserved he
Of news that was known, who the ness-cliff did travel,
But he truly discoursed to all that could hear him:

"Now the free-giving friend-lord of the folk of the Weders,
The folk-prince of Geatmen, is fast in his death-bed,
By the deeds of the dragon in death-bed abideth;
Along with him lieth his life-taking foeman
Slain with knife-wounds: he was wholly unable
To injure at all the ill-planning monster
Wiglaf sits by our dead lord.
With bite of his sword-edge. Wiglaf is sitting,
Offspring of Wihstan, up over Beowulf,

Earl o'er another whose end-day hath reached him,
 Head-watch holdeth o'er heroes unliving,
 Our lord's death will lead to attacks from our old foes.
 For friend and for foeman. The folk now expecteth
 A season of strife when the death of the folk-king
 To Frankmen and Frisians in far-lands is published.
 The war-hatred waxed warm 'gainst the Hugmen,
 When Higelac came with an army of vessels
 Faring to Friesland, where the Frankmen in battle
 Humbled him and bravely with overmight 'complished
 That the mail-clad warrior must sink in the battle,
 Fell 'mid his folk-troop: no fret-gems presented
 The atheling to earlmen; aye was denied us
 Merewing's mercy. The men of the Swedelands
 For truce or for truth trust I but little;
 But widely 'twas known that near Ravenswood Ongentheow
 Sundered Haethcyn the Hrethling from life-joys,
 When for pride overweening the War-Scylfings first did
 Seek the Geatmen with savage intentions.
 Early did Ohthere's age-laden father,
 Old and terrible, give blow in requital,
 Killing the sea-king, the queen-mother rescued,
 The old one his consort deprived of her gold,
 Onela's mother and Ohthere's also,
 And then followed the feud-nursing foemen till hardly,
 Reaved of their ruler, they Ravenswood entered.
 Then with vast-numbered forces he assaulted the remnant,
 Weary with wounds, woe often promised
 The livelong night to the sad-hearted war-troop:

 Said he at morning would kill them with edges of weapons,
 Some on the gallows for glee to the fowls.
 Aid came after to the anxious-in-spirit
 At dawn of the day, after Higelac's bugle
 And trumpet-sound heard they, when the good one proceeded
 And faring followed the flower of the troopers.

XLI. THE MESSENGER'S RETROSPECT.

The messenger continues, and refers to the feuds of Swedes and Geats

“The blood-stainèd trace of Swedes and Geatmen,
The death-rush of warmen, widely was noticed,
How the folks with each other feud did awaken.
The worthy one went then with well-beloved comrades,
Old and dejected to go to the fastness,
Ongentheo earl upward then turned him;
Of Higelac’s battle he’d heard on inquiry,
The exultant one’s prowess, despaired of resistance,
With earls of the ocean to be able to struggle,
'Gainst sea-going sailors to save the hoard-treasure,
His wife and his children; he fled after thenceward
Old 'neath the earth-wall. Then was offered pursuance
To the braves of the Swedemen, the banner to Higelac.
They fared then forth o’er the field-of-protection,
When the Hrethling heroes hedgeward had thronged them.
Then with edges of irons was Ongentheow driven,
The gray-haired to tarry, that the troop-ruler had to
Suffer the power solely of Eofor:

Wulf then wildly with weapon assaulted him,
Wonred his son, that for swinge of the edges
The blood from his body burst out in currents,
Forth 'neath his hair. He feared not however,
Gray-headed Scylfing, but speedily quited
Ongentheow gives a stout blow in return.
The wasting wound-stroke with worse exchange,
When the king of the thane-troop thither did turn him:

The wise-mooded son of Wonred was powerless
To give a return-blow to the age-hoary man,
But his head-shielding helmet first hewed he to pieces,
That flecked with gore perforce he did totter,
Fell to the earth; not fey was he yet then,
But up did he spring though an edge-wound had reached him.
Then Higelac’s vassal, valiant and dauntless,
When his brother lay dead, made his broad-bladed weapon,
Giant-sword ancient, defence of the giants,
Bound o’er the shield-wall; the folk-prince succumbed then,
Shepherd of people, was pierced to the vitals.
There were many attendants who bound up his kinsman,
Carried him quickly when occasion was granted
That the place of the slain they were suffered to manage.

This pending, one hero plundered the other,
His armor of iron from Ongentheow ravished,
His hard-sword hilted and helmet together;
Eofor takes the old king's war-gear to Higelac.
The old one's equipments he carried to Higelac.
He the jewels received, and rewards 'mid the troopers
Graciously promised, and so did accomplish:

The king of the Weders requited the war-rush,
Hrethel's descendant, when home he repaired him,
To Eofor and Wulf with wide-lavished treasures,
To each of them granted a hundred of thousands
In land and rings wrought out of wire:

His gifts were beyond cavil.
None upon mid-earth needed to twit him
With the gifts he gave them, when glory they conquered;
To Eofor he also gives his only daughter in marriage.
And to Eofor then gave he his one only daughter,
The honor of home, as an earnest of favor.
That's the feud and hatred—as ween I 'twill happen—
The anger of earthmen, that earls of the Swedemen
Will visit on us, when they hear that our leader
Lifeless is lying, he who longtime protected
His hoard and kingdom 'gainst hating assailers,
Who on the fall of the heroes defended of yore
The deed-mighty Scyldings, did for the troopers
What best did avail them, and further moreover
It is time for us to pay the last marks of respect to our lord.
Hero-deeds 'complished. Now is haste most fitting,
That the lord of liegemen we look upon yonder,
And that one carry on journey to death-pyre
Who ring-presents gave us. Not aught of it all
Shall melt with the brave one—there's a mass of bright jewels,
Gold beyond measure, grewsomely purchased
And ending it all ornament-rings too
Bought with his life; these fire shall devour,
Flame shall cover, no earlman shall wear
A jewel-memento, nor beautiful virgin
Have on her neck rings to adorn her,
But wretched in spirit bereavèd of gold-gems
She shall oft with others be exiled and banished,

Since the leader of liegemen hath laughter forsaken,
Mirth and merriment. Hence many a war-spear
Cold from the morning shall be clutched in the fingers,
Heaved in the hand, no harp-music's sound shall
Waken the warriors, but the wan-coated raven
Fain over fey ones freely shall gabble,
Shall say to the eagle how he sped in the eating,
When, the wolf his companion, he plundered the slain.”
So the high-minded hero was rehearsing these stories
Loathsome to hear; he lied as to few of
The warriors go sadly to look at Beowulf's lifeless body.
Weirds and of words. All the war-troop arose then,
'Neath the Eagle's Cape sadly betook them,
Weeping and woful, the wonder to look at.
They saw on the sand then soulless a-lying,
His slaughter-bed holding, him who rings had given them
In days that were done; then the death-bringing moment
Was come to the good one, that the king very warlike,
Wielder of Weders, with wonder-death perished.
First they beheld there a creature more wondrous,
The worm on the field, in front of them lying,
The foeman before them: the fire-spewing dragon,
Ghostly and grisly guest in his terrors,
Was scorched in the fire; as he lay there he measured
Fifty of feet; came forth in the night-time
To rejoice in the air, thereafter departing
To visit his den; he in death was then fastened,
He would joy in no other earth-hollowed caverns.
There stood round about him beakers and vessels,
Dishes were lying and dear-valued weapons,
With iron-rust eaten, as in earth's mighty bosom
A thousand of winters there they had rested:

The hoard was under a magic spell.
That mighty bequest then with magic was guarded,
Gold of the ancients, that earlman not any
The ring-hall could touch, save Ruling-God only,
Sooth-king of Vict'ries gave whom He wished to
God alone could give access to it.
(He is earth-folk's protector) to open the treasure,
E'en to such among mortals as seemed to Him proper.

XLII. WIGLAF'S SAD STORY.—THE HOARD CARRIED OFF.

Then 'twas seen that the journey prospered him little
Who wrongly within had the ornaments hidden
Down 'neath the wall. The warden erst slaughtered
Some few of the folk-troop: the feud then thereafter
Was hotly avengèd. 'Tis a wonder where,
When the strength-famous trooper has attained to the end of
Life-days allotted, then no longer the man may
Remain with his kinsmen where mead-cups are flowing.
So to Beowulf happened when the ward of the barrow,
Assaults, he sought for: himself had no knowledge
How his leaving this life was likely to happen.
So to doomsday, famous folk-leaders down did
Call it with curses—who 'complished it there—
That that man should be ever of ill-deeds convicted,
Confined in foul-places, fastened in hell-bonds,
Punished with plagues, who this place should e'er ravage.
He cared not for gold: rather the Wielder's
Favor preferred he first to get sight of.
Wiglaf discoursed then, Wihstan his son:

“Oft many an earlman on one man's account must
Sorrow endure, as to us it hath happened.
The liegelord belovèd we could little prevail on,
Kingdom's keeper, counsel to follow,
Not to go to the guardian of the gold-hoard, but let him
Lie where he long was, live in his dwelling
Till the end of the world. Met we a destiny
Hard to endure: the hoard has been looked at,
Been gained very grimly; too grievous the fate that
The prince of the people pricked to come thither.
I was therein and all of it looked at,
The building's equipments, since access was given me,
Not kindly at all entrance permitted
He tells them of Beowulf's last moments.
Within under earth-wall. Hastily seized I
And held in my hands a huge-weighing burden
Of hoard-treasures costly, hither out bare them
To my liegelord belovèd: life was yet in him,
And consciousness also; the old one discoursed then

Much and mournfully, commanded to greet you,
 Bade that remembering the deeds of your friend-lord
 Ye build on the fire-hill of corpses a lofty
 Burial-barrow, broad and far-famous,
 As 'mid world-dwelling warriors he was widely most honored
 While he reveled in riches. Let us rouse us and hasten
 Again to see and seek for the treasure,
 The wonder 'neath wall. The way I will show you,
 That close ye may look at ring-gems sufficient
 And gold in abundance. Let the bier with promptness
 Fully be fashioned, when forth we shall come,
 And lift we our lord, then, where long he shall tarry,
 Well-beloved warrior, 'neath the Wielder's protection."
 Wiglaf charges them to build a funeral-pyre.
 Then the son of Wihstan bade orders be given,
 Mood-valiant man, to many of heroes,
 Holders of homesteads, that they hither from far,
 Leaders of liegemen, should look for the good one
 With wood for his pyre: "The flame shall now swallow
 (The wan fire shall wax) the warriors' leader
 Who the rain of the iron often abided,
 When, sturdily hurled, the storm of the arrows
 Leapt o'er linden-wall, the lance rendered service,
 Furnished with feathers followed the arrow."
 Now the wise-mooded son of Wihstan did summon
 The best of the braves from the band of the ruler
 He takes seven thanes, and enters the den.
 Seven together; 'neath the enemy's roof he
 Went with the seven; one of the heroes
 Who fared at the front, a fire-blazing torch-light
 Bare in his hand. No lot then decided
 Who that hoard should havoc, when hero-earls saw it
 Lying in the cavern uncared-for entirely,
 Rusting to ruin: they rued then but little
 That they hastily hence hauled out the treasure,
 They push the dragon over the wall.
 The dear-valued jewels; the dragon eke pushed they,
 The worm o'er the wall, let the wave-currents take him,
 The waters enwind the ward of the treasures.
 There wounden gold on a wain was uploaded,
 A mass unmeasured, the men-leader off then,
 The hero hoary, to Whale's-Ness was carried.

XLIII. THE BURNING OF BEOWULF.

Beowulf's pyre

The folk of the Geatmen got him then ready
A pile on the earth strong for the burning,
Behung with helmets, hero-knights' targets,
And bright-shining burnies, as he begged they should have them;
Then wailing war-heroes their world-famous chieftain,
Their liegelord beloved, laid in the middle.
The funeral-flame.
Soldiers began then to make on the barrow
The largest of dead-fires: dark o'er the vapor
The smoke-cloud ascended, the sad-roaring fire,
Mingled with weeping (the wind-roar subsided)
Till the building of bone it had broken to pieces,
Hot in the heart. Heavy in spirit
They mood-sad lamented the men-leader's ruin;
And mournful measures the much-grieving widow
The Weders carry out their lord's last request.
The men of the Weders made accordingly
A hill on the height, high and extensive,
Of sea-going sailors to be seen from a distance,
And the brave one's beacon built where the fire was,
In ten-days' space, with a wall surrounded it,
As wisest of world-folk could most worthily plan it.
They placed in the barrow rings and jewels,
Rings and gems are laid in the barrow.
All such ornaments as erst in the treasure
War-mooded men had won in possession:

The earnings of earlmen to earth they entrusted,
The gold to the dust, where yet it remaineth
As useless to mortals as in foregoing eras.
'Round the dead-mound rode then the doughty-in-battle,
Bairns of all twelve of the chiefs of the people,
They mourn for their lord, and sing his praises.
More would they mourn, lament for their ruler,
Speak in measure, mention him with pleasure,
Weighed his worth, and his warlike achievements
Mightily commended, as 'tis meet one praise his

Liegelord in words and love him in spirit,
When forth from his body he fares to destruction.
So lamented mourning the men of the Geats,
Fond-loving vassals, the fall of their lord,
An ideal king.
Said he was kindest of kings under heaven,
Gentlest of men, most winning of manner,
Friendliest to folk-troops and fondest of honor.

THE PROSE EDDA

By

SNORRI STURLUSON

Translated by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur

PROLOGUE

IN the beginning God created heaven and earth and all those things which are in them; and last of all, two of human kind, Adam and Eve, from whom the races are descended. And their offspring multiplied among themselves and were scattered throughout the earth. But as time passed, the races of men became unlike in nature: some were good and believed on the right; but many more turned after the lusts of the world and slighted God's command. Wherefore, God drowned the world in a swelling of the sea, and all living things, save them alone that were in the ark with Noah. After Noah's flood eight of mankind remained alive, who peopled the earth; and the races descended from them. And it was even as before: when the earth was full of folk and inhabited of many, then all the multitude of mankind began to love greed, wealth, and worldly honor, but neglected the worship of God. Now accordingly it came to so evil a pass that they would not name God; and who then could tell their sons of God's mighty wonders? Thus it happened that they lost the name of God; and throughout the wideness of the world the man was not found who could distinguish in aught the trace of his Creator. But not the less did God bestow upon them the gifts of the earth: wealth and happiness, for their enjoyment in the world; He increased also their wisdom, so that they knew all earthly matters, and every phase of whatsoever they might see in the air and on the earth.

One thing they wondered and pondered over: what it might mean, that the earth and the beasts and the birds had one nature in some ways, and yet were unlike in manner of life. In this was their nature one: that the earth was cleft into lofty mountain-peaks, wherein water spurted up, and it was not needful to dig longer for water there than in the deep valleys; so it is also with beasts and birds: it is equally far to the blood in the head and the feet. Another quality of the earth is, that in each year grass and flowers grow upon the earth, and in the same year all that growth falls away and withers; it is even so with beasts and birds: hair and feathers grow and fall away each year. This is the third nature of the earth, that when it is opened and dug up, the grass grows

straightway on the soil which is uppermost on the earth. Boulders and stones they likened to the teeth and bones of living beings. Thus they recognized that the earth was quick, and had life with some manner of nature of its own; and they understood that she was wondrous old in years and mighty in kind: she nourished all that lived, and she took to herself all that died. Therefore they gave her a name, and traced the number of their generations from her. The same thing, moreover, they learned from their aged kinsmen: that many hundreds of years have been numbered since the same earth yet was, and the same sun and stars of the heavens; but the courses of these were unequal, some having a longer course, and some a shorter.

From things like these the thought stirred within them that there might be some governor of the stars of heaven: one who might order their courses after his will; and that he must be very strong and full of might. This also they held to be true: that if he swayed the chief things of creation, he must have been before the stars of heaven; and they saw that if he ruled the courses of the heavenly bodies, he must also govern the shining of the sun, and the dews of the air, and the fruits of the earth, whatsoever grows upon it; and in like manner the winds of the air and the storms of the sea. They knew not yet where his kingdom was; but this they believed: that he ruled all things on earth and in the sky, the great stars also of the heaven, and the winds of the sea. Wherefore, not only to tell of this fittingly, but also that they might fasten it in memory, they gave names out of their own minds to all things. This belief of theirs has changed in many ways, according as the peoples drifted asunder and their tongues became severed one from another. But all things they discerned with the wisdom of the earth, for the understanding of the spirit was not given to them; this they perceived, that all things were fashioned of some essence.

II

The world was divided into three parts: from the south, extending into the west and bordering on the Mediterranean Sea,—all this part was called Africa, the southern quarter of which is hot, so that it is parched with the sun. The second part, from west to north and bordering on the ocean, is called Európa or Eneá; its northern part is so cold that no grass grows upon it, and no man dwells there. From the north and all down over the eastern part, even to the south, is called Asia. In that region of the world is all fairness and pride, and the fruits of the earth's increase, gold and jewels. There also is the centre of the earth; and even as the land there is lovelier and better in every way than in other places, so also were the sons of men there most favored with all goodly gifts: wisdom, and strength of the body, beauty, and all manner of knowledge.

III

Near the earth's centre was made that goodliest of homes and haunts that ever have been, which is called Troy, even that which we call Turkland. This abode was much more gloriously made than others, and fashioned with more skill of craftsmanship in manifold wise, both in luxury and in the wealth which was there in abundance. There were twelve kingdoms and one High King, and many sovereignties belonged to each kingdom; in the stronghold were twelve chieftains. These chieftains were in every manly part greatly above other men that have ever been in the world. One king among them was called Múnón or Mennón; and he was wedded to the daughter of the High King Priam, her who was called Tróán; they had a child named Trór, whom we call Thor. He was fostered in Thrace by a certain war-duke called Lórikus; but when he was ten winters old he took unto him the weapons of his father. He was as goodly to look upon, when he came among other men, as the ivory that is inlaid in oak; his hair was fairer than gold. When he was twelve winters old he had his full measure of strength; then he lifted clear of the earth ten bear-skins all at one time; and then he slew Duke Lórikus, his foster-father, and with him his wife Lórá, or Glórá, and took into his own hands the realm of Thrace, which we call Thrúdheim. Then he went forth far and wide over the lands, and sought out every quarter of the earth, overcoming alone all berserks and giants, and one dragon, greatest of all dragons, and many beasts. In the northern half of his kingdom he found the prophetess that is called Síbil, whom we call Sif, and wedded her. The lineage of Sif I cannot tell; she was fairest of all women, and her hair was like gold. Their son was Lóridi, who resembled his father; his son was Einridi, his son Vingethor, his son Vingener, his son Móda, his son Magi, his son Seskef, his son Bedvig, his son Athra (whom we call Annarr), his son Ítermann, his son Heremód, his son Skjaldun (whom we call Skjöld), his son Bjáf (whom we call Bjárr), his son Ját, his son Gudólfr, his son Finn, his son Fríallaf (whom we call Fridleifr); his son was he who is named Vóden, whom we call Odin: he was a man far-famed for wisdom and every accomplishment. His wife was Frígídá, whom we call Frigg.

IV

Odin had second sight, and his wife also; and from their foreknowledge he found that his name should be exalted in the northern part of the world and glorified above the fame of all other kings. Therefore, he made ready to journey out of Turkland, and was accompanied by a great multitude of people, young folk and old, men and women; and they had with them much goods of great price. And wherever they went over the lands of the earth, many glorious things were spoken of them, so that they were held more like gods than men. They made no end to their journeying till they were come north into the land that is now called Saxland; there Odin tarried for a long space, and took the land into his own hand, far and wide.

In that land Odin set up three of his sons for land-wardens. One was named Vegdeg; he was a mighty king and ruled over East Saxland; his son was Vitgils; his sons were Vitta, Heingistr's father, and Sigarr, father of Svebdeg, whom we call Svipdagr. The second son of Odin was Beldeg, whom we call Baldr: he had the land which is now called Westphalia. His son was Brandr, his son Frjódigar, (whom we call Fródi), his son Freóvin, his son Uvigg, his son Gevis (whom we call Gave). Odin's third son is named Sigi, his son Rerir. These the forefathers ruled over what is now called Frankland; and thence is descended the house known as Völsungs. From all these are sprung many and great houses.

Then Odin began his way northward, and came into the land which they called Reidgothland; and in that land he took possession of all that pleased him. He set up over the land that son of his called Skjöldr, whose son was Fridleifr;—and thence descends the house of the Skjöldungs: these are the kings of the Danes. And what was then called Reidgothland is now called Jutland.

V

After that he went northward, where the land is called Sweden; the king there was named Gylfi. When the king learned of the coming of those men of Asia, who were called Aesir, he went to meet them, and made offer to them that Odin should have such power in his realm as he himself wielded. And such well-being followed ever upon their footsteps, that in whatsoever lands they dwelt were good seasons and peace; and all believed that they caused these things, for the lords of the land perceived that they were unlike other men whom they had seen, both in fairness and also in wisdom.

The fields and the choice lands in that place seemed fair to Odin, and he chose for himself the site of a city which is now called Sigtún. There he established chieftains in the fashion which had prevailed in Troy; he set up also twelve head-men to be doomsmen over the people and to judge the laws of the land; and he ordained also all laws as, there had been before, in Troy, and according to the customs of the Turks. After that he went into the north, until he was stopped by the sea, which men thought lay around all the lands of the earth; and there he set his son over this kingdom, which is now called Norway. This king was Saemingr; the kings of Norway trace their lineage from him, and so do also the jarls and the other mighty men, as is said in the Háleygjatal. Odin had with him one of his sons called Yngvi, who was king in Sweden after him; and those houses come from him that are named Ynglings. The Aesir took wives of the land for themselves, and some also for their sons; and these kindreds became many in number, so that throughout Saxland, and thence all over the region of the north, they spread out until their tongue, even the speech of the men of Asia, was the native tongue over all these lands. Therefore men think that they can perceive, from their forefathers' names which are written down, that those names belonged to

this tongue, and that the Aesir brought the tongue hither into the northern region, into Norway and into Sweden, into Denmark and into Saxland. But in England there are ancient lists of land-names and place-names which may show that these names came from another tongue than this.

THE PROSE EDDA

GYLFAGINNING - HERE BEGINS THE BEGUILING OF GYLFI

I. King Gylfi ruled the land that men now call Sweden. It is told of him that he gave to a wandering woman, in return for her merry-making, a plow-land in his realm, as much as four oxen might turn up in a day and a night. But this woman was of the kin of the Aesir; she was named Gefjun. She took from the north, out of Jötunheim, four oxen which were the soils of a certain giant and, herself, and set them before the plow. And the plow cut so wide and so deep that it loosened up the land; and the oxen drew the land out into the sea and to the westward, and stopped in a certain sound. There Gefjun set the land, and gave it a name, calling it Selund. And from that time on, the spot whence the land had been torn up is water: it is now called the Lögr in Sweden; and bays lie in that lake even as the headlands in Selund. Thus says Bragi, the ancient skald:

*Gefjun drew from Gylfi, gladly the wave-trove's free-hold,
Till from the running beasts sweat reeked, to Denmark's increase;
he oxen bore, moreover, eight eyes, gleaming brow-lights,
O'er the field's wide: booty, and four heads in their plowing.*

II. King Gylfi was a wise man and skilled in magic; he was much troubled that the Aesir-people were so cunning that all things went according to their will. He pondered whether this might proceed from their own nature, or whether the divine powers which they worshipped might ordain such things. He set out on his way to Ásgard, going secretly, and clad himself in the likeness of an old man, with which he dissembled. But the Aesir were wiser in this matter, having second sight; and they saw his journeying before ever he came, and prepared against him deceptions of the eye. When he came into the town, he saw there a hall so high that he could not easily make out the top of it: its thatching was laid with golden shields after the fashion of a shingled roof. So also says Thjódólfr of Hvin, that Valhall was thatched with shields:

*On their backs they let beam, sore battered with stones,
Odin's hall-shingles, the shrewd sea-farers.*

In the hall-doorway Gylfi saw a man juggling with anlaces, having seven in the air at one time. This man asked of him his name. He called himself Gangleri, and said

he had come by the paths of the serpent, and prayed for lodging for the night, asking: "Who owns the hall?" The other replied that it was their king; "and I will attend thee to see him; then shalt thou thyself ask him concerning his; name;" and the man wheeled about before him into the hall, and he went after, and straightway the door closed itself on his heels. There he saw a great room and much people, some with games, some drinking; and some had weapons and were fighting. Then he looked about him, and thought unbelievable many things which he saw; and he said:

*All the gateways, ere one goes out
Should one scan:
For 't is uncertain, where sit the unfriendly,
On the bench before thee.*

He saw three high-seats, each above the other, and three men sat thereon,-one on each. And he asked what might be the name of those lords. He who had conducted him in answered that the one who, sat on the nethermost high-seat was a king, "and his name is Hárr; but the next is named Janhárr; and he who is uppermost is called Thridi." Then Hárr asked the newcomer whether his errand were more than for the meat and drink which were always at his command, as for every one there in the Hall of the High One. He answered that he first desired to learn whether there were any wise man there within. Hárr said, that he should not escape whole from thence unless he were wiser.

*And stand thou forth, who speirest;
Who answers, he shall sit.*

III. Gangleri began his questioning thus: "Who is foremost, or oldest, of all the gods?" Hárr answered: "He is called in our speech Allfather, but in the Elder Ásgard he had twelve names: one is Allfather; the second is Lord, or Lord of Hosts; the third is Nikarr, or Spear-Lord; the fourth is Nikudr, or Striker; the fifth is Knower of Many Things; the sixth, Fulfiller of Wishes; the seventh, Far-Speaking One; the eighth, The Shaker, or He that Putteth the Armies to Flight; the ninth, The Burner; the tenth, The Destroyer; the eleventh, The Protector; the twelfth, Gelding."

Then asked Gangleri: "Where is this god, or what power hath he, or what hath he wrought that is a glorious deed?" Hárr made answer: "He lives throughout all ages and governs all his realm, and directs all things, great and small." Then said Jafnhárr: "He fashioned heaven and earth and air, and all things which are in them." Then spake Thridi: "The greatest of all is this: that he made man, and gave him the spirit, which shall live and never perish, though the flesh-frame rot to mould, or burn to ashes; and all men shall live, such as are just in action, and be with himself in the place called Gimlé. But evil men go to Hel and thence down to the Misty Hel; and that is down in the ninth world." Then said Gangleri: "What did he before heaven and earth were made?" And Hárr answered: "He was then with the Rime-Giants."

IV. Gangleri said: "What was the beginning, or how began it, or what was before it?" Hárr answered: "As is told in Völuspá:

*Erst was the age, when nothing was:
Nor sand nor sea, nor chilling stream-waves;
Earth was not found, nor Ether-Heaven,—
A Yawning Gap, but grass was none."*

Then said Jafnhárr: "It was many ages before the earth was shaped that the Mist-World was made; and midmost within it lies the well that is called Hvergelmir, from which spring the rivers called Svöl, Gunnthrá, Fjörm, Fimbulthul, Slídr and Hríd, Sylgr and Ylgr, Víd, Leiptr; Gjöll is hard by Hel-gates." And Thrídi said: "Yet first was the world in the southern region, which was named Múspell; it is light and hot; that region is glowing and burning, and impassable to such as are outlanders and have not their holdings there. He who sits there at the land's-end, to defend the land, is called Surtr; he brandishes a flaming sword, and at the end of the world he shall go forth and harry, and overcome all the gods, and burn all the world with fire; thus is said in Völuspá:

*Surtr fares from the south, with switch-eating flame,—
On his sword shimmers, the sun of the War-Gods;
The rock-crags crash; the fiends are reeling;
Heroes tread Hel-way; Heaven is cloven."*

V. Gangleri asked: "How were things wrought, ere the races were and the tribes of men increased?" Then said Hárr: "The streams called Ice-waves, those which were so long come from the fountain-heads that the yeasty venom upon them had hardened like the slag that runs out of the fire,—these then became ice; and when the ice halted and ceased to run, then it froze over above. But the drizzling rain that rose from the venom congealed to rime, and the rime increased, frost over frost, each over the other, even into Ginnungagap, the Yawning Void." Then spake Jafnhárr: "Ginnungagap, which faced toward the northern quarter, became filled with heaviness, and masses of ice and rime, and from within, drizzling rain and gusts; but the southern part of the Yawning Void was lighted by those sparks and glowing masses which flew out of Múspellheim." And Thrídi said: "Just as cold arose out of Niflheim, and all terrible things, so also all that looked toward Múspellheim became hot and glowing; but Ginnungagap was as mild as windless air, and when the breath of heat met the rime, so that it melted and dripped, life was quickened from the yeast-drops, by the power of that which sent the heat, and became a man's form. And that man is named Ymir, but the Rime-Giants call him Aurgelimir; and thence are come the races of the Rime-Giants, as it says in Völuspá the Less:

*All the witches spring from Witolf,
All the warlocks are of Willharm,*

*And the spell-singers spring from Swarthead;
All the ogres of Ymir come.
But concerning this says Vafthrúdnir the giant:*

*Out of the Ice-waves issued venom-drops,
Waxing until a giant was;
Thence are our kindred come all together,—
So it is they are savage forever.”*

Then said Gangleri: "How did the races grow thence, or after what fashion was it brought to pass that more men came into being? Or do ye hold him God, of whom ye but now spake?" And Jafnhárr answered: "By no means do we acknowledge him God; he was evil and all his kindred: we call them Rime-Giants. Now it is said that when he slept, a sweat came upon him, and there grew under his left hand a man and a woman, and one of his feet begat a son with the other; and thus the races are come; these are the Rime-Giants. The old Rime-Giant, him we call Ymir."

VI. Then said Gangleri: "Where dwelt Ymir, or wherein did he find sustenance?" Hárr answered: "Straightway after the rime dripped, there sprang from it the cow called Audumla; four streams of milk ran from her udders, and she nourished Ymir." Then asked Gangleri: "Wherewithal was the cow nourished?" And Hárr made answer:

"She licked the ice-blocks, which were salty; and the first day that she licked the blocks, there came forth from the blocks in the evening a man's hair; the second day, a man's head; the third day the whole man was there. He is named Búri: he was fair of feature, great and mighty. He begat a son called Borr, who wedded the woman named Bestla, daughter of Bölthorn the giant; and they had three sons: one was Odin, the second Vili, the third Vé. And this is my belief, that he, Odin, with his brothers, must be ruler of heaven and earth; we hold that he must be so called; so is that man called whom we know to be mightiest and most worthy of honor, and ye do well to let him be so called."

VII. Then said Gangleri: "What covenant was between them, or which was the stronger?" And Hárr answered: "The sons of Borr slew Ymir the giant; lo, where he fell there gushed forth so much blood out of his wounds that with it they drowned all the race of the Rime-Giants, save that one, whom giants call Bergelmir, escaped with his household; he went upon his ship, and his wife with him, and they were safe there. And from them are come the races of the Rime-Giants, as is said here:

*Untold ages ere earth was shapen,
Then was Bergelmir born;
That first I recall, how the famous wise giant
On the deck of the ship was laid down.”*

VIII. Then said Gangleri: "What was done then by Borr's sons, if thou believe that they be gods?" Hárr replied: "In this matter there is no little to be said. They took

Ymir and bore him into the middle of the Yawning Void, and made of him the earth: of his blood the sea and the waters; the land was made of his flesh, and the crags of his bones; gravel and stones they fashioned from his teeth and his grinders and from those bones that were broken." And Jafnhárr said: "Of the blood, which ran and welled forth freely out of his wounds, they made the sea, when they had formed and made firm the earth together, and laid the sea in a ring round about her; and it may well seem a hard thing to most men to cross over it." Then said Thridi: "They took his skull also, and made of it the heaven, and set it up over the earth with four corners; and under each corner they set a dwarf: the names of these are East, West, North, and South. Then they took the glowing embers and sparks that burst forth and had been cast out of Múspellheim, and set them in the midst of the Yawning Void, in the heaven, both above and below, to illumine heaven and earth. They assigned places to all fires: to some in heaven, some wandered free under the heavens; nevertheless, to these also they gave a place, and shaped them courses. It is said in old "songs, that from these the days were reckoned, and the tale of years told, as is said in Völuspá:

*The sun knew not where she had housing;
The moon knew not what Might he had;
The stars knew not where stood their places.
Thus was it ere the earth was fashioned."*

Then said Gangleri: These are great tidings which I now hear; that is a wondrous great piece of craftsmanship, and cunningly made. How was the earth contrived?" And Hárr answered: "She is ring-shaped without, and round about her without lieth the deep sea; and along the strand of that sea they gave lands to the races of giants for habitation. But on the inner earth they made a citadel round about the world against the hostility of the giants, and for their citadel they raised up the brows of Ymir the giant, and called that place Midgard. They took also his brain and cast it in the air, and made from it the clouds, as is here said:

*Of Ymir's flesh the earth was fashioned,
And of his sweat the sea;
Crags of his bones, trees of his hair,
And of his skull the sky.
Then of his brows the blithe gods made
Midgard for sons of men;
And of his brain the bitter-mooded
Clouds were all created."*

IX. Then said Gangleri: "Much indeed they had accomplished then, methinks, when earth and heaven were made, and the sun and the constellations of heaven were fixed, and division was made of days; now whence come the men that people the world?" And

Hárr answered: 'When the sons of Borr were walking along the sea-strand, they found two trees, and took up the trees and shaped men of them: the first gave them spirit and life; the second, wit and feeling; the third, form, speech, hearing, and sight. They gave them clothing and names: the male was called Askr, and the female Embla, and of them was mankind begotten, which received a dwelling-place under Midgard. Next they made for themselves in the middle of the world a city which is called Ásgard; men call it Troy. There dwelt the gods and their kindred; and many tidings and tales of it have come to pass both on earth and aloft. There is one abode called Hlidskjálf, and when Allfather sat in the high-seat there, he looked out over the whole world and saw every man's acts, and knew all things which he saw. His wife was called Frigg daughter of Fjörgvinn; and of their blood is come that kindred which we call the races of the Aesir, that have peopled the Elder Ásgard, and those kingdoms which pertain to it; and that is a divine race. For this reason must he be called Allfather: because he is father of all the gods and of men, and of all that was fulfilled of him and of his might. The Earth was his daughter and his wife; on her he begot the first son, which is Ása-Thor: strength and prowess attend him, wherewith he overcometh all living things.

X. "Nörfi or Narfi is the name of a giant that dwelt in Jötunheim: he had a daughter called Night; she was swarthy and dark, as befitted her race. She was given to the man named Naglfari; their son was Audr. Afterward she was wedded to him that was called Annarr; Jörd was their daughter. Last of all Dayspring had her, and he was of the race of the Aesir; their son was Day: he was radiant and fair after his father. Then Allfather took Night, and Day her son, and gave to them two horses and two chariots, and sent them up into the heavens, to ride round about the earth every two half-days. Night rides before with the horse named Frosty-Mane, and on each morning he bedews the earth with the foam from his bit. The horse that Day has is called Sheen-Mane, and he illumines all the air and the earth from his mane."

XI. Then said Gangleri: "How does he govern the course of the sun or of the moon?" Hárr answered: "A certain man was named Mundilfari, who had two children; they were so fair and comely that he called his son Moon, and his daughter Sun, and wedded her to the man called Glenr. But the gods were incensed at that insolence, and took the brother and sister, and set them up in the heavens; they caused Sun to drive those horses that drew the chariot of the sun, which the gods had fashioned, for the world's illumination, from that glowing stuff which flew out of Múspellheim. Those horses are called thus: Early-Wake and All-Strong; and under the shoulders of the horses the gods set two wind-bags to cool them, but in some records that is called 'iron-coolness.' Moon steers the course of the moon, and determines its waxing and waning. He took from the earth-two children, called Bil and Hjúki, they that went from the well called Byrgir, bearing on their shoulders the cask called Sægr, and the pole Simul. Their father is named Vidfinnr. These children follow Moon, as may be seen from the earth."

XII. Then said Gangleri: "The sun fares swiftly, and almost as if she were afraid: she could not hasten her course any the more if she feared her destruction." Then Hárr made answer: "It is no marvel that she hastens furiously: close cometh he that seeks

her, and she has no escape save to run away." Then said Gangleri: "Who is he that causes her this disquiet?" Hárr replied: "It is two wolves; and he that runs after her is called Skoll; she fears him, and he shall take her. But he that leaps before her is called Hati Hródvitnisson. He is eager to seize the moon; and so it must be." Then said Gangleri: "What is the race of the wolves?" Hárr answered: "A witch dwells to the east of Midgard, in the forest called Ironwood: in that wood dwell the troll-women, who are known as Ironwood-Women. The old witch bears many giants for sons, and all in the shape of wolves; and from this source are these wolves sprung. The saying runs thus: from this race shall come one that shall be mightiest of all, he that is named Moon-Hound; he shall be filled with the flesh of all those men that die, and he shall swallow the moon, and sprinkle with blood the heavens and all the lair; thereof-shall the sun lose her shining, and the winds in that day shall be unquiet and roar on every side. So it says in Völuspá:

*Eastward dwells the Old One in Ironwood,
And there gives birth to Fenrir's brethren;
There shall spring of them all a certain one,
The moon's taker in troll's likeness.
He is filled with flesh of fey men.
Reddens the gods' seats with ruddy blood-gouts;
Swart becomes sunshine in summers after,
The weather all shifty. Wit ye yet, or what?"*

XIII. Then said Gangleri: "What is the way to heaven from earth?" Then Hárr answered, and laughed aloud: "Now, that is not wisely asked; has it not been told thee, that the gods made a bridge from earth, to heaven, called Bifröst? Thou must have seen it; it may be that ye call it rainbow.' It is of three colors, and very strong, and made with cunning and with more magic art than other works of craftsmanship. But strong as it is, yet must it be broken, when the sons of Múspell shall go forth harrying and ride it, and swim their horses over great rivers; thus they shall proceed." Then said Gangleri: "To my thinking the gods did not build the bridge honestly, seeing that it could be broken, and they able to make it as they would." Then Hárr replied: "The gods are not deserving of reproof because of this work of skill: a good bridge is Bifröst, but nothing in this world is of such nature that it may be relied on when the sons of Múspell go a-harrying."

XIV. Then said Gangleri: "What did Allfather then do when Ásgard was made?" Hárr answered: "In the beginning he established rulers, and bade them ordain fates with him, and give counsel concerning the planning of the town; that was in the place which is called Ida-field, in the midst of the town. It was their first work to make that court in which their twelve seats stand, and another, the high-seat which Allfather himself has. That house is the best-made of any on earth, and the greatest; without and within, it is all like one piece of gold; men call it Gladsheim. They made also a

second hall: that was a shrine which the goddesses had, and it was a very fair house; men call it Vingólf. Next they fashioned a house, wherein they placed a forge, and made besides a hammer, tongs, and anvil, and by means of these, all other tools. After this they smithied metal and stone and wood, and wrought so abundantly that metal which is called gold, that they had all their household ware and all dishes of gold; and that time is called the Age of Gold, before it was spoiled by the coming of the Women, even those who came out of Jötunheim. Next after this, the gods enthroned themselves in their seats and held judgment, and called to mind whence the dwarves had quickened in the mould and underneath in the earth, even as do maggots in flesh. The dwarves had first received shape and life in the flesh of Ymir, and were then maggots; but by decree of the gods had become conscious with the intelligence of men, and had human shape. And nevertheless they dwell in the earth and in stones. Módsognir was the first, and Durinn the second; so it says in Völuspá.

*Then strode all the mighty to the seats of judgment,
The gods most holy, and together held counsel,
Who should of dwarves shape the peoples*

From the bloody surge and the Blue One's bones. They made many in man's likeness, Dwarves in the earth, as Durinn said.

And these, says the Sibyl, are their names: Nýi and Nidi, Nordri and Sudri, Austri, Vestri, Althjófr, Dvalinn; Nár, Náinn, Nípingr, Dáinn, Bifurr, Báfurr, Bömburr, Nóri, Óri, Ónarr, Óinn, Mjödvitnir, Vigr and Gandálfr, Vindálfr, Thorinn, Fíli, Kíli, Fundinn, Váli; Thrór, Thróinn, Thekk, Litr and Vitr, Nýr, Nýrádr, Rekk, Rádsvidr. And these also are dwarves and dwell in stones, but the first in mould: Draupnir, Dól-gthvari, Hörr, Hugstari, Hledjólf, Glóinn; Dóri, Óri, Dúfr, Andvari, Heptifíli, Hárr, Svíarr. And these proceed from Svarinshaugr to Aurvangar on Jöruplain, and thence is Lovarr come; these are their names: Skirfir, Virfir Skáfidr, Ái, Álfr, Yngvi, Eikinskjaldi, Falr, Frosti, Fidr, Ginnarr."

XV. Then said Gangleri: "Where is the chief abode or holy place of the gods?" Hárr answered: "That is at the Ash of Yggdrasill; there the gods must give judgment everyday." Then Gangleri asked: "What is to be said concerning that place?" Then said Jafnhárr: "The Ash is greatest of all trees and best: its limbs spread out over all the world and stand above heaven. Three roots of the tree uphold it and stand exceeding broad: one is among the Aesir; another among the Rime-Giants, in that place where aforetime was the Yawning Void; the third stands over Niflheim, and under that root is Hvergelmir, and Nídhöggr gnaws the root from below. But under that root which turns toward the Rime-Giants is Mímir's Well, wherein wisdom and understanding are stored; and he is called Mímir, who keeps the well. He is full of ancient lore, since he drinks of the well from the Gjallar-Horn. Thither came Allfather and craved one drink of the well; but he got it not until he had laid his eye in pledge. So says Völuspá:

All know I, Odin, where the eye thou hiddest,

*In the wide-renowned well of Mímir;
Mímir drinks mead every morning
From Valfather's wage. Wit ye yet, or what?*

The third root of the Ash stands in heaven; and under that root is the well which is very holy, that is called the Well of Urdr; there the gods hold their tribunal. Each day the Aesir ride thither up over Bifröst, which is also called the Aesir's Bridge. These are the names of the Aesir's steeds: Sleipnir is best, which Odin has; he has eight feet. The second is Gladr, the third Gyllir, the fourth Glenr, the fifth Skeidbrimir, the sixth Silfrintoppr, the seventh Sinir, the eighth Gisl, the ninth Falhófnir, the tenth. Gulltoppr, the eleventh Léttfeti. Baldr's horse was burnt with him; and Thor walks to the judgment, and wades those rivers which are called thus:

*Körmt and Örmr and the Kerlaugs twain,
Them shall Thor wade
Every day when he goes to doom
At Ash Yggdrasill;
For the Aesir's Bridge burns all with flame,
And the holy waters howl."*

Then said Gangleri: "Does fire burn over Bifröst?" Hárr replied: "That which thou seest to be red in the bow is burning fire; the Hill-Giants might go up to heaven, if passage on Bifröst were open to all those who would cross. There are many fair places in heaven, and over everything there a godlike watch is kept. A hall stands there, fair, under the ash by the well, and out of that hall come three maids, who are called thus: Urdr, Verdandi, Skuld; these maids determine the period of men's lives: we call them Norns; but there are many norns: those who come to each child that is born, to appoint his life; these are of the race of the gods, but the second are of the Elf-people, and the third are of the kindred of the dwarves, as it is said here:

*Most sundered in birth I say the Norns are;
They claim no common kin:
Some are of Aesir-kin, some are of Elf-kind,
Some are Dvalinn's daughters."*

Then said Gangleri: "If the Norns determine the weards of men, then they apportion exceeding unevenly, seeing that some have a pleasant and luxurious life, but others have little worldly goods or fame; some have long life, others short." Hárr said: "Good norns and of honorable race appoint good life; but those men that suffer evil fortunes are governed by evil norns."

XVI. Then said Gangleri: "What more mighty wonders are to be told of the Ash?" Hárr replied: "Much is to be told of it. An eagle sits in the limbs of the Ash, and he has understanding of many a thing; and between his eyes sits the hawk that is

called Vedrfölnir. The squirrel called Ratatöskr runs up and down the length of the Ash, bearing envious words between the eagle and Nídhöggr; and four harts run in the limbs of the Ash and bite the leaves. They are called thus: Dáinn, Dvalinn, Duneyrr, Durathrór. Moreover, so many serpents are in Hvergelmir with Nídhöggr, that no tongue can tell them, as is here said:

*Ash Yggdrasil suffers anguish,
More than men know of:
The stag bites above; on the side it rotteth,
And Nídhöggr gnaws from below.
And it is further said:*

*More serpents lie under Yggdrasil's stock
Than every unwise ape can think:
Góinn and Móinn (they're Grafvitnir's sons),
Grábakr and Grafvölludr;
Ófnir and Sváfnir I think shall aye
Tear the trunk's twigs.*

It is further said that these Norns who dwell by the Well of Urdr take water of the well every day, and with it that clay which lies about the well, and sprinkle it over the Ash, to the end that its limbs shall not wither nor rot; for that water is so holy that all things which come there into the well become as white as the film which lies within the egg-shell,—as is here said:

*I know an Ash standing called Yggdrasil,
A high tree sprinkled with snow-white clay;
Thence come the dews in the dale that fall—
It stands ever green above Urdr's Well.*

That dew which falls from it onto the earth is called by men honey-dew, and thereon are bees nourished. Two fowls are fed in Urdr's Well: they are called Swans, and from those fowls has come the race of birds which is so called."

XVII. Then said Gangleri: "Thou knowest many tidings to tell of the heaven. What chief abodes are there more than at Urdr's Well?" Hárr said: "Many places are there, and glorious. That which is called Álfheimr is one, where dwell the peoples called Light-Elves; but the Dark-Elves dwell down in the earth, and they are unlike in appearance, but by far more unlike in nature. The Light-Elves are fairer to look upon than the sun, but the Dark-Elves are blacker than pitch. Then there is also in that place the abode called Breidablik, and there is not in heaven a fairer dwelling. There, too, is the one called Glitnir, whose walls, and all its posts and pillars, are of red gold, but its roof of silver. There is also the abode called Himinbjörg; it stands at heaven's end by the bridge-head, in the place where Bifröst joins heaven. Another great abode

is there, which is named Valaskjálf; Odin possesses that dwelling; the gods made it and thatched it with sheer silver, and in this hall is the Hlidskjálf, the high-seat so called. Whenever Allfather sits in that seat, he surveys all lands. At the southern end of heaven is that hall which is fairest of all, and brighter than the sun; it is called Gimlé. It shall stand when both heaven and earth have departed; and good men and of righteous conversation shall dwell therein: so it is said in Völuspá.—

*A hall I know standing than the sun fairer,
Thatched with gold in Gimlé bright;
There shall dwell the doers of righteousness
And ever and ever enjoy delight.”*

Then said Gangleri: "What shall guard this place, when the flame of Surtr shall consume heaven and earth?" Hárr answered: "It is sad that another heaven is to the southward and upward of this one, and it is called Andlangr; but the third heaven is yet above that, and it is called Víðbláinn, and in that heaven we think this abode is. But we believe that none but Light-Elves inhabit these mansions now."

XVIII. Then said Gangleri: "Whence comes the wind? It is strong, so that it stirs great seas, and it swells fire; but, strong as it is, none may see it, for it is wonderfully shapen." Then said Hárr: "That I am well able to tell thee. At the northward end of heaven sits the giant called Hræsvelgr: he has the plumes of an eagle, and when he stretches his wings for flight, then the wind rises from under his wings, as is here said:

*Hraesvelgr hight he who sits at heaven's ending,
Giant in eagle's coat;
From his wings, they say, the wind cometh
All men-folk over.”*

XIX. Then said Gangleri: "Why is there so much difference, that summer should be hot, but winter cold?" Hárr answered: "A wise man would not ask thus, seeing that all are able to tell this; but if thou alone art become-so slight of understanding as not to have heard it, then I will yet permit that thou shouldst rather ask foolishly once, than that thou shouldst be kept longer in ignorance of a thing which it is proper to know. He is called Svásudr who is father of Summer; and he is of pleasant nature, so that from his name whatsoever is pleasant is called 'sweet.'

But the father of Winter is variously called Vindljóni or Vindsvalr; he is the son of Vásadr; and these were kinsmen grim and chilly-breasted, and Winter has their temper."

XX. Then said Gangleri: "Who are the Aesir, they in whom it behoves men to believe?" Hárr answered: "The divine Aesir are twelve." Then said Jafnhárr: "Not less holy are the Ásynjur, the goddesses, and they are of no less authority." Then said Thridi: "Odin is highest and eldest of the Aesir: he rules all things, and mighty as are

the other gods, they all serve him as children obey a father. Frigg is his wife, and she knows all the fates of men, though she speaks no prophecy,—as is said here, when Odin himself spake with him of the esir whom men call Loki:

*Thou art mad now, Loki, and reft of mind,—
Why, Loki, leav'st thou not off?
Frigg, methinks, is wise in all fates,
Though herself say them not!*

Odin is called Allfather because he is father of all the gods. He is also called Father of the Slain, because all those that fall in battle are the sons of his adopt on; for them he appoints Valhall and Vingólf, and they are then called Champions. He is also called God of the Hanged, God of Gods, God of Cargoes; and he has also been named in many more ways, after he had come to King Geirrödr:

We were called Grímr and Gangleri, Herjann, Hjálmbéri; Thekk, Thrídi, Thudr, Udr, Helblindi, Hárr. Sadr, Svipall, Sann-getall, Herteitr, Hnikarr; Bileygr, Báleygr, Bölverkr, Fjölnir, Grímnir, Glapsvidr, Fjölsvidr. Sídhöttr, Sidskeggr, Sigfödr, Hnikudr, Alfödr, Atrídr, Farmatýr; Óski, Ómi, Jafnhárr, Bifindi, Göndlir, Hárbardr. Svidurr, Svidrir, Jálkr, Kjalarr, Vidurr, Thrór, Yggr, Thundr; Vagr, Skilfingr, Váfudr, Hropatátýr, Gautr, Veratátýr.”

Then said Gangleri: ”Exceeding many names have ye given him; and, by my faith, it must indeed be a goodly wit that knows all the lore and the examples of what chances have brought about each of these names.” Then Hárr made answer: ”It is truly a vast sum of knowledge to gather together and set forth fittingly. But it is briefest to tell thee that most of his names have been given him by reason of this chance: there being so many branches of tongues in the world, all peoples believed that it was needful for them to turn his name into their own tongue, by which they might the better invoke him and entreat him on their own behalf. But some occasions for these names arose in his wanderings; and that matter is recorded in tales. Nor canst thou ever be called a wise man if thou shalt not be able to tell of those great events.”

XXI. Then said Gangleri: ”What are the names of the other Aesir, or what is their office, or what deeds of renown have they done?” Hárr answered: ”Thor is the foremost of them, he that is called Thor of the Aesir, or Öku-Thor; he is strongest of all the gods and men. He has his realm in the place called Thrúdvangar, and his hall is called Bilskirnir; in that hall are five hundred rooms and forty. That is the greatest house that men know of; It is thus said in Grímnismál:

*Five hundred floors and more than forty,
So reckon I Bilskirnir with bending ways;
Of those houses that I know of hall-roofed,
My son's I know the most.*

Thor has two he-goats, that are called Tooth-Gnasher and Tooth-Gritter, and a chariot wherein he drives, and the he-goats draw the chariot; therefore is he called Öku-Thor. He has also three things of great price: one is the hammer Mjöllnir, which the Rime-Giants and the Hill-Giants know, when it is raised on high; and that is no wonder, it has bruised many a skull among their fathers or their kinsmen. He has a second costly thing, best of all: the girdle of might; and when he clasps it about him, then the godlike strength within him is increased by half. Yet a third thing he has, in which there is much virtue: his iron gloves; he cannot do without them when he uses his hammer-shaft. But no one is so wise that he can tell all his mighty works; yet I can tell thee so much tidings of him that the hours would be spent before all that I know were told."

XXII. Then said Gangleri: "I would ask tidings of more Aesir." Hárr replied: "The second son of Odin is Baldr, and good things are to be said of him. He is best, and all praise him; he is so fair of feature, and so bright, that light shines from him. A certain herb is so white that it is likened to Baldr's brow; of all grasses it is whitest, and by it thou mayest judge his fairness, both in hair and in body. He is the wisest of the Aesir, and the fairest-spoken and most gracious; and that quality attends him, that none may gainsay his judgments. He dwells in the place called Breidablik, which is in heaven; in that place may nothing unclean be, even as is said here:

*Breidablik 't is called, where Baldr has
A hall made for himself:
In that land where I know lie
Fewest baneful runes.*

XXIII. "The third among the Aesir is he that is called Njördr: he dwells in heaven, in the abode called Nóatún. He rules the course of the wind, and stills sea and fire; on him shall men call for voyages and for hunting. He is so prosperous and abounding in wealth, that he may give them great plenty of lands or of gear; and him shall men invoke for such things. Njördr is not of the race of the Aesir: he was reared in the land of the Vanir, but the Vanir delivered him as hostage to the gods, and took for hostage in exchange him that men call Hoenir; he became an atonement between the gods and the Vanir. Njördr has to wife the woman called Skadi, daughter of Thjazi the giant. Skadi would fain dwell in the abode which her father had had, which is on certain mountains, in the place called Thrymheimr; but Njördr would be near the sea. They made a compact on these terms: they should be nine nights in Thrymheimr, but the second nine at Nóatún. But when Njördr came down from the mountain back to Nóatún, he sang this lay:

*Loath were the hills to me, I was not long in them,
Nights only nine;
To me the wailing of wolves seemed ill,*

After the song of swans.
Then Skadi sang this:

*Sleep could I never on the sea-beds,
For the wailing of waterfowl;
He wakens me, who comes from the deep—
The sea-mew every morn.*

Then Skadi went up onto the mountain, and dwelt in Thrymheimr. And she goes for the more part on snowshoes and with a bow and arrow, and shoots beasts; she is called Snowshoe-Goddess or Lady of the Snowshoes. So it is said:

*Thrymheimr 't is called, where Thjazi dwelt,
He the hideous giant;
But now Skadi abides, pure bride of the gods,
In her father's ancient freehold.*

XXIV. "Njördr in Nóatún begot afterward two children: the son was called Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of face and mighty. Freyr is the most renowned of the Aesir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the prosperity of men. But Freyja is the most renowned of the goddesses; she has in heaven the dwelling called Fólkvangr, and wheresoever she rides to the strife, she has one-half of the kill, and Odin half, as is here said:

*Fólkvangr 't is called, where Freyja rules
Degrees of seats in the hall;
Half the kill she keepeth each day,
And half Odin hath.*

Her hall Sessrúmnir is great and fair. When she goes forth, she drives her cats and sits in a chariot; she is most conformable to man's prayers, and from her name comes the name of honor, Frú, by which noblewomen are called. Songs of love are well-pleasing to her; it is good to call on her for furtherance in love."

XXV. Then said Gangleri: "Great in power do these Aesir seem to me; nor is it a marvel, that much authority attends you who are said to possess understanding of the gods, and know which one men should call on for what boon soever. Or are the gods yet more?" Hárr said: "Yet remains that one of the Aesir who is called Týr: he is most daring, and best in stoutness of heart, and he has much authority over victory in battle; it is good for men of valor to invoke him. It is a proverb, that he is Týr-valiant, who surpasses other men and does not waver. He is wise, so that it is also said, that he that is wisest is Týr-prudent. This is one token of his daring: when the Aesir enticed Fenris-Wolf to take upon him the fetter Gleipnir, the wolf did not believe them, that

they would loose him, until they laid Týr's hand into his mouth as a pledge. But when the Aesir would not loose him, then he bit off the hand at the place now called 'the wolf's joint;' and Týr is one-handed, and is not called a reconciler of men.

XXVI. "One is called Bragi: he is renowned for wisdom, and most of all for fluency of speech and skill with words. He knows most of skaldship, and after him skaldship is called bragr, and from his name that one is called bragr-man or -woman, who possesses eloquence surpassing others, of women or of men. His wife is Idunn: she guards in her chest of ash those apples which the gods must taste whensoever they grow old; and then they all become young, and so it shall be even unto the Weird of the Gods." Then said Gangleri: "A very great thing, methinks, the gods entrust to the watchfulness and good faith of Idunn." Then said Hárr, laughing loudly: "'T was near being desperate once; I may be able to tell thee of it, but now thou shalt first hear more of the names of the Aesir.

XXVII. "Heimdallr is the name of one: he is called the White God. He is great and holy; nine maids, all sisters, bore him for a son. He is also called Hallinskídi and Gullintanni; his teeth were of gold, and his horse is called Gold-top. He dwells in the place called Himinbjörg, hard by Bifröst: he is the warder of the gods, and sits there by heaven's end to guard the bridge from the Hill-Giants. He needs less sleep than a bird; he sees equally well night and day a hundred leagues from him, and hears how grass grows on the earth or wool on sheep, and everything that has a louder sound. He has that trumpet which is called Gjallar-Horn, and its blast is heard throughout all worlds. Heimdallr's sword is called Head. It is said further:

*Himinbjörg 't is called, where Heimdallr, they say,
Aye has his housing;
There the gods' sentinel drinks in his snug hall
Gladly good mead.*

And furthermore, he himself says in Heimdalar-galdr:

*I am of nine mothers the offspring,
Of sisters nine am I the son.*

XXVIII. "One of the Aesir is named Hödr: he is blind. He is of sufficient strength, but the gods would desire that no occasion should rise of naming this god, for the work of his hands shall long be held in memory among gods and men.

XXIX. "Vidarr is the name of one, the silent god. He has a thick shoe. He is nearly as strong as Thor; in him the gods have great trust in all struggles.

XXX. "One is called Áli or Váli, son of Odin and Rindr: he is daring in fights, and a most fortunate marksman.

XXXI. "One is called Ullr, son of Sif, step-son of Thor; he is so excellent a bowman, and so swift on snowshoes, that none may contend with him. He is also fair of aspect and has the accomplishments of a warrior; it is well to call on him in single-combats.

XXXII. "Forseti is the name of the son of Baldr and Nanna daughter of Nep: he has that hall in heaven which is called Glitnir. All that come to him with such quarrels as arise out of law-suits, all these return thence reconciled. That is the best seat of judgment among gods and men; thus it is said here:

*A hall is called Glitnir, with gold 't is pillared,
And with silver thatched the same;
There Forseti bides the full day through,
And puts to sleep all suits.*

XXXIII. "Also numbered among the Aesir is he whom some call the mischief-monger of the Aesir, and the first father of falsehoods, and blemish of all gods and men: he is named Loki or Loptr, son of Fárbaudi the giant; his mother was Laufey or Nál; his brothers are Býleistr and Helblindi. Loki is beautiful and comely to look upon, evil in spirit., very fickle in habit. He surpassed other men in that wisdom which is called 'sleight,' and had artifices for all occasions; he would ever bring the Aesir into great hardships, and then get them out with crafty counsel. His wife was called Sigyn, their son Nari or Narfi.

XXXIV. Yet more children had Loki. Angrboda was the name of a certain giantess in Jötunheim, with whom Loki gat three children: one was Fenris-Wolf, the second Jörmungandr—that is the Midgard Serpent,—the third is Hel. But when the gods learned that this kindred was nourished in Jötunheim, and when the gods perceived by prophecy that from this kindred great misfortune should befall them; and since it seemed to all that there was great prospect of ill—(first from the mother's blood, and yet worse from the father's)—then Allfather sent gods thither to take the children and bring them to him. When they came to him, straightway he cast the serpent into the deep sea, where he lies about all the land; and this serpent grew so greatly that he lies in the midst of the ocean encompassing all the land, and bites upon his own tail. Hel he cast into Niflheim, and gave to her power over nine worlds, to apportion all abodes among those that were sent to her: that is, men dead of sickness or of old age. She has great possessions there; her walls are exceeding high and her gates great. Her hall is called Sleet-Cold; her dish, Hunger; Famine is her knife; Idler, her thrall; Sloven, her maidservant; Pit of Stumbling, her threshold, by which one enters; Disease, her bed; Gleaming Bale, her bed-hangings. She is half blue-black and half flesh-color (by which she is easily recognized), and very lowering and fierce.

The Wolf the Aesir brought up at home, and Týr alone dared go to him to give him meat. But when the gods saw. how much he grew every day, and when all prophecies declared that he was fated to be their destruction, then the Aesir seized upon this way of escape: they made a very strong fetter, which they called Laedingr, and brought it before the Wolf, bidding him try his strength against the fetter. The Wolf thought that no overwhelming odds, and let them do with him as they would. The first time the Wolf lashed out against it, the fetter broke; so he was loosed out of Laedingr. After

this, the Aesir made a second fetter, stronger by half, which they called Drómi, and bade the Wolf try that fetter, saying he would become very famous for strength, if such huge workmanship should not suffice to hold him. But the Wolf thought that this fetter was very strong; he considered also that strength had increased in him since the time he broke Lædingr: it came into his mind, that he must expose himself to danger, if he would become famous. So he let the fetter be laid upon him. Now when the Aesir declared themselves ready, the Wolf shook himself, dashed the fetter against the earth and struggled fiercely with it, spurned against it, and broke the fetter, so that the fragments flew far. So he dashed himself out of Drómi. Since then it passes as a proverb, 'to loose out of Lædingr,' or 'to dash out of Drómi,' when anything is exceeding hard.

"After that the Aesir feared that they should never be able to get the Wolf bound. Then Allfather sent him who is called Skírnir, Freyr's messenger, down into the region of the Black Elves, to certain dwarves, and caused to be made the fetter named Gleipnir. It was made of six things: the noise a cat makes in foot-fall, the beard of a woman, the roots of a rock, the sinews of a bear, the breath of a fish, and the spittle of a bird. And though thou understand not these matters already, yet now thou mayest speedily find certain proof herein, that no lie is told thee: thou must have seen that a woman has no beard, and no sound comes from the leap of a cat, and there are no roots under a rock; and by my troth, all that I have told thee is equally true, though there be some things which thou canst not put to the test."

Then said Gangleri: "This certainly I can perceive to be true: these things which thou hast taken for proof, I can see; but how was the fetter fashioned?" Hárr answered: "That I am well able to tell thee. The fetter was soft and smooth as a silken ribbon, but as sure and strong as thou shalt now hear. Then, when the fetter was brought to the Aesir, they thanked the messenger well for his errand. Then the Aesir went out upon the lake called Ámsvartnir, to the island called Lyngvi, and summoning the Wolf with them, they showed him the silken ribbon and bade him burst it, saying that it was somewhat stouter than appeared from its thickness. And each passed it to the others, and tested it with the strength of their hands and it did not snap; yet they said the Wolf could break it. Then the Wolf answered: 'Touching this matter of the ribbon, it seems to me that I shall get no glory of it, though I snap asunder so slender a band; but if it be made with cunning and wiles, then, though it seem little, that band shall never come upon my feet.' Then the Aesir answered that he could easily snap apart a slight silken band, he who had before broken great fetters of iron,—'but if thou shalt not be able to burst this band, then thou wilt not be able to frighten the gods; and then we shall unloose thee.' The Wolf said: 'If ye bind me so that I shall not get free again, then ye will act in such a way that it will be late ere I receive help from you; I am unwilling that this band should be laid upon me. Yet rather than that ye should impugn my courage, let some one of you lay his hand in my mouth, for a pledge that this is done in good faith.' Each of the Aesir looked at his neighbor, and none was willing to part with his hand, until Týr stretched out his right hand and laid it in the

Wolf's mouth. But when the Wolf lashed out, the fetter became hardened; and the more he struggled against it, the tighter the band was. Then all laughed except Týr: he lost his hand.

"When the Aesir saw that the Wolf was fully bound, they took the chain that was fast to the fetter, and which is called Gelgja, and passed it through a great rock—it is called Gjöll—and fixed the rock deep down into the earth. Then they took a great stone and drove it yet deeper into the earth—it was called Thviti—and used the stone for a fastening-pin. The Wolf gaped terribly, and thrashed about and strove to bite them; they thrust into his mouth a certain sword: the guards caught in his lower jaw, and the point in the upper; that is his gag. He howls hideously, and slaver runs out of his mouth: that is the river called Ván; there he lies till the Weird of the Gods." Then said Gangleri: "Marvellous ill children did Loki beget, but all these brethren are of great might. Yet why did not the Aesir kill the Wolf, seeing they had expectation of evil from him?" Hárr answered: "So greatly did the gods esteem their holy place and sanctuary, that they would not stain it with the Wolf's blood; though (so say the prophecies) he shall be the slayer of Odin."

XXXV. Then said Gangleri: "Which are the Ásynjur? Hárr said: "Frigg is the foremost: she has that estate which is called Fensalir, and it is most glorious. The second is Sága: she dwells at Sökkvabekkr, and that is a great abode. The third is Fir: she is the best physician. The fourth is Gefjun: she is a virgin, and they that die maidens attend her. The fifth is Fulla: she also is a maid, and goes with loose tresses and a golden band about her head; she bears the ashen coffer of Frigg, and has charge over her footgear, and knows her secret counsel. Freyja is most gently born (together with Frigg): she is wedded to the man named Ódr. Their daughter is Hnoss: she is so fair, that those things which are fair and precious are called hnossir. Ódr went away on long journeys, and Freyja weeps for him, and her tears are red gold. Freyja has many names, and this is the cause thereof: that she gave herself sundry names, when she went out among unknown peoples seeking Ódr: she is called Mardöll and Hörn, Gefn, Sýr. Freyja had the necklace Brísinga-men. She is also called Lady of the Vanir. The seventh is Sjöfn: she is most diligent in turning the thoughts of men to love, both of women and of men; and from her name love-longing is called sjafni. The eighth is Lofn: she is so gracious and kindly to those that call upon her, that she wins Allfather's or Frigg's permission for the coming together of mankind in marriage, of women and of men, though it were forbidden before, or seem flatly denied; from her name such permission is called 'leave,' and thus also she is much 'loved' of men. The ninth is Vár: she harkens to the oaths and compacts made between men and women; wherefore such covenants are called 'vows.' She also takes vengeance on those who perjure themselves. The tenth is Vör: she is wise and of searching spirit, so that none can conceal anything from her; it is a saying, that a woman becomes 'ware' of that of which she is informed. The eleventh is Syn: she keeps the door in the hall, and locks it before those who should not go in; she is also set at trials as a defence against such suits as she wishes to refute: thence is the expression, that syn is set forward, when a man denies. The twelfth is Hlín:

she is established as keeper over those men whom Frigg desires to preserve from any danger; thence comes the saying, that he who escapes 'leans.' Snotra is thirteenth: she is prudent and of gentle bearing; from her name a woman or a man who is moderate is called snotr. The fourteenth is Gná: her Frigg sends into divers lands on her errands; she has that horse which runs over sky and sea and is called Hoof-Tosser. Once when she was riding, certain of the Vanir saw her course in the air; then one spake:

*What flieth there? What fareth there,
Or glideth in the air?
She made answer:*

*I fly not, though I fare
And in the air glide
On Hoof-Tosser, him that Hamskerpir
Gat with Gardrofa.*

From Gná's name that which soars high is said to gnaefa. Sól and Bil are reckoned among the Ásynjur, but their nature has been told before.

XXXVI. "There are also those others whose office it is to serve in Valhall, to bear drink and mind the table-service and ale-flagons; thus are they named in Grímnismál:

*Hrist and Mist I would have bear the horn to me,
Skeggjöld and Skögull;
Hildr and Thrúdr, Hlökk and Herfjötur,
Göll and Geirahöd,
Randgrídr and Rádgrídr and Reginleif
These bear the Einherjar ale.*

These are called Valkyrs: them Odin sends to every battle; they determine men's feyness and award victory. Gudr and Róta and the youngest Norn, she who is called Skuld, ride ever to take the slain and decide fights. Jörd, the mother of Thor, and Rindr, Váli's mother, are reckoned among the Ásynjur.

XXXVII. "A certain man was called Gýmir, and his wife Aurboda: she was of the stock of the Hill-Giants; their daughter was Gerdr, who was fairest of all women. It chanced one day that Freyr had gone to Hlidskjálf, and gazed over all the world; but when he looked over into the northern region, he saw on an estate a house great and fair. And toward this house went a woman; when she raised her hands and opened the door before her, brightness gleamed from her hands, both over sky and sea, and all the worlds were illumined of her. Thus his overweening pride, in having presumed to sit in that holy seat, was avenged upon him, that he went away full of sorrow. When he had come home, he spake not, he slept not, he drank not; no man dared speak to him. Then Njördr summoned to him Skírnir, Freyr's foot-page, and bade him go to Freyr and beg speech of him and ask for whose sake he was so bitter that he would

not speak with men. But Skírnir said he would go, albeit unwillingly; and said that evil answers were to be expected of Freyr.

”But when he came to Freyr, straightway he asked why Freyr was so downcast, and spake not with men. Then Freyr answered and said that he had seen a fair woman; and for her sake he was so full of grief that he would not live long if he were not to obtain her. ’And now thou shalt go and woo her on my behalf and have her hither, whether her father will or no. I will reward thee well for it.’ Then Skírnir answered thus: he would go on his errand, but Freyr should give him his own sword—which is so good that it fights of itself;—and Freyr did not refuse, but gave him the sword. Then Skírnir went forth and wooed the woman for him, and received her promise; and nine nights later she was to come to the place called Barrey, and then go to the bridal with Freyr. But when Skírnir told Freyr his answer, then he sang this lay:

*Long is one night, long is the second;
How can I wait through three?
Often a month to me seemed less
Than this one night of waiting.*

This was to blame for Freyr’s being so weaponless, when he fought with Beli, and slew him with the horn of a hart.” Then said Gangleri: ”’T is much to be wondered at, that such a great chief as Freyr is would give away his sword, not having another equally good. It was a great privation to him, when he fought with him called Beli; by my faith, he must have rued that gift.” Then answered Hárr: ”There was small matter in that, when he and Beli met; Freyr could have killed him with his hand. It shall come to pass that Freyr will think a worse thing has come upon him, when he misses his sword on that day that the Sons of Múspell go a-harrying.”

XXXVIII. Then said Gangleri: ”Thou sayest that all those men who have fallen in battle from the beginning of the world are now come to Odin in Valhall. What has he to give them for food? I should think that a very great host must be there.” Then Hárr answered: ”That which thou sayest is true: a very mighty multitude is there, but many more shall be, notwithstanding which it will seem all too small, in the time when the Wolf shall come. But never is so vast a multitude in Valhall that the flesh of that boar shall fail, which is called Sæhrímnir; he is boiled every day and is whole at evening. But this question which thou askest now: I think it likelier that few may be so wise as to be able to report truthfully concerning it. His name who roasts is Andhrímnir, and the kettle is Eldhrímnir; so it is said here:

*Andhrímnir has in Eldhrímnir
Sæhrímnir sodden,
Best of hams; yet how few know
With what food the champions are fed.”*

Then said Gangleri: "Has Odin the same fare as the champions?" Hárr answered: "That food which stands on his board he gives to two wolves which he has, called Geri¹ and Freki;² but no food does he need; wine is both food and drink to him; so it says here:

*Geri and Freki the war-mighty glutteth,
The glorious God of Hosts;
But on wine alone the weapon-glorious
Odin aye liveth.*

The ravens sit on his shoulders and say into his ear all the tidings which they see or hear; they are called thus: Huginn³ and Muninn.⁴ He sends them at day-break to fly about all the world, and they come back at undern-meal; thus he is acquainted with many tidings. Therefore men call him Raven-God, as is said:

*Huginn and Muninn hover each day
The wide earth over;
I fear for Huginn lest he fare not back,—
Yet watch I more for Muninn."*

XXXIX. Then said Gangleri: "What have the champions to drink, that may suffice them as abundantly as the food? Or is water drunk there?" Then said Hárr: "Now thou askest strangely; as if Allfather would invite to him kings or earls or other men of might and would give them water to drink! I know, by my faith! that many a man comes to Valhall who would think he had bought his drink of water dearly, if there were not better cheer to be had there, he who before had suffered wounds and burning pain unto death. I can tell thee a different tale of this. The she-goat, she who is called Heidrún, stands up in Valhall and bites the needles from the limb of that tree which is very famous, and is called Laerádr; and from her udders mead runs so copiously, that she fills a tun every day. That tun is so great that all the champions become quite drunk from it." Then said Gangleri: "That is a wondrous proper goat for them; it must be an exceeding good tree from which she eats." Then spake Hárr: "Even more worthy of note is the hart Eikthyrni, which stands in Valhall and bites from the limbs of the tree; and from his horns distils such abundant exudation that it comes down into Hvergelmir, and from thence fall those rivers called thus: Síð, Víð, Sòkin, Eikin, Svöl, Gunnthrá, Fjörm, Fimbulthul, Gípul, Göpul, Gömul, Geirvimul. Those fall about the abodes of the Aesir; these also are recorded: Thyn, Vín, Thöll, Höll, Grád, Gunnthráin, Nytt, Nöt, Nönn, Hrönn, Vína, Vegsvinn, Thjóðnuma."

¹ Ravener.

² Glutton, greedy.

³ Thought.

⁴ Memory.

XL. Then said Gangleri: "These are marvellous tidings which thou now tellest. A wondrous great house Valhall must be; it must often be exceeding crowded before the doors." Then Hárr answered: "Why dost thou not ask how many doors there are in the hall, or how great? If thou hearest that told, then thou wilt say that it is strange indeed if whosoever will may not go out and in; but it may be said truly that it is no more crowded to find place therein than to enter into it; here thou mayest read in Grímnismál:

*Five hundred doors and forty more
So I deem stand in Valhall;
Eight hundred champions go out at each door
When they fare to fight with the Wolf."*

XLI. Then said Gangleri: "A very mighty multitude of men is in Valhall, so that, by my faith, Odin is a very great chieftain, since he commands so large an army. Now what is the sport of the champions, when they are not fighting?" Hárr replied: "Every day, as soon as they are clothed, they straightway put on their armor and go out into the court and fight, and fell each other. That is their sport; and when the time draws near to undern-meal, they ride home to Valhall and sit down to drink, even as is said here:

*All the Einherjar in Odin's court
Deal out blows every day;
The slain they choose and ride from the strife,
Sit later in love together.*

But what thou hast said is true: Odin is of great might. Many examples are found in proof of this, as is here said in the words of the Aesir themselves:

*Ash Yggdrasill's trunk of trees is foremost,
And Skíðbladnir of ships;
Odin of Aesir, of all steeds Sleipnir,
Bifröst of bridges, and Bragi of skalds;
Hábrók of hawks, and of hounds Garmr."*

XLII. Then said Gangleri: "Who owns that horse Sleipnir, or what is to be said of him?" Hárr answered: "Thou hast no knowledge of Sleipnir's points, and thou knowest not the circumstances of his begetting; but it will seem to thee worth the telling. It was early in the first days of the gods' dwelling here, when the gods had established the Midgard and made Valhall; there came at that time a certain wright and offered to build them a citadel in three seasons, so good that it should be staunch and proof against the Hill-Giants and the Rime-Giants, though they should come in over Midgard. But he demanded as wages that he should have possession of Freyja, and would fain

have had the sun and the moon. Then the Aesir held parley and took counsel together; and a bargain was made with the wright, that he should have that which he demanded, if he should succeed in completing the citadel in one winter. On the first day of summer, if any part of the citadel were left unfinished, he should lose his reward; and he was to receive help from no man in the work. When they told him these conditions, he asked that they would give him leave to have the help of his stallion, which was called Svadilfari; and Loki advised it, so that the wright's petition was granted. He set to work the first day of winter to make the citadel, and by night he hauled stones with the stallion's aid; and it seemed very marvellous to the Aesir what great rocks that horse drew, for the horse did more rough work by half than did the wright. But there were strong witnesses to their bargain, and many oaths, since it seemed unsafe to the giant to be among the Aesir without truce, if Thor should come home. But Thor had then gone away into the eastern region to fight trolls.

"Now when the winter drew nigh unto its end, the building of the citadel was far advanced; and it was so high and strong that it could not be taken. When it lacked three days of summer, the work had almost reached the gate of the stronghold. Then the gods sat down in their judgment seats, and sought means of evasion, and asked one another who had advised giving Freyja into Jötunheim, or so destroying the air and the heaven as to take thence the sun and the moon and give them to the giants. The gods agreed that he must have counselled this who is wont to give evil advice, Loki Laufeyarson, and they declared him deserving of an ill death, if he could not hit upon a way of losing the wright his wages; and they threatened Loki with violence. But when he became frightened, then he swore oaths, that he would so contrive that the wright should lose his wages, cost him what it might.

"That same evening, when the wright drove out after stone with the stallion Svadilfari, a mare bounded forth from a certain wood and whinnied to him. The stallion, perceiving what manner of horse this was, straightway became frantic, and snapped the traces asunder, and leaped over to the mare, and she away to the wood, and the wright after, striving to seize the stallion. These horses ran all night, and the wright stopped there that night; and afterward, at day, the work was not done as it had been before. When the wright saw that the work could not be brought to an end, he fell into giant's fury. Now that the Aesir saw surely that the hill-giant was come thither, they did not regard their oaths reverently, but called on Thor, who came as quickly. And straightway the hammer Mjölnir was raised aloft; he paid the wright's wage, and not with the sun and the moon. Nay, he even denied him dwelling in Jötunheim, and struck but the one first blow, so that his skull was burst into small crumbs, and sent him down bellow under Niflhel. But Loki had such dealings with Svadilfari, that somewhat later he gave birth to a foal, which was gray and had eight feet; and this horse is the best among gods and men. So is said in Völuspá:

*Then all the Powers strode to the seats of judgment,
The most holy gods council held together:*

*Who had the air all with evil envenomed,
Or to the Ettin-race Ódr's maid given.
Broken were oaths then, bond and swearing,
Pledges all sacred which passed between them;
Thor alone smote there, swollen with anger:
He seldom sits still when such he hears of."*

XLIII. Then said Gangleri: "What is to be said of Skíðbladnir, that which is best of ships? Is there no ship equally great?" Hárr replied: "Skíðbladnir is best of ships and made with most skill of craftsmanship; but Naglfar is the largest ship; Múspell has it. Certain dwarves, sons of Ívaldi, made Skíðbladnir and gave the ship to Freyr. It is so great that all the Aesir may man it, with their weapons and armaments, and it has a favoring wind as soon as the sail is hoisted, whithersoever it is bound; but when there is no occasion for going to sea in it, it is made of so many things and with so much cunning that then it may be folded together like a napkin and kept in one's pouch."

XLIV. Then spake Gangleri: "'A good ship is Skíðbladnir, but very great magic must have been used upon it before it got to be so fashioned. Has Thor never experienced such a thing, that he has found in his path somewhat so mighty or so powerful that it has overmatched him through strength of magic?" Then said Hárr: "Few men, I ween, are able to tell of this; yet many a thing has seemed to him hard to overcome. Though there may have been something so powerful or strong that Thor might not have succeeded in winning the victory, yet it is not necessary to speak of it; because there are many examples to prove, and because all are bound to believe, that Thor is mightiest." Then said Gangleri: "It seems to me that I must have asked you touching this matter what no one is able to tell of. Then spake Jafnhárr: "We have heard say concerning some matters which seem to us incredible, but here sits one near at hand who will know how to tell true tidings of this. Therefore thou must believe that he will not lie for the first time now, who never lied before." Gangleri said: "Here will I stand and listen, if any answer is forthcoming to this word; but otherwise I pronounce you overcome, if ye cannot tell that which I ask you."

Then spake Thrídi: "Now it is evident that he is resolved to know this matter, though it seem not to us a pleasant thing to tell. This is the beginning of this tale: Öku-Thor drove forth with his he-goats and chariot, and with him that Ás called Loki; they came at evening to a husbandman's, and there received a night's lodging. About evening, Thor took his he-goats and slaughtered them both; after that they were flayed and borne to the caldron. When the cooking was done, then Thor and his companion sat down to supper. Thor invited to meat with him the husbandman and his wife, and their children: the husbandman's son was called Thjálfi, and the daughter Rökva. Then Thor laid the goat-hides farther away from the fire, and said that the husbandman and his servants should cast the bones on the goat-hides. Thjálfi, the husbandman's son, was holding a thigh-bone of the goat, and split it with his knife and broke it for the marrow.

"Thor tarried there overnight; and in the interval before day he rose up and clothed himself, took the hammer Mjölnir, swung it up, and hallowed the goat-hides; straightway the he-goats rose up, and then one of them was lame in a hind leg. Thor discovered this, and declared that the husbandman or his household could not have dealt wisely with the bones of the goat: he knew that the thighbone was broken. There is no need to make a long story of it; all may know how frightened the husbandman must have been when he saw how Thor let his brows sink down before his eyes; but when he looked at the eyes, then it seemed to him that he must fall down before their glances alone. Thor clenched his hands on the hammer-shaft so that the knuckles whitened; and the husbandman and all his household did what was to be expected: they cried out lustily, prayed for peace, offered in recompense all that they had. But when he saw their terror, then the fury departed from him, and he became appeased, and took of them in atonement their children, Thjálfi and Röskva, who then became his bond-servants; and they follow him ever since.

XLV. "Thereupon he left his goats behind, and began his journey eastward toward Jötunheim and clear to the sea; and then he went out over the sea, that deep one; but when he came to land, he went up, and Loki and Thjálfi and Röskva with him. Then, when they had walked a little while, there stood before them a great forest; they walked all that day till dark. Thjálfi was swiftest-footed of all men; he bore Thor's bag, but there was nothing good for food. As soon as it had become dark, they sought themselves shelter for the night, and found before them a certain hall, very great: there was a door in the end, of equal width with the hall, wherein they took up quarters for the night. But about midnight there came a great earthquake: the earth rocked under them exceedingly, and the house trembled. Then Thor rose up and called to his companions, and they explored farther, and found in the middle of the hall a side-chamber on the right hand, and they went in thither. Thor sat down in the doorway, but the others were farther in from him, and they were afraid; but Thor gripped his hammer-shaft and thought to defend himself. Then they heard a great humming sound, and a crashing.

"But when it drew near dawn, then Thor went out and saw a man lying a little way from him in the wood; and that man was not small; he slept and snored mightily. Then Thor thought he could perceive what kind of noise it was which they had heard during the night. He girded himself with his belt of strength, and his divine power waxed; and on the instant the man awoke and rose up swiftly; and then, it is said, the first time Thor's heart failed him, to strike him with the hammer. He asked him his name, and the man called himself Skrímir,—'but I have no need,' he said, 'to ask thee for thy name; I know that thou art Ása-Thor. But what? Hast thou dragged away my glove?' Then Skrímir stretched out his hand and took up the glove; and at once Thor saw that it was that which he had taken for a hall during the night; and as for the side-chamber, it was the thumb of the glove. Skrímir asked whether Thor would have his company, and Thor assented to this. Then Skrímir took and unloosened his provision wallet and made ready to eat his morning meal, and Thor and his fellows in

another place. Skrímir then proposed to them to lay their supply of food together, and Thor assented. Then Skrímir bound all the food in one bag and laid it on his own back; he went before during the day, and stepped with very great strides; but late in the evening Skrímir found them night-quarters under a certain great oak. Then Skrímir said to Thor that he would lay him down to sleep,—'and do ye take the provision-bag and make ready for your supper.'

"Thereupon Skrímir slept and snored hard, and Thor took the provision-bag and set about to unloose it; but such things must be told as will seem incredible: he got no knot loosened and no thong-end stirred, so as to be looser than before. When he saw that this work might not avail, then he became angered, gripped the hammer Mjöllnir in both hands, and strode with great strides to that place where Skrímir lay, and smote him in the head. Skrímir awoke, and asked whether a leaf had fallen upon his head; or whether they had eaten and were ready for bed? Thor replied that they were just then about to go to sleep; then they went under another oak. It must be told thee, that there was then no fearless sleeping. At midnight Thor heard how Skrímir snored and slept fast, so that it thundered in the woods; then he stood up and went to him, shook his hammer eagerly and hard, and smote down upon the middle of his crown: he saw that the face of the hammer sank deep into his head. And at that moment Skrímir awoke and said: 'What is it now? Did some acorn fall on my head? Or what is the news with thee, Thor?' But Thor went back speedily, and replied that he was then but new-wakened; said that it was then midnight, and there was yet time to sleep.

"Thor meditated that if he could get to strike him a third blow, never should the giant see himself again; he lay now and watched whether Skrímir were sleeping soundly yet. A little before day, when he perceived that Skrímir must have fallen asleep, he stood up at once and rushed over to him, brandished his hammer with all his strength, and smote upon that one of his temples which was turned up. But Skrímir sat up and stroked his cheek, and said: 'Some birds must be sitting in the tree above me; I imagined, when I awoke, that some dirt from the twigs fell upon my head. Art thou awake, Thor? It will be time to arise and clothe us; but now ye have no long journey forward to the castle called Útgardr. I have heard how ye have whispered among yourselves that I am no little man in stature; but ye shall see taller men, if ye come into Útgardr. Now I will give you wholesome advice: do not conduct yourselves boastfully, for the henchmen of Útgarda-Loki will not well endure big words from such swaddling-babes. But if not so, then turn back, and I think it were better for you to do that; but if ye will go forward, then turn to the east. As for me, I hold my way north to these hills, which ye may now see.' Skrímir took the provision-bag and cast it on his back, and turned from them across the forest; and it is not recorded that the Aesir bade him god-speed.

XLVI. "Thor turned forward on his way, and his fellows, and went onward till mid-day. Then they saw a castle standing in a certain plain, and set their necks down on their backs before they could see up over it. They went to the cattle; and there was a grating in front of the castle-gate, and it was closed. Thor went up to the grating,

and did not succeed in opening it; but when they struggled to make their way in, they crept between the bars and came in that way. They saw a great hall and went thither; the door was open; then they went in, and saw there many men on two benches, and most of them were big enough. Thereupon they came before the king Útgarda-Loki and saluted him; but he looked at them in his own good time, and smiled scornfully over his teeth, and said: 'It is late to ask tidings of a long journey; or is it otherwise than I think: that this toddler is Öku-Thor? Yet thou mayest be greater than thou appearest to me. What manner of accomplishments are those, which thou and thy fellows think to be ready for? No one shall be here with us who knows not some kind of craft or cunning surpassing most men.'

"Then spoke the one who came last, 'Who was called Loki: 'I know such a trick, which I am ready to try: that there is no one within here who shall eat his food more quickly than I.' Then Útgarda-Loki answered: 'That is a feat, if thou accomplish it; and this feat shall accordingly be put to the proof.' He called to the farther end of the bench, that he who was called Logi should come forth on the floor and try his prowess against Loki. Then a trough was taken and borne in upon the hall-floor and filled with flesh; Loki sat down at the one end and Logi at the other, and each ate as fast as he could, and they met in the middle of the trough. By that time Loki had eaten all the meat from the bones, but Logi likewise had eaten all the meat, and the bones with it, and the trough too; and now it seemed to all as if Loki had lost the game.

"Then Útgarda-Loki asked what yonder young man could play at; and Thjálfí answered that he would undertake to run a race with whomsoever Útgarda-Loki would bring up. Then Útgarda-Loki said that that was a good accomplishment, and that there was great likelihood that he must be well endowed with fleetness if he were to perform that feat; yet he would speedily see to it that the matter should be tested. Then Útgarda-Loki arose and went out; and there was a good course to run on over the level plain. Then Útgarda-Loki called to him a certain lad, who was named Hugi, and bade him run a match against Thjálfí. Then they held the first heat; and Hugi was so much ahead that he turned back to meet Thjálfí at the end of the course. Then said Útgarda-Loki: 'Thou wilt need to lay thyself forward more, Thjálfí, if thou art to win the game; but it is none the less true that never have any men come hither who seemed to me fleeter of foot than this.' Then they began another heat; and when Hugi had reached the course's end, and was turning back, there was still a long bolt-shot to Thjálfí. Then spake Útgarda-Loki: 'Thjálfí appears to me to run this course well, but I do not believe of him now that he will win the game. But it will be made manifest presently, when they run the third heat.' Then they began the heat; but when Hugi had come to the end of the course and turned back, Thjálfí had not yet reached mid-course. Then all said that that game had been proven.

"Next, Útgarda-Loki asked Thor what feats there were which he might desire to show before them: such great tales as men have made of his mighty works. Then Thor answered that he would most willingly undertake to contend with any in drinking. Útgarda-Loki said that might well be; he went into the hall and called his serving-

boy, and bade him bring the sconce-horn which the henchmen were wont to drink off. Straightway the serving-lad came forward with the horn and put it into Thor's hand. Then said Útgarda-Loki: 'It is held that this horn is well drained if it is drunk off in one drink, but some drink it off in two; but no one is so poor a man at drinking that it fails to drain off in three.' Thor looked upon the horn, and it did not seem big to him; and yet it was somewhat long. Still he was very thirsty; he took and drank, and swallowed enormously, and thought that he should not need to bend oftener to the horn. But when his breath failed, and he raised his head from the horn and looked to see how it had gone with the drinking, it seemed to him that there was very little space by which the drink was lower now in the horn than before. Then said Útgarda-Loki: 'It is well drunk, and not too much; I should not have believed, if it had been told me, that Ása-Thor could not drink a greater draught. But I know that thou wilt wish to drink it off in another draught.' Thor answered nothing; he set the horn to his mouth, thinking now that he should drink a greater drink, and struggled with the draught until his breath gave out; and yet he saw that the tip of the horn would not come up so much as he liked. When he took the horn from his mouth and looked into it, it seemed to him then as if it had decreased less than the former time; but now there was a clearly apparent lowering in the horn. Then said Útgarda-Loki: 'How now, Thor? Thou wilt not shrink from one more drink than may be well for thee? If thou now drink the third draught from the horn, it seems to me as if this must be esteemed the greatest; but thou canst not be called so great a man here among us as the Aesir call thee, if thou give not a better account of thyself in the other games than it seems to me may come of this.' Then Thor became angry, set the horn to his mouth, and drank with all his might, and struggled with the drink as much as he could; and when he looked into the horn, at least some space had been made. Then he gave up the horn and would drink no more.

"Then said Útgarda-Loki: Now it is evident that thy prowess is not so great as we thought it to be; but wilt thou try thy hand at more games? It may readily be seen that thou gettest no advantage hereof.' Thor answered: "will make trial of yet other games; but it would have seemed wonderful to me, when I was at home with the Aesir, if such drinks had been called so little. But what game will ye now offer me?" Then said Útgarda-Loki: 'Young lads here are wont to do this (which is thought of small consequence): lift my cat up from the earth; but I should not have been able to speak of such a thing to Ása-Thor if I had not seen that thou hast far less in thee than I had thought.' Thereupon there leaped forth on the hall-floor a gray cat, and a very big one; and Thor went to it and took it with his hand down under the middle of the belly and lifted up. But the cat bent into an arch just as Thor stretched up his hands; and when Thor reached up as high as he could at the very utmost, then the cat lifted up one foot, and Thor got this game no further advanced. Then said Útgarda-Loki: 'This game went even as I had foreseen; the cat is very great, whereas Thor is low and little beside the huge men who are here with us.'

”Then said Thor: ’Little as ye call me, let any one come up now and wrestle with me; now I am angry.’ Then Útgarda-Loki answered, looking about him on the benches, and spake: ’I see no such man here within, who would not hold it a disgrace to wrestle with thee;’ and yet he said: ’Let us see first; let the old woman my nurse be called hither, Elli, and let Thor wrestle with her if he will. She has thrown such men as have seemed to me no less strong than Thor.’ Straightway there came into the hall an old woman, stricken in years. Then Útgarda-Loki said that she should grapple with Ása-Thor. There is no need to make a long matter of it: that struggle went in such wise that the harder Thor strove in gripping, the faster she stood; then the old woman essayed a hold, and then Thor became totty on his feet, and their tuggings were very hard. Yet it was not long before Thor fell to his knee, on one foot. Then Útgarda-Loki went up and bade them cease the wrestling, saying that Thor should not need to challenge more men of his body-guard to wrestling. By then it had passed toward night; Útgarda-Loki showed Thor and his companions to a seat, and they tarried there the night long in good cheer.

XLVII. ”But at morning, as soon as it dawned, Thor and his companions arose, clothed themselves, and were ready to go away. Then came there Útgarda-Loki and caused a table to be set for them; there was no lack of good cheer, meat and drink. So soon as they had eaten, he went out from the castle with them; and at parting Útgarda-Loki spoke to Thor and asked how he thought his journey had ended, or whether he had met any man mightier than himself. Thor answered that he could not say that he had not got much shame in their dealings together. ’But yet I know that ye will call me a man of little might, and I am ill-content with that.’ Then said Útgardi-Loki: ’Now I will tell thee the truth, now that thou art come out of the castle; and if I live and am able to prevail, then thou shalt never again come into it. And this I know, by my troth! that thou shouldst never have come into it, If I had known before that thou haddest so much strength in thee, and that thou shouldst so nearly have had us in great peril. But I made ready against thee eye-illusions; and I came upon you the first time in the wood, and when thou wouldst have unloosed the provision-bag, I had bound it with iron, and thou didst not find where to undo it. But next thou didst smite me three blows with the hammer; and the first was least, and was yet so great that it would have sufficed to slay me, if it had come upon me. Where thou sawest near my hall a saddle-backed mountain, cut at the top into threesquare dales, and one the deepest, those were the marks of thy hammer. I brought the saddle-back before the blow, but thou didst not see that. So it was also with the games, in which ye did contend against my henchmen: that was the first, which Loki did; he was very hungry and ate zealously, but he who was called Logi was ”wild-fire,” and he burned the trough no less swiftly than the meat. But when Thjálfi ran the race with him called Hugi, that was my ”thought,” and it was not to be expected of Thjálfi that he should match swiftness with it.

”Moreover, when thou didst drink from the horn, and it seemed to thee to go slowly, then, by my faith, that was a wonder which I should not have believed possible: the

other end of the horn was out in the sea, but thou didst not perceive it. But now, when thou comest to the sea, thou shalt be able to mark what a diminishing thou hast drunk in the sea: this is henceforth called "ebb-tides."

"And again he said: 'It seemed to me not less noteworthy when thou didst lift up the cat; and to tell thee truly, then all were afraid who saw how thou didst lift one foot clear of the earth. That cat was not as it appeared to thee: it was the Midgard Serpent, which lies about all the land, and scarcely does its length suffice to encompass the earth with head and tail. So high didst thou stretch up thine arms that it was then but a little way more to heaven. It was also a great marvel concerning the wrestling-match, when thou didst withstand so long, and didst not fall more than on one knee, wrestling with Elli; since none such has ever been and none shall be, if he become so old as to abide "Old Age," that she shall not cause him to fall. And now it is truth to tell that we must part; and it will be better on both sides that ye never come again to seek me. Another time I will defend my castle with similar wiles or with others, so that ye shall get no power over me.'

"When Thor had heard these sayings, he clutched his hammer and brandished it aloft; but when he was about to launch it forward, then he saw Útgarda-Loki nowhere. Then he turned back to the castle, purposing to crush it to pieces; and he saw there a wide and fair plain, but no castle. So he turned back and went his way, till he was come back again to Thrúdvangar. But it is a true tale that then he resolved to seek if he might bring about a meeting between himself and the Midgard Serpent, which after ward came to pass. Now I think no one knows how to tell thee more truly concerning this journey of Thor's."

XLVIII. Then said Gangleri: "Very mighty is Útgarda-Loki, and he deals much in wiles and in magic; and his might may be seen in that he had such henchmen as have great prowess. Now did Thor ever take vengeance for this?" Hárr answered: "It is not unknown, though one be not a scholar, that Thor took redress for this journey of which the tale has but now been told; and he did not tarry at home long before he made ready for his journey so hastily that he had with him no chariot and no he-goats and no retinue. He went out over Midgard in the guise of a young lad, and came one evening at twilight to a certain giant's, who was called Hymir. Thor abode as guest there overnight; but at dawn Hymir arose and clothed himself and made ready to row to sea a-fishing. Then Thor sprang up and was speedily ready, and asked Hymir to let him row to sea with him. But Hymir said that Thor would be of little help to him, being so small and a youth, 'And thou wilt freeze, if I stay so long and so far out as I am wont.' But Thor said that he would be able to row far out from land, for the reason that it was not certain whether he would be the first to ask to row back. Thor became so enraged at the giant that he was forthwith ready to let his hammer crash against him; but he forced himself to forbear, since he purposed to try his strength in another quarter. He asked Hymir what they should have for bait, but Hymir bade him get bait for himself. Then Thor turned away thither where he, saw a certain herd of

oxen, which Hymir owned; he took the largest ox, called Himinbrjotr,⁵ and cut off its head and went therewith to the sea. By that time Hymir had shoved out the boat.

”Thor went aboard the skiff and sat down in the stern-seat, took two oars and rowed; and it seemed to Hymir that swift progress came of his rowing. Hymir rowed forward in the bow, and the rowing proceeded rapidly; then Hymir said that they had arrived at those fishing-banks where he was wont to anchor and angle for flat-fish. But Thor said that he desired to row much further, and they took a sharp pull; then Hymir said that they had come so far that it was perilous to abide out farther because of the Midgard Serpent. Thor replied that they would row a while yet, and so he did; but Hymir was then sore afraid. Now as soon as Thor had laid by the oars, he made ready a very strong fishing-line, and the hook was no less large and strong. Then Thor put the ox-head on the hook and cast it overboard, and the hook went to the bottom; and it is telling thee the truth to say that then Thor beguiled the Midgard Serpent no less than Útgarda-Loki had mocked Thor, at the time when he lifted up the Serpent in his hand.

”The Midgard Serpent snapped at the ox-head, and the hook caught in its jaw; but when the Serpent was aware of this, it dashed away so fiercely that both Thor’s fists crashed against the gunwale. Then Thor was angered, and took upon him his divine strength, braced his feet so strongly that he plunged through the ship with both feet, and dashed his feet against the bottom; then he drew the Serpent up to the gunwale. And it may be said that no one has seen very fearful sights who might not see that: bow Thor flashed fiery glances at the Serpent, and the Serpent in turn stared up toward him from below and blew venom. Then, it is said, the giant Hymir grew pale, became yellow, and was sore afraid, when he saw the Serpent, and how the sea rushed out and in through the boat. In the very moment when Thor clutched his hammer and raised it on high, then the giant fumbled for his fish-knife and hacked off Thor’s line at the gunwale, and the Serpent sank down into the sea. Thor hurled his hammer after it; and men say that he struck off its head against the bottom; but I think it were true to tell thee that the Midgard Serpent yet lives and lies in the encompassing sea. But Thor swung his fist and brought it against Hymir’s ear, so that he plunged overboard, and Thor saw the soles of his feet. And Thor waded to land.”

XLIX. Then spake Gangleri: ”Have any more matters of note befallen among the Aesir? A very great deed of valor did Thor achieve on that journey.” Hárr made answer: ”Now shall be told of those tidings which seemed of more consequence to the Aesir. The beginning of the story is this, that Baldr the Good dreamed great and perilous dreams touching his life. When he told these dreams to the Aesir, then they took counsel together: and this was their decision: to ask safety for Baldr from all kinds of dangers. And Frigg took oaths to this purport, that fire and water should spare Baldr, likewise iron and metal of all kinds, stones, earth, trees, sicknesses, beasts, birds, venom, serpents. And when that was done and made known, then it was a diversion of Baldr’s

⁵ Heaven-bellowing?

and the Aesir, that he should stand up in the Thing,⁶ and all the others should some shoot at him, some hew at him, some beat him with stones; but whatsoever was done hurt him not at all, and that seemed to them all a very worshipful thing.

”But when Loki Laufeyarson saw this, it pleased him ill that Baldr took no hurt. He went to Fensalir to Frigg, and made himself into the likeness of a woman. Then Frigg asked if that woman knew what the Aesir did at the Thing. She said that all were shooting at Baldr, and moreover, that he took no hurt. Then said Frigg: ’Neither weapons nor trees may hurt Baldr: I have taken oaths of them all.’ Then the woman asked: ’Have all things taken oaths to spare Baldr?’ and Frigg answered: ’There grows a tree-sprout alone westward of Valhall: it is called Mistletoe; I thought it too young to ask the oath of.’ Then straightway the woman turned away; but Loki took Mistletoe and pulled it up and went to the Thing.

”Hödr stood outside the ring of men, because he was blind. Then spake Loki to him: ’Why dost thou not shoot at Baldr?’ He answered: ’Because I see not where Baldr is; and for this also, that I am weaponless.’ Then said Loki: ’Do thou also after the manner of other men, and show Baldr honor as the other men do. I will direct thee where he stands; shoot at him with this wand.’ Hödr took Mistletoe and shot at Baldr, being guided by Loki: the shaft flew through Baldr, and he fell dead to the earth; and that was the greatest mischance that has ever befallen among gods and men.

”Then, when Baldr was fallen, words failed all the, Aesir, and their hands likewise to lay hold of him; each looked at the other, and all were of one mind as to him who had wrought the work, but none might take vengeance, so great a sanctuary was in that place. But when the Aesir tried to speak, then it befell first that weeping broke out, so that none might speak to the others with words concerning his grief. But Odin bore that misfortune by so much the worst, as he had most perception of how great harm and loss for the Aesir were in the death of Baldr.

”Now when the gods had come to themselves, Frigg spake, and asked who there might be among the Aesir who would fain have for his own all her love and favor: let him ride the road to Hel, and seek if he may find Baldr, and offer Hel a ransom if she will let Baldr come home to Ásgard. And he is named Hermódr the Bold, Odin’s son, who undertook that embassy. Then Sleipnir was taken, Odin’s steed, and led forward; and Hermódr mounted on that horse and galloped off.

”The Aesir took the body of Baldr and brought it to the sea. Hringhorni is the name of Baldr’s ship: it was greatest of all ships; the gods would have launched it and made Baldr’s pyre thereon, but the ship stirred not forward. Then word was sent to Jötunheim after that giantess who is called Hyrrokkin. When she had come, riding a wolf and having a viper for bridle, then she leaped off the steed; and Odin called to four berserks to tend the steed; but they were not able to hold it until they had felled it. Then Hyrrokkin went to the prow of the boat and thrust it out at the first push,

⁶ The Thing was the legislative assembly of Iceland; less specifically, a formal assembly held for judicial purposes or to settle questions of moment; an assembly of men.

so that fire burst from the rollers, and all lands trembled. Thor became angry and clutched his hammer, and would straightway have broken her head, had not the gods prayed for peace for her.

”Then was the body of Baldr borne out on shipboard; and when his wife, Nanna the daughter of Nep, saw that, straightway her heart burst with grief, and she died; she was borne to the pyre, and fire was kindled. Then Thor stood by and hallowed the pyre with Mjöllnir; and before his feet ran a certain dwarf which was named Litr; Thor kicked at him with his foot and thrust him into the fire, and he burned. People of many races visited this burning: First is to be told of Odin, how Frigg and the Valkyrs went with him, and his ravens; but Freyr drove in his chariot with the boar called Gold-Mane, or Fearful-Tusk, and Heimdallr rode the horse called Gold-Top, and Freyja drove her cats. Thither came also much people of the Rime-Giants and the Hill-Giants. Odin laid on the pyre that gold ring which is called Draupnir; this quality attended it, that every ninth night there dropped from it eight gold rings of equal weight. Baldr’s horse was led to the bale-fire with all his trappings.

”Now this is to be told concerning Hermódr, that he rode nine nights through dark dales and deep, so that he saw not before he was come to the river Gjöll and rode onto the Gjöll-Bridge; which bridge is thatched with glittering gold. Módgudr is the maiden called who guards the bridge; she asked him his name and race, saying that the day before there had ridden over the bridge five companies of dead men; but the bridge thunders no less under thee alone, and thou hast not the color of dead men. Why ridest thou hither on Hel-way?’ He answered: ’I am appointed to ride to Hel to seek out Baldr. Hast thou perchance seen Baldr on Hel-way?’ She said that Baldr had ridden there over Gjöll’s Bridge,—’but down and north lieth Hel-way.’

”Then Hermódr rode on till he came to Hel-gate; he dismounted from his steed and made his girths fast, mounted and pricked him with his spurs; and the steed leaped so hard over the gate that he came nowise near to it. Then Hermódr rode home to the hall and dismounted from his steed, went into the hall, and saw sitting there in the high-seat Baldr, his brother; and Hermódr tarried there overnight. At morn Hermódr prayed Hel that Baldr might ride home with him, and told her how great weeping was among the Aesir. But Hel said that in this wise it should be put to the test, whether Baldr were so all-beloved as had been said: ’If all things in the world, quick and dead, weep for him, then he shall go back to the Aesir; but he shall remain with Hel if any gainsay it or will not weep.’ Then Hermódr arose; but Baldr led him out of the hall, and took the ring Draupnir and sent it to Odin for a remembrance. And Nanna sent Frigg a linen smock, and yet more gifts, and to Fulla a golden finger-ring.

”Then Hermódr rode his way back, and came into Ásgard, and told all those tidings which he had seen and heard. Thereupon the Aesir sent over all the world messengers to pray that Baldr be wept out of Hel; and all men did this, and quick things, and the earth, and stones, and trees, and all metals,—even as thou must have seen that these things weep when they come out of frost and into the heat. Then, when the messengers went home, having well wrought their errand, they found, in a certain cave, where a

giantess sat: she called herself Thökk. They prayed her to weep Baldr out of Hel; she answered:

Thökk will weep waterless tears
For Baldr's bale-fare;
Living or dead, I loved not the churl's son;
Let Hel hold to that she hath!

And men deem that she who was there was Loki Laufeyarson, who hath wrought most ill among the Aesir."

L. Then said Gangleri: "Exceeding much Loki had brought to pass, when he had first been cause that Baldr was slain, and then that he was not redeemed out of Hel. Was any vengeance taken on him for this?" Hárr answered: "This thing was repaid him in such wise that he shall remember it long. When the gods had become as wroth with him as was to be looked for, he ran off and hid himself in a certain mountain; there he made a house with four doors, so that he could see out of the house in all directions. Often throughout the day he turned himself into the likeness of a salmon and hid himself in the place called Fránangr-Falls; then he would ponder what manner of wile the gods would devise to take him in the water-fall. But when he sat in the house, he took twine of linen and knitted meshes as a net is made since; but a fire burned before him. Then he saw that the Aesir were close upon him; and Odin had seen from Hlidskjálf where he was. He leaped up at once and out into the river, but cast the net into the fire.

"When the Aesir had come to the house, he went in first who was wisest of all, who is called Kvasir; and when he saw in the fire the white ash where the net had burned, then he perceived that that thing must be a device for catching fish, and told it to the Aesir. Straightway they took hold, and made themselves a net after the pattern of the one which they perceived, by the burnt-out ashes, that Loki had made. When the net was ready, then the Aesir went to the river and cast the net into the fall; Thor held one end of the net, and all of the Aesir held the other, and they drew the net. But Loki darted ahead and lay down between two stones; they drew the net over him, and perceived that something living was in front of it. A second time they went up to the fall and cast out the net, having bound it to something so heavy that nothing should be able to pass under it. Then Loki swam ahead of the net; but when he saw that it was but a short distance to the sea, then he jumped up over the net-rope and ran into the fall. Now the Aesir saw where he went, and went up again to the fall and divided the company into two parts, but Thor waded along in mid-stream; and so they went out toward the sea. Now Loki saw a choice of two courses: it was a mortal peril to dash out into the sea; but this was the second—to leap over the net again. And so he did: he leaped as swiftly as he could over the net-cord. Thor clutched at him and got hold of him, and he slipped in Thor's hand, so that the hand stopped at the tail; and for this reason the salmon has a tapering back.

"Now Loki was taken truceless, and was brought with them into a certain cave. Thereupon they took three flat stones, and set them on edge and drilled a hole in each stone. Then were taken Loki's sons, Vili and Nari or Narfi; the Aesir changed Váli into the form of a wolf, and he tore asunder Narfi his brother. And the Aesir took his entrails and bound Loki with them over the three stones: one stands under his shoulders, the second under his loins, the third under his boughs; and those bonds were turned to iron. Then Skadi took a venomous serpent and fastened it up over him, so that the venom should drip from the serpent into his face. But Sigyn, his wife, stands near him and holds a basin under the venom-drops; and when the basin is full, she goes and pours out the venom, but in the meantime the venom drips into his face. Then he writhes against it with such force that all the earth trembles: ye call that 'earthquakes.' There he lies in bonds till the Weird of the Gods."

LI. Then said Gangleri: "What tidings are to be told concerning the Weird of the Gods? Never before have I heard aught said of this." Hárr answered: "Great tidings are to be told of it, and much. The first is this, that there shall come that winter which is called the Awful Winter: in that time snow shall drive from all quarters; frosts shall be great then, and winds sharp; there shall be no virtue in the sun. Those winters shall proceed three in succession, and no summer between; but first shall come three other winters, such that over all the world there shall be mighty battles. In that time brothers shall slay each other for greed's sake, and none shall spare father or son in manslaughter and in incest; so it says in Völuspá:

Brothers shall strive and slaughter each other;
Own sisters' children shall sin together;
Ill days among men, many a whoredom:

An axe-age, a sword-age, shields shall be cloven;
A wind-age, a wolf-age, ere the world totters.

Then shall happen what seems great tidings: the Wolf shall swallow the sun; and this shall seem to men a great harm. Then the other wolf shall seize the moon, and he also shall work great ruin; the stars shall vanish from the heavens. Then shall come to pass these tidings also: all the earth shall tremble so, and the crags, that trees shall be torn up from the earth, and the crags fall to ruin; and all fetters and bonds shall be broken and rent. Then shall Fenris-Wolf get loose; then the sea shall gush forth upon the land, because the Midgard Serpent stirs in giant wrath and advances up onto the land. Then that too shall happen, that Naglfar shall be loosened, the ship which is so named. (It is made of dead men's nails; wherefore a warning is desirable, that if a man die with unshorn nails, that man adds much material to the ship Naglfar, which gods and men were fain to have finished late.) Yet in this sea-flood Naglfar shall float. Hrymr is the name of the giant who steers Naglfar. Fenris-Wolf shall advance with gaping mouth, and his lower jaw shall be against the earth, but the upper against

heaven,—he would gape yet more if there were room for it; fires blaze from his eyes and nostrils. The Midgard Serpent shall blow venom so that he shall sprinkle all the air and water; and he is very terrible, and shall be on one side of the Wolf. In this din shall the heaven be cloven, and the Sons of Múspell ride thence: Surtr shall ride first, and both before him and after him burning fire; his sword is exceeding good: from it radiance shines brighter than from the sun; when they ride over Bifröst, then the bridge shall break, as has been told before. The Sons of Múspell shall go forth to that field which is called Vígrídr, thither shall come Fenris-Wolf also and the Midgard Serpent; then Loki and Hrymr shall come there also, and with him all the Rime-Giants. All the champions of Hel follow Loki; and the Sons of Múspell shall have a company by themselves, and it shall be very bright. The field Vígrídr is a hundred leagues wide each way.

”When these tidings come to pass, then shall Heimdallr rise up and blow mightily in the Gjallar-Horn, and awaken all the gods; and they shall hold council together. Then Odin shall ride to Mímir’s Well and take counsel of Mímir for himself and his host. Then the Ash of Yggdrasill shall tremble, and nothing then shall be without fear in heaven or in earth. Then shall the Aesir put on their war-weeds, and all the Champions, and advance to the field: Odin rides first with the gold helmet and a fair birnie, and his spear, which is called Gungnir. He shall go forth against Fenris-Wolf, and Thor stands forward on his other side, and can be of no avail to him, because he shall have his hands full to fight against the Midgard Serpent. Freyr shall contend with Surtr, and a hard encounter shall there be between them before Freyr falls: it is to be his death that he lacks that good sword of his, which he gave to Skírnir. Then shall the dog Garmr be loosed, which is bound before Gnipa’s Cave: he is the greatest monster; he shall do battle with Týr, and each become the other’s slayer. Thor shall put to death the Midgard Serpent, and shall stride away nine paces from that spot; then shall he fall dead to the earth, because of the venom which the Snake has blown at him. The Wolf shall swallow Odin; that shall be his ending. But straight thereafter shall Vídarr stride forth and set one foot upon the lower jaw of the Wolf: on that foot he has the shoe, materials for which have been gathering throughout all time. (They are the scraps of leather which men cut out: of their shoes at toe or heel; therefore he who desires in his heart to come to the Aesir’s help should cast those scraps away.) With one hand he shall seize the Wolf’s upper jaw and tear his gullet asunder; and that is the death of the Wolf. Loki shall have battle with Heimdallr, and each be the slayer of the other. Then straightway shall Surtr cast fire over the earth and burn all the world; so is said in Völuspá:

High blows Heimdallr, the horn is aloft;
Odin communes with Mimir’s head;
Trembles Yggdrasill’s towering Ash;
The old tree wails when the Ettin is loosed.
What of the Aesir? What of the Elf-folk?

All Jötunheim echoes, the Aesir are at council;
 The dwarves are groaning before their stone doors,
 Wise in rock-walls; wit ye yet, or what?
 Hrymr sails from the east, the sea floods onward;
 The monstrous Beast twists in mighty wrath;
 The Snake beats the waves, the Eagle is screaming;
 The gold-neb tears corpses, Naglfar is loosed.
 From the east sails the keel; come now Múspell's folk
 Over the sea-waves, and Loki steereth;
 There are the warlocks all with the Wolf,—
 With them is the brother of Býleistr faring.
 Surtr fares from southward with switch-eating flame;
 On his sword shimmers the sun of the war-gods;
 The rocks are falling, and fiends are reeling,
 Heroes tread Hel-way, heaven is cloven.
 Then to the Goddess a second grief cometh,
 When Odin fares to fight with the Wolf,
 And Beli's slayer, the bright god, with Surtr;
 There must fall Frigg's beloved.
 Odin's son goeth to strife with the Wolf,—
 Víðarr, speeding to meet the slaughter-beast;
 The sword in his hand to the heart he thrusteth
 Of the fiend's offspring; avenged is his Father.
 Now goeth Hlödyn's glorious son
 Not in flight from the Serpent, of fear unheeding;
 All the earth's offspring must empty the homesteads,
 When furiously smiteth Midgard's defender.
 The sun shall be darkened, earth sinks in the sea,—
 Glide from the heaven the glittering stars;
 Smoke-reek rages and reddening fire:

The high heat licks against heaven itself.
 And here it says yet so:

Vígrídr hight the field where in fight shall meet
 Surtr and the cherished gods;
 An hundred leagues it has on each side:

Unto them that field is fated."

LII. Then said Gangleri: 'What shall come to pass afterward, when all the world is burned, and dead are all the gods and all the champions and all mankind? Have ye

not said before, that every man shall live in some world throughout all ages?" Then Thridi answered: "In that time the good abodes shall be many, and many the ill; then it shall be best to be in Gimlé in Heaven. Moreover, there is plenteous abundance of good drink, for them that esteem that a pleasure, in the hall which is called Brimir: it stands in Ókólnir. That too is a good hall which stands in Nida Fells, made of red gold; its name is Sindri. In these halls shall dwell good men and pure in heart.

"On Nástrand is a great hall and evil, and its doors face to the north: it is all woven of serpent-backs like a wattle-house; and all the snake-heads turn into the house and blow venom, so that along the hall run rivers of venom; and they who have broken oaths, and murderers, wade those rivers, even as it says here:

I know a hall standing far from the sun,
In Nástrand: the doors; to northward are turned;
Venom-drops fill down from the roof-holes;
That hall is bordered with backs of serpents.
There are doomed to wade the weltering streams
Men that are mansworn, and they that murderers are.
But it is worst in Hvergelmir:

There the cursed snake tears dead men's corpses."

LIII. Then spake Gangleri: "Shall any of the gods live then, or shall there be then any earth or heaven?" Hárr answered: "In that time the earth shall emerge out of the sea, and shall then be green and fair; then shall the fruits of it be brought forth unsown. Vídarr and Váli shall be living, inasmuch as neither sea nor the fire of Surtr shall have harmed them; and they shall dwell at Ida-Plain, where Ásgard was before. And then the sons of Thor, Módi and Magni, shall come there, and they shall have Mjöllnir there. After that Baldr shall come thither, and Hödr, from Hel; then all shall sit down together and hold speech. with one another, and call to mind their secret wisdom, and speak of those happenings which have been before: of the Midgard Serpent and of Fenris-Wolf. Then they shall find in the grass those golden chess-pieces which the Aesir had had; thus is it said:

In the deities' shrines shall dwell Vídarr and Váli,
When the Fire of Surtr is slackened;
Módi and Magni shall have Mjöllnir
At the ceasing of Thor's strife.

In the place called Hoddmímir's Holt there shall lie hidden during the Fire of Surtr two of mankind, who are called thus: Líf and Lífthrasir, and for food they shall have the morning-dews. From these folk shall come so numerous an offspring that all the world shall be peopled, even as is said here:

Líf and Lífthrasir, these shall lurk hidden
In the Holt of Hoddmímir;
The morning dews their meat shall be;
Thence are gendered the generations.

And it may seem wonderful to thee, that the sun shall have borne a daughter not less fair than herself; and the daughter shall then tread in the steps of her mother, as is said here:

The Elfin-beam shall bear a daughter,
Ere Fenris drags her forth;
That maid shall go, when the great gods die,
To ride her mother's road.

But now, if thou art able to ask yet further, then indeed I know not whence answer shall come to thee, for I never heard any man tell forth at greater length the course of the world; and now avail thyself of that which thou hast heard."

LIV. Thereupon Gangleri heard great noises on every side of him; and then, when he had looked about him more, lo, he stood out of doors on a level plain, and saw no hall there and no castle. Then he went his way forth and came home into his kingdom, and told those tidings which he had seen and heard; and after him each man told these tales to the other.

SKÁLDSKAPARMAL - THE POESY OF SKALDS

I. A certain man was named Aegir, or Hlér. He dwelt on the island which is now called Hlér's Isle, and was deeply versed in black magic. He took his way to Ásgard, but the Aesir had foreknowledge of his journey; he was received with good cheer, and yet many things were done by deceit, with eye-illusions. And at evening, when it was time for drinking, Odin had swords brought into the hall, so bright that light radiated from them: and other illumination was not used while they sat at drinking. Then the Aesir came in to their banquet, and in the high-seats sat them down those twelve Aesir who were appointed to be judges; these were their names: Thor, Njördr, Freyr, Týr, Heimdallr, Bragi, Vídarr, Váli, Ullr, Hoenir, Forseti, Loki; and in like manner the Ásynjur: Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Idunn, Gerdr, Sigyn, Fulla, Nanna. It seemed glorious to Aegir to look about him in the hall: the wainscottings there were all hung with fair shields; there was also stinging mead, copiously quaffed. The man seated next to Aegir was Bragi, and they took part together in drinking and in converse: Bragi told Aegir of many things which had come to pass among the Aesir.

He began the story at the point where three of the Aesir, Odin and Loki and Hoenir, departed from home and were wandering over mountains and wastes, and food was hard to find. But when they came down into a certain dale, they saw a herd of oxen, took one ox, and set about cooking it. Now when they thought that it must be cooked, they broke up the fire, and it was not cooked. After a while had passed, they having

scattered the fire a second time, and it was not cooked, they took counsel together, asking each other what it might mean. Then they heard a voice speaking in the oak up above them, declaring that he who sat there confessed he had caused the lack of virtue in the fire. They looked thither, and there sat an eagle; and it was no small one. Then the eagle said: "If ye are willing to give me my fill of the ox, then it will cook in the fire." They assented to this. Then he let himself float down from the tree and alighted by the fire, and forthwith at the very first took unto himself the two hams of the ox, and both shoulders. Then Loki was angered, snatched up a great pole, brandished it with all his strength, and drove it at the eagle's body. The eagle plunged violently at the blow and flew up, so that the pole was fast to the eagle's back, and Loki's hands to the other end of the pole. The eagle flew at such a height that Loki's feet down below knocked against stones and rock-heaps and trees, and he thought his arms would be torn from his shoulders. He cried aloud, entreating the eagle urgently for peace; but the eagle declared that Loki should never be loosed, unless he would give him his oath to induce Idunn to come out of Ásgard with her apples. Loki assented, and being straightway loosed, went to his companions; nor for that time are any more things reported concerning their journey, until they had come home.

But at the appointed time Loki lured Idunn out of Ásgard into a certain wood, saying that he had found such apples as would seem to her of great virtue, and prayed that she would have her apples with her and compare them with these. Then Thjazi the giant came there in his eagle's plumage and took Idunn and flew away with her, off into Thrymheimr to his abode.

But the Aesir became straitened at the disappearance of Idunn, and speedily they became hoary and old. Then those, Aesir took counsel together, and each asked the other what had last been known of Idunn; and the last that had been seen was that she had gone out of Ásgard with Loki. Thereupon Loki was seized and brought to the Thing, and was threatened with death, or tortures; when he had become well frightened, he declared that he would seek after Idunn in Jötunheim, if Freyja would lend him the hawk's plumage which she possessed. And when he got the hawk's plumage, he flew north into Jötunheim, and came on a certain day to the home of Thjazi the giant. Thjazi had rowed out to sea, but Idunn was at home alone: Loki turned her into the shape of a nut and grasped her in his claws and flew his utmost.

Now when Thjazi came home and missed Idunn, he took his eagle's plumage and flew after Loki, making a mighty rush of sound with his wings in his flight. But when the Aesir saw how the hawk flew with the nut, and where the eagle was flying, they went out below Ásgard and bore burdens of plane-shavings thither. As soon as the hawk flew into the citadel, he swooped down close by the castle-wall; then the Aesir struck fire to the plane-shavings. But the eagle could not stop himself when he missed the hawk: the feathers of the eagle caught fire, and straightway his flight ceased. Then the Aesir were near at hand and slew Thjazi the giant within the Gate of the Aesir, and that slaying is exceeding famous.

Now Skadi, the daughter of the giant Thjazi, took helm and birnie and all weapons of war and proceeded to Ásgard, to avenge her father. The Aesir, however, offered her reconciliation and atonement: the first article was that she should choose for herself a husband from among the Aesir and choose by the feet only, seeing no more of him. Then she saw the feet of one man, passing fair, and said: "I choose this one: in Baldr little can be loathly." But that was Njördr of Nóatún. She had this article also in her bond of reconciliation: that the Aesir must do a thing she thought they would not be able to accomplish: to make her laugh. Then Loki did this: he tied a cord to the beard of a goat, the other end being about his own genitals, and each gave way in turn, and each of the two screeched loudly; then Loki let himself fall onto Skadi's knee, and she laughed. Thereupon reconciliation was made with her on the part of the Aesir. It is so said, that Odin did this by way of atonement to Skadi: he took Thjazi's eyes and cast them up into the heavens, and made of them two stars.

Then said Aegir: "It seems to me that Thjazi was a mighty man: now of what family was he?" Bragi answered: "His father was called Ölvaldi, and if I tell thee of him, thou wilt think these things wonders. He was very rich in gold; but when he died and his sons came to divide the inheritance, they determined upon this measure for the gold which they divided: each should take as much as his mouth would hold, and all the same number of mouthfuls. One of them was Thjazi, the second Idi, the third Gangr. And we have it as a metaphor among us now, to call gold the mouth-tale of these giants; but we conceal it in secret terms or in poesy in this way, that we call it Speech, or Word, or Talk, of these giants."

Then said Aegir: "I deem that well concealed in secret terms." And again said Aegir: "Whence did this art, which ye call poesy, derive its beginnings?" Bragi answered: "These were the beginnings thereof. The gods had a dispute with the folk which are called Vanir, and they appointed a peace-meeting between them and established peace in this way: they each went to a vat and spat their spittle therein. Then at parting the gods took that peace-token and would not let it perish, but shaped thereof a man. This man is called Kvasir, and he was so wise that none could question him concerning anything but that he knew the solution. He went up and down the earth to give instruction to men; and when he came upon invitation to the abode of certain dwarves, Fjalar and Galarr, they called him into privy converse with them, and killed him, letting his blood run into two vats and a kettle. The kettle is named Ódrerir, and the vats Són and Bodn; they blended honey with the blood, and the outcome was that mead by the virtue of which he who drinks becomes a skald or scholar. The dwarves reported to the Aesir that Kvasir had choked on his own shrewdness, since there was none so wise there as to be able to question his wisdom.

"Then these dwarves invited the giant who is called Gillingr to visit them, and his wife with him. Next the dwarves invited Gillingr to row upon the sea with them; but when they had gone out from the land, the dwarves rowed into the breakers and capsized the boat. Gillingr was unable to swim, and he perished; but the dwarves righted their boat and rowed to land. They reported this accident to his wife, but she

took it grievously and wept aloud. Then Fjalar asked her whether it would ease her heart if she should look out upon the sea at the spot where he had perished; and she desired it. Then he spoke softly to Galarr his brother, bidding him go up over the doorway, when she should go out, and let a mill-stone fall on her head, saying that her weeping grew wearisome to him; and even so he did.

”Now when the giant Suttungr, Gillingr’s son, learned of this, he went over and took the dwarves and carried them out to sea, and set them on a reef which was covered at high tide. They besought Suttungr to grant them respite of their lives, and as the price of reconciliation offered him the precious mead in satisfaction of his father’s death. And that became a means of reconciliation between them. Suttungr carried the mead home and concealed it in the place called Hnitbjörg, placing his daughter Gunnlöd there to watch over it. Because of this we call poesy Kvasir’s Blood or Dwarves’ Drink, or Fill, or any kind of liquid of Ódrerir, or of Bodn, or of Són, or Ferry-Boat of Dwarves—since this mead brought them life—ransom from the reef—or Suttungr’s Mead, or Liquor of Hnitbjörg.”

Then Aegir said: ”These seem to me dark sayings, to call poesy by these names. But how did ye Aesir come at Suttungr’s Mead?” Bragi answered: ”That tale runs thus: Odin departed from home and came to a certain place where nine thralls were mowing hay. He asked if they desired him to whet their scythes, and they assented. Then he took a hone from his belt and whetted the scythes; it seemed to them that the scythes cut better by far, and they asked that the hone be sold them. But he put such a value on it that whoso desired to buy must give a considerable price: nonetheless all said that they would agree, and prayed him to sell it to them. He cast the hone up into the air; but since all wished to lay their hands on it, they became so intermingled with one another that each struck with his scythe against the other’s neck.

”Odin sought a night’s lodging with the giant who is called Baugi, Suttungr’s brother. Baugi bewailed his husbandry, saying that his nine thralls had killed one another, and declared that he had no hope of workmen. Odin called himself Bölverkr in Baugi’s presence; he offered to undertake nine men’s work for Baugi, and demanded for his wages one drink of Suttungr’s Mead. Baugi declared that he had no control whatever over the mead, and said that Suttungr was determined to have it to himself, but promised to go with Bölverkr and try if they might get the mead. During the summer Bölverkr accomplished nine men’s work for Baugi, but when winter came he asked Baugi for his hire. Then they both set out for Suttungr’s. Baugi told Suttungr his brother of his bargain with Bölverkr; but Suttungr flatly refused them a single drop of the mead. Then Bölverkr made suggestion to Baugi that they try certain wiles, if perchance they might find means to get at the mead; and Baugi agreed readily. Thereupon Bölverkr drew out the auger called Rati, saying that Baugi must bore the rock, if the auger cut. He did so. At last Baugi said that the rock was bored through, but Bölverkr blew into the auger-hole, and the chips flew up at him. Then he discovered that Baugi would have deceived him, and he bade him bore through the rock. Baugi bored anew; and when Bölverkr blew a second time, then the chips were blown in by

the blast. Then Bölverkr turned himself into a serpent and crawled into the auger-hole, but Baugi thrust at him from behind with the auger and missed him. Bölverkr proceeded to the place where Gunnlöð was, and lay with her three nights; and then she gave him leave to drink three draughts of the mead. In the first draught he drank every drop out of Ódrerir; and in the second, he emptied Bodn; and in the third, Són; and then he had all the mead. Then he turned himself into the shape of an eagle and flew as furiously as he could; but when Suttungr saw the eagle's flight, he too assumed the fashion of an eagle and flew after him. When the Aesir saw Odin flying, straightway they set out their vats in the court; and when Odin came into Ásgard, he spat up the mead into the vats. Nevertheless he came so near to being caught by Suttungr that he sent some mead backwards, and no heed was taken of this: whosoever would might have that, and we call that the poetaster's part. But Odin gave the mead of Suttungr to the Aesir and to those men who possess the ability to compose. Therefore we call poesy Odin's Booty and Find, and his Drink and Gift, and the Drink of the Aesir."

Then said Aegir: "In how many ways are the terms of skaldship variously phrased, or how many are the essential elements of the skaldic art?" Then Bragi answered: "The elements into which all poesy is divided are two." Aegir asked: "What two?" Bragi said: "Metaphor and metre." "What manner of metaphor is used for skaldic writing?" "Three are the types of skaldic metaphor." "Which?" "Thus: [first], calling everything by its name; the second type is that which is called 'substitution,' the third type of metaphor is that which is called 'periphrasis,' and this type is employed in such manner: Suppose I take Odin, or Thor, or Týr, or any of the Aesir or Elves; and to any of them whom I mention, I add the name of a property of some other of the Aesir, or I record certain works of his. Thereupon he becomes owner of the name, and not the one whose name was applied to him: just as when we speak of Victory-Týr, or Týr of the Hanged, or Týr of Cargoes: that then becomes Odin's name: and we call these periphrastic names. So also with the title Týr of the Wain.

"But now one thing must be said to young skalds, to such as yearn to attain to the craft of poesy and to increase their store of figures with traditional metaphors; or to those who crave to acquire the faculty of discerning what is said in hidden phrase: let such an one, then, interpret this book to his instruction and pleasure. Yet one is not so to forget or discredit these traditions as to remove from poesy those ancient metaphors with which it has pleased Chief Skalds to be content; nor, on the other hand, ought Christian men to believe in heathen gods, nor in the truth of these tales otherwise than precisely as one may find here in the beginning of the book.

II. Now you may hear examples of the way in which Chief Skalds have held it becoming to compose, making use of these simple terms and periphrases: as when Arnórr Earls' Skald says that Odin is called Allfather:

Now I'll tell men the virtue
Of the terrible Jarl;
Allfather's Song-Surf streams;

Late my sorrows lighten,

Here, moreover, he calls poesy the Song-Surf of Allfather. Hávardr the Halt sang thus:

Now is the flight of eagles
Over the field; the sailors
Of the sea-horses hie them
To the Hanged-God's gifts and feasting.
Thus sang Víga-Glúmr:

With the Hanged-God's helmet
The hosts have ceased from going
By the brink; not pleasant
The bravest held the venture.
Thus sang Refr:

Oft the Gracious One came to me
At the holy cup of the Raven-God;
The king of the stem-ploughed sea's gold
From the skald in death is sundered.
Thus sang Eyvindr Skald-Despoiler:

And Sigurdr,
He who sated the ravens
Of Cargo-God
With the gore of the host
Of slain Haddings
Of life was spoiled
By the earth-rulers
At Ögló.
Thus sang Glúmr Geirason:

There the Týr of Triumph
Himself inspired the terror
Of ships; the gods of breezes
That favor good men steered them.
Thus sang Eyvindr:

Göndull and Skögull
Gauta-Týr sent
To choose from kings
Who of Yngvi's kin

Should go with Odin
And be in Valhall.
Thus sang Úlfr Uggason:

Swiftly the Far-Famed rideth,
The Foretelling God, to the fire speeds,
To the wide pyre of his offspring;
Through my cheeks praise-songs are pouring.
Thus sang Thjóðólfr of Hvin:

The slain lay there sand-strewing,
Spoil for the Single-Eyed
Dweller in Frigg's bosom;
In such deeds we rejoiced.
Hallfredr sang thus:

The doughty ship-possessor
With sharpened words and soothfast
Lures our land, the patient,
Barley-lockèd Wife of Thrídi.

Here is an example of this metaphor, that in poesy the earth is called the Wife of Odin. Here is told what Eyvindr sang:

Hermódr and Bragi,
Spake Hropta-Týr.
Go ye to greet the Prince;
For a king who seemeth
A champion cometh
To the hall hither.
Thus sang Kormákr:

The Giver of Lands, who bindeth
The sail to the top, with gold-lace
Honors him who pours god's verse-mead;
Odin wrought charms on Rindr.
Thus sang Steinhórr:

Much have I to laud
The ancient-made (though little)
Liquor of the valiant
Load of Gunnlöð's arm-clasp.
Thus sang Úlfr Uggason:

There I think the Valkyrs follow,
And ravens, Victorious Odin
To the blood of holy Baldr.
With old tales the hall was painted.
Thus sang Egill Skallagrímsson:

No victims for this
To Víli's brother,
The High-God, I offer,
Glad to behold him;
Yet has Mímir's friend
On me bestowed
Amends of evil
Which I account better.
He has given me the art
He, the Wolf's Opposer,
Accustomed to battle,
Of blemish blameless.
Here he is called High God, and Friend of Mímir, and Adversary of the
Wolf.

Thus sang Refr:

Swift God of Slain, that wieldeth
The snowy billow's wave-hawks,
The ships that drive the sea-road,
To thee we owe the dwarves' drink.
Thus sang Einarr Tinkling-Scale:

'T is mine to pour the liquor
Of the Host-God's mead-cask freely
Before the ships' swift Speeder:

For this I win no scorning.
Thus sang Úlfr Uggason:

His steed the lordly Heimdallr
Spurs to the pyre gods builded
For the fallen son of Odin,
The All-Wise Raven-Ruler.
This is said in Eiríksmál:

What dream is that? quoth Odin,—
I thought to rise ere day-break

To make Valhall ready
For troops of slain;
I roused the champions,
Bade them rise swiftly
Benches to strew,
To wash beer-flagons;
The Valkyrs to pour wine,
As a Prince were coming.
Kormákr sang this:

I pray the precious Ruler
Of Yngvi's people, o'er me
To hold his hand, bow-shaking.
Hroptr bore with him Gungnir.
Thórálfr sang this:

The Mighty One of Hlidskjálf
Spake his mind unto them
Where the hosts of fearless
Hárekr were slaughtered.
Thus sang Eyvindr:

The mead which forth
From Surtr's sunk dales
The Strong-through-spells
Swift-flying bore.
So sang Bragi:

'Tis seen, on my shield's surface,
How the Son of the Father of Peoples
Craved to try his strength full swiftly
'Gainst the rain-beat Snake earth-circling.
Thus sang Eínarr:

Since less with Bestla's Offspring
Prevail most lordly princes
Than thou, my task is singing
Thy praise in songs of battle.
Thus sang Thorvaldr Blending-Skald:

Now have I much
In the middle grasped
Of the son of Borr,
Of Búri's heir.

III. "Now you shall hear how the skalds have termed the art of poesy in these metaphorical phrases which have been recorded before: for example, by calling it Kvasir's Gore and Ship of the Dwarves, Dwarves' Mead, Mead of the Aesir, Giants' Father-Ransom, Liquor of Ódrerir and of Bodn and of Són, and Fullness of these, Liquor of Hnitbjörg, Booty and Find and Gift of Odin, even as has been sung in these verses which Einarr Tinkling-Scale wrought:

I pray the high-souled Warder
Of earth to hear the Ocean
Of the Cliff of Dwarves, my verses:

Hear, Earl, the Gore of Kvasir.
And as Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang further:

The Dwarves' Crag's Song-wave rushes
O'er all the dauntless shield-host
Of him who speeds the fury
Of the shield-wall's piercing sword-bane.
Even as Ormr Steinhórsson sang:

The body of the dame
And my dead be borne
Into one hall; the Drink
Of Dvalinn, Franklins, hear.
And as Refr sang:

I reveal the Thought's Drink
Of the Rock-Folk to Thorsteinn;
The Billow of the Dwarf-Crag
Plashes; I bid men hearken.
Even as Egill sang:

The Prince requires my lore,
And bound his praise to pour,
Odin's Mead I bore
To English shore.
And as Glúmr Geirason sang:

Let the Princely Giver hearken:

I hold the God-King's liquor.
Let silence, then, be granted,
While we sing the loss of thanes.
And as Eyvindr sang:

A hearing I crave
For the High One's Liquor,
While I utter
Gillingr's Atonement;
While his kin
In the Kettle-Brewing
Of the Gallows-Lord
To the gods I trace.
Even as Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

The Wave of Odin surges;
Of Ódrerir's Sea a billow
'Gainst the tongue's song-glade crashes;
Aye our King's works are goodly.
And as he sang further:

Now that which Bodn's Billow
Bodes forth will straight be uttered:

Let the War-King's host make silence
In the hall, and hear the Dwarves' Ship.
And as Eilífr Guðrúnarson sang:

Grant shall ye gifts of friendship,
Since grows of Són the Seedling
In our tongue's fertile sedge-bank:

True praise of our High Lord.
Even as Völu-Steinn sang:

Egill, hear the Heart-streams
Of Odin beat in cadence
'Gainst my palate's skerry;
The God's Spoil to me is given.
Thus sang Ormr Steinthórsson:

No verse of mine men need to fear,
No mockery I intertwine
In Odin's Spoil; my skill is sure
In forging songs of praise.
Thus sang Úlfr Uggason:

I show to host-glad Áleifr
The Heart-Fjord's Shoal of Odin,—
My song: him do I summon
To hear the Gift of Grímnir.

Poesy is called Sea, or Liquid of the Dwarves, because Kvasir's blood was liquid in Ódrerir before the mead was made, and then it was put into the kettle; wherefore it is called Odin's Kettle-Liquor, even as Eyvindr sang and as we have recorded before:

While his kin
In the Kettle-Brewing
Of the Gallows-Lord
To the gods I trace.

Moreover, poesy is called Ship or Ale of the Dwarves: ale is líð, and líð is a word for ships; therefore it is held that it is for this reason that poesy is now called Ship of the Dwarves, even as this verse tells:

The wit of Gunnlöd's Liquor
In swelling wind-like fullness,
And the everlasting Dwarves' Ship
I own, to send the same road.

IV. "What figures should be employed to periphrase the name of Thor? Thus: one should call him Son of Odin and of Jörd, Father of Magni and Módi and Thrúdr, Husband of Sif, Stepfather of Ullr, Wielder and Possessor of Mjöllnir and of the Girdle of Strength, and of Bilskirnir; Defender of Ásgard and of Midgard, Adversary and Slaver of Giants and Troll-Women, Smiter of Hrungrnir, of Geirrödr and of Thrívaldi, Master of Thjálfí and Röskva, Foe of the Midgard Serpent. Foster-father of Vingnir and Hlóra. So sang Bragi the Skald:

The line of Odin's Offspring
Lay not slack on the gunwale,
When the huge ocean-serpent
Uncoiled on the sea's bottom.
Thus sang Ölvir Cut-Nose-and-Crop-Ears:

The encircler of all regions
And Jörd's Son sought each other.
Thus sang Eilifr:

Wroth stood Röskva's Brother,
And Magni's Sire wrought bravely:

With terror Thor's staunch heart-stone
Trembled not, nor Thjálf's.
And thus sang Eysteinn Valdason:

With glowing eyes Thrúdr's Father
Glared at the sea-road's circler,
Ere the fishes' watery dwelling
Flowed in, the boat confounding.
Eysteinn sang further:

Swiftly Sif's Husband bounded him
To haste forth with the Giants
For his hardy fishing:

Well sing we Hrímnir's horn-stream.
Again he sang:

The earth-fish tugged so fiercely
That Ullr's Kinsman's clenched fists
Were pulled out past the gunwale;
The broad planks rent asunder.
Thus sang Bragi:

The strong fiend's Terrifier
In his right hand swung his hammer,
When he saw the loathly sea-fish
That all the lands confineth.
Thus sang Gamli:

While the Lord of high Bilskirnir,
Whose heart no falsehood fashioned,
Swiftly strove to shatter
The sea-fish with his hammer.
Thus sang Thorbjörn Lady's-Skald:

Bravely Thor fought for Ásgard
And the followers of Odin.
Thus sang Bragi:

And the vast misshapen circler
Of the ship's sea-path, fierce-minded,
Stared from below in anger
At the Skull-Splitter of Hrungnir.

Again sang Bragi:
Well hast Thou, Hewer-in-Sunder
Of the nine heads of Thrívaldi,
Kept thy goats⁷
Thus sang Eilifr:

The Merciless Destroyer
Of the people of the Giants
Grasped with ready fore-arms
At the heavy red-hot iron.

Thus sang Úlfr Uggason:
Faintly the stout-framed thickling
A fearful peril called it,
At the great draught wondrous heavy
Drawn up by the Lord of he-goats.
Thus Úlfr sang further:

The very mighty Slayer
Of the Mountain-Man brought crashing
His fist on Hymir's temple:

That was a hurt full deadly.
Yet again sang Úlfr:

Vimur's ford's Wide-Grappler
'Gainst the waves smote featly
The glittering Serpent's head off.
With old tales the hall was gleaming.

Here he is called Giant of Vimur's Ford. There is a river called Vimur, which Thor waded when he journeyed to the garth of Geirrödr.

Thus sang Vetrliði the skald:

Thou didst break the leg of Leikn,
Didst cause to stoop Starkadr,
Didst bruise Thrívaldi,
Didst stand on lifeless Gjálp.
Thus sang Thorbjörn Lady's-Skald:

⁷ The remainder of this stanza cannot be made out.

Thou didst smite the head of Keila,
Smash Kjallandi altogether,
Ere thou slewest Lútr and Leidi,
Didst spill the blood of Búseyra;
Didst hold back Hengjankjapta,
Hyrrokin died before;
Yet sooner in like fashion
Svívör from life was taken.

V. "How should one periphrase Baldr? By calling him Son of Odin and Frigg, Husband of Nanna, Father of Forseti, Possessor of Hringhorni and Draupnir, Adversary of Hödr, Companion of Hel, God of Tears. Úlfr Uggason, following the story of Baldr, has composed a long passage in the Húsdrápa; and examples are recorded earlier to the effect that Baldr is so termed.

VI. "How should one periphrase Njördr? By calling him God of the Vanir, or Kinsman of the Vanir, or Wane, Father of Freyr and Freyja, God of Wealth-Bestowal.

So says Thórdr Sjáreksson:

Gudrun's self by ill
Her sons did kill;
The wise God-bride
At the Wane's side
Grieved; men tell
Odin tamed steeds well;
'T was not the saying
Hamdir spared sword-playing.

Here it is recorded that Skadi departed from Njördr, as has already been written.

VII. "How should one periphrase Freyr? Thus: by calling him Son of Njördr, Brother of Freyja, and also God of Vanir, and Kinsman of the Vanir, and Wane, and God of the Fertile Season, and God of Wealth-Gifts.

Thus sang Egill Skallagrímsson:

For that Grjótbjörn
In goods and gear
Freyr and Njördr
Have fairly blessed.
Freyr is called Adversary of Beli, even as Eyvindr Spoiler of Skalds sang:

When the Earl's foe
Wished to inhabit
The outer bounds
Of Beli's hater.

He is the possessor of Skíðbladnir and of that boar which is called Gold-Bristle, even as it is told here:

Ívaldi's offspring
In ancient days
Went to shape Skíðbladnir,
Foremost of ships,
Fairly for Freyr,
Choicely for Njördr's child.
Thus speaks Úlfr Uggason:

The battle-bold Freyr rideth
First on the golden-bristled
Barrow-boar to the bale-fire
Of Baldr, and leads the people.
The boar is also called Fearful-Tusk.

VIII. "How should one periphrase Heimdallr? By calling him Son of Nine Mothers, or Watchman of the Gods, as already has been written; or White God, Foe of Loki, Seeker of Freyja's Necklace. A sword is called Heimdallr's Head: for it is said that he was pierced by a man's head. The tale thereof is told in Heimdalar-galdr; and ever since a head is called Heimdallr's Measure; a sword is called Man's Measure. Heimdallr is the Possessor of Gulltoppr; he is also Frequenter of Vágasker and Singasteinn, where he contended with Loki for the Necklace Brísinga-men, he is also called Vindlér. Úlfr Uggason composed a long passage in the Húsdrápa on that legend, and there it is written that they were in the form of seals. Heimdallr also is son of Odin.

IX. "How should one periphrase Týr? By calling him the One-handed God, and Fosterer of the Wolf, God of Battles, Son of Odin.

X. "How should one periphrase Bragi? By calling him Husband of Idunn, First Maker of Poetry, and the Long-bearded God (after his name, a man who has a great beard is called Beard-Bragi) and Son of Odin.

XI. "How should one periphrase Víðarr? He maybe called the Silent God, Possessor of the Iron Shoe, Foe and Slayer of Fenris-Wolf, Avenger of the Gods, Divine Dweller in the Homesteads of the Fathers, Son of Odin, and Brother of the Aesir.

XII. "How should Váli be periphrased? Thus: by calling him Son of Odin and Rindr, Stepson of Frigg, Brother of the Aesir, Baldr's Avenger, Foe and Slayer of Hödr, Dweller in the Homesteads of the Fathers.

XIII. "How should one periphrase Hödr? Thus: by calling him the Blind God, Baldr's Slayer, Thrower of the Mistletoe, Son of Odin, Companion of Hel, Foe of Váli.

XIV. How should Ullr be periphrased? By calling him Son of Sif, Stepson of Thor, God of the Snowshoe, God of the Bow, Hunting-God, God of the Shield.

XV. How should Hoenir be periphrased? By calling him Bench-Mate or Companion or Friend of Odin, the Swift of God, the Long-Footed, and' King of Clay.⁸

XVI. "How should one periphrase Loki? Thus: call him Son of Fárbaudi and Laufey, or of Nil, Brother of Býleistr and of Helblindi, Father of the Monster of Ván (that is, Fenris-Wolf), and of the Vast Monster (that is, the Midgard Serpent), and of Hel, and Nari, and Áli; Kinsman and Uncle, Evil Companion and Bench-Mate of Odin and the Aesir, Visitor and Chest-Trapping of Geirrödr, Thief of the Giants, of the Goat, of Brisinga-men, and of Idunn's Apples, Kinsman of Sleipnir, Husband of Sigyn, Foe of the Gods, Harmer of Sif's Hair, Forger of Evil, the Sly God,

Slanderer and Cheat of the Gods, Contriver of Baldr's Death, the Bound God, Wrangling Foe of Heimdallr and of Skadi. Even as Úlfr Uggason sings here:

The famed rain-bow's defender,
Ready in wisdom, striveth
At Singasteinn with Loki,
Fárbaudi's sin-sly offspring;
The son of mothers eight and one,
Mighty in wrath, possesses
The Stone ere Loki cometh:

I make known songs of praise.

Here it is written that Heimdallr is the son of nine mothers.

XVII. "Now an account shall be given of the source of those metaphors which have but now been recorded, and of which no accounts were rendered before: even such as Bragi gave to Aegir, telling how Thor had gone into the east to slay trolls, and Odin rode Sleipnir into Jötunheim and visited that giant who was named Hrungrnir. Hrungrnir asked what manner of man he with the golden helm might be, who rode through air and water; and said that the stranger had a wondrous good steed. Odin said he would wager his head there was no horse in Jötunheim that would prove equally good. Hrungrnir answered that it was a good horse, but declared that he had a much better paced horse which was called Gold-Mane. Hrungrnir had become angry, and vaulted up onto his horse and galloped after him, thinking to pay him for his boasting. Odin gal loped so furiously that he was on the top of the next hill first; but Hrungrnir was so filled with the giant's frenzy that he took no heed until he had come in beyond the gates of Ásgard. When he came to the hall-door, the Aesir invited him to drink. He went within and ordered drink to be brought to him, and then those flagons were brought in from which Thor was wont to drink; and Hrungrnir swilled from each in turn. But when he had become drunken, then big words were not wanting: he boasted that he would lift up Valhall and carry it to Jötunheim, and sink Ásgard and kill all the gods, save that he would take Freyja and Sif home with him. Freyja alone dared

⁸ ? Aur-konung.

pour for him; and he vowed that he would drink all the ale of the Aesir. But when his overbearing insolence became tiresome to the Aesir, they called on the name of Thor.

"Straightway Thor came into the hall, brandishing his hammer, and he was very wroth, and asked who had advised that these dogs of giants be permitted to drink there, or who had granted Hrungrnir safe-conduct to be in Valhall, or why Freyja should pour for him as at a feast of the Aesir. Then Hrungrnir answered, looking at Thor with no friendly eyes, and said that Odin had invited him to drink, and he was under his safe-conduct. Thor declared that Hrungrnir should repent of that invitation before he got away. Hrungrnir answered that Ása-Thor would have scant renown for killing him, weaponless as he was: it were a greater trial of his courage if he dared fight with Hrungrnir on the border at Grjótúnagard. 'And it was a great folly,' said he, 'when I left my shield and hone behind at home; if I had my weapons here, then we should try single-combat. But as matters stand, I declare thee a coward if thou wilt slay me, a weaponless man.' Thor was by no means anxious to avoid the fight when challenged to the field, for no one had ever offered him single-combat before.

"Then Hrungrnir went his way, and galloped furiously until he came to Jötunheim. The news of his journey was spread abroad among the giants, and it became noised abroad that a meeting had been arranged between him and Thor; the giants deemed that they had much at stake, who should win the victory, since they looked for ill at Thor's hands if Hrungrnir perished, he being strongest of them all. Then the giants made a man of clay at Grjótúnagard: he was nine miles high and three broad under the arm-pits; but they could get no heart big enough to fit him, until they took one from a mare. Even that was not steadfast within him, when Thor came. Hrungrnir had the heart which is notorious, of hard stone and spiked with three corners, even as the written character is since formed, which men call Hrungrnir's Heart. His head also was of stone; his shield too was stone, wide and thick, and he had the shield before him when he stood at Grjótúnagard and waited for Thor. Moreover he had a hone for a weapon, and brandished it over his shoulders, and he was not a pretty sight. At one side of him stood the clay giant, which was called Mökkurkálfi: he was sore afraid, and it is said that he wet himself when he saw Thor.

"Thor went to the meeting-place, and Thjálfi with him. Then Thjálfi ran forward to the spot where Hrungrnir stood and said to him: 'Thou standest unwarily, Giant, having the shield before thee: for Thor has seen thee, and comes hither down below the earth, and will come at thee from beneath.' Then Hrungrnir thrust the shield under his feet and stood upon it, wielding the hone with both hands. Then speedily he saw lightnings and heard great claps of thunder; then he saw Thor in God-like anger, who came forward furiously and swung the hammer and cast it at Hrungrnir from afar off. Hrungrnir lifted up the hone in both hands and cast it against him; it struck the hammer in flight, and the hone burst in sunder: one part fell to the earth, and thence are come all the flint-rocks; the other burst on Thor's head, so that he fell forward to the earth. But the hammer Mjölnir struck Hrungrnir in the middle of the head, and smashed his skull into small crumbs, and he fell forward upon Thor, so that his foot lay over Thor's

neck. Thjálfí struck at Mökkurkálfí, and he fell with little glory. Thereupon Thjálfí went over to Thor and would have lifted Hrungrnir's foot off him, but could not find sufficient strength. Straightway all the Aesir came up, when they, learned that Thor was fallen, and would have lifted the foot from off him, and could do nothing. Then Magni came up, son of Thor and Járnsaxa: he was then three nights old; he cast the foot of Hrungrnir off Thor, and spake: 'See how ill it is, father, that I came so late: I had struck this giant dead with my fist, methinks, if I had met with him.' Thor arose and welcomed his son, saying that he should surely become great; 'And I will give thee,' he said, the horse Gold-Mane, which Hrungrnir possessed.' Then Odin spake and said that Thor did wrong to give the good horse to the son of a giantess, and not to his father.

"Thor went home to Thrúdvangar, and the hone remained sticking in his head. Then came the wise woman who was called Gróa, wife of Aurvandill the Valiant: she sang her spells over Thor until the hone was loosened. But when Thor knew that, and thought that there was hope that the hone might be removed, he desired to reward Gróa for her leech-craft and make her glad, and told her these things: that he had waded from the north over Icy Stream and had borne Aurvandill in a basket on his back from the north out of Jötunheim. And he added for a token, that one of Aurvandill's toes had stuck out of the basket, and became frozen; wherefore Thor broke it off and cast it up into the heavens, and made thereof the star called Aurvandill's Toe. Thor said that it would not be long ere Aurvandill came home: but Gróa was so rejoiced that she forgot her incantations, and the hone was not loosened, and stands yet in Thor's head. Therefore it is forbidden to cast a hone across the floor, for then the hone is stirred in Thor's head. Thjóðólfr of Hvin has made a song after this tale in the Haustlöng. [It says there:

On the high and painted surface
Of the hollow shield, still further
One may see how the Giant's Terror
Sought the home of Grjótún;
The angry son of Jörd drove
To the play of steel; below him
Thundered the moon-way; rage swelled
In the heart of Meili's Brother.
All the bright gods' high mansions
Burned before Ullr's kinsman;
With hail the earth was beaten
Along his course, when the he-goats
Drew the god of the smooth wain forward
To meet the grisly giant:

The Earth, the Spouse of Odin,

Straightway reft asunder.
No truce made Baldr's brother
With the bitter foe of earth-folk.
Rocks shook, and crags were shivered;
The shining Upper Heaven
Burned; I saw the giant
Of the boat-sailed sea-reef waver
And give way fast before him,
Seeing his war-like Slayer.
Swiftly the shining shield-rim
Shot 'neath the Cliff-Ward's shoe-soles;
That was the wise gods' mandate,
The War-Valkyrs willed it.
The champion of the Waste-Land
Not long thereafter waited
For the speedy blow delivered
By the Friend of the snout-troll's crusher.
He who of breath despoileth
Beli's baleful hirelings
Felled on the shield rim-circled
The fiend of the roaring mountain;
The monster of the glen-field
Before the mighty hammer
Sank, when the Hill-Danes' Breaker
Struck down the hideous caitiff.
Then the hone hard-broken
Hurled by the Ogress-lover
Whirred into the brain-ridge
Of Earth's Son, that the whetter
Of steels, sticking unloosened
In the skull of Odin's offspring,
Stood there all besprinkled
With Einridi's blood.
Until the wise ale-goddess,
With wondrous lays, enchanted
The vaunted woe, rust-ruddy,
From the Wain-God's sloping temples;
Painted on its circuit
I see them clearly pictured:

The fair-bossed shield, with stories

Figured, I had from Thórlleifr.”⁹

XVIII. Then said, Aegir: ”Methinks Hrungrnir was of great might. Did Thor accomplish yet more valorous deeds when he had to do with the trolls?” And Bragi answered: ”It is worthy to be told at length, how Thor went to Geirrödr’s dwelling. At that time he had not the hammer Mjölnir with him, nor his Girdle of Might, nor the iron gauntlets: and that was the fault of Loki, who went with him. For once, flying in his sport with Frigg’s hawk-plumage, it had happened to Loki to fly for curiosity’s sake into Geirrödr’s court. There he saw a great hall, and alighted and looked in through the window; and Geirrödr looked up and saw him, and commanded that the bird be taken and brought to him, But he who was sent could scarce get to the top of the wall, so high was it; and it seemed pleasant to Loki to see the man striving with toil and pains to reach him, and he thought it was not yet time to fly away until the other had accomplished the perilous climb. When the man pressed hard after him, then he stretched his wings for flight, and thrust out vehemently, but now his feet were stuck fast.

So Loki was taken and brought before Geirrödr the giant; but when Geirrödr saw his eyes, he suspected that this might be a man, and bade him answer; but Loki was silent. Then Geirrödr shut Loki into a chest and starved him there three months. And now when Geirrödr took him out and commanded him to speak, Loki told who he was; and by way of ransom for his life he swore to Geirrödr with oaths that he would get Thor to come into Geirrödr’s dwelling in such a fashion that he should have neither hammer nor Girdle of Might with him.

”Thor came to spend the night with that giantess who was called Grídr, mother of Vídarr the Silent. She told Thor the truth concerning Geirrödr, that he was a crafty giant and ill to deal with; and she lent him the Girdle of Might and iron gloves which she possessed, and her staff also, which was called Grídr’s Rod. Then Thor proceeded to the river named Vimur, greatest of all rivers. There he girded himself with the Girdle of Might and braced firmly downstream with Grídr’s Rod, and Loki held on behind by the Girdle of Might. When Thor came to mid-current, the river waxed so greatly that it broke high upon his shoulders. Then Thor sang this:

Wax thou not now, Vimur,
For I fain would wade thee
Into the Giants’ garth:

Know thou, if thou waxest,
Then waxeth God-strength in me
As high up as the heaven.

”Then Thor saw Gjalp, daughter of Geirrödr, standing in certain ravines, one leg in each, spanning the river, and she was causing the spate. Then Thor snatched up a

⁹ Passages enclosed within brackets are considered by Jónsson to be spurious.

great stone out of the river and cast it at her, saying these words: 'At its source should a river be stemmed.' Nor did he miss that at which he threw. In that moment he came to the shore and took hold of a rowan-clump, and so climbed out of the river; whence comes the saying that rowan is Thor's deliverance.

"Now when Thor came before Geirrödr, the companions were shown first into the goat-fold for their entertainment, and there was one chair there for a seat, and Thor sat there. Then he became aware that the chair moved under him up toward the roof: he thrust Grídr's Rod up against the rafters and pushed back hard against the chair. Then there was a great crash, and screaming followed. Under the chair had been Geirrödr's daughters, Gjálp and Greip; and he had broken both their backs. Then Geirrödr had Thor called into the hall to play games. There were great fires the whole length of the hall. When Thor came up over against Geirrödr, then Geirrödr took up a glowing bar of iron with the tongs and cast it at Thor. Thor caught it with his iron gloves and raised the bar in the air, but Geirrödr leapt behind an iron pillar to save himself. Thor lifted up the bar and threw it, and it passed through the pillar and through Geirrödr and through the wall, and so on out, even into the earth. Eilífr Gudrúnarson has wrought verses on this story, in Thórsdrápa:

[The winding sea-snake's father
Did wile from home the slayer
Of the life of the gods' grim foemen;
—(Ever was Loptr a liar)—
The never faithful Searcher
Of the heart of the fearless Thunderer
Declared green ways were lying
To the walled stead of Geirrödr.
No long space Thor let Loki
Lure him to the going:

They yearned to overmaster
Thorn's offspring, when the Seeker
Of Idi's garth, than giants
Greater in might, made ready
In ancient days, for faring
To the Giants' Seat, from Odin's.
Further in the faring
Forward went warlike Thjálf
With the divine Host-Cheerer
Than the deceiving lover
Of her of enchanted singing:

—(I chant the Ale of Odin)—

The hill dame's Mocker measured
The moor with hollow foot-soles.
And the war-wonted journeyed
Till the hill-women's Waster
Came to Gangr's blood, the Vimur;
Then Loki's bale-repeller,
Eager in anger, lavish
Of valor, longed to struggle
Against the maid, kinswoman
Of the sedge-cowled giant.
And the honor-lessener
Of the Lady of the Sea-Crag
Won foot-hold in the surging
Of the hail-rolled leaping hill-spate;
The rock-knave's swift Pursuer
Passed the broad stream of his staff's road,
Where the foam-flecked mighty rivers
Frothed with raging venom.
There they set the staves before them
In the streaming grove of dogfish;
The wind-wood's slippery pebbles,
Smitten to speech, slept not;
The clashing rod did rattle
'Gainst the worn rocks, and the rapid
Of the fells howled, storm-smitten,
On the river's stony anvil.
The Weaver of the Girdle
Beheld the washing slope-stream
Fall on his hard-grown shoulders:

No help he found to save him;
The Minisher of hill-folk
Caused Might to grow within him
Even to the roof of heaven,
Till the rushing flood should ebb.
The fair warriors of the Aesir,
In battle wise, fast waded,
And the surging pool, sward-sweeping,
Streamed: the earth-drift's billow,
Blown by the mighty tempest,
Tugged with monstrous fury
At the terrible oppressor

Of the earth-born tribe of cave-folk.
Till Thjálfi came uplifted
On his lord Thor's wide shield-strap:

That was a mighty thew-test
For the Prop of Heaven; the maidens
Of the harmful giant stiffly
Held the stream stubborn against them;
The Giantess-Destroyer
With Grídr's staff fared sternly.
Nor did their hearts of rancor
Droop in the men unblemished,
Nor courage 'gainst the headlong
Fall of the current fail them:

A fiercer-daring spirit
Flamed in the dauntless God's breast,—
With terror Thor's staunch heart-stone
Trembled not, nor Thjálfi's.
And afterward the haters
Of the host of sword-companions,
The shatterers of bucklers,
Dinned on the shield of giants,
Ere the destroying peoples
Of the shingle-drift of monsters
Wrought the helm-play of Hedinn
'Gainst the rock-dwelling marksmen.
The hostile folk of sea-heights
Fled before the Oppressor
Of headland tribes; the dalesmen
Of the hill-tops, imperilled,
Fled, when Odin's kindred
Stood, enduring staunchly;
The Danes of the flood-reef's border
Bowed down to the Flame-Shaker.
Where the chiefs, with thoughts of valor
Imbued, marched into Thorn's house,
A mighty crash resounded
Of the cave's ring-wall; the slayer
Of the mountain-reindeer-people
On the giant-maiden's wide hood
Was brought in bitter peril:

There was baleful peace-talk.
And they pressed the high head, bearing
The piercing brow-moon's eye-flame
Against the hill-hall's rafters;
On the high roof-tree broken
He crushed those raging women:

The swinging Storm-car's Guider
Burst the stout, ancient back-ridge
And breast-bones of both women.
Earth's Son became familiar
With knowledge strange; the cave-men
Of the land of stone o'ercame not,
Nor long with ale were merry:

The frightful elm-string's plucker,
The friend of Sudri, hurtled
The hot bar, in the forge fused,
Into the hand of Odin's Gladdener.
So that Gunnr's Swift-Speeder
Seized (the Friend of Freyja),
With quick hand-gulps, the molten
High-raised draught of metal,
When the fire-brand, glowing,
Flew with maddened fury
From the giant's gripping fingers
To the grim Sire of Thrúdr.
The hall of the doughty trembled
When he dashed the massy forehead
Of the hill-wight 'gainst the bottom
Of the house-wall's ancient column;
Ullr's glorious step-sire
With the glowing bar of mischief
Struck with his whole strength downward
At the hill-knave's mid-girdle.
The God with gory hammer
Crushed utterly Glaumr's lineage;
The Hunter of the Kindred
Of the hearth-dame was victorious;
The Plucker of the Bow-String
Lacked not his people's valor,—
The Chariot-God, who swiftly

Wrought grief to the Giant's bench-thanes.
He to whom hosts make offering
Hewed down the dolt-like dwellers
Of the cloud-abyss of Elf-Home,
Crushing them with the fragment
Of Grídr's Rod: the litter
Of hawks, the race of Listi
Could not harm the help-strong
Queller of Ella's Stone-Folk.]

XIX." How should one periphrase Frigg? Call her Daughter of Fjörgynn, Wife of Odin, Mother of Baldr, Co-Wife of Jörd and Rindr and Gunnlöd and Grídr, Mother-in-law of Nanna, Lady of the Aesir and Ásynjur, Mistress of Fulla and of the Hawk-Plumage and of Fensalir.

XX. "How should one periphrase Freyja? Thus: by calling her Daughter of Njördr, Sister of Freyr, Wife of Ódr, Mother of Hnoss, Possessor of the Slain, of Sessrúmnir, of the Gib-Cats, and of Brisinga-men; Goddess of the Vanir, Lady of the Vanir, Goddess Beautiful in Tears, Goddess of Love. All the goddesses may be periphrased thus: by calling them by the name of another, and naming them in terms of their possessions or their works or their kindred.

[XXI. "How should Sif be periphrased? By calling her Wife of Thor, Mother of Ullr, Fair-Haired Goddess, Co-Wife of Járnsaxa, Mother of Thrúdr.

XXII. "How should Idunn be periphrased? Thus: by calling her Wife of Bragi, and Keeper of the Apples; and the apples should be called Age-Elixir of the Aesir. Idunn is also called Spoil of the Giant Thjazi, according to the tale that has been told before, how he took her away from the Aesir. Thjódólfr of Hvin composed verses after that tale in the Haustlög:

How shall I make voice-payment
Meetly for the shield-bridge
Of the war-wall Thórleifr gave me?
I survey the truceless faring
Of the three gods strife-foremost,
And Thjatsi's, on the shining
Cheek of the shield of battle.
The Spoiler of the Lady
Swiftly flew with tumult
To meet the high god-rulers
Long hence in eagle-plumage;
The erne in old days lighted
Where the Aesir meat were bearing
To the fire-pit; the Giant

Of the rocks was called no faint-heart.
The skilful god-deceiver
To the gods proved a stern sharer
Of bones: the high Instructor
Of Aesir, helmet-hooded,
Saw some power checked the seething;
The sea-mew, very crafty,
Spake from the ancient tree-trunk;
Loki was ill-willed toward him.
The wolfish monster ordered
Meili's Sire to deal him
Food from the holy trencher:

The friend of Him of Ravens
To blow the fire was chosen;
The Giant-King, flesh-greedy,
Sank down, where the guileless
Craft-sparing gods were gathered.
The comely Lord of All Things
Commanded Loki swiftly
To part the bull's-meat, slaughtered
By Skadi's ringing bow-string,
Among the folk, but straightway
The cunning food-defiler
Of the Aesir filched-the quarters,
All four, from the broad table.
And the hungry Sire of Giants
Savagely ate the yoke-beast
From the oak-tree's sheltering branches,—
That was in ancient ages,—
Ere the wise-minded Loki,
Warder of war-spoil, smote him,
Boldest of foes of Earth-Folk,
With a pole betwixt the shoulders.
The Arm-Burden then of Sigyn,
Whom all the gods in bonds see,
Firmly forthwith was fastened
To the Fosterer of Skadi;
To Jötunheim's Strong Dweller
The pole stuck, and the fingers
Of Loki too, companion
Of Hœnir, clung to the pole's end.

The Bird of Blood flew upward
 (Blithesome in his quarry)
 A long way off with Loki,
 The lither God, that almost
 Wolf's Sire was rent asunder;
 Thor's friend must sue for mercy,
 Such peace as he might purchase
 To pray: nigh slain was Loptr.
 Then Hymir's Kinsman ordered
 The crafty god, pain-maddened,
 To wile to him the Maiden
 Who warded the Aesir's age-cure;
 Ere long the necklace-robber,
 Brísinga's thief, lured slyly
 The Dame of Brunnakr's brooklet
 Into the Base One's dwelling.
 At that the steep slope-dwellers
 No sorrow felt; then Idunn
 Was from the south, by giants
 New-stolen, come among them.
 All Ingvi-Freyr's high kindred,
 Hoary and old, to council
 Hasted; grewsome of fashion
 And ugly all the gods were.

.....¹⁰

This heard I, that the Staunch Friend
 Of Hœnir—oft thereafter
 With wiles he tricked the Aesir—
 Flew, in hawk-wings hidden;
 And the vile Sire of Giants,
 Vigorous Wing-Plume-Wielder,
 Hurtled on eagle-pinion
 After the hawk-shaped Loki.
 Swiftly the gods have kindled
 A fire; and the sovereign rulers
 Sustained the flame with shavings:

Scorched was the flying giant,—
 He plunged down in mid-soaring:

¹⁰ "Brjála ður texti"—Jónsson, *Edda* (Reykjavik, 1907), p. 384. The condition of the text makes translation impossible.

'Tis pictured on the giant's
Sole-bridge, the shield which, painted
With stories, Thórleifr gave me.]

"This is the correct manner of periphrasing the Aesir: To call each of them by the name of another, and to designate him in terms of his works or his possessions or his kindred.

XXIII. "How should the heaven be periphrased? Thus: call it Skull of Ymir, and hence, Giant's Skull; Task or Burden of the Dwarves, or Helm of Vestri and Austri, Sudri, or Nordri; Land of the Sun, of the Moon, and of the

Stars of Heaven, of the Wains and the Winds; Helm, or House, of the Air and the Earth and the Sun. So sang Arnórr Earls'-Skald:

So large of gifts ne'er mounted
Young Lord of Shields on ship-deck
'Neath the ancient Skull of Ymir:

Splendid this Prince's largess.
And as he sang again:

Bright grows the sun at dusking,
The earth sinks into the dark sea,
The Toil of Austri bursteth;
All the ocean on the fells breaks.
Thus sang Bödvarr the Halt:

For never 'neath the Sun's Plain
Shall come a nobler Land-Ward,
Keener in battle-onset,
Nor a brother of Ingi better.
And as Thjóðólfr of Hvin sang:

Jörd's Son drove to the steel-play
(High swelled the godlike anger
In the mind of Meili's Brother),
And the Moon-Way 'neath him quivered.
Even as sang Ormr Barrey's-Skald:

Lady of Draupnir's gore-streak,
However great I know him,
The wielder (by right he ruleth)
Of the Wain's Road sees me gladly.
Even as the skald Bragi sang:

He who threw the dead eyes
Of Thjazi, Skadi's father,
Into the Winds' Wide Basin
O'er the abodes of men-folk many.
And as Markús sang:

'Tis long since the dear-loved Warder
Of sea-men was born on the wave-girt earth-bottom
Of the Storm-Container; each man praises
The sublime age of the Ring-Dispenser.
Even as Steinn Herdísarson sang:

I sing the holy Ruler
Of the high World-Tent rather
Than men, for very precious
Is He: His praises tell I.
And as Arnórr Earls'-Skald sang:

Help, dear King of Heaven,
The Day's Plain, help my Hermundr.
And as Arnórr sang further:

Soothfast King of the Sun-Tents,
Help stout-hearted Rögnvaldr.
And as Hallvarðr sang:

Knútr wards the land, as the Ruler
Of All wards the radiant Fell-Hall.
As Arnórr sang:

Michael, wise of understanding,
Weighs what seems done ill, and good things:

Then the Monarch of the Sun's Helm
At the Doom-Seat parts all mortals.

XXIV. "How should one periphraise the earth? Thus: by calling her Flesh of Ymir, and Mother of Thor, Daughter of Ónarr, Odin's Bride, Co-Wife of Frigg and Rindr and Gunnlöð, Mother-in-law of Sif, Floor and Bottom of the Storm-Hall, Sea of Beasts, Daughter of Night, Sister of Audr and of Day. Even as Eyvindr Skald-Despoiler sang:

Now the beaming gold is hidden
In the body of the Mother
Of the Giants' Foe; the counsels
Of a kindred strong are mighty.
As sang Hallfredr Troublous-Skald:

In council 't was determined
That the King's friend, wise in counsel,
Should wed the Land, sole Daughter
Of Ónarr, greenly wooded.
And he said further:

The Raven-Abode's brave Ruler
Got the broad-faced Bride of Odin,
The Land, with kingly counsels
Of weapons, lured unto him.
Even as Thjódólfr sang:

The Ruler, glad in Warriors,
In the rowed hull doth fasten
The ships of men to the strand's end,
At the head of the sea keel-ridden.
As Hallfredr sang:

Full loath to let the Land slip
I hold the lordly Spear-Prince
Audr's sister is subjected
To the splendid Treasure-Spender.
Thus sang Thjódólfr:

Far off the dart-slow sluggard
Stood, when the Sword-Inciter
In ancient days took to him
The unripe Co-Wife of Rindr.

XXV. "How should one periphrase the sea? Thus: by calling it Ymir's Blood; Visitor of the Gods; Husband of Rán; Father of Aegir's Daughters, of them who are called Himinglæva, Dúfa, Blódughadda, Hefring, Udr, Hrönn, Bylgja, Bára, Kolga; Land of Rán and of Aegir's Daughters, of Ships and of ships' names, of the Keel, of Beaks, of Planks and Seams, of Fishes, of Ice; Way and Road of Sea-Kings; likewise Encircler of Islands; House of Sands and of Kelp and of Reefs; Land of Fishing-gear, of Sea-Fowls, and of Fair Wind. Even as Ormr Barrey's-Skald sang:

On the gravelly beach of good ships
Grates the Blood of Ymir.
As Refr sang:

The mild deer of the masthead beareth
O'er the murky water from the westward

Her wave-pressed bows; the land I look for
Before the beak; the Whale-Home shallows.
Even as Steinn sang:

When the fallow fell-wall's Whirlwinds
Wove o'er the waves full fiercely,
And Aegir's storm-glad daughters
Tore, of grim frost begotten.
And as Refr sang:

Gymir's wet-cold Spae-Wife
Wiles the Bear of Twisted Cables
Oft into Aegir's wide jaws,
Where the angry billow breaketh.
It is said here that Aegir and Gymir are both the same. And he sang
further:

And the Sea-Peak's Sleipnir slitteth
The stormy breast rain-driven,
The wave, with red stain running
Out of white Rán's mouth.
As Einarr Skúlason sang:

The stern snow-wind has thrust out
With strength, the ship from landward:

The Swan-Land's steed sees Iceland
Into the surf receding.
And as he sang further:

Many a stiff rowlock straineth,
And the noisy Strand of Fish-Gear,
The Sea, the lands o'ercometh:

Men's hands oft span the stays.
And he sang yet further:

The gray Isle-Fetter urges
Heiti's raven-ship onward;
Gold beaks the fleet ships carry:

Rich that faring to the Chieftain.
And he sang again:

The Isle-Rim autumn chilly
Impels the dock's cold snowshoe.
And thus also:

The cool lands' Surging-Girdle
Before the beaks springs asunder.
As Snaebjorn sang:

They say nine brides of skerries
Swiftly move the Sea-Churn
Of Grótti's Island-Flour-Bin
Beyond the Earth's last outskirt,—
They who long the corny ale ground
Of Amlódi; the Giver
Of Rings now cuts with ship's beak
The Abiding-Place of boat-sides.
Here the sea is called Amlódi's Churn.
As Einarr Skúlason sang:

The sturdy drive-nails weaken
In the swift swirl, where paeth
Rakni's Heaving Plain: wind
Puffs the reefs against the stays.

XXVI. "How should one periphrase the sun? By calling her Daughter of Mundilfari, Sister of the Moon, Wife of Glenr, Fire of Heaven and of the Air. Even as Skúli Thorsteinsson sang:

Glenr's god-blithe Bed-Mate wadeth
Into the Goddess's mansion
With rays; then the good light cometh
Of gray-sarked Máni downward.
Thus sang Einarr Skúlason:

Whereso the lofty flickering
Flame of the World's Hall swimmeth
O'er our loved friend, who hateth
And lavisheth the sea-gold.

XXVII. "How should the wind be periphrased? Thus: call it Son of Fornjótr, Brother of the Sea and of Fire, Scathe or Ruin or Hound or Wolf of the Wood or of the Sail or of the Rigging.

Thus spake Sveinn in the Nordrsetu-drápa:

First began to fly
Fornjótr's sons ill-shapen.

XXVIII. "How should one periphraise fire? Thus: call it Brother of the Wind and the Sea, Ruin and Destruction of Wood and of Houses, Hálf's Bane, Sun of Houses.

XXIX. "How should winter be periphraised? Thus: call it Son of Vindsvalr, Destruction of Serpents, Tempest Season. Thus sang Ormr Steinhórsson:

To the blind man I proffer
This blessing: Vindsvalr's Son.
Thus sang Ásgrímr:

The warlike Spoil-Bestower,
Lavish of Wealth, that winter—
Snake's-Woe—in Thrándheim tarried;
The folk knew thy true actions.

XXX. "How should one periphraise summer? Thus: call it Son of Svásudr and Comfort of Serpents, and Growth of Men. Even as Egill Skallagrímsson sang:

We shall wave our swords, O Dyer
Of Wolf's Teeth, make them glitter:

A deed we have for wreaking
In the Comfort of Dale-Serpents.

XXXI. "How should man be periphraised? By his works, by that which he gives or receives or does; he may also be periphraised in terms of his property, those things which he possesses, and, if he be liberal, of his liberality; likewise in terms of the families from which he descended, as well as of those which have sprung from him. How is one to periphraise him in terms of these things? Thus, by calling him accomplisher or performer of his goings or his conduct, of his battles or sea-voyages or huntings or weapons or ships. And because he is a tester of weapons and a winner of battles,—the words for 'winner' and 'wood' being the same, as are also those for 'tester' and 'rowan,'—therefore, from these phrases, skalds have called man Ash or Maple, Grove, or other masculine tree-names, and periphraised him in such expressions in terms of battles or ships or possessions. It is also correct to periphraise man with all the names of the Aesir; also with giant-terms, and this last is for the most part for mocking or libellous purposes. Periphraisis with the names of elves is held to be favorable.

"Woman should be periphraised with reference to all female garments, gold and jewels, ale or wine or any other drink, or to that which she dispenses or gives; likewise

with reference to ale-vessels, and to all those things which it becomes her to perform or to give. It is correct to paraphrase her thus: by calling her giver or user of that of which she partakes. But the words for 'giver' and 'user' are also names of trees; therefore woman is called in metaphorical speech by all feminine tree-names. Woman is paraphrased with reference to jewels or agates for this reason: in heathen times what was called a 'stone-necklace,' which they wore about the neck, was a part of a woman's apparel; now it is used figuratively in such a way as to paraphrase woman with stones and all names of stones. Woman is also metaphorically called by the names of the Ásynjur or the Valkyrs or Norris or women of supernatural kind. It is also correct to paraphrase woman in terms of all her conduct or property or family.

XXXII. "How should gold be paraphrased? Thus: by calling it Aegir's Fire, and Needles of Glasir, Hair of Sif, Snood of Fulla, Freyja's Tears, Talk and Voice and Word of Giants, Draupnir's Drop and Rain or Shower of Draupnir, or of Freyja's Eyes, Otter's Ransom, Forced Payment of the Aesir, Seed of Fýris-Plain, Cairn-Roof of Hölgi, Fire of all Waters and of the Hand, Stone and Reef or Gleam of the Hand.

XXXIII. Wherefore is gold called Aegir's Fire? This tale is to the same purport as we have told before: Aegir went to Ásgard to a feast, but when he was ready to return home, he invited Odin and all the Aesir to visit him in three months' time. First came Odin and Njördr, Freyr, Týr, Bragi, Vídarr, Loki; likewise the Ásynjur: Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Skadi, Idunn, Sif. Thor was not there, having gone into the eastern lands to slay trolls. When the gods had sat down in their places, straightway Aegir had bright gold brought in onto the floor of the hall, and the gold gave forth light and illumined the hall like fire: and it was used there for lights at his banquet, even as in Valhall swords were used in place of fire. Then Loki bandied sharp words with all the gods, and slew one of Aegir's thralls, him who was called Five-Finger; another of his thralls was named Fire-Kindler. Rán is the name of Aegir's wife, and their daughters are nine, even as we have written before. At this feast all things were self-served, both food and ale, and all implements needful to the feast. Then the Aesir became aware that Rán had that net wherein she was wont to catch all men who go upon the sea. Now this tale is to show whence it comes that gold is called Fire or Light or Brightness of Aegir, of Rán, or of Aegir's daughters; and now such use is made of these metaphors that gold is called Fire of the Sea, and of all names of the sea, even as Aegir or Rán had names associated with the sea. Therefore gold is now called Fire of Waters or of Rivers, and of all river names.

"But these names have fared just as other figures also have done: the later skalds have composed after the examples of the old skalds, even those examples which stood in their poems, but were later expanded into such forms as seemed to later poets to be like what was written before: as a lake is to the sea, or the river to the lake, or the brook to the river. Therefore all these are called new figures, when terms are expanded to greater length than what was recorded before; and all this seems well and good, so fair as it concurs with verisimilitude and nature. As Bragi the Skald sang:

I was given by the Battler
The fire of the Brook of Sea-Fish:

He gave it me, with mercy,
For the Drink of the Mountain-Giant.

XXXIV. "Why is gold called the Needles, or Leaves; of Glasir? In Ásgard, before the doors of Valhall, there stands a grove which is called Glasir, and its leafage is all red gold, even as is sung here:

Glasir stands
With golden leafage
Before the High God's halls.
Far and wide, this tree is the fairest known among gods and men.

XXXV. "Why is gold called Sif's Hair? Loki Laufeyarson, for mischief's sake, cut off all Sif's hair. But when Thor learned of this, he seized Loki, and would have broken every bone in him, had he not sworn to get the Black Elves to make Sif hair of gold, such that it would grow like other hair. After that, Loki went to those dwarves who are called Ívaldi's Sons; and they made the hair, and Skíðbladnir also, and the spear which became Odin's possession, and was called Gungnir. Then Loki wagered his head with the dwarf called Brokkr that Brokkr's brother Sindri could not make three other precious things equal in virtue to these. Now when they came to the smithy, Sindri laid a pigskin in the hearth and bade Brokkr blow, and did not cease work until he took out of the hearth that which he had laid therein. But when he went out of the smithy, while the other dwarf was blowing, straightway a fly settled upon his hand and stung: yet he blew on as before, until the smith took the work out of the hearth; and it was a boar, with mane and bristles of gold. Next, he laid gold in the hearth and bade Brokkr blow and cease not from his blast until he should return. He went out; but again the fly came and settled on Brokkr's neck, and bit now half again as hard as before; yet he blew even until the smith took from the hearth that gold ring which is called Draupnir. Then Sindri laid iron in the hearth and bade him blow, saying that it would be spoiled if the blast failed. Straightway the fly settled between Brokkr's eyes and stung his eyelid, but when the blood fell into his eyes so that he could not see, then he clutched at it with his hand as swiftly as he could,—while the bellows grew flat,—and he swept the fly from him. Then the smith came thither and said that it had come near to spoiling all that was in the hearth. Then he took from the forge a hammer, put all the precious works into the hands of Brokkr his brother, and bade him go with them to Ásgard and claim the wager.

"Now when he and Loki brought forward the precious gifts, the Aesir sat down in the seats of judgment; and that verdict was to prevail which Odin, Thor, and Freyr should render. Then Loki gave Odin the spear Gungnir, and to Thor the hair which

Sif was to have, and Skíðbladnir to Freyr, and told the virtues of all these things: that the spear would never stop in its thrust; the hair would grow to the flesh as soon as it came upon Sif's head; and Skíðbladnir would have a favoring breeze as soon as the sail was raised, in whatsoever direction it might go, but could be folded together like a napkin and be kept in Freyr's pouch if he so desired. Then Brokkr brought forward his gifts: he gave to Odin the ring, saying that eight rings of the same weight would drop from it every ninth night; to Freyr he gave the boar, saying that it could run through air and water better than any horse, and it could never become so dark with night or gloom of the Murky Regions that there should not be sufficient light where he went, such was the glow from its mane and bristles. Then he gave the hammer to Thor, and said that Thor might smite as hard as he desired, whatsoever might be before him, and the hammer would not fail; and if he threw it at anything, it would never miss, and never fly so far as not to return to his hand; and if he desired, he might keep it in his sark, it was so small; but indeed it was a flaw in the hammer that the fore-haft was somewhat short.

"This was their decision: that the hammer was best of all the precious works, and in it there was the greatest defence against the Rime-Giants; and they gave sentence, that the dwarf should have his wager. Then Loki offered to redeem his head, but the dwarf said that there was no chance of this. 'Take me, then,' quoth Loki; but when Brokkr would have laid hands on him, he was a long way off. Loki had with him those shoes with which he ran through air and over water. Then the dwarf prayed Thor to catch him, and Thor did so. Then the dwarf would have hewn off his head; but Loki said that he might have the head, but not the neck. So the dwarf took a thong and a knife, and would have bored a hole in Loki's lips and stitched his mouth together, but the knife did not cut. Then Brokkr said that it would be better if his brother's awl were there: and even as he named it, the awl was there, and pierced the lips. He stitched the Ups together, and Loki ripped the thong out of the edges. That thong, with which Loki's mouth was sewn together, is called Vartari.

XXXVI. "One may hear how gold is metaphorically called Fulla's Snood, in this verse which Eyvindr Skald-Despoiler wrought:

Fulla's shining Fillet,
The forehead's sun at rising,
Shone on the swelling shield-hill
For skalds all Hakon's life-days.

XXXVII. "Gold is called Freyja's Tears, as was said before. So sang Skúli Thorsteinson:

Many a fearless swordsman
Received the Tears of Freyja
The more the morn when foemen

We murdered; we were present.
And as Einarr Skúlason sang:

Where, mounted 'twixt the carvings,
The Tear of Mardöll lieth,
We bear the axe shield-splitting,
Swollen with Serpent's lair-gold.

And here Einarr has further periphrased Freyja so as to call her Mother of Hnoss,
or Wife of Ódr, as standeth below:

The shield, tempest's strong roof-ice,
With tear-gold is unminished,
Eye-rain of Ódr's Bed-Mate:

His age the King so useth.
And again thus:

Hörn's Child, the glorious adornment,
I own, gold-wound—a jewel
Most fair—to the shield's rim
Fast is the golden Sea-Flame:

On the gem, Freyr's Niece, the tear-drift
Of the fore-head of her Mother
She bears; the Raven-Feeder
Gave me Fródi's seed-gold's fostering.

It is also recorded here that one may periphrase Freyja by calling her Sister of Freyr.

And thus also:

A defence of songs full goodly
He freely gave me, neighbor
Of sea-scales: I praise gladly
Njördr's Daughter's golden gem-child.
Here she is called Daughter of Njördr.
And again thus:

The awesome Stately Urger
Of Odin, he who raises
The struggle stern, gave to me
The courage-stalwart daughter
Of the Vana-Bride, my fair axe;
The valorous sword-mote's Ruler
Led Gefn's girl to the Skald's bed,
Set with the sea-flame's gold-work.

Here she is called Gefn and Bride of the Vanir.—It is proper to join 'tears' with all the names of Freyja, and to call gold by such terms; and in divers ways these periphrases have been varied, so that gold is called Hail, or Rain, or Snow-Storm, or Drops, or Showers, or Water falls, of Freyja's Eyes, or Cheeks, or Brows, or Eyelids.

XXXVIII. "In this place one may hear that gold is called Word, or Voice, of Giants, as we have said before; thus sang Bragi the Skald:

Then had I the third friend
Fairly praised: the poorest
In the Voice of the Botched-Knob's Áli,
But best of all to me.

He called a rock Botched Knob, and a giant Áli of Rock, and gold Voice of the Giant.

XXXIX. "For what reason is gold called Otter's Wergild? It is related that when certain of the Aesir, Odin and Loki and Hœnir, went forth to explore the earth, they came to a certain river, and proceeded along the river to a waterfall. And beside the fall was an otter, which had taken a salmon from the fall and was eating, blinking his eyes the while. Then Loki took up a stone and cast it at the otter, and struck its head. And Loki boasted in his catch, that he had got otter and salmon with one blow. Then they took up the salmon and the otter and bore them along with them, and coming to the buildings of a certain farm, they went in. Now the husbandman who dwelt there was named Hreidmarr: he was a man of much substance, and very skilled in black magic. The Aesir asked him for a night's lodging, saying that they had sufficient food with them, and showed him their catch. But when Hreidmarr saw the otter, straight way he called to him his sons, Fáfnir and Reginn, and told them that the otter their brother was slain, and who had done that deed.

Now father and sons went up to the Aesir, seized them, bound them, and told them about the otter, how he was Hreidmarr's son. The Aesir offered a ransom for their lives, as much wealth as Hreidmarr himself desired to appoint; and a covenant was made between them on those terms, and confirmed with oaths. Then the otter was flayed, and Hreidmarr, taking the otter-skin, bade them fill the skin with red gold and also cover it altogether; and that should be the condition of the covenant between them. Thereupon Odin sent Loki into the Land of the Black Elves, and he came to the dwarf who is called Andvari, who was as a fish in the water. Loki caught him in his hands and required of him in ransom of his life all the gold that he had in his rock; and when they came within the rock, the dwarf brought forth all the gold he had, and it was very much wealth. Then the dwarf quickly swept under his hand one little gold ring, but Loki saw it and commanded him to give over the ring. The dwarf prayed him not to take the ring from him, saying that from this ring he could multiply wealth for himself if he might keep it. Loki answered that he should not have one penny left, and took the ring from him and went out; but the dwarf declared that that ring should be the

ruin of every one who should come into possession of it. Loki replied that this seemed well enough to him, and that this condition should hold good provided that he himself brought it to the ears of them that should receive the ring and the curse. He went his way and came to Hreidmarr's dwelling, and showed the gold to Odin; but when Odin saw the ring, it seemed fair to him, and he took it away from the treasure, and paid the gold to Hreidmarr. Then Hreidmarr filled the otter-skin as much as he could, and set it up when it was full. Next Odin went up, having the skin to cover with gold, and he bade Hreidmarr look whether the skin were yet altogether hidden. But Hreidmarr looked at it searchingly, and saw one of the hairs of the snout, and commanded that this be covered, else their covenant should be at an end. Then Odin drew out the ring, and covered the hair, saying that they were now delivered from their debt for the slaying of the otter. But when Odin had taken his spear, and Loki his shoes, and they had no longer any need to be afraid, then Loki declared that the curse which Andvari had uttered should be fulfilled: that this ring and this gold should be the destruction of him who received it; and that was fulfilled afterward. Now it has been told wherefore gold is called Otter's Wergild, or Forced Payment of the Aesir, or Metal of Strife.

XL. "What more is to be said of the gold? Hreidmarr took the gold for his son's wergild, but Fáfnir and Reginn claimed some part of their brother's blood-money for themselves. Hreidmarr would not grant them one penny of the gold. This was the wicked purpose of those brethren: they slew their father for the gold. Then Reginn demanded that Fáfnir share the gold with him, half for half. Fáfnir answered that there was little chance of his sharing it with his brother, seeing that he had slain his father for its sake; and he bade Reginn go hence, else he should fare even as Hreidmarr. Fáfnir had taken the helmet which Hreidmarr had possessed, and set it upon his head (this helmet was called the Helm of Terror, of which all living creatures that see it are afraid), and the sword called Hrotti. Reginn had that sword which was named Refill. So he fled away, and Fáfnir went up to Gnita Heath, and made himself a lair, and turned himself into a serpent, and laid him down upon the gold.

"Then Reginn went to King Hjálprekr at Thjóð, and there he became his smith; and he took into his fostering Sigurdr, son of Sigmundr, Völsungr's son, and of Hjördís, daughter of Eylimi. Sigurdr was. most illustrious of all Host-Kings in race, in prowess, and in mind. Reginn declared to him where Fáfnir lay on the gold, and incited him to seek the gold. Then Reginn fashioned the sword Gramr, which was so sharp that Sigurdr, bringing it down into running water, cut asunder a flock of wool which drifted down-stream onto the sword's edge. Next Sigurdr clove Reginn's anvil down to the stock with the sword. After that they went, Sigurdr and Reginn, to Gnita Heath, and there Sigurdr dug a pit in Fáfnir's way and laid him self in ambush therein. And when Fáfnir glided toward the water and came above the pit, Sigurdr straightway thrust his sword through him, and that was his end.

"Then Reginn came forward, saying that Sigurdr had slain his brother, and demanded as a condition of reconciliation that he take Fáfnir's heart and roast it with fire; and Reginn laid him down and drank the blood of Fáfnir, and settled himself to

sleep. But when Sigurdr was roasting the heart, and thought that it must be quite roasted, he touched it with his finger to see how hard it was; and then the juice ran out from the heart onto his finger, so that he was burned and put his finger to his mouth. As soon as the heart's blood came upon his tongue, straightway he knew the speech of birds, and he understood what the nuthatches were saying which were sitting in the trees. Then one spake:

There sits Sigurdr
Blood-besprinkled,
Fáfnir's heart
With flame he roasteth:

Wise seemed to me
The Spoiler of Rings
If the gleaming
Life-fibre he ate.
There lies Reginn—sang another—
Rede he ponders,
Would betray the youth
Who trusteth in him:

In his wrath he plots
Wrong accusation;
The smith of bale
Would avenge his brother.

Then Sigurdr went over to Reginn and slew him, and thence to his horse, which was named Grani, and rode till he came to Fáfnir's lair. He took up the gold, trussed it up in his saddle-bags, laid it upon Grani's back, mounted up himself, and then rode his ways. Now the tale is told why gold is called Lair or Abode of Fáfnir, or Metal of Gnita Heath, or Grani's Burden.

XLI. "Then Sigurdr rode on till he found a house on the mountain, wherein a woman in helm and birnie lay sleeping. He drew his sword and cut the birnie from her: she awoke then, and gave her name as Hildir: she is called Brynhildir, and was a Valkyr. Sigurdr rode away and came to the king who was named Gjúki, whose wife was Grímhildir; their children were Gunnarr, Högni, Gudrún, Gudný; Gotthormr was Gjúki's stepson. Sigurdr tarried there a long time, and then he obtained the hand of Gudrún, daughter of Gjúki, and Gunnarr and Högni swore oaths of blood brotherhood with Sigurdr. Thereafter Sigurdr and the sons of Gjúki went unto Atli, Budli's son, to sue for the hand of Brynhildir his sister in marriage to Gunnarr. Brynhildir abode on Hinda-Fell, and about her hall there was a flaring fire; and she had made a solemn vow to take none but that man who should dare to ride through the flaring fire.

”Then Sigurdr and the sons of Gjúki (who were also called Niflungs) rode up onto the mountain, and Gunnarr should have ridden through the flaring fire: but he had the horse named Goti, and that horse dared not leap into the fire. So they exchanged shapes, Sigurdr and Gunnarr, and names likewise; for Grani would go under no man but Sigurdr. Then Sigurdr leapt onto Grani, and rode through the flaring fire. That eve he was wedded with Brynhildr. But when they came to bed, he drew the Sword Gramr from its sheath and laid it between them. In the morning when he arose and clothed himself, he gave Brynhildr as linen-fee the same gold ring which Loki had taken from Andvari, and took another ring from her hand for remembrance. Then Sigurdr mounted his horse and rode to his fellows, and he and Gunnarr changed shapes again and went home to Gjúki with Brynhildr. Sigurdr and Gudrún had two children, Sigmundr and Svanhildr.

”It befell on a time that Brynhildr and Gudrún went to the water to wash their hair. And when they came to the river, Brynhildr waded out from the bank well into the river, saying that she would not touch to her head the water which ran out of the hair of Gudrún, since herself had the more valorous husband. Then Gudrún went into the river after her and said that it was her right to wash her hair higher upstream, for the reason that she had to husband such a man as neither Gunnarr nor any other in the world matched in valor, seeing that he had slain Fáfñir and Reginn and succeeded to the heritage of both. And Brynhildr made answer: ’It was a matter of greater worth that Gunnarr rode through the flaring fire and Sigurdr durst not.’ Then Gudrún laughed, and said: ’Dost thou think that Gunnarr rode through the flaring fire? Now I think that he who went into the bride-bed with thee was the same that gave me this gold ring; and the gold ring which thou bearest on thine hand and didst receive for linen-fee is called Andvari’s Yield, and I believe that it was not Gunnarr who got that ring on Gnita Heath.’ Then Brynhildr was silent, and went home.

”After that she egged on Gunnarr and Högni to slay Sigurdr; but because they were Sigurdr’s sworn blood-brothers, they stirred up Gotthormr their brother to slay him. He thrust his sword through Sigurdr as he slept; but when Sigurdr felt the wound, he hurled his sword Gramr after Gotthormr, so that it cut the man asunder at the middle. There fell Sigurdr and Sigmundr, his son of three winters, whom they slew. Then Brynhildr stabbed herself with a sword, and she was burned with Sigurdr; but Gunnarr and Högni took Fáfñir’s heritage and Andvari’s Yield, and ruled the lands thereafter.

”King Atli, Budli’s son, and brother of Brynhildr, then wedded Gudrún, whom Sigurdr had had to wife; and they had children. King Atli invited to him Gunnarr and Högni, and they came at his invitation. Yet before they departed from their land, they hid the gold, Fáfñir’s heritage, in the Rhine, and that gold has never since been found. Now King Atli had a host in readiness, and fought with Gunnarr and Högni; and they were made captive. King Atli bade . the heart be cut out of Högni alive, and that was his end. Gunnarr he caused to be cast into a den of serpents. But a harp was brought secretly to Gunnarr, and he struck it with his toes, his hands being bound; he

played the harp so that all the serpents fell asleep, saving only one adder, which glided over to him, and gnawed into the cartilage of his breast-bone so far that her head sank within the wound, and she clove to his liver till he died. Gunnarr and Högni were called Niflungs and Gjúkungs, for which reason gold is called Treasure, or Heritage, of the Niflungs.

[’A little while after, Gudrún slew her two sons, and caused flagons to be made of their skulls, set with gold and silver. Then the funeral-feast was held for the Niflungs; and at this feast Gudrún had mead poured into the flagons for King Atli, and the mead was mixed with the blood of the boys. Moreover, she caused their hearts to be roasted and set before the king, that he might eat of them. And when he had eaten, then she herself told him what she had done, with many scathing words. There was no lack of strong drink there, so that most of the company had fallen asleep where they sat. That night she went to the king while he slept, and Högni’s son with her; they smote the king, and that was the death of him. Then they set fire to the hall, and burned the folk that were within. After that she went to the shore and leaped into the sea, desiring to make an end of herself; but she was tossed by the billows over the firth, and was borne to King Jónakr’s land. And when he saw her, he took her to him and wedded her, and they had three sons, called Sörli, Hamdir, and Erpr: they were all raven-black of hair, like Gunnarr and Högni and the other Niflungs. There Svanhildr, daughter of the youth Sigurdr, was reared, and of all women she was fairest. King Jörmunrekkr the Mighty learned of her beauty, and sent his son Randvér to woo her and bring her to be his wife. When Randvér had come to the court of Jónakr, Svanhildr was given into his hands, and he should have! brought her to King Jörmunrekkr. But Earl Bikki said that it was a better thing for Randvér to wed Svandhildr, since he and she were both young, whereas Jörmunrekkr was old. This counsel pleased the young folk well. Thereupon Bikki reported the matter to the king. Straightway, King Jörmunrekkr commanded that his son be seized and led to the gallows. Then Randvér took his hawk and plucked off its feathers, and bade that it be sent so to his father; after which he was hanged. But when King Jörmunrekkr saw the hawk, suddenly it came home to him that even as the hawk was featherless and powerless to fly, so was his kingdom shorn of its might, since he was old and childless. Then King Jörmunrekkr, riding out of the wood where he had been hunting, beheld Svanhildr as she sat washing her hair: they rode upon her and trod her to death under their horses’ feet.

”But when Gudrún learned of this, she urged on her sons to take vengeance for Svanhildr. When they were preparing for their journey, she gave them birnies and helmets so strong that iron could not bite into them. She laid these instructions upon them: that, when they were come to King Jörmunrekkr, they should go up to him by night as he slept:

Sörli and Hamdir should hew off his hands and feet, and Erpr his head. But when they were on their way, they asked Erpr what help they might expect from him, if they met King Jörmunrekkr. He answered that he would render them such aid as the hand affords the foot. They said that that help which the foot received from the hand was

altogether nothing. They were so wroth with their mother that she had sent them away with angry words, and they desired so eagerly to do what would seem worst to her, that they slew Erpr, because she loved him most of all. A little later, while Sörli was walking, one of his feet slipped, and he supported himself on his hand; and he said: 'Now the hand assists the foot indeed; it were better now that Erpr were living.' Now when they came to King Jörmunrekkr by night, where he was sleeping, and hewed hands and feet off him, he awoke and called upon his men, and bade them arise. And then Hamdir spake, saying: 'The head had been off by now, if Erpr lived.' Then the henchmen rose up and attacked them, but could not overmaster them with weapons; and Jörmunrekkr called out to them to beat them with stones, and it was done. There Sörli and Hamdir fell, and now all the house and offspring of Gjúki were dead. A daughter named Áslaug lived after young Sigurdr; she was reared with Heimir in Hlymdalir, and great houses are sprung from her. It is said that Sigmundr, Völsungr's son, was so strong that he could drink venom and receive no hurt; and Sinfjötli his son and Sigurdr were so hard-skinned that no venom from without could harm them: wherefore Bragi the Skald has sung thus:

When the wriggling Serpent
Of the Völsung's Drink hung writhing
On the hook of the Foeman
Of Hill-Giants' kindred.

Most skalds have made verses and divers short tales from these sagas. Bragi the Old wrote of the fall of Sörli and Hamdir in that song of praise which he composed on Ragnarr Lodbrók:

Once Jörmunrekkr awakened
To an dream, 'mid the princes
Blood-stained, while swords were swirling:

A brawl burst in the dwelling
Of Randvér's royal kinsman,
When the raven-swarthy
Brothers of Erpr took vengeance
For all the bitter sorrows.
The bloody dew of corpses,
O'er the king's couch streaming,
Fell on the floor where, severed,
Feet and hands blood-dripping
Were seen; in the ale-cups' fountain
He fell headlong, gore-blended:

On the Shield, Leaf of the Bushes
 Of Leifi's Land, 't is painted.
 There stood the shielded swordsmen,
 Steel biting not, surrounding
 The king's couch; and the brethren
 Hamdir and Sörli quickly
 To the earth were beaten
 By the prince's order,
 To the Bride of Odin
 With hard stones were battered.
 The swirling weapons' Urger
 Bade Gjúki's race be smitten
 Sore, who from life were eager
 To ravish Svanhildr's lover;
 And all pay Jónakr's offspring
 With the fair-piercing weapon,
 The render of blue birnies,
 With bitter thrusts and edges.
 I see the heroes' slaughter
 On the fair shield-rim's surface;
 Ragnarr gave me the Ship-Moon
 With many tales marked on it.]

XLII. "Why is gold called Fródi's Meal? This is the tale thereof: One of Odin's sons, named Skjöldr,—from whom the Skjöldungs are come,—had his abode and ruled in the realm which now is called Denmark, but then was known as Gotland. Skjöldr's son, who ruled the land after him, was named Fridleifr. Fridleifr's son was Fródi: he succeeded to the kingdom after his father, in the time when Augustus Caesar imposed peace on all the world; at that time Christ was born. But because Fródi was mightiest of all kings in the Northern lands, the peace was called by his name wherever the Danish tongue was spoken; and men call it the Peace of Fródi. No man injured any other, even though he met face to face his father's slayer or his brother's, loose or bound. Neither was there any thief nor robber then, so that a gold ring lay long on Jаланgr's Heath. King Fródi went to a feast in Sweden at the court of the king who was called Fjölnir, and there he bought two maid-servants, Fenja and Menja: they were huge and strong. In that time two mill-stones were found in Denmark, so great that no one was so strong that he could turn them: the nature of the mill was such that whatsoever he who turned asked for, was ground out by the mill-stones. This mill was called Grótti. He who gave King Fródi the mill was named Hengikjöptr. King Fródi had the maid-servants led to the mill, and bade them grind gold; and they did so. First they ground gold and, peace and happiness for Fródi; then he would grant them rest

or sleep no longer than the cuckoo held its peace or a song might be sung. It is said that they sang the song which is called the Lay of Grótti, and this is its beginning:

Now are we come
To the king's house,
The two fore-knowing,
Fenja and Menja:

These are with Fródi
Son of Fridleifr,
The Mighty Maidens,
As maid-thralls held.

And before they ceased their singing, they ground out a host against Fródi, so that the sea-king called Mýsingr came there that same night and slew Fródi, taking much plunder. Then the Peace of Fródi was ended. Mýsingr took Grótti with him, and Fenja and Menja also, and bade them grind salt. And at midnight they asked whether Mýsingr were not weary of salt. He bade them grind longer. They had ground but a little while, when down sank the ship; and from that time there has been a whirlpool the sea where the water falls through the hole in the mill-stone. It was then that the sea became salt.

XLIII. "Why is gold called Kraki's Seed? In Denmark there was a king called Hrólfr Kraki: he was most renowned of all ancient kings for munificence, valor, and graciousness. One evidence of his graciousness which is often brought into stories is this: A little lad and poor, Vöggr by name, came into the hall of King Hrólfr. At that time the king was young, and of slender stature. Vöggr came into his presence and looked up at him; and the king said: 'What wouldst thou say, lad, for thou lookest at me?' Vöggr answered: 'When I was at home, I heard say that Hrólfr the king at Hleidr was the greatest man in the northern lands; but now there sitteth in the high seat a little pole, and he is called King.' Then the king made answer: 'Thou, boy, hast given me a name, so that I shall be called Hrólfr the Pole (Kraki); and it is the custom that the giving of a name be accompanied by a gift. Now I see that with the name which thou has fastened on me, thou hast no gift such as would be acceptable to me, wherefore he that has wherewith to give shall give to the other.' And he took from his hand a gold ring and gave it to him. Then Vöggr said: 'Above all kings be thou most blessed of givers! Now I swear an oath that I shall be that man's slayer who slays thee.' Then spake the king, laughing loudly: 'Vöggr is pleased with a small thing.'

"Another example is the tale told concerning the valor of Hrólfr Kraki: That king whom men call Adils ruled over Uppsala; he had to wife Yrsa, mother of Hrólfr Kraki. He was at strife with the king who ruled over Norway, whose name was Ali; the two joined battle on the ice of the lake called Vaeni. King Adils sent an embassy to Hrólfr Kraki, his stepson, praying him to come to his aid, and promised wages to all his host

so long as they should be away; King Hrólfr himself should have three precious gifts, whatsoever three he might choose from all Sweden.

King Hrólfr could not make the journey in person, owing to the strife in which he was engaged with the Saxons; but he sent to Adils his twelve berserks: Bödvar-Bjarki was there for one, and Hjalti the Stout-Hearted, Hvítserkr the Stern, Vöttr Véseti, and the brethren Svipdagr and Beigudr. In that battle King Áli fell, and the great part of his host with him; and King Adils took from him in death the helm Battle-Swine and his horse Raven. Then the berserks of Hrólfr Kraki demanded for their hire three pounds of gold for each man of them; and in addition they required that they might bear to Hrólfr Kraki those gifts of price which they had chosen for him: which were the Helm Battle-Boar and the birnie Finn's Heritage,—on neither of which iron would take hold,—and the gold ring which was called Pig of the Swedes, which Adils' forefathers had had. But the king denied them all these things, nor did he so much as pay their hire: the berserks went away ill-pleased with their share, and told the state of things to Hrólfr Kraki.

”Straightway he begin his journey to Uppsala; and when he had brought his ships into the river Fýri, he rode at once to Uppsala, and his twelve berserks with him, all without safe-conduct. Yrsa, his mother, welcomed him and led him to lodgings, but not to the king's hall: fires were made there before them, and ale was given them to drink. Then men of King Adils came in and heaped firewood onto the fire, and made it so great that the clothes were burnt off Hrólfr and his men. And the fellows spake: 'Is it true that Hrólfr Kraki and his berserks shun neither fire nor iron?' Then Hrólfr Kraki leapt up, and all they that were with him; and he said:

'Add we to the fire
In Adils' dwelling!'

He took his shield and cast it onto the fire, and leapt over the flames, while the shield burnt; and he spake again:

'He flees not the flames
Who o'er the fire leapeth!'

Even so did his men, one after another; and they laid hands on those fellows who had heaped up the fire, and cast them into the flames. Then Yrsa came and gave Hrólfr Kraki a deer's horn full of gold, the ring Pig of the Swedes being with the gold; and she bade them ride away to the host. They vaulted onto their horses and rode down into the Plain of the Fýri; and soon they saw King Adils riding after them with his host all in armor, hoping to slay them. Then Hrólfr Kraki plunged his right hand down into the horn, grasped the gold, and strewed it all about the road. When the Swedes saw that, they leapt down out of their saddles, and each took up as much as he could lay hold of; but King Adils bade them ride on, and himself rode furiously. His horse

was called Slöngvir, swiftest of all horses. Then Hrólfr Kraki saw that King Adils was drawing close up to him, took the ring, Pig of the Swedes, and threw it toward him, and bade him receive it as a gift. King Adils rode at the ring and thrust at it with his spear-point, and let it slide down over the shaft-socket. Then Hrólfr Kraki turned back and saw how he bent down, and spake: 'Now I have made him who is mightiest of Swedes stoop as a swine stoops.' Thus they parted. For this cause gold is called Seed of Kraki or of Fýri's Plain. Thus sang Eyvindr Skald-Despoiler:

God of the blade of battle,
We bear through Hákon's life-days
The Seed of Fýri's valley
On our arms, where sits the falcon.
Even as Thjóðólfr sang:

The king sows the bright seed-corn
Of knuckle-splendid gold rings,
With the crop of Yrsa's offspring,
In his company's glad hand-grasp;
The guileless 'Land-Director
With Kraki's gleaming barley
Sprinkles my arms, the flesh-grown
Seat of the hooded falcon.

XLIV. "It is said that the king called Hölgi, from whom Hálogaland is named, was the father of Thorgerdr Hölgabrúdr; sacrifice was made to both of them, and a cairn was raised over Hölgi: one layer of gold or silver (that was the sacrificial money), and another layer of mould and stones. Thus sang Skúli Thorsteinsson:

When I reddened Reifnir's Roof-Bane,
The ravening sword, for wealth's sake
At Svöldr, I heaped with gold rings
Warlike Hölgi's cairn-thatch.
In the ancient Bjarkamál many terms for gold are told: it says there:

The king most gift-gracious
His guardsmen enriched
With Fenja's Labor,
With Fáfñir's Midgard,
Glasir's bright Needles,
Grani's fair Burden,
Draupnir's dear dripping,
Down of Grafvitnir.
The free-handed Lord gave,

The heroes accepted,
 Sif's firm-grown tresses,
 Ice of the bow-force,
 Otter-gild unwilling,
 Weeping of Mardöll,
 Fire-flame of Órun,
 Idi's fine Speeches.
 The warrior rejoiced;
 We walked in fair garments,
 In Thjazi's counsels
 The people's host-countless,
 In the Rhine's red metal,
 Wrangling of Niflungs,
 The leader war-daring,
 Warded Baldr not.

XLV. Gold is metaphorically termed Fire of the Hand, or of the Limb, or of the Leg, because it is red; but silver is called Snow, or Ice, or Hoar-Frost, because it is white. In like manner, gold or silver may be periphrased in metaphors of purse, or crucible, or lather, and both silver and gold may be called Hand-Stone, or Necklace, of any man who was wont to have a necklace. Necklaces and rings are both silver and gold, if no other distinction is raised.

As Thorleikr the Fair sang:

The kindly Prince the Load casts
 Of Crucibles on the Hawk-Seats
 Of thanes, the wrists embellished,—
 Gives Embers of the Arm-joint.
 And as Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

The land-strong King of Lurid
 Breaks the golden Limb-Brands;
 I think the Prince of Warriors
 Lacks not the Rhine's bright Pebbles.
 Thus sang Einarr Skúlason:

The Purse-Snow and the Sea-Fire
 Lie on both sides of the axe-head
 Blood-spilling; 't is my office
 To praise our foemen's Scather.
 And as he sang further:

The Sea-Glow each day standeth
O'er the Crucible's white Snow-Drift,
And the shield, ships' cheeks protecting,
Shelters a heart most lavish;
Ne'er can one melt the silver
Flagon-Snow in the Fire-Flame
Of the Eel's Stream-Road; the Feller
Of Hosts all feats performeth.

Here gold is called Fire of the Eel's Stream-Road; and silver, Snow of Flagons.

Thus sang Thórdr Maeri's Skald:

The glad Giver of the Hand-Waste
Of the Gold-Minisher perceiveth
That the Hermódr of the Snake's Lair
Hath had a lordly father.

XLVI. "Man is called Breaker of Gold, even as Óttarr the Swarthy sang:

I needs must use the Breaker
Of the Battle-Glow of good men;
Here is the watch war-doughty
Of the Wise King assembled.
Or Gold-Sender, as Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

The Sender of Gold permitteth
The silent earth to hearken
To song; his gifts I gather:

The prince his young men gladdens.
Gold-Caster, as Thorleikr sang:

Gold-Caster makes loyal to him
His guard with kingly armor.
Gold's Adversary, as sang Thorvaldr Blending-Skald:

The gold's foe Hot Coals casteth
Of the Arm; the king gives red wealth;
The vile folk's Desolator
Dispenseth the Freight of Grani.
Gold-Towerer, as is written here:

The Gold-Towerer in friendship
I got, and of the Warrior,
Son of the glowing War-Blade,
I make a song of praise.

Woman is periphrased in metaphors of gold, being called Willow or Giver of Gold, as Hallarsteinn sang:

He who casts the Amber
Of Vidblindi's Boar's cool, salt Drink,
Long will recall the Willow
Of the Reed-Snake's golden River.

Here the whale is called Boar of Vidblindi; this Vidblindi was a giant who drew whales out of the sea like fishes. The Drink of Whales is the sea; Amber of the Sea is gold; woman is the Willow, or Dealer, of that gold which she gives; and the willow is a tree. Therefore, as is already shown, woman is periphrased with all manner of feminine tree-names: she is also called User of that which she gives; and the word for 'user' also signifies a log, the tree which falls in the forest.

Thus sang Gunnlaugr Serpent's-Tongue:

That dame was born to stir strife
Among the sons of men-folk;
The War-Bush caused that; madly
I yearned to have the Wealth-Log.
Woman is called Forest; so sang Hallarsteinn:

With the well-trained Plane of Singing,
The tongue, I have planed, my Lady,
Dame of the First Song's ale-vats,
Forest fair of Flagons.
Fagot, as Steinn sang:

Thou shalt, O fresh Sif-Tender
Of the Flood's gold Fire, like other
Fagots of Hjadnings' gravel,
Break with thy good fortune.
Prop, as Ormr Steinthórsson sang:

The Prop of Stone was clothèd
In garments clean and seemly:

A new cloak did the hero
Cast o'er the Mead's bright Valkyr.
Post, as Steinarr sang:

All my dreams of the gracious Goddess
Of the bracelet-girded soft arms
Have lied to me; the Stream-Moon's
Unsteadfast Prop beguiled me.
Birch, as Ormr sang:

For a mark of the Birch
Of the bright hollow ring,
The palm-flame, I laid
On the dwarf-flagon, my song.
Oak, even as stands here:

The fair shaped Oak of Riches
Stands, our mirth forestalling.
Linden, even as is written here:

O dreadful, towering Elm-Tree
Of the dinning shower of weapons,
Our courage shall not lessen:

So bade the Linen's Linden.

Man is periphrased in tree-metaphors, as we have written before; he is called Rowan, or Tester, of Weapons, or of Combats, of Expeditions and of Deeds, of Ships, and of all that which he wields and tests; thus sang Úlfr Uggason:

But the flashing-eyed stiff Edge-Rope
Of the Earth stared past the gunwale
At the Rowan-Tree of the people
Of Stone, the Giant-Tester.
Tree and Beam, as Kormákr sang:

The Beam of the murdering Sword-Twig
Is taller than are many
In the Din of Darts; the sword wins.
The land for dauntless Sigurdr.
Grove, as sang Hallfredr Troublous-Skald:

The Mighty Grove and Faithful
Of the Shield-Murderer, budded
With hair, stands in the Eastlands
Safe with Ullr's Ash-Warriors.
Here he is also called Ash.
Box, as Arnórr sang:

The Box of Ships bade the Rygir
Bring the shields together
At early dusk; through the spear-rain
Of strife-clouds held the autumn night.
Ash, as Refr sang:

The Strife-Lord, gracious Giver,
Sought the Maid's bed gold-sprinkled;
The Ash of Odin's War-Sleet
Won the estate of manhood.
Maple, as here:

Hail, Maple of the Ice-Lumps
Of the Hand!' So spake the Birnie.
Tree, as Refr sang:

Since I have appointed
To proffer Odin's Breast-Sea,
The War-God's Verse, to Thorsteinn;
The Tree of Swords so wills it.
Staff, as Óttarr sang:

Thou, fierce War-Staff, maintainedst
Maugre two kings, thy borders
With heroes' kin, where the ravens
Starved not; keen-hearted art thou.
Thorn, as Arnórr sang:

He gathered, the young Wealth-Thorn,
Many great heaps of corpses
For the eagles, and his henchmen
Guided and helped the hero.

XLVII. "How should battle be periphrased? By calling it Storm of Weapons or of Sheltering Shields, or of Odin or the Valkyrs, or of Host-Kings; and Din and Clashing.

Thus sang Hornklofi:

The king hath held a Spear-Storm
With heroes, where the eagles
Screamed at the Din of Skögun;
The red wounds spat out blood.
Thus sang Eyvindr:

And that hero
At Háar's Tempest
Wore a sark
Of gray wolf-skin.
Thus sang Bersi:

In earlier days I seemed not
To Gunn's War-Bushes useful
In the Sleet of Hlökk, when younger
We were: so 't is said.
Thus sang Einarr:

The stark prince lets Hildir's Shield-Sails
Take the sternest crashing Storm-Wind
Of the Valkyr, where hail of bow-strings
Drives; the sword-blade hammers.
As Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

The mail-sarks of the warriors,
Firm-woven, did not shelter
The seemly youths 'gainst Högni's
Showers of Hákon's onset.
Even as here:

They set the Point-Net's edge-band
Against the Point-Crash-Urger.
And again:

'Neath eagles' claws the king's foes
Sank at the Clash of Göndul.

XLVIII. "Weapons and armor should be periphrased in figures of battle, and with reference to Odin and the Valkyrs and host-kings: one should call a helmet Cowl, or Hood; a birnie, Sark, or Kirtle; a shield, Tent; and a shield-wall is termed Hall and Roof, Wall and Floor. Shields, periphrased in figures of warships, are called Sun, or

Moon, or Leaf, or Sheen, or Garth, of the Ship; the shield is also called Ship of Ullr, or periphrased in terms of Hrungrnir's feet, since he stood upon his shield. On ancient shields it was customary to paint a circle, which was called the 'ring,' and shields are called in metaphors of that ring. Hewing weapons, axes or swords, are called Fires of Blood, or of Wounds; swords are called Odin's Fires; but men call axes by the names of troll-women, and periphrase them in terms of blood or wounds or a forest or wood. Thrusting weapons are properly periphrased by calling them by names of serpents or fishes. Missile weapons are often metaphorically termed hail or sleet or storm. Variants of all these figures have been made in many ways, for they are used chiefly in poems of praise, where there is need of such metaphors.

So sang Víga-Glúmr:

With the Hanged-God's helmet
The hosts have ceased from going
By the brink; not pleasant
The bravest held the venture.
Thus sang Einarr Tinkling-Scale:

Helm-folded strife-bold Búi,—
Who from the south went forth
Into Gunn's Crash,—and din-swift
Sigvaldi offered battle.
Sark of Ródi, as Tindr sang:

When came the birnied Hákon
To cast away the ring-rent
Streaming Sark of Odin,
Ródi's rocking sea-steeds were cleared.
Hamdir's Kirtle, as Hallfreðr sang:

The war-sleet hard and streaming
Of Egill's weapons breaketh
Fiercely on Hamdir's Kirtles
Of the foremost wave-deer's warriors.
Sörli's Garments, as he sang further:

Thence the bright Weeds of Sörli
In men's blood must be reddened;
I hear it clearly: Wound-Fire
In cutting showers of iron.
Shields are called Tents of Hlökk, as Grettír sang:

Hlökk's Tent-Raisers held their noses
Together, and the heroes
Of the Rain-Storm of Hildr's Shield-Wall
Hewed at each other's beards.
Ródi's Roof, as Einarr sang:

Ródi's Roof's great Ice-Lump
For the Rain of Freyja's Eyelids
Grows not less, my fair axe-head;
His age my lord so useth.
Wall of Hildr, as Grettír sang, and as we have written before.
Ship-Sun, as Einarr sang:

In the sea Ólafr's Kinsman
Reddens the flame of the Ship-Sun.
Moon of the Ship's Cheek, as Refr sang:

Fair was the day, when Scatterers
Of Arm-Fire thrust the clear Moon
Of the Cheek into my hand-clasp,
The coiling track of red rings.
Ship's Garth, as here:

The swift Sweller of the Spear-Crash
Shot through the stain-dyed Prow-Garth
As it were birch-bark; truly
He was a bitter battler.
Ash of Ullr, as here:

The Snow-Gusts of Ullr's Ash-Ship
Grimly o'er our Prince shoot
With fullness, where are tossing
The fearsome covered spike-spars.
Blade of Hrungrir's Foot-Soles, as Bragi sang:

Wilt hear, O Hrafnketill,
How I shall praise the Sole-Blade
Of Thrúdr's thief, stain-covered
With skill, and praise my king.
Bragi the Skald sang this concerning the ring on the shield:

Unless it be, that Sigurdr's
Renowned Son would have payment

In good kind for the ring-nave
Of the Ringing Wheel of Hildr.
He called the shield Wheel of Hildr, and the ring the Nave of the Wheel.
Ring-Earth, as Hallvarðr sang:

The Chief of ranks of Combat
Sees the red-gleaming Ring-Earth
Fly in two parts; the white disk,
The pictured, bursts in sunder.
It is also sung:

A ring befits the shield best;
Arrows befit the bow.
A sword is Odin's Fire, as Kormákr sang:

The fight swelled, when the Warrior,
The Wolf's blithe Feeder, in tumult
Fared with Odin's ringing Fire-Flame;
Urðr came forth from the Well.
Fire of the Helm, as Úlfr Uggason sang:

The very mighty Maiden
Of the Mountain made the Sea-Horse
Roll forward, but the Champions
Of Odin's Helm-Fire felled her Wolf-Steed.
Fire of the Birnie, as Glúmr Geirason sang:

At that the Land-Protector
Let the Birnie's Streaming Fire whine,
Hone-whetted, he who warded
Him strongly 'gainst the warriors.
Ice of the Rim, and Hurt of Sheltering Weapons, as Einarr sang:

I received the Ice of Wed Rims,
With Freyja's golden Eye-Thaw,
From the upright prince high-hearted;
We bear in hand the Helm's Hurt.
An axe is called Troll-Woman of Sheltering Weapons, as Einarr sang:

Ræfill's Sea-Steed's Riders
May see how, richly carven,
The dragons close are brooding
'Gainst the brow of the Helm-Ogress.
A spear is called Serpent, as Refr sang:

My angry Murky Serpent
Of the markings of the Shield-Board
Savagely doth sport, in
My palms, where men in strife meet.
Arrows are called Hail of the Bow or Bowstring, or of the
Shelters, or of Battle, as Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

The hammering King of Swords shook
From the Sails of Hlökk the Bow-Hail:

Bravely the Wolf's Supporter
Warded his life in battle.
And Hallfredr:

And the armor of the Spear-Sleet,
Knitted with iron, saved not
The saters of hungry ravens
From the Shaft-Hail of the Bowstring.
And Eyvindr Skald- Despoiler:

They said, O Hörds' Land-Warder,
Thy spirit little faltered,
When the Birnie's Hail in the wound burst;
Bent were the stringèd elm-bows.

XLIX. "Battle is called Storm or Snow-Shower of the Hjadnings, and weapons are termed Fire or Wands of Hjadnings; and this is the tale thereof: that king who was called Högni had a daughter named Hildr: her King Hedinn, son of Hjarrandi, took as the spoils of war, while King Högni attended an assembly of kings. But when he learned that there had been raiding in his realm and his daughter had been borne off, he departed with his host to seek Hedinn, and heard tidings of him, that he was proceeding northward along the land. When Högni had come into Norway, he learned that Hedinn had sailed westward over the sea. Then Högni sailed after him, even to the Orkneys; and when he landed at the place called Hoy, Hedinn was already there before him with his host. Then Hildr went to meet her father, and offered him a necklace on Hedinn's behalf, for reconciliation and peace; but if it were not accepted, she said, Hedinn was ready to fight, and Högni might hope for no mercy at his hands.

"Högni answered his daughter harshly; and when she returned to Hedinn, she told him that Högni desired no reconciliation, and she bade him make ready for battle. So did both parties: they went to the island and marshalled their hosts. Then Hedinn called to Högni his father-in-law, offering him reconciliation and much gold in compensation. But Högni answered: "Thou hast made this offer over-late, if thou wouldst make peace: for now I have drawn Dáinsleif, which the dwarves made, and which must

cause a man's death every time it is bared, nor ever fails in its stroke; moreover, the wound heals not if one be scratched with it.' Then said Hedinn: 'Thou dost boast in the sword, but not in the victory; I call any sword good which is faithful to its lord.' Then they began that famous battle which is called the Hjadnings' Strife, and they fought all that day, but at evening the kings went to their ships. Now Hildr went to the slain by night, and with magic quickened all those that were dead. The next day the kings went to the battlefield and fought, and so did all those that had fallen on the day before. So the fight went one day after the other: all who fell, and all those weapons which lay on the field, and the shields also, were turned to stone; but when day dawned, up rose all the dead men and fought, and all weapons were renewed. It is said in songs that in this fashion the Hjadnings shall continue unto the Weird of the Gods. Bragi the Skald composed verses after this tale in Ragnarr Lodbrók's Song of Praise:

And the belovèd Maiden
Of the veins' blood-letting
Purposed to bring, for wrath's sake,
The bow-storm to her father:

When the ring-wearing lady,
The woman full of evil,
Bore the neck-ring of War-Doom
To the Battler of the Wind's Steeds.
That gory Wound-Amender
To the glorious Monarch offered
The necklace not for fear's sake,
At the mote of fatal weapons:

Ever as restraining battle
She seemed, although she goaded
Warriors to walk the death-road
With the ravening Wolf's dire Sister.
The Prince of Folk, the Land-God,
Let not the fight, wolf-gladdening,
Halt, nor slaughter on the sands cease,—
Hate, deadly, swelled in Högni,
When the stern Lords of Sword-Din
Sought Hedinn with stern weapons,
Rather than receive
The necklet-rings of Hildr.
And that baleful Witch of Women,
Wasting the fruits of victory,

Took governance on the island
 O'er the axe, the Birnie's Ruin;
 All the Ship-King's war-host
 Went wrathful 'neath the firm shields
 Of Hjarrajidi, swift-marching
 From Reifnir's fleet sea-horses.
 On the fair shield of Svölnir
 One may perceive the onslaught;
 Ragnarr gave me the Ship-Moon,
 With many tales marked on it.
 Battle is called Storm of Odin, as is recorded above; so sang Víga-Glúmr:

I cleared my way aforetime
 Like earls to lands; the word went
 Of this among the Storm-Staves,
 The men of Vidrir's Sword-Wand.

Here battle is called Storm of Vidrir, and the sword is the Wand of Battle; men are Staves of the Sword. Here, then, both battle and weapons are used to make metaphors for man. It is called 'inlaying,' when one writes thus.

"The shield is the Land of Weapons, and weapons are Hail or Rain of that land, if one employs figures of later coinage.

L. "How should the ship be phrased? Call it Horse or Deer or Snowshoe of the Sea-King, or of Ship's Rigging, or of Storm. Steed of the Billow, as Hornklofi sang:

The Counsel-Stern Destroyer
 Of the pale Steed of the Billow
 When full young let the ships' prows
 Press on the sea at flood-tide.
 Geitir's Steed, as Erringar-Steinn sang:

But though to the skald all people
 This strife from the south are telling,
 We shall yet load Geitir's Sea-Steed
 With stone; we voyage gladly.
 Sveidi's Reindeer:

O Son of Sveinn strife-valiant,
 Thou comest with Sveidi's Reindeer,
 Long of seam, on the Seat of Sölsi;
 The Sound-Deer from land glided.

So sang Hallvarðr. Here the ship is also called Deer of the Sound; and the Sea is called Sölsi's Seat.

Thus sang Thórdr Sjáreksson:

The swift Steed of the Gunwale
Around Sigg veered from northward,
The gust shoved Gylfi's Stream's Mirth,
The Gull's Wake-Horse, to southward
Of Aumar, laying fleetly
Both Körmt and Agdir's coastline
Along the stern; by Listi
The Leek's Steed lightly bounded.

Here the ship is called Steed of the Gunwale; and the sea is Gylfi's Land; the sea is also called Gull's Wake. The ship is called Horse, and further, Horse of the Leek: for 'leek' means 'mast.'

And again, as Markús sang:

The Stream's Winterling waded
Stoutly the Firth-Snake's Snow-Heaps;
The Tusker of the Mast-Head
Leaped o'er the Whale's spurned House-Tops;
The Bear of the Flood strode forward
On the ancient paths of sea-ships;
The Stay's Bear, shower-breasting.
Broke the Reef's splashing Fetter.

Here the ship is called Winterling of the Stream: a bear cub is called a Winterling; and a bear is called Tusker; the Bear of the Stay is a ship.

The ship is also called Reindeer, and so Hallvarðr sang, as we have written before; and Hart, as King Haraldr Sigurdarson sang:

By Sicily then widely
The Seam cut: we were stately;
The Sea-Hart glided swiftly
As we hoped beneath the heroes.
And Elk, as Einarr sang:

The ring's mild Peace-Dispenser,
The princely hero, may not
Long bide with thee, if something
Aid not; we bouned the Flood's Elk.
And Otter, as Máni sang:

What, laggard carle with gray cheeks,
Canst do among keen warriors
On the Otter of the Sea-Waves?
For thy strength is ebbing from thee.
Wolf, as Refr sang:

And the Hoard-Diminisher hearkened
To Thorsteinn; true my heart is
To the Lord of the Wolf of Billows
In the baleful Wrath-Wand's conflict.

And Ox also. The ship is called Snowshoe, or Wagon, or Wain. Thus sang Eyjólfur the Valiant Skald:

Late in the day the young Earl
In the Snowshoe of Landless Waters
Fared with equal following
To meet the fearless chieftain.
Thus sang Styrkárr Oddason:

Högni's host drove the Wagons
Of Rollers o'er Heiti's snow-Heaps,
Angrily pursuing
The great Giver of Flood-Embers.
And as Thorbjörn sang:

The Freighter of Wave-Crests' Sea-Wain
Was in the font of christening,
Hoard-Scatterer, who was given
The White Christ's highest favor.

LI. "How should one periphrase Christ? Thus: by calling Him Fashioner of Heaven and Earth, of Angels, and of the Sun; Governor of the World and of the Heavenly Kingdom and of Jerusalem and Jordan and the Land of the Greeks; Counsellor of the Apostles and of the Saints. Ancient skalds have written of Him in metaphors of Urdr's Well and Rome; as Eilífr Guðrúnarson sang:

So has Rome's Mighty Ruler
In the Rocky Realms confirmèd
His power; they say He sitteth
South, at the Well of Urdr.
Thus sang Skapti Thóroddssen:

The King of Monks is greatest
Of might, for God all governs;
Christ's power wrought this earth all,
And raised the Hall of Rome.
King of the Heavens, as Markús sang:

The King of the Wind-House fashioned
Earth, sky, and faithful peoples;
Christ, sole Prince of Mortals,
Hath power o'er all that liveth.
Thus sang Eilífr Kúlnasveinn:

The Host of the beaming World's Roof
And the Band of Illustrious bow down
To the Holy Cross; than all glory
Else the Sole Sun's King is brighter.
Son of Mary, as Eilífr sang further:

The bright Host of Heaven boweth
To Mary's Bairn: He winneth,
The Gentle Prince, of glory
The true might, God and man both.
King of Angels, as Eilífr sang again:

The goodly might of God's friend
Is better than men guess of;
Yet the Gracious King of Angels
Is dearer than all, and holier.
King of Jordan, as Sigvatr sang:

Four angels the King of Jordan
Sent long ago through aether
To earthward; and the stream washed
The holy head of the World's Lord.
King of Greeks, as Arnórr sang:

I have lodged for the hero's ashes
Prayers with the Lordly Warder
Of Greeks and men of Gardar:

Thus I pay my Prince for good gifts.
Thus sang Eilífr Kúlnasveinn:

The Glory of Heaven praises
Man's Prince: He is King of all things.

Here he called Christ, first, King of Men, and again, King of All. Eínarr Skúlason sang:

He who compasseth, Bright in Mercy,
All the world, and gently careth
For all, caused the realm of Heaven
To ope for the valiant ruler.

LII. "There the metaphors coincide; and he who interprets the language of poesy learns to distinguish which king is meant; for it is correct to call the Emperor of Constantinople King of Greeks, and similarly to call the king who rules over the land of Jerusalem King of Jerusalem, and also to call the Emperor of Rome King of Rome, and to call him King of Angles' who governs England. But that periphrasis which was cited but now, which called Christ King of Men, may be had by, every king. It is proper to periphrase all kings by calling them Land-Rulers, or Land-Warders, or Land-Attackers, or Leader of Henchmen, or Warder of the People.

Thus sang Eyvindr Skald-Despoiler:

Who filled the ravens
From life was reft
By the Earth-Rulers
At Ögló.
And as Glúmr Geirason sang:

The Prince beneath the helmet
Reddened the sword hone-hollowed
On the Geats: there the Land-Warder
Was found in the grinding spear-din.
As Thjóðólfr sang:

'T is my wish that the glorious Leader
Of Henchmen, the Glad-hearted,
Should leave his sons the heritage
And the sod of his fair freehold.
As Eínarr sang:

The valiant-souled Earth-Warder
On his stern head the helm bears;
The bard before heroes telleth
The fame of the King of Hördland.

It is right also to call him King of Kings, under whom are tributary kings. An emperor is highest of kings, and next under him is that king who reigns over a nation; and each of these is equal to the other in the periphrases made of them in poesy. Next to them are those men who are called earls or tributary kings: and they are equal in periphrasis with a king, save that one may not term them kings of nations. And thus sang Arnórr Earl's Skald concerning Earl Thorfinnr:

Let the men hear how the Earl's King,
Hardy of mind, the sea sought:

The overwhelming Ruler
Failed not to thwart the ocean.

Next to these in the figures of poesy are those men who are called chiefs: one may periphrase them as one might a king or an earl, calling them Dispensers of Gold, Wealth Munificent, Men of the Standards, and Captains of the Host, or Van-Leaders of the Array or of Battle; since each king of a nation, who rules over many lands, appoints tributary kings and earls in joint authority with himself, to administer the laws of the land and defend it from attack in those parts which lie far removed from the king. And in those parts they shall be equal with the king's self in giving judgment and meting punishment. Now there are many districts in one land; and it is the practice of kings to appoint justiciars over as many districts as one chooses to give into their hands. These justiciars are called chiefs or landed men in the Danish tongue, reeves in Saxony, and barons in England. They are also to be righteous judges and faithful warriors over the land which is entrusted to them for governance. If the king is not near, then a standard shall be borne before them in battle; and then they are quite as lawful war-captains as kings or earls.

"Next under them are those men who are called franklins: they are those freeholders who are of honorable kindred, and possessed of full rights. One may periphrase them by calling them Wealth-Givers, and Protectors, and Reconcilers of Men; headmen also may have these titles.

"Kings and earls have as their following the men called henchmen and house-carles; landed-men also have in their service those who are called henchmen in Denmark and Sweden, and house-carles in Norway, and these men swear oaths of service to them, even as henchmen do to kings. The house-carles of kings were often called henchmen in the old heathen time.

Thus sang Thorvaldr Blending Skald:

Hail, King, swift in the onset!
And thy sturdy house-carles with thee!
In their mouths men have my verses,
Made for a song of praising.
King Haraldr Sigurdarson composed this:

The man full mighty waiteth
The filling of the King's seat;
Oft, I find, to the Earl's heels
Throngs my host of house-carles.

Henchmen and house-carles may be periphrased by calling them House-Guard, or Wage-Band, or Men of Honor: thus sang Sigvatr:

I learned the Warrior's Wage-Band
On the water fought that battle
Newly: 't is not the smallest
Snow-shower of Shields I tell of.
And thus also:

When on the Steed of Cables
The clashing steel was meeting,
'T was not as when a maid bears
The Chief's mead to the Honor-Winners.

The service-fee which headmen give is called wages and gifts; thus sang Óttarr the Swarthy:

I needs must use the Breaker
Of the Battle-Glow of good men;
Here is the watch war-doughty
Of the Wise King assembled.

Earls and chiefs and henchmen are periphrased by calling them Counsellors or Speech-Friends or Seat-Mates of the King, as Hallfredr sang:

The Counsellor battle-mighty
Of the Prince, whom boldness pleases,
Lets the feud-fiery weeds of Högni,
Hammer-beaten, clash upon him.
As Snaebjörn sang:

The Speech-Friend of Kings letteth
The long-hulled steer-rope's Race-Horse
Steady the swordlike steel beak
Of the ship against the stern wave.
Thus sang Arnórr:

My young sons do bear for my sake
Grave sorrow for the slaughter
Of the Earl, destroyed by murder,
The Bench-Mate of our Monarch.
King's Counsel-Friend, as Hallfredr sang:

In council 't was determined
That the King's Friend, wise in counsel,
Should wed the Land, sole Daughter
Of Ónarr, greenly wooded.
One should periphraise men by their kindred; as Kormákr sang:

Let the son of Haraldr's true friend
Give ear, and hearken to me:

I raise my song, the Yeast-Stream
Of Sýr's snow-covered Monsters.

He called the Earl True Friend of the King, and Hákon, Son of Earl Sigurdr. And Thjóðólfr sang thus concerning Haraldr:

About Ólafr's sire
Waxed the steel-knife-storm's ire,
That of wightness each deed
Is worthy fame's meed.
And again:

Jarizleifr could espy
Where the king passed by:

The brave, sainted lord's kin
Stoutly praise did win.
And again he sang:

Breath-bereft is he
Who o'er all bore the gree,—
Of chiefs kinsman mild,
Haraldr's brother's child.
Arnórr also sang thus in Rögnvaldr's Song of Praise:

Heiti's war-good kinsman
Made wedlock-kindred with me:

The earl's strong tie of marriage
Made honor to us rendered.
And again, concerning Earl Thorfinnr, he sang:

The thin-made swords bit keenly
Old Rögnvaldr's kin, to southward
Of Man, where rushed the strong hosts
Under the sheltering shield-rims.
And he sang further:

O God, guard the glorious
Kin-Betterer of great Turf-Einarr
From harm; I pray, show mercy
To him whom faithful chiefs love.
And Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

The House-Prop of the Kindred
Of Hilditönn shall not lack
Hardihood more munificent;
I am bound to maintain praises.

LIII. "How are the uninvolved terms of poesy made? By calling each thing by its proper name. What are the simple terms for poesy? It is called Poetry, Glorifying, Song, Laud, and Praise. Bragi the Old sang this, when he was travelling through a forest late at evening: a troll woman hailed him in verse, asking who passed:

'Trolls do call me
Moon's . . .
. . . of the giant,
Storm-sun's bale,
Fellow-in-misery of the sibyl,
Warder of the circled ring-earth,
Wheel-devourer of the heaven.
What is the troll but that?"
He answered thus:

'Skalds do call me
Vidurr's Shape-Smith,
Gautr's Gift-Finder,
Bard not faulty,
Yggr's Ale-Bearer,
Song's Arrayer,
Skilled Smith of Verse:

What is the Skald but this?
And as Kormákr sang:

I make more Glorifying
By far o'er Hákon's great son:

I pay him the song-atonement
Of the gods. In his wain Thor sitteth.
And as Thórdr Kolbeinsson sang:

The Shield-Maple let many swift ships
And merchant-craft, and speedy
War-boats o'er the sea pour;
The skald's ready Song of Laud waxed.
Laud, as Úlfr Uggason sang:

Now the stream to the sea cometh;
But first the Laud I sang forth
Of the Messenger of Sword-Rain:

Thus I raise the praise of warriors.
Here poesy is called praise also.

LIV. "How are the gods named? They are called Fetters, as Eyjólfur the Valiant Skald sang:

Eiríkr draws the lands beneath him
At the pleasure of the Fetters,
And fashions the Spear-Battle.
And Bonds, as Thjóðólfr of Hvin sang:

The skilful God-Deceiver
To the Bonds proved a stern sharer
Of bones: the Helmet-Hooded
Saw somewhat hindered seething.
Powers, as Einarr Tinkling-Scale sang:

I say, the Mighty Powers
Magnify Hákon's empire.
Jólnar, as Eyvindr sang:

We have fashioned
The Feast of Jólnar,
The Prince's praise-song,
Strong as a stone bridge.
Deities, as Kormákr sang:

The Giver of Lands, who bindeth
The sail to the top, with gold-lace
Honors him who pours Deities' verse-mead;
Odin wrought charms on Rindr.

LV. "These names of the heavens are recorded (but we have not found all these terms in poems; and these skaldic terms, even as others, are not meet for use in skaldic writing, methinks, unless one first find such names in the works of Chief Skalds): Heaven, Hlýrnir, Heidthornir, Storm Mímir, Long-Lying, Light-Farer, Driving, Topmost Sky, Wide-Fathom, Vet-Mímir, Lightning, Destroyer, Wide-Blue. The solar planet is called Sun, Glory, Ever-Glow, All-Bright, Sight, Fair Wheel, Healing Ray, Dvalinn's Playmate, Elfin-Beam, Doubtful-Beam, Luminary. The lunar planet is called Moon, Waxer, Waner, Year-Teller, Mock-Sun, Fengari, Glamour, Haster, Crescent, Glare.

LVI. "Which are the simple terms for Earth? She is called Earth, as Thjóðólfr sang:

The hardy Point-Rain's Urger
Oft caused the harsh sword-shower,
Ere under him the broad Earth
With battle he subjected.
Field, as Óttarr sang:

The Prince guards the Field:

Few kings are so mighty;
Óleifr fattens the eagle,
Foremost is the Swedes' King.
Ground, as Hallvarðr sang:

The broad Ground, 'neath the venom-cold Adder
Bound, lies subject to the Warrior
Of the Island-Fetter's heaped gold;
The Hone-Land's Lord the hoard dispenseth.
Haudr, as Einarr sang:

Brave heroes are defending
The hard Haudr of famous princes
With the sword; oft splits the helmet
Before the furious edge-storm.
Land, as Thórðr Kolbeinsson sang:

The Land, after the battle,
Was laid low from Veiga northward
To Agdir south, or farther:

Hard is song in conflict.
Fief, as Óttarr sang:

Thou, fierce War-Staff, maintainedst
The Fief despite two Monarchs
With heroes' kin. where the ravens
Starved not; keen-hearted art thou.
Hlödyn, as Völu-Steinn sang:

I remember how murky earth yawned
With graven mouth for the Sender
Of the Gold-Words of the Giant
Of the hard bones of Green Hlödyn.
Country, as Úlfr Uggason sang:

But the flashing-eyed stiff Edge-Rope
Of the Earth stared past the gunwale
At the Rowan-Tree of the Country
Of Stone, the Giant-Tester.
Fjörgyn, as is said here:

I was faithful to the free Payer
Of the stream-bed of Fjörgyn's Serpent;
May honor be closely guarded
By the Giver of the Giant's Stream-gold.

LVII. "It is correct to periphrase blood or carrion in terms of the beast which is called Strangler," by calling them his Meat and Drink; it is not correct to express them in terms of other beasts. The Strangler is also called Wolf.

As Thjódólfur sang:

Enough guesting to the Ravener
Was given, when the Son of Sigurdr
Came from the North, the Wolf
To lure from the wood to the wound.
Here he is called Ravener also.
Greedy One, as Egill sang:

The Greedy One gashed
Grisly wounds, when plashed
The red Point-Creek
On the raven's beak.
Witch-Beast, as Einarr sang:

The Götha, cold with venom,
With hot Wound-Gush was reddened;
The Witch-Beast's warm drink, mingled
With the water, in the sea poured.
She-Wolf, as Arnórr sang:

The She-Wolf's evil Kindred
Swallowed the corpse, harm-swollen,
When the green sea was turned
To red, with gore commingled.
Strangler, as Illugi sang:

There was happiness for the Strangler
When my lord pursued hosts full many;
With the sword the Necklet-Minisher
Pierced the swart Snake of the Forest.

Thus sang Hallr:

He sated the Heath-Beasts' Hunger:
The hoar howler in wounds gladdened;
The king reddened the Wild One's mouth-hairs,—
The Wolf went to drink of the wound.

And again, as Thórdr sang:

In blood Gjalp's Stud-Horse waded,
The dusty pack got fullness
Of the Greedy One's Wheat; the howler
Enjoyed the Ravener's Gore-Drink.

The bear is called Wide-Stepper, Cub, Winterling, Ourse, Gib-Cat, Tusker, Youngling, Roarer, Jölfudr,¹¹ Wilful-Sharp, She-Bear, Horse-Chaser, Scratcher, Hungry One, Blómr,¹² Bustler. The hart is called Módrödnir,¹³ Dalarr,¹⁴ Dalr,¹⁵ Dáinn,¹⁶ Dvalinn,¹⁷ Duneyrr,¹⁸ Durathróf.¹⁹ These are the names of horses enumerated in the Rhymes of Thorgrímr:²⁰

¹¹ Meaning?

¹² Meaning?

¹³ Angry-minded?

¹⁴ Meaning?

¹⁵ Meaning?

¹⁶ These are the names of the harts that feed on the leaves of the Ash Yggdrasill. See Gylfag., ch. xvi.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ For meanings not given in footnotes, see Gylfag., ch. xv, and Skálds., ch. xvii.

Hrafn²¹ and Sleipnir,
The famous horses;
Valr²² and Léttfeti;
Tjaldari²³ a was there too;
Gulltopr and Goti;²⁴
I heard Sóti²⁵ told of;
Mór²⁶ and Lungr²⁷ with Marr.²⁸

Vigg[29] and Stúfr[30]
Were with Skaevadr;[31]
Blakkr[32] could well bear Thegn;
Silfrtoppr and Sinir;[33]
I heard Fákr[34] spoke of;
Gullfaxi and Jór[35] with the Gods were.
Blódughófi[36] hight a horse
That they said beareth
The strength-eminent Atridi;
Gísl[37] and Falhófnir;[38]
Glær[39] and Skeidbrimir;[40]
Mention, too, was made of Gyllir.[41]
These also are recorded in Kálfsvísa:

<verse>

Dagr rode Drösull,[42]
And Dvalinn rode Módnir;[43]
Hjálmthér, Háfeti;[44]
Haki rode Fákr;
The Slayer of Beli
Rode Blódughófi,
And Skævadr was ridden
By the Ruler of Haddings.
Vésteinn rode Valr,
And Vifill rode Stúfr;
Meinthjófr rode Mór,
[29] Carrier.

²¹ Raven.

²² Hawk.

²³ Racer?

²⁴ ?

²⁵ Soot-Colored.

²⁶ Dark-Gray.

²⁷ ?

²⁸ a Steed.

- [30] Stump.
- [31] Hoof-Tosser.
- [32] Black.
- [33] Sinewy.
- [34] Jade.
- [35] Horse, Steed.
- [36] Bloody-Hoof.
- [37] Hostage.
- [38] Hollow-Hoof.
- [39] Shining.
- [40] Swift-Runner.
- [41] Golden.
- [42] Roamer.
- [43] Spirited.
- [44] High-Heels.

And Morginn on Vagr;²⁹
 Áli rode Hrafn,
 They who rode onto the ice:

But another, southward,
 Under Adils,
 A gray one, wandered,
 Wounded with the spear.
 Björn rode Blakkr,
 And Bjárr rode Kertr;³⁰
 Atli rode Glaumr,³¹
 And Adils on Slöngvir;³²
 Högni on Hölvir,³³
 And Haraldr on Fölkvir;³⁴
 Gunnarr rode Goti,³⁵

²⁹ Watchful, Nimble, Ambling, or perhaps Hawk.

³⁰ Related to Kerti = a candle?

³¹ Tumult.

³² Slinger.

³³ Horse; etymology?

³⁴ ?

³⁵ Goth.

And Sigurdr, Grani.³⁶

Arvakr³⁷ and Alsvidr³⁸ draw the Sun, as is written before; Hrímfaxi³⁹ or Fjörsvartnir⁴⁰ draw the Night; Skinfaxi⁴¹ and Gladr⁴² are the Day's horses.

"These names of oxen are in Thorgrímr's Rhymes:

Of all oxen the names
Have I accurately learned,—
Of these: Raudr⁴³ and Hœfir,⁴⁴
Rekinn⁴⁵ and Hýrr,⁴⁶

Himinhrjódr and Apli, Arfr and Arfuni.

These are names of serpents: Dragon, Fáfñir, Mighty Monster, Adder, Nídhöggr, Lindworm, She-Adder, Góinn, Móinn, Grafvitnir, Grábakr, Ófñir, Sváfñir, Hooded One.

Neat-Cattle: Cow, calf, oxen, heifer, yearling, steer, bull.

Sheep: Ram, buck, ewe, lamb, wether.

Swine: Sow, she-pig, boar, hog, suckling.

LVIII. "What are the names of the air and of the winds? Air is called Yawning Void and Middle World, Bird-Abode, Wind-Abode. Wind is called Storm, Breeze, Gale, Tempest, Gust, Blowing. Thus does one read in Alsvinnsmál:

Wind 't is called among menfolk,
And Waverer with the gods,—
Neigher the great powers name it;
Shrieker the giants,
And Shouter elves call it;
In Hel Clamorer 't is called.
The Wind is also called Blast.

³⁶ Shining-Lip? (Jónsson).

³⁷ Early-Wake.

³⁸ All-Swift.

³⁹ Frosty-Mane.

⁴⁰ Swart-Life.

⁴¹ Shining-Mane.

⁴² Bright, or Glad.

⁴³ Red.

⁴⁴ Meet.

⁴⁵ Driven.

⁴⁶ Gentle.

LIX. "Two are those birds which there is no need to periphrase otherwise than by calling blood and corpses their Drink and Meat: these are the raven and the eagle. All other male birds may be periphrased in metaphors of blood or corpses; and then their names are terms of the eagle or the raven. As Thjóðólfr sang:

The Prince with Eagle's Barley
Doth feed the bloody moor-fowl:

The Hörd-King bears the sickle
Of Odin to the gory Swan's crop;
The Sater of the Vulture
Of the Eagle's Sea of corpses
Stakes each shoal to the southward
Which he wards, with the spear-point.

These are names of the raven: Crow, Huginn, Muninn, Bold of Mood, Yearly Flier, Year-Teller, Flesh-Boder.

Thus sang Einarr Tinkling-Scale:

With flesh the Host-Convoker
Filled the feathered ravens:

The raven, when spears were screaming,
With the she-wolf's prey was sated.
Thus sang Einarr Skúlason:

He who gluts the Gull of Hatred,
Our precious lord, could govern
The sword; the hurtful raven
Of Huginn's corpse-load eateth.
And as he sang further:

But the King's heart swelleth,
His spirit flushed with battle,
Where heroes shrink; dark Muninn
Drinks blood from out the wounds.
As Víga-Glúmr sang:

When stood the shielded Maidens
Of the gory sword, strife-eager,
On the isle; the Bold of Mood then
Received the meat of wound-blood.
As Skúli Thorsteinsson sang:

Not the hindmost in the hundred
Might Hlökk of horns have seen me,
Where to the Yearly Flier
I fed the wounds full grievous.

The erne is called Eagle, Old One, Storm-Shearer, Inciter, Soarer, Wound-Shearer,
Cock. As Einarr sang:

With blood the lips he reddened
Of the black steed of Járnsaxa;
With steel Erne's meat was furnished:

The Eagle slit the Wolf's Bait.
As Ottarr sang:

The Erne swills corpse-drink,
The She-wolf is sated,
The Eagle there feedeth,
Oft the wolf his fangs reddens.
As Thjóðólfr sang:

The Spoiler of the Lady
Swiftly flew with tumult
To meet the high God-Rulers,
Long hence, in Old One's plumage.
And as stands here:

With skill will I rehearse
Of the Storm-Shearer my verse.
And again as Skúli sang:

Early and late with sobbing
I wake, where well is sated
The hawk of the Cock's blood-ocean:

Then the bard heareth good tidings.

LX. "What are the names of the Sea? It is called Ocean, Main, Wintry, Lee, Deep,
Way, Weir, Salt, Lake, Furtherer. As Arnórr sang, and as we have written above:

Let men hear how the Earls' King,
Hardy of mind, the Sea sought;
The overwhelming Ruler
Failed not to resist the Main.
Here it is named Sea, and Main also.
"Ocean, as Hornklofi sang:

When the man-scathing Meeter
Of the Mansion of the Rock-Reefs
Thrust the Forecastle-Adder
And the skiff out on the Ocean.

In the following verse it is called Lake as well: thus sang Einarr:

The Lake doth bathe the vessel,
Where the sea 'gainst each side beateth,
And the bright wind-vanes rattle;
The surf washes the Flood-Steeds.
Here it is called Flood also. Thus sang Refr, as was said before:

Wintry One's wet-cold Spae-Wife
Wiles the Bear of Twisted Cables
Oft into Aegir's wide jaws,
Where the angry billow breaketh.
Deep, as Hallvarðr sang:

The Sword-Shaker bids be pointed
The prow of the hardy ship-steed
Westward in the girdle
Of all lands, the Watery Deep.
Way, as here:

On our course from land we glided;
On the Way to the coast of Finland:

I see from the Ship's Road, eastward,
The fells with radiance gleaming.
Weir, as Egill sang:

I sailed o'er the Weir
To the West: I bear
Odin's Heart-Sea.
So it stands with me.
Ocean, as Einarr sang:

Many a day the cold Ocean
Washes the swarthy deck-planks
'Neath the gracious Prince; and Snow-Storm
Furrows Mona's Girdle.
Salt, as Arnórr sang:

The hardy King the Salt plowed
From the east with hull ice-laden:

Brown tempests tossed the Lessener
Of Surf-Gold toward Sigtún.
Furtherer, as Bölverkr sang:

Thou didst summon from fair Norway
A levy the next season,
With Din-Surf's ships the Furtherer
Didst shear; o'er decks the sea poured.
Here the sea is called Din-Surf also.
Wide One, as Refr sang:

To its breast the Stay's steed taketh
The Home of Planks, beak-furrowed,
And tosses the Wide One over
The hard side; the wood suffers.
Dusky One, as Njáll of the Burning sang:

We sixteen pumped, my Lady,
In four oar-rooms, but the surge waxed:

The Dusky One beat over
The hull of the driven sea-ship.

These are other names for the Sea, such as it is proper to use in periphrasing ships or gold.

"Rán, it is said, was Aegir's wife, even as is written here:

To the sky shot up the Deep's Gledes,
With fearful might the sea surged:

Methinks our stems the clouds cut,—
Rán's Road to the moon soared upward.

The daughters of Aegir and Rán are nine, and their names are recorded before: Himinglæva,⁴⁷ Dúfa,⁴⁸ Blóduhadda,⁴⁹ Hefring,⁵⁰ Udr,⁵¹ Hrönn,⁵² Bylgja,⁵³ Dröfn,⁵⁴ Kólga.⁵⁵ Einarr Skúlason recorded the names of six of them in this stanza, beginning:

⁴⁷ That through which one can see the heaven (Jónsson).

⁴⁸ The Pitching One (Jónsson).

⁴⁹ Bloody-Hair.

⁵⁰ Riser.

⁵¹ Frothing Wave.

⁵² Welling Wave.

⁵³ Billow.

⁵⁴ Foam-Fleck.

⁵⁵ Poetical term for Wave. "The Cool One" (Jónsson).

Himinglæva sternly stirreth,
And fiercely, the sea's wailing.
Welling Wave,⁵⁶ as Valgardr sang:

Foam rested in the Sea's bed:
Swollen with wind, the deep played,

And the Welling Waves were washing
The awful heads of the war-ships.
Billow, as Ottarr the Swarthy sang:

Ye shear with shaven rudder
Billows moisty-deep; the broad sheet,
Which girls spun, on the mast-head
With the Roller's Reindeer sported.
Foam-Fleck, as Ormr sang:

The hawk-like, heedful Lady
Has every virtue: Lofn
Of the Foam-Fleck's flame-gold, faithful
As a friend, all faults renounceth.
Wave-Borne, as Thorleikr the Fair sang:

The sea walls, and the Wave-Borne
Bears bright froth o'er the red wood,
Where gapes the Roller's Brown Ox,
With mouth gold-ornamented.
Shoal, as Einarr sang:

Nor met the Forward-Minded,
Where the fierce sea on our friends falls;
I think the Shoal becalmed not
The Ship, Wood of the Waters.
Fullness, as Refr sang:

Downward the Fells of Fullness
Fall on the Bear of Tackle:

Now forward Winterling, stirreth,
The ship, on Glammi's sea-path.
Comber,⁵⁷ as here:

⁵⁶ In the following stanzas, for the sake of consistency, I have been obliged to translate the names, since they are employed in the stanzas as common nouns, rather than as proper names. It is beyond my ability to translate Himinglaeva briefly.]

⁵⁷ So Cl.-Vig. Literally, the word means ominous, foreboder.

The Comber fell headlong o'er me;
The Main called me home unto it:

I accepted not the Sea's bidding.
Breaker, as Óttarr sang:

In burst the ship-sides thin;
Rushed the Breaker downward; flushed
Stood the wind, bane of the wood;
Men endured wild tempest then.
Wave, as Bragi sang:

The Giver of the Wave's Coals,
Who cut Thor's slender tackle,
The Line of the Land of Sea-Mews,
Loved not to fight the wroth sea.
Sound, as Einarr sang:

I sheared the Sound
From Hrund south-bound;
My hand was gold-wound
When the Giver I found.
Fjord, as Einarr sang:

Next I see a serpent
Carved well on the splendid ale-horn:

Let the Fjord-Fire's Dispenser
Learn how for that I pay him.
Wetness, as Markús sang:

I'll not lampoon the Chatterer,
Lord of the fearful sword-blade,
Who squanders the Sun of Wetness:

Ill is he who spoileth verses.
LXI. "What are the names of fire? Even as is written here:

Not seldom does the fire blaze
Which Magnús sets: the stalwart
Ruler burns habitations:

Houses blow reek before him.
Glow, as Valgardr sang:

Fierce Glow, with red-hot embers,
Swiftly from the soot flared,
Straight o'er the tottering dwellings
Stood up the dense smoke-columns.
Bale, as here:

Haki was burned on Bale,
Where the sea's broad wake weltered.
Gledes, as Grani sang:

I think the Gledes diminished . . .
Glammi's tracks; thus the king kindled.
Embers, as Atli sang:

With blood the axe is reddened,
Embers wax, burn many houses,
Halls stand aglow; now rages
The Gem; good men are falling.
Here fire is called Gem also.
Vapor, as here:

Half-built, by the Nid's side
Burn the All-Ruler's dwellings;
I think fire razed the hall's pride:

Vapor shot rime on the people.
Hot Ashes, as Arnórr sang:

The Isle-Danes' wrathful Harmer
With the Raumar spared not hard counsel:

Hot Ashes made them calmer;
The Heinir's threatening words hushed.
Flames, as Einarr sang:

Flame soon was alight,
And swiftly took flight
All Hísing's host:

The fight they lost.
Flare, as Valgardr sang:

The sturdy king's bright Flare soared
Above the castle's bulwark;
The vikings burst in grimly:

Grief on the maid descended.
Lowe, as Haldórr sang:

There did ye share their jewels,
While o'er the host the Shield's Lowe,
The sword, shrieked fiercely: never
Wert thou spoiled of conquest.

LXII. "These are time-names: Cycle, Days of Yore, Generation, Lang-Syne, Year, Season, Winter, Summer, Spring, Autumn, Month, Week, Day, Night, Morning, Eve, Twilight, Early, Soon, Late, Betimes, Day before Yesterday, Yester Eve, Yesterday, To-morrow, Hour, Moment. These are more names of Night in Alsvinnsmál:

Night 't is called among men,
And among the gods, Mist-Time;
Hooded Hour the Holy Powers know it;
Sorrowless the giants,
And elves name it Sleep-joy;
The dwarves call it Dream-Weaver.

[It is autumn from the equinox till the time when the sun sets three hours and a half after noon; then winter endures till the equinox; then it is spring till the moving-days; then summer till the equinox. The month next before winter is called Harvest-Month; the first in winter is the Month of Cattle-Slaughter; then Freezing Month, then Rain-Month, then the Month of Winter's Wane, then Góí; then Single Month, then Cuckoo-Month and Seed-Time, then Egg-time and Lamb-Weaning-Time; then come Sun-Month and Pasture Month, then Haying-Season; then Reaping Month.]

LXIII. "What are the simple terms for men? Each, in himself, is Man; the first and highest name by which man is called is Emperor; next to that, King; the next thereto, Earl: these three men possess in common all the following titles: All-Ruler, as this song showeth:

I know all All-Rulers
East and south, o'er the Ships' seat
Sveinn's son in proof is better
Than any other War-Prince.

Here he is called War-Prince also; for this reason he is called All-Ruler, that he is sole Ruler of all his realm.

Host-Arrayer, as Gizurr sang:

The Host-Arrayer feedeth
The wolf and the raven in folk-mote;
Óláfr gladdens, in Skögun's sharp showers
Of battle, the geese of Odin.

"A King is called Host-Arrayer because he divides his war-host into companies.

Leader, as Ottarr the Swarthy sang:

The Leader taketh
Odin's loved Wife,
The lordless land;
His a warrior's life.
Lord or Lording, as Arnórr sang:

The Lord of Hjaltland, highest
Of heroes, gained the victory
In every thunderous sword-clash:

The bard will extol his glory.

An earl is called Host-Duke, and a king also is so termed, forasmuch as he leads his host to battle. Thus sang Thjóðólfr:

He who put to shame the Host-Duke
Thrust out the eyes of prisoners,—
He who speeds the sacrifices;
In song I chant his praises.
Signor, or Señor, as Sigvatr sang:

O Norway's gracious Signor,
Grant the wretched, as the happy,
May now enjoy thy wise laws;
Give greatly, hold thy word!
Munificent One, as Markús sang:

The Munificent Prince brought fire's destruction
O'er the base people; to the pirates
Death was fated: Thief-Compeller,
South at Jóm highest flame-glow kindle!
Illustrious One, as Hallvarðr sang:

No Illustrious One nearer
Under Earth's Hazel liveth
Than thou, O Monks' Upholder:

The Gold-Minisher Danes protecteth.
Land-Driver, as Thjóðólfr sang:

The guileless Land-Driver sprinkles
Kraki's gleaming barley,

as was written before; he is called so because he drives his host about the lands of other kings, or drives a host out of his own land.

LXIV. "There was a king named Hálfðan the Old, who was most famous of all kings. He made a great sacrificial feast at mid-winter, and sacrificed to this end, that he might live three hundred years in his kingdom; but he received these answers: he should not live more than the full life of a man, but for three hundred years there should be no woman and no man in his line who was not of great repute. He was a great warrior, and went on forays far and wide in the Eastern Regions: there he slew in single combat the king who was called Sigtrygr. Then he took in marriage that woman named Alvig the Wise, daughter of King Eymundr of Hólmgardr: they had eighteen sons, nine born at one birth. These were their names: the first, Thengill, who was called Manna-Thengill; the second, RAesir; the third, Gramr; the fourth, Gylfi; the fifth, Hilmir; the sixth, Jöfurr; the seventh, Tyggi; the eighth, Skyli or Skúli; the ninth, Harri or Herra. These nine brothers became so famous in foraying that, in all records since, their names are used as titles of rank, even as the name of King or that of Earl. They had no children, and all fell in battle. Thus sang Ottarr the Swarthy:

In his youth stalwart Thengill
Was swift and staunch in battle:

I pray his line endureth;
O'er all men I esteem him.
Thus sang Markus:

The RAesir let the Rhine's Sun shimmer
From the reddened Skull's ship on the Sea-Fells.
Thus sang Egill:

The Gramr the hood hath lifted
From the hair-fenced brows of the Singer.
Thus sang Eyvindr:

He played with the land-folk
Who should have defended;
Gylfi the gladsome
Stood 'neath the gold helmet.
Thus sang Glúmr Geirason:

Hilmir beneath the helmet
Reddened the sword hone-hollowed.
Thus sang Óttarr the Swarthy:

Let Jöfurr hear the beginning
Of his laud: all the king's praises
Shall be maintained, and justly
Let him mark my praise-song's measures.
As Stúfr sang:

The glory-ardent Tyggi
South before Niz with two hands
Beat down the band of heroes:

Glad beneath their shields the host went.
Thus sang Hallfredr:

From Skyli I am parted:

This age of swords hath caused it.
'T is greatest of all self-mockings
To hope that the king's guard cometh.
Thus sang Markús:

I bid the hawklike Danish Harri
Hark to my cunning web of praises.

"Hálfðan and his wife had nine other sons also; these were Hildir, from whom the Hildings are come; Nefir, from whom the Niflungs sprang; Audi, from whom the Ödlungs are come; Yngvi, from whom the Ynglings are descended; Dagr, from whom come the Döglings; Bragi, from whom the Bragnings are sprung (that is the race of Hálfðan the Munificent); Budli, from whom the Budlungs are come (from the house of the Budlungs Atli and Brynhildr descended); the eighth was Lofdi, who was a great war-king (that host who were called Lofdar followed him; his kindred are called Lofdungs, whence sprang Eylimi, Sigurdr Fáfnisbani's mother's sire); the ninth, Sigarr, whence come the Siklings: that is the house of Siggeirr, who was son-in-law of Völsungr,—and the house of Sigarr, who hanged Hagbardr. From the race of Hildings sprang Haraldr the Red-Bearded, mother's father of Hálfðan the Swarthy. Of the Niflung's house was Gjúki; of the house of Ödlings, Kjárr; of the house of the Ylfings was Eiríkr the Wise in Speech. These also are illustrious royal houses: from Yngvi, the Ynglings are descended; from Skjöldr in Denmark, the Skjöldungs are come; from Völsungr in the land of Franks, those who are called Völsungs. One war-king was named Skelfir; and his house is called the House of Skilfings: his kindred is in the Eastern Region.

"These houses which were named but now have been used in skaldship for titles of rank. Even as Einarr sang:

I learned that the Hildings sallied
To hold the Spear-Assembly
On the Gray Isle; the broad shields,
Green lindens, burst in sunder.
As Grant sang:

The Dögling to eagle's kindred
For drink gave Danish blood.
As Gamli Gnævadar-Skald sang:

Not long since, the young Ödling
With ship's deck and with sword-blade
Joined battle, waging fiercely
Of points the bitter tempest.
As Jórunn sang:

The Bragning bade the weapons
Be dyed in blood of vile folk;
The people endured his anger:

Houses bowed before red embers.
Thus sang Einarr:

The Budlung's blade sheared,
Blood on darts was smeared;
The storm-cloud of Hildr
At Whitby spilled.
Thus sang Arnorr:

The Kin of Siklings inureth
To the waves the ships sea-tossing;
With blood he dyes the warships
Within: 't is the weal of ravens.
As Thjóðólfr sang:

Thus the doughty Sikling ended
His life; in dire straits were we:

The glorious Lofdung waited
Bravely surcease of living.
The folk who were called Lofdar followed King Lofdi.
As Arnórr sang:

Chief, another Skjöldung higher
Than thou shall ne'er be born 'neath sun's light.
Völsung, as Thorkell Hamar-Skald sang:

The Kin of Völsungs
Gave counsel to send me
The gold-decked weapon
O'er the cool waters.
Yngling, as Ottarr the Swarthy sang:

In the East no mighty Yngling
To earth fell, ere o'ertook thee
He who subjected to him
The Sea-isles from the westward.
Yngvi: that too is a king's title, as Markús sang:

The age shall hear the praise of Eiríkr:

None in the world a prince hath known of
Lordier; thou holdest, Yngvi,
The Seat of Kings with long-kept glory.
Skilfing, as Valgardr sang:

The Skilfing kept a great host
Southward in the broad lands,
Where the swift ships shivered:

Sicily soon was desolated.
Signor, as Sigvatr sang:

O Norway's gracious Signor,
Let the poor enjoy; give greatly.

LXV. "Skalds are called bards; and in skaldship it is correct to call any man so whom one will. Those men who served King Hálfir were called Champions and from their name warriors are called champions; and it is correct to call all men so. In skaldship men are called Lofdar also, as is written above. Those men were called Skatnar who served the king named Skati the Munificent: from his name every one who is munificent is called Skati. They who followed Bragi the Old were called Bragnar. They who assess the transactions of men are called taxers. Fyrdar and Firar are they called who defend the land. Vikings and fleet-men form a ship-army. They who followed King Beimuni were called Beimar. Captains of companies are called Grooms, even as he is called who carries home a bride. The Goths are named after that king who was called Goti, from

whom Gotland is named: he was so called after Odin's name, derived from the name Gautr, for Gautland or Gotland was named after Odin's name, and Sweden from the name of Svidurr, which is also a title of Odin's. At that time all the mainland which he possessed was called Reid-Gotland, and all the islands, Ey-Gotland: that is now called the Realm of Danes or of Swedes.

"Young men not householders are called Drengs, while they are acquiring wealth and glory: sea-faring Drengs are they who voyage from land to land; King's Drengs are they who serve rulers. They also are Drengs who serve wealthy men or franklins; valiant and ambitious men are called Drengs. Warriors are also called Champions and Troops: these are soldiers. Freeholders are called Thanes and Yeomen; those men who go about reconciling men are called Day-Men. These men are they who are called Champions, Kemps, Men of War, Brave Men, Valiant Men, Hardy Men, Overpowerers, Heroes. Over against these are the following terms: Soft, Weak, Unleavened, Leavenless, Melting One, Sheath, Coward, Skulker, Weakling, Qualmish, Caitiff, Scamp, Vile One, Dog, Lout, Feeble One, Paltry' One, Imbecile, Bungler, Son of Wretchedness.

"A good man of his hands is called Munificent, Illustrious, Towerer, Mighty Towerer, Towering Gold-Giver, Prince of Men, Wealthy One, Prosperous, Heaper-Up of Riches, Mighty Man, Chieftain. In contrast to these are they who are called Niggard, Miser, Calculator, Wretched One, Wealth-Hiding, Gift-Tardy One. A man wise in Counsel is called Wielder of Counsel. A witless man is called Clown, Oaf, Gander, Dupe, Boor, Idiot, Dolt, Fool, Madman, Maniac, Moon-Struck. One who thinks much of dress is called Gaudy, Dreng, Glittering One, Careful of Attire, Tricked-Out. A noisy fellow is called Shark-Skin, Braggart, Sheath-Cleaner, Fawner, Brawler, Good-for-Naught, Worthless One. Common-folk are called Country-folk or People. A thrall is called Kept-Man, Serf, Laborer, Servant.

LXVI. "Each one singly is called man; 't is twain if they are two; three are a thorp; four are a group; a band is five men; if there are six, it is a squad; seven complete a crew; eight men make a panel; nine are 'good fellows;' ten are a gang; eleven form an embassy; it is a dozen if twelve go together; thirteen. are a crowd; fourteen are an expedition; it is a gathering, when fifteen meet; sixteen make a garrison; seventeen are a congregation; to him who meets eighteen, they seem enemies enough. He who has nineteen men has a company; twenty men are a posse; thirty are a squadron; forty, a community; fifty are a shire; sixty are an assembly; seventy are a line; eighty are a people; one hundred is a host.

LXVII. "Beside these there are those terms which men prefix to the names of men: we call such terms epithets of possession, or true terms, or surnames. It is an epithet of possession when one names a thing by its true name, and calls him whom one desires to periphrase Owner of that thing; or Father or Grandfather of that which was named; Grandsire is a third epithet. Moreover, a son is also called Heir, Heritor, Bairn, Child and Boy, Inheritor. A blood-kinsman is called Brother, Twin, Germane, Consanguine; a relation is also called Nephew, Kinsman, Kin, Kith, Friend, Kin-Stave, Descendant, Family-Prop, Family-Stem, Kin-Branch, Family-Bough, Offshoot,

Offspring, Head-Tree, Scion. Kinsmen by marriage are further called Sib-folk, Minglers of Blood. A friend is called Counsel-Mate, Counsel-Giver, Adviser, Secret-Sharer, Converser, Bench-Fellow, Fondling, Seat-Mate; bench-fellow also means Cabin-Mate. A foe is called Adversary, Shooter Against One, Hater, Attacker, Scather, Slayer, Hard Presser, Pursuer, Overbearer.

"These terms we call epithets of possession; and so also if a man is known by his dwelling or his ship, which has a name of its own, or by his estate, when a name of its own is given to it.

"This we call true terms: to call a man Wise Man, Man of Thought, Wise in Speech, Sage in Counsel, Wealth Munificent, Not Slack, Endower, Illustrious One; these are surnames.

LXVIII. "These are simple terms for women in skald ship: Wife and Bride and Matron are those women who are given to a man. Those who walk in pomp and fine array are called Dame and Lady. They who are witty of speech are called Women of Wisdom. They who are gentle are called Girls; they who are of high countenance are called Proud and Haughty Ones. She who is of noble mind is called Gentlewoman; she who is richest, Lady. She who is bashful, as young -maids are, or those women who are modest, is called Lass. The woman whose husband has departed from the land is called Stay-at-Home.

That woman whose husband is slain is called War-Widow: Widow is the term for her whose husband has died of sick ness. Maid means, first, every woman, and then carlines that are old. Then there are those terms for women which are libellous: one may find them in songs, though they be not ill writing. Those women who have one husband in common are called Concubines. A son's wife is termed Daughter-in-law; the husband's mother is called Mother-in-law. A woman may also be called Mother, Grand mother, Great-Grandmother; a Mother is called Dam. Woman is further called Daughter, Bairn, and Child. She is also called Sister, Lady,⁵⁸ and Maiden.⁵⁹ Woman is also called Bed-Fellow, Speech-Mate, and Secret-Sharer of her husband; and that is an epithet of possession.

LXIX. "A man's head is termed thus: [thus should it be periphrased: call it Toil or Burden of the Neck; Land of the Helm, of the Hood, and of the Brain, of the Hair and Brows, of the Scalp, of Ears, Eves, and Mouth; Sword of Heimdallr, and it is correct to name any term for sword which one desires; and to periphrase it in terms of every one of the names of Heimdallr]⁶⁰ the Head, in simple terms, is called Skull, Brain, Temple, Crown. The eyes are termed Vision or Glance, and Regard, Swift-Appraising; [they may be so periphrased as to call them Sun or Moon, Shields and Glass or Jewels or Stones of the Eyelids, of the Brows, the Lashes, or the Forehead]. The ears are

⁵⁸ Dís; jodís: properly = sister. For discussion of these words, see under dís in Cl.-Vig., p. 100.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ This and other pages in brackets are probably spurious.

called Listeners⁶¹ or Hearing;⁶² [one should periphraise them by calling them Land, or any earth-name, or Mouth, or Canal, or Vision, or Eyes of Hearing, if the metaphors employed are new-coined. The mouth one should periphraise by calling it Land or House of the Tongue or of the Teeth, of Words or of the Palate, of the Lips, or the like; and if the metaphors used are not traditional, then men may call the mouth Ship, and the lips the Planks, and the tongue Oar or Tiller of the Ship. The teeth are sometimes called Gravel or Rocks of Words, of the Mouth, or of the Tongue. The tongue is often called Sword of Speech or of the Mouth]. The hair which stands on the lips is called Beard, Moustache, or Whiskers. Hair is called Nap; the hair of women is called Tresses. Hair is termed Locks. [One may periphraise hair by calling it Forest, or by some tree-name; one may periphraise it in terms of the skull or brain or head; and the beard in terms of chin or cheeks or throat.]

LXX. The heart is called grain-sheaf; [one should periphraise it by terming it Grain or Stone or Apple or Nut or Ball, or the like, in figures of the breast or of feeling. More over, it may be called House or Earth or Mount of Feeling. One should periphraise the breast by calling it House or Garth or Ship of the Heart, of Breath, or of the Liver; Land of Energy, of Feeling, and of Memory]. Feeling is affection and emotion, love, passion, desire, love-longing. [Passion should be periphraised by calling it Wind of Troll Women; also it is correct to name what one soever is desired, and to name giants, periphraising giantesses as Woman or Mother or Daughter of the Giants.] Feeling is also called mood, liking, eagerness, courage, activity, memory, understanding, temper, humor, good faith. It is also wrath, enmity, mischievousness, grimness, balefulness, grief, sorrow, ill-will, spite, falseness, faithlessness, fickleness, light-mindedness, baseness, hasty temper, violence.

LXXI. "The hand and fore-arm may be called hand, arm, paw, palm. Parts of the arm are called elbow, upper arm, wolf's joint, finger, grip, wrist, nail, finger-tip, hand-edge, quick. [One may term the hand Earth of Weapons or of Defensive Armor; and together with shoulder and arm, the hollow of the hand and the wrist, it may, be called Earth of Gold Rings, of the Falcon and the Hawk, and of all the equivalents thereof; and in new-coined metaphors, Leg of the Shoulder-joint, and Force of the Bow. The legs may be called Tree of the Soles, of the Insteps, of the Ankles, or the like; Running Shaft of the Road or of the Way or the Pace; one may call the leg Tree or Post of all these. The legs are periphraised in metaphors of snowshoes, shoes, and breeks.] The parts of the legs are called thigh, knee, calf, lower leg, upper leg, instep, arch, sole, toe; [one may periphraise the leg in terms of all these, calling it Tree, Mast, and Yard thereof; and in metaphors of them all].

LXXII. "Speech is called words, language, eloquence, talk, tale, gibing, controversy, song, spell, recital, idle talk, babbling, din, chatter, squalling, merry noise, wrangling,

⁶¹ These are the literal meanings; the meanings, in general usage, coincide: both words signify the inner parts of the ear (Cl.-Vig.).

⁶² Ibid.

mocking, quarrelling, wish-wash, boasting, tittle-tattle, nonsense, idiom, vanity, gabbling. It is also termed voice, sound, resonance, articulation, wailing, shriek, dash, crash, alarm, roaring, creaking, swoop, swooping, outburst.

LXXIII. "Understanding is called wisdom, counsel, discernment, memory, speculation, intelligence, arithmetic, far sight, craft, word-wit, preëminence. It is called subtlety, wiliness, falsehood, fickleness.

LXXIV. "Expression is of two kinds: that which is called voice, and that which is called manners; manners is also temper. Reiði also has double meaning: reiði is the ill humor of a man, and reiði is also the rigging of a ship or the driving-gear of a horse. Fár also has double meaning: fár signifies wrath, and far signifies a ship.

"Men have made frequent use of such ambiguous expressions as these; and this practice is called punning. [Lith is that part of a man where bones meet; lið is a word for ship; lið means people; when a man renders an other assistance, his aid is lið; líð signifies ale. Hliðsignifies the gate in a garth; hliðr men call an ox, and hlið signifies a slope. One may make such use of these distinct meanings in skaldship as to make a pun that is hard to interpret, provided one employ other distinctions than those which are indicated by the half-lines which precede. These cases are there, and many others, in which divers things have the same name in common.]"

THE STORY OF GUNNLAUG THE WORM-TONGUE AND RAVEN THE SKALD

By Anonymous

Translated by William Morris

CHAPTER I. Of Thorstein Egilson and his Kin.

There was a man called Thorstein, the son of Egil, the son of Skallagrim, the son of Kveldulf the Hersir of Norway. Asgerd was the mother of Thorstein; she was the daughter of Biorn Hold. Thorstein dwelt at Burg in Burg-firth; he was rich of fee, and a great chief, a wise man, meek and of measure in all wise. He was nought of such wondrous growth and strength as his father Egil had been; yet was he a right mighty man, and much beloved of all folk.

Thorstein was goodly to look on, flaxen-haired, and the best-eyed of men; and so say men of lore that many of the kin of the Mere-men, who are come of Egil, have been the goodliest folk; yet, for all that, this kindred have differed much herein, for it is said that some of them have been accounted the most ill-favoured of men: but in that kin have been also many men of great prowess in many wise, such as Kiartan, the son of Olaf Peacock, and Slaying-Bardi, and Skuli, the son of Thorstein. Some have been great bards, too, in that kin, as Biorn, the champion of Hit-dale, priest Einar Skulison, Snorri Sturluson, and many others.

Now, Thorstein had to wife Jofrid, the daughter of Gunnar, the son of Hlifar. This Gunnar was the best skilled in weapons, and the lithest of limb of all bonderfolk who have been in Iceland; the second was Gunnar of Lithend; but Steinthor of Ere was the third. Jofrid was eighteen winters old when Thorstein wedded her; she was a widow, for Thorodd, son of Odd of Tongue, had had her to wife aforetime. Their daughter was Hungerd, who was brought up at Thorstein's at Burg. Jofrid was a very stirring woman; she and Thorstein had many children betwixt them, but few of them come into this tale. Skuli was the eldest of their sons, Kollsvein the second, Egil the third.

CHAPTER II. Of Thorsteins Dream.

One summer, it is said, a ship came from over the main into Gufaros. Bergfinn was he hight who was the master thereof, a Northman of kin, rich in goods, and somewhat stricken in years, and a wise man he was withal.

Now, goodman Thorstein rode to the ship, as it was his wont mostly to rule the market, and this he did now. The Eastmen got housed, but Thorstein took the master to himself, for thither he prayed to go. Bergfinn was of few words throughout the winter, but Thorstein treated him well. The Eastman had great joy of dreams.

One day in spring-tide Thorstein asked Bergfinn if he would ride with him up to Hawkfell, where at that time was the Thing-stead of the Burg-firthers; for Thorstein had been told that the walls of his booth had fallen in. The Eastman said he had good will to go, so that day they rode, some three together, from home, and the house-carles of Thorstein withal, till they came up under Hawkfell to a farmstead called Foxholes. There dwelt a man of small wealth called Atli, who was Thorstein's tenant. Thorstein bade him come and work with them, and bring with him hoe and spade. This he did, and when they came to the tofts of the booth, they set to work all of them, and did out the walls.

The weather was hot with sunshine that day, and Thorstein and the Eastman grew heavy; and when they had moved out the walls, those two sat down within the tofts, and Thorstein slept, and fared ill in his sleep. The Eastman sat beside him, and let him have his dream fully out, and when he awoke he was much wearied. Then the Eastman asked him what he had dreamt, as he had had such an ill time of it in his sleep.

Thorstein said, "Nay, dreams betoken nought."

But as they rode homeward in the evening, the Eastman asked him again what he had dreamt.

Thorstein said, "If I tell thee the dream, then shalt thou unriddle it to me, as it verily is."

The Eastman said he would risk it.

Then Thorstein said: "This was my dream; for methought I was at home at Burg, standing outside the men's-door, and I looked up at the house-roof, and on the ridge I saw a swan, goodly and fair, and I thought it was mine own, and deemed it good beyond all things. Then I saw a great eagle sweep down from the mountains, and fly thitherward and alight beside the swan, and chuckle over her lovingly; and methought the swan seemed well content thereat; but I noted that the eagle was black-eyed, and that on him were iron claws: valiant he seemed to me.

"After this I thought I saw another fowl come flying from the south quarter, and he, too, came hither to Burg, and sat down on the house beside the swan, and would fain be fond with her. This also was a mighty eagle.

"But soon I thought that the eagle first-come ruffled up at the coming of the other. Then they fought fiercely and long, and this I saw that both bled, and such was the

end of their play, that each tumbled either way down from the house-roof, and there they lay both dead.

"But the swan sat left alone, drooping much, and sad of semblance.

"Then I saw a fowl fly from the west; that was a falcon, and he sat beside the swan and made fondly towards her, and they flew away both together into one and the same quarter, and therewith I awoke.

"But a dream of no mark this is," he says, "and will in all likelihood betoken gales, that they shall meet in the air from those quarters whence I deemed the fowl flew."

The Eastman spake: "I deem it nowise such," saith he.

Thorstein said, "Make of the dream, then, what seemeth likest to thee, and let me hear."

Then said the Eastman: "These birds are like to be fetches of men: but thy wife sickens now, and she will give birth to a woman-child fair and lovely; and dearly thou wilt love her; but high-born men shall woo thy daughter, coming from such quarters as the eagles seemed to fly from, and shall love her with overweening love, and shall fight about her, and both lose their lives thereby. And thereafter a third man, from the quarter whence came the falcon, shall woo her, and to that man shall she be wedded. Now, I have unravelled thy dream, and I think things will befall as I have said."

Thorstein answered: "In evil and unfriendly wise is the dream interpreted, nor do I deem thee fit for the work of unriddling dreams."

Then Eastman said, "Thou shalt find how it will come to pass."

But Thorstein estranged himself from the Eastman thenceforward, and he left that summer, and now he is out of the tale.

CHAPTER III. Of the Birth and Fostering of Helga the Fair.

This summer Thorstein got ready to ride to the Thing, and spake to Jofrid his wife before he went from home. "So is it," he says, "that thou art with child now, but thy child shall be cast forth if thou bear a woman; but nourished if it be a man."

Now, at this time when all the land was heathen, it was somewhat the wont of such men as had little wealth, and were like to have many young children on their hands, to have them cast forth, but an evil deed it was always deemed to be.

And now, when Thorstein had said this, Jofrid answers, "This is a word all unlike thee, such a man as thou art, and surely to a wealthy man like thee it will not seem good that this should be done."

Thorstein answered: "Thou knowest my mind, and that no good will hap if my will be thwarted."

So he rode to the Thing; but while he was gone Jofrid gave birth to a woman-child wondrous fair. The women would fain show her to the mother; she said there was little need thereof, but had her shepherd Thorvard called to her, and spake to him:—

”Thou shalt take my horse and saddle it, and bring this child west to Herdholt, to Thorgerd, Egil’s daughter, and pray her to nourish it secretly, so that Thorstein may not know thereof. For with such looks of love do I behold this child, that surely I cannot bear to have it cast forth. Here are three marks of silver, have them in reward of thy work; but west there Thorgerd will get thee fare and food over the sea.”

Then Thorvard did her bidding; he rode with the child to Herdholt, and gave it into Thorgerd’s hands, and she had it nourished at a tenant’s of hers who dwelt at Freedmans-stead up in Hvamfirth; but she got fare for Thorvard north in Steingrimsfirth, in Shell-creek, and gave him meet outfit for his sea-faring; he went thence abroad, and is now out of the story.

Now when Thorstein came home from the Thing, Jofrid told him that the child had been cast forth according to his word, but that the herdsman had fled away and stolen her horse. Thorstein said she had done well, and got himself another herdsman. So six winters passed, and this matter was nowise wotted of.

Now in those days Thorstein rode to Herdholt, being bidden there as guest of his brother-in-law, Olaf Peacock, the son of Hoskuld, who was then deemed to be the chief highest of worth among all men west there. Good cheer was made Thorstein, as was like to be; and one day at the feast it is said that Thorgerd sat in the high seat talking with her brother Thorstein, while Olaf was talking to other men; but on the bench right over against them sat three little maidens. Then said Thorgerd,—

”How dost thou, brother, like the look of these three little maidens sitting straight before us?”

”Right well,” he answers, ”but one is by far the fairest; she has all the goodliness of Olaf, but the whiteness and the countenance of us, the Mere-men.”

Thorgerd answered: ”Surely this is true, brother, wherein thou sayest that she has the fairness and countenance of us Mere-folk, but the goodliness of Olaf Peacock she has not got, for she is not his daughter.”

”How can that be,” says Thorstein, ”being thy daughter none the less?”

She answered: ”To say sooth, kinsman,” quoth she, ”this fair maiden is not my daughter, but thine.”

And therewith she told him all as it had befallen, and prayed him to forgive her and his own wife that trespass.

Thorstein said: ”I cannot blame you two for having done this; most things will fall as they are fated, and well have ye covered over my folly: so look I on this maiden that I deem it great good luck to have so fair a child. But now, what is her name?”

”Helga she is called,” says Thorgerd.

”Helga the Fair,” says Thorstein. ”But now shalt thou make her ready to come home with me.”

She did so, and Thorstein was led out with good gifts, and Helga rode with him to his home, and was brought up there with much honour and great love from father and mother and all her kin.

CHAPTER IV. Of Gunnlaug Worm-tongue and his Kin.

Now at this time there dwelt at Gilsbank, up in White-water-side, Illugi the Black, son of Hallkel, the son of Hrosskel. The mother of Illugi was Thurid Dandle, daughter of Gunnlaug Worm-tongue.

Illugi was the next greatest chief in Burg-firth after Thorstein Egilson. He was a man of broad lands and hardy of mood, and wont to do well to his friends; he had to wife Ingibiorg, the daughter of Asbiorn Hordson, from Ornofsdale; the mother of Ingibiorg was Thorgerd, the daughter of Midfirth-Skeggi. The children of Illugi and Ingibiorg were many, but few of them have to do with this story. Hermund was one of their sons, and Gunnlaug another; both were hopeful men, and at this time of ripe growth.

It is told of Gunnlaug that he was quick of growth in his early youth, big, and strong; his hair was light red, and very goodly of fashion; he was dark-eyed, somewhat ugly-nosed, yet of lovesome countenance; thin of flank he was, and broad of shoulder, and the best-wrought of men; his whole mind was very masterful; eager was he from his youth up, and in all wise unsparing and hardy; he was a great skald, but somewhat bitter in his rhyming, and therefore was he called Gunnlaug Worm-tongue.

Hermund was the best beloved of the two brothers, and had the mien of a great man.

When Gunnlaug was fifteen winters old he prayed his father for goods to fare abroad withal, and said he had will to travel and see the manners of other folk. Master Illugi was slow to take the matter up, and said he was unlike to be deemed good in the out-lands "when I can scarcely shape thee to my own liking at home."

On a morning but a very little afterwards it happened that Illugi came out early, and saw that his storehouse was opened, and that some sacks of wares, six of them, had been brought out into the road, and therewithal too some pack-gear. Now, as he wondered at this, there came up a man leading four horses, and who should it be but his son Gunnlaug. Then said he:—

"I it was who brought out the sacks."

Illugi asked him why he had done so. He said that they should make his faring goods.

Illugi said: "In nowise shalt thou thwart my will, nor fare anywhere sooner than I like!" and in again he swung the ware-sacks therewith.

Then Gunnlaug rode thence and came in the evening down to Burg, and goodman Thorstein asked him to bide there, and Gunnlaug was fain of that proffer. He told Thorstein how things had gone betwixt him and his father, and Thorstein offered to let him bide there as long as he liked, and for some seasons Gunnlaug abode there, and learned law-craft of Thorstein, and all men accounted well of him.

Now Gunnlaug and Helga would be always at the chess-playing together, and very soon each found favour with the other, as came to be proven well enough afterwards: they were very nigh of an age.

Helga was so fair, that men of lore say that she was the fairest woman of Iceland, then or since; her hair was so plenteous and long that it could cover her all over, and it was as fair as a band of gold; nor was there any so good to choose as Helga the Fair in all Burgfirth, and far and wide elsewhere.

Now one day, as men sat in the hall at Burg, Gunnlaug spake to Thorstein: "One thing in law there is which thou hast not taught me, and that is how to woo me a wife."

Thorstein said, "That is but a small matter," and therewith taught him how to go about it.

Then said Gunnlaug, "Now shalt thou try if I have understood all: I shall take thee by the hand and make as if I were wooing thy daughter Helga."

"I see no need of that," says Thorstein. Gunnlaug, however, groped then and there after his hand, and seizing it said, "Nay, grant me this though."

"Do as thou wilt, then," said Thorstein; "but be it known to all who are hereby that this shall be as if it had been unspoken, nor shall any guile follow herein."

Then Gunnlaug named for himself witnesses, and betrothed Helga to him, and asked thereafter if it would stand good thus. Thorstein said that it was well; and those who were present were mightily pleased at all this.

CHAPTER V. Of Raven and his Kin.

There was a man called Onund, who dwelt in the south at Mossfell: he was the wealthiest of men, and had a priesthood south there about the nesses. He was married, and his wife was called Geirny. She was the daughter of Gnup, son of Mold-Gnup, who settled at Grindwick, in the south country. Their sons were Raven, and Thorarin, and Eindridi; they were all hopeful men, but Raven was in all wise the first of them. He was a big man and a strong, the sightliest of men and a good skald; and when he was fully grown he fared between sundry lands, and was well accounted of wherever he came.

Thorod the Sage, the son of Eyvind, then dwelt at Hjalli, south in Olfus, with Skapti his son, who was then the spokesman-at-law in Iceland. The mother of Skapti was Ranveig, daughter of Gnup, the son of Mold-Gnup; and Skapti and the sons of Onund were sisters' sons. Between these kinsmen was much friendship as well as kinship.

At this time Thorfin, the son of Selthorir, dwelt at Red-Mel, and had seven sons, who were all the hopefullest of men; and of them were these—Thorgils, Eyjolf, and Thorir; and they were all the greatest men out there. But these men who have now been named lived all at one and the same time.

Next to this befell those tidings, the best that ever have befallen here in Iceland, that the whole land became Christian, and that all folk cast off the old faith.

CHAPTER VI. How Helga was vowed to Gunnlaug, and of Gunnlaug's faring abroad.

Gunnlaug Worm-Tongue was, as is aforesaid, whiles at Burg with Thorstein, whiles with his father Illugi at Gilsbank, three winters together, and was by now eighteen winters old; and father and son were now much more of a mind.

There was a man called Thorkel the Black; he was a house-carle of Illugi, and near akin to him, and had been brought up in his house. To him fell an heritage north at As, in Water-dale, and he prayed Gunnlaug to go with him thither. This he did, and so they rode, the two together, to As. There they got the fee; it was given up to them by those who had the keeping of it, mostly because of Gunnlaug's furtherance.

But as they rode from the north they gusted at Grimstongue, at a rich bonder's who dwelt there; but in the morning a herdsman took Gunnlaug's horse, and it had sweated much by then he got it back. Then Gunnlaug smote the herdsman, and stunned him; but the bonder would in nowise bear this, and claimed boot therefor. Gunnlaug offered to pay him one mark. The bonder thought it too little.

Then Gunnlaug sang,—
"Bade I the middling mighty
To have a mark of waves' flame;
Giver of grey seas? glitter,
This gift shalt thou make shift with.
If the elf sun of the waters
From out of purse thou lettest,
O waster of the worm's bedy
Awaits thee sorrow later."

So the peace was made as Gunnlaug bade, and in such wise the two rode south.

Now, a little while after, Gunnlaug asked his father a second time for goods for going abroad.

Illugi says, "Now shalt thou have thy will, for thou hast wrought thyself into something better than thou wert." So Illugi rode hastily from home, and bought for Gunnlaug half a ship which lay in Gufaros, from Audun Festargram—this Audun was

he who would not flit abroad the sons of Oswif the Wise, after the slaying of Kiartan Olafson, as is told in the story of the Laxdalemen, which thing though betid later than this.—And when Illugi came home, Gunnlaug thanked him well.

Thorkel the Black betook himself to seafaring with Gunnlaug, and their wares were brought to the ship; but Gunnlaug was at Burg while they made her ready, and found more cheer in talk with Helga than in toiling with chapmen.

Now one day Thorstein asked Gunnlaug if he would ride to his horses with him up to Long-water-dale. Gunnlaug said he would. So they ride both together till they come to the mountain-dairies of Thorstein, called Thorgils-stead. There were stud-horses of Thorstein, four of them together, all red of hue. There was one horse very goodly, but little tried: this horse Thorstein offered to give to Gunnlaug. He said he was in no need of horses, as he was going away from the country; and so they ride to other stud-horses. There was a grey horse with four mares, and he was the best of horses in Burgfirth. This one, too, Thorstein offered to give Gunnlaug, but he said, "I desire these in no wise more than the others; but why dost thou not bid me what I will take?"

"What is that?" said Thorstein.

"Helga the Fair, thy daughter," says Gunnlaug.

"That rede is not to be settled so hastily," said Thorstein; and therewithal got on other talk. And now they ride homewards down along Long-water.

Then said Gunnlaug, "I must needs know what thou wilt answer me about the wooing."

Thorstein answers: "I heed not thy vain talk," says he.

Gunnlaug says, "This is my whole mind, and no vain words."

Thorstein says, "Thou shouldst first know thine own will. Art thou not bound to fare abroad? and yet thou makest as if thou wouldst go marry. Neither art thou an even match for Helga while thou art so unsettled, and therefore this cannot so much as be looked at."

Gunnlaug says, "Where lookest thou for a match for thy daughter, if thou wilt not give her to the son of Illugi the Black; or who are they throughout Burg-firth who are of more note than he?"

Thorstein answered: "I will not play at men-mating," says he, "but if thou wert such a man as he is, thou wouldst not be turned away."

Gunnlaug said, "To whom wilt thou give thy daughter rather than to me?"

Said Thorstein, "Hereabout are many good men to choose from. Thorfin of Red-Mel hath seven sons, and all of them men of good manners."

Gunnlaug answers, "Neither Onund nor Thorfin are men as good as my father. Nay, thou thyself clearly fallest short of him—or what hast thou to set against his strife with Thorgrim the Priest, the son of Kiallak, and his sons, at Thorsness Thing, where he carried all that was in debate?"

Thorstein answers, "I drave away Steinar, the son of Onund Sioni, which was deemed somewhat of a deed."

Gunnlaug says, "Therein thou wast holpen by thy father Egil; and, to end all, it is for few bonders to cast away my alliance."

Said Thorstein, "Carry thy cowing away to the fellows up yonder at the mountains; for down here, on the Meres, it shall avail thee nought."

Now in the evening they come home; but next morning Gunnlaug rode up to Gilsbank, and prayed his father to ride with him a-wooing out to Burg.

Illugi answered, "Thou art an unsettled man, being bound for faring abroad, but makest now as if thou wouldst busy thyself with wife-wooing; and so much do I know, that this is not to Thorstein's mind."

Gunnlaug answers, "I shall go abroad all the same, nor shall I be well pleased but if thou further this."

So after this Illugi rode with eleven men from home down to Burg, and Thorstein greeted him well. Early in the morning Illugi said to Thorstein, "I would speak to thee."

"Let us go, then, to the top of the Burg, and talk together there," says Thorstein; and so they did, and Gunnlaug went with them.

Then said Illugi, "My kinsman Gunnlaug tells me that he has begun a talk with thee on his own behalf, praying that he might woo thy daughter Helga; but now I would fain know what is like to come of this matter. His kin is known to thee, and our possessions; from my hand shall be spared neither land nor rule over men, if such things might perchance further matters."

Thorstein said, "Herein alone Gunnlaug pleases me not, that I find him an unsettled man; but if he were of a mind like thine, little would I hang back."

Illugi said, "It will cut our friendship across if thou gainsayest me and my son an equal match."

Thorstein answers, "For thy words and our friendship then, Helga shall be vowed, but not betrothed, to Gunnlaug, and shall bide for him three winters: but Gunnlaug shall go abroad and shape himself to the ways of good men; but I shall be free from all these matters if he does not then come back, or if his ways are not to my liking."

Thereat they parted; Illugi rode home, but Gunnlaug rode to his ship. But when they had wind at will they sailed for the main, and made the northern part of Norway, and sailed landward along Thrandheim to Nidaros; there they rode in the harbour, and unshipped their goods.

CHAPTER VII. Of Gunnlaug in the East and the West.

In those days Earl Eric, the son of Hakon, and his brother Svein, ruled in Norway. Earl Eric abode as then at Hladir, which was left to him by his father, and a mighty lord he was. Skuli, the son of Thorstein, was with the earl at that time, and was one of his court, and well esteemed.

Now they say that Gunnlaug and Audun Festargram, and seven of them together, went up to Hladir to the earl. Gunnlaug was so clad that he had on a grey kirtle and white long-hose; he had a boil on his foot by the instep, and from this oozed blood and matter as he strode on. In this guise he went before the earl with Audun and the rest of them, and greeted him well. The earl knew Audun, and asked him tidings from Iceland. Audun told him what there was toward. Then the earl asked Gunnlaug who he was, and Gunnlaug told him his name and kin. Then the earl said: "Skuli Thorstein's son, what manner of man is this in Iceland?"

"Lord," says he, "give him good welcome, for he is the son of the best man in Iceland, Illugi the Black of Gilsbank, and my foster-brother withal."

The earl asked, "What ails thy foot, Icelander?"

"A boil, lord," said he.

"And yet thou wentest not halt?"

Gunnlaug answers, "Why go halt while both legs are long alike?"

Then said one of the earl's men, called Thorir: "He swaggereth hugely, this Icelander! It would not be amiss to try him a little."

Gunnlaug looked at him and sang:—

*"A courtman there is
Full evil I wis,
A bad man and black,
Belief let him lack."*

Then would Thorir seize an axe. The earl spake: "Let it be," says he; "to such things men should pay no heed. But now, Icelander, how old a man art thou?"

Gunnlaug answers: "I am eighteen winters old as now," says he.

Then says Earl Eric, "My spell is that thou shalt not live eighteen winters more."

Gunnlaug said, somewhat under his breath: "Pray not against me, but for thyself rather."

The earl asked thereat, "What didst thou say, Icelander?"

Gunnlaug answers, "What I thought well befitting, that thou shouldst bid no prayers against me, but pray well for thyself rather."

"What prayers, then?" says the earl.

"That thou mightest not meet thy death after the manner of Earl Hakon, thy father."

The earl turned red as blood, and bade them take the rascal in haste; but Skuli stepped up to the earl, and said: "Do this for my words, lord, and give this man peace, so that he depart at his swiftest."

The earl answered, "At his swiftest let him be off then, if he will have peace, and never let him come again within my realm."

Then Skuli went out with Gunnlaug down to the bridges, where there was an England-bound ship ready to put out; therein Skuli got for Gunnlaug a berth, as

well as for Thorkel, his kinsman; but Gunnlaug gave his ship into Audun's ward, and so much of his goods as he did not take with him.

Now sail Gunnlaug and his fellows into the English main, and come at autumntide south to London Bridge, where they hauled ashore their ship.

Now at that time King Ethelred, the son of Edgar, ruled over England, and was a good lord; this winter he sat in London. But in those days there was the same tongue in England as in Norway and Denmark; but the tongues changed when William the Bastard won England, for thenceforward French went current there, for he was of French kin.

Gunnlaug went presently to the king, and greeted him well and worthily, The king asked him from what land he came, and Gunnlaug told him all as it was. "But," said he, "I have come to meet thee, lord, for that I have made a song on thee, and I would that it might please thee to hearken to that song." The king said it should be so, and Gunnlaug gave forth the song well and proudly; and this is the burden thereof:—

*"As God are all folk fearing
The free lord King of England,
Kin of all kings and all folk,
To Ethelred the head tow."*

The king thanked him for the song, and gave him as song-reward a scarlet cloak lined with the costliest of furs, and golden-broidered down to the hem; and made him his man; and Gunnlaug was with him all the winter, and was well accounted of.

One day, in the morning early, Gunnlaug met three men in a certain street, and Thororm was the name of their leader; he was big and strong, and right evil to deal with. He said, "Northman, lend me some money."

Gunnlaug answered, "That were ill counselled to lend one's money to unknown men."

He said, "I will pay it thee back on a named day."

"Then shall it be risked," says Gunnlaug; and he lent him the fee withal.

But some time afterwards Gunnlaug met the king, and told him of the money-lending. The king answered, "Now hast thou thriven little, for this is the greatest robber and reiver; deal with him in no wise, but I will give thee money as much as thine was."

Gunnlaug said, "Then do we, your men, do after a sorry sort, if, treading sackless folk under foot, we let such fellows as this deal us out our lot. Nay, that shall never be."

Soon after he met Thororm and claimed the fee of him. He said he was not going to pay it.

Then sang Gunnlaug:—
"Evil counselled art thou,

*Gold from us withholding;
The reddener of the edges,
Pricking on with tricking.
Wot ye what? they called me,
Worm-tongue, yet a youngling;
Nor for nought so hight I;
Now is time to show it!"*

"Now I will make an offer good in law," says Gunnlaug; "that thou either pay me my money, or else that thou go on holm with me in three nights' space."

Then laughed the viking, and said, "Before thee none have come to that, to call me to holm, despite of all the ruin that many a man has had to take at my hands. Well, I am ready to go."

Thereon they parted for that time.

Gunnlaug told the king what had befallen; and he said, "Now, indeed, have things taken a right hopeless turn; for this man's eyes can dull any weapon. But thou shalt follow my rede; here is a sword I will give thee—with that thou shalt fight, but before the battle show him another."

Gunnlaug thanked the king well therefor.

Now when they were ready for the holm, Thororm asked what sort of a sword it was that he had. Gunnlaug unsheathed it and showed him, but had a loop round the handle of the king's sword, and slipped it over his hand; the berserk looked on the sword, and said, "I fear not that sword."

But now he dealt a blow on Gunnlaug with his sword, and cut off from him nigh all his shield; Gunnlaug smote in turn with the king's gift; the berserk stood shieldless before him, thinking he had the same weapon he had shown him, but Gunnlaug smote him his deathblow then and there.

The king thanked him for this work, and he got much fame therefor, both in England and far and wide elsewhere.

In the spring, when ships sailed from land to land, Gunnlaug prayed King Ethelred for leave to sail somewhither; the king asks what he was about then. Gunnlaug said, "I would fulfil what I have given my word to do," and sang this stave withal:—

*"My ways must I be wending
Three kings' walls to see yet,
And earls twain, as I promised
Erewhile to land-sharers.
Neither will I wend me
Back, the worms'-bed lacking,
By war-lord's son, the wealth-free,
For work done gift well given."*

"So be it, then, skald," said the king, and withal he gave him a ring that weighed six ounces; "but," said he, "thou shalt give me thy word to come back next autumn, for I will not let thee go altogether, because of thy great prowess."

CHAPTER VIII. Of Gunnlaug in Ireland.

Thereafter Gunnlaug sailed from England with chapmen north to Dublin. In those days King Sigtrygg Silky-beard, son of King Olaf Kvaran and Queen Kormlada, ruled over Ireland; and he had then borne sway but a little while. Gunnlaug went before the king, and greeted him well and worthily. The king received him as was meet. Then Gunnlaug said, "I have made a song on thee, and I would fain have silence therefor."

The king answered, "No men have before now come forward with songs for me, and surely will I hearken to thine." Then Gunnlaug brought the song, whereof this is the burden,—

"Swaru's steed
Doth Sigtrygg feed."
And this is therein also:—
*"Praise-worth I can
Well measure in man,
And kings, one by one—
Lo here, Kvararis son!
Gruageth the king
Gift of gold ring?
I, singer, know
His wont to bestow.
Let the high king say,
Heard he or this day,
Song drapu-measure
Dearer a treasure?"*

The king thanked him for the song, and called his treasurer to him, and said, "How shall the song be rewarded?"

"What hast thou will to give, lord?" says he.

"How will it be rewarded if I give him two ships for it?" said the king.

Then said the treasurer, "This is too much, lord; other kings give in regard of songs good keepsakes, fair swords, or golden rings."

So the king gave him his own raiment of new scarlet, a gold-embroidered kirtle, and a cloak lined with choice furs, and a gold ring which weighed a mark. Gunnlaug thanked him well.

He dwelt a short time here, and then went thence to the Orkneys.

Then was lord in Orkney, Earl Sigurd, the son of Hlodver; he was friendly to Icelanders. Now Gunnlaug greeted the earl well, and said he had a song to bring him. The earl said he would listen thereto, since he was of such great kin in Iceland.

Then Gunnlaug brought the song; it was a shorter lay, and well done. The earl gave him for lay-reward a broad axe, all inlaid with silver, and bade him abide with him.

Gunnlaug thanked him both for his gift and his offer, but said he was bound east for Sweden; and thereafter he went on board ship with chapmen who sailed to Norway.

In the autumn they came east to King's Cliff, Thorkel, his kinsman, being with him all the time. From King's Cliff they got a guide up to West Gothland, and came upon a cheaping-stead, called Skarir: there ruled an earl called Sigurd, a man stricken in years. Gunnlaug went before him, and told him he had made a song on him; the earl gave a willing ear hereto, and Gunnlaug brought the song, which was a shorter lay.

The earl thanked him, and rewarded the song well, and bade him abide there that winter.

Earl Sigurd had a great Yule-feast in the winter, and on Yule-eve came thither men sent from Earl Eric of Norway, twelve of them together, and brought gifts to Earl Sigurd. The earl made them good cheer, and bade them sit by Gunnlaug through the Yule-tide; and there was great mirth at drinks.

Now the Gothlanders said that no earl was greater or of more fame than Earl Sigurd; but the Norwegians thought that Earl Eric was by far the foremost of the two. Hereon would they bandy words, till they both took Gunnlaug to be umpire in the matter.

Then he sang this stave:—
*"Tell ye, staves of spear-din,
How on sleek-side sea-horse
Oft this earl hath proven
Over-toppling billows;
But Eric, victory's ash-tree,
Oft hath seen in east-seas
More of high blue billows
Before the bows a-roaring."*

Both sides were content with his finding, but the Norwegians the best. But after Yule-tide those messengers left with gifts of goodly things, which Earl Sigurd sent to Earl Eric.

Now they told Earl Eric of Gunnlaug's finding: the earl thought that he had shown upright dealing and friendship to him herein, and let out some words, saying that Gunnlaug should have good peace throughout his land. What the earl had said came thereafter to the ears of Gunnlaug.

But now Earl Sigurd gave Gunnlaug a guide east to Tenthland, in Sweden, as he had asked.

CHAPTER IX. Of the Quarrel between Gunnlaug and Raven before the Swedish King.

In those days King Olaf the Swede, son of King Eric the Victorious, and Sigrid the High-counselled, daughter of Skogul Tosti, ruled over Sweden. He was a mighty king and renowned, and full fain of fame.

Gunnlaug came to Upsala towards the time of the Thing of the Swedes in spring-tide; and when he got to see the king, he greeted him. The king took his greeting well, and asked who he was. He said he was an Iceland-man.

Then the king called out: "Raven," says he, "what man is he in Iceland?"

Then one stood up from the lower bench, a big man and a stalwart, and stepped up before the king, and spake: "Lord," says he, "he is of good kin, and himself the most stalwart of men."

"Let him go, then, and sit beside thee," said the king.

Then Gunnlaug said, "I have a song to set forth before thee, king, and I would fain have peace while thou hearkenest thereto."

"Go ye first, and sit ye down," says the king, "for there is no leisure now to sit listening to songs."

So they did as he bade them.

Now Gunnlaug and Raven fell a-talking together, and each told each of his travels. Raven said that he had gone the summer before from Iceland to Norway, and had come east to Sweden in the forepart of winter. They soon got friendly together.

But one day, when the Thing was over, they were both before the king, Gunnlaug and Raven.

Then spake Gunnlaug, "Now, lord, I would that thou shouldst hear the song."

"That I may do now," said the king.

"My song too will I set forth now," says Raven.

"Thou mayst do so," said the king.

Then Gunnlaug said, "I will set forth mine first if thou wilt have it so, king."

"Nay," said Raven, "it behoveth me to be first, lord, for I myself came first to thee."

"Whereto came our fathers forth, so that my father was the little boat towed behind? Whereto, but nowhere?" says Gunnlaug. "And in likewise shall it be with us."

Raven answered, "Let us be courteous enough not to make this a matter of bandying of words. Let the king rule here."

The king said, "Let Gunnlaug set forth his song first, for he will not be at peace till he has his will."

Then Gunnlaug set forth the song which he had made to King Olaf, and when it was at an end the king spake. "Raven," says he, "how is the song done?"

"Right well," he answered; "it is a song full of big words and little beauty; a somewhat rugged song, as is Gunnlaug's own mood."

"Well, Raven, thy song," said the king.

Raven gave it forth, and when it was done the king said, "How is this song made, Gunnlaug?"

"Well it is, lord," he said; "this is a pretty song, as is Raven himself to behold, and delicate of countenance. But why didst thou make a short song on the king, Raven? Didst thou perchance deem him unworthy of a long one?"

Raven answered, "Let us not talk longer on this; matters will be taken up again, though it be later."

And thereat, they parted.

Soon after Raven became a man of King Olaf's, and asked him leave to go away. This the king granted him. And when Raven was ready to go, he spake to Gunnlaug, and said, "Now shall our friendship be ended, for that thou must needs shame me here before great men; but in time to come I shall cast on thee no less shame than thou hadst will to cast on me here."

Gunnlaug answers: "Thy threats grieve me nought. Nowhere are we likely to come where I shall be thought less worthy than thou."

King Olaf gave to Raven good gifts at parting, and thereafter.

CHAPTER X. How Raven came home to Iceland, and asked for Helga to Wife.

Now this spring Raven came from the east to Thrandheim, and fitted out his ship, and sailed in the summer to Iceland. He brought his ship to Leiruvag, below the Heath, and his friends and kinsmen were right fain of him. That winter he was at home with his father, but the summer after he met at the Althing his kinsman, Skapti the law-man.

Then said Raven to him, "Thine aid would I have to go a-wooing to Thorstein Egilson, to bid Helga his daughter."

Skapti answered, "But is she not already vowed to Gunnlaug Worm-tongue?"

Said Raven, "Is not the appointed time of waiting between them passed by? And far too wanton is he withal, that he should hold or heed it aught."

"Let us then do as thou wouldst," said Skapti.

Thereafter they went with many men to the booth of Thorstein Egilson, and he greeted them well.

Then Skapti spoke: "Raven, my kinsman, is minded to woo thy daughter Helga. Thou knowest well his blood, his wealth, and his good manners, his many mighty kinsmen and friends."

Thorstein said, "She is already the vowed maiden of Gunnlaug, and with him shall I hold all words spoken."

Skapti said, "Are not the three winters worn now that were named between you?"

"Yes," said Thorstein; "but the summer is not yet worn, and he may still come out this summer."

Then Skapti said, "But if he cometh not this summer, what hope may we have of the matter then?"

Thorstein answered, "We are like to come here next summer, and then may we see what may wisely be done, but it will not do to speak hereof longer as at this time."

Thereon they parted. And men rode home from the Althing. But this talk of Raven's wooing of Helga was nought hidden.

That summer Gunnlaug came not out.

The next summer, at the Althing, Skapti and his folk pushed the wooing eagerly, and said that Thorstein was free as to all matters with Gunnlaug.

Thorstein answered, "I have few daughters to see to, and fain am I that they should not be the cause of strife to any man. Now I will first see Illugi the Black." And so he did. .

And when they met, he said to Illugi, "Dost thou not think that I am free from all troth with thy son Gunnlaug?"

Illugi said, "Surely, if thou wiliest it. Little can I say herein, as I do not know clearly what Gunnlaug is about."

Then Thorstein went to Skapti, and a bargain was struck that the wedding should be at Burg, about winter-nights, if Gunnlaug did not come out that summer; but that Thorstein should be free from all troth with Raven if Gunnlaug should come and fetch his bride.

After this men ride home from the Thing, and Gunnlaug's coming was long drawn out. But Helga thought evilly of all these redes.

CHAPTER XI. Of how Gunnlaug must needs abide away from Iceland.

Now it is to be told of Gunnlaug that he went from Sweden the same summer that Raven went to Iceland, and good gifts he had from King Olaf at parting.

King Ethelred welcomed Gunnlaug worthily, and that winter he was with the king, and was held in great honour.

In those days Knut the Great, son of Svein, ruled Denmark, and had new-taken his father's heritage, and he vowed ever to wage war on England, for that his father had won a great realm there before he died west in that same land.

And at that time there was a great army of Danish men west there, whose chief was Heming, the son of Earl Strut-Harald, and brother to Earl Sigvaldi, and he held for King Knut that land that Svein had won.

Now in the spring Gunnlaug asked the king for leave to go away, but he said, "It ill beseems that thou, my man, shouldst go away now, when all bodes such mighty war in the land."

Gunnlaug said, "Thou shalt rule, lord; but give me leave next summer to depart, if the Danes come not."

The king answered, "Then we shall see."

Now this summer went by, and the next winter, but no Danes came; and after midsummer Gunnlaug got his leave to depart from the king, and went thence east to Norway, and found Earl Eric in Thrandheim, at Hladir, and the earl greeted him well, and bade him abide with him. Gunnlaug thanked him for his offer, but said he would first go out to Iceland, to look to his promised maiden.

The earl said, "Now all ships bound for Iceland have sailed."

Then said one of the court, "Here lay, yesterday, Hallfred Troublous-Skald, out tinder Agdaness."

The earl answered, "That may well be; he sailed hence five nights ago."

Then Earl Eric had Gunnlaug rowed put to Hallfred, who greeted him with joy; and forthwith a fair wind bore them from land, and they were right merry.

This was late in the summer: but now Hallfred said to Gunnlaug, "Hast thou heard of how Raven, the son of Onund, is wooing Helga the Fair?"

Gunnlaug said he had heard thereof but dimly. Hallfred tells him all he knew of it, and therewith, too, that it was the talk of many men that Raven was in nowise less brave a man than Gunnlaug. Then Gunnlaug sang this stave:—

*"Light the weather wafteth;
But if this east wind drifted
Week-long, wild upon us
Little were I recking;
More this word I mind of
Me with Raven mated,
Than gain for me the gold-foe
Of days to make me grey-haired."*

Then Hallfred said, "Well, fellow, may'st thou fare better in thy strife with Raven than I did in mine. I brought my ship some winters ago into Leiruvag, and had to pay a half-mark in silver to a house-carle of Raven's, but I held it back from him. So Raven rode at us with sixty men, and cut the moorings of the ship, and she was driven up on the shallows, and we were bound for a wreck. Then I had to give selfdoom to Raven, and a whole mark I had to pay; and that is the tale of my dealings with him."

Then they two talked together alone of Helga the Fair, and Gunnlaug praised her much for her goodliness; and Gunnlaug sang:—

*"He who brand of battle
Beareth over-wary,
Never love shall let him
Hold the linen-folded;
For we when we were younger
In many a way were playing
On the outward nesses
From golden land outstanding."
"Well sung!" said Hallfred.*

CHAPTER XII. Of Gunnlaug's landing, and how he found Helga wedded to Raven.

They made land north by Fox-Plain, in Hraunhaven, half a month before winter, and there unshipped their goods. Now there was a man called Thord, a bonder's son of the Plain, there. He fell to wrestling with the chapmen, and they mostly got worsted at his hands.

Then a wrestling was settled between him and Gunnlaug. The night before Thord made vows to Thor for the victory; but the next day, when they met, they fell to wrestling. Then Gunnlaug tripped both feet from under Thord, and gave him a great fall; but the foot that Gunnlaug stood on was put out of joint, and Gunnlaug fell together with Thord.

Then said Thord, "Maybe that other things go no better for thee."
"What then?" says Gunnlaug.

"Thy dealings with Raven, if he wed Helga the Fair at winter-nights. I was anigh at the Thing when that was settled last summer."

Gunnlaug answered naught thereto.

Now the foot was swathed, and put into joint again, and it swelled mightily; but he and Hallfred ride twelve in company till they come to Gilsbank, in Burg-firth, the

very Saturday night when folk sat at the wedding at Burg. Illugi was fain of his son Gunnlaug and his fellows; but Gunnlaug said he would ride then and there down to Burg. Illugi said it was not wise to do so, and to all but Gunnlaug that seemed good. But Gunnlaug was then unfit to walk, because of his foot, though he would not let that be seen. Therefore there was no faring to Burg.

On the morrow Hallfred rode to Hreda-water, in North-water dale, where Galti, his brother and a brisk man, managed their matters.

CHAPTER XIII. Of the Winter-Wedding at Skaney, and how Gunnlaug gave the Kings Cloak to Helga.

Tells the tale of Raven, that he sat at his weddings-feast at Burg, and it was the talk of most men that the bride was but drooping; for true is the saw that saith, "Long we remember what youth gained us," and even so it was with her now.

But this new thing befell at the feast, that Hungerd, the daughter of Thorod and Jofrid, was wooed by a man named Sverting, the son of Hafr-Biorn, the son of Mold-Gnup, and the wedding was to come off that winter after Yule, at Skaney, where dwelt Thorkel, a kinsman of Hungerd, and son of Torn Valbrandsson; and the mother of Torn was Thorodda, the sister of Odd of the Tongue.

Now Raven went home to Mossfell with Helga his wife. When they had been there a little while, one morning early before they rose up, Helga was awake, but Raven slept, and fared ill in his sleep. And when he woke Helga asked him what he had dreamt. Then Raven sang:—

*"In thine arms, so dreamed I,
Hewn was I, gold island!
Bride, in blood I bled there,
Bed of thine was reddened.
Never more then mightst thou,
Mead-bowl'spouser speedy,
Bind my gashes bloody—
Lind-leek-bough thou likst it."*

Helga spake: "Never shall I weep therefor," quoth she; "ye have evilly beguiled me, and Gunnlaug has surely come out." And therewith she wept much.

But, a little after, Gunnlaug's coming was bruited about, and Helga became so hard with Raven, that he could not keep her at home at Mossfell; so that back they had to go to Burg, and Raven got small share of her company.

Now men get ready for the winter-wedding. Thorkel of Skaney bade Illugi the Black and his sons. But when master Illugi got ready, Gunnlaug sat in the hall, and stirred not to go. Illugi went up to him and said, "Why dost thou not get ready, kinsman?"

Gunnlaug answered, "I have no mind to go."

Says Illugi, "Nay, but certes thou shalt go, kinsman," says he; "and cast thou not grief over thee by yearning for one woman. Make as if thou knewest nought of it, for women thou wilt never lack."

Now Gunnlaug did as his father bade him; so they came to the wedding, and Illugi and his sons were set down in the high seat; but Thorstein Egilson, and Raven his son-in-law, and the bridegroom's following, were set in the other high seat, over against Illugi.

The women sat on the dais, and Helga the Fair sat next to the bride. Oft she turned her eyes on Gunnlaug, thereby proving the saw, "Eyes will bewray if maid love man."

Gunnlaug was well arrayed, and had on him that goodly raiment that King Sigtrygg had given him; and now he was thought far above all other men, because of many things, both strength, and goodness, and growth.

There was little mirth among folk at this wedding. But on the day when all men were making ready to go away the women stood up and got ready to go home. Then went Gunnlaug to talk to Helga, and long they talked together: but Gunnlaug sang:—

*"Light-heart lived the Worm-tongue
All day long no longer
In mountain-home, since Helga
Had name of wife of Raven;
Nought foresaw thy father,
Hardener white of fight-thaw,
What my words should come to.
—The maid to gold was wedded."
And again he sang:—
"Worst reward I owe them,
Father thine, O wine-may,
And mother, that they made thee
So fair beneath thy maid-gear;
For thou, sweet field of sea-flame,
All joy hast slain within me.—
Lo, here, take it, loveliest
E'er made of lord and lady!"*

And therewith Gunnlaug gave Helga the cloak, Ethelred's-gift, which was the fairest of things, and she thanked him well for the gift.

Then Gunnlaug went out, and by that time riding-horses had been brought home and saddled, and among them were many very good ones; and they were all tied up in the road. Gunnlaug leaps on to a horse, and rides a hand-gallop along the homefield up to a place where Raven happened to stand just before him; and Raven had to draw out of his way. Then Gunnlaug said,—

”No need to slink aback, Raven, for I threaten thee nought as at this time; but thou knowest forsooth, what thou hast earned.”.

Raven answered and sang,—
”*God of wound-flamed glitter,
Glorier of fight-goddess,
Must we fall a-fighting
For fairest kirtle-bearer?
Death-staffs many such-like
Fair as she is are there
In south-lands o’er the sea floods.
Sooth saith he who knoweth.*”

”Maybe there are many such, but they do not seem so to me,” said Gunnlaug.

Therewith Illugi and Thorstein ran up to them, and would not have them fight.

Then Gunnlaug sang,—
”*The fair-hued golden goddess
For gold to Raven sold they,
(Raven my match as men say)
While the mighty isle-king,
Ethelred, in England
From eastward way delayed me,
Wherefore to gold-waster
Waneth tongue’s speech-hunger.*”

Hereafter both rode home, and all was quiet and tidingless that winter through; but Raven had nought of Helga’s fellowship after her meeting with Gunnlaug.

CHAPTER XIV. Of the Holmgang at the Althing.

Now in summer men ride a very many to the Althing: Illugi the Black and his sons with him, Gunnlaug and Hermund; Thorstein Egilson and Kolsvein his son; Onund, of Mossfell, and his sons all, and Sverting, Hafr-Biorn’s son. Skapti yet held the spokesmanship-at-law.

One day at the Thing, as men went thronging to the Hill of Laws, and when the matters of the law were done there, then Gunnlaug craved silence, and said:—

"Is Raven, the son of Onund, here?"

He said he was.

Then spake Gunnlaug, "Thou well knowest that thou hast got to wife my avowed bride, and thus hast thou made thyself my foe. Now for this I bid thee to holm here at the Thing, in the holm of the Axe-water, when three nights are gone by."

Raven answers, "This is well bidden, as was to be looked for of thee, and for this I am ready, whenever thou wilt it."

Now the kin of each deemed this a very ill thing. But, at that time it was lawful for him who thought himself wronged by another to call him to fight on the holm.

So when three nights had gone by they got ready for the holmgang, and Illugi the Black followed his son thither with a great following. But Skapti, the lawman, followed Raven, and his father and other kinsmen of his.

Now before Gunnlaug went upon the holm he sang,—

*"Out to isle ofeel-field
Dight am I to hie me:
Give, O God, thy singer
With glaive to end the striving.
Here shall I the head cleave
Of Helga's love's devourer,
At last my bright sword bringeth
Sundering of head and body."*

Then Raven answered and sang,—

*"Thou, singer, knowest not surely
Which of us twain shall gain it;
With edge for leg-swathe eager,
Here are the wound-scythes bare now.
In whatso-wise we wound us,
The tidings from the Thing here,
And fame of thanes' fair doings,
The fair young maid shall hear it."*

Hermund held shield for his brother, Gunnlaug; but Sverting, Hafr-Biorn's son, was Raven's shield-bearer. Whoso should be wounded was to ransom himself from the holm with three marks of silver.

Now, Raven's part it was to deal the first blow, as he was the challenged man. He hewed at the upper part of Gunnlaug's shield, and the sword brake asunder just beneath the hilt, with so great might he smote; but the point of the sword flew up from the shield and struck Gunnlaug's cheek, whereby he got just grazed; with that their fathers ran in between them, and many other men.

"Now," said Gunnlaug, "I call Raven overcome, as he is weaponless."

"But I say that thou art vanquished, since thou art wounded," said Raven.

Now, Gunnlaug was nigh mad, and very wrathful, and said it was not tried out yet.

Illugi, his father, said they should try no more for that time.

Gunnlaug said, "Beyond all things I desire that I might in such wise meet Raven again, that thou, father, wert not anigh to part us."

And thereat they parted for that time, and all men went back to their booths.

But on the second day after this it was made law in the law-court that, henceforth, all holmgangs should be forbidden; and this was done by the counsel of all the wisest men that were at the Thing; and there, indeed, were all the men of most counsel in all the land. And this was the last holmgang fought in Iceland, this, wherein Gunnlaug and Raven fought.

But this Thing was the third most thronged Thing that has been held in Iceland; the first was after Njal's burning, the second after the Heath-slaughters.

Now, one morning, as the brothers Hermund and Gunnlaug went to Axe-water to wash, on the other side went many women towards the river, and in that company was Helga the Fair. Then said Hermund,—

"Dost thou see thy friend Helga there on the other side of the river?"

"Surely, I see her," says Gunnlaug, and withal he sang:—

*"Born was she for men's bickering:
Sore bale hath wrought the war-stemy
And I yearned ever madly
To hold that oak-tree golden.
To me then, me destroyer
Of swan-mead's flame, unneedful
This looking on the dark-eyed,
This golden land's beholding."*

Therewith they crossed the river, and Helga and Gunnlaug spake awhile together, and as the brothers crossed the river eastward back again, Helga stood and gazed long after Gunnlaug.

Then Gunnlaug looked back and sang:—

*"Moon of linen-lapped one,
Leek-sea-bearing goddess,
Hawk-keen out of heaven
Shone all bright upon me;
But that eyelid's moonbeam
Of gold-necklaced goddess
Her hath all undoing
Wrought, and me made nought of."*

CHAPTER XV. How Gunnlaug and Raven agreed to go East to Norway, to try the matter again.

Now after these things were gone by men rode home from the Thing, and Gunnlaug dwelt at home at Gilsbank.

On a morning when he awoke all men had risen up, but he alone still lay abed; he lay in a shut-bed behind the seats. Now into the hall came twelve men, all full armed, and who should be there but Raven, Onund's son; Gunnlaug sprang up forthwith, and got to his weapons.

But Raven spake, "Thou art in risk of no hurt this time," quoth he, "but my errand hither is what thou shalt now hear: Thou didst call me to a holmgang last summer at the Althing, and thou didst not deem matters to be fairly tried therein; now I will offer thee this, that we both fare away from Iceland, and go abroad next summer, and go on holm in Norway, for there our kinsmen are not like to stand in our way."

Gunnlaug answered, "Hail to thy words, stoutest of men! this thine offer I take gladly; and here, Raven, mayest thou have cheer as good as thou mayest desire."

"It is well offered," said Raven, "but this time we shall first have to ride away." Thereon they parted.

Now the kinsmen of both sore misliked them of this, but could in no wise undo it, because of the wrath of Gunnlaug and Raven; and, after all, that must betide that drew towards.

Now it is to be said of Raven that he fitted out his ship in Leiruvag; two men are named that went with him, sisters' sons of his father Onund, one hight Grim, the other Olaf, doughty men both. All the kinsmen of Raven thought it great scathe when he went away, but he said he had challenged Gunnlaug to the holmgang because he could have no joy soever of Helga; and he said, withal, that one must fall before the other.

So Raven put to sea, when he had wind at will, and brought his ship to Thrandheim, and was there that winter and heard nought of Gunnlaug that winter through; there lie abode him the summer following: and still another winter was he in Thrandheim, at a place called Lifangr.

Gunnlaug Worm-tongue took ship with Hallfred Troublous-Skald, in the north at The Plain; they were very late ready for sea.

They sailed into the main when they had a fair wind, and made Orkney a little before the winter. Earl Sigurd Lodverson was still lord over the isles, and Gunnlaug went to him and abode there that winter, and the earl held him of much account.

In the spring the earl would go on warfare, and Gunnlaug made ready to go with him; and that summer they harried wide about the South-isles and Scotland's firths, and had many fights, and Gunnlaug always showed himself the bravest and doughtiest of fellows, and the hardiest of men wherever they came.

Earl Sigurd went back home early in the summer, but Gunnlaug took ship with chapmen, sailing for Norway, and he and Earl Sigurd parted in great friendship.

Gunnlaug fared north to Thrandheim, to Hladir, to see Earl Eric, and dwelt there through the early winter; the earl welcomed him gladly, and made offer to Gunnlaug to stay with him, and Gunnlaug agreed thereto.

The earl had heard already how all had befallen between Gunnlaug and Raven, and he told Gunnlaug that he laid ban on their fighting within his realm; Gunnlaug said the earl should be free to have his will herein.

So Gunnlaug abode there the winter through, ever heavy of mood.

CHAPTER XVI. How the two Foes met and fought at Dingness.

But on a day in spring Gunnlaug was walking abroad, and his kinsman Thorkel with him; they walked away from the town, till on the meads. before them they saw a ring of men, and in that ring were two men with weapons fencing; but one was named Raven, the other Gunnlaug, while they who stood by said that Icelanders smote light, and were slow to remember their words.

Gunnlaug saw the great mocking hereunder, and much jeering was brought into the play; and withal he went away silent.

So a little while after he said to the earl that he had no mind to bear any longer the jeers and mocks of his courtiers about his dealings with Raven, and therewith he prayed the earl to give him a guide to Lifangr: now before this the earl had been told that Raven had left Lifangr and gone east to Sweden; therefore, he granted Gunnlaug leave to go, and gave him two guides for the journey.

Now Gunnlaug went from Hladir with six men to Lifangr; and, on the morning of the very day whereas Gunnlaug came in in the evening, Raven had left Lifangr with four men. Thence Gunnlaug went to Vera-dale, and came always in the evening to where Raven had been the night before.

So Gunnlaug went on till he came to the uppermost farm in the valley, called Sula, wherefrom had Raven fared in the morning; there he stayed not his journey, but kept on his way through the night.

Then in the morning at sun-rise they saw one another. Raven had got to a place where were two waters, and between them flat meads, and they are called Gleipni's meads: but into one water stretched a little ness called Dingness. There on the ness Raven and his fellows, five together, took their stand. With Raven were his kinsmen, Grim and Olaf.

Now when they met, Gunnlaug said, "It is well that we have found one another."

Raven said that he had nought to quarrel with therein;

"But now," says he, "thou mayest choose as thou wilt, either that we fight alone together, or that we fight all of us man to man."

Gunnlaug said that either way seemed good to him.

Then spake Raven's kinsmen, Grim and Olaf, and said that they would little like to stand by and look on the fight, and in like wise spake Thorkel the Black, the kinsman of Gunnlaug.

Then said Gunnlaug to the earl's guides, "Ye shall sit by and aid neither side, and be here to tell of our meeting;" and so they did.

So they set on, and fought dauntlessly, all of them. Grim and Olaf went both against Gunnlaug alone, and so closed their dealings with him that Gunnlaug slew them both and got no wound. This proves Thord Kolbeinson in a song that he made on Gunnlaug the Wormtongue:—

*"Grim and Olaf great-hearts
In Gondul's din, with thin sword
First did Gunnlaug fell there
Ere at Raven fared he;
Bold, with blood be-drifted
Bane of three the thane was;
War-lord of the wave-horse
Wrought for men folks' slaughter."*

Meanwhile Raven and Thorkel the Black, Gunnlaug's kinsman, fought until Thorkel fell before Raven and lost his life; and so at last all their fellowship fell. Then they two alone fought together with fierce onsets and mighty strokes, which they dealt each the other, falling on furiously without stop or stay.

Gunnlaug had the sword Ethelred's-gift, and that was the best of weapons. At last Gunnlaug dealt a mighty blow at Raven, and cut his leg from under him; but none the more did Raven fall, but swung round up to a tree-stem, whereat he steadied the stump.

Then said Gunnlaug, "Now thou art no more meet for battle, nor will I fight with thee any longer, a maimed man."

Raven answered: "So it is," said he, "that my lot is now all the worser lot, but it were well with me yet, might I but drink somewhat."

Gunnlaug said, "Bewray me not if I bring thee water in my helm."

"I will not bewray thee," said Raven. Then went Gunnlaug to a brook and fetched water in his helm, and brought it to Raven; but Raven stretched forth his left hand to take it, but with his right hand drove his sword into Gunnlaug's head, and that was a mighty great wound.

Then Gunnlaug said, "Evilly hast thou beguiled me, and done traitorously wherein I trusted thee."

Raven answers, "Thou sayest sooth, but this brought me to it, that I begrudged thee to lie in the bosom of Helga the Fair."

Thereat they fought on, recking of nought; but the end of it was that Gunnlaug overcame Raven, and there Raven lost his life..

Then the earl's guides came forward and bound the head-wound of Gunnlaug, and in meanwhile, he sat and sang:—

*"O thou sword-storm stirrer,
Raven, stem of battle
Famous, fared against me
Fiercely in the spear din.
Many a flight of metal
Was borne on me this morning,
By the spear-walls' builder,
Ring-bearer, on hard Dingness."*

After that they buried the dead, and got Gunnlaug on to his horse thereafter, and brought him right down to Lifangr. There he lay three nights, and got all his rights of a priest, and died thereafter, and was buried at the church there.

All men thought it great scathe of both of these men, Gunnlaug and Raven, amid such deeds as they died.

CHAPTER XVII. The News of the Fight brought to Iceland.

Now this summer, before these tidings were brought out hither to Iceland, Illugi the Black, being at home at Gilsbank, dreamed a dream: he thought that Gunnlaug came to him in his sleep, all bloody, and he sang in the dream this stave before him; and Illugi remembered the song when he woke, and sang it before others:—

*"Knew I of the hewing
Of Raven's hilt-finned steel-fish
Byrny-shearing—sword-edge
Sharp clave leg of Raven.—
Of warm wounds drank the eagle,
When the war-rod slender,
Cleaver of the corpses,
Clave the head of Gunnlaug."*

This portent befel south at Mossfell, the self-same night, that Onund dreamed how Raven came to him, covered all over with blood, and sang:—

*"Red is the sword, but I now
Am undone by Sword-Odin.
'Gainst shields beyond the sea-flood
The ruin of shields was wielded.
Methinks the blood-fowl blood-stained
In blood o'er men's heads stood there,
The wound-erne yet wound-eager
Trod over wounded bodies?"*

Now the second summer after this, Illugi the Black spoke at the Althing from the Hill of Laws, and said:—

"Wherewith wilt thou make atonement to me for my son, whom Raven, thy son, beguiled in his troth?"

Onund answers, "Be it far from me to atone for him, so sorely as their meeting hath wounded me. Yet will I not ask atonement of thee for my son."

"Then shall my wrath come home to some of thy kin," says Illugi. And withal after the Thing was Illugi at most times very sad.

Tells the tale how this autumn Illugi rode from Gilsbank with thirty men, and came to Mossfell early in the morning. Then Onund got into the church with his sons, and took sanctuary; but Illugi caught two of his kin, one called Biorn and the other Thorgrim, and had Biorn slain, but the feet smitten from Thorgrim. And thereafter Illugi rode home, and there was no righting of this for Onund.

Hermund, Illugi's son, had little joy after the death of Gunnlaug his brother, and deemed he was none the more avenged even though this had been wrought.

Now there was a man called Raven, brother's son to Onund of Mossfell; he was a great sea-farer, and had a ship that lay up in Ramfirth: and in the spring Hermund Illugison rode from home alone north over Holt-beacon Heath, even to Ramfirth, and out as far as Board-ere to the ship of the chapmen. The chapmen were then nearly ready for sea; Raven, the ship-master, was on shore, and many men with him; Hermund rode up to him, and thrust him through with his spear, and rode away forthwith: but all Raven's men were bewildered at seeing Hermund.

No atonement came for this slaying, and therewith ended the dealings of Illugi the Black and Onund of Mossfell.

CHAPTER XVIII. The Death of Helga the Fair.

AS time went on, Thorstein Egilson married his daughter Helga to a man called Thorkel, son of Hallkel, who lived west in Hraundale. Helga went to his house with

him, but loved him little, for she cannot cease to think of Gunnlaug, though he be dead. Yet was Thorkel a doughty man, and wealthy of goods, and a good skald.

They had children together not a few, one of them was called Thorarin, another Thorstein, and yet more they had.

But Helga's chief joy was to pluck at the threads of that cloak, Gunnlaug's gift, and she would be ever gazing at it.

But on a time there came a great sickness to the house of Thorkel and Helga, and many were bed-ridden for a long time. Helga also fell sick, and yet she could not keep abed.

So one Saturday evening Helga sat in the fire-hall, and leaned her head upon her husband's knees, and had the cloak Gunnlaug's gift sent for; and when the cloak came to her she sat up and plucked at it, and gazed thereon awhile, and then sank back upon her husband's bosom, and was dead. Then Thorkel sang this:—

*"Dead in mine arms she droopeth,
My dear one, gold-rings bearer,
For God hath changed the life-days
Of this Lady of the linen.
Weary pain hath pined her,
But unto me, the seeker
Of hoard of fishes highway,
Abiding here is wearier."*

Helga was buried in the church there, but Thorkel dwelt yet at Hraundale: but a great matter seemed the death of Helga to all, as was to be looked for.

AND HERE ENDETH THE STORY

ERIC THE RED

By

Anonymous

Translated by Jennie Hall

It was a spring day many years after Ingolf died. All the freemen in the west of Iceland had come to a meeting. Here they made laws and punished men for having done wrong. The meeting was over now. Men were walking about the plain and talking. Everybody seemed much excited. Voices were loud, arms were swinging.

"It was an unjust decision," some one cried. "Eric killed the men in fair fight. The judges outlawed him because they were afraid. His foe Thorgest has many rich and powerful men to back him."

"No, no!" said another. "Eric is a bloody man. I am glad he is out of Iceland."

Just then a big man with bushy red hair and beard stalked through the crowd. He looked straight ahead and scowled.

"There he goes," people said, and turned to look after him.

"His hands are as red as his beard," some said, and frowned.

But others looked at him and smiled, saying:

"He walks like Thor the Fearless."

"His story would make a fine song," one said. "As strong and as brave and as red as Thor! Always in a quarrel. A man of many places—Norway, the north of Iceland, the west of Iceland, those little islands off the shore of Iceland. Outlawed from all of them on account of his quarrels. Where will he go now, I wonder?"

This Eric strode down to the shore with his men following.

"He is in a black temper," they said. "We should best not talk to him."

So they made ready the boat in silence. Eric got into the pilot's seat and they sailed off. Soon they pulled the ship up on their own shore. Eric strolled into his house and called for supper. When the drinking-horns had been filled and emptied, Eric pulled himself up and smiled and shouted out so that the great room was full of his big voice:

"There is no friend like mead. It always cheers a man's heart."

Then laughter and talking began in the hall because Eric's good temper had come back. After a while Eric said:

"Well, I must off somewhere. I have been driven about from place to place, like a seabird in a storm. And there is always a storm about me. It is my sword's fault. She is ever itching to break her peace-bands and be out and at the play. She has shut Norway to me and now Iceland. Where will you go next, old comrade?" and he pulled out his sword and looked at it and smiled as the fire flashed on it.

"There are some of us who will follow you wherever you go, Eric," called a man from across the fire.

"Is it so?" Eric cried, leaping up. "Oh! then we shall have some merry times yet. Who will go with me?"

More than half the men in the hall jumped to their feet and waved their drinking-horns and shouted:

"I! I!"

Eric sat down in his chair and laughed.

"O you bloody birds of battle!" he cried. "Ever hungry for new frolic! Our swords are sisters in blood, and we are brothers in adventure. Do you know what is in my heart to do?"

He jumped to his feet, and his face glowed. Then he laughed as he looked at his men.

"I see the answer flashing from your eyes," he said, "that you will do it even if it is to go down to Niflheim and drag up Hela, the pale queen of the stiff dead."

His men pounded on the tables and shouted:

"Yes! Yes! Anywhere behind Eric!"

"But it is not to Niflheim," Eric laughed. "Did you ever hear that story that Gunnbiorn told? He was sailing for Iceland, but the fog came down, and then the wind caught him and blew him far off. While he drifted about he saw a strange land that rose up white and shining out of a blue sea. Huge ships of ice sailed out from it and met him. I mean to sail to that land."

A great shout went up that shook the rafters. Then the men sat and talked over plans. While they sat, a stranger came into the hall.

"I have no time to drink," he said. "I have a message from your friend Eyjolf. He says that Thorgest with all his men means to come here and catch you to-night. Eyjolf bids you come to him, and he will hide you until you are ready to start; for he loves you."

"Hunted like a wolf from corner to corner of the world!" Eric cried angrily. "Will they not even let me finish one feast?"

Then he laughed.

"But if I take my sport like a wolf, I must be hunted like one. So we shall sleep to-night in the woods about Eyjolf's house, comrades, instead of in these good beds. Well, we have done it before."

"And it is no bad place," cried some of the men.

"I always liked the stars better than a smoky house fire," said one.

"Can no bad fortune spoil your good nature?" laughed Eric. "But now we are off. Let every man carry what he can."

So they quickly loaded themselves with clothes and gold and swords and spears and kettles of food. Eric led his wife Thorhild and his two young sons, Thorstein and Leif. All together they got into the boat and went to Eyjolf's farm. For a week or more they

stayed in his woods, sometimes in a secret cave of his when they knew that Thorgest was about. And sometimes Eyjolf sent and said:

"Thorgest is off. Come to my house for a feast."

All this time they were making ready for the voyage, repairing the ship and filling it with stores. Word of what Eric meant to do got out, and men laughed and said:

"Is that not like Eric? What will he not do?"

Some men liked the sound of it, and they came to Eric and said:

"We will go with you to this strange land."

So all were ready and they pushed off with Eric's family aboard and those friends who had joined him. They took horses and cattle with them, and all kinds of tools and food.

"I do not well know where this land is," Eric said. "Gunnbiorn said only that he sailed east when he came home to Iceland. So I will steer straight west. We shall surely find something. I do not know, either, how long we must go."

So they sailed that strange ocean, never dreaming what might be ahead of them. They found no islands to rest on. They met heavy fogs.

One day as Eric sat in the pilot's seat, he said:

"I think that I see one of Gunnbiorn's ships of ice. Shall we sail up to her and see what kind of a craft she is?"

"Yes," shouted his men.

So they went on toward it.

"It sends out a cold breath," said one of the men.

They all wrapped their cloaks about them.

"It is a bigger boat than I ever saw before," said Eric. "The white mast stands as high as a hill."

"It must be giants that sail in it, frost giants," said another of the men.

But as they came nearer, Eric all at once laughed loudly and called out:

"By Thor, that Gunnbiorn was a foolish fellow. Why, look! It is only a piece of floating ice such as we sometimes see from Iceland. It is no ship, and there is no one on it."

His men laughed and one called to another and said:

"And you thought of frost giants!"

Then they sailed on for days and days. They met many of these icebergs. On one of them was a white bear.

"Yonder is a strange pilot," Eric laughed.

"I have seen bears come floating so to the north shore of Iceland," an old man said. "Perhaps they come from the land that we are going to find."

One day Eric said:

"I see afar off an iceberg larger than any one yet. Perhaps that is our white land."

But even as he said it he felt his boat swing under his hand as he held the tiller. He bore hard on the rudder, but he could not turn the ship.

"What is this?" he cried. "A strong river is running here. It is carrying our ship away from this land. I cannot make head against it. Out with the oars!"

So with oars and sail and rudder they fought against the current, but it took the boat along like a chip, and after a while they put up their oars and drifted.

"Luck has taken us into its own hands," Eric laughed. "But this is as good a way as another."

Sometimes they were near enough to see the land, then they were carried out into the sea and thought that they should never see any land again.

"Perhaps this river will carry us to a whirlpool and suck us under," the men said.

But at last Eric felt the current less strong under his hand.

"To the oars again!" he called.

So they fought with the current and sailed out of it and went on toward land. But when they reached the shore they found no place to go in. Steep black walls shot up from the sea. Nothing grew on them. When the men looked above the cliffs they saw a long line of white cutting the sky.

"It is a land of ice," they said.

They sailed on south, all the time looking for a place to go ashore.

"I am sick of this endless sea," Thorhild complained, "but this land is worse."

After a while they began to see small bays cut into the shore with little flat patches of green at their sides. They landed in these places and stretched and warmed themselves and ate.

"But these spots are only big enough for graves," the men said. "We can not live here."

So they went on again. All the time the weather was growing colder. Eric's people kept themselves wrapped in their cloaks and put scarfs around their heads.

"And it is still summer!" Thorhild said. "What will it be in winter?"

"We must find a place to build a house now before the winter comes on," said Eric. "We must not freeze here."

So they chose a little spot with hills about it to keep off the wind. They made a house out of stones; for there were many in that place. They lived there that winter. The sea for a long way out from shore froze so that it looked like white land. The men went out upon it to hunt white bear and seal. They ate the meat and wore the skins to keep them warm. The hardest thing was to get fuel for the fire. No trees grew there. The men found a little driftwood along the shore, but it was not enough. So they burned the bones and the fat of the animals they killed.

"It is a sickening smell," Thorhild said. "I have not been out of this mean house for weeks. I am tired of the darkness and the smoke and the cattle. And all the time I hear great noises, as though some giant were breaking this land into pieces."

"Ah, cheer up, good wife!" Eric laughed. "I smell better luck ahead."

Once Eric and his men climbed the cliffs and went back into the middle of the land. When they came home they had this to tell:

"It is a country of ice, shining white. Nothing grows on it but a few mosses. Far off it looks flat, but when you walk upon it, there are great holes and cracks. We could see nothing beyond. There seems to be only a fringe of land around the edge of an island of ice."

The winter nights were very long. Sometimes the sun showed for an hour, sometimes for only a few minutes, sometimes it did not show at all for a week. The men hunted by the bright shining of the moon or by the northern lights.

As it grew warmer the ice in the sea began to crack and move and melt and float away. Eric waited only until there was a clear passage in the water. Then he launched his boat, and they sailed southward again. At last they found a place that Eric liked.

"Here I will build my house," he said.

So they did and lived there that summer and pastured their cattle and cut hay for the winter and fished and hunted.

The next spring Eric said:

"The land stretches far north. I am hungry to know what is there."

Then they all got into the boat again and sailed north.

"We can leave no one here," Eric had said. "We cannot tell what might come between us. Perhaps giants or dragons or strange men might come out of this inland ice and kill our people. We must stay together."

Farther north they found only the same bare, frozen country. So after a while they sailed back to their home and lived there.

One spring after they had been in that land for four years, Eric said:

"My eyes are hungry for the sight of men and green fields again. My stomach is sick of seal and whale and bear. My throat is dry for mead. This is a bare and cold and hungry land. I will visit my friends in Iceland."

"And our swords are rusty with long resting," said his men. "Perhaps we can find play for them in Iceland."

"Now I have a plan," Eric suddenly said. "Would it not be pleasant to see other feast halls as we sail along the coast?"

"Oh! it would be a beautiful sight," his men said.

"Well," said Eric, "I am going to try to bring back some neighbors from Iceland. Now we must have a name for our land. How does Greenland sound?"

His men laughed and said:

"It is a very white Greenland, but men will like the sound of it. It is better than Iceland."

So Eric and all his people sailed back and spent the winter with his friends.

"Ah! Eric, it is good to hear your laugh again," they said.

Eric was at many feasts and saw many men, and he talked much of his Greenland.

"The sea is full of whale and seals and great fish," he said. "The land has bear and reindeer. There are no men there. Come back with me and choose your land."

Many men said that they would do it. Some men went because they thought it would be a great frolic to go to a new country. Some went because they were poor in Iceland and thought:

"I can be no worse off in Greenland, and perhaps I shall grow rich there."

And some went because they loved Eric and wanted to be his neighbors.

So the next summer thirty-five ships full of men and women and goods followed Eric for Greenland. But they met heavy storms, and some ships were wrecked, and the men drowned. Other men grew heartsick at the terrible storm and the long voyage and no sight of land, and they turned back to Iceland. So of those thirty-five ships only fifteen got to Greenland.

"Only the bravest and the luckiest men come here," Eric said. "We shall have good neighbors."

Soon other houses were built along the fiords.

"It is pleasant to sail along the coast now," said Eric. "I see smoke rising from houses and ships standing on the shore and friendly hands waving."

THE SEA FIGHT

By

Anonymous

Translated by Jennie Hall

Many men felt as Solfi did. So when King Audbiorn and King Arnvid sent out their war arrows, a great host gathered. All men came by sea. Two hundred ships lay at anchor in the fiord, looking like strange swimming animals because of their high carved prows and bright paint. There were red and gold dragons with long necks and curved tails. Sea-horses reared out of the water. Green and gold snakes coiled up. Sea-hawks sat with spread wings ready to fly. And among all these curved necks stood up the tall, straight masts with the long yardarms swinging across them holding the looped-up sails.

When the starting horn blew, and their sails were let down, it was like the spreading of hundreds of curious flags. Some were striped black and yellow or blue and gold. Some were white with a black raven or a brown bear embroidered on them, or blue with a white sea-hawk, or black with a gold sun. Some were edged with fur. As the wind filled the gaudy sails, and the ships moved off, the men waved their hands to the women on shore and sang:

*"To the sea! To the sea!
The wind in our sail,
The sea in our face,
And the smell of the fight.
After ship meets ship,
In the quarrel of swords
King Harald shall lie
In the caves under sea
And Norsemen shall laugh."*

In the prow stood men leaning forward and sniffing the salt air with joy. Some were talking of King Harald.

"Yesterday he had a hard fight," they said. "To-day he will be lying still, dressing his wounds and mending his ships. We shall take him by surprise."

They sailed near the coast. Solfi in his "Sea-hawk" was ahead leading the way. Suddenly men saw his sail veer and his oars flash out. He had quickly turned his boat and was rowing back. He came close to King Arnvid and called:

"He is there, ahead. His boats are ready in line of battle. The fox has not been asleep."

King Arnvid blew his horn. Slowly his boats came into line with his "Sea-stag" in the middle. Again he blew his horn. Cables were thrown across from one prow to the next, and all the ships were tied together so that their sides touched. Then the men set their sails again and they went past a tongue of land into a broad fiord. There lay the long line of King Harald's ships with their fierce heads grinning and mocking at the newcomers. Back of those prows was what looked like a long wall with spots of green and red and blue and yellow and shining gold. It was the locked shields of the men in the bows, and over every shield looked fierce blue eyes. Higher up and farther back was another wall of shields; for on the half deck in the stern of every ship stood the captain with his shield-guard of a dozen men.

Arnvid's people had furled their sails and were taking down the masts, but the ships were still drifting on with the wind. The horn blew, and quickly every man sprang to his place in bow and stern. All were leaning forward with clenched teeth and widespread nostrils. They were clutching their naked swords in their hands. Their flashing eyes looked over their shields.

Soon King Arnvid's ships crashed into Harald's line, and immediately the men in the bows began to swing their swords at one another. The soldiers of the shield-guard on the high decks began to throw darts and stones and to shoot arrows into the ships opposite them.

So in every ship showers of stones and arrows were falling, and many men died under them or got broken arms or legs. Spears were hurled from deck to deck and many of them bit deep into men's bodies. In every bow men slashed with their swords at the foes in the opposite ship. Some jumped upon the gunwale to get nearer or hung from the prow-head. Some even leaped into the enemy's boat.

"Then he leaped into King Arnvid's boat"

King Harald's ship lay prow to prow with King Arnvid's. The battle had been going on for an hour. King Harald was still in the stern on the deck. There was a dent in his helmet where a great stone had struck. There was a gash in his shoulder where a spear had cut. But he was still fighting and laughed as he worked.

"Wolf meets wolf to-day," he said. "But things are going badly in the prow," he cried. "Ivar fallen, Thorstein wounded, a dozen men lying in the bottom of the boat!"

He leaped down from the deck and ran along the gunwale, shouting as he went:

"Harald and victory!"

So he came to the bow and stood swinging his sword as fast as he breathed. Every time it hit a man of Arnvid's men. Harald's own warriors cheered, seeing him.

"Harald and victory!" they shouted, and went to work again with good heart.

Slowly King Arnvid's men fell back before Harald's biting sword. Then Harald's men threw a great hook into that boat and pulled it alongside and still pushed King Arnvid's people back.

"Come on! Follow me!" cried Harald.

Then he leaped into King Arnvid's boat, and his warriors followed him.

"He comes like a mad wolf," King Arnvid's men said, and they turned and ran back below the deck.

Then Arnvid himself leaped down and stood with his sword raised.

"Can this young Shockhead make cowards of you all?" he cried.

But Harald's sword struck him, and he fell dead. Then a big, bloody viking of King Arnvid leaped upon the edge of the ship and stood there. He held his drinking-horn and his sword high in his hands.

"Ran and not you, Shockhead, shall have them and me!" he cried, and leaped laughing into the water and was drowned.

Many other warriors chose the same death on that terrible day.

All along the line of boats men fought for hours. In some places the cables had been cut, and the boats had drifted apart. Ships lay scattered about two by two, fighting. Many boats sank, many men died, some fled away in their ships, and at the end King Harald had won the battle. So he had King Arnvid's country and King Audbiorn's country. Many men took the oath and became his friends. All people were talking of his wonderful battles.

SIGURD THE VOLSUNG

By
William Morris

BOOK I: SIGMUND

Of the dwelling of King Volsung, and the wedding of Signy his daughter

There was a dwelling of Kings ere the world was waxen old;
Dukes were the door-wards there, and the roofs were thatched with gold:

Earls were the wrights that wrought it, and silver nailed its doors;
Earls' wives were the weaving-women, queens' daughters strewed its floors,
And the masters of its song-craft were the mightiest men that cast
The sails of the storm of battle adown the bickering blast.
There dwelt men merry-hearted, and in hope exceeding great
Met the good days and the evil as they went the way of fate:

There the Gods were unforgotten, yea whiles they walked with men,
Though e'en in that world's beginning rose a murmur now and again
Of the midward time and the fading and the last of the latter days,
And the entering in of the terror, and the death of the People's Praise.
Thus was the dwelling of Volsung, the King of the Midworld's Mark,
As a rose in the winter season, a candle in the dark;
And as in all other matters 'twas all earthly houses' crown,
And the least of its wall-hung shields was a battle-world's renown,
So therein withal was a marvel and a glorious thing to see,
For amidst of its midmost hall-floor sprang up a mighty tree,
That reared its blessings roofward, and wreathed the roof-tree dear
With the glory of the summer and the garland of the year.
I know not how they called it ere Volsung changed his life,
But his dawning of fair promise, and his noontide of the strife,
His eve of the battle-reaping and the garnering of his fame,
Have bred us many a story and named us many a name;
And when men tell of Volsung, they call that war-duke's tree,

That crowned stem, the Branstock; and so was it told unto me.
So there was the throne of Volsung beneath its blossoming bower,
But high o'er the roof-crest red it rose 'twixt tower and tower,
And therein were the wild hawks dwelling, abiding the dole of their lord;
And they wailed high over the wine, and laughed to the waking sword.
Still were its boughs but for them, when lo, on an even of May
Comes a man from Siggeir the King with a word for his mouth to say:

"All hail to thee King Volsung, from the King of the Goths I come:

He hath heard of thy sword victorious and thine abundant home;
He hath heard of thy sons in the battle, the fillers of Odin's Hall;
And a word hath the west-wind blown him, (full fruitful be its fall!)
A word of thy daughter Signy the crown of womanhood:

Now he deems thy friendship goodly, and thine help in the battle good,
And for these will he give his friendship and his battle-aid again:

But if thou wouldst grant his asking, and make his heart full fain,
Then shalt thou give him a matter, saith he, without a price,
—Signy the fairer than fair, Signy the wiser than wise."

Now the message gladdened Volsung and his sons, but no word spake Signy, till the king asked her what her mind might be. Then said Signy, "I will wed the Goth king, and yet shall I rue my lot in his hall." And Volsung urged her with kind words to do nought against her will, but her mind was fixed, and she said she wrought but what the gods had fore-ordained. So the earl of Siggeir went his way with gifts and fair words, bidding the Goth king come ere a month was over to wed the white-handed Signy and bear her home.

So on Mid-Summer Even ere the undark night began
Siggeir the King of the Goth-folk went up from the bath of the swan
Unto the Volsung dwelling with many an Earl about;
There through the glimmering thicket the linkèd mail rang out,
And sang as mid the woodways sings the summer-hidden ford:

There were gold-rings God-fashioned, and many a Dwarf-wrought sword,
And many a Queen-wrought kirtle and many a written spear;
So came they to the acres, and drew the threshold near,
And amidst of the garden blossoms, on the grassy, fruit-grown land,
Was Volsung the King of the Wood-world with his sons on either hand;

Therewith down lighted Siggeir the lord of a mighty folk,
Yet showed he by King Volsung as the bramble by the oak,
Nor reached his helm to the shoulder of the least of Volsung's sons.
And so into the hall they wended, the Kings and their mighty ones;
And they dight the feast full glorious, and drank through the death of the
day,

Till the shadowless moon rose upward, till it wended white away;
Then they went to the gold-hung beds, and at last for an hour or twain
Were all things still and silent, save a flaw of the summer rain.
But on the morrow noontide when the sun was high and bare,
More glorious was the banquet, and now was Signy there,
And she sat beside King Siggeir, a glorious bride forsooth;
Ruddy and white was she wrought as the fair-stained sea-beast's tooth,
But she neither laughed nor spake, and her eyes were hard and cold,
And with wandering side-long looks her lord would she behold.
That saw Sigmund her brother, the eldest Volsung son,
And oft he looked upon her, and their eyes met now and anon,
And ruth arose in his heart, and hate of Siggeir the Goth,
And there had he broken the wedding, but for plighted promise and troth.
But those twain were beheld of Siggeir, and he deemed of the Volsung kin,
That amid their might and their malice small honour should he win;
Yet thereof made he no semblance, but abided times to be,
And laughed out with the loudest, amid the hope and the glee.
And nought of all saw Volsung, as he dreamed of the coming glory,
And how the Kings of his kindred should fashion the round world's story.
So round about the Branstock they feast in the gleam of the gold;
And though the deeds of man-folk were not yet waxen old,
Yet had they tales for songcraft, and the blossomed garth of rhyme;
Tales of the framing of all things and the entering in of time
From the halls of the outer heaven; so near they knew the door.
Wherefore uprose a sea-king, and his hands that loved the oar
Now dealt with the rippling harp-gold, and he sang of the shaping of earth,
And how the stars were lighted, and where the winds had birth,
And the gleam of the first of summers on the yet untrodden grass.
But e'en as men's hearts were hearkening some heard the thunder pass
O'er the cloudless noontide heaven; and some men turned about
And deemed that in the doorway they heard a man laugh out.
Then into the Volsung dwelling a mighty man there strode,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, yet bright his visage glowed:

Cloud-blue was the hood upon him, and his kirtle gleaming-grey
As the latter morning sundog when the storm is on the way:

A bill he bore on his shoulder, whose mighty ashen beam
Burnt bright with the flame of the sea and the blended silver's gleam.
And such was the guise of his raiment as the Volsung elders had told
Was borne by their fathers' fathers, and the first that warred in the wold.
So strode he to the Branstock nor greeted any lord,
But forth from his cloudy raiment he drew a gleaming sword,
And smote it deep in the tree-hole, and the wild hawks overhead
Laughed 'neath the naked heaven as at last he spake and said:

"Earls of the Goths, and Volsungs, abiders on the earth,
Lo there amid the Branstock a blade of plenteous worth!
The folk of the war-wand's forgers wrought never better steel
Since first the burg of heaven uprose for man-folk's weal.
Now let the man among you whose heart and hand may shift
To pluck it from the oakwood e'en take it for my gift.
Then ne'er, but his own heart falter, its point and edge shall fail
Until the night's beginning and the ending of the tale.
Be merry Earls of the Goth-folk, O Volsung Sons be wise
And reap the battle-acre that ripening for you lies:

For they told me in the wild wood, I heard on the mountain side,
That the shining house of heaven is wrought exceeding wide,
And that there the Early-comers shall have abundant rest
While Earth grows scant of great ones, and fadeth from its best,
And fadeth from its midward and groweth poor and vile:—
All hail to thee King Volsung! farewell for a little while!"
So sweet his speaking sounded, so wise his words did seem,
That moveless all men sat there, as in a happy dream
We stir not lest we waken; but there his speech had end,
And slowly down the hall-floor, and outward did he wend;
And none would cast him a question or follow on his ways,
For they knew that the gift was Odin's, a sword for the world to praise.
But now spake Volsung the King: "Why sit ye silent and still?
Is the Battle-Father's visage a token of terror and ill?
Arise O Volsung Children, Earls of the Goths arise,
And set your hands to the hilts as mighty men and wise!
Yet deem it not too easy; for belike a fateful blade
Lies there in the heart of the Branstock for a fated warrior made."
Now therewith spake King Siggeir: "King Volsung give me a grace
To try it the first of all men, lest another win my place
And mere chance-hap steal my glory and the gain that I might win."
Then somewhat laughed King Volsung, and he said: "O Guest, begin;

Though herein is the first as the last, for the Gods have long to live,
Nor hath Odin yet forgotten unto whom the gift he would give.”
Then forth to the tree went Siggeir, the Goth-folk’s mighty lord,
And laid his hand on the gemstones, and strained at the glorious sword
Till his heart grew black with anger; and never a word he said
As he wended back to the high-seat: but Signy waxed blood-red
When he sat him adown beside her; and her heart was nigh to break
For the shame and the fateful boding: and therewith King Volsung spake:

”Thus comes back empty-handed the mightiest King of Earth,
And how shall the feeble venture? yet each man knows his worth;
And today may a great beginning from a little seed upspring
To o’erpass many a great one that hath the name of King:

So stand forth free and unfree; stand forth both most and least:

But first ye Earls of the Goth-folk, ye lovely lords we feast.”
Upstood the Earls of Siggeir, and each man drew anigh
And deemed his time was coming for a glorious gain and high;
But for all their mighty shaping and their deeds in the battle-wood,
No looser in the Branstock that gift of Odin stood.
Then uprose Volsung’s homemen, and the fell-abiding folk;
And the yellow-headed shepherds came gathering round the Oak,
And the searchers of the thicket and the dealers with the oar:

And the least and the worst of them all was a mighty man of war.
But for all their mighty shaping, and the struggle and the strain
Of their hands, the deft in labour, they tugged thereat in vain;
And still as the shouting and jeers, and the names of men and the laughter
Beat backward from gable to gable, and rattled o’er roof-tree and rafter,
Moody and still sat Siggeir; for he said: ”They have trained me here
As a mock for their woodland bondsmen; and yet shall they buy it dear.”
Now the tumult sank a little, and men cried on Volsung the King
And his sons, the hedge of battle, to try the fateful thing.
So Volsung laughed, and answered: ”I will set me to the toil,
Lest these my guests of the Goth-folk should deem I fear the foil.
Yet nought am I ill-sworded, and the oldest friend is best;
And this, my hand’s first fellow, will I bear to the grave-mound’s rest,
Nor wield meanwhile another: Yea, this shall I have in hand
When mid the host of Odin in the Day of Doom I stand.”
Therewith from his belt of battle he raised the golden sheath,
And showed the peace-strings glittering about the hidden death:

Then he laid his hand on the Branstock, and cried: "O tree beloved,
I thank thee of thy good-heart that so little thou art moved:

Abide thou thus, green bower, when I am dead and gone
And the best of all my kindred a better day hath won!"
Then as a young man laughed he, and on the hilts of gold
His hand, the battle-breaker, took fast and certain hold,
And long he drew and strained him, but mended not the tale,
Yet none the more thereover his mirth of heart did fail;
But he wended to the high-seat and thence began to cry:

"Sons I have gotten and cherished, now stand ye forth to try;
Lest Odin tell in God-home how from the way he strayed,
And how to the man he would not he gave away his blade."
So therewithal rose Rerir, and wasted might and main;
Then Gunthiof, and then Hunthiof, they wearied them in vain;
Nought was the might of Agnar; nought Helgi could avail;
Sigi the tall and Solar no further brought the tale,
Nor Geirmund the priest of the temple, nor Gylfi of the wood.
At last by the side of the Branstock Sigmund the Volsung stood,
And with right hand wise in battle the precious sword-hilt caught,
Yet in a careless fashion, as he deemed it all for nought:

When lo, from floor to rafter went up a shattering shout,
For aloft in the hand of Sigmund the naked blade shone out
As high o'er his head he shook it: for the sword had come away
From the grip of the heart of the Branstock, as though all loose it lay.
A little while he stood there mid the glory of the hall,
Like the best of the trees of the garden, when the April sunbeams fall
On its blossomed boughs in the morning, and tell of the days to be;
Then back unto the high-seat he wended soberly;
For this was the thought within him; Belike the day shall come
When I shall bide here lonely amid the Volsung home,
Its glory and sole avenger, its after-summer seed.
Yea, I am the hired of Odin, his workday will to speed,
And the harvest-tide shall be heavy.—What then, were it come and past
And I laid by the last of the sheaves with my wages earned at the last?
He lifted his eyes as he thought it, for now was he come to his place,
And there he stood by his father and met Siggeir face to face,
And he saw him blithe and smiling, and heard him how he spake:

"O best of the sons of Volsung, I am merry for thy sake
And the glory that thou hast gained us; but whereas thine hand and heart

Are e'en now the lords of the battle, how lack'st thou for thy part
A matter to better the best? Wilt thou overgild fine gold
Or dye the red rose redder? So I prithee let me hold
This sword that comes to thine hand on the day I wed thy kin.
For at home have I a store-house; there is mountain-gold therein
The weight of a war-king's harness; there is silver plenteous store;
There is iron, and huge-wrought amber, that the southern men love sore,
When they sell me the woven wonder, the purple born of the sea;
And it hangeth up in that bower, and all this is a gift for thee:

But the sword that came to my wedding, methinketh it meet and right,
That it lie on my knees in the council and stead me in the fight."
But Sigmund laughed and answered, and he spake a scornful word:

"And if I take twice that treasure, will it buy me Odin's sword,
And the gift that the Gods have given? will it buy me again to stand
Betwixt two mightiest world-kings with a longed-for thing in mine hand
That all their might hath missed of? when the purple-selling men
Come buying thine iron and amber, dost thou sell thine honour then?
Do they wrap it in bast of the linden, or run it in moulds of earth?
And shalt thou account mine honour as a matter of lesser worth?
Came the sword to thy wedding, Goth-king, to thine hand it never came,
And thence is thine envy whetted to deal me this word of shame."
Black then was the heart of Siggeir, but his face grew pale and red,
Till he drew a smile thereover, and spake the word and said:

"Nay, pardon me, Signy's kinsman! when the heart desires o'ermuch
It teacheth the tongue ill speaking, and my word belike was such.
But the honour of thee and thy kindred, I hold it even as mine,
And I love you as my heart-blood, and take ye this for a sign.
I bid thee now King Volsung, and these thy glorious sons,
And thine earls and thy dukes of battle and all thy mighty ones,
To come to the house of the Goth-kings as honoured guests and dear
And abide the winter over; that the dusky days and drear
May be glorious with thy presence, that all folk may praise my life,
And the friends that my fame hath gotten; and that this my new-wed wife
Thine eyes may make the merrier till she bear my eldest born."
Then speedily answered Volsung: "No king of the earth might scorn
Such noble bidding, Siggeir; and surely will I come
To look upon thy glory and the Goths' abundant home.
But let two months wear over, for I have many a thing
To shape and shear in the Woodland, as befits a people's king:

And thou meanwhile here abiding of all my goods shalt be free,
And then shall we twain together roof over the glass-green sea
With the sides of our golden dragons; and our war-hosts' blended shields
Shall fright the sea-abiders and the folk of the fishy fields."
Answered the smooth-speeched Siggeir: "I thank thee well for this,
And thy bidding is most kingly; yet take it not amiss
That I wend my ways in the morning; for we Goth-folk know indeed
That the sea is a foe full deadly, and a friend that fails at need."
And for all the words of Volsung e'en so must the matter be,
And Siggeir the Goth and Signy on the morn shall sail the sea.

Then the feast sped on the fairer, far into the night, but amidst the mirth Sigmund and Signy were sad at heart. And before the sun was risen next day Signy came to her father in secret and begged him to stay in his own country rather than trust the guileful heart and murder-loving hand of Siggeir. But Volsung answered that he must go to be Siggeir's guest, for he could not break his pledged word through fear of peril. So on the morrow the smooth-speeched Siggeir departed with Signy, and when two months were passed Volsung made ready to visit them.

How the Volsungs fared to the Land of the Goths, and of the fall of King Volsung

So now, when all things were ready, in the first of the autumn tide
Adown unto the swan-bath the Volsung Children ride;
And lightly go a shipboard, a goodly company,
Though the tale thereof be scanty and their ships no more than three:

But kings' sons dealt with the sail-sheets and earls and dukes of war
Were the halers of the hawsers and the tuggers at the oar.
But when the sun on the morrow shone over earth and sea
Ashore went the Volsung Children a goodly company,
And toward King Siggeir's dwelling o'er heath and holt they went.
But when they came to the topmost of a certain grassy bent,
Lo there lay the land before them as thick with shield and spear
As the rich man's wealthiest acre with the harvest of the year.
There bade King Volsung tarry and dight the wedge-array;
"For duly," he said, "doeth Siggeir to meet his guests by the way."
So shield by shield they serried, nor ever hath been told
Of any host of battle more glorious with the gold;
And there stood the high King Volsung in the very front of war;
And lovelier was his visage than ever heretofore,
As he rent apart the peace-strings that his brand of battle bound

And the bright blade gleamed to the heavens, and he cast the sheath to the ground.

Then up the steep came the Goth-folk, and the spear-wood drew anigh,
And earth's face shook beneath them, yet cried they never a cry;
And the Volsungs stood all silent, although forsooth at whiles
O'er the faces grown earth-weary would play the flickering smiles,
And swords would clink and rattle: not long had they to bide,
For soon that flood of murder flowed round the hillock-side;
Then at last the edges mingled, and if men forbore the shout,
Yet the din of steel and iron in the grey clouds rang about;
But how to tell of King Volsung, and the valour of his folk!
Three times the wood of battle before their edges broke;
And the shield-wall, sorely dwindled and reft of the ruddy gold,
Against the drift of the war-blast for the fourth time yet did hold.
But men's shields were waxen heavy with the weight of shafts they bore,
And the fifth time many a champion cast earthward Odin's door
And gripped the sword two-handed; and in sheaves the spears came on.
And at last the host of the Goth-folk within the shield-wall won,
And wild was the work within it, and oft and o'er again
Forth brake the sons of Volsung, and drave the foe in vain;
For the driven throng still thickened, till it might not give aback.
But fast abode King Volsung amid the shifting wrack
In the place where once was the forefront: for he said: "My feet are old,
And if I wend on further there is nought more to behold
Than this that I see about me."—Whiles drew his foes away
And stared across the corpses that before his sword-edge lay.
But nought he followed after: then needs must they in front
Thrust on by the thickening spear-throng come up to bear the brunt,
Till all his limbs were weary and his body rent and torn:

Then he cried: "Lo now, Allfather, is not the swathe well shorn?
Wouldst thou have me toil for ever, nor win the wages due?"
And mid the hedge of foemen his blunted sword he threw,
And, laid like the oars of a longship the level war-shafts pressed
On 'gainst the unshielded elder, and clashed amidst his breast;
And dead he fell, thrust backward, and rang on the dead men's gear:

But still for a certain season durst no man draw anear,
For 'twas e'en as a great God's slaying, and they feared the wrath of the
sky;
And they deemed their hearts might harden if awhile they should let him
lie.

Of the ending of all Volsung's Sons save Sigmund only, and of how he abideth in the wild wood

They joined battle again, but the fight grew feeble after Volsung fell, and his earls were struck down one by one. Last of all, his sons were borne to earth and carried captive to the hall, where Siggeir awaited them, for he himself had feared to face the Volsung swords.

Then he would have slain them at once without torture, but Signy besought him that they might breathe the earthly air a day or two before their death, and he listened to her, for he saw how he might thus give them greater pain. He bade his men lead them to a glade in the forest and fetter them to the mightiest tree that grew there. So the ten Volsungs were fettered with iron to a great oak, and on the morrow Siggeir's woodmen told him sweet tidings, for beasts of the wood had devoured two and left their bones in the fetters. So it befell every night till the woodmen brought word that nothing remained of the king's foemen save their bones in the fetters that had bound them.

Now a watch had been set on Signy lest she should send help to her brethren, but henceforth no man hindered her from going out to the wood. So that night she came to the glade in the forest, and saw in the midst of it a mighty man who was toiling to dig a grave in the greensward.

And behold, it was Sigmund the Volsung: but she cried and had no fear:

"If thou art living, Sigmund, what day's work dost thou here
In the midnight and the forest? but if thou art nought but a ghost
Then where are those Volsung brethren, of whom thou wert best and most?"
Then he turned about unto her, and his raiment was fouled and torn,
And his eyes were great and hollow, as a famished man forlorn;
But he cried: "Hail, Sister Signy! I looked for thee before,
Though what should a woman compass, she one alone and no more,
When all we shielded Volsungs did nought in Siggeir's land?
O yea, I am living indeed, and this labour of mine hand
Is to bury the bones of the Volsungs; and lo, it is well-nigh done.
So draw near, Volsung's daughter, and pile we many a stone
Where lie the grey wolf's gleanings of what was once so good."
So she set her hand to the labour, and they toiled, they twain in the wood,
And when the work was over, dead night was beginning to fall:

Then spake the white-hand Signy: "Now shall thou tell the tale
Of the death of the Volsung brethren ere the wood thy wrath shall hide,
Ere I wend me back sick-hearted in the dwelling of kings to abide."
Then said Sigmund:

”We lay fettered to the tree and at midnight there came from the thicket two mighty wood-wolves, and falling on my brethren Gylfi and Geirmund, they devoured them in their bonds, and turned again to the forest. Night after night, my sister, this befell, till I was left alone with our brother Sigi to await the wood-beasts. Then came midnight, and one of the wolves fell upon Sigi and the other turned on me. But I met it with snarling like its own, and my teeth gripped its throat, and my hands strove with the fetters till they burst. So I slew the beast with my irons, but when I looked, Sigi lay dead, and the other wolf had fled again to the thicket. Then I lay hid till Siggeir’s woodmen had looked on the place and departed with their tidings, and as I beheld them I knew that pity was killed in my heart, and that henceforward I should live but to avenge me on him who hath so set the gods at nought.” Then Signy spake noble words of comfort, saying: ”I wot well that Siggeir shall pay the due price of his deeds, though the vengeance may tarry long, and I wot also that thy life shall yet know gladness. Bear a stout heart, therefore, to meet the waiting time, and make thee a lair in the woods whence thou mayest fall on men of the Goth-folk, and win what thy life needeth. As for me, I will see thy face once again ere many days are past to wot where thou dwellest and then must we meet no more.” And so saying, she kissed him and departed, but Sigmund turned in the dawn-light, and sought a wood-lair as she had bidden him.

Of the fostering of Sinfiotli, Signy’s son, and of the slaying of Siggeir the Goth-king

So wrought is the will of King Siggeir, and he weareth Odin’s sword
And it lies on his knees in the council and hath no other lord:

And he sendeth earls o’er the sea-flood to take King Volsung’s land,
And those scattered and shepherdless sheep must come beneath his hand.
And he holdeth the milk-white Signy as his handmaid and his wife,
And nought but his will she doeth, nor raiseth a word of strife;
So his heart is praising his wisdom, and he deems him of most avail
Of all the lords of the cunning that teacheth how to prevail.

Now Sigmund dwelt long in the wild-wood, abiding in a strong cave deep hidden in a thicket by the river-side. And now and again he fell upon the folk of Siggeir as they journeyed, and slew them, and thus he had war-gear and gold as much as he would. Also he became a master of masters in the smithying craft, and the folk who beheld the gleam of his forge by night, deemed that a king of the Giants was awakened from death to dwell there, and they durst not wander near the cavern.

So passed the years till on a springtide morning Signy sent forth to Sigmund a damsel leading her eldest son, a child of ten summers, and bearing a word of her

mouth to bid him foster the child for his helper, if he should prove worthy and bold-hearted. And Sigmund heeded her words and fostered the child for the space of three months even though he could give no love to a son of Siggeir.

At last he was minded to try the boy's courage, to which end he set a deadly ash-grey adder in the meal-sack, and bade the child bake bread. But he feared when he found something that moved in the meal and had not courage to do the task. Then would Sigmund foster him no longer, but thrust him out from the woods to return to his father's hall.

So ten years won over again, and Signy sent another son to the wild-wood, and the lad was called Sinfiotli. Sigmund thrust him into many dangers, and burdened him with heavy loads, and he bore all passing well. Now after a year Sigmund deemed that the time for his testing was come, and once again he set an adder in the meal-sack and bade the lad bake bread. And the boy feared not the worm, but kneaded it with the dough and baked all together. So Sigmund cherished him as his own son, and he grew strong and valiant and loved Sigmund as his father. Now Sigmund began to ponder how he might at last take vengeance on Siggeir, and gladly did Sinfiotli hear him, for all his love was given to Sigmund, so that he no longer deemed himself the Goth-king's son.

At last when the long mirk nights of winter were come, Sigmund and his foster-son went their way to the home of Siggeir and sought to lurk therein. Then Sinfiotli led the way to a storehouse where lay great wine-casks, and whence they could see the lighted feast-hall, and hear the clamour of Siggeir's folk. There they had to abide the time when the feasters should be hushed in sleep. Long seemed the hours to Sinfiotli, but Sigmund was calm and clear-eyed.

Then it befell that two of Queen Signy's youngest-born children threw a golden toy hither and thither in the feast-hall, and at last it rolled away among the wine-casks till it lay at Sigmund's feet. So the children followed it, and coming face to face with those lurkers, they fled back to the feast-hall. And Sigmund and his foster-son saw all hope was ended, for they heard the rising tumult as men ran to their weapons; so they made ready to go forth and die in the hall. Then on came the battle around the twain, and but short is the tale to tell, for Sinfiotli slipped on the blood-stained floor and the shield wall encompassed Sigmund, and so they were both hopped strait and fast.

The Goth-folk washed their hall of blood and got them to slumber, but Siggeir lay long pondering what dire death he might bring on his foes.

Now at the first grey dawning Siggeir's folk dight a pit and it had two chambers with a sundering stone in the midst. Then they brought the Volsung kindred and set them therein, one in each chamber, that they might abide death alone, and yet in hearing of one another's woe. And over the top the thralls laid roofing turfs, but so lingering were their hands that eve drew on ere the task was finished. Then stole Signy forth in the dusk, and spake the thralls fair, and gave them gold that they might hold their peace of what she did. And when they gainsaid her nought she drew out something

wrapped in wheat straw, and cast it down swiftly into the pit where Sinfiotli lay, and departed.

Sinfiotli at first deemed it food, but after a space Sigmund heard him laugh aloud for joy, for within the wrappings lay the sword of the Branstock. And Sinfiotli cried out the joyous tidings to his foster-father, and tarried not to set the point to the stone that sundered them, and lo, the blade pierced through, and Sigmund grasped the point. Then sawed Sigmund and Sinfiotli together till they cleft the stone, and they hewed full hard at the roofing, till they cast the turfs aside, and their hearts were gladdened with the sight of the starry heaven.

Forth they leapt, and no words were needed of whither they should wend, but they fell on King Siggeir's night-watch and slew them sleeping, and made haste to find the store of winter faggots, wherewith they built a mighty bale about the hall of Siggeir. They set a torch to the bale, and Sigmund gat him to one hall door and Sinfiotli to the other, and now the Goth-folk awoke to their last of days.

Then cried Siggeir to his thralls and offered them joyous life-days and plenteous wealth if they would give him life, deeming that they had fired the hall in hatred. But there came a great voice crying from the door, "Nay, no toilers are we; wealth is ours when we list, but now our hearts are set to avenge our kin; now hath the murder seed sprung and borne its fruit; now the death-doomed and buried work this deed; now doom draweth nigh thee at the hand of Sigmund the Volsung, and Sinfiotli, Signy's son."

Then the voice cried again, "Come ye forth, women of the Goths, and thou, O Signy, my sister, come forth to seek the boughs of the Branstock." So fled the white-faced women from the fire, and passed scatheless by Sinfiotli's blade, but Signy came not at all. Then the earls of Siggeir strove to burst from the hall, but ever the two glaives at the doorways drove them back to the fire.

And, lo, now came Signy in queenly raiment, and stood before Sinfiotli and said, "O mightiest son, this is the hour of our parting, and fain am I of slumber and the end of my toil now I have seen this day. And the blither do I leave thee because thy days on earth shall be but few; I charge thee make thy life glorious, and leave a goodly tale."

She kissed him and turned to Sigmund, and her face in the dawn-light seemed to him fair and ruddy as in the days when they twain dwelt by the Branstock. And she said, "My youth was happy, yet this hour is the crown of my life-days which draw nigh their ending. And now I charge thee, Sigmund, when thou sittest once more a mighty king beneath the boughs of the Branstock, that thou remember how I loved the Volsung name, and spared not to spend all that was mine for its blossoming." Then she kissed him and turned again, and the dawn brightened at her back, and the fire shone red before her, and so for the last time was Signy beheld by the eyes of men. Thereafter King Siggeir's roof-tree bowed earthward, and the mighty walls crashed down, and so that dark murder-hall lay wasted, and its glory was swept away.

How Sigmund cometh to the Land of the Volsungs again, and of the death of Sinfiotli his Son

Now Sigmund the king bestirs him, and Sinfiotli, Sigmund's son,
 And they gather a host together, and many a mighty one;
 Then they set the ships in the sea-flood and sail from the stranger's shore,
 And the beaks of the golden dragons see the Volsungs' land once more;
 And men's hearts are fulfilled of joyance; and they cry, The sun shines now
 With never a curse to hide it, and they shall reap that sow!
 Then for many a day sits Sigmund 'neath the boughs of the Branstock
 green,
 With his earls and lords about him as the Volsung wont hath been.
 And oft he thinketh on Signy and oft he nameth her name,
 And tells how she spent her joyance and her life-days and her fame
 That the Volsung kin might blossom and bear the fruit of worth
 For the hope of unborn people and the harvest of the earth.
 And again he thinks of the word that he spake that other day,
 How he should abide there lonely when his kin was passed away,
 Their glory and sole avenger, their after-summer seed.

But far and wide went Sinfiotli through the earth, mowing the war swathe and
 wasting the land, and passing but little time in song and laughter in his father's hall.
 So went his days in warfare and valour, and yet his end was not glorious, for he drank
 of the poisoned cup given him by the sister of a warrior he had rightly slain.

None might come nigh Sigmund in his anguish as he lifted the head of his fallen
 foster-child, and then swiftly bare him from the hall. On he went through dark thicket
 and over wind-swept heath, past the foot-hills and the homes of the deer, till he came
 to a great rushing water, whereon was a white-sailed boat, manned by a mighty man,
 "one-eyed and seeming ancient." This mighty one told Sigmund he had been bidden to
 waft a great king over the water, and bade him lay his burden on board, but when
 Sigmund would have followed he could see neither ship nor man.

But Sigmund went back to his throne, and behaved himself as a king, listening to
 his people's complaints, and dealing out justice.

Of the last battle of King Sigmund, and the death of him

Now there was a king of the Islands, whom the tale doth Eylimi call,
 And saith he was wise and valiant, though his kingdom were but small:

He had one only daughter that Hiordis had to name,
 A woman wise and shapely beyond the praise of fame.
 And now saith the son of King Volsung that his time is short enow
 To labour the Volsung garden, and the hand must be set to the plough:

So he sendeth an earl of the people to King Eylimi's high-built hall,
 Bearing the gifts and the tokens, and this word in his mouth withal:

"King Sigmund the son of Volsung hath sent me here with a word
That plenteous good of thy daughter among all folk he hath heard,
And he wooeth that wisest of women that she may sit on his throne.
"Now hereof would he have an answer within a half-month's space,
And these gifts meanwhile he giveth for the increase of thy grace."
So King Eylimi hearkened the message, and hath no word to say,
For an earl of King Lyngi the mighty is come that very day,
He too for the wooing of Hiordis: and Lyngi's realm is at hand,
But afar King Sigmund abideth o'er many a sea and land:

And the man is young and eager, and grim and guileful of mood.
At last he sayeth: "Abide here such space as thou deemest good,
But tomorn shalt thou have thine answer that thine heart may the lighter
be,
For the hearkening of harp and songcraft, and the dealing with game and
glee."

Then he went to Queen Hiordis' bower, where she worked in the silk and the gold
The deeds of the world that should be, and the deeds that were of old.
And he stood before her and said:

"Often have I told thee that thou shouldst wed only the man thou wouldst.
Now it hath come to pass that two kings desire thee."
And she swiftly rose to her feet as she said, "And which be they?"
He spake: "The first is Lyngi, a valiant man and a fair,
A neighbour ill for thy father, if a foe's name he must bear:

And the next is King Sigmund the Volsung of a land far over sea,
And well thou knowest his kindred, and his might and his valiancy,
And the tales of his heart of a God; and though old he be waxen now,
Yet men deem that the wide world's blossom from Sigmund's loins shall
grow."

Said Hiordis: "I wot, my father, that hereof may strife arise;
Yet soon spoken is mine answer; for I, who am called the wise,
Shall I thrust by the praise of the people, and the tale that no ending hath,
And the love and the heart of the godlike, and the heavenward-leading
path,

For the rose and the stem of the lily, and the smooth-lipped youngling's
kiss,

And the eyes' desire that passeth, and the frail unstable bliss?
Now shalt thou tell King Sigmund, that I deem it the crown of my life
To dwell in the house of his fathers amidst all peace and strife."

Now the king's heart sore misgave him, but herewith must he be content,
And great gifts to the earl of Lyngi and a word withal he sent,
That the woman's troth was plighted to another people's king.
But King Sigmund's earl on the morrow hath joyful yea-saying,
And ere two moons be perished he shall fetch his bride away.
"And bid him," King Eylimi sayeth, "to come with no small array,
But with sword and shield and war-shaft, lest aught of ill betide."
So forth goes the earl of Sigmund across the sea-flood wide,
And comes to the land of the Volsungs, and meeteth Sigmund the king,
And tells how he sped on his errand, and the joyful yea-saying.
So King Sigmund maketh him ready, and they ride adown to the sea
All glorious of gear and raiment, and a goodly company.
Yet hath Sigmund thought of his father, and the deed he wrought before,
And hath scorn to gather his people and all his hosts of war
To wend to the feast and the wedding: yet are their long-ships ten,
And the shielded folk aboard them are the mightiest men of men.
So Sigmund goeth a shipboard, and they hoist their sails to the wind,
And the beaks of the golden dragons leave the Volsungs' land behind.
Then come they to Eylimi's kingdom, and good welcome have they there,
And when Sigmund looked on Hiordis, he deemed her wise and fair.
But her heart was exceeding fain when she saw the glorious king,
And it told her of times that should be full many a noble thing.
So there is Sigmund wedded at a great and goodly feast,
And day by day on Hiordis the joy of her heart increased;
And her father joyed in Sigmund and his might and majesty,
And dead in the heart of the Isle-king his ancient fear did lie.
Yet, forsooth, had men looked seaward, they had seen the gathering cloud,
And the little wind arising, that should one day pipe so loud.
For well may ye wot indeed that King Lyngi the Mighty is wroth,
When he getteth the gifts and the answer, and that tale of the woman's
troth:

And he saith he will have the gifts and the woman herself withal,
Either for loving or hating, and that both those heads shall fall.
So now when Sigmund and Hiordis are wedded a month or more,
And the Volsung bids men dight them to cross the sea-flood o'er,
Lo, how there cometh the tidings of measureless mighty hosts
Who are gotten ashore from their long-ships on the skirts of King Eylimi's
coasts.

Sore boded the heart of the Isle-king of what the end should be.
But Sigmund long beheld him, and he said: "Thou deem'st of me
That my coming hath brought thee evil; but put aside such things;

For long have I lived, and I know it, that the lives of mighty kings
 Are not cast away, nor drifted like the down before the wind;
 And surely I know, who say it, that never would Hiordis' mind
 Have been turned to wed King Lyngi or aught but the Volsung seed.
 Come, go we forth to the battle, that shall be the latest deed
 Of thee and me meseemeth: yea, whether thou live or die,
 No more shall the brand of Odin at peace in his scabbard lie."
 And therewith he brake the peace-strings and drew the blade of bale,
 And Death on the point abided, Fear sat on the edges pale.
 So men ride adown to the sea-strand, and the kings their hosts array
 When the high noon flooded heaven; and the men of the Volsungs lay,
 With King Eylimi's shielded champions mid Lyngi's hosts of war,
 As the brown pips lie in the apple when ye cut it through the core.
 But now when the kings were departed, from the King's house Hiordis
 went,
 And before men joined the battle she came to a woody bent,
 Where she lay with one of her maidens the death and the deeds to behold.
 In the noon sun shone King Sigmund as an image all of gold,
 And he stood before the foremost and the banner of his fame,
 And many a thing he remembered, and he called on each earl by his name
 To do well for the house of the Volsungs, and the ages yet unborn.
 Then he tossed up the sword of the Branstock, and blew on his father's
 horn,
 Dread of so many a battle, doom-song of so many a man.
 Then all the earth seemed moving as the hosts of Lyngi ran
 On the Volsung men and the Isle-folk like wolves upon the prey;
 But sore was their labour and toil ere the end of their harvesting day.
 On went the Volsung banners, and on went Sigmund before,
 And his sword was the flail of the tiller on the wheat of the wheat-thrashing
 floor,
 And his shield was rent from his arm, and his helm was sheared from his
 head:

But who may draw nigh him to smite for the heap and the rampart of
 dead?

White went his hair on the wind like the ragged drift of the cloud,
 And his dust-driven, blood-beaten harness was the death-storm's angry
 shroud,
 When the summer sun is departing in the first of the night of wrack;
 And his sword was the cleaving lightning, that smites and is hurried aback
 Ere the hand may rise against it; and his voice was the following thunder.

Then cold grew the battle before him, dead-chilled with the fear and the wonder:

For again in his ancient eyes the light of victory gleamed;
From his mouth grown tuneful and sweet the song of his kindred streamed;
And no more was he worn and weary, and no more his life seemed spent:

And with all the hope of his childhood was his wrath of battle blent;
And he thought: A little further, and the river of strife is passed,
And I shall sit triumphant the king of the world at last.
But lo, through the hedge of the war-shafts a mighty man there came,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, but his visage shone like flame:

Gleaming-grey was his kirtle, and his hood was cloudy blue;
And he bore a mighty twi-bill, as he waded the fight-sheaves through,
And stood face to face with Sigmund, and upheaved the bill to smite.
Once more round the head of the Volsung fierce glittered the Branstock's
light,

The sword that came from Odin; and Sigmund's cry once more
Rang out to the very heavens above the din of war.
Then clashed the meeting edges with Sigmund's latest stroke,
And in shivering shards fell earthward that fear of worldly folk.
But changed were the eyes of Sigmund, and the war-wrath left his face;
For that grey-clad mighty helper was gone, and in his place
Drave on the unbroken spear-wood 'gainst the Volsung's empty hands:

And there they smote down Sigmund, the wonder of all lands,
On the foemen, on the death-heap his deeds had piled that day.
Ill hour for Sigmund's fellows! they fall like the seeded hay
Before the brown scythes' sweeping, and there the Isle-king fell
In the fore-front of his battle, wherein he wrought right well,
And soon they were nought but foemen who stand upon their feet
On the isle-strand by the ocean where the grass and the sea-sand meet.
And now hath the conquering War-king another deed to do,
And he saith: "Who now gainsayeth King Lyngi come to woo,
The lord and the overcomer and the bane of the Volsung kin?"
So he fares to the Isle-king's dwelling a wife of the kings to win;
And the host is gathered together, and they leave the field of the dead;
And round as a targe of the Goth-folk the moon ariseth red.
And so when the last is departed, and she deems they will come not aback,
Fares Hiordis forth from the thicket to the field of the fateful wrack,
And half-dead was her heart for sorrow as she waded the swathes of the
sword.

Not far did she search the death-field ere she found her king and lord
On the heap that his glaive had fashioned: not yet was his spirit past,
Though his hurts were many and grievous, and his life-blood ebbing fast;
And glad were his eyes and open as her wan face over him hung,
And he spake:

"Thou art sick with sorrow, and I would thou wert not so young;
Yet as my days passed shall thine pass; and a short while now it seems
Since my hand first gripped the sword-hilt, and my glory was but in
dreams."

She said: "Thou livest, thou livest! the leeches shall heal thee still."
"Nay," said he, "my heart hath hearkened to Odin's bidding and will;
For today have mine eyes beheld him: nay, he needed not to speak:

Forsooth I knew of his message and the thing he came to seek.
And now do I live but to tell thee of the days that are yet to come:

And perchance to solace thy sorrow; and then will I get me home
To my kin that are gone before me. Lo, yonder where I stood
The shards of a glaive of battle that was once the best of the good:

Take them and keep them surely. I have lived no empty days;
The Norns were my nursing mothers; I have won the people's praise.
When the Gods for one deed asked me I ever gave them twain;
Spendthrift of glory I was, and great was my life-days' gain;
Now these shards have been my fellow in the work the Gods would have,
But today hath Odin taken the gift that once he gave.
I have wrought for the Volsungs truly, and yet have I known full well
That a better one than I am shall bear the tale to tell:

And for him shall these shards be smithied; and he shall be my son
To remember what I have forgotten and to do what I left undone."
Then failed the voice of Sigmund; but so mighty was the man,
That a long while yet he lingered till the dusky night grew wan,
And she sat and sorrowed o'er him, but no more a word he spake.
Then a long way over the sea-flood the day began to break;
And when the sun was arisen a little he turned his head
Till the low beams bathed his eyes, and there lay Sigmund dead.
And the sun rose up on the earth; but where was the Volsung kin
And the folk that the Gods had begotten the praise of all people to win?
How King Sigmund the Volsung was laid in mound on the sea-side of the
Isle-realm.

Now Hiordis looked from the dead, and her eyes strayed down to the sea,

And a shielded ship she saw, and a war-dight company,
Who beached the ship for the landing: so swift she fled away,
And once more to the depth of the thicket, wherein her handmaid lay:

And she said: "I have left my lord, and my lord is dead and gone,
And he gave me a charge full heavy, and here are we twain alone,
And earls from the sea are landing: give me thy blue attire,
And take my purple and gold and my crown of the sea-flood's fire,
And be thou the wife of King Volsung when men of our names shall ask,
And I will be the handmaid: now I bid thee to this task,
And I pray thee not to fail me, because of thy faith and truth,
And because I have ever loved thee, and thy mother fostered my youth."
So the other nought gainsaith it and they shift their raiment there:

But well-spoken was the maiden, and a woman tall and fair.
Now the lord of those new-coming men was a king and the son of a king,
King Elf the son of the Helper, and he sailed from warfaring
And drew anigh to the Isle-realm and sailed along the strand;
For the shipmen needed water and fain would go a-land;
And King Elf stood hard by the tiller while the world was yet a-cold:

Then the red sun lit the dawning, and they looked, and lo, behold!
The wrack of a mighty battle, and heaps of the shielded dead,
And a woman alive amidst them, a queen with crownèd head,
And her eyes strayed down to the sea-strand, and she saw that weaponed
folk,
And turned and fled to the thicket: then the lord of the shipmen spoke:

"Lo, here shall we lack for water, for the brooks with blood shall run,
Yet wend we ashore to behold it and to wot of the deeds late done."
So they turned their faces to Sigmund, and waded the swathes of the sword.
"O, look ye long," said the Sea-king, "for here lieth a mighty lord:

And all these are the deeds of his war-flame, yet hardy hearts, be sure,
That they once durst look in his face or the wrath of his eyen endure;
Though his lips be glad and smiling as a God that dreameth of mirth.
Would God I were one of his kindred, for none such are left upon earth.
Now fare we into the thicket, for thereto is the woman fled,
And belike she shall tell us the story of this field of the mighty dead."
So they wend and find the women, and bespeak them kind and fair:

Then spake the gold-crowned handmaid: "Of the Isle-king's house we were,
And I am the Queen called Hiordis; and the man that lies on the field

Was mine own lord Sigmund the Volsung, the mightiest under shield."
Then all amazed were the sea-folk when they hearkened to that word,
And great and heavy tidings they deem their ears have heard:

But again spake out the Sea-king: "And this blue-clad one beside,
So pale, and as tall as a Goddess, and white and lovely eyed?"
"In sooth and in troth," said the woman, "my serving-maid is this;
She hath wept long over the battle, and sore afraid she is."
Now the king looks hard upon her, but he saith no word thereto,
And down again to the death-field with the women-folk they go.
There they set their hands to the labour, and amidst the deadly mead
They raise a mound for Sigmund, a mighty house indeed;
And therein they set that folk-king, and goodly was his throne,
And dight with gold and scarlet: and the walls of the house were done
With the cloven shields of the foemen, and banners borne to field;
But none might find his war-helm or the splinters of his shield,
And clenched and fast was his right hand, but no sword therein he had:

For Hiordis spake to the shipmen:

"Our lord and master bade
That the shards of his glaive of battle should go with our lady the Queen:

And by them that lie a-dying a many things are seen."

How Queen Hiordis is known; and how she abideth in the house of Elf the son of the Helper

Then Elf asked of the two women where they would go, and they prayed that he would take them to his land, where they dwelt for long in all honour. But the old queen, the mother of Elf, was indeed a woman wise above many, and fain would she know why the less noble of the two was dressed the more richly and why the handmaid gave always wiser counsel than her mistress. So she bade her son to speak suddenly and to take them unawares.

Then he asked the gold-clad one how she knew in the dark winter night that the dawn was near. She answered that ever in her youth she awoke at the dawn to follow her daily work, and always was she wont to drink of whey, and now, though the times were changed, she still woke athirst near the dawning. To Elf it seemed strange that a fair queen in her youth had need to arise to follow the plough in the dark of the winter morning, and turning to the handmaid he asked of her the same question. She replied that in her youth her father had given her the gold ring she still wore, and which had the magic power of growing cold as the hours neared daybreak, and such was her dawning sign.

Then did Elf know of their exchange, and he told Hiordis that long had he loved her and felt pity for her sorrow, and that he would make her his wife. So that night she sat on the high-seat with the crown on her head, and dreamt of what had been and what was to be.

So passeth the summer season, and the harvest of the year,
And the latter days of the winter on toward the springtide wear.

BOOK II: REGIN

Of the birth of Sigurd the son of Sigmund

Peace lay on the land of the Helper and the house of Elf his son;
There merry men went bedward when their tide of toil was done,
And glad was the dawn's awakening, and the noontide fair and glad:

There no great store had the franklin, and enough the hireling had;
And a child might go unguarded the length and breadth of the land
With a purse of gold at his girdle and gold rings on his hand.
'Twas a country of cunning craftsmen, and many a thing they wrought,
That the lands of storm desired, and the homes of warfare sought.
But men deemed it o'er-well warded by more than its stems of fight,
And told how its earth-born watchers yet lived of plenteous might.
So hidden was that country, and few men sailed its sea,
And none came o'er its mountains of men-folk's company.
But fair-fruited, many-peopled, it lies a goodly strip,
'Twixt the mountains cloudy-headed and the sea-flood's surging lip,
And a perilous flood is its ocean, and its mountains, who shall tell
What things, in their dales deserted and their wind-swept heaths may dwell.
Again, in the house of the Helper there dwelt a certain man
Beardless and low of stature, of visage pinched and wan:

So exceeding old was Regin, that no son of man could tell
In what year of the days passed over he came to that land to dwell:

But the youth of King Elf had he fostered, and the Helper's youth thereto,
Yea and his father's father's: the lore of all men he knew,
And was deft in every cunning, save the dealings of the sword:

So sweet was his tongue-speech fashioned, that men trowed his every word;
His hand with the harp-strings blended was the mingler of delight

With the latter days of sorrow; all tales he told aright;
The Master of the Masters in the smithying craft was he;
And he dealt with the wind and the weather and the stilling of the sea;
Nor might any learn him leech-craft, for before that race was made,
And that man-folk's generation, all their life-days had he weighed.
In this land of the Helper and Elf, his son, dwelt Hiordis, and here her
son, the last of the Volsungs, was born. The babe had eyes of such
wondrous brightness that the folk shrank from him, while they rejoiced
over his birth, but his mother spake to the babe as to one who might
understand, and she told him of Sigmund and Volsung, of their wars
and their troubles and their joys. Then she gave him to her maids to
bear him to the kings of the land that they might rejoice with her.
But there sat the Helper of Men with King Elf and his Earls in the hall,
And they spake of the deeds that had been, and told of the times to befall,
And they hearkened and heard sweet voices and the sound of harps draw
nigh,
Till their hearts were exceeding merry and they knew not wherefore or why:

Then, lo, in the hall white raiment, as thither the damsels came,
And amid the hands of the foremost was the woven gold aflame.
"O daughters of earls," said the Helper, "what tidings then do ye bear?
Is it grief in the merry morning, or joy or wonder or fear?"
Quoth the first: "It is grief for the foemen that the Masters of God-home
would grieve."
Said the next: "'Tis a wonder of wonders, that the hearkening world shall
believe."
"A fear of all fears," said the third, "for the sword is uplifted on men."
"A joy of all joys," said the fourth, "once come, and it comes not again!"
"What then hath betid," said King Elf, "do the high Gods stand in our
gate?"
"Nay," said they, "else were we silent, and they should be telling of fate."
"Is the bidding come," said the Helper, "that we wend the Gods to see?"
"Many summers and winters," they said, "ye shall live on the earth, it may
be."
"Speak then," said the ancient Helper, "let the worst and the best be said."
They said: "The earth is weary: but the tender blade hath sprung,
That shall wax till beneath its branches fair bloom the meadows green;
For the Gods and they that were mighty were glad erewhile with the
Queen."
Said King Elf: "How say ye, women? Of a King new-born do ye tell,
By a God of the Heavens begotten in our fathers' house to dwell?"
"By a God of the Earth," they answered; "but greater yet is the son,

Though long were the days of Sigmund, and great are the deeds he hath done.”

Then she with the golden burden to the kingly high-seat stepped
And away from the new-born baby the purple cloths she swept,
And cried: ”O King of the people, long mayst thou live in bliss,
As our hearts today are happy! Queen Hiordis sends thee this,
And she saith that the world shall call it by the name that thou shalt name;
Now the gift to thee is given, and to thee is brought the fame.”
Then e’en as a man astonied King Elf the Volsung took,
While his feast-hall’s ancient timbers with the cry of the earl-folk shook;
With the love of many peoples was the wise king smitten through,
As he hung o’er the new-born Volsung: but at last he raised his head,
And looked forth kind o’er his people, and spake aloud and said:

”O Sigmund King of Battle; O man of many days,
Whom I saw mid the shields of the fallen and the dead men’s silent praise,
Lo, how hath the dark tide perished and the dawn of day begun!
And now, O mighty Sigmund, wherewith shall we name thy son?”
But there rose up a man most ancient, and he cried: ”Hail Dawn of the
Day!

How many things shalt thou quicken, how many shalt thou slay!
How many things shalt thou waken, how many lull to sleep!
How many things shalt thou scatter, how many gather and keep!
O me, how thy love shall cherish, how thine hate shall wither and burn!
How the hope shall be sped from thy right hand, nor the fear to thy left
return!

O thy deeds that men shall sing of! O thy deeds that the Gods shall see!
O SIGURD, Son of the Volsungs, O Victory yet to be!”

Men heard the name and they knew it, and they caught it up in the air,
And it went abroad by the windows and the doors of the feast-hall fair,
It went through street and market; o’er meadow and acre it went,
And over the wind-stirred forest and the dearth of the sea-beat bent,
And over the sea-flood’s welter, till the folk of the fishers heard,
And the hearts of the isle-abiders on the sun-scorched rocks were stirred.
Sigurd getteth to him the horse that is called Greyfell.

Now waxeth the son of Sigmund in might and goodliness,
And soft the days win over, and all men his beauty bless.
But amidst the summer season was the Isle-queen Hiordis wed
To King Elf the son of the Helper, and fair their life-days sped.
Peace lay on the land for ever, and the fields gave good increase,
And there was Sigurd waxing mid the plenty and the peace.
Now hath the child grown greater, and is keen and eager of wit

And full of understanding, and oft hath he joy to sit
Amid talk of weighty matters when the wise men meet for speech;
And joyous he is moreover and blithe and kind with each.
But Regin the wise craftsman heedeth the youngling well,
And before the Kings he cometh, and saith such words to tell.
"I have fostered thy youth, King Elf, and thine O Helper of men,
And ye wot that such a master no king shall see again;
And now would I foster Sigurd; for, though he be none of thy blood,
Mine heart of his days that shall be speaketh abundant good."
Then spake the Helper of men-folk: "Yea, do herein thy will:

For thou art the Master of Masters, and hast learned me all my skill:

But think how bright is this youngling, and thy guile from him withhold;
For this craft of thine hath shown me that thy heart is grim and cold,
Though three men's lives thrice over thy wisdom might not learn;
And I love this son of Sigmund, and mine heart to him doth yearn."
Then Regin laughed, and answered: "I doled out cunning to thee;
But nought with him will I measure: yet no cold-heart shall he be,
Nor grim, nor evil-natured: for whate'er my will might frame,
Gone forth is the word of the Norns, that abideth ever the same.
And now, despite my cunning, how deem ye I shall die?"
And they said he would live as he listed, and at last in peace should lie
When he listed to live no longer; so mighty and wise he was.
But again he laughed and answered: "One day it shall come to pass,
That a beardless youth shall slay me: I know the fateful doom;
But nought may I withstand it, as it heaves up dim through the gloom."
So is Sigurd now with Regin, and he learns him many things;
Yea, all save the craft of battle, that men learned the sons of kings:

The smithying sword and war-coat; the carving runes aright;
The tongues of many countries, and soft speech for men's delight;
The dealing with the harp-strings, and the winding ways of song.
So wise of heart waxed Sigurd, and of body wondrous strong:

And he chased the deer of the forest, and many a wood-wolf slew,
And many a bull of the mountains: and the desert dales he knew,
And the heaths that the wind sweeps over; and seaward would he fare,
Far out from the outer skerries, and alone the sea-wights dare.
One day did Regin tell Sigurd of deeds done in the past by kings both
bold and wise, and the lad longed, too, to do the like, and his bright
eyes glowed with desire. And Regin told him that he should follow his
Volsung fathers and roam far and wide, leaving the peace-lovers and

home-abiders who had cherished his youth. This roused Sigurd's wrath, for he would have nought said against those who had reared him, but Regin bade him ask for one of the horses of Gripir, and banished his anger by a song of the deeds of the Choosers of the Slain. Before the song was finished Sigurd went to King Elf and asked that he might have authority to seek a horse from King Gripir.

Then smiled King Elf, and answered: "A long way wilt thou ride,
To where unpeace and troubles and the griefs of the soul abide,
Yea unto the death at the last: yet surely shall thou win
The praise of many a people: so have thy way herein.
Forsooth no more may we hold thee than the hazel copse may hold
The sun of the early dawning, that turneth it all unto gold."
Then sweetly Sigurd thanked them; and through the night he lay
Mid dreams of many a matter till the dawn was on the way;
Then he shook the sleep from off him, and that dwelling of Kings he left
And wended his ways unto Gripir. On a crag from the mountain reft
Was the house of the old King builded; and a mighty house it was,
Though few were the sons of men that over its threshold would pass:

But the wild ernes cried about it, and the vultures toward it flew,
And the winds from the heart of the mountains searched every chamber
through,
And about were meads wide-spreading; and many a beast thereon,
Yea some that are men-folk's terror, their sport and pasture won.
So into the hall went Sigurd; and amidst was Gripir set
In a chair of the sea-beast's tooth; and his sweeping beard nigh met
The floor that was green as the ocean, and his gown was of mountain-gold,
And the kingly staff in his hand was knobbed with the crystal cold.
Now the first of the twain spake Gripir: "Hail King with the eye bright!
Nought needest thou show the token, for I know of thy life and thy light.
And no need to tell of thy message; it was wafted here on the wind,
That thou wouldst be coming today a horse in my meadow to find:

And strong must he be for the bearing of those deeds of thine that shall
be.

Now choose thou of all the way-wearers that are running loose in my lea."
Then again gat Sigurd outward, and adown the steep he ran
And unto the horse-fed meadow: but lo, a grey-clad man,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, there met him by the way:

And he spake: "Thou hastest, Sigurd; yet tarry till I say
A word that shall well bestead thee: for I know of these mountains well

And all the lea of Gripir, and the beasts that thereon dwell.”
”Wouldst thou have red gold for thy tidings? art thou Gripir’s horse-herd
then?

Nay sure, for thy face is shining like the battle-eager men
My master Regin tells of: and I love thy cloud-grey gown,
And thy visage gleams above it like a thing my dreams have known.”
”Nay whiles have I heeded the horse-kind,” then spake that elder of days,
”And sooth do the sages say, when the beasts of my breeding they praise.
There is one thereof in the meadow, and, wouldst thou cull him out,
Thou shalt follow an elder’s counsel, who hath brought strange things
about,

Who hath known thy father aforetime, and other kings of thy kin.”
So Sigurd said, ”I am ready; and what is the deed to win?”
He said: ”We shall drive the horses adown to the water-side,
That cometh forth from the mountains, and note what next shall betide.”
Then the twain sped on together, and they drave the horses on
Till they came to a rushing river, a water wide and wan;
And the white mews hovered o’er it; but none might hear their cry
For the rush and the rattle of waters, as the downlong flood swept by.
So the whole herd took the river and strove the stream to stem,
And many a brave steed was there; but the flood o’ermastered them:

And some, it swept them down-ward, and some won back to bank,
Some, caught by the net of the eddies, in the swirling hubbub sank;
But one of all swam over, and they saw his mane of grey
Toss over the flowery meadows, a bright thing far away:

Wide then he wheeled about them, then took the stream again
And with the waves’ white horses mingled his cloudy mane.
Then spake the elder of days: ”Hearken now, Sigurd, and hear;
Time was when I gave thy father a gift thou shalt yet deem dear,
And this horse is a gift of my giving:—heed nought where thou mayst ride:

For I have seen thy fathers in a shining house abide,
And on earth they thought of its threshold, and the gifts I had to give;
Nor prayed for a little longer, and a little longer to live.”
Then forth he strode to the mountains, and fain was Sigurd now.
To ask him many a matter: but dim did his bright shape grow,
As a man from the litten doorway fades into the dusk of night;
And the sun in the high-noon shone, and the world was exceeding bright.
So Sigurd turned to the river and stood by the wave-wet strand,
And the grey horse swims to his feet and lightly leaps aland,

And the youngling looks upon him, and deems none beside him good.
And indeed, as tells the story, he was come of Sleipnir's blood,
The tireless horse of Odin: cloud-grey he was of hue,
And it seemed as Sigurd backed him that Sigmund's son he knew,
So glad he went beneath him. Then the youngling's song arose
As he brushed through the noontide blossoms of Gripir's mighty close,
Then he singeth the song of Greyfell, the horse that Odin gave,
Who swam through the sweeping river, and back through the toppling
wave.

Regin telleth Sigurd of his kindred, and of the Gold that was accursed from
ancient days.

Now yet the days pass over, and more than words may tell
Grows Sigurd strong and lovely, and all children love him well.
But oft he looks on the mountains and many a time is fain
To know of what lies beyond them, and learn of the wide world's gain.
Now again it happed on a day that he sat in Regin's hall
And hearkened many tidings of what had chanced to fall,
And of kings that sought their kingdoms o'er many a waste and wild,
And at last saith the crafty master:

"Thou art King Sigmund's child:

Wilt thou wait till these kings of the carles shall die in a little land,
Or wilt thou serve their sons and carry the cup to their hand;
Or abide in vain for the day that never shall come about,
When their banners shall dance in the wind and shake to the war-gods'
shout?"

Then Sigurd answered and said: "Nought such do I look to be.
But thou, a deedless man, too much thou eggest me:

And these folk are good and trusty, and the land is lovely and sweet,
And in rest and in peace it lieth as the floor of Odin's feet:

Yet I know that the world is wide, and filled with deeds unwrought;
And for e'en such work was I fashioned, lest the songcraft come to nought."
Then answered Regin the guileful: "The deed is ready to hand,
Yet holding my peace is the best, for well thou lovest the land;
And thou lovest thy life moreover, and the peace of thy youthful days,
And why should the full-fed feaster his hand to the rye-bread raise?
Yet they say that Sigmund begat thee and he looked to fashion a man.
Fear nought; he lieth quiet in his mound by the sea-waves wan."
So shone the eyes of Sigurd, that the shield against him hung
Cast back their light as the sunbeams; but his voice to the roof-tree rung:

"Tell me, thou Master of Masters, what deed is the deed I shall do?
Nor mock thou the son of Sigmund lest the day of his birth thou rue."
Then answered the Master of Sleight: "The deed is the righting of wrong,
And the quelling a bale and a sorrow that the world hath endured o'erlong,
And the winning a treasure untold, that shall make thee more than the
kings;

Thereof is the Helm of Aweing, the wonder of earthly things,
And thereof is its very fellow, the War-Coat all of gold,
That has not its like in the heavens, nor has earth of its fellow told."
Then answered Sigurd the Volsung: "How long hereof hast thou known?
And what unto thee is this treasure, that thou seemest to give as thine
own?"

"Alas!" quoth the smithying master, "it is mine, yet none of mine,
Since my heart herein avails not, and my hand is frail and fine—
It is long since I first came hither to seek a man for my need;
For I saw by a glimmering light that hence would spring the deed,
And many a deed of the world: but the generations passed,
And the first of the days was as near to the end that I sought as the last;
Till I looked on thine eyes in the cradle: and now I deem through thee,
That the end of my days of waiting, and the end of my woes shall be."
Then Sigurd awhile was silent; but at last he answered and said:

"Thou shalt have thy will and the treasure, and shalt take the curse on
thine head
If a curse the gold enwrappeth: but the deed will I surely do,
For today the dreams of my childhood hath bloomed in my heart anew:

And I long to look on the world and the glory of the earth
And to deal in the dealings of men, and garner the harvest of worth.
But tell me, thou Master of Masters, where lieth this measureless wealth;
Is it guarded by swords of the earl-folk, or kept by cunning and stealth?
Is it over the main sea's darkness, or beyond the mountain wall?
Or e'en in these peaceful acres anigh to the hands of all?"
Then Regin answered sweetly: "Hereof must a tale be told:

Bide sitting, thou son of Sigmund, on the heap of unwrought gold,
And hearken of wondrous matters, and of things unheard, unsaid,
And deeds of my beholding ere the first of Kings was made.
"And first ye shall know of a sooth, that I never was born of the race
Which the masters of God-home have made to cover the fair earth's face;
But I come of the Dwarfs departed; and fair was the earth whileome
Ere the short-lived thralls of the Gods amidst its dales were come.

"It was Reidmar the Ancient begat me; and now was he waxen old,
And a covetous man and a king; and he bade, and I built him a hall,
And a golden glorious house; and thereto his sons did he call,
And he bade them be evil and wise, that his will through them might be
wrought.

Then he gave unto Fafnir my brother the soul that feareth nought,
And the brow of the hardened iron, and the hand that may never fail,
And the greedy heart of a king, and the ear that hears no wail.

"But next unto Otter my brother he gave the snare and the net,
And the longing to wend through the wild-wood, and wade the highways
wet:

And the foot that never resteth, while aught be left alive
That hath cunning to match man's cunning or might with his might to
strive.

"And to me, the least and the youngest, what gift for the slaying of ease?
Save the grief that remembers the past, and the fear that the future sees;
And the hammer and fashioning-iron, and the living coal of fire;
And the craft that createth a semblance, and fails of the heart's desire;
And the toil that each dawning quickens and the task that is never done;
And the heart that longeth ever, nor will look to the deed that is won.

"Thus gave my father the gifts that might never be taken again;
Far worse were we now than the Gods, and but little better than men.
But yet of our ancient might one thing had we left us still:

We had craft to change our semblance, and could shift us at our will
Into bodies of the beast-kind, or fowl, or fishes cold;

"So dwelt we, brethren and father; and Fafnir my brother fared
As the scourge and compeller of all things, and left no wrong undared;
But for me, I toiled and I toiled; and fair grew my father's house;
But writhen and foul were the hands that had made it glorious;

"And myself a little fragment amidst it all I saw,
Grim, cold-hearted, and unmighty as the tempest-driven straw.

—Let be.—For Otter my brother saw seldom field or fold,
And he oftenest used that custom, whereof e'en now I told,
And would shift his shape with the wood-beasts and the things of land and
sea;

And he knew what joy their hearts had, and what they longed to be,
And their dim-eyed understanding, and his wood-craft waxed so great,
That he seemed the king of the creatures and their very mortal fate.

"Now as the years won over three folk of the heavenly halls
Grew awary of sleepless sloth, and the day that nought befalls;

And they fain would look on the earth, and their latest handiwork,
And turn the fine gold over, lest a flaw therein should lurk.
And the three were the heart-wise Odin, the Father of the Slain,
And Loki, the World's Begrudger, who maketh all labour vain,
And Hoenir, the Utter-Blameless, who wrought the hope of man,
And his heart and inmost yearnings, when first the work began;—”

The three wandered over the earth till they came to a mighty river, haunted for long by Otter, by reason of its great wealth of fish. There he lay on the bank, and as he watched the fish in the water his shape was changed to that of a true otter, and he began to devour a golden trout. Two of the gods would have passed without stay, but in the otter Loki saw an enemy, and straightway killed him, rejoicing over his dead body.

As night fell the three gods came to a great hall, wondrously wrought and carved, with golden hangings and forests of pillars. In the midst of the hall sat a king on an ivory throne, and his garments were made of purple from the sea. Kind welcome he gave to the wanderers, and there they feasted and delighted in music and song; but even as they drank and made merry they knew they were caught in the snare.

The king's welcome changed to scornful laughter, and thus he spoke: "Truly are ye gods, but ye are come to people who want you not. Before ye were known to us, still was the winter cold, and the summer warm, and still could we find meat and drink. I am Reidmar, and ye come straight from the slaying of Reidmar's son. Shall I not then take the vengeance I will? Unless, indeed, ye give me the treasure I covet, and then shall ye go your way. This is my sentence. Choose ye which ye will."

Then spake the wise Allfather and prayed Reidmar to unsay his word, and cease to desire the gold. But Reidmar the Wise, and Fafnir the Lord, and Regin the Worker cried aloud in their wrath:—

”O hearken Gods of the Goths! ye shall die, and we shall be Gods,
And rule your men beloved with bitter-heavy rods,
And make them beasts beneath us, save today ye do our will,
And pay us the ransom of blood, and our hearts with the gold fulfill.’
”But Odin spake in answer, and his voice was awful and cold:

’Give righteous doom, O Reidmar! say what ye will of the Gold!’
”Then Reidmar laughed in his heart, and his wrath and his wisdom fled,
And nought but his greed abided; and he spake from his throne and said:

”Now hearken the doom I shall speak! Ye stranger-folk shall be free
When ye give me the Flame of the Waters, the gathered Gold of the Sea,
That Andvari hideth rejoicing in the wan realm pale as the grave;
And the Master of Sleight shall fetch it, and the hand that never gave,

And the heart that begrudgeth for ever shall gather and give and rue.
 —Lo this is the doom of the wise, and no doom shall be spoken anew.’
 ”Then Odin spake: ’It is well; the Curser shall seek for the curse;
 And the Greedy shall cherish the evil—and the seed of the Great they shall
 nurse.’
 ”No word spake Reidmar the great, for the eyes of his heart were turned
 To the edge of the outer desert, so sore for the gold he yearned.
 But Loki I loosed from the toils, and he goeth his way abroad;
 And the heart of Odin he knoweth, and where he shall seek the Hoard.
 ”There is a desert of dread in the uttermost part of the world,
 Where over a wall of mountains is a mighty water hurled,
 Whose hidden head none knoweth, nor where it meeteth the sea;
 And that force is the Force of Andvari, and an Elf of the Dark is he.
 In the cloud and the desert he dwelleth amid that land alone;
 And his work is the storing of treasure within his house of stone.
 Time was when he knew of wisdom, and had many a tale to tell
 Of the days before the Dwarf-age, and of what in that world befell:

And he knew of the stars and the sun, and the worlds that come and go
 On the nether rim of heaven, and whence the wind doth blow,
 And how the sea hangs balanced betwixt the curving lands,
 And how all drew together for the first Gods’ fashioning hands.
 But now is all gone from him, save the craft of gathering gold,
 And he heedeth nought of the summer, nor knoweth the winter cold,
 Nor looks to the sun nor the snowfall, nor ever dreams of the sea,
 Nor hath heard of the making of men-folk, nor of where the high Gods be;
 But ever he gripeth and gathereth, and he toileth hour by hour,
 Nor knoweth the noon from the midnight as he looks on his stony bower,
 And saith: ’It is short, it is narrow for all I shall gather and get;
 For the world is but newly fashioned, and long shall its years be yet.’
 ”There Loki fareth, and seeth in a land of nothing good,
 Far off o’er the empty desert, the reek of the falling flood
 Go up to the floor of heaven, and thither turn his feet
 As he weaveth the unseen meshes and the snare of strong deceit;
 So he cometh his ways to the water, where the glittering foam-bow glows,
 And the huge flood leaps the rock-wall and a green arch over it throws.
 There under the roof of water he treads the quivering floor,
 And the hush of the desert is felt amid the water’s roar,
 And the bleak sun lighteth the wave-vault, and tells of the fruitless plain,
 And the showers that nourish nothing, and the summer come in vain.
 ”There did the great Guile-master his toils and his tangles set,
 And as wide as was the water, so wide was woven the net;

And as dim as the Elf's remembrance did the meshes of it show;
And he had no thought of sorrow, nor spared to come and go
On his errands of griping and getting till he felt himself tangled and caught:

Then back to his blinded soul was his ancient wisdom brought,
And he saw his fall and his ruin, as a man by the lightning's flame
Sees the garth all flooded by foemen; and again he remembered his name;
And e'en as a book well written the tale of the Gods he knew,
And the tale of the making of men, and much of the deeds they should do.
"Then Andvari groaned and answered: 'I know what thou wouldst have,
The wealth mine own hands gathered, the gold that no man gave.'
"'Come forth,' said Loki, 'and give it, and dwell in peace henceforth—
Or die in the toils if thou listeth, if thy life be nothing worth.'
"Full sore the Elf lamented, but he came before the God,
And the twain went into the rock-house and on fine gold they trod,
And the walls shone bright, and brighter than the sun of the upper air.
How great was that treasure of treasures: and the Helm of Dread was there;
The world but in dreams had seen it; and there was the hauberk of gold;
None other is in the heavens, nor has earth of its fellow told.
"Then Loki bade the Elf-king bring all to the upper day,
And he dight himself with his Godhead to bear the treasure away:

So there in the dim grey desert before the God of Guile,
Great heaps of the hid-world's treasure the weary Elf must pile,
And Loki looked on laughing: but, when it all was done,
And the Elf was hurrying homeward, his finger gleamed in the sun:

Then Loki cried: 'Thou art guileful: thou hast not learned the tale
Of the wisdom that Gods hath gotten and their might of all avail.
"'Come hither again to thy master, and give the ring to me;
For meseems it is Loki's portion, and the Bale of Men shall it be.'
"Then the Elf drew off the gold-ring and stood with empty hand
E'en where the flood fell over 'twixt the water and the land,
And he gazed on the great Guile-master, and huge and grim he grew;
And his anguish swelled within him, and the word of the Norns he knew;
How that gold was the seed of gold to the wise and the shapers of things,
The hoarders of hidden treasure, and the unseen glory of rings;
But the seed of woe to the world and the foolish wasters of men,
And grief to the generations that die and spring again:

Then he cried:

'There farest thou Loki, and might I load thee worse
Than with what thine ill heart beareth, then shouldst thou bear my curse:

But for men a curse thou bearest: entangled in my gold,
Amid my woe abideth another woe untold.
Two brethren and a father, eight kings my grief shall slay;
And the hearts of queens shall be broken, and their eyes shall loathe the
day.'

"But Loki laughed in silence, and swift in Godhead went,
To the golden hall of Reidmar and the house of our content.
But when that world of treasure was laid within our hall
'Twas as if the sun were minded to live 'twixt wall and wall,
And all we stood by and panted. Then Odin spake and said:

"O Kings, O folk of the Dwarf-kind, lo, the ransom duly paid!
Will ye have this sun of the ocean, and reap the fruitful field,
And garner up the harvest that earth therefrom shall yield.'

"So he spake; but a little season nought answered Reidmar the wise,
But turned his face from the Treasure, and peered with eager eyes
Endlong the hall and athwart it, as a man may chase about
A ray of the sun of the morning that a naked sword throws out;
And lo from Loki's right-hand came the flash of the fruitful ring,
And at last spake Reidmar scowling:

'Ye wait for my yea-saying
That your feet may go free on the earth, and the fear of my toils may be
done;
That then ye may say in your laughter: The fools of the time agone!
The purblind eyes of the Dwarf-kind! they have gotten the garnered sheaf
And have let their Masters depart with the Seed of Gold and of Grief:

O Loki, friend of Allfather, cast down Andvari's ring,
Or the world shall yet turn backward and the high heavens lack a king.'
"Then Loki drew off the Elf-ring and cast it down on the heap,
And forth as the gold met gold did the light of its glory leap:

But he spake: 'It rejoiceth my heart that no whit of all ye shall lack.
Lest the curse of the Elf-king cleave not, and ye 'scape the utter wrack.'

Then Regin loosed the shackles of the gods and they departed into the night, but Odin stayed in the doorway and thus he spake: "Why do ye thus desire treasure and take sorrow to yourselves? Know ye not that I was before your fathers' fathers, and that I can foresee your fate, and the end of the gold ye covet? I am the Wise One who ordereth all."

Then they went, but Regin afterwards often recalled Odin's words and the evening filled with the gleam of the gold, but little cared he then, so well he loved the gold.

And he prayed his father to keep the treasure, but give a little unto him and Fafnir for the help they had given him that day.

His father in no wise heeded his words, but sat ever on his ivory throne, staring moodily at the gold. But Fafnir grew fierce and grim as he watched him.

”The night waned into the morning, and still above the Hoard
Sat Reidmar clad in purple; but Fafnir took his sword,
And I took my smithying-hammer, and apart in the world we went;
But I came aback in the even, and my heart was heavy and spent;
And I longed, but fear was upon me and I durst not go to the Gold;
So I lay in the house of my toil mid the things I had fashioned of old;
And methought as I lay in my bed ’twixt waking and slumber of night
That I heard the tinkling metal and beheld the hall alight,
But I slept and dreamed of the Gods, and the things that never have slept,
Till I woke to a cry and a clashing and forth from the bed I leapt,
And there by the heaped-up Elf-gold my brother Fafnir stood,
And there at his feet lay Reidmar and reddened the Treasure with blood;
And e’en as I looked on his eyes they glazed and whitened with death,
And forth on the torch-litten hall he shed his latest breath.
”But I looked on Fafnir and trembled for he wore the Helm of Dread,
And his sword was bare in his hand, and the sword and the hand were red
With the blood of our father Reidmar, and his body was wrapped in gold,
With the ruddy-gleaming mailcoat of whose fellow hath nought been told,
And it seemed as I looked upon him that he grew beneath mine eyes:

And then in the mid-hall’s silence did his dreadful voice arise:

”I have slain my father Reidmar, that I alone might keep
The Gold of the darksome places, the Candle of the Deep.
I am such as the Gods have made me, lest the Dwarf-kind people the earth,
Or mingle their ancient wisdom with its short-lived latest birth.
I shall dwell alone henceforward, and the Gold and its waxing curse,
I shall brood on them both together, let my life grow better or worse.
And I am a King henceforward and long shall be my life,
And the Gold shall grow with my longing, for I shall hide it from strife,
And hoard up the Ring of Andvari in the house thine hand hath built.
O thou, wilt thou tarry and tarry, till I cast thy blood on the guilt?
Lo, I am a King for ever, and alone on the Gold shall I dwell
And do no deed to repent of and leave no tale to tell.’

”More awful grew his visage as he spake the word of dread,
And no more durst I behold him, but with heart a-cold I fled;
I fled from the glorious house my hands had made so fair,
As poor as the new-born baby with nought of raiment or gear:

I fled from the heaps of gold, and my goods were the eager will,
And the heart that remembereth all, and the hand that may never be still.
"Then unto this land I came, and that was long ago.
As men-folk count the years; and I taught them to reap and to sow,
"And I grew the master of masters—Think thou how strange it is
That the sword in the hands of a stripling shall one day end all this!
"Yet oft mid all my wisdom did I long for my brother's part,
And Fafnir's mighty kingship weighed heavy on my heart
When the Kings of the earthly kingdoms would give me golden gifts
From out of their scanty treasures, due pay for my cunning shifts.
And once—didst thou number the years thou wouldst think it long ago—
I wandered away to the country from whence our stem did grow.
"Then I went to the pillared hall-stead, and lo, huge heaps of gold,
And to and fro amidst them a mighty Serpent rolled:

Then my heart grew chill with terror, for I thought on the wont of our race,
And I, who had lost their cunning, was a man in a deadly place,
A feeble man and a swordless in the lone destroyer's fold;
For I knew that the Worm was Fafnir, the Wallower on the Gold.
"So I gathered my strength and fled, and hid my shame again
Mid the foolish sons of men-folk; and the more my hope was vain,
The more I longed for the Treasure, and deliv'rance from the yoke:

And yet passed the generations, and I dwelt with the short-lived folk.
"Long years, and long years after, the tale of men-folk told
How up on the Glittering Heath was the house and the dwelling of gold,
And within that house was the Serpent, and the Lord of the Fearful Face:

Then I wondered sore of the desert; for I thought of the golden place
My hands of old had builded; for I knew by many a sign
That the Fearful Face was my brother, that the blood of the Worm was
mine.

This was ages long ago, and yet in that desert he dwells,
Betwixt him and men death lieth, and no man of his semblance tells;
But the tale of the great Gold-wallower is never the more outworn.
Then came thy kin, O Sigurd, and thy father's father was born,
And I fell to the dreaming of dreams, and I saw thine eyes therein,
And I looked and beheld thy glory and all that thy sword should win;
And I thought that thou shouldst be he, who should bring my heart its
rest,

That of all the gifts of the Kings thy sword should give me the best.
"Ah, I fell to the dreaming of dreams; and oft the gold I saw,

And the golden-fashioned Hauberk, clean-wrought without a flaw,
And the Helm that aweth the world; and I knew of Fafnir's heart
That his wisdom was greater than mine, because he had held him apart,
Nor spilt on the sons of men-folk our knowledge of ancient days,
Nor bartered one whit for their love, nor craved for the people's praise.
"And some day I shall have it all, his gold and his craft and his heart
And the gathered and garnered wisdom he guards in the mountains apart."
And he spake: "Hast thou hearkened, Sigurd, wilt thou help a man that is
old
To avenge him for his father? Wilt thou win that Treasure of Gold
And be more than the Kings of the earth? Wilt thou rid the earth of a
wrong
And heal the woe and the sorrow my heart hath endured o'erlong?"
Then Sigurd looked upon him with steadfast eyes and clear,
And Regin drooped and trembled as he stood the doom to hear:

But the bright child spake as aforetime, and answered the Master and said:

"Thou shalt have thy will, and the Treasure, and take the curse on thine
head."

Of the forging of the Sword that is called The Wrath of Sigurd.

But when the morrow was come he went to his mother and spake:

"The shards, the shards of the sword, that thou gleanedst for my sake
In the night on the field of slaughter, in the tide when my father fell,
Hast thou kept them through sorrow and joyance? hast thou warded them
trusty and well?

Where hast thou laid them, my mother?"

Then she looked upon him and said:

"Art thou wroth, O Sigurd my son, that such eyes are in thine head?

And wilt thou be wroth with thy mother? do I withstand thee at all?"

"Nay," said he, "nought am I wrathful, but the days rise up like a wall
Betwixt my soul and the deeds, and I strive to rend them through.

"Now give me the sword, my mother, that Sigmund gave thee to keep."

She said: "I shall give it thee gladly, for fain shall I be of thy praise

When thou knowest my careful keeping of that hope of the earlier days."

So she took his hand in her hand, and they went their ways, they twain;

Till they came to the treasure of queen-folk, the guarded chamber of gain:

They were all alone with its riches, and she turned the key in the gold,

And lifted the sea-born purple, and the silken web unrolled,

And lo, 'twixt her hands and her bosom the shards of Sigmund's sword;

No rust-fleck stained its edges, and the gems of the ocean's hoard
Were as bright in the hilts and glorious, as when in the Volsungs' hall
It shone in the eyes of the earl-folk and flashed from the shielded wall.
But Sigurd smiled upon it, and he said: "O Mother of Kings,
Well hast thou warded the war-glaive for a mirror of many things,
And a hope of much fulfilment: well hast thou given to me
The message of my fathers, and the word of thing to be:

Trusty hath been thy warding, but its hour is over now:

These shards shall be knit together, and shall hear the war-wind blow."
Then she felt his hands about her as he took the fateful sword,
And he kissed her soft and sweetly; but she answered never a word:

But swift on his ways went Sigurd, and to Regin's house he came,
Where the Master stood in the doorway and behind him leapt the flame,
And dark he looked and little: no more his speech was sweet,
No words on his lip were gathered the Volsung child to greet,
Till he took the sword from Sigurd and the shards of the days of old;
Then he spake:

"Will nothing serve thee save this blue steel and cold,
The bane of thy father's father, the fate of all his kin,
The baleful blade I fashioned, the Wrath that the Gods would win?"
Then answered the eye-bright Sigurd: "If thou thy craft wilt do,
Nought save these battle-gleanings shall be my helper true:"

So Regin welded together the shards of Sigmund's sword, and wrought the Wrath of Sigurd, whose hilts were great and along whose edge ran a living flame so that men thought it like sunlight and lightning mingled. Then on Greyfell, with the Wrath girt by his side, Sigurd rode to the hall of Gripir, who told him of deeds to be and of the fate that would befall him. In no wise was Sigurd troubled, but smiled as a happy child, and together they talked of the deeds of the kings of the Earth, of the wonders of Heaven, and of the Queen of the Sea.

And Sigurd told Gripir that he indeed was wise above all men, but for himself had the Wrath been fashioned, and he was ready to ride to the Glittering Heath. So they took leave of one another, and as the sky grew blood-red in the West, and the birds were flying homeward, Sigurd drew near to Regin's dwelling.

Sigurd rideth to the Glittering Heath
Again on the morrow morning doth Sigurd the Volsung ride,
And Regin, the Master of Masters, is faring by his side,
And they leave the dwelling of kings and ride the summer land,

Until at the eve of the day the hills are on either hand;
Then they wend up higher and higher, and over the heaths they fare
Till the moon shines broad on the midnight, and they sleep 'neath the
 heavens bare;
And they waken and look behind them, and lo, the dawning of day
And the little land of the Helper and its valleys far away;
But the mountains rise before them, a wall exceeding great.
Then spake the Master of Masters: "We have come to the garth and the
 gate;
There is youth and rest behind thee and many a thing to do,
There is many a fond desire, and each day born anew;
And the land of the Volsungs to conquer, and many a people's praise:

And for me there is rest it may be, and the peaceful end of days.
We have come to the garth and the gate; to the hall-door now shall we win,
Shall we go to look on the high-seat and see what sitteth therein?"
"Yea, and what else?" said Sigurd, "was thy tale but mockeries,
And have I been drifted hither on a wind of empty lies?"
"It was sooth, it was sooth," said Regin, "and more might I have told
Had I heart and space to remember the deeds of the days of old."
Day-long they fared through the mountains, and that highway's fashioner,
Forsooth, was a fearful craftsman, and his hands the waters were,
And the heaped-up ice was his mattock, and the fire-blast was his man,
And never a whit he heeded though his walls were waste and wan,
And the guest-halls of that wayside great heaps of the ashes spent.
But, each as a man alone, through the sun-bright day they went,
And they rode till the moon rose upward, and the stars were small and
 fair,
Then they slept on the long-slaked ashes beneath the heavens bare;
And the cold dawn came and they wakened, and the King of the Dwarf-kind
 seemed
As a thing of that wan land fashioned; but Sigurd glowed and gleamed
Amid a shadowless twilight by Greyfell's cloudy flank,
As a little space they abided while the latest star-world shrank;
On the backward road looked Regin and heard how Sigurd drew
The girths of Greyfell's saddle, and the voice of his sword he knew,
And his war-gear clanged and tinkled as he leapt to the saddle-stead:

And the sun rose up at their backs and the grey world changed to red,
And away to the west went Sigurd by the glory wreathed about,
But little and black was Regin as a fire that dieth out.
Day-long they rode the mountains by the crags exceeding old,

And the ash that the first of the Dwarf-kind found dull and quenched and cold.

Then the moon in the mid-sky swam, and the stars were fair and pale,
And beneath the naked heaven they slept in an ash-grey dale;
And again at the dawn-dusk's ending they stood upon their feet,
And Sigurd donned his war-gear nor his eyes would Regin meet.
A clear streak widened in heaven low down above the earth;
And above it lay the cloud-flecks, and the sun, anigh its birth,
Unseen, their hosts was staining with the very hue of blood,
And ruddy by Greyfell's shoulder the Son of Sigmund stood.
Then spake the Master of Masters: "What is thine hope this morn
That thou dightest thee, O Sigurd, to ride this world forlorn?"
"What needeth hope," said Sigurd, "when the heart of the Volsungs turns
To the light of the Glittering Heath, and the house where the Waster burns?
I shall slay the Foe of the Gods, as thou badst me a while agone,
And then with the Gold and its wisdom shalt thou be left alone."
"O Child," said the King of the Dwarf-kind, "when the day at last comes
round

For the dread and the Dusk of the Gods, and the kin of the Wolf is unbound,
When thy sword shall hew the fire, and the wildfire beateth thy shield,
Shalt thou praise the wages of hope and the Gods that pitched the field?"
"O Foe of the Gods," said Sigurd, "wouldst thou hide the evil thing,
And the curse that is greater than thou, lest death end thy labouring,
Lest the night should come upon thee amidst thy toil for nought?
It is me, it is me that thou fearest, if indeed I know thy thought;
Yea me, who would utterly light the face of all good and ill,
If not with the fruitful beams that the summer shall fulfill,
Then at least with the world a-blazing, and the glare of the grinded sword.
"I have hearkened not nor heeded the words of thy fear and thy ruth:

Thou hast told thy tale and thy longing, and thereto I hearkened well:—
Let it lead thee up to heaven, let it lead thee down to hell,
The deed shall be done tomorrow: thou shalt have that measureless Gold,
And devour the garnered wisdom that blessed thy realm of old,
That hath lain unspent and begrudged in the very heart of hate:

With the blood and the might of thy brother thine hunger shalt thou sate;
And this deed shall be mine and thine; but take heed for what followeth
then!

Let each do after his kind! I shall do the deeds of men;
I shall harvest the field of their sowing, in the bed of their strewing shall
sleep;

To them shall I give my life-days, to the Gods my glory to keep.
But them with the wealth and the wisdom that the best of the Gods might
praise,
If thou shall indeed excel them and become the hope of the days,
Then me in turn hast thou conquered, and I shall be in turn
Thy fashioned brand of the battle through good and evil to burn,
Or the flame that sleeps in thy stithy for the gathered winds to blow,
When thou listest to do and undo and thine uttermost cunning to show.
But indeed I wot full surely that thou shalt follow thy kind;
And for all that cometh after, the Norns shall loose and bind.”
Then his bridle-reins rang sweetly, and the warding-walls of death,
And Regin drew up to him, and the Wrath sang loud in the sheath,
And forth from that trench in the mountains by the westward way they
ride;
And little and black goes Regin by the golden Volsung’s side;
So ever they wended upward, and the midnight hour was o’er,
And the stars grew pale and paler, and failed from the heaven’s floor,
And the moon was a long while dead, but where was the promise of day?
No change came over the darkness, no streak of the dawning grey;
No sound of the wind’s uprising adown the night there ran:

It was blind as the Gaping Gulf ere the first of the worlds began.
Then athwart and athwart rode Sigurd and sought the walls of the pass,
But found no wall before him; and the road rang hard as brass
Beneath the hoofs of Greyfell, as up and up he trod:

—Was it the daylight of Hell, or the night of the doorway of God?
But lo, at the last a glimmer, and a light from the west there came,
And another and another, like points of far-off flame;
And they grew and brightened and gathered; and whiles together they ran
Like the moonwake over the waters; and whiles they were scant and wan,
Some greater and some lesser, like the boats of fishers laid
About the sea of midnight; and a dusky dawn they made,
A faint and glimmering twilight: So Sigurd strains his eyes,
And he sees how a land deserted all round about him lies
More changeless than mid-ocean, as fruitless as its floor:

Then the heart leaps up within him, for he knows that his journey is o’er,
And there he draweth bridle on the first of the Glittering Heath:

And the Wrath is waxen merry and sings in the golden sheath
As he leaps adown from Greyfell, and stands upon his feet,
And wends his ways through the twilight the Foe of the Gods to meet.

Sigurd slayeth Fafnir the Serpent

Nought Sigurd seeth of Regin, and nought he heeds of him,
As in watchful might and glory he strides the desert dim,
And behind him paceth Greyfell; but he deems the time o'erlong
Till he meet the great gold-warden, the over-lord of wrong.
So he wendeth midst the silence through the measureless desert place,
And beholds the countless glitter with wise and steadfast face,
Till him-seems in a little season that the flames grown somewhat wan,
And a grey thing glimmers before him, and becomes a mighty man,
One-eyed and ancient-seeming, in cloud-grey raiment clad;
A friendly man and glorious, and of visage smiling-glad:

Then content in Sigurd groweth because of his majesty,
And he heareth him speak in the desert as the wind of the winter sea:

"Hail Sigurd! Give me thy greeting ere thy ways alone thou wend!"
Said Sigurd: "Hail! I greet thee, my friend and my fathers' friend."
"Now whither away," said the elder, "with the Steed and the ancient Sword?"
"To the greedy house," said Sigurd, "and the King of the Heavy Hoard."
"Wilt thou smite, O Sigurd, Sigurd?" said the ancient mighty-one.
"Yea, yea, I shall smite," said the Volsung, "save the Gods have slain the
sun."

"What wise wilt thou smite," said the elder, "lest the dark devour thy day?"
"Thou hast praised the sword," said the child, "and the sword shall find a
way."

"Be learned of me," said the Wise-one, "for I was the first of thy folk."
Said the child: "I shall do thy bidding, and for thee shall I strike the stroke."
Spake the Wise-one: "Thus shalt thou do when thou wendest hence alone:

Thou shalt find a path in the desert, and a road in the world of stone;
It is smooth and deep and hollow, but the rain hath riven it not,
And the wild wind hath not worn it, for it is but Fafnir's slot,
Whereby he wends to the water and the fathomless pool of old,
When his heart in the dawn is weary, and he loathes the ancient Gold:

There think of the great and the fathers, and bare the whetted Wrath,
And dig a pit in the highway, and a grave in the Serpent's path:

Lie thou therein, O Sigurd, and thine hope from the glooming hide,
And be as the dead for a season, and the living light abide!
And so shall thine heart avail thee, and thy mighty fateful hand,
And the Light that lay in the Branstock, the well-belovèd brand."
Said the child: "I shall do thy bidding, and for thee shall I strike the stroke;

For I love thee, friend of my fathers, Wise Heart of the holy folk.”
So spake the Son of Sigmund, and beheld no man anear,
And again was the night the midnight, and the twinkling flame shone clear
In the hush of the Glittering Heath; and alone went Sigmund’s son
Till he came to the road of Fafnir, and the highway worn by one,
By the drift of the rain unfurrowed, by the windy years unrent,
And forth from the dark it came, and into the dark it went.
Great then was the heart of Sigurd, for there in the midmost he stayed,
And thought of the ancient fathers, and bared the bright blue blade,
That shone as a fleck of the day-light, and the night was all around.
Fair then was the Son of Sigmund as he toiled and laboured the ground;
Great, mighty he was in his working, and the Glittering Heath he clave,
And the sword shone blue before him as he dug the pit and the grave:

There he hid his hope from the night-tide and lay like one of the dead,
And wise and wary he bided; and the heavens hung over his head.
Now the night wanes over Sigurd, and the ruddy rings he sees,
And his war-gear’s fair adornment, and the God-folk’s images;
But a voice in the desert ariseth, a sound in the waste has birth,
A changing tinkle and clatter, as of gold dragged over the earth:

O’er Sigurd widens the day-light, and the sound is drawing close,
And speedier than the trample of speedy feet it goes;
But ever deemeth Sigurd that the sun brings back the day,
For the grave grows lighter and lighter and heaven o’erhead is grey.
But now, how the rattling waxeth till he may not heed nor hark!
And the day and the heavens are hidden, and o’er Sigurd rolls the dark,
As the flood of a pitchy river, and heavy-thick is the air
With the venom of hate long hoarded, and lies once fashioned fair:

Then a wan face comes from the darkness, and is wrought in man-like wise,
And the lips are writhed with laughter and bleared are the blinded eyes;
And it wandereth hither and thither, and searcheth through the grave
And departeth, leaving nothing, save the dark, rolled wave on wave
O’er the golden head of Sigurd and the edges of the sword,
And the world weighs heavy on Sigurd, and the weary curse of the Hoard;
Him-seemed the grave grew straiter, and his hope of life grew chill,
And his heart by the Worm was enfolded, and the bonds of the Ancient Ill.
Then was Sigurd stirred by his glory, and he strove with the swaddling of
Death;
He turned in the pit on the highway, and the grave of the Glittering Heath;
He laughed and smote with the laughter and thrust up over his head.

And smote the venom asunder and clave the heart of Dread;
Then he leapt from the pit and the grave, and the rushing river of blood,
And fulfilled with the joy of the War-God on the face of earth he stood
With red sword high uplifted, with wrathful glittering eyes;
And he laughed at the heavens above him for he saw the sun arise,
And Sigurd gleamed on the desert, and shone in the new-born light,
And the wind in his raiment wavered, and all the world was bright.
But there was the ancient Fafnir, and the Face of Terror lay
On the huddled folds of the Serpent, that were black and ashen-grey
In the desert lit by the sun; and those twain looked each on each,
And forth from the Face of Terror went a sound of dreadful speech:

"Child, child, who art thou that hast smitten? bright child, of whence is
thy birth?"

"I am called the Wild-thing Glorious, and alone I wend on the earth."

"What master hath taught thee of murder?—Thou hast wasted Fafnir's
day."

"I, Sigurd, knew and desired, and the bright sword learned the way."

"I am blind, O Strong Compeller, in the bonds of Death and Hell.

But thee shall the rattling Gold and the red rings bring unto bane."

"Yet the rings mine hand shall scatter, and the earth shall gather again."

"Woe, woe! in the days passed over I bore the Helm of Dread,

I reared the Face of Terror, and the hoarded hate of the Dead:

I overcame and was mighty; I was wise and cherished my heart

In the waste where no man wandered, and the high house builded apart:

Till I met thine hand, O Sigurd, and thy might ordained from of old;

And I fought and fell in the morning, and I die far off from the Gold."

Then all sank into silence, and the Son of Sigmund stood

On the torn and furrowed desert by the pool of Fafnir's blood,

And the Serpent lay before him, dead, chilly, dull, and grey;

And over the Glittering Heath fair shone the sun and the day,

And a light wind followed the sun and breathed o'er the fateful place,

As fresh as it furrows the sea-plain or bows the acres' face.

Sigurd slayeth Regin the Master of Masters on the Glittering Heath

There standeth Sigurd the Volsung, and leaneth on his sword,

And beside him now is Greyfell and looks on his golden lord,

And the world is awake and living; and whither now shall they wend,

Who have come to the Glittering Heath, and wrought that deed to its end?

For hither comes Regin the Master from the skirts of the field of death.

Afoot he went o'er the desert, and he came unto Sigurd and stared

At the golden gear of the man, and the Wrath yet bloody and bared,
And the light locks raised by the wind, and the eyes beginning to smile,
And the lovely lips of the Volsung, and the brow that knew no guile;
And he murmured under his breath while his eyes grew white with wrath:

"O who art thou, and wherefore, and why art thou in the path?"
Then he turned to the ash-grey Serpent, and grovelled low on the ground,
And he drank of that pool of the blood where the stones of the wild were
drowned,
And long he lapped as a dog; but when he arose again,
Lo, a flock of the mountain-eagles that drew to the feastful plain;
And he turned and looked on Sigurd, as bright in the sun he stood,
A stripling fair and slender, and wiped the Wrath of the blood.
Then he scowled and crouched and darkened, and came to Sigurd and
spake:

"O child, thou hast slain my brother, and the Wrath is alive and awake."
"Thou sayest sooth," said Sigurd, "thy deed and mine is done:

But now our ways shall sunder, for here, meseemeth, the sun
Hath but little of deeds to do, and no love to win aback."
But Regin darkened before him, and exceeding grim was he grown,
And he spake: "Thou hast slain my brother, and wherewith wilt thou
atone?"

"Stand up, O Master," said Sigurd, "O Singer of ancient days,
And take the wealth I have won thee, ere we wend on the sundering ways.
I have toiled and thou hast desired, and the Treasure is surely anear,
And thou hast wisdom to find it, and I have slain thy fear."
But Regin crouched and darkened: "Thou hast slain my brother," he said.
"Take thou the Gold," quoth Sigurd, "for the ransom of my head!"
Then Regin crouched and darkened, and over the earth he hung;
And he said: "Thou hast slain my brother, and the Gods are yet but young."
And he spake: "Thou hast slain my brother, and today shall thou be my
thrall:

Yea, a King shall be my cook-boy and this heath my cooking-hall."
Then he crept to the ash-grey coils where the life of his brother had lain,
And he drew a glaive from his side and smote the smitten and slain,
And tore the heart from Fafnir, while the eagles cried o'erhead,
And sharp and shrill was their voice o'er the entrails of the dead.
Then Regin spake to Sigurd: "Of this slaying wilt thou be free?
Then gather thou fire together and roast the heart for me,
That I may eat it and live, and be thy master and more;

For therein was might and wisdom, and the grudged and hoarded lore:—
—Or else, depart on thy ways afraid from the Glittering Heath.”
Then he fell abackward and slept, nor set his sword in the sheath.
But Sigurd took the Heart, and wood on the waste he found,
The wood that grew and died, as it crept on the niggard ground,
And grew and died again, and lay like whitened bones;
And the ernes cried over his head, as he builded his hearth of stones,
And kindled the fire for cooking, and sat and sang o’er the roast
The song of his fathers of old, and the Wolfings’ gathering host:

So there on the Glittering Heath rose up the little flame,
And the dry sticks crackled amidst it, and alow the eagles came,
And seven they were by tale, and they pitched all round about
The cooking-fire of Sigurd, and sent their song-speech out:

But nought he knoweth its wisdom, or the word that they would speak:

And hot grew the Heart of Fafnir and sang amid the reek.
Then Sigurd looketh on Regin, and he deemeth it overlong
That he dighteth the dear-bought morsel, and the might for the Master of
wrong,
So he reacheth his hand to the roast to see if the cooking be o’er;
But the blood and the fat seethed from it and scalded his finger sore,
And he set his hand to his mouth to quench the fleshly smart,
And he tasted the flesh of the Serpent and the blood of Fafnir’s Heart:

Then there came a change upon him, for the speech of fowl he knew,
And wise in the ways of the beast-kind as the Dwarfs of old he grew;
And he knitted his brows and hearkened, and wrath in his heart arose
For he felt beset of evil in a world of many foes.
But the hilts of the Wrath he handled, and Regin’s heart he saw,
And how that the Foe of the Gods the net of death would draw;
And his bright eyes flashed and sparkled, and his mouth grew set and stern
As he hearkened the voice of the eagles, and their song began to learn.
And six of the eagles cried to Sigurd not to tarry before the feast, and they
urged him to kill Regin, who had planned Fafnir’s death that he alone
might live and fashion the world after his evil will.
And the seventh: ”Arise, O Sigurd, lest the hour be overlate!
For the sun in the mid-noon shineth, and swift is the hand of Fate:

Arise! lest the world run backward and the blind heart have its will,
And once again be tangled the Sundered good and ill;
Lest love and hatred perish, lest the world forget its tale,

And the Gods sit deedless, dreaming, in the high-walled heavenly vale."
 Then swift ariseth Sigurd, and the Wrath in his hand is bare,
 And he looketh, and Regin sleepeth, and his eyes wide-open glare;
 But his lips smile false in his dreaming, and his hand is on the sword;
 For he dreams himself the Master and the new world's fashioning-lord,
 And his dream hath forgotten Sigurd, and the King's life lies in the pit;
 He is nought; Death gnaweth upon him, while the Dwarfs in mastery sit.
 But lo, how the eyes of Sigurd the heart of the guileful behold,
 And great is Allfather Odin, and upriseth the Curse of the Gold,
 And the Branstock bloometh to heaven from the ancient wondrous root;
 The summer hath shone on its blossoms, and Sigurd's Wrath is the fruit.
 Then his second stroke struck Sigurd, for the Wrath flashed thin and white,
 And 'twixt head and trunk of Regin fierce ran the fateful light;
 And there lay brother by brother a faded thing and wan.
 But Sigurd cried in the desert: "So far have I wended on!
 Dead are the foes of God-home that would blend the good and the ill;
 And the World shall yet be famous, and the Gods shall have their will.
 Nor shall I be dead and forgotten, while the earth grows worse and worse,
 With the blind heart king o'er the people, and binding curse with curse."

How Sigurd took to him the Treasure of the Elf Andvari

So Sigurd ate of the heart of Fafnir, and as he ate the longing to be gone to mighty deeds grew great, and he leapt on Greyfell and sought the home of the Dweller amid the Gold on the edge of the heath. He strode through the doorway, and before him lay golden armour, golden coins, and golden sands from rivers that none but the Dwarfs could mine. But more wonderful than all other treasures were the Helm of Aweing, and the Hauberk all of gold, while on top of the midmost heap, gleaming like the brightest star in the sky, lay the ring of Andvari.

Sigurd put on the helm and the hauberk, and dragged out gold wherewith he loaded Greyfell till the cloud-grey horse shone, while the eagles ever bade him bring forth the treasure, and let the gold shine in the open. And as the stars paled and the dawn grew clearer, Sigurd and Greyfell passed swiftly and lightly towards the west.

How Sigurd awoke Brynhild upon Hindfell

By long roads rideth Sigurd amidst that world of stone,
 And somewhat south he turneth; for he would not be alone,
 But longs for the dwellings of man-folk, and the kingly people's speech,
 And the days of the glee and the joyance, where men laugh each to each.
 But still the desert endureth, and afar must Greyfell fare
 From the wrack of the Glittering Heath, and Fafnir's golden lair.
 Long Sigurd rideth the waste, when, lo, on a morning of day

From out of the tangled crag-walls, amidst the cloud-land grey
Comes up a mighty mountain, and it is as though there burns
A torch amidst of its cloud-wreath; so thither Sigurd turns,
For he deems indeed from its topmost to look on the best of the earth;
And Greyfell neigheth beneath him, and his heart is full of mirth.
Night falls, but yet rides Sigurd, and hath no thought of rest,
For he longs to climb that rock-world and behold the earth at its best;
But now mid the maze of the foot-hills he seeth the light no more,
And the stars are lovely and gleaming on the lightless heavenly floor.
So up and up he wendeth till the night is wearing thin;
And he rideth a rift of the mountain, and all is dark therein,
Till the stars are dimmed by dawning and the wakening world is cold;
Then afar in the upper rock-wall a breach doth he behold,
And a flood of light poured inward the doubtful dawning blinds:

So swift he rideth thither and the mouth of the breach he finds,
And sitteth awhile on Greyfell on the marvellous thing to gaze:

For lo, the side of Hindfell enwrapped by the fervent blaze,
And nought 'twixt earth and heaven save a world of flickering flame,
And a hurrying shifting tangle, where the dark rents went and came.
Great groweth the heart of Sigurd with uttermost desire,
And he crieth kind to Greyfell, and they hasten up, and nigher,
Till he draweth rein in the dawning on the face of Hindfell's steep:

But who shall heed the dawning where the tongues of that wildfire leap?
For they weave a wavering wall, that driveth over the heaven
The wind that is born within it; nor ever aside is it driven
By the mightiest wind of the waste, and the rain-flood amidst it is nought;
And no wayfarer's door and no window the hand of its builder hath
wrought.

But thereon is the Volsung smiling as its breath uplifteth his hair,
And his eyes shine bright with its image, and his mail gleams white and
fair,
And his war-helm pictures the heavens and the waning stars behind:

But his neck is Greyfell stretching to snuff at the flame-wall blind,
And his cloudy flank upheaveth, and tinkleth the knitted mail,
And the gold of the uttermost waters is waxen wan and pale.
Now Sigurd turns in his saddle, and the hilt of the Wrath he shifts,
And draws a girth the tighter; then the gathered reins he lifts,
And crieth aloud to Greyfell, and rides at the wildfire's heart;
But the white wall wavers before him and the flame-flood rusheth apart,

And high o'er his head it riseth, and wide and wild is its roar
As it beareth the mighty tidings to the very heavenly floor:

But he rideth through its roaring as the warrior rides the rye,
When it bows with the wind of the summer and the hid spears draw anigh.
The white flame licks his raiment and sweeps through Greyfell's mane,
And bathes both hands of Sigurd and the hilts of Fafnir's bane,
And winds about his war-helm and mingles with his hair,
But nought his raiment dusketh or dims his glittering gear;
Then it fails and fades and darkens till all seems left behind,
And dawn and the blaze is swallowed in mid-mirk stark and blind.
But forth a little further and a little further on
And all is calm about him, and he sees the scorched earth wan
Beneath a glimmering twilight, and he turns his conquering eyes,
And a ring of pale slaked ashes on the side of Hindfell lies;
And the world of the waste is beyond it; and all is hushed and grey,
And the new-risen moon is a-paleing, and the stars grow faint with day.
Then Sigurd looked before him and a Shield-burg there he saw,
A wall of the tiles of Odin wrought clear without a flaw,
The gold by the silver gleaming, and the ruddy by the white;
And the blazonings of their glory were done upon them bright.
As of dear things wrought for the war-lords new come to Odin's hall.
Piled high aloft to the heavens uprose that battle-wall,
And far o'er the topmost shield-rim for a banner of fame there hung
A glorious golden buckler; and against the staff it rung
As the earliest wind of dawning uprose on Hindfell's face
And the light from the yellow east beamed soft on the shielded place.
But the Wrath cried out in answer as Sigurd leapt adown
To the wasted soil of the desert by that rampart of renown;
He looked but little beneath it, and the dwelling of God it seemed,
As against its gleaming silence the eager Sigurd gleamed:

He draweth not sword from scabbard, as the wall he wendeth around,
And it is but the wind and Sigurd that wakeneth any sound:

But, lo, to the gate he cometh, and the doors are open wide,
And no warder the way withstandeth, and no earls by the threshold abide.
So he stands awhile and marvels; then the baleful light of the Wrath
Gleams bare in his ready hand as he wendeth the inward path:

For he doubteth some guile of the Gods, or perchance some Dwarf-king's
snare,
Or a mock of the Giant people that shall fade in the morning air:

But he getteth him in and gazeth; and a wall doth he behold,
And the ruddy set by the white, and the silver by the gold;
But within the garth that it girdeth no work of man is set,
But the utmost head of Hindfell ariseth higher yet;
And below in the very midmost is a Giant-fashioned mound,
Piled high as the rims of the Shield-burg above the level ground;
And there, on that mound of the Giants, o'er the wilderness forlorn,
A pale grey image lieth, and gleameth in the morn.
So there was Sigurd alone; and he went from the shielded door,
And aloft in the desert of wonder the Light of the Branstock he bore;
And he set his face to the earth-mound, and beheld the image wan,
And the dawn was growing about it; and, lo, the shape of a man
Set forth to the eyeless desert on the tower-top of the world,
High over the cloud-wrought castle whence the windy bolts are hurled.
Now over the body he standeth, and seeth it shapen fair,
And clad from head to foot-sole in pale grey-glittering gear,
In a hauberk wrought as straitly as though to the flesh it were grown:

But a great helm hideth the head and is girt with a glittering crown.
So thereby he stoopeth and kneeleth, for he deems it were good indeed
If the breath of life abide there and the speech to help at need;
And as sweet as the summer wind from a garden under the sun
Cometh forth on the topmost Hindfell the breath of that sleeping-one.
Then he saith he will look on the face, if it bear him love or hate,
Or the bonds for his life's constraining, or the sundering doom of fate.
So he draweth the helm from the head, and, lo, the brow snow-white,
And the smooth unfurrowed cheeks, and the wise lips breathing light;
And the face of a woman it is, and the fairest that ever was born,
Shown forth to the empty heavens and the desert world forlorn:

But he looketh, and loveth her sore, and he longeth her spirit to move,
And awaken her heart to the world, that she may behold him and love.
And he toucheth her breast and her hands, and he loveth her passing sore.
And he saith: "Awake! I am Sigurd;" but she moveth never the more.
Then he looked on his bare bright blade, and he said: "Thou—what wilt
thou do?"

For indeed as I came by the war-garth thy voice of desire I knew."
Bright burnt the pale blue edges for the sunrise drew anear,
And the rims of the Shield-burg glittered, and the east was exceeding clear:

So the eager edges he setteth to the Dwarf-wrought battle-coat
Where the hammered ring-knit collar constraineth the woman's throat;

But the sharp Wrath biteth and rendeth, and before it fail the rings,
And, lo, the gleam of the linen, and the light of golden things:

Then he driveth the blue steel onward, and through the skirt, and out,
Till nought but the rippling linen is wrapping her about;
Then he deems her breath comes quicker and her breast begins to heave,
So he turns about the War-Flame and rends down either sleeve,
Till her arms lie white in her raiment, and a river of sun-bright hair
Flows free o'er bosom and shoulder and floods the desert bare.
Then a flush cometh over her visage and a sigh up-heaveth her breast,
And her eyelids quiver and open, and she wakeneth into rest;
Wide-eyed on the dawning she gazeth, too glad to change or smile,
And but little moveth her body, nor speaketh she yet for a while;
And yet kneels Sigurd moveless her wakening speech to heed,
While soft the waves of the daylight o'er the starless heavens speed,
And the gleaming rims of the Shield-burg yet bright and brighter grow,
And the thin moon hangeth her horns dead-white in the golden glow.
Then she turned and gazed on Sigurd, and her eyes met the Volsung's eyes.
And mighty and measureless now did the tide of his love arise,
For their longing had met and mingled, and he knew of her heart that she
loved,
As she spake unto nothing but him and her lips with the speech-flood
moved:

"O, what is the thing so mighty that my weary sleep hath torn,
And rent the fallow bondage, and the wan woe over-worn?"
He said: "The hand of Sigurd and the Sword of Sigmund's son,
And the heart that the Volsungs fashioned this deed for thee have done."
But she said: "Where then is Odin that laid me here alow?
Long lasteth the grief of the world, and manfolk's tangled woe!"
"He dwelleth above," said Sigurd, "but I on the earth abide,
And I came from the Glittering Heath the waves of thy fire to ride."
Then Sigurd looketh upon her, and the words from his heart arise:

"Thou art the fairest of earth, and the wisest of the wise;
O who art thou that lovest? I am Sigurd, e'en as I told;
I have slain the Foe of the Gods, and gotten the Ancient Gold;
And great were the gain of thy love, and the gift of mine earthly days,
If we twain should never sunder as we wend on the changing ways.
O who art thou that lovest, thou fairest of all things born?
And what meaneth thy sleep and thy slumber in the wilderness forlorn?"

Then the maiden told him that she had been the handmaid of the All-father, but
that she grew too proud, and Odin had sent her to Hindfell, where the sleep thorn

pierced her that she might sleep till she found the fearless heart she would wed. Such a one had she found now, and many were the words of prophetic wisdom and warning that fell from her lips on the ears of Sigurd.

But many though they were they were not enough for him, who prayed her to speak with him more of Wisdom.

So together they sat on the side of Hindfell and talked of all that is and can be, and then together they climbed the mountain, till beneath them they saw the kingdoms of the earth stretching far away, and Brynhild bade him look down on her home, saying:

"Yet I bid thee look on the land 'twixt the wood and the silver sea
In the bight of the swirling river, and the house that cherished me!
There dwelleth mine earthly sister and the king that she hath wed;
There morn by morn aforetime I woke on the golden bed;
There eve by eve I tarried mid the speech and the lays of kings;
There noon by noon I wandered and plucked the blossoming things;
The little land of Lymdale by the swirling river's side,
Where Brynhild once was I called in the days ere my father died;
The little land of Lymdale 'twixt the woodland and the sea,
Where on thee mine eyes shall brighten and thine eyes shall beam on me."
"I shall seek thee there," said Sigurd, "when the day-spring is begun,
Ere we wend the world together in the season of the sun."
"I shall bide thee there," said Brynhild, "till the fulness of the days,
And the time for the glory appointed, and the springing-tide of praise."
From his hand then draweth Sigurd Andvari's ancient Gold;
There is nought but the sky above them as the ring together they hold,
The shapen ancient token, that hath no change nor end,
No change, and no beginning, no flaw for God to mend:

Then Sigurd cries: "O Brynhild, now hearken while I swear,
That the sun shall die in the heavens and the day no more be fair,
If I seek not love in Lymdale and the house that fostered thee,
And the land where thou awakedst 'twixt the woodland and the sea!"
And she cried: "O Sigurd, Sigurd, now hearken while I swear
That the day shall die for ever and the sun to blackness wear,
Ere I forget thee, Sigurd, as I lie 'twixt wood and sea
In the little land of Lymdale and the house that fostered me!"
Then he set the ring on her finger and once, if ne'er again,
They kissed and clung together, and their hearts were full and fain.

BOOK III: BRYNHILD

Of Sigurd's riding to the Niblungs

Now Brynhild and Sigurd left Hindfell, and Brynhild went to dwell in her sister's house, but Sigurd abode not long in the land of Lymdale, for his love urged him to great adventures wherein he might win glory befitting the man who should wed so noble a woman as Brynhild. So it befell one day in summer that he dight himself in the Helm of Aweing and the Mail-coat all of gold, and girded the Wrath to his side to ride forth again. And on his saddle he bound the red rings of Fafnir's Treasure. Then he kissed the ancient King Heimir, and hailed the folk of the land who came to give him god-speed.

And he gathered the reins together, and set his face to the road,
And the glad steed neighed beneath him as they fared from the King's
abode.

And out past the dewy closes; but the shouts went up to the sky,
Though some for very sorrow forbore the farewell cry,
Nor was any man but heavy that the godlike guest should go;
And they craved for that glad heart guileless, and that face without a foe.
But forth by dale and lealand doth the Son of Sigmund wend,
Till far away lies Lymdale and the folk of the forest's end;
And he rides a heath unpeopled and holds the westward way,
Till a long way off before him come up the mountains grey;
Grey, huge beyond all telling, and the host of the heaped clouds,
The black and the white together, on that rock-wall's coping crowds.
So up and down he rideth, till at even of the day
A hill's brow he o'ertoppeth that had hid the mountains grey;
Huge, blacker they showed than aforesaid, white hung the cloud-flecks
there,
But red was the cloudy crown, for the sun was sinking fair:

A wide plain lay beneath him, and a river through it wound
Betwixt the lea and the acres, and the misty orchard ground;
But forth from the feet of the mountains a ridged hill there ran
That upreared at its hithermost ending a builded burg of man;
And Sigurd deemed in his heart as he looked on the burg from afar,
That the high Gods scarce might win it, if thereon they fell with war;
So many and great were the walls, so bore the towers on high
The threat of guarded battle, and the tale of victory.
For as waves on the iron river of the days whereof nothing is told
Stood up the many towers, so stark and sharp and cold;
But dark-red and worn and ancient as the midmost mountain-sides
Is the wall that goeth about them; and its mighty compass hides
Full many a dwelling of man whence the reek now goeth aloft,
And the voice of the house-abiders, the sharp sounds blent with the soft:

But one house in the midst is unhidden and high up o'er the wall it goes;
Aloft in the wind of the mountains its golden roof-ridge glows,
And down mid its buttressed feet is the wind's voice never still;
And the day and the night pass o'er it and it changes to their will,
And whiles is it glassy and dark, and whiles is it white and dead,
And whiles is it grey as the sea-mead, and whiles is it angry red;
And it shimmers under the sunshine and grows black to the threat of the
storm,
And dusk its gold roof glimmers when the rain-clouds over it swarm,
And bright in the first of the morning its flame doth it uplift,
When the light clouds rend before it and along its furrows drift.

Then Sigurd's heart was glad as he beheld the city, and after a while he came to a gate-way set in the northern wall, and the gate was long and dark as a sea-cave. But no man stayed him as he rode through the dusk to the inner court-yard, and saw the lofty roof of the hall before him, cold now and grey like a very cloud, for the sun was fully set. But in the towers watch-men were calling one to another. To them he cried, saying:—

"Ho, men of this mighty burg, to what folk of the world am I come?
And who is the King of battles who dwells in this lordly home?
Or perchance are ye of the Elf-kin? are ye guest-fain, kind at the board,
Or murder-churls and destroyers to gain and die by the sword?"
Then the spears in the forecourt glittered and the swords shone over the
wall,
But the song of smitten harp-strings came faint from the cloudy hall.
And he hearkened a voice and a crying: "The house of Giuki the King,
And the Burg of the Niblung people and the heart of their warfaring."
There were many men about him, and the wind in the wall-nook sang,

And the spears of the Niblungs glittered, and the swords in the forecourt rang.
But they looked on his face in the even, and they hushed their voices and gazed,

For fear and great desire the hearts of men amazed.
Now cometh an earl to King Giuki as he sits in godlike wise
With his sons, the Kings of battle, and his wife of the glittering eyes,
And the King cries out at his coming to tell why the watch-horns blew;
But the earl saith: "Lord of the people, choose now what thou wilt do;
For here is a strange new-comer, and he saith, to thee alone
Will he tell of his name and his kindred, and the deeds that his hand hath
done."
Then uprose the King of the Niblungs, and was clad in purple and pall,

And his sheathed sword lay in his hand, as he gat him adown the hall,
And abroad through the Niblung doorway; and a mighty man he was,
And wise and ancient of days: so there by the earls doth he pass,
And beholdeth the King on the war-steed and looketh up in his face:

But Sigurd smileth upon him in the Niblungs' fencèd place,
As the King saith: "Gold-bestrider, who into our garth wouldst ride,
Wilt thou tell thy name to a King, who biddeth thee here abide
And have all good at our hands? for unto the Niblungs' home
And the heart of a war-fain people from the weary road are ye come;
And I am Giuki the King: so now if thou nam'st thee a God,
Look not to see me tremble; for I know of such that have trod
Unfeared in the Burg of the Niblungs; nor worsèr, nor better at all
May fare the folk of the Gods than the Kings in Giuki's hall;
So I bid thee abide in my house, and when many days are o'er,
Thou shalt tell us at last of thine errand, if thou bear us peace or war."
Then all rejoiced at his word till the swords on the bucklers rang,
And adown from the red-gold Treasure the Son of Sigmund sprang,
And he took the hand of Giuki, and kissed him soft and sweet,
And spake: "Hail, ancient of days! for thou biddest me things most meet,
And thou knowest the good from the evil: few days are over and gone
Since my father was old in the world ere the deed of my making was won;
But Sigmund the Volsung he was, full ripe of years and of fame;
And I, who have never beheld him, am Sigurd called of name;
Too young in the world am I waxen that a tale thereof should be told,
And yet have I slain the Serpent, and gotten the Ancient Gold,
And broken the bonds of the weary, and ridden the Wavering Fire.
But short is mine errand to tell, and the end of my desire:

For peace I bear unto thee, and to all the kings of the earth,
Who bear the sword aright, and are crowned with the crown of worth;
But unpeace to the lords of evil, and the battle and the death;
And the edge of the sword to the traitor, and the flame to the slanderous
breath:

And I would that the loving were loved, and I would that the weary should
sleep,
And that man should hearken to man, and that he that soweth should reap.
Now wide in the world would I fare, to seek the dwellings of Kings,
For with them would I do and undo, and be heart of their warfarings;
So I thank thee, lord, for thy bidding, and here in thine house will I bide,
And learn of thine ancient wisdom till forth to the field we ride."

Glad then was the murmur of folk, for the tidings had gone forth,
And its breath had been borne to the Niblungs, and the tale of Sigurd's
worth.

But the King said: "Welcome, Sigurd, full fair of deed and of word!
And here mayst thou win thee fellows for the days of the peace and the
sword;

For not lone in the world have I lived, but sons from my loins have sprung,
Whose deeds with the rhyme are mingled, and their names with the people's
tongue."

Then he took his hand in his hand, and into the hall they passed,
And great shouts of salutation to the cloudy roof were cast;
And they rang from the glassy pillars, and the Gods on the hangings stirred,
And afar the clustering eagles on the golden roof-ridge heard,
And cried out on the Sword of the Branstock as they cried in the other
days:

Then the harps rang out in the hall, and men sang in Sigurd's praise
But now on the daïs he meeteth the kin of Giuki the wise:

Lo, here is the crownèd Grimhild, the queen of the glittering eyes;
Lo, here is the goodly Gunnar with the face of a king's desire;
Lo, here is Hogni that holdeth the wisdom tried in the fire;
Lo, here is Guttorm the youngest, who longs for the meeting swords;
Lo, here, as a rose in the oak-boughs, amid the Niblung lords
Is the Maid of the Niblungs standing, the white-armed Giuki's child;
And all these looked long on Sigurd and their hearts upon him smiled.

Then all gave him greeting as one who should be their fellow in mighty deeds, and
the fair-armed Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, brought him a cup of welcome, and that
night the Niblungs feasted in gladness of heart.

*Of Sigurd's warfaring in the company of the Niblungs, and of his great fame and
glory*

So Sigurd abode with the Niblungs all through summer and harvest time till with the
stark midwinter came tidings of war. Then the earls of Giuki donned dusky hauberks
and led forth their bands from the fortress, and the fair face and golden gear of Sigurd
shone among those swart-haired warriors.

They fell on the cities of the plains, but none might resist the valour of Sigurd, and
the Niblungs turned in triumph from the war, bringing rich spoil. So all that winter
Sigurd fared to war with them and grew greater in glory and more beloved of all men,
but ever the thoughts of his heart turned to Lymdale and to Brynhild who awaited
him there.

Now sheathed is the Wrath of Sigurd; for as wax withstands the flame,
So the Kings of the land withstood him and the glory of his fame.
And before the grass is growing, or the kine have fared from the stall,
The song of the fair-speech-masters goes up in the Niblung hall,
And they sing of the golden Sigurd and the face without a foe,
And the lowly man exalted and the mighty brought alow:

And they say, when the sun of summer shall come aback to the land,
It shall shine on the fields of the tiller that fears no heavy hand;
That the sheaf shall be for the plougher, and the loaf for him that sowed,
Through every furrowed acre where the son of Sigmund rode.
Full dear was Sigurd the Volsung to all men most and least,
And now, as the spring drew onward, 'twas deemed a goodly feast
For the acre-biders' children by the Niblung Burg to wait,
If perchance the Son of Sigmund should ride abroad by the gate:

For whosoever feared him, no little-one, forsooth,
Would shrink from the shining eyes and the hand that clave out truth
From the heart of the wrack and the battle: it was then, as his gold gear
burned

O'er the balks of the bridge and the river, that oft the mother turned,
And spake to the laughing baby: "O little son, and dear,
When I from the world am departed, and whiles a-nights ye hear
The best of man-folk longing for the least of Sigurd's days,
Thou shalt hearken to their story, till they tell forth all his praise,
And become beloved and a wonder, as thou sayest when all is sung,
'And I too once beheld him in the days when I was young.'"
Yea, they sing the song of Sigurd and the face without a foe,
And they sing of the prison's rending and the tyrant laid alow,
And the golden thieves' abasement, and the stilling of the churl,
And the mocking of the dastard where the chasing edges whirl;
And they sing of the outland maidens that thronged round Sigurd's hand,
And sung in the streets of the foemen of the war-delivered land;
And they tell how the ships of the merchants come free and go at their will,
And how wives in peace and safety may crop the vine-clad hill;
How the maiden sits in her bower, and the weaver sings at his loom,
And forget the kings of grasping and the greedy days of gloom;
For by sea and hill and township hath the Son of Sigmund been,
And looked on the folk unheeded, and the lowly people seen.
But he stood in the sight of the people, and sweet he was to see,
And no foe and no betrayer, and no envier now hath he:

But Gunnar the bright in the battle deems him his earthly friend,

And Hogni is fain of his fellow, howso the day's work end,
And Guttorm the young is joyous of the help and gifts he hath;
And all these would shine beside him in the glory of his path;
There is none to hate or hinder, or mar the golden day,
And the light of love flows plenteous, as the sun-beams hide the way.

Of the Cup of evil drink that Grimhild the Wise-wife gave to Sigurd

Now Gudrun the daughter of Giuki beheld Sigurd's glory and knew the kindness of his heart, and set her love on him, not knowing that all his thoughts were given to Brynhild. So Sigurd, seeing her sad and in no wise guessing the cause of her grief, strove to comfort her with kindly words, but her mood was still unchanged. Then Grimhild the Queen, who was a witch-wife and a woman of crafty mind, marked the love of Gudrun for Sigurd, and marked moreover how his power and honour in the land would soon be greater than that of her own sons. Therefore she cast about for some shift that might bind Sigurd to serve with the Niblungs all his life-days. Now it befell one night that Sigurd had returned from warring and sat on the high-seat to sup with the Niblung kings. His heart was merry with victory and ever he thought of Hindfell and of Lyndale and the love of Brynhild. The people waxed joyful, and the hangings whereon glowed figures of the gods were stirred with their song and shouting till Giuki called on Sigurd to take the harp and sing of deeds agone. Then all men hearkened, hushed and happy, while Sigurd struck the strings and sang of his mighty kin, of Volsung, of Signy, and of Sigmund, their deeds and noble deaths. At last the tale was ended and he fell silent thinking still of Brynhild.

Now came Grimhild bearing him a cup of wine and speaking fair words of praise, but in the wine she had mingled a fatal witch-drink. So she stood by Sigurd and said:—

"There is none of the kings of kingdoms that may match thy goodlihead:

Lo now, thou hast sung of thy fathers; but men shall sing of thee,
And therewith shall our house be remembered, and great shall our glory
be.

I beseech thee hearken a little to a faithful word of mine,
When thou of this cup hast drunken; for my love is blent with the wine."
He laughed and took the cup: But therein with the blood of the earth
Earth's hidden might was mingled, and deeds of the cold sea's birth,
And things that the high Gods turn from, and a tangle of strange love,
Deep guile and strong compelling, that whoso drank thereof
Should remember not his longing, should cast his love away,
Remembering dead desire but as night remembereth day.
So Sigurd looked on the horn, and he saw how fair it was scored

With the cunning of the Dwarf-kind and the masters of the sword;
And he drank and smiled on Grimhild above the beaker's rim,
And she looked and laughed at his laughter; and the soul was changed in
him.

Men gazed and their hearts sank in them, and they knew not why it was,
Why the fair-lit hall was darkling, nor what had come to pass:

For they saw the sorrow of Sigurd, who had seen but his deeds erewhile,
And the face of the mighty darkened, who had known but the light of its
smile.

But Grimhild looked and was merry: and she deemed her life was great,
And her hand a wonder of wonders to withstand the deeds of Fate:

For she saw by the face of Sigurd and the token of his eyes
That her will had abased the valiant, and filled the faithful with lies.
But the heart was changed in Sigurd; as though it ne'er had been
His love of Brynhild perished as he gazed on the Niblung Queen:

Brynhild's belovèd body was e'en as a wasted hearth,
No more for bale or blessing, for plenty or for dearth.
—O ye that shall look hereafter, when the day of Sigurd is done,
And the last of his deeds is accomplished, and his eyes are shut in the sun,
When ye look and long for Sigurd, and the image of Sigurd behold,
And his white sword still as the moon, and his strong hand heavy and cold,
Then perchance shall ye think of this even, then perchance shall ye wonder
and cry,

"Twice over, King, are we smitten, and twice have we seen thee die."

Men say that a little after the evil of that night
All waste is the burg of Brynhild, and there springeth a marvellous light
On the desert hard by Lymdale, and few men know for why;
But there are, who say that a wildfire thence roareth up to the sky
Round a glorious golden dwelling, wherein there sitteth a Queen
In remembrance of the wakening, and the slumber that hath been;
Wherein a Maid there sitteth, who knows not hope nor rest
For remembrance of the Mighty, and the Best come forth from the Best.

Now after Sigurd took the witch-drink came a great hush upon the feast-hall for a space. But Grimhild was fain of that hour and cried to the scalds for music, and they hastened to strike the harp, but no joy mingled with the sounds and no man was moved to singing. No word spake Sigurd till the feast was over; then he strode out alone from the hall and the folk fell back before him. So he took a steed and all that

night he rode alone in the deedless dark, and all the morrow, very heavy at heart yet knowing no cause for grief, and remembering all things save Brynhild.

At last he came again at sunset to the Niblung gates, and there came forth Giuki and Grimhild and the Niblung brethren with fair words of greeting, but in the doorway Gudrun stood and wept. So Sigurd entered with them, yet he knew that a flood of sorrow had come on his life-days and that no more might he feel the joy he had known aforetime in the Niblung hall. Howbeit, when he looked on the people and saw them in fear at his trouble, the kindness of his heart was kindled, and thrusting the heavy sorrow aside, he lifted his head and spake wise words of good cheer so that the folk looking on him were comforted.

Of the Wedding of Sigurd the Volsung

But Gudrun knew Sigurd's heart and was sorrowful because of his grief and her great love for him, and when Grimhild bade her carry him wine, she arose and took the cup but could find no word to speak for anguish. And Sigurd looking on her face saw there a kindness and a sorrow like his own, and seeing it he knew that she loved him. Then pity and love for her rose in his heart and comforted him, and he took the cup from her and spake, saying:—

”Here are glad men about us, and a joyous folk of war,
And they that have loved thee for long, and they that have cherished mine
heart;

But we twain alone are woeful, as sad folk sitting apart.

Ah, if I thy soul might gladden! if thy lips might give me peace!

Then belike were we gladdest of all; for I love thee more than these.

The cup of goodwill that thou bearest, and the greeting thou wouldst say,

Turn these to the cup of thy love, and the words of the troth-plighting day;

The love that endureth for ever, and the never-dying troth,

To face the Norns' undoing, and the Gods amid their wrath.”

And his clear voice saith:

”O Gudrun, now hearken while I swear

That the sun shall die for ever and the day no more be fair,

Ere I forget thy pity and thine inmost heart of love!

Yea, though the Kings be mighty, and the Gods be great above,

I will wade the flood and the fire, and the waste of war forlorn,

To look on the Niblung dwelling, and the house where thou wert born.”

Strange seemed the words to Sigurd that his gathering love compelled,

And sweet and strange desire o'er his tangled trouble welled.

But bright flashed the eyes of Gudrun, and she said: ”King, as for me,

If thou sawest the heart in my bosom, what oath might better thee?

Yet my words thy words shall cherish, as thy lips my lips have done.

—Herewith I swear, O Sigurd, that the earth shall hate the sun,

And the year desire but darkness, and the blossoms shrink from day,
Ere my love shall fail, beloved, or my longing pass away!"

So they twain went hand in hand to stand before Giuki and Grimhild and the swart-haired Niblung brethren, and all these were glad-hearted when they marked their joy and goodlihead. Then Sigurd spake noble words of thanks to Giuki for all past kindness, and bade Giuki call him son because he had that day bidden Gudrun to wife, and he sware also to toil for her exalting and for the weal of all the Niblung kin. Thereto Giuki answered glad-hearted, "Hail, Sigurd, son of mine eld!" and called upon Grimhild the Queen to bless him.

Thus was Sigurd troth-plight to the white-armed Gudrun, and all men were fain of their love and spake nought but praise of him.

Hark now, on the morrow morning how the blast of the mighty horn
From the builded Burg of the Niblungs goes over the acres shorn,
And the roads are gay with the riders, and the bull in the stall is left,
And the plough is alone in the furrow, and the wedge in the hole half-cleft;
And late shall the ewes be folded, and the kine come home to the pail,
And late shall the fires be litten in the outmost treeless dale:

For men fare to the gate of Giuki and the ancient cloudy hall,
And therein are the earls assembled and the kings wear purple and pall,
And the flowers are spread beneath them, and the bench-cloths beaten with
gold;
And the walls are strange and wondrous with the noble stories told:

For new-hung is the ancient dwelling with the golden spoils of the south,
And men seem merry for ever, and the praise is in each man's mouth,
And the name of Sigurd the Volsung, the King and the Serpent's Bane,
Who exalteth the high this morning and blesseth the masters of gain:

For men drink the bridal of Sigurd and the white-armed Niblung maid,
And the best with the best shall be mingled, and the gold with the gold
o'erlaid.

So, fair in the hall is the feasting and men's hearts are uplifted on high,
And they deem that the best of their life-days are surely drawing anigh,
As now, one after other, uprise the scalds renowned,
And their well-belovèd voices awake the hoped-for sound,
In the midmost of the high-tide, and the joy of feasting lords.
Then cometh a hush and a waiting, and the light of many swords
Flows into the hall of Giuki by the doorway of the King,
And amid those flames of battle the war-clad warriors bring

The Cup of daring Promise and the hallowed Boar of Sôn,
And men's hearts grow big with longing and great is the hope-tide grown;
For bright the Son of Sigmund ariseth by the board
And unwinds the knitted peace-strings that hamper Regin's Sword:

Then fierce is the light on the high-seat as men set down the Cup
Anigh the hand of Sigurd, and the edges blue rise up,
And fall on the hallowed Wood-beast: as a trump of the woeful war
Rings the voice of the mighty Volsung as he speaks the words of yore:

"By the Earth that groweth and giveth, and by all the Earth's increase
That is spent for Gods and man-folk; by the sun that shines on these;
By the Salt-Sea-Flood that beareth the life and death of men;
By the Heavens and Stars that change not, though earth die out again;
By the wild things of the mountain, and the houseless waste and lone;
By the prey of the Goths in the thicket and the holy Beast of Sôn,
I hallow me to Odin for a leader of his host,
To do the deeds of the Highest, and never count the cost:

And I swear, that whatso great-one shall show the day and the deed,
I shall ask not why nor wherefore, but the sword's desire shall speed:

And I swear to seek no quarrel, nor to swerve aside for aught,
Though the right and the left be blooming, and the straight way wend to
nought:

And I swear to abide and hearken the prayer of any thrall,
Though the war-torch be on the threshold and the foemen's feet in the hall:

And I swear to sit on my throne in the guise of the kings of the earth,
Though the anguish past amending, and the unheard woe have birth:

And I swear to wend in my sorrow that none shall curse mine eyes
For the scowl that quelleth beseeching, and the hate that scorneth the wise.
So help me Earth and Heavens, and the Under-sky and Seas,
And the Stars in their ordered houses, and the Norns that order these!"
And he drank of the Cup of the Promise, and fair as a star he shone,
And all men rejoiced and wondered, and deemed Earth's glory won.
Then came the girded maidens, and the slim earls' daughters poured,
And uprose the dark-haired Gunnar and bare was the Niblung sword;
Blue it gleamed in the hand of the folk-king as he laid it low on the Beast,
And took oath as the Goths of aforetime in the hush of the people's feast:

"I will work for the craving of Kings, and accomplish the will of the great,
 Nor ask what God withstandeth, nor hearken the tales of fate;
 When a King my life hath exalted, and wrought for my hope and my gain,
 For every deed he hath done me, thereto shall I fashion twain.
 I shall bear forth the fame of the Niblungs through all that hindereth;
 In my life shall I win great glory, and be merry in my death."
 So sweareth the lovely war-king and drinketh of the Cup,
 And the joy of the people waxeth and their glad cry goeth up.
 But again came the girded maidens: earls' daughters pour the wine,
 And bare is the blade of Hogni in the feast-hall over the Swine;
 Then he cries o'er the hallowed Wood-beast: "Earth, hearken, how I swear,
 To beseech no man for his helping, and to vex no God with prayer;
 And to seek out the will of the Norns, and look in the eyes of the curse;
 And to laugh while the love aboundeth, lest the glad world grow into worse;
 Then if in the murder I laugh not, O Earth, remember my name,
 And oft tell it aloud to the people for the Niblungs' fated shame!"
 Then he drank of the Cup of the Promise, and all men hearkened and
 deemed
 That his speech was great and valiant, and as one of the wise he seemed.
 Then the linen-folded maidens of the earl-folk lift the gold,
 But the earls look each on the other, and Guttorm's place behold,
 And empty it lieth before them; for the child hath wearied of peace,
 And he sits by the oars in the East-seas, and winneth fame's increase.
 Nor then, nor ever after, o'er the Holy Beast he spake,
 When mighty hearts were exalted for the golden Sigurd's sake.
Sigurd rideth with the Niblungs, and wooeth Brynhild for King Gunnar
 Now it fell on a day of the spring-tide that followed on these things,
 That Sigurd fares to the meadows with Gunnar and Hogni the Kings;
 For afar is Guttorm the youngest, and he sails the Eastern Seas,
 And fares with war-shield hoisted to win him fame's increase.
 There stay those Kings of the people alone in weed of war,
 And they cut a strip of the greensward on the meadow's daisied floor,
 And loosen it clean in the midst, while its ends in the earth abide;
 Then they heave its midmost aloft, and set on either side
 An ancient spear of battle writ round with words of worth;
 And these are the posts of the door, whose threshold is of the earth,
 And the skin of the earth is its lintel: but with war-glaives gleaming bare
 The Niblung Kings and Sigurd beneath the earth-yoke fare;
 Then each an arm-vein openeth, and their blended blood falls down
 On Earth the fruitful Mother where they rent her turfy gown:

And then, when the blood of the Volsungs hath run with the Niblung blood,

They kneel with their hands upon it and swear the brotherhood:

Each man at his brother's bidding to come with the blade in his hand,
Though the fire and the flood should sunder, and the very Gods withstand:

Each man to love and cherish his brother's hope and will;
Each man to avenge his brother when the Norns his fate fulfill:

And now are they foster-brethren, and in such wise have they sworn
As the God-born Goths of aforetime, when the world was newly born.
But among the folk of the Niblungs goes forth the tale of the same,
And men deem the tidings a glory and the garland of their fame.
So is Sigurd yet with the Niblungs, and he loveth Gudrun his wife,
And wendeth afield with the brethren to the days of the dooming of life;
And nought his glory waneth, nor falleth the flood of praise:

To every man he hearkeneth, nor gainsayeth any grace,
And glad is the poor in the Doom-ring when he seeth his face mid the
Kings,

For the tangle straighteneth before him, and the maze of crookèd things.
But the smile is departed from him, and the laugh of Sigurd the young,
And of few words now is he waxen, and his songs are seldom sung.
Howbeit of all the sad-faced was Sigurd loved the best;
And men say: Is the king's heart mighty beyond all hope of rest?
Lo, how he beareth the people! how heavy their woes are grown!
So oft were a God mid the Goth-folk, if he dwelt in the world alone.
Now Giuki the king was long grown old, and he died and was buried beneath
a great earth-mound high on the mountains.
So there lieth Giuki the King, mid steel and the glimmer of gold,
As the sound of the feastful Niblungs round his misty house is rolled:

But Gunnar is King of the people, and the chief of the Niblung land;
A man beloved for his mercy, and his might and his open hand;
A glorious king in the battle, a hearkener at the doom,
A singer to sing the sun up from the heart of the midnight gloom.
On a day sit the Kings in the high-seat when Grimhild saith to her son:

"O Gunnar, King beloved, a fair life hast thou won;
On the flood, in the field hast thou wrought, and hung the chambers with
gold;
Far abroad mid many a people are the tidings of thee told:

Now do a deed for thy mother and the hallowed Niblung hearth,
Lest the house of the mighty perish, and our tale grow wan with dearth.
If thou do the deed that I bid thee, and wed a wife of the Kings,
No less shalt thou cleave the war-helms and scatter the ruddy rings.”
He said: ”Meseemeth, mother, thou speakest not in haste,
But hast sought and found beforehand, lest thy fair words fall to waste.”
She said: ”Thou sayest the sooth; I have found the thing I sought:

A Maid for thee is shapen, and a Queen for thee is wrought:

In the waste land hard by Lymdale a marvellous hall is built,
With its roof of the red gold beaten, and its wall-stones over-gilt:

Afar o’er the heath men see it, but no man draweth nigher,
For the garth that goeth about it is nought but the roaring fire,
A white wall waving aloft; and no window nor wicket is there,
Whereby the shielded earl-folk or the sons of the merchants may fare:

But few things from me are hidden, and I know in that hall of gold
Sits Brynhild, white as a wild-swan where the foamless seas are rolled;
And the daughter of Kings of the world, and the sister of Queens is she,
And wise, and Odin’s Chooser, and the Breath of Victory:

But for this cause sitteth she thus in the ring of the Wavering Flame,
That no son of the Kings will she wed save the mightiest master of fame,
And the man who knoweth not fear, and the man foredoomed of fate
To ride through her Wavering Fire to the door of her golden gate:

And for him she sitteth and waiteth, and him shall she cherish and love,
Though the Kings of the world should withstand it, and the Gods that sit
above.

Speak thou, O mighty Gunnar!—nay rather, Sigurd my son,
Say who but the lord of the Niblungs should wed with this glorious one?”
Long Sigurd gazeth upon her, and slow he sayeth again:

”I know thy will, my mother; of all the sons of men,
Of all the Kings unwedded, and the kindred of the great,
It is meet that my brother Gunnar should ride to her golden gate.”
In the May-morn riseth Gunnar with fair face and gleaming eyes,
And he calleth on Sigurd his brother, and he calleth on Hogni the wise:

”Today shall we fare to the wooing, for so doth our mother bid;
We shall go to gaze on marvels, and things from the King-folk hid.”

So they do on the best of their war-gear, and their steeds are dight for the
road,
And forth to the sun neigheth Greyfell as he neighed 'neath the Golden
Load:

But or ever they leap to the saddle, while yet in the door they stand,
Thereto cometh Grimhild the wise-wife, and on each head layeth her hand,
As she saith: "Be mighty and wise, as the kings that came before!
For they knew of the ways of the Gods, and the craft of the Gods they
bore:

And they knew how the shapes of man-folk are the very images
Of the hearts that abide within them, and they knew of the shaping of
these.

Be wise and mighty, O Kings, and look in mine heart and behold
The craft that prevaieth o'er semblance, and the treasured wisdom of old!
I hallow you thus for the day, and I hallow you thus for the night,
And I hallow you thus for the dawning with my fathers' hidden might.
Go now, for ye bear my will while I sit in the hall and spin;
And tonight shall be the weaving, and tomorn the web shall ye win."
So they leap to the saddles aloft, and they ride and speak no word,
But the hills and the dales are awakened by the clink of the sheathèd sword:

None looks in the face of the other, but the earth and the heavens gaze,
And behold those kings of battle ride down the dusty ways.
So they come to the Waste of Lymdale when the afternoon is begun,
And afar they see the flame-blink on the grey sky under the sun:

And they spur and speak no word, and no man to his fellow will turn;
But they see the hills draw upward and the earth beginning to burn:

And they ride, and the eve is coming, and the sun hangs low o'er the earth,
And the red flame roars up to it from the midst of the desert's dearth.
None turns or speaks to his brother, but the Wrath gleams bare and red,
And blood-red is the Helm of Aweing on the golden Sigurd's head,
And bare is the blade of Gunnar, and the first of the three he rides,
And the wavering wall is before him and the golden sun it hides.
Then the heart of a king's son failed not, but he tossed his sword on high
And laughed as he spurred for the fire, and cried the Niblung cry;
But the mare's son saw and imagined, and the battle-eager steed,
That so oft had pierced the spear-hedge and never failed at need,
Shrank back, and shrieked in his terror, and spite of spur and rein
Fled fast as the foals unbitted on Odin's pasturing plain;

Wide then he wheeled with Gunnar, but with hand and knee he dealt,
And the voice of a lord belovèd, till the steed his master felt,
And bore him back to the brethren; by Greyfell Sigurd stood,
And stared at the heart of the fire, and his helm was red as blood;
But Hogni sat in his saddle, and watched the flames up-roll;
And he said: "Thy steed has failed thee that was once the noblest foal
In the pastures of King Giuki; but since thine heart fails not,
And thou wouldst not get thee backward and say, The fire was hot,
And the voices pent within it were singing nought but death,
Let Sigurd lend thee his steed that wore the Glittering Heath,
And carried the Bed of the Serpent, and the ancient ruddy rings.
So perchance may the mocks be lesser when men tell of the Niblung Kings."
Then Sigurd looked on the twain, and he saw their swart hair wave
In the wind of the waste and the flame-blast, and no answer awhile he gave.
But at last he spake: "O brother, on Greyfell shalt thou ride,
And do on the Helm of Aweing and gird the Wrath to thy side,
And cover thy breast with the war-coat that is throughly woven of gold,
That hath not its like in the heavens nor has earth of its fellow told:

For this is the raiment of Kings when they ride the Flickering Fire,
And so sink the flames before them and the might of their desire."
Then Hogni laughed in his heart, and he said: "This changing were well
If so might the deed be accomplished; but perchance there is more to tell:

Thou shalt take the war-steed, Gunnar, and enough or nought it shall be:

But the coal-blue gear of the Niblungs the golden hall shall see."
Then Sigurd looked on the speaker, as one who would answer again,
But his words died out on the waste and the fire-blast made them vain.
Then he casteth the reins to his brother, and Gunnar praiseth his gift,
And springeth aloft to the saddle as the fair sun fails from the lift;
And Sigurd looks on the burden that Greyfell doth uprear,
The huge king towering upward in the dusky Niblung gear:

There sits the eager Gunnar, and his heart desires the deed,
And of nought he recketh and thinketh, but a fame-stirred warrior's need;
But Greyfell trembleth nothing and nought of the fire doth reck:

Then the spurs in his flank are smitten, and the reins lie loose on his neck,
And the sharp cry springeth from Gunnar—no handbreadth stirred the
beast;

The dusk drew on and over and the light of the fire increased,
And still as a shard on the mountain in the sandy dale alone

Was the shape of the cloudy Greyfell, nor moved he more than the stone;
But right through the heart of the fire for ever Sigurd stared,
As he stood in the gold red-litten with the Wrath's thin edges bared.
No word for a while spake any, till Gunnar leaped to the earth,
And the anger wrought within him, and the fierce words came to birth:

"Who mocketh the King of the Niblungs in the desert land forlorn?
Is it thou, O Sigurd the Stranger? is it thou, O younger-born?
Dost thou laugh in the hall, O Mother? dost thou spin, and laugh at the
tale
That has drawn thy son and thine eldest to the sword and the blaze of the
bale?
Or thou, O God of the Goths, wilt thou hide and laugh thy fill,
While the hands of the foster-brethren the blood of brothers spill?"
But the awful voice of Sigurd across the wild went forth:

"How changed are the words of Gunnar! where wend his ways of worth?
I mock thee not in the desert, as I mocked thee not in the mead,
When I swore beneath the turf-yoke to help thy fondest need:

Nay, strengthen thine heart for the work, for the gift that thy manhood
awaits;
For I give thee a gift, O Niblung, that shall overload the Fates,
And how may a King sustain it? but forbear with the dark to strive;
For thy mother spinneth and worketh, and her craft is awake and alive."
Then Hogni spake from the saddle: "The time, and the time is come
To gather the might of our mother, and of her that spinneth at home.
Forbear all words, O Gunnar, and anigh to Sigurd stand,
And face to face behold him, and take his hand in thine hand:

Then be thy will as his will, that his heart may mingle with thine,
And the love that he sware 'neath the earth-yoke with thine hope may
intertwine."
Then the wrath from the Niblung slippeth and the shame that anger hath
bred,
And the heavy wings of the dreamtide flit over Gunnar's head:

But he doth by his brother's bidding, and Sigurd's hand he takes,
And he looks in the eyes of the Volsung, though scarce in the desert he
wakes.
There Hogni sits in the saddle aloof from the King's desire,
And little his lips are moving, as he stares on the rolling fire,
And mutters the spells of his mother, and the words she bade him say:

But the craft of the kings of aforetime on those Kings of the battle lay;
Dark night was spread behind them, and the fire flared up before,
And unheard was the wind of the wasteland mid the white flame's wavering
 roar.

Long Sigurd gazeth on Gunnar, till he sees, as through a cloud,
The long black locks of the Niblung, and the King's face set and proud:

Then the face is alone on the dark, and the dusky Niblung mail
Is nought but the night before him: then whiles will the visage fail,
And grow again as he gazeth, black hair and gleaming eyes,
And fade again into nothing, as for more of vision he tries:

Then all is nought but the night, yea the waste of an emptier thing,
And the fire-wall Sigurd forgetteth, nor feeleth the hand of the King:

Nay, what is it now he remembereth? it is nought that aforetime he knew,
And no world is there left him to live in, and no deed to rejoice in or rue;
But frail and alone he fareth, and as one in the sphere-stream's drift,
By the starless empty places that lie beyond the lift:

Then at last is he stayed in his drifting, and he saith, It is blind and dark;
Yet he feeleth the earth at his feet, and there cometh a change and a spark,
And away in an instant of time is the mirk of the dreamland rolled,
And there is the fire-lit midnight, and before him an image of gold,
A man in the raiment of Gods, nor fashioned worsen than they:

Full sad he gazeth on Sigurd from the great wide eyes and grey;
And the Helm that Aweth the people is set on the golden hair,
And the Mail of Gold enwraps him, and the Wrath in his hand is bare.
Then Sigurd looks on his arm and his hand in his brother's hand,
And thereon is the dark grey mail-gear well forged in the southern land;
Then he looks on the sword that he beareth, and, lo, the eager blade
That leaps in the hand of Gunnar when the kings are waxen afraid;
And he turns his face o'er his shoulder, and the raven-locks hang down
From the dark-blue helm of the Dwarf-folk, and the rings of the Niblung
 crown.

Then a red flush riseth against him in the face ne'er seen before,
Save dimly in the mirror or the burnished targe of war,
And the foster-brethren sunder, and the clasped hands fall apart;
But a change cometh over Sigurd, and the fierce pride leaps in his heart;
He knoweth the soul of Gunnar, and the shaping of his mind;
He seeketh the words of Sigurd, and Gunnar's voice doth he find,
As he cries: "I know thy bidding; let the world be lief or loth,

The child is unborn that shall hearken how Sigurd rued his oath!
Well fare thou brother Gunnar! what deed shall I do this eve
That I shall never repent of, that thine heart shall never grieve?
What deed shall I do this even that none else may bring to the birth,
Nay, not the King of the Niblungs, and the lord of the best of the earth?"
The flames rolled up to the heavens, and the stars behind were bright,
Dark Hogni sat on his war-steed, and stared out into the night,
And there stood Gunnar the King in Sigurd's semblance wrapped,
—As Sigurd walking in slumber, for in Grimhild's guile was he lapped,
That his heart forgot his glory, and the ways of Odin's lords,
And the thought was frozen within him, and the might of spoken words.
But Sigurd leapeth on Greyfell, and the sword in his hand is bare,
And the gold spurs flame on his heels, and the fire-blast lifteth his hair;
Forth Greyfell bounds rejoicing, and they see the grey wax red,
As unheard the war-gear clasheth, and the flames meet over his head,
Yet a while they see him riding, as through the rye men ride,
When the word goes forth in the summer of the kings by the ocean-side;
But the fires were slaked before him and the wild-fire burned no more
Than the ford of the summer waters when the rainy time is o'er.
Not once turned Sigurd aback, nor looked o'er the ashy ring,
To the midnight wilderness drear and the spell-drenched Niblung King:

But he stayed and looked before him, and lo, a house high-built
With its roof of the red gold beaten, and its wall-stones over-gilt:

So he leapt adown from Greyfell, and came to that fair abode,
And dark in the gear of the Niblungs through the gleaming door he strode:

All light within was that dwelling, and a marvellous hall it was,
But of gold were its hangings woven, and its pillars gleaming as glass,
And Sigurd said in his heart, it was wrought erewhile for a God:

But he looked athwart and endlong as alone its floor he trod,
And lo, on the height of the daïs is upreared a graven throne,
And thereon a woman sitting in the golden place alone;
Her face is fair and awful, and a gold crown girdeth her head;
And a sword of the kings she beareth, and her sun-bright hair is shed
O'er the laps of the snow-white linen that ripples adown to her feet:

As a swan on the billow unbroken ere the firth and the ocean meet,
On the dark-blue cloths she sitteth, in the height of the golden place,
Nor breaketh the hush of the hall, though her eyes be set on his face.
Now he sees this is even the woman of whom the tale hath been told,

E'en she that was wrought for the Niblungs, the bride ordained from of
old,
And hushed in the hall he standeth, and a long while looks in her eyes,
And the word he hath shapen for Gunnar to his lips may never arise.
The man in Gunnar's semblance looked long and knew no deed;
And she looked, and her eyes were dreadful, and none would help her need.
Then the image of Gunnar trembled, and the flesh of the War-King shrank;
For he heard her voice on the silence, and his heart of her anguish drank:

"King, King, who art thou that comest, thou lord of the cloudy gear?
What deed for the weary-hearted shall thy strange hands fashion here?"
The speech of her lips pierced through him like the point of the bitter
sword,
And he deemed that death were better than another spoken word;
But he clencheth his hand on the war-blade, and setteth his face as the
brass,
And the voice of his brother Gunnar from out his lips doth pass:

"When thou lookest on me, O Goddess, thou seest Gunnar the King,
The King and the lord of the Niblungs, and the chief of their warfaring.
But art thou indeed that Brynhild of whom is the rumour and fame,
That she bideth the coming of kings to ride her Wavering Flame,
Lest she wed the little-hearted, and the world grow evil and vile?
For if thou be none other I will speak again in a while."
She said: "Art thou Gunnar the Stranger! O art thou the man that I see?
Yea, verily I am Brynhild; what other is like unto me?
O men of the Earth behold me! hast thou seen, O labouring Earth,
Such sorrow as my sorrow, or such evil as my birth?"
Then spake the Wildfire's Trampler that Gunnar's image bore:

"O Brynhild, mighty of women, be thou glorious evermore!
Thou seest Gunnar the Niblung, as he sits mid the Niblung lords,
And rides with the gods of battle in the fore-front of the swords."
Hard rang his voice in the hall, and a while she spake no word,
And there stood the Image of Gunnar, and leaned on his bright blue sword:

But at last she cried from the high-seat: "If I yet am alive and awake,
I know no words for the speaking, nor what answer I may make."
She ceased and he answered nothing; and a hush on the hall there lay
And the moon slipped over the windows as he clomb the heavenly way;
And no whit stirred the raiment of Brynhild: till she hearkened the Wooer's
voice,

As he said: "Thou art none of the women that swear and forswear and rejoice,
Forgetting the sorrow of kings and the Gods and the labouring earth.
Thou shall wed with King Gunnar the Niblung and increase his worth with thy worth."

So spake he in semblance of Gunnar, and from off his hand he drew
A ring of the spoils of the Southland, a marvel seen but of few,
And he set the ring on her finger, and she turned to her lord and spake:

"I thank thee, King, for thy goodwill, and thy pledge of love I take.
Depart with my troth to thy people: but ere full ten days are o'er
I shall come to the Sons of the Niblungs, and then shall we part no more
Till the day of the change of our life-days, when Odin and Freyia shall call.
Lo, here, my gift of the morning! 'twas my dearest treasure of all;
But thou art become its master, and for thee was it fore-ordained,
Since thou art the man of mine oath and the best that the earth hath gained."

And lo, 'twas the Grief of Andvari, and the lack that made him loth,
The last of the God-folk's ransom, the Ring of Hindfell's oath;
Now on Sigurd's hand it shineth, and long he looketh thereon,
But it gave him back no memories of the days that were bygone.
So forth from the hall goes the Wooer, and slow and slow he goes,
As a conquered king from his city fares forth to meet his foes;
And he taketh the reins of Greyfell, nor yet will back him there,
But afoot through the cold slaked ashes of yester-eve doth fare,
With his eyes cast down to the earth; till he heareth the wind, and a cry,
And raiseth a face brow-knitted and beholdeth men anigh,
And beholdeth Hogni the King set grey on his coal-black steed,
And beholdeth the image of Sigurd, the King in the golden weed:

Then he stayeth and stareth astonished and setteth his hand to his sword;
Till Hogni cries from his saddle, and his word is a kindly word:

"Hail, brother, the King of the people! hail, helper of my kin!
Again from the death and the trouble great gifts hast thou set thee to win
For thy friends and the Niblung children, and hast crowned thine earthly fame,
And increased thine exceeding glory and the sound of thy lovèd name."
Nought Sigurd spake in answer but looked straight forth with a frown,
And stretched out his hand to Gunnar, as one that claimeth his own.

Then no word speaketh Gunnar, but taketh his hand in his hand,
And they look in the eyes of each other, and a while in the desert they
stand
Till the might of Grimhild prevaieth, and the twain are as yester-morn;
But sad was the golden Sigurd, though his eyes knew nought of scorn;
And he spake: "It is finished, O Gunnar! and I will that our brotherhood
May endure through the good and the evil as it sprang in the days of the
good:

But I bid thee look to the ending, that the deed I did yest'reve
Bear nought for me to repent of, for thine heart of hearts to grieve.
Thou art troth-plight, O King of the Niblungs, to Brynhild Queen of the
earth,
She hath sworn thine heart to cherish and increase thy worth with her
worth:

She shall come to the house of Gunnar ere ten days are past and o'er;
And thenceforth the life of Brynhild shall part from thy life no more,
Till the doom of our kind shall speed you, and Odin and Freyia shall call,
And ye bide the Day of the Battle, and the uttermost changing of all."
The praise and thanks they gave him! the words of love they spake!
The tale that the world should hear of, deeds done for Sigurd's sake!
They were lovely might you hear them: but they lack; for in very deed
Their sound was clean forgotten in the day of Sigurd's need.
So that night in the hall of the ancient they hold high-tide again,
And the Gods on the Southland hangings smile out full fair and fain,
And the song goes up of Sigurd, and the praise of his fame fulfilled,
But his speech in the dead sleep lieth, and the words of his wisdom are
chilled:

And men say, the King is careful, for he thinks of the people's weal,
And his heart is afraid for our trouble, lest the Gods our joyance steal.
But that night, when the feast was over, to Gudrun Sigurd came,
And she noted the ring on his finger, and she knew it was nowise the same
As the ring he was wont to carry; so she bade him tell thereof:

Then he turned unto her kindly, and his words were words of love;
Nor his life nor his death he heeded, but told her last night's tale:

Yea, he drew forth the sword for his slaying, and whetted the edges of bale;
For he took that Gold of Andvari, that Curse of the uttermost land,
And he spake as a king that loveth, and set it on her hand;
But her heart was exceeding joyous, as he kissed her sweet and soft,

And bade her bear it for ever, that she might remember him oft
When his hand from the world was departed and he sat in Odin's home.

How Brynhild was wedded to Gunnar the Niblung

So ten days wore over, and on the morrow-morn the folk were all astir in the Niblung house, till the watchers on the towers cried to them tidings of a goodly company drawing nigh upon the road. Then the Niblungs got them to horse in glittering-gay raiment and went forth to meet the people of Brynhild.

First rode bands of maidens arrayed in fine linen and blue-broidered cloaks, and after them came a golden wain with horses of snowy white and bench-cloths of blue, and therein sat Brynhild alone, clad in swan-white raiment and crowned with gold. Then they hailed her sweet and goodly, and so she entered the darksome gate-way and came within the Niblung Burg.

So fair in the sun of the forecourt doth Brynhild's wain shine bright,
And the huge hall riseth before her, and the ernes cry out from its height,
And there by the door of the Niblungs she sees huge warriors stand,
Dark-clad, by the shoulders greater than the best of any land,
And she knoweth the chiefs of the Niblungs, the dreaded dukes of war:

But one in cloudy raiment stands a very midst the door,
And ruddy and bright is his visage, and his black locks wave in the wind,
And she knoweth the King of the Niblungs and the man she came to find:

Then nought she lingered nor loitered, but stepped to the earth adown
With right-hand reached to the War-God, the wearer of the crown;
And she said:

"I behold thee, Gunnar, the King of War that rode
Through the waves of the Flickering Fire to the door of mine abode,
"And for this I needs must deem thee the best of all men born,
The highest-hearted, the greatest, the staunchest of thy love:

And that such the world yet holdeth, my heart is fain thereof:

And for thee I deem was I fashioned, and for thee the oath I swore
In the days of my glory and wisdom, ere the days of youth were o'er.

"May the fire ne'er stay thy glory, nor the ocean-flood thy fame!
Through ages of all ages may the wide world praise thy name!
Yea, oft may the word be spoken when low we lie at rest;
'It befell in the days of Gunnar, the happiest and the best!'
All this may the high Gods give thee, and thereto a gift I give,
The body of Queen Brynhild so long as both we live."
With unmoved face, unfaltering, the blessing-words she said,
But the joy sprang up in Gunnar and increased his goodlihead,
And he cast his arms about her and kissed her on the mouth,
And he said:

"The gift is greater than all treasure of the south;
As glad as my heart this moment, so glad may be thy life,
And the world be never weary of the joy of Gunnar's wife!"
She spake no word, and smiled not, but she held his hand henceforth.
And he said; "Now take the greetings of my men, the most of worth."
Then she turned her face to the war-dukes, and hearkened to their praise,
And she spake in few words sweetly, and blessed their coming days.
Then again spake Gunnar and said: "Lo, Hogni my brother is this;
But Guttorm is far on the East-seas, and seeketh the warrior's bliss;
A third there is of my brethren, and my house holds none so great;
In the hall by the side of my sister thy face doth he await."
Then Brynhild gave fair greeting to Hogni, but anon she turned and ques-
tioned Gunnar of his words concerning that brother who awaited her in
the hall. "I deemed the sons of Giuki had been but three," said Brynhild.
"This fourth, this hall-abider the mighty,—is he akin to thee?"
And Gunnar answered:

"He is nought of our blood,
But the Gods have sent him to usward to work us measureless good:

It is even Sigurd the Volsung, the best man ever born,
The man that the Gods withstand not, my friend, and my brother sworn."
She heard the name, and she changed not, but her feet went forth as he
led,
And under the cloudy roof-tree Queen Brynhild bowed her head.
Then, were there a man so ancient as had lived beyond his peers
On the earth, that beareth all things, a twice-told tale of years,
He had heard no sound so mighty as the shout that shook the wall
When Brynhild's feet unhearkened first trod the Niblung hall.
No whit the clamour stirred her; but her godlike eyes she raised
And betwixt the hedge of the earl-folk on the golden high-seat gazed,

And the man that sat by Gudrun: but e'en as the rainless cloud
Ere the first of the tempest ariseth the latter sun doth shroud,
And men look round and shudder, so Grimhild came between
The silent golden Sigurd and the eyes of the mighty Queen,
And again heard Brynhild greeting, and again she spake and said:

"O Mother of the Niblungs, such hap be on thine head,
As thy love for me, the stranger, was past the pain of words!
Mayst thou see thy son's sons glorious in the meeting of the swords!
Mayst thou sleep and doubt thee nothing of the fortunes of thy race!
Mayst thou hear folk call yon high-seat the earth's most happy place!"
Then the Wise-wife hushed before her, and a little fell aside,
And nought from the eyes of Brynhild the high-seat now did hide;
And the face so long desired, unchanged from time agone,
In the house of the Cloudy People from the Niblung high-seat shone:

She stood with her hand in Gunnar's, and all about and around
Were the unfamiliar faces, and the folk that day had found;
But her heart ran back through the years, and yet her lips did move
With the words she spake on Hindfell, when they plighted troth of love.
Lo, Sigurd fair on the high-seat by the white-armed Gudrun's side,
In the midst of the Cloudy People, in the dwelling of their pride!
His face is exceeding glorious and awful to behold;
For of all his sorrow he knoweth and his hope smit dead and cold:

The will of the Norns is accomplished, and, lo, they wend on their ways,
And leave the mighty Sigurd to deal with the latter days:

The Gods look down from heaven, and the lonely King they see,
And sorrow over his sorrow, and rejoice in his majesty.
For the will of the Norns is accomplished, and outworn is Grimhild's spell,
And nought now shall blind or help him, and the tale shall be to tell:

He hath seen the face of Brynhild, and he knows why she hath come,
And that his is the hand that hath drawn her to the Cloudy People's home:

He knows of the net of the days, and the deeds that the Gods have bid,
And no whit of the sorrow that shall be from his wakened soul is hid:

And his glory his heart restraineth, and restraineth the hand of the strong
From the hope of the fools of desire and the wrong that amendeth wrong.
And Brynhild's face drew near him with eyes grown stern and strange.
Now she stands on the floor of the high-seat, and for e'en so little a space
As men may note delaying, she looketh on Sigurd's face,
Ere she saith:

"I have greeted many in the Niblungs' house today,
And for thee is the last of my greetings ere the feast shall wear away:

Hail, Sigurd, son of the Volsungs! hail, lord of Odin's storm!
Hail, rider of the wasteland and slayer of the Worm!
If aught thy soul shall desire while yet thou livest on earth,
I pray that thou mayst win it, nor forget its might and worth."
All grief, sharp scorn, sore longing, stark death in her voice he knew,
But gone forth is the doom of the Norns, and what shall he answer thereto,
While the death that amendeth lingers and they twain shall dwell for awhile
In the Niblung house together by the hearth that forged the guile.
So he spake as a King of the people in whom all fear is dead,
And his anguish no man noted, as the greeting-words he said:

"Hail, fairest of all things fashioned! hail, thou desire of eyes!
Hail, chooser of the mightiest, and teacher of the wise!
Hail, wife of my brother Gunnar! in might may thy days endure,
And in peace without a trouble that the world's weal may be sure!"
But the song sprang up in the hall, and the eagles cried from above
And forth to the freshness of May went the joyance of the feast:

And Sigurd sat with the Niblungs, and gave ear to most and to least.
And showed no sign to the people of the grief that on him lay;
Nor seemeth he worsen to any than he was on the yesterday.

Of the Contention betwixt the Queens

So now must Sigurd and Brynhild abide together in the Burg of the Niblungs, yet each must bear the burden of sorrow alone. Brynhild held close converse with Gudrun, and behaved humbly towards her lest strife should arise between them. But Gudrun, filled with pride that she was the wife of so great a man as Sigurd, deemed it a little matter that all others should give her honour, and knowing how Sigurd had ridden the fire, she cherished great scorn of Gunnar and Brynhild in her heart, and her pride waxed daily greater.

Of the heart-wise Hogni men tell how he grew wiser day by day and more learned in the craft of his mother Grimhild. As for Gunnar, he lived with Brynhild in great honour and praise from all men, but the thought of how Sigurd had ridden the fire in his semblance lay heavy upon him. He brooded thereon in bitterness and envy, and the lie shadowed his life-days so that he had but small joy in his wife.

And Grimhild, marking his heavy mood, wrought upon him with cunning words and he gave ear to her. For ever she spake of kings' supplanters who bear away the praise from their lords after great deeds are done, and often her talk was of the mighty power that he holdeth who knoweth the shame of a king. So Gunnar hearkened and ill thoughts grew within him.

But fair-faced, calm as a God who hath none to call his foes,
Betwixt the Kings and the people the golden Sigurd goes;
No knowledge of man he lacketh, and the lore he gained of old
From the ancient heart of the Serpent and the Wallower on the Gold
Springs fresh in the soul of Sigurd; the heart of Hogni he sees,
And the heart of his brother Gunnar, and he grieveth sore for these.

It was most in these latter days that his fame went far abroad,
The helper, the overcomer, the righteous sundering sword;
The loveliest King of the King-folk, the man of sweetest speech,
Whose ear is dull to no man that his helping shall beseech;
The eye-bright seer of all things, that wasteth every wrong,
The straightener of the crooked, the hammer of the strong:

Lo, such was the Son of Sigmund in the days whereof I tell,
The dread of the doom and the battle; and all children loved him well.

Now Gudrun's scorn of Brynhild waxed greater as she thought on the knowledge that she held, and it needed but a little that she should speak out the whole tale.

Such was her mind when it befell her to go with Brynhild to bathe in the Niblung river. There it chanced that they fell to talk of their husbands, and Gudrun named Sigurd the best of the world. Thereat Brynhild, stung by her love for Sigurd and the memory of his broken troth,—for so she deemed it,—cried out, saying: "Thy lord is but Gunnar's serving man to do his bidding, but my mate is the King of King-folk, who rode the Wavering Fire and hath dared very death to win me."

Then Gudrun held out her hand and a golden gleam shone on her finger, at the sight whereof Brynhild waxed wan as a dead woman. "Lo," said Gudrun, "I had Andvari's ring of Sigurd, and indeed thou sayest truly, that he did Gunnar's bidding, for he took the King's semblance and hid his own shape in Gunnar's. Thus he wooed the bride for Gunnar and for Gunnar rode the fire, and now by this token mayest thou know whether thy husband is truly the best of Kings." And Brynhild spake no word in answer, but clad herself in haste and fled from the river, and Gudrun followed her in triumph of heart.

Yet as the day wore on she repented of her words and feared the deeds that Brynhild might do, and at even she sought her alone and craved pardon. Then spake Brynhild the Queen: "I repent me of my bitter words this day, yet one thing I beseech thee,—do thou say that thou hadst the ring of Gunnar and not of Sigurd, lest I be shamed before all men." "What?" said Gudrun; "hast thou heard that the wives of the Niblungs lie? Nay, Sigurd it was who set this ring on my finger and therewith he told me the shame of my brother Gunnar,—how his glory was turned to a scoff."

And Brynhild seeing that the tale of the deceiving wrought against her might not be hidden, lifted her voice and cursed the house of the Niblungs wherein she had suffered such woe. So the queens parted in great wrath and bitterness.

Of the exceeding great grief and mourning of Brynhild

Now on the morrow it was known that Brynhild was sick, nor would she reveal the cause to any. Then Gunnar besought her to be comforted and to show what ailed her, but for a long while he might win no word in answer. Thereat the evil thoughts that Grimhild had sown in his heart grew strong, and he cried in bitter anger: "Lo, Brynhild, I deem thou art sick for love of my foe, the supplanter of Kings, he who hath shone like a serpent this long while past amidst the honour of our kin."

Then at last was Brynhild moved to look on him, and she besought him, saying: "Swear to me, Gunnar, that I may live, and say that thou gavest Andvari's ring to Gudrun—thou, and not thy captain of war." Thereby Gunnar understood that all his falsehood was known to her, so that never again might they two have any joy together. He had no answering word, but turned from her and departed, for bitter shame was come on him and hatred of Sigurd burnt in his soul like fire.

Then as evening drew on, boding of evil fell on Gudrun, and she sought her brothers that they might plead with Brynhild to pardon her and forget her bitter taunts.

But Gunnar she found seated alone arrayed in his war-gear and on his knees lay his sword, neither would he hear any word of further pleading with Brynhild.

Then sought she Hogni, and behold, he was in the like guise, and sat as one that waits for a foe. So she sped to Sigurd, but chill fear fell on her beholding him, for he was dight in the Helm of Aweing and his golden hauberk, and the Wrath lay on his knees, neither would he then speak to Brynhild.

So that heavy night passed away and there was but little sleep in the abode of the Niblungs. And with the dawn Sigurd arose and sought Brynhild's chamber where she lay as one dead. Like a pillar of light he stood in the sunshine and the Wrath rattled by his side. And Brynhild looked on him and said: "Art thou come to behold me? Thou—the mightiest and the worst of my betrayers." Then for very grief the breast of Sigurd heaved so that the rings of his byrny burst asunder and he cried: "O live, Brynhild beloved! For hereafter shalt thou know of the snare and the lie that entrapped us and the measureless grief of my soul." "It is o'erlate," said Brynhild, "for I may live no longer and the gods have forgotten the earth." And in such despair must he leave her.

Of the slaying of Sigurd the Volsung

Then at high noon Brynhild sent for Gunnar and sought to whet him to the slaying of Sigurd, for to such hatred was her love turned.

"I look upon thee," said Brynhild, "I know thy race and thy name,
Yet meseems the deed thou sparest, to amend thine evil and shame."

"Nought, nought," he said, "may amend it, save the hungry eyeless sword,
And the war without hope or honour, and the strife without reward."

"Thou hast spoken the word," said Brynhild, "if the word is enough, it is
well.

Let us eat and drink and be merry, that all men of our words may tell!"

"O all-wise woman," said Gunnar, "what deed lieth under the tongue?

What day for the dearth of the people, when the seed of thy sowing hath
sprung?"

She said: "Our garment is Shame, and nought the web shall rend,

Save the day without repentance, and the deed that nought may amend."

"Speak, mighty of women," said Gunnar, "and cry out the name and the
deed

That the ends of the Earth may hearken, and the Niblungs' grievous Need."

"To slay," she said, "is the deed, to slay a King ere the morn,

And the name is Sigurd the Volsung, my love and thy brother sworn."

She turned and departed from him, and he knew not whither she went;

But he took his sword from the girdle and the peace-strings round it rent,

And into the house he gat him, and the sunlit fair abode,

But his heart in the mid-mirk waded, as through the halls he strode,

Till he came to a chamber apart; and Grimhild his mother was there,

And there was his brother Hogni in the cloudy Niblung gear:

Him-seemed there was silence between them as of them that have spoken,
and wait

Till the words of their mouths be accomplished by slow unholpen Fate:

But they turned to the door, and beheld him, and he took his sheathed
sword

And cast it adown betwixt them, and it clashed half bare on the board,

And Grimhild spake as it clattered: "For whom are the peace-strings rent?

For whom is the blood-point whetted and the edge of thine intent?"

He said: "For the heart of Sigurd; and thus all is rent away

Betwixt this word and his slaying, save a little hour of day."

Again spake Grimhild the wise-wife: "Where then is Guttorm the brave?

For he blent not his blood with the Volsung's, nor his oath to Sigurd gave,

Nor called on Earth to witness, nor went beneath the yoke;

And now is he Sigurd's foeman; and who may curse his stroke?"

Then Hogni laughed and answered: "His feet on the threshold stand:

Forged is thy sword, O Mother, and its hilts are come to hand.

"Ho, Guttorm, enter, and hearken to the counsel of the wise!"

Then in through the door strode Guttorm fair-clad in hunter's guise,

With no steel save his wood-knife girded; but his war-fain eyes stared wild,
As he spake: "What words are ye hiding from the youngest Niblung child?
What work is to win, my brethren, that ye sit in warrior's weed,
And tell me nought of the glory, and cover up the deed?"
Then uprose Grimhild the wise-wife, and took the cup again;
Night-long had she brewed that witch-drink and laboured not in vain.
For therein was the creeping venom, and hearts of things that prey
On the hidden lives of ocean, and never look on day;
And the heart of the ravening wood-wolf and the hunger-blinded beast
And the spent slaked heart of the wild-fire the guileful cup increased:

But huge words of ancient evil about its rim were scored,
The curse and the eyeless craving of the first that fashioned sword.
So the cup in her hand was gleaming, as she turned unto Guttorm and
spake:

"Be merry, King of the War-fain! we hold counsel for thy sake:

The work is a God's son's slaying, and thine is the hand that shall smite,
That thy name may be set in, glory and thy deeds live on in light."
Forth flashed the flame from his eyes, and he cried: "Where then is the foe,
This dread of mine house and my brethren, that my hand may lay him
alow?"

"Drink, son," she said, "and be merry! and I shall tell his name,
Whose death shall crown thy life-days, and increase thy fame with his
fame."

He drinketh and craveth for battle, and his hand for a sword doth seek,
And he looketh about on his brethren, but his lips no word may speak;
They speak the name, and he hears not, and again he drinks of the cup
And knows not friend nor kindred, and the wrath in his heart wells up,
That no God may bear unmingled, and he cries a wordless cry,
As the last of the day is departing and the dusk time drawing anigh.
Then Grimhild goes from the chamber, and bringeth his harness of war,
And therewith they array his body, and he drinketh the cup once more,
And his heart is set on the murder, and now may he understand
What soul is dight for the slaying, and what quarry is for his hand.
For again they tell him of Sigurd, and the man he remembereth,
And praiseth his mighty name and his deeds that laughed on death.
Now dusk and dark draw over, and through the glimmering house
They go to the place of the Niblungs, the high hall and glorious;
For hard by is the chamber of Sigurd: there dight in their harness of war
In their thrones sit Gunnar and Hogni, but Guttorm stands on the floor

With his blue blade naked before them: the torches flare from the wall
And the woven God-folk waver, but the hush is deep in the hall,
And those Niblung faces change not, though the slow moon slips from her
height

And earth is acold ere dawning, and new winds shake the night.
Now it was in the earliest dawn-dusk that Guttorm stirred in his place,
And the mail-rings tinkled upon him, as he turned his helm-hid face,
And went forth from the hall and the high-seat; but the Kings sat still in
their pride

And hearkened the clash of his going and heeded how it died.
Slow, all alone goeth Guttorm to Sigurd's chamber door,
And all is open before him, and the white moon lies on the floor
And the bed where Sigurd lieth with Gudrun on his breast,
And light comes her breath from her bosom in the joy of infinite rest.
Then Guttorm stands on the threshold, and his heart of the murder is fain,
And he thinks of the deeds of Sigurd, and praiseth his greatness and gain;
Bright blue is his blade in the moonlight—but lo, how Sigurd lies,
As the carven dead that die not, with fair wide-open eyes;
And their glory gleameth on Guttorm, and the hate in his heart is chilled,
And he shrinketh aback from the threshold and knoweth not what he willed.

Thereon he turned him again to the hall, and the Kings beheld his un-
stained sword in the torch-light, but they cast him never a word. Then
shame and wrath urged him and he wended the second time to Sigurd's
chamber, but yet again the dread eyes of the Volsung were open and he
fled from their light to his biding brethren.

Now dieth moon and candle, and though the day be nigh
The roof of the hall fair-built seems far aloof as the sky,
But a glimmer grows on the pavement and the ernes on the roof-ridge stir:

Then the brethren hist and hearken, for a sound of feet they hear,
And into the hall of the Niblungs a white thing cometh apace:

But the sword of Guttorm upriseth, and he wendeth from his place,
And the clash of steel goes with him; yet loud as it may sound
Still more they hear those footsteps light-falling on the ground,
And the hearts of the Niblungs waver, and their pride is smitten acold,
For they look on that latest comer, and Brynhild they behold:

But she sits by their side in silence, and heeds them nothing more
Than the grey soft-footed morning heeds yester-even's war.

But Guttorm clashed in the cloisters and through the silence strode
And scarce on the threshold of Sigurd a little while abode;
There the moon from the floor hath departed and heaven without is grey,
And afar in the eastern quarter faint glimmer streaks of day.
Close over the head of Sigurd the Wrath gleams wan and bare,
And the Niblung woman stirreth, and her brow is knit with fear;
But the King's closed eyes are hidden, loose lie his empty hands,
There is nought 'twixt the sword of the slayer and the Wonder of all Lands.
Then Guttorm laughed in his war-rage, and his sword leapt up on high,
As he sprang to the bed from the threshold and cried a wordless cry,
And with all the might of the Niblungs through Sigurd's body thrust,
And turned and fled from the chamber, and fell amid the dust,
Within the door and without it, the slayer slain by the slain;
For the cast of the sword of Sigurd had smitten his body atwain
While yet his cry of onset through the echoing chambers went.
Woe's me! how the house of the Niblungs by another cry was rent,
The wakening wail of Gudrun, as she shrank in the river of blood
From the breast of the mighty Sigurd: he heard it and understood,
And rose up on the sword of Guttorm, and turned from the country of
death,
And spake words of loving-kindness as he strove for life and breath:

"Wail not, O child of the Niblungs! I am smitten, but thou shall live,
In remembrance of our glory, mid the gifts the Gods shall give!"
She stayed her cry to hearken, and her heart well nigh stood still:

But he spake: "Mourn not, O Gudrun, this stroke is the last of ill;
Fear leaveth the House of the Niblungs on this breaking of the morn;
Mayst thou live, O woman belovèd, unforsaken, unforlorn!"
Then he sank aback on the sword, and down to his lips she bent
If some sound therefrom she might hearken; for his breath was well-nigh
spent:

"It is Brynhild's deed," he murmured, "and the woman that loves me well;
Nought now is left to repent of, and the tale abides to tell.
I have done many deeds in my life-days, and all these, and my love, they
lie
In the hollow hand of Odin till the day of the world go by.
I have done and I may not undo, I have given and I take not again:

Art thou other than I, Allfather, wilt thou gather my glory in vain?"
There was silence then in the chamber, as the dawn spread wide and grey,
And hushed was the hall of the Niblungs at the entering-in of day.

Long Gudrun hung o'er the Volsung and waited the coming word;
Then she stretched out her hand to Sigurd and touched her love and her
lord,
And the broad day fell on his visage, and she knew she was there alone,
And her heart was wrung with anguish and she uttered a weary moan:

Then Brynhild laughed in the hall, and the first of men's voices was that
Since when on yester-even the kings in the high-seat had sat.
In the house rose rumour and stir, and men stood up in the morn,
And their hearts with doubt were shaken, as if with the Uttermost Horn:

The cry and the calling spread, and shields clashed down from the wall,
And swords in the chamber glittered, and men ran apace to the hall.
Nor knew what man to question, nor who had tidings to give,
Nor what were the days thenceforward wherein the folk should live.
But ever the word is amongst them that Sigurd the Volsung is slain,
And the spears in the hall were tossing as the rye in the windy plain.
But they look aloft to the high-seat and they see the gleam of the gold:

And Gunnar the King of battle, and Hogni wise and cold,
And Brynhild the wonder of women; and her face is deadly pale,
And the Kings are clad in their war-gear, and bared are the edges of bale.
Then cold fear falleth upon them, but the noise and the clamour abate,
And they look on the war-wise Gunnar and awhile for his word they wait;
But e'en as he riseth above them, doth a shriek through the tumult ring;
"Awake, O House of the Niblungs, for slain is Sigurd the King!"
Then nothing faltered Gunnar, but he stood o'er the Niblung folk,
And over the hall woe-stricken the words of pride he spoke:

"Mourn now, O Niblung people, for gone is Sigurd our guest,
And Guttorm the King is departed, and this is our day of unrest;
But all this of the Norns was fore-ordered, and herein is Odin's hand;
Cast down are the mighty of men-folk, but the Niblung house shall stand:

Mourn then today and tomorrow, but the third day waken and live,
For the Gods died not this morning, and great gifts they have to give."
He spake and awhile was silence, and then did the cry outbreak,
And many there were of the Earl-folk that wept for Sigurd's sake;
And they wept for their little children, and they wept for those unborn,
Who should know the earth without him and the world of his worth forlorn.
So rent is the joy of the Niblungs; and their simple days and fain
From that ancient house are departed, and who shall buy them again?
For he, the redeemer, the helper, the crown of all their worth,

They looked upon him and wondered, they loved, and they thrust him forth.

Of the mighty Grief of Gudrun over Sigurd dead

But as for the grief of Gudrun over Sigurd no man may tell it. Long she lay on his body and spent herself in weeping, but at last she arose and cursed Brynhild and Gunnar and all the Niblung house, saying:

”O hearken, hearken Gunnar! May the dear Gold drag thee adown,
And Greyfell’s ruddy Burden, and the Treasure of renown,
And the rings that ye swore the oath on! yea, if all avengers die,
May Earth, that ye bade remember, on the blood of Sigurd cry!
Be this land as waste as the troth-pledge that the lips of fools have sworn!
May it rain through this broken hall-roof, and snow on the hearth forlorn!
And may no man draw anigh it to tell of the ruin and the wrack!
Yea, may I be a mock for the idle if my feet come ever aback,
If my heart think kind of the chambers, if mine eyes shall yearn to behold
The fair-built house of my fathers, the house beloved of old!”

And therewith Gudrun fled forever from the Burg of the Niblungs, and none dared hinder or follow her, and none knew whither she turned for refuge.

Of the passing away of Brynhild

Once more on the morrow-morning fair shineth the glorious sun,
And the Niblung children labour on a deed that shall be done.
For out in the people’s meadows they raise a bale on high,
The oak and the ash together, and thereon shall the Mighty lie;
Nor gold nor steel shall be lacking, nor savour of sweet spice,
Nor cloths in the Southlands woven, nor webs of untold price;
The work grows, toil is as nothing; long blasts of the mighty horn
From the topmost tower out-wailing o’er the woeful world are borne.
But Brynhild cried to her maidens: ”Now open ark and chest,
And draw forth queenly raiment of the loveliest and the best,
Red rings that the Dwarf-lords fashioned, fair cloths that queens have
sewed,
To array the bride for the mighty, and the traveller for the road.”
They wept as they wrought her bidding and did on her goodliest gear;
But she laughed mid the dainty linen, and the gold-rings fashioned fair:

She arose from the bed of the Niblungs, and her face no more was wan;
As a star in the dawn-tide heavens, mid the dusky house she shone:

And they that stood about her, their hearts were raised aloft
Amid their fear and wonder: then she spake them kind and soft:

”Now give me the sword, O maidens, wherewith I sheared the wind
When the Kings of Earth were gathered to know the Chooser’s mind.”
All sheathed the maidens brought it, and feared the hidden blade,
But the naked blue-white edges across her knees she laid,
And spake: ”The heaped-up riches, the gear my fathers left,
All dear-bought woven wonders, all rings from battle reft,
All goods of men desired, now strew them on the floor,
And so share among you, maidens, the gifts of Brynhild’s store.”
Then upright by the bed of the Niblungs for a moment doth she stand,
And the blade flasheth bright in the chamber, but no more they hinder her
hand
Than if a God were smiting to rend the world in two:

Then dulled are the glittering edges, and the bitter point cleaves through
The breast of the all-wise Brynhild, and her feet from the pavement fail,
And the sigh of her heart is hearkened mid the hush of the maidens’ wail.
Chill, deep is the fear upon them, but they bring her aback to the bed,
And her hand is yet on the hilts, and sidelong droopeth her head.
Then there cometh a cry from withoutward, and Gunnar’s hurrying feet
Are swift on the kingly threshold, and Brynhild’s blood they meet.
Low down o’er the bed he hangeth and hearkeneth for her word,
And her heavy lids are opened to look on the Niblung lord,
And she saith:

”I pray thee a prayer, the last word in the world I speak,
That ye bear me forth to Sigurd, and the hand my hand would seek;
The bale for the dead is builded, it is wrought full wide on the plain,
It is raised for Earth’s best Helper, and thereon is room for twain:

Ye have hung the shields about it, and the Southland hangings spread,
There lay me adown by Sigurd and my head beside his head.”
Then they took the body of Brynhild in the raiment that she wore,
And out through the gate of the Niblungs the holy corpse they bore,
And thence forth to the mead of the people, and the high-built shielded
bale;

Then afresh in the open meadows breaks forth the women’s wail
When they see the bed of Sigurd and the glittering of his gear;
And fresh is the wail of the people as Brynhild draweth anear,
And the tidings go before her that for twain the bale is built,
That for twain is the oak-wood shielded and the pleasant odours spilt.

There is peace on the bale of Sigurd, and the Gods look down from on high,
And they see the lids of the Volsung close shut against the sky,
As he lies with his shield beside him in the Hauberk all of gold,
That has not its like in the heavens, nor has earth of its fellow told;
And forth from the Helm of Aweing are the sunbeams flashing wide,
And the sheathed Wrath of Sigurd lies still by his mighty side.
Then cometh an elder of days, a man of the ancient times,
Who is long past sorrow and joy, and the steep of the bale he climbs;
And he kneeleth down by Sigurd, and bareth the Wrath to the sun
That the beams are gathered about it, and from hilt to blood-point run,
And wide o'er the plain of the Niblungs doth the Light of the Branstock
glare,
Till the wondering mountain-shepherds on that star of noontide stare,
And fear for many an evil; but the ancient man stands still
With the war-flame on his shoulder, nor thinks of good or of ill,
Till the feet of Brynhild's bearers on the topmost bale are laid,
And her bed is dight by Sigurd's; then he sinks the pale white blade
And lays it 'twixt the sleepers, and leaves them there alone—
He, the last that shall ever behold them,—and his days are well nigh done.
Then is silence over the plain; in the noon shine the torches pale
As the best of the Niblung Earl-folk bear fire to the builded bale:

Then a wind in the west ariseth, and the white flames leap on high,
And with one voice crieth the people a great and mighty cry,
And men cast up hands to the Heavens, and pray without a word,
As they that have seen God's visage, and the voice of the Father have
heard.

They are gone—the lovely, the mighty, the hope of the ancient Earth:

It shall labour and bear the burden as before that day of their birth.
Ye have heard of Sigurd aforetime, how the foes of God he slew;
How forth from the darksome desert the Gold of the Waters he drew;
How he wakened Love on the Mountain, and wakened Brynhild the Bright,
And dwelt upon Earth for a season and shone in all men's sight.
Ye have heard of the Cloudy People, and the dimming of the day,
And the latter world's confusion, and Sigurd gone away.

THE END

The Ted K Archive

Anonymous, Snorri Sturluson, William Morris, Jennie Hall, J. Lesslie Hall
Saga Six Pack (Beowulf, The Prose Edda and More)

Ted Kaczynski had *The Prose Edda* in his cabin upon his arrest. Some verse formatting may be in error. For likely better formatted versions you can search en.wikisource.org.

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