GRAMMATICUS SAXO

THE DANISH HISTORY, BOOKS I-IX

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Saxo G.

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INTRODUCTION

SAXO'S POSITION

Saxo Grammaticus, or "The Lettered", one of the notable historians of the Middle Ages, may fairly be called not only the earliest chronicler of Denmark, but her earliest writer. In the latter half of the twelfth century, when Iceland was in the flush of literary production, Denmark lingered behind. No literature in her vernacular, save a few Runic inscriptions, has survived. Monkish annals, devotional works, and lives were written in Latin; but the chronicle of Roskild, the necrology of Lund, the register of gifts to the cloister of Sora, are not literature. Neither are the half-mythological genealogies of kings; and besides, the mass of these, though doubtless based on older verses that are lost, are not proved to be, as they stand, prior to Saxo. One man only, Saxo's elder contemporary, Sueno Aggonis, or Sweyn (Svend) Aageson, who wrote about 1185, shares or anticipates the credit of attempting a connected record. His brief draft of annals is written in rough mediocre Latin. It names but a few of the kings recorded by Saxo, and tells little that Saxo does not. Yet there is a certain link between the two writers. Sweyn speaks of Saxo with respect; he not obscurely leaves him the task of filling up his omissions. Both writers, servants of the brilliant Bishop Absalon, and probably set by him upon their task, proceed, like Geoffrey of Monmouth, by gathering and editing mythical matter. This they more or less embroider, and arrive in due course insensibly at actual history. Both, again, thread their stories upon a genealogy of kings in part legendary. Both write at the spur of patriotism, both to let Denmark linger in the race for light and learning, and desirous to save her glories, as other nations have saved theirs, by a record. But while Sweyn only made a skeleton chronicle, Saxo leaves a memorial in which historian and philologist find their account. His seven later books are the chief Danish authority for the times which they relate; his first nine, here translated, are a treasure of myth and folk-lore. Of the songs and stories which Denmark possessed from the common Scandinavian stock, often her only native record is in Saxo's Latin. Thus, as a chronicler both of truth and fiction, he had in his own land no predecessor, nor had he any literary tradition behind him. Single-handed, therefore, he may be said to have lifted the dead-weight against him, and given Denmark a writer. The nature of his work will be discussed presently.

LIFE OF SAXO

Of Saxo little is known but what he himself indicates, though much doubtful supposition has gathered round his name.

That he was born a Dane his whole language implies; it is full of a glow of aggressive patriotism. He also often praises the Zealanders at the expense of other Danes, and Zealand as the centre of Denmark; but that is the whole contemporary evidence for the statement that he was a Zealander. This statement is freely taken for granted three centuries afterwards by Urne in the first edition of the book (1514), but is not traced further back than an epitomator, who wrote more than 200 years after Saxo's death. Saxo tells us that his father and grandfather fought for Waldemar the First of Denmark, who reigned from 1157 to 1182. Of these men we know nothing further, unless the Saxo whom he names as one of Waldemar's admirals be his grandfather, in which case his family was one of some distinction and his father and grandfather probably "King's men". But Saxo was a very common name, and we shall see the licence of hypothesis to which this fact has given rise. The notice, however, helps us approximately towards Saxo's birth-year. His grandfather, if he fought for Waldemar, who began to reign in 1157, can hardly have been born before 1100, nor can Saxo himself have been born before 1145 or 1150. But he was undoubtedly born before 1158, since he speaks of the death of Bishop Asker, which took place in that year, as occurring "in our time". His life therefore covers and overlaps the last half of the twelfth century.

His calling and station in life are debated. Except by the anonymous Zealand chronicler, who calls him Saxo "the Long", thus giving us the one personal detail we have, he has been universally known as Saxo "Grammaticus" ever since the epitomator of 1431 headed his compilation with the words, "A certain notable man of letters ("grammaticus"), a Zealander by birth, named Saxo, wrote," etc. It is almost certain that this general term, given only to men of signal gifts and learning, became thus for the first time, and for good, attached to Saxo's name. Such a title, in the Middle Ages, usually implied that its owner was a churchman, and Saxo's whole tone is devout, though not conspicuously professional.

But a number of Saxos present themselves in the same surroundings with whom he has been from time to time identified. All he tells us himself is, that Absalon, Archbishop of Lund from 1179 to 1201, pressed him, who was "the least of his companions, since all the rest refused the task", to write the history of Denmark, so that it might record its glories like other nations. Absalon was previously, and also after his promotion, Bishop of Roskild, and this is the first circumstance giving colour to the theory—which lacks real evidence—that Saxo the historian was the same as a certain Saxo, Provost of the Chapter of Roskild, whose death is chronicled in a contemporary hand without any mark of distinction. It is unlikely that so eminent a man would be thus barely named; and the appended eulogy and verses identifying the Provost and the historian are of later date. Moreover, the Provost Saxo went on a mission to Paris in 1165, and was thus much too old for the theory. Nevertheless, the good Bishop of Roskild, Lave Urne, took this identity for granted in the first edition, and fostered the assumption. Saxo was a cleric; and could such a man be of less than canonical rank? He was (it was assumed) a Zealander; he was known to be a friend of Absalon, Bishop of Roskild. What more natural than that he should have been the Provost Saxo? Accordingly this latter worthy had an inscription in gold letters, written by Lave Urne himself, affixed to the wall opposite his tomb.

Even less evidence exists for identifying our Saxo with the scribe of that name—a comparative menial—who is named in the will of Bishop Absalon; and hardly more warranted is the theory that he was a member, perhaps a subdeacon, of the monastery of St. Laurence, whose secular canons formed part of the Chapter of Lund. It is true that Sweyn Aageson, Saxo's senior by about twenty years, speaks (writing about 1185) of Saxo as his "contubernalis". Sweyn Aageson is known to have had strong family connections with the monastery of St. Laurence; but there is only a tolerably strong

probability that he, and therefore that Saxo, was actually a member of it. ("Contubernalis" may only imply comradeship in military service.) Equally doubtful is the consequence that since Saxo calls himself "one of the least" of Absalon's "followers" ("comitum"), he was probably, if not the inferior officer, who is called an "acolitus", at most a sub-deacon, who also did the work of a superior "acolitus". This is too poor a place for the chief writer of Denmark, high in Absalon's favor, nor is there any direct testimony that Saxo held it.

His education is unknown, but must have been careful. Of his training and culture we only know what his book betrays. Possibly, like other learned Danes, then and afterwards, he acquired his training and knowledge at some foreign University. Perhaps, like his contemporary Anders Suneson, he went to Paris; but we cannot tell. It is not even certain that he had a degree; for there is really little to identify him with the "M(agister) Saxo" who witnessed the deed of Absalon founding the monastery at Sora.

THE HISTORY

How he was induced to write his book has been mentioned. The expressions of modesty Saxo uses, saying that he was "the least" of Absalon's "followers", and that "all the rest refused the task", are not to be taken to the letter. A man of his parts would hardly be either the least in rank, or the last to be solicited. The words, however, enable us to guess an upward limit for the date of the inception of the work. Absalon became Archbishop in 1179, and the language of the Preface (written, as we shall see, last) implies that he was already Archbishop when he suggested the History to Saxo. But about 1185 we find Sweyn Aageson complimenting Saxo, and saying that Saxo "had `determined' to set forth all the deeds" of Sweyn Estridson, in his eleventh book, "at greater length in a more elegant style". The exact bearing of this notice on the date of Saxo's History is doubtful. It certainly need not imply that Saxo had already written ten books, or indeed that he had written any, of his History. All we call say is, that by 1185 a portion of the history was planned. The order in which its several parts were composed, and the date of its completion, are not certainly known, as Absalon died in 1201. But the work was not then finished; for, at the end of Bk. XI, one Birger, who died in 1202, is mentioned as still alive.

We have, however, a yet later notice. In the Preface, which, as its whole language implies, was written last, Saxo speaks of Waldemar II having "encompassed (`complexus') the ebbing and flowing waves of Elbe." This language, though a little vague, can hardly refer to anything but an expedition of Waldemar to Bremen in 1208. The whole History was in that case probably finished by about 1208. As to the order in which its parts were composed, it is likely that Absalon's original instruction was to write a history of Absalon's own doings. The fourteenth and succeeding books deal with these at disproportionate length, and Absalon, at the expense even of Waldemar, is the protagonist. Now Saxo states in his Preface that he "has taken care to follow the statements ("asserta") of Absalon, and with obedient mind and pen to include both his own doings and other men's doings of which he learnt."

The latter books are, therefore, to a great extent, Absalon's personally communicated memoirs. But we have seen that Absalon died in 1201, and that Bk. xi, at any rate, was not written after 1202. It almost certainly follows that the latter books were written in Absalon's life; but the Preface, written after them, refers to events in 1208. Therefore, unless we suppose that the issue was for some reason delayed, or that Saxo spent seven years in polishing—which is not impossible—there is some reason to surmise that he began with that portion of his work which was nearest to his own time, and added the previous (especially the first nine, or mythical) books, as a completion, and possibly as an afterthought. But this is a point which there is no real means of settling. We do not know how late the Preface was written, except that it must have been some time between 1208 and 1223, when Anders Suneson ceased to be Archbishop; nor do we know when Saxo died.

HISTORY OF THE WORK

Nothing is stranger than that a work of such force and genius, unique in Danish letters, should have been forgotten for three hundred years, and have survived only in an epitome and in exceedingly few manuscripts. The history of the book is worth recording. Doubtless its very merits, its "marvellous vocabulary, thickly-studded maxims, and excellent variety of images," which Erasmus admired long afterwards, sealed it to the vulgar. A man needed some Latin to appreciate it, and Erasmus' natural wonder "how a Dane at that day could have such a force of eloquence" is a measure of the rarity both of the gift and of a public that could appraise it. The epitome (made about 1430) shows that Saxo was felt to be difficult, its author saying: "Since Saxo's work is in many places diffuse, and many things are said more for ornament than for historical truth, and moreover his style is too obscure on account of the number of terms ("plurima vocabula") and sundry poems, which are unfamiliar to modern times, this opuscle puts in clear words the more notable of the deeds there related, with the addition of some that happened after Saxo's death." A Low-German version of this epitome, which appeared in 1485, had a considerable vogue, and the two together "helped to drive the history out of our libraries, and explains why the annalists and geographers of the Middle Ages so seldom quoted it." This neglect appears to have been greatest of all in Denmark, and to have lasted until the appearance of the "First Edition" in 1511.

The first impulse towards this work by which Saxo was saved, is found in a letter from the Bishop of Roskild, Lave Urne, dated May 1512, to Christian Pederson, Canon of Lund, whom he compliments as a lover of letters, antiquary, and patriot, and urges to edit and publish "tam divinum latinae eruditionis culmen et splendorem Saxonem nostrum". Nearly two years afterwards Christian Pederson sent Lave Urne a copy of the first edition, now all printed, with an account of its history. "I do not think that any mortal was more inclined and ready for" the task. "When living at Paris, and paying heed to good literature, I twice sent a messenger at my own charges to buy a faithful copy at any cost, and bring it back to me. Effecting nothing thus, I went back to my country for this purpose; I visited and turned over all the libraries, but still could not pull out a Saxo, even covered with beetles, bookworms, mould, and dust. So stubbornly had all the owners locked it away." A worthy prior, in compassion offered to get a copy and transcribe it with his own hand, but Christian, in respect for the prior's rank, absurdly declined. At last Birger, the Archbishop of Lund, by some strategy, got a copy, which King Christian the Second allowed to be taken to Paris on condition of its being wrought at "by an instructed and skilled graver (printer)." Such a person was found in Jodocus Badius Ascenshls, who adds a third letter written by himself to Bishop Urne, vindicating his application to Saxo of the title Grammaticus, which he well defines as "one who knows how to speak or write with diligence, acuteness, or knowledge." The beautiful book he produced was worthy of the zeal, and unsparing, unweariable pains, which had been spent on it by the band of enthusiasts, and it was truly a little triumph of humanism. Further editions were reprinted during the sixteenth century at Basic and at Frankfort-on-Main, but they did not improve in any way upon the first; and the next epoch in the study of Saxo was made by the edition and notes of Stephanus Johansen Stephanius, published at Copenhagen in the middle of the seventeenth century (1644). Stephanius, the first commentator on Saxo, still remains the best upon his language. Immense knowledge of Latin, both good and bad (especially of the authors Saxo imitated), infinite and prolix industry, a sharp eye for the text, and continence in emendation, are not his only virtues. His very bulkiness and leisureliness are charming; he writes like a man who had eternity to write in, and who knew enough to fill it, and who expected readers of an equal leisure. He also prints some valuable notes signed with the famous name of Bishop Bryniolf of Skalholt, a man of force and talent, and others by Casper Barth, "corculum Musarum", as Stephanius calls him, whose textual and other comments are sometimes of use, and who worked with a MS. of Saxo. The edition of Klotz, 1771, based on that of Stephanius, I have but seen; however,

the first standard commentary is that begun by P. E. Muller, Bishop of Zealand, and finished after his death by Johan Velschow, Professor of History at Copenhagen, where the first part of the work, containing text and notes, was published in 1839; the second, with prolegomena and fuller notes, appearing in 1858. The standard edition, containing bibliography, critical apparatus based on all the editions and MS. fragments, text, and index, is the admirable one of that indefatigable veteran, Alfred Holder, Strasburg, 1886.

Hitherto the translations of Saxo have been into Danish. The first that survives, by Anders Soffrinson Vedel, dates from 1575, some sixty years after the first edition. In such passages as I have examined it is vigorous, but very free, and more like a paraphrase than a translation, Saxo's verses being put into loose prose. Yet it has had a long life, having been modified by Vedel's grandson, John Laverentzen, in 1715, and reissued in 1851. The present version has been much helped by the translation of Seier Schousbolle, published at Copenhagen in 1752. It is true that the verses, often the hardest part, are put into periphrastic verse (by Laurentius Thura, c. 1721), and Schousbolle often does not face a difficulty; but he gives the sense of Saxo simply and concisely. The lusty paraphrase by the enthusiastic Nik. Fred. Sev. Grundtvig, of which there have been several editions, has also been of occasional use. No other translations, save of a scrap here and there into German, seem to be extant.

THE MSS

It will be understood, from what has been said, that no complete MS. of Saxo's History is known. The epitomator in the fourteenth century, and Krantz in the seventeenth, had MSS. before them; and there was that one which Christian Pedersen found and made the basis of the first edition, but which has disappeared. Barth had two manuscripts, which are said to have been burnt in 1636. Another, possessed by a Swedish parish priest, Aschaneus, in 1630, which Stephenhis unluckily did not know of, disappeared in the Royal Archives of Stockholm after his death. These are practically the only MSS. of which we have sure information, excepting the four fragments that are now preserved. Of these by far the most interesting is the "Angers Fragment."

This was first noticed in 1863, in the Angers Library, where it was found degraded into the binding of a number of devotional works and a treatise on metric, dated 1459, and once the property of a priest at Alencon. In 1877 M. Gaston Paris called the attention of the learned to it, and the result was that the Danish Government received it next year in exchange for a valuable French manuscript which was in the Royal Library at Copenhagen. This little national treasure, the only piece of contemporary writing of the History, has been carefully photographed and edited by that enthusiastic and urbane scholar, Christian Bruun. In the opinion both of Dr. Vigfusson and M. Paris, the writing dates from about 1200; and this date, though difficult to determine, owing to the paucity of Danish MSS. of the 12th and early lath centuries, is confirmed by the character of the contents. For there is little doubt that the Fragment shows us Saxo in the labour of composition. The MSS. looks as if expressly written for interlineation. Besides a marginal gloss by a later, fourteenth century hand, there are two distinct sets of variants, in different writings, interlined and running over into the margin. These variants are much more numerous in the prose than in the verse. The first set are in the same hand as the text, the second in another hand: but both of them have the character, not of variants from some other MSS., but of alternative expressions put down tentatively. If either hand is Saxo's it is probably the second. He may conceivably have dictated both at different times to different scribes. No other man would tinker the style in this fashion. A complete translation of all these changes has been deemed unnecessary in these volumes; there is a full collation in Holder's "Apparatus Criticus". The verdict of the Angers-Fragment, which, for the very reason mentioned, must not be taken as the final form of the text, nor therefore, despite its antiquity, as conclusive against the First Edition where the two differ, is to confirm, so far as it goes, the editing of Ascensius and Pederson. There are no vital differences, and the care of the first editors, as well as the authority of their source, is thus far amply vindicated.

A sufficient account of the other fragments will be found in Holder's list. In 1855 M. Kall-Rasmussen found in the private archives at Kronborg a scrap of fourteenth century MS., containing a short passage from Bk. vii. Five years later G. F. Lassen found, at Copenhagen, a fragment of Bk. vi believed to be written in North Zealand, and in the opinion of Bruun belonging to the same codex as Kall-Rasmussen's fragment. Of another longish piece, found in Copenhagen at the end of the seventeenth century by Johannes Laverentzen, and belonging to a codex burnt in the fire of 1728, a copy still extant in the Copenhagen Museum, was made by Otto Sperling. For fragments, either extant or alluded to, of the later books, the student should consult the carefully collated text of Holder. The whole MS. material, therefore, covers but a little of Saxo's work, which was practically saved for Europe by the perseverance and fervour for culture of a single man, Bishop Urne.

SAXO AS A WRITER

Saxo's countrymen have praised without stint his remarkable style, for he has a style. It is often very bad; but he writes, he is not in vain called Grammaticus, the man of letters. His style is not merely remarkable considering its author's difficulties; it is capable at need of pungency and of high expressiveness. His Latin is not that of the Golden Age, but neither is it the common Latin of the Middle Ages. There are traces of his having read Virgil and Cicero. But two writers in particular left their mark on him. The first and most influential is Valerius Maximus, the mannered author of the "Memorabilia", who lived in the first half of the first century, and was much relished in the Middle Ages. From him Saxo borrowed a multitude of phrases, sometimes apt but often crabbed and deformed, as well as an exemplary and homiletic turn of narrative. Other idioms, and perhaps the practice of interspersing verses amid prose (though this also was a twelfth century Icelandic practice), Saxo found in a fifth-century writer, Martianus Capella, the pedantic author of the "De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii" Such models may have saved him from a base mediaeval vocabulary; but they were not worthy of him, and they must answer for some of his falsities of style. These are apparent. His accumulation of empty and motley phrase, like a garish bunch of coloured bladders; his joy in platitude and pomposity, his proneness to say a little thing in great words, are only too easy to translate. We shall be well content if our version also gives some inkling of his qualities; not only of what Erasmus called his "wonderful vocabulary, his many pithy sayings, and the excellent variety of his images"; but also of his feeling for grouping, his barbaric sense of colour, and his stateliness. For he moves with resource and strength both in prose and verse, and is often only hindered by his own wealth. With no kind of critical tradition to chasten him, his force is often misguided and his work shapeless; but he stumbles into many splendours.

FOLK LORE INDEX

The mass of archaic incidents, beliefs, and practices recorded by the 12th-century writer seemed to need some other classification than a bare alphabetic index. The present plan, a subject-index practically, has been adopted with a view to the needs of the anthropologist and folk-lorist. Its details have been largely determined by the bulk and character of the entries themselves. No attempt has been made to supply full parallels from any save the more striking and obvious old Scandinavian sources, the end being to classify material rather than to point out its significance of geographic distribution. With regard to the first three heads, the reader who wishes to see how Saxo compares with the Old Northern poems may be referred to the Grimm Centenary papers, Oxford, 1886, and the Corpus Poeticurn Boreale, Oxford, 1883.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

King—As portrayed by Saxo, the ideal king should be (as in "Beowulf's Lay") generous, brave and just. He should be a man of accomplishments, of unblemished body, presumably of royal kin (peasant-birth is considered a bar to the kingship), usually a son or a nephew, or brother of his foregoer (though no strict rule of succession seems to appear in Saxo), and duly chosen and acknowledged at the proper place of election. In Denmark this was at a stone circle, and the stability of these stones was taken as an omen for the king's reign. There are exceptional instances noted, as the serf-king Eormenric (cf. Guthred-Canute of Northumberland), whose noble birth washed out this blot of his captivity, and there is a curious tradition of a conqueror setting his hound as king over a conquered province in mockery.

The king was of age at twelve. A king of seven years of age has twelve Regents chosen in the Moot, in one case by lot, to bring him up and rule for him till his majority. Regents are all appointed in Denmark, in one case for lack of royal blood, one to Scania, one to Zealand, one to Funen, two to Jutland. Underkings and Earls are appointed by kings, and though the Earl's office is distinctly official, succession is sometimes given to the sons of faithful fathers. The absence of a settled succession law leads (as in Muslim States) to rebellions and plots.

Kings sometimes abdicated, giving up the crown perforce to a rival, or in high age to a kinsman. In heathen times, kings, as Thiodwulf tells us in the case of Domwald and Yngwere, were sometimes sacrificed for better seasons (African fashion), and Wicar of Norway perishes, like Iphigeneia, to procure fair winds. Kings having to lead in war, and sometimes being willing to fight wagers of battle, are short-lived as a rule, and assassination is a continual peril, whether by fire at a time of feast, of which there are numerous examples, besides the classic one on which Biarea-mal is founded and the not less famous one of Hamlet's vengeance, or whether by steel, as with Hiartuar, or by trick, as in Wicar's case above cited. The reward for slaying a king is in one case 120 gold lbs.; 19 "talents" of gold from each ringleader, 1 oz. of gold from each commoner, in the story of Godfred, known as Ref's gild, "i.e., Fox tax". In the case of a great king, Frode, his death is concealed for three years to avoid disturbance within and danger from without. Captive kings were not as a rule well treated. A Slavonic king, Daxo, offers Ragnar's son Whitesark his daughter and half his realm, or death, and the captive strangely desires death by fire. A captive king is exposed, chained to wild beasts, thrown into a serpent-pit, wherein Ragnar is given the fate of the elder Gunnar in the Eddic Lays, Atlakvida. The king is treated with great respect by his people, he is finely clad, and his commands are carried out, however abhorrent or absurd, as long as they do not upset customary or statute law. The king has slaves in his household, men and women, besides his guard of housecarles and his bearsark champions. A king's daughter has thirty slaves with her, and the footmaiden existed exactly as in the stories of the Wicked Waiting Maid. He is not to be awakened in his slumbers (cf. St. Olaf's Life, where the naming of King Magnus is the result of adherence to this etiquette). A champion weds the king's leman.

His thanes are created by the delivery of a sword, which the king bolds by the blade and the thane takes by the hilt. (English earls were created by the girding with a sword. "Taking treasure, and weapons and horses, and feasting in a hall with the king" is synonymous with thane-hood or gesith-ship in "Beowulf's Lay"). A king's thanes must avenge him if he falls, and owe him allegiance. (This was paid in the old English monarchies by kneeling and laying the head down at the lord's knee.)

The trick by which the Mock-king, or King of the Beggars (parallel to our Boy-bishop, and perhaps to that enigmatic churls' King of the "O. E. Chronicle", s.a. 1017, Eadwiceorla-kyning) gets allegiance paid to him, and so secures himself in his attack on the real king, is cleverly devised. The king, besides being a counsel giver himself, and speaking the law, has "counsellors", old and wise men, "sapientes" (like the 0. E. Thyle). The aged warrior counsellor, as Starcad here and Master Hildebrand in the "Nibelungenlied", is one type of these persons, another is the false counsellor, as

Woden in guise of Bruni, another the braggart, as Hunferth in "Beowulf's Lay". At "moots" where laws are made, kings and regents chosen, cases judged, resolutions taken of national importance, there are discussions, as in that armed most the host.

The king has, beside his estates up and down the country, sometimes (like Hrothgar with his palace Heorot in "Beowulf's Lay") a great fort and treasure house, as Eormenric, whose palace may well have really existed. There is often a primitive and negroid character about dwellings of formidable personages, heads placed on stakes adorn their exterior, or shields are ranged round the walls.

The provinces are ruled by removable earls appointed by the king, often his own kinsmen, sometimes the heads of old ruling families. The "hundreds" make up the province or subkingdom. They may be granted to king's thanes, who became "hundred-elders". Twelve hundreds are in one case bestowed upon a man.

The "yeoman's" estate is not only honourable but useful, as Starcad generously and truly acknowledges. Agriculture should be fostered and protected by the king, even at the cost of his life.

But gentle birth and birth royal place certain families above the common body of freemen (landed or not); and for a commoner to pretend to a king's daughter is an act of presumption, and generally rigorously resented.

The "smith" was the object of a curious prejudice, probably akin to that expressed in St. Patrick's "Lorica", and derived from the smith's having inherited the functions of the savage weapon-maker with his poisons and charms. The curious attempt to distinguish smiths into good and useful swordsmiths and base and bad goldsmiths seems a merely modern explanation: Weland could both forge swords and make ornaments of metal. Starcad's loathing for a smith recalls the mockery with which the Homeric gods treat Hephaistos.

Slavery.—As noble birth is manifest by fine eyes and personal beauty, courage and endurance, and delicate behaviour, so the slave nature is manifested by cowardice, treachery, unbridled lust, bad manners, falsehood, and low physical traits. Slaves had, of course, no right either of honour, or life, or limb. Captive ladies are sent to a brothel; captive kings cruelly put to death. Born slaves were naturally still less considered, they were flogged; it was disgraceful to kill them with honourable steel; to accept a slight service from a slave-woman was beneath old Starcad's dignity. A man who loved another man's slave-woman, and did base service to her master to obtain her as his consort, was looked down on. Slaves frequently ran away to escape punishment for carelessness, or fault, or to gain liberty.

CUSTOMARY LAW

The evidence of Saxo to archaic law and customary institutions is pretty much (as we should expect) that to be drawn from the Icelandic Sagas, and even from the later Icelandic rimur and Scandinavian kaempe-viser. But it helps to complete the picture of the older stage of North Teutonic Law, which we are able to piece together out of our various sources, English, Icelandic, and Scandinavian. In the twilight of Yore every glowworm is a helper to the searcher.

There are a few MAXIMS of various times, but all seemingly drawn from custom cited or implied by Saxo as authoritative:—

"It is disgraceful to be ruled by a woman."—The great men of Teutonic nations held to this maxim. There is no Boudicea or Maidhbh in our own annals till after the accession of the Tudors, when Great Eliza rivals her elder kins-women's glories. Though Tacitus expressly notices one tribe or confederacy, the Sitones, within the compass of his Germania, ruled by a woman, as an exceptional case, it was contrary to the feeling of mediaeval Christendom for a woman to be emperor; it was not till late in the Middle Ages that Spain saw a queen regnant, and France has never yet allowed such rule. It was not till long after Saxo that the great queen of the North, Margaret, wielded a wider sway than that rejected by Gustavus' wayward daughter.

"The suitor ought to urge his own suit."—This, an axiom of the most archaic law, gets evaded bit by bit till the professional advocate takes the place of the plaintiff. "Njal's Saga", in its legal scenes, shows the transition period, when, as at Rome, a great and skilled chief was sought by his client as the supporter of his cause at the Moot. In England, the idea of representation at law is, as is well known, late and largely derived from canon law practice.

"To exact the blood-fine was as honourable as to take vengeance."—This maxim, begotten by Interest upon Legality, established itself both in Scandinavia and Arabia. It marks the first stage in a progress which, if carried out wholly, substitutes law for feud. In the society of the heathen Danes the maxim was a novelty; even in Christian Denmark men sometimes preferred blood to fees.

MARRIAGE.—There are many reminiscences of "archaic marriage customs in Saxo." The capture marriage has left traces in the guarded king's daughters, the challenging of kings to fight or hand over their daughters, in the promises to give a daughter or sister as a reward to a hero who shall accomplish some feat. The existence of polygamy is attested, and it went on till the days of Charles the Great and Harold Fairhair in singular instances, in the case of great kings, and finally disappeared before the strict ecclesiastic regulations.

But there are evidences also of later customs, such as "marriage by purchase", already looked on as archaic in Saxo's day; and the free women in Denmark had clearly long had a veto or refusal of a husband for some time back, and sometimes even free choice. "Go-betweens" negotiate marriages.

Betrothal was of course the usage. For the groom to defile an espoused woman is a foul reproach. Gifts made to father-in-law after bridal by bridegroom seem to denote the old bride-price. Taking the bride home in her car was an important ceremony, and a bride is taken to her future husband's by her father. The wedding-feast, as in France in Rabelais' time, was a noisy and drunken and tumultuous rejoicing, when bone-throwing was in favor, with other rough sports and jokes. The three days after the bridal and their observance in "sword-bed" are noticed below.

A commoner or one of slave-blood could not pretend to wed a high-born lady. A woman would sometimes require some proof of power or courage at her suitor's hands; thus Gywritha, like the famous lady who weds Harold Fairhair, required her husband Siwar to be over-king of the whole land. But in most instances the father or brother betrothed the girl, and she consented to their choice. Unwelcome suitors perish.

The prohibited degrees were, of course, different from those established by the mediaeval church, and brother weds brother's widow in good archaic fashion. Foster-sister and foster-brother

may marry, as Saxo notices carefully. The Wolsung incest is not noticed by Saxo. He only knew, apparently, the North-German form of the Niflung story. But the reproachfulness of incest is apparent.

Birth and beauty were looked for in a bride by Saxo's heroes, and chastity was required. The modesty of maidens in old days is eulogised by Saxo, and the penalty for its infraction was severe: sale abroad into slavery to grind the quern in the mud of the yard. One of the tests of virtue is noticed, "lac in ubere".

That favourite "motif", the "Patient Grizzle", occurs, rather, however, in the Border ballad than the Petrarcan form.

"Good wives" die with their husbands as they have vowed, or of grief for their loss, and are wholly devoted to their interests. Among "bad wives" are those that wed their husband's slayer, run away from their husbands, plot against their husbands' lives. The penalty for adultery is death to both, at husband's option—disfigurement by cutting off the nose of the guilty woman, an archaic practice widely spread. In one case the adulterous lady is left the choice of her own death. Married women's Homeric duties are shown.

There is a curious story, which may rest upon fact, and not be merely typical, where a mother who had suffered wrong forced her daughter to suffer the same wrong.

Captive women are reduced to degrading slavery as "harlots" in one case, according to the eleventh century English practice of Gytha.

THE FAMILY AND BLOOD REVENGE.—This duty, one of the strongest links of the family in archaic Teutonic society, has left deep traces in Saxo.

To slay those most close in blood, even by accident, is to incur the guilt of parricide, or kin-killing, a bootless crime, which can only be purged by religious ceremonies; and which involves exile, lest the gods' wrath fall on the land, and brings the curse of childlessness on the offender until he is forgiven.

BOOTLESS CRIMES.—As among the ancient Teutons, botes and were-gilds satisfy the injured who seek redress at law rather than by the steel. But there are certain bootless crimes, or rather sins, that imply "sacratio", devotion to the gods, for the clearing of the community. Such are treason, which is punishable by hanging; by drowning in sea.

Rebellion is still more harshly treated by death and forfeiture; the rebels' heels are bored and thonged under the sinew, as Hector's feet were, and they are then fastened by the thongs to wild bulls, hunted by hounds, till they are dashed to pieces (for which there are classic parallels), or their feet are fastened with thongs to horses driven apart, so that they are torn asunder.

For "parricide", i.e., killing within near degrees, the criminal is hung up, apparently by the heels, with a live wolf (he having acted as a wolf which will slay its fellows). Cunning avoidance of the guilt by trick is shown.

For "arson" the appropriate punishment is the fire.

For "incestuous adultery" of stepson with his stepmother, hanging is awarded to the man. In the same case Swanwhite, the woman, is punished, by treading to death with horses. A woman accomplice in adultery is treated to what Homer calls a "stone coat." Incestuous adultery is a foul slur.

For "witchcraft", the horror of heathens, hanging was the penalty.

"Private revenge" sometimes deliberately inflicts a cruel death for atrocious wrong or insult, as when a king, enraged at the slaying of his son and seduction of his daughter, has the offender hanged, an instance famous in Nathan's story, so that Hagbard's hanging and hempen necklace were proverbial.

For the slayer by a cruel death of their captive father, Ragnar's sons act the blood-eagle on Ella, and salt his flesh. There is an undoubted instance of this act of vengeance (the symbolic meaning of which is not clear as yet) in the "Orkney Saga".

But the story of Daxo and of Ref's gild show that for such wrongs were-gilds were sometimes exacted, and that they were considered highly honourable to the exactor.

Among OFFENCES NOT BOOTLESS, and left to individual pursuit, are:—

"Highway robbery".—There are several stories of a type such as that of Ingemund and Ioknl (see "Landnamaboc") told by Saxo of highwaymen; and an incident of the kind that occurs in the Theseus story (the Bent-tree, which sprung back and slew the wretch bound to it) is given. The romantic trick of the mechanic bed, by which a steel-shod beam is let fall on the sleeping traveller, also occurs. Slain highwaymen are gibbeted as in Christian days.

"Assassination", as distinct from manslaughter in vengeance for a wrong, is not very common. A hidden mail-coat foils a treacherous javelin-cast (cf. the Story of Olaf the Stout and the Blind King, Hrorec); murderers lurk spear-armed at the threshold, sides, as in the Icelandic Sagas; a queen hides a spear-head in her gown, and murders her husband (cf. Olaf Tryggvason's Life). Godfred was murdered by his servant (and Ynglingatal).

"Burglary".—The crafty discovery of the robber of the treasury by Hadding is a variant of the world-old Rhampsinitos tale, but less elaborate, possibly abridged and cut down by Saxo, and reduced to a mere moral example in favour of the goldenness of silence and the danger of letting the tongue feed the gallows.

Among other disgraceful acts, that make the offender infamous, but do not necessarily involve public action:—

"Manslaughter in Breach of Hospitality".—Probably any gross breach of hospitality was disreputable and highly abhorred, but "guest-slaughter" is especially mentioned. The ethical question as to whether a man should slay his guest or forego his just vengeance was often a "probleme du jour" in the archaic times to which these traditions witness. Ingeld prefers his vengeance, but Thuriswend, in the Lay cited by Paul the Deacon, chooses to protect his guest. Heremod slew his messmates in his wrath, and went forth alone into exile. ("Beowulf's Lay".)

"Suicide".—This was more honourable than what Earl Siward of Northumberland called a "cow-death." Hadding resolves to commit suicide at his friend's death. Wermund resolves to commit suicide if his son be slain (in hopelessness of being able to avenge him, cf. "Njal's Saga", where the hero, a Christian, prefers to perish in his burning house than live dishonoured, "for I am an old man and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame"). Persons commit suicide by slaying each other in time of famine; while in England (so Baeda tells) they "decliffed" themselves in companies, and, as in the comic little Icelandic tale Gautrec's birth, a Tarpeian death is noted as the customary method of relieving folks from the hateful starvation death. It is probable that the violent death relieved the ghost or the survivors of some inconveniences which a "straw death" would have brought about.

"Procedure by Wager of Battle".—This archaic process pervades Saxo's whole narrative. It is the main incident of many of the sagas from which he drew. It is one of the chief characteristics of early Teutonic custom-law, and along with "Cormac's Saga", "Landnamaboc", and the Walter Saga, our author has furnished us with most of the information we have upon its principles and practice.

Steps in the process are the Challenge, the Acceptance and Settlement of Conditions, the Engagement, the Treatment of the vanquished, the Reward of the conqueror, and there are rules touching each of these, enough almost to furnish a kind of "Galway code".

A challenge could not, either to war or wager of battle, be refused with honor, though a superior was not bound to fight an inferior in rank. An ally might accept for his principal, or a father for a son, but it was not honourable for a man unless helpless to send a champion instead of himself.

Men were bound to fight one to one, and one man might decline to fight two at once. Great champions sometimes fought against odds.

The challenged man chose the place of battle, and possibly fixed the time. This was usually an island in the river.

The regular weapons were swords and shields for men of gentle blood. They fought by alternate separate strokes; the senior had the first blow. The fight must go on face to face without change of place; for the ground was marked out for the combatants, as in our prize ring, though one can hardly help fancying that the fighting ground so carefully described in "Cormac's Saga", ch. 10, may have been Saxo's authority. The combatants change places accidentally in the struggle in one story.

The combat might last, like Cuchullin's with Ferdia, several days; a nine days' fight occurs; but usually a few blows settled the matter. Endurance was important, and we are told of a hero keeping himself in constant training by walking in a mail coat.

The conqueror ought not to slay his man if he were a stripling, or maimed, and had better take his were-gild for his life, the holmslausn or ransom of "Cormac's Saga" (three marks in Iceland); but this was a mere concession to natural pity, and he might without loss of honor finish his man, and cut off his head, though it was proper, if the slain adversary has been a man of honor, to bury him afterward.

The stakes are sometimes a kingdom or a kingdom's tribute, often a lady, or the combatants fought for "love" or the point of honor. Giants and noted champions challenge kings for their daughters (as in the fictitious parts of the Icelandic family sagas) in true archaic fashion, and in true archaic fashion the prince rescues the lady from a disgusting and evil fate by his prowess.

The champion's fee or reward when he was fighting for his principal and came off successful was heavy—many lands and sixty slaves. Bracelets are given him; a wound is compensated for at ten gold pieces; a fee for killing a king is 120 of the same.

Of the incidents of the combat, beside fair sleight of fence, there is the continual occurrence of the sword-blunting spell, often cast by the eye of the sinister champion, and foiled by the good hero, sometimes by covering his blade with thin skin, sometimes by changing the blade, sometimes by using a mace or club.

The strength of this tradition sufficiently explains the necessity of the great oath against magic taken by both parties in a wager of battle in Christian England.

The chief combats mentioned by Saxo are:—

Sciold v. Attila. Sciold v. Scate, for the hand of Alfhild. Gram v. Swarin and eight more, for the crown of the Swedes. Hadding v. Toste, by challenge. Frode v. Hunding, on challenge. Frode v. Hacon, on challenge. Helge v. Hunding, by challenge at Stad. Agnar v. Bearce, by challenge. Wizard v. Danish champions, for truage of the Slavs. Wizard v. Ubbe, for truage of the Slavs. Coll v. Horwendill, on challenge. Athisl v. Frowine, meeting in battle. Athisl v. Ket and Wig, on challenge. Uffe v. Prince of Saxony and Champion, by challenge. Frode v. Froger, on challenge. Eric v. Grep's brethren, on challenge, twelve a side. Eric v. Alrec, by challenge. Hedin v. Hogni, the mythic everlasting battle. Arngrim v. Scalc, by challenge. Arngrim v. Egtheow, for truage of Permland. Arrow-Odd and Hialmar v. twelve sons of Arngrim Samsey fight. Ane Bow-swayer v. Beorn, by challenge. Starkad v. Wisin, by challenge. Starkad v. Tanlie, by challenge. Starkad v. Wasce —Wilzce, by challenge. Starkad v. Hame, by challenge. Starkad v. Angantheow and eight of his brethren, on challenge. Halfdan v. Hardbone and six champions, on challenge. Halfdan v. Egtheow, by challenge. Halfdan v. Grim, on challenge. Halfdan v. Ebbe, on challenge, by moonlight. Halfdan v. Twelve champions, on challenge. Halfdan v. Hildeger, on challenge. Ole v. Skate and Hiale, on challenge. Homod and Thole v. Beorn and Thore, by challenge. Ref. v. Gaut, on challenge. Ragnar and three sons v. Starcad of Sweden and seven sons, on challenge.

CIVIL PROCEDURE.—"Oaths" are an important art of early procedure, and noticed by Saxo; one calling the gods to witness and therefor, it is understood, to avenge perjury if he spake not truth.

"Testification", or calling witnesses to prove the steps of a legal action, was known, "Glum's Saga" and "Landnamaboc", and when a manslayer proceeded (in order to clear himself of murder) to announce the manslaughter as his act, he brings the dead man's head as his proof, exactly as the hero in the folk-tales brings the dragon's head or tongue as his voucher.

A "will" is spoken of. This seems to be the solemn declaration of a childless man to his kinsfolk, recommending some person as his successor. Nothing more was possible before written wills were introduced by the Christian clergy after the Roman fashion.

STATUTE LAWS

"Lawgivers".—The realm of Custom had already long been curtailed by the conquests of Law when Saxo wrote, and some epochs of the invasion were well remembered, such as Canute's laws. But the beginnings were dim, and there were simply traditions of good and bad lawyers of the past; such were "Sciold" first of all the arch-king, "Frode" the model lawgiver, "Helge" the tyrant, "Ragnar" the shrewd conqueror.

"Sciold", the patriarch, is made by tradition to fulfil, by abolishing evil customs and making good laws, the ideal of the Saxon and Frankish Coronation oath formula (which may well go back with its two first clauses to heathen days). His fame is as widely spread. However, the only law Saxo gives to him has a story to it that he does not plainly tell. Sciold had a freedman who repaid his master's manumission of him by the ingratitude of attempting his life. Sciold thereupon decrees the unlawfulness of manumissions, or (as Saxo puts it), revoked all manumissions, thus ordaining perpetual slavery on all that were or might become slaves. The heathen lack of pity noticed in Alfred's preface to "Gregory's Handbook" is illustrated here by contrast with the philosophic humanity of the Civil Law, and the sympathy of the mediaeval Church.

But FRODE (known also to the compiler of "Beowulf's Lay", 2025) had, in the Dane's eyes, almost eclipsed Sciold as conqueror and lawgiver. His name Frode almost looks as if his epithet Sapiens had become his popular appellation, and it befits him well. Of him were told many stories, and notably the one related of our Edwin by Bede (and as it has been told by many men of many rulers since Bede wrote, and before). Frode was able to hang up an arm-ring of gold in three parts of his kingdom that no thief for many years dared touch. How this incident (according to our version preserved by Saxo), brought the just king to his end is an archaic and interesting story. Was this ring the Brosinga men?

Saxo has even recorded the Laws of Frode in four separate bits, which we give as A, B, C, D.

A. is mainly a civil and military code of archaic kind:

(a) The division of spoil shall be—gold to captains, silver to privates, arms to champions, ships to be shared by all. Cf. Jomswickinga S. on the division of spoil by the law of the pirate community of Jom.

(b) No house stuff to be locked; if a man used a lock he must pay a gold mark.

(c) He who spares a thief must bear his punishment.

(d) The coward in battle is to forfeit all rights (cf. "Beowulf", 2885).

(e) Women to have free choice (or, at least, veto) in taking husbands.

(f) A free woman that weds a slave loses rank and freedom (cf. Roman Law).

(g) A man must marry a girl he has seduced.

(h) An adulterer to be mutilated at pleasure of injured husband.

(i) Where Dane robbed Dane, the thief to pay double and peace-breach.

(k) Receivers of stolen goods suffer forfeiture and flogging at most.

(l) Deserter bearing shield against his countrymen to lose life and property.

(m) Contempt of fyrd-summons or call to military service involves outlawry and exile.

(n) Bravery in battle to bring about increase in rank (cf. the old English "Ranks of Men").

(o) No suit to lie on promise and pledge; fine of a gold lb. for asking pledge.

(p) Wager of battle is to be the universal mode of proof.

(q) If an alien kill a Dane two aliens must suffer. (This is practically the same principle as appears in the half weregild of the Welsh in West Saxon Law.)

B. An illustration of the more capricious of the old enactments and the jealousy of antique kings.

(a) Loss of gifts sent to the king involves the official responsible; he shall be hanged. (This is introduced as illustration of the cleverness of Eric and the folly of Coll.)

C. Saxo associates another set of enactments with the completion of a successful campaign of conquest over the Ruthenians, and shows Frode chiefly as a wise and civilising statesman, making conquest mean progress.

(a) Every free householder that fell in war was to be set in his barrow with horse and arms (cf. "Vatzdaela Saga", ch. 2).

The body-snatcher was to be punished by death and the lack of sepulture.

Earl or king to be burned in his own ship.

Ten sailors may be burnt on one ship.

(b) Ruthenians to have the same law of war as Danes.

(c) Ruthenians must adopt Danish sale-marriage. (This involves the abolition of the Baltic custom of capture-marriage. That capture-marriage was a bar to social progress appears in the legislation of Richard II, directed against the custom as carried out on the borders of the Palatine county of Chester, while cases such as the famous one of Rob Roy's sons speak to its late continuance in Scotland. In Ireland it survived in a stray instance or two into this century, and songs like "William Riley" attest the sympathy of the peasant with the eloping couple.)

(d) A veteran, one of the Doughty, must be such a man as will attack one foe, will stand two, face three without withdrawing more than a little, and be content to retire only before four. (One of the traditional folk-sayings respecting the picked men, the Doughty or Old Guard, as distinguished from the Youth or Young Guard, the new-comers in the king's Company of House-carles. In Harald Hardrede's Life the Norwegians dread those English house-carles, "each of whom is a match for four," who formed the famous guard that won Stamford Bridge and fell about their lord, a sadly shrunken band, at Senlake.)

(f) The house-carles to have winter-pay. The house-carle three pieces of silver, a hired soldier two pieces, a soldier who had finished his service one piece.

(The treatment of the house-carles gave Harald Harefoot a reputation long remembered for generosity, and several old Northern kings have won their nicknames by their good or ill feeding and rewarding their comitatus.)

D. Again a civil code, dealing chiefly with the rights of travellers.

(a) Seafarers may use what gear they find (the "remis" of the text may include boat or tackle).

(b) No house is to be locked, nor coffer, but all thefts to be compensated threefold. (This, like A, b, which it resembles, seems a popular tradition intended to show the absolute security of Frode's reign of seven or three hundred years. It is probably a gloss wrongly repeated.)

(c) A traveller may claim a single supper; if he take more he is a thief (the mark of a prae-tabernal era when hospitality was waxing cold through misuse).

(d) Thief and accomplices are to be punished alike, being hung up by a line through the sinews and a wolf fastened beside. (This, which contradicts A, i, k, and allots to theft the punishment proper for parricide, seems a mere distorted tradition.)

But beside just Frode, tradition spoke of the unjust Kinge HELGE, whose laws represent ill-judged harshness. They were made for conquered races, (a) the Saxons and (b) the Swedes.

(a) Noble and freedmen to have the same were-gild (the lower, of course, the intent being to degrade all the conquered to one level, and to allow only the lowest were-gild of a freedman, fifty pieces, probably, in the tradition).

(b) No remedy for wrong done to a Swede by a Dane to be legally recoverable. (This is the traditional interpretation of the conqueror's haughty dealing; we may compare it with the Middle-English legends of the pride of the Dane towards the conquered English. The Tradition sums up the position in such concrete forms as this Law of Helge's.)

Two statutes of RAGNAR are mentioned:—

(a) That any householder should give up to his service in war the worst of his children, or the laziest of his slaves (a curious tradition, and used by Saxo as an opportunity for patriotic exaltation).

(b) That all suits shall be absolutely referred to the judgment of twelve chosen elders (Lodbroc here appearing in the strange character of originator of trial by jury).

"Tributes".—Akin to laws are the tributes decreed and imposed by kings and conquerors of old. Tribute infers subjection in archaic law. The poll-tax in the fourteenth century in England was unpopular, because of its seeming to degrade Englishmen to the level of Frenchmen, who paid tribute like vanquished men to their absolute lord, as well as for other reasons connected with the collection of the tax.

The old fur tax (mentioned in "Egil's Saga") is here ascribed to FRODE, who makes the Finns pay him, every three years, a car full or sledge full of skins for every ten heads; and extorts one skin per head from the Perms. It is Frode, too (though Saxo has carved a number of Frodes out of one or two kings of gigantic personality), that made the Saxons pay a poll-tax, a piece of money per head, using, like William the Conqueror, his extraordinary revenue to reward his soldiers, whom he first regaled with double pay. But on the conquered folks rebelling, he marked their reduction by a tax of a piece of money on every limb a cubit long, a "limb-geld" still more hateful than the "neb-geld."

HOTHERUS (Hodr) had set a tribute on the Kurlanders and Swedes, and HROLF laid a tribute on the conquered Swedes.

GODEFRIDUS-GOTRIC is credited with a third Saxon tribute, a heriot of 100 snow-white horses payable to each Danish king at his succession, and by each Saxon chief on his accession: a statement that, recalling sacred snow-white horses kept in North Germany of yore makes one wish for fuller information. But Godefridus also exacted from the Swedes the "Ref-gild", or Fox-money; for the slaying of his henchman Ref, twelve pieces of gold from each man of rank, one from every commoner. And his Friesland tribute is stranger still, nor is it easy to understand from Saxo's account. There was a long hall built, 240 feet, and divided up into twelve "chases" of 20 feet each (probably square). There was a shield set up at one end, and the taxpayers hurled their money at it; if it struck so as to sound, it was good; if not, it was forfeit, but not reckoned in the receipt. This (a popular version, it may be, of some early system of treasury test) was abolished, so the story goes, by Charles the Great.

RAGNAR'S exaction from Daxo, his son's slayer, was a yearly tribute brought by himself and twelve of his elders barefoot, resembling in part such submissions as occur in the Angevin family history, the case of the Calais burgesses, and of such criminals as the Corporation of Oxford, whose penance was only finally renounced by the local patriots in our own day.

WAR

"Weapons".—The sword is the weapon par excellence in Saxo's narrative, and he names several by name, famous old blades like our royal Curtana, which some believed was once Tristrem's, and that sword of Carlus, whose fortunes are recorded in Irish annals. Such are "Snyrtir", Bearce's sword; "Hothing", Agnar's blade; "Lauf", or "Leaf", Bearce's sword; "Screp", Wermund's sword, long buried and much rust-eaten, but sharp and trusty, and known by its whistle; Miming's sword ("Mistletoe"), which slew Balder. Wainhead's curved blade seems to be a halbert; "Lyusing" and "Hwiting", Ragnald of Norway's swords; "Logthe", the sword of Ole Siward's son.

The "war-club" occurs pretty frequently. But it is usually introduced as a special weapon of a special hero, who fashions a gold-headed club to slay one that steel cannot touch, or who tears up a tree, like the Spanish knight in the ballad, or who uses a club to counteract spells that blunt steel. The bat-shapen archaic rudder of a ship is used as a club in the story of the Sons of Arngrim.

The "spear" plays no particular part in Saxo: even Woden's spear Gungne is not prominent.

"Bows and arrows" are not often spoken of, but archer heroes, such as Toki, Ane Bow-swayer, and Orwar-Odd, are known. Slings and stones are used.

The shield, of all defensive armour, is far the most prominent. They were often painted with devices, such as Hamlet's shield, Hildiger's Swedish shield. Dr. Vigfusson has shown the importance of these painted shields in the poetic history of the Scandinavians.

A red shield is a signal of peace. Shields are set round ramparts on land as round ships at sea.

"Mail-coats" are worn. Frode has one charmed against steel. Hother has another; a mail-coat of proof is mentioned and their iron meshes are spoken of.

"Helmets" are used, but not so carefully described as in "Beowulf's Lay"; crested helmets and a gilded helmet occur in Bearca-mal and in another poem.

"Banners" serve as rallying points in the battle and on the march. The Huns' banners are spoken of in the classic passage for the description of a huge host invading a country. Bearcamal talks of golden banners.

"Horns"[1] were blown pp at the beginning of the engagement and for signalling. The gathering of the host was made by delivery of a wooden arrow painted to look like iron.

"Tactics".—The hand-to-hand fight of the wager of battle with sword and shield, and the fighting in ranks and the wedge-column at close quarters, show that the close infantry combat was the main event of the battle. The preliminary hurling of stones, and shooting of arrows, and slinging of pebbles, were harassing and annoying, but seldom sufficiently important to affect the result of the main engagement.

Men ride to battle, but fight on foot; occasionally an aged king is car-borne to the fray, and once the car, whether by Saxo's adorning hand, or by tradition, is scythe-armed.

The gathered host is numbered, once, where, as with Xerxes, counting was too difficult, by making each man as he passed put a pebble in a pile (which piles survive to mark the huge size of Frode's army). This is, of course, a folktale, explaining the pebble-hills and illustrating the belief in Frode's power; but armies were mustered by such expedients of old. Burton tells of an African army each man of whom presented an egg, as a token of his presence and a means of taking the number of the host.

We hear of men marching in light order without even scabbards, and getting over the ice in socks.

[1] A horn and a tusk of great size are described as things of price, and great uroch's horns are mentioned in Thorkill's Second Journey. Horns were used for feast as well as fray.

The war equipment and habits of the Irish, light armoured, clipped at back of head, hurling the javelin backwards in their feigned flight; of the Slavs, small blue targets and long swords; of the Finns, with their darts and skees, are given.

Watches are kept, and it is noted that "uht", the early watch after midnight, is the worst to be attacked in (the duke's two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage being needed, and the darkness and cold helping the enemy).

Spies were, of course, slain if discovered. But we have instances of kings and heroes getting into foeman's camps in disguise (cf. stories of Alfred and Anlaf).

The order of battle of Bravalla fight is given, and the ideal array of a host. To Woden is ascribed the device of the boar's head, hamalt fylking (the swine-head array of Manu's Indian kings), the terrible column with wedge head which could cleave the stoutest line.

The host of Ring has men from Wener, Wermland, Gotaelf, Thotn, Wick, Thelemark, Throndham, Sogn, Firths, Fialer, Iceland; Sweden, Gislamark, Sigtun, Upsala, Pannonia.

The host of Harold had men from Iceland, the Danish provinces, Frisia, Lifland; Slavs, and men from Jom, Aland, and Sleswick.

The battle of Bravalla is said to have been won by the Gotland archers and the men of Throndham, and the Dales. The death of Harald by treachery completed the defeat, which began when Ubbe fell (after he had broken the enemy's van) riddled with arrows.

The defeated, unless they could fly, got little quarter. One-fifth only of the population of a province are said to have survived an invasion. After sea-battles (always necessarily more deadly) the corpses choke the harbours. Seventy sea-kings are swept away in one sea-fight. Heads seem to have been taken in some cases, but not as a regular Teutonic usage, and the practice, from its being attributed to ghosts and aliens, must have already been considered savage by Saxo, and probably by his informants and authorities.

Prisoners were slaves; they might be killed, put to cruel death, outraged, used as slaves, but the feeling in favour of mercy was growing, and the cruelty of Eormenric, who used tortures to his prisoners, of Rothe, who stripped his captives, and of Fro, who sent captive ladies to a brothel in insult, is regarded with dislike.

Wounds were looked on as honourable, but they must be in front or honourably got. A man who was shot through the buttocks, or wounded in the back, was laughed at and disgraced. We hear of a mother helping her wounded son out of battle.

That much of human interest centered round war is evident by the mass of tradition that surrounds the subject in Saxo, both in its public and private aspects. Quaint is the analysis of the four kinds of warriors: (a) The Veterans, or Doughty, who kill foes and spare flyers; (b) the Young men who kill foes and flyers too; (c) the well-to-do, landed, and propertied men of the main levy, who neither fight for fear nor fly for shame; (d) the worthless, last to fight and first to fly; and curious are the remarks about married and unmarried troops, a matter which Chaka pondered over in later days. Homeric speeches precede the fight.

"Stratagems of War" greatly interested Saxo (probably because Valerius Maximus, one of his most esteemed models, was much occupied with such matters), so that he diligently records the military traditions of the notably skillful expedients of famous commanders of old.

There is the device for taking a town by means of the "pretended death" of the besieging general, a device ascribed to Hastings and many more commanders (see Steenstrup Normannerne); the plan of "firing" a besieged town by fire-bearing birds, ascribed here to Fridlev, in the case of Dublin to Hadding against Duna (where it was foiled by all tame birds being chased out of the place).

There is the "Birnam Wood" stratagem, by which men advanced behind a screen of boughs, which is even used for the concealment of ships, and the curious legend (occurring in Irish tradition also, and recalling Capt. B. Hall's "quaker gun" story) by which a commander bluffs off his enemy by binding his dead to stakes in rows, as if they were living men.

Less easy to understand are the "brazen horses" or "machines" driven into the close lines of the enemy to crush and open them, an invention of Gewar. The use of hooked weapons to pull down the foes' shields and helmets was also taught to Hother by Gewar.

The use of black tents to conceal encampment; the defence of a pass by hurling rocks from the heights; the bridge of boats across the Elbe; and the employment of spies, and the bold venture, ascribed in our chronicles to Alfred and Anlaf, of visiting in disguise the enemy's camp, is here attributed to Frode, who even assumed women's clothes for the purpose.

Frode is throughout the typical general, as he is the typical statesman and law-giver of archaic Denmark.

There are certain heathen usages connected with war, as the hurling of a javelin or shooting of an arrow over the enemy's ranks as a "sacratio" to Woden of the foe at the beginning of a battle. This is recorded in the older vernacular authorities also, in exact accordance with the Homeric usage, "Odyssey" xxiv, 516-595.

The dedication of part of the spoils to the god who gave good omens for the war is told of the heathen Baltic peoples; but though, as Sidonius records, it had once prevailed among the Saxons, and, as other witnesses add, among the Scandinavian people, the tradition is not clearly preserved by Saxo.

"Sea and Sea Warfare."—As might be expected, there is much mention of Wicking adventure and of maritime warfare in Saxo.

Saxo tells of Asmund's huge ship (Gnod), built high that he might shoot down on the enemy's craft; he speaks of a ship (such as Godwin gave as a gift to the king his master), and the monk of St. Bertin and the court-poets have lovingly described a ship with gold-broidered sails, gilt masts, and red-dyed rigging. One of his ships has, like the ships in the Chansons de Geste, a carbuncle for a lantern at the masthead. Hedin signals to Frode by a shield at the masthead. A red shield was a peace signal, as noted above. The practice of "strand-hewing", a great feature in Wicking-life (which, so far as the victualling of raw meat by the fishing fleets, and its use raw, as Mr. P. H. Emerson informs me, still survives), is spoken of. There was great fear of monsters attacking them, a fear probably justified by such occasional attacks of angry whales as Melville (founding his narrative on repeated facts) has immortalised. The whales, like Moby Dick, were uncanny, and inspired by troll-women or witches (cf. "Frithiof Saga" and the older "Lay of Atle and Rimegerd"). The clever sailing of Hadding, by which he eludes pursuit, is tantalising, for one gathers that, Saxo knows the details that he for some reason omits. Big fleets of 150 and a monster armada of 3,000 vessels are recorded.

The ships were moved by oars and sails; they had rudders, no doubt such as the Gokstad ship, for the hero Arrow-Odd used a rudder as a weapon.

"Champions".—Professed fighting men were often kept by kings and earls about their court as useful in feud and fray. Harald Fairhair's champions are admirably described in the contemporary Raven Song by Hornclofe—

> "Wolf-coats they call them that in battle
> Bellow into bloody shields.
> They wear wolves' hides when they come into the fight,
> And clash their weapons together."

and Saxo's sources adhere closely to this pattern.

These "bear-sarks", or wolf-coats of Harald give rise to an O. N. term, "bear-sarks' way", to describe the frenzy of fight and fury which such champions indulged in, barking and howling, and biting their shield-rims (like the ferocious "rook" in the narwhale ivory chessmen in the British Museum) till a kind of state was produced akin to that of the Malay when he has worked himself up to "run-a-muck." There seems to have been in the 10th century a number of such fellows about unemployed, who became nuisances to their neighbours by reason of their bullying and

highhandedness. Stories are told in the Icelandic sagas of the way such persons were entrapped and put to death by the chiefs they served when they became too troublesome. A favourite (and fictitious) episode in an "edited" Icelandic saga is for the hero to rescue a lady promised to such a champion (who has bullied her father into consent) by slaying the ruffian. It is the same "motif" as Guy of Warwick and the Saracen lady, and one of the regular Giant and Knight stories.

Beside men-warriors there were "women-warriors" in the North, as Saxo explains. He describes shield-maidens, as Alfhild, Sela, Rusila (the Ingean Ruadh, or Red Maid of the Irish Annals, as Steenstrup so ingeniously conjectures); and the three she-captains, Wigbiorg, who fell on the field, Hetha, who was made queen of Zealand, and Wisna, whose hand Starcad cut off, all three fighting manfully at Bravalla fight.

SOCIAL LIFE AND MANNERS

"Feasts".—The hall-dinner was an important feature in the old Teutonic court-life. Many a fine scene in a saga takes place in the hall while the king and his men are sitting over their ale. The hall decked with hangings, with its fires, lights, plate and provisions, appears in Saxo just as in the Eddic Lays, especially Rigsmal, and the Lives of the Norwegian Kings and Orkney Earls.

The order of seats is a great point of archaic manners. Behaviour at table was a matter of careful observance. The service, especially that of the cup-bearer, was minutely regulated by etiquette. An honoured guest was welcomed by the host rising to receive him and giving him a seat near himself, but less distinguished visitors were often victims to the rough horseplay of the baser sort, and of the wanton young gentleman at court. The food was simple, boiled beef and pork, and mutton without sauce, ale served in horns from the butt. Roast meat, game, sauces, mead, and flagons set on the table, are looked on by Starcad as foreign luxuries, and Germany was credited with luxurious cookery.

"Mimes and jugglers", who went through the country or were attached to the lord's court to amuse the company, were a despised race because of their ribaldry, obscenity, cowardice, and unabashed self-debasement; and their newfangled dances and piping were loathsome to the old court-poets, who accepted the harp alone as an instrument of music.

The story that once a king went to war with his jugglers and they ran away, would represent the point of view of the old house-carle, who was neglected, though "a first-class fighting man", for these debauched foreign buffoons.

SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

GODS AND GODDESSES.—The gods spring, according to Saxo's belief, from a race of sorcerers, some of whom rose to pre-eminence and expelled and crushed the rest, ending the "wizard-age", as the wizards had ended the monster or "giant-age". That they were identic with the classic gods he is inclined to believe, but his difficulty is that in the week-days we have Jove : Thor; Mercury : Woden; whereas it is perfectly well known that Mercury is Jove's son, and also that Woden is the father of Thor—a comic "embarras". That the persians the heathens worshipped as gods existed, and that they were men and women false and powerful, Saxo plainly believes. He has not Snorre's appreciation of the humorous side of the mythology. He is ironic and scornful, but without the kindly, naive fun of the Icelander.

The most active god, the Dane's chief god (as Frey is the Swede's god, and patriarch), is "Woden". He appears in heroic life as patron of great heroes and kings. Cf. "Hyndla-Lay", where it is said of Woden:—

"Let us pray the Father of Hosts to be gracious to us!
He granteth and giveth gold to his servants,
He gave Heremod a helm and mail-coat,
And Sigmund a sword to take.
He giveth victory to his sons, to his followers wealth,
Ready speech to his children and wisdom to men.
Fair wind to captains, and song to poets;
He giveth luck in love to many a hero."

He appears under various disguises and names, but usually as a one-eyed old man, cowled and hooded; sometimes with another, bald and ragged, as before the battle Hadding won; once as "Hroptr", a huge man skilled in leechcraft, to Ragnar's son Sigfrid.

Often he is a helper in battle or doomer of feymen. As "Lysir", a rover of the sea, he helps Hadding. As veteran slinger and archer he helps his favourite Hadding; as charioteer, "Brune", he drives Harald to his death in battle. He teaches Hadding how to array his troops. As "Yggr" the prophet he advises the hero and the gods. As "Wecha" (Waer) the leech he woos Wrinda. He invented the wedge array. He can grant charmed lives to his favourites against steel. He prophesies their victories and death. He snatches up one of his disciples, sets him on his magic horse that rides over seas in the air, as in Skida-runa the god takes the beggar over the North Sea. His image (like that of Frey in the Swedish story of Ogmund dytt and Gunnar helming, "Flatey book", i, 335) could speak by magic power.

Of his life and career Saxo gives several episodes.

Woden himself dwelt at Upsala and Byzantium (Asgard); and the northern kings sent him a golden image ring-bedecked, which he made to speak oracles. His wife Frigga stole the bracelets and played him false with a servant, who advised her to destroy and rob the image.

When Woden was away (hiding the disgrace brought on him by Frigga his wife), an imposter, Mid Odin, possibly Loke in disguise, usurped his place at Upsala, instituted special drink-offerings, fled to Finland on Woden's return, and was slain by the Fins and laid in barrow. But the barrow smote all that approached it with death, till the body was unearthed, beheaded, and impaled, a well-known process for stopping the haunting of an obnoxious or dangerous ghost.

Woden had a son Balder, rival of Hother for the love of Nanna, daughter of King Gewar. Woden and Thor his son fought for him against Hother, but in vain, for Hother won the laity and put Balder to shameful flight; however, Balder, half-frenzied by his dreams of Nanna, in turn drove him

into exile (winning the lady); finally Hother, befriended hy luck and the Wood Maidens, to whom he owed his early successes and his magic coat, belt, and girdle (there is obvious confusion here in the text), at last met Balder and stabbed him in the side. Of this wound Balder died in three days, as was foretold by the awful dream in which Proserpina (Hela) appeared to him. Balder's grand burial, his barrow, and the magic flood which burst from it when one Harald tried to break into it, and terrified the robbers, are described.

The death of Balder led Woden to seek revenge. Hrossthiof the wizard, whom he consulted, told him he must beget a son by "Wrinda" (Rinda, daughter of the King of the Ruthenians), who should avenge his half-brother.

Woden's wooing is the best part of this story, half spoilt, however, by euhemeristic tone and lack of epic dignity. He woos as a victorious warrior, and receives a cuff; as a generous goldsmith, and gets a buffet; as a handsome soldier, earning a heavy knock-down blow; but in the garb of a women as Wecha (Wakr), skilled in leechcraft, he won his way by trickery; and ("Wale") "Bous" was born, who, after some years, slew Hother in battle, and died himself of his wounds. Bous' barrow in Bohusland, Balder's haven, Balder's well, are named as local attestations of the legend, which is in a late form, as it seems.

The story of Woden's being banished for misbehaviour, and especially for sorcery and for having worn woman's attire to trick Wrinda, his replacement by "Wuldor" ("Oller"), a high priest who assumed Woden's name and flourished for ten years, but was ultimately expelled by the returning Woden, and killed by the Danes in Sweden, is in the same style. But Wuldor's bone vessel is an old bit of genuine tradition mangled. It would cross the sea as well as a ship could, by virtue of certain spells marked on it.

Of "Frey", who appears as "satrapa" of the gods at Upsala, and as the originator of human sacrifice, and as appeased by black victims, at a sacrifice called Froblod (Freys-blot) instituted by Hadding, who began it as an atonement for having slain a sea-monster, a deed for which he had incurred a curse. The priapic and generative influences of Frey are only indicated by a curious tradition mentioned. It almost looks as if there had once been such an institution at Upsala as adorned the Phoenician temples, under Frey's patronage and for a symbolic means of worship.

"Thunder", or "Thor", is Woden's son, strongest of gods or men, patron of Starcad, whom he turned, by pulling off four arms, from a monster to a man.

He fights by Woden's side and Balder's against Hother, by whose magic wand his club (hammer) was lopped off part of its shaft, a wholly different and, a much later version than the one Snorre gives in the prose Edda. Saxo knows of Thor's journey to the haunt of giant Garfred (Geirrod) and his three daughters, and of the hurling of the iron "bloom", and of the crushing of the giantesses, though he does not seem to have known of the river-feats of either the ladies or Thor, if we may judge (never a safe thing wholly) by his silence.

Whether "Tew" is meant by the Mars of the Song of the Voice is not evident. Saxo may only be imitating the repeated catch-word "war" of the original.

"Loke" appears as Utgard-Loke, Loke of the skirts of the World, as it were; is treated as a venomous giant bound in agony under a serpent-haunted cavern (no mention is made of "Sigyn" or her pious ministry).

"Hela" seems to be meant by Saxo's Proserpina.

"Nanna" is the daughter of Gewar, and Balder sees her bathing and falls in love with her, as madly as Frey with Gertha in Skirnismal.

"Freya", the mistress of Od, the patroness of Othere the homely, the sister of Frey-Frode, and daughter of Niord-Fridlaf, appears as Gunwara Eric's love and Syritha Ottar's love and the hair-clogged maiden, as Dr. Rydberg has shown.

The gods can disguise their form, change their shape, are often met in a mist, which shrouds them save from the right person; they appear and disappear at will. For the rest they have the mental

and physical characteristics of the kings and queens they protect or persecute so capriciously. They can be seen by making a magic sign and looking through a witch's arm held akimbo. They are no good comates for men or women, and to meddle with a goddess or nymph or giantess was to ensure evil or death for a man. The god's loves were apparently not always so fatal, though there seems to be some tradition to that effect. Most of the god-sprung heroes are motherless or unborn (i.e., born like Macduff by the Caesarean operation)—Sigfred, in the Eddic Lays for instance.

Besides the gods, possibly older than they are, and presumably mightier, are the "Fates" (Norns), three Ladies who are met with together, who fulfil the parts of the gift-fairies of our Sleeping Beauty tales, and bestow endowments on the new-born child, as in the beautiful "Helge Lay", a point of the story which survives in Ogier of the Chansons de Geste, wherein Eadgar (Otkerus or Otgerus) gets what belonged to Holger (Holge), the Helga of "Beowulf's Lay". The caprices of the Fates, where one corrects or spoils the others' endowments, are seen in Saxo, when beauty, bounty, and meanness are given together. They sometimes meet heroes, as they met Helgi in the Eddic Lay (Helgi and Sigrun Lay), and help or begift them; they prepare the magic broth for Balder, are charmed with Hother's lute-playing, and bestow on him a belt of victory and a girdle of splendour, and prophesy things to come.

The verse in Biarca-mal, where "Pluto weaves the dooms of the mighty and fills Phlegethon with noble shapes," recalls Darrada-liod, and points to Woden as death-doomer of the warrior.

"Giants".—These are stupid, mischievous, evil and cunning in Saxo's eyes. Oldest of beings, with chaotic force and exuberance, monstrous in extravagant vitality.

The giant nature of the older troll-kind is abhorrent to man and woman. But a giantess is enamoured of a youth she had fostered, and giants carry off king's daughters, and a three-bodied giant captures young children.

Giants live in caves by the sea, where they keep their treasure. One giant, Unfoot (Ofoti), is a shepherd, like Polyphemus, and has a famous dog which passed into the charge of Biorn, and won a battle; a giantess is keeping goats in the wilds. A giant's fury is so great that it takes twelve champions to control him, when the rage is on him. The troll (like our Puss-in-Boots Ogre) can take any shape.

Monstrous apparitions are mentioned, a giant hand (like that in one story of Finn) searching for its prey among the inmates of a booth in the wilds. But this Grendel-like arm is torn off by a giantess, Hardgrip, daughter of Wainhead and niece possibly of Hafle.

The voice heard at night prophesying is that of some god or monster, possibly Woden himself.

"Dwarves".—These Saxo calls Satyrs, and but rarely mentions. The dwarf Miming, who lives in the desert, has a precious sword of sharpness (Mistletoe?) that could even pierce skin-hard Balder, and a ring (Draupnir) that multiplied itself for its possessor. He is trapped by the hero and robbed of his treasures.

FUNERAL RITES AND MAN'S FUTURE STATE

"Barrow-burials".—The obsequies of great men (such as the classic funeral of "Beowulf's Lay", 3138-80) are much noticed by Saxo, and we might expect that he knew such a poem (one similar to Ynglingatal, but not it) which, like the Books of the Kings of Israel and Judah, recorded the deaths and burials, as well as the pedigrees and deeds, of the Danish kings.

The various stages of the "obsequy by fire" are noted; the byre sometimes formed out of a ship; the "sati"; the devoted bower-maidens choosing to die with their mistress, the dead man's beloved (cf. The Eddic funerals of Balder, Sigfred, and Brunhild, in the Long "Brunhild's Lay", Tregrof Gudrumar and the lost poem of Balder's death paraphrased in the prose Edda); the last message given to the corpse on the pyre (Woden's last words to Balder are famous); the riding round the pyre; the eulogium; the piling of the barrow, which sometimes took whole days, as the size of many existing grass mounds assure us; the funeral feast, where an immense vat of ale or mead is drunk in honor of the dead; the epitaph, like an ogham, set up on a stone over the barrow.

The inclusion of a live man with the dead in a barrow, with the live or fresh-slain beasts (horse and bound) of the dead man, seems to point to a time or district when burning was not used. Apparently, at one time, judging from Frode's law, only chiefs and warriors were burnt.

Not to bury was, as in Hellas, an insult to the dead, reserved for the bodies of hated foes. Conquerors sometimes show their magnanimity (like Harald Godwineson) by offering to bury their dead foes.

The buried "barrow-ghost" was formidable; he could rise and slay and eat, vampire-like, as in the tale of Asmund and Aswit. He must in such case be mastered and prevented doing further harm by decapitation and thigh-forking, or by staking and burning. So criminals' bodies were often burnt to stop possible haunting.

Witches and wizards could raise corpses by spells to make them prophesy. The dead also appeared in visions, usually foretelling death to the person they visited.

OTHER WORLDS.—The "Land of Undeath" is spoken of as a place reached by an exiled hero in his wanderings. We know it from Eric the traveller's S., Helge Thoreson's S., Herrand and Bose S., Herwon S., Thorstan Baearmagn S., and other Icelandic sources. But the voyage to the Other Worlds are some of the most remarkable of the narratives Saxo has preserved for us.

"Hadding's Voyage Underground".—(a) A woman bearing in her lap angelica fresh and green, though it was deep winter, appears to the hero at supper, raising her head beside the brazier. Hadding wishes to know where such plants grow.

(b) She takes him with her, under cover of her mantle, underground.

(c) They pierce a mist, get on a road worn by long use, pass nobly-clad men, and reach the sunny fields that bear the angelica:—

> "Through griesly shadowes by a beaten path,
> Into a garden goodly garnished."
> —F.Q. ii. 7, 51.

(d) Next they cross, by a bridge, the "River of Blades", and see "two armies fighting", ghosts of slain soldiers.

(e) Last they came to a high wall, which surrounds the land of Life, for a cock the woman brought with her, whose neck she wrung and tossed over this wall, came to life and crowed merrily.

Here the story breaks off. It is unfinished, we are only told that Hadfling got back. Why he was taken to this under-world? Who took him? What followed therefrom? Saxo does not tell. It is left to us to make out.

That it is an archaic story of the kind in the Thomas of Ercildoune and so many more fairy-tales, e.g., Kate Crack-a-Nuts, is certain. The "River of Blades" and "The Fighting Warriors" are

known from the Eddic Poems. The angelica is like the green birk of that superb fragment, the ballad of the Wife of Usher's Well—a little more frankly heathen, of course—

"It fell about the Martinmas, when nights are long and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons cam hame, and their hats were o' the birk.
It neither grew in syke nor dyke, nor yet in ony sheugh,
But at the gates o' Paradise that birk grew fair eneuch."

The mantel is that of Woden when he bears the hero over seas; the cock is a bird of sorcery the world over; the black fowl is the proper gift to the Underground powers—a heriot really, for did not the Culture god steal all the useful beasts out of the underground world for men's use?

Dr. Rydberg has shown that the "Seven Sleepers" story is an old Northern myth, alluded to here in its early pre-Christian form, and that with this is mixed other incidents from voyages of Swipdag, the Teutonic Odusseus.

"Thorkill's Second Voyage to Outgarth-Loke to get Knowledge".—(a) Guthrum is troubled as to the immortality and fate of the soul, and the reward of piety after death. To spite Thorkill, his enviers advised the king to send him to consult Outgarth-Loke. He required of the king that his enemies should be sent with him.

(b) In one well-stored and hide-defended ship they set out, reached a sunless, starless land, without fuel; ate raw food and suffered. At last, after many days, a fire was seen ashore. Thorkill, setting a jewel at the mast-head to be able to regain his vessel easily, rows ashore to get fire.

(c) In a filthy, snake-paved, stinking cavern he sees two horny-nebbed giants,[2] making a fire. One of the giants offers to direct him to Loke if he will say three true things in three phrases, and this done, tells him to row four days and then he would reach a Dark and Grassless Land. For three more true sayings he obtains fire, and gets back to his vessel.

(d) With good wind they make Grassless Land, go ashore, find a huge, rocky cavern, strike a flint to kindle a fire at the entrance as a safeguard against demons, and a torch to light them as they explored the cavern.

(e) First appears iron seats set amid crawling snakes.

(f) Next is sluggish water flowing over sand.

(g) Last a steep, sloping cavern is reached, in a chamber of which lay Outgarth-Loke chained, huge and foul.

(h) Thorkill plucks a hair of his beard "as big as a cornel-wood spear." The stench that arose was fearful; the demens and snakes fell upon the invaders at once; only Thorkill and five of the crew, who had sheltered themselves with hides against the virulent poison the demons and snakes cast, which would take a head off at the neck if it fell upon it, got back to their ship.

(i) By vow to the "God that made the world", and offerings, a good voyage was made back, and Germany reached, where Thorkill became a Christian. Only two of his men survived the effects of the poison and stench, and he himself was scarred and spoilt in the face.

(k) When he reached the king, Guthrum would not listen to his tale, because it was prophesied to him that he would die suddenly if he heard it; nay, he even sent men to smite him as he lay in bed, but, by the device of laying a log in his place, he escaped, and going to the king as he sat at meat, reproached him for his treachery.

[2] Such bird-beaked, bird-legged figures occur on the Cross at Papil, Burra Island, Shetland. Cf. Abbey Morne Cross, and an Onchan Cross, Isle of Man.

(l) Guthrum bade him tell his story, but died of horror at hearing his god Loke foully spoken of, while the stench of the hair that Thorkill produced, as Othere did his horn for a voucher of his speech, slew many bystanders.

This is the regular myth of Loke, punished by the gods, lying bound with his own soils' entrails on three sharp stones and a sword-blade, (this latter an addition, when the myth was made stones were the only blades), with snakes' venom dripping on to him, so that when it falls on him he shakes with pain and makes earthquakes—a Titan myth in answer to the question, "Why does the earth quake?" The vitriolic power of the poison is excellently expressed in the story. The plucking of the hair as a token is like the plucking of a horn off the giant or devil that occurs in some folk-tale.

MAGIC AND FOLK-SCIENCE

There is a belief in magic throughout Saxo's work, showing how fresh heathendom still was in men's minds and memories. His explanations, when he euhemerizes, are those of his day.

By means of spells all kinds of wonders could be effected, and the powers of nature forced to work for the magician or his favourite.

"Skin-changing" (so common in "Landnamaboc") was as well known as in the classic world of Lucian and Apuleius; and, where Frode perishes of the attacks of a witch metamorphosed into a walrus.

"Mist" is induced by spells to cover and hide persons, as in Homer, and "glamour" is produced by spells to dazzle foemen's sight. To cast glamour and put confusion into a besieged place a witch is employed by the beleaguerer, just as William the Conqueror used the witch in the Fens against Hereward's fortalice. A soothsayer warns Charles the Great of the coming of a Danish fleet to the Seine's mouth.

"Rain and bad weather" may be brought on, as in a battle against the enemy, but in this, as in other instances, the spell may be counteracted.

"Panic Terror" may be induced by the spell worked with a dead horse's head set up on a pole facing the antagonist, but the spell may be met and combatted by silence and a counter-curse.

"Magic help" may be got by calling on the friendly magician's name. The magician has also the power of summoning to him anyone, however unwilling, to appear.

Of spells and magic power to blunt steel there are several instances; they may be counteracted (as in the Icelandic Sagas) by using the hilt, or a club, or covering the blade with fine skin. In another case the champion can only be overcome by one that will take up some of the dust from under his feet. This is effected by the combatants shifting their ground and exchanging places. In another case the foeman can only be slain by gold, whereupon the hero has a gold-headed mace made and batters the life out of him therewith. The brothers of Swanhild cannot be cut by steel, for their mail was charmed by the witch Gudrun, but Woden taught Eormenric, the Gothic king, how to overcome them with stones (which apparently cannot, as archaic weapons, be charmed against at all, resisting magic like wood and water and fire). Jordanis tells the true history of Ermanaric, that great Gothic emperor whose rule from the Dnieper to the Baltic and Rhine and Danube, and long reign of prosperity, were broken by the coming of the Huns. With him vanished the first great Teutonic empire.

Magic was powerful enough even to raise the dead, as was practised by the Perms, who thus renewed their forces after a battle. In the Everlasting battle the combatants were by some strange trick of fate obliged to fulfil a perennial weird (like the unhappy Vanderdecken). Spells to wake the dead were written on wood and put under the corpses' tongue. Spells (written on bark) induce frenzy.

"Charms" would secure a man against claw or tooth.

"Love philtres" (as in the long "Lay of Gudrun) appear as everywhere in savage and archaic society.

"Food", porridge mixed with the slaver of tortured snakes, gives magic strength or endues the eater with eloquence and knowledge of beast and bird speech (as Finn's broiled fish and Sigfred's broiled dragon-heart do).

"Poison" like these hell-broths are part of the Witch or Obi stock-in-trade, and Frode uses powdered gold as an antidote.

"Omens" are observed; tripping as one lands is lucky (as with our William the Norman). Portents, such as a sudden reddening of the sea where the hero is drowned, are noticed and interpreted.

"Dreams" (cf. Eddic Lays of Attila, and the Border ballads) are prophetic (as nine-tenths of Europeans firmly believe still); thus the visionary flame-spouting dragon is interpreted exactly as Hogne's and Attila's dreams. The dreams of the three first bridals nights (which were kept hallowed

by a curious superstition, either because the dreams would then bold good, or as is more likely, for fear of some Asmodeus) were fateful. Animals and birds in dreams are read as persons, as nowadays.

A "curse" is powerful unless it can be turned back, when it will harm its utterer, for harm someone it must. The "curse" of a dying man on his slayer, and its lack of effect, is noted.

Sometimes "magic messengers" are sent, like the swans that bore a token and uttered warning songs to the hero.

"Witches and wizards" (as belonging to the older layer of archaic beliefs) are hateful to the gods, and Woden casts them out as accursed, though he himself was the mightiest of wizards. Heathen Teutonic life was a long terror by reason of witchcraft, as is the heathen African life to-day, continual precautions being needful to escape the magic of enemies. The Icelandic Sagas, such as Gretter's, are full of magic and witchcraft. It is by witchcraft that Gretter is first lamed and finally slain; one can see that Glam's curse, the Beowulf motif, was not really in the original Gretter story.

"Folk-medicine" is really a branch of magic in old days, even to such pioneers of science as Paracelsus.

Saxo's traditions note drinking of a lion's blood that eats men as a means of gaining might and strength; the drinking of bear's blood is also declared to give great bodily power.

The tests for "madness" are of a primitive character, such as those applied to Odusseus, who, however, was not able, like Hamlet, to evade them.

The test for death is the red-hot iron or hot brand (used by the Abyssinians of to-day, as it was supposed in the thirteenth century to have been used by Grimhild. "And now Grimhild goes and takes a great brand, where the house had burnt, and goes to Gernot her brother, and thrusts the burning brand in his mouth, and will know whether he is dead or living. But Gernot was clearly dead. And now she goes to Gislher and thrusts the firebrand in his mouth. He was not dead before, but Gislher died of that. Now King Thidrec of Bern saw what Grimhild is doing, and speaks to King Attila. `See how that devil Grimhild, thy wife, is killing her brothers, the good warriors, and how many men have lost their lives for her sake, and how many good men she has destroyed, Huns and Amalungs and Niflungs; and in the same way would she bring thee and me to hell, if she could do it?' Then spake King Attila, `Surely she is a devil, and slay thou her, and that were a good work if thou had done it seven nights ago! Then many a gallant fellow were whole that is now dead.' Now King Thidrec springs at Grimhild and swings up his sword Eckisax, and hews her asunder at the middle").

It was believed (as in Polynesia, where "Captain Cook's path" was shown in the grass) that the heat of the hero's body might blast the grass; so Starcad's entrails withered the grass.

It was believed that a severed head might bite the ground in rage, and there were certainly plenty of opportunities for observation of such cases.

It was believed that a "dumb man" might be so wrought on by passion that he would speak, and wholly acquire speech-power.

Little is told of "surgery", but in one case of intestines protruding owing to wounds, withies were employed to bind round the trunk and keep the bowels from risk till the patient could be taken to a house and his wounds examined and dressed. It was considered heroic to pay little heed to wounds that were not dangerous, but just to leave them to nature.

Personal "cleanliness" was not higher than among savages now. A lover is loused by his lady after the mediaeval fashion.

CHRISTIANITY—In the first nine books of Saxo, which are devoted to heathendom, there is not much save the author's own Christian point of view that smacks of the New Faith. The apostleships of Ansgarius in Denmark, the conversion of King Eric, the Christianity of several later Danish Kings, one of whom was (like Olaf Tryggwason) baptised in Britain are also noticed.

Of "Christian legends" and beliefs, besides the euhemerist theory, widely held, of the heathen gods there are few hints, save the idea that Christ was born in the reign of Frode, Frode having been somehow synchronised with Augustus, in whose reign also there was a world-peace.

Of course the christening of Scandinavia is history, and the mythic books are little concerned with it. The episode in Adam of Bremen, where the king offers the people, if they want a new god, to deify Eric, one of their hero-kings, is eminently characteristic and true.

FOLK-TALES

There might be a classification of Saxo's stories akin to that of the Irish poets, Battles, Sieges, Voyages, Rapes, Cattle Forays, etc.; and quite apart from the historic element, however faint and legendary, there are a set of stories ascribed by him, or rather his authorities, to definite persons, which had, even in his day, probably long been the property of Tis, their original owners not being known owing to lapse of time and the wear of memory, and the natural and accidental catastrophies that impair the human record. Such are the "Dragon-Slayer" stories. In one type of these the hero (Frithlaf) is cast on a desolate island, and warned by a dream to attack and slay a dragon guarding treasure. He wakes, sees the dragon arise out of the waves, apparently, to come ashore and go back to the cavern or mound wherein the treasure lay. His scales are too hard to pierce; he is terribly strong, lashing trees down with his tail, and wearing a deep path through the wood and over the stones with his huge and perpetual bulk; but the hero, covered with hide-wrapped shield against the poison, gets down into the hollow path, and pierces the monster from below, afterward rifling its underground store and carrying off its treasure.

Again the story is repeated; the hero (Frode Haddingsson) is warned by a countryman of the island-dragon and its hoard, is told to cover his shield and body with bulls' hides against the poison, and smite the monster's belly. The dragon goes to drink, and, as it is coming back, it is attacked, slain, and its treasure lifted precisely as before. The analogies with the Beowulf and Sigfred stories are evident; but no great poet has arisen to weave the dragon-slaying intimately into the lives of Frode and Frithlaf as they have been woven into the tragedy of Sigfred the wooer of Brunhild and, if Dr. Vigffisson be right the conqueror of Varus, or into the story of Beowulf, whose real engagements were with sea-monsters, not fiery dragons.

Another type is that of the "Loathly Worm". A king out hunting (Herod or Herraud, King of Sweden), for some unexplained reason brings home two small snakes as presents for his daughter. They wax wonderfully, have to be fed a whole ox a day, and proceed to poison and waste the countryside. The wretched king is forced to offer his daughter (Thora) to anyone who will slay them. The hero (Ragnar) devises a dress of a peculiar kind (by help of his nurse, apparently), in this case, woolly mantle and hairy breeches all frozen and ice-covered to resist the venom, then strapping his spear to his hand, he encounters them boldly alone. The courtiers hide "like frightened little girls", and the king betakes him to a "narrow shelter", an euphemism evidently of Saxo's, for the scene is comic. The king comes forth when the hero is victorious, and laughing at his hairy legs, nick-names him Shaggy-breech, and bids him to the feast. Ragnar fetches up his comrades, and apparently seeks out the frightened courtiers (no doubt with appropriate quip, omitted by Saxo, who hurries on), feasts, marries the king's daughter, and begets on her two fine sons.

Of somewhat similar type is the proud "Maiden guarded" by Beasts. Here the scene is laid in Gaulardale in Norway. The lady is Ladgerda, the hero Ragnar. Enamoured of the maiden by seeing her prowess in war, he accepts no rebuffs, but leaving his followers, enters the house, slays the guardian Bear and Dog, thrusting one through with a spear and throttling the other with his hand. The lady is won and wed, and two daughters and a son (Frithlaf) duly begotten. The story of Alf and Alfhild combines several types. There are the tame snakes, the baffled suitors' heads staked to terrify other suitors, and the hero using red-hot iron and spear to slay the two reptiles.

The "Proud Lady", (cf. Kudrun and the Niebelungen, and Are's story of the queen that burnt her suitors) appears in Hermintrude, Queen of Scotland, who battles and slays her lovers, but is out-witted by the hero (Hamlet), and, abating her arrogance, agrees to wed him. This seems an obvious accretion in the original Hamlet story, and probably owing not to Saxo, but to his authority.

The "Beggar that stole the Lady" (told of Snio Siwaldson and the daughter of the King of the Goths), with its brisk dialogue, must have been one of the most artful of the folk-tales worked on by Saxo or his informants; but it is only half told, unfortunately.

The "Crafty Soaker" is another excellent comic folk-tale. A terrible famine made the king (Snio) forbid brewing to save the barley for bread, and abolished all needless toping. The Soaker baffled the king by sipping, never taking a full draught. Rebuked, he declared that he never drank, but only sucked a drop. This was forbidden him for the future, so he sopped his bread in ale, and in that inconvenient manner continued to get drunk, excusing himself with the plea that though it was forbidden to drink or sip beer, it was not forbidden to eat it. When this was in turn prohibited, the Soaker gave up any pretence, and brewed and drank unabashed, telling the angry king that he was celebrating his approaching funeral with due respect, which excuse led to the repeal of the obnoxious decree. A good Rabelaisian tale, that must not have been wide-spread among the Danish topers, whose powers both Saxo and Shakespeare have celebrated, from actual experience no doubt.

The "Magician's tricks to elude pursuit", so common an incident in our fairy tales, e.g., Michael Scot's flight, is ascribed here to the wonder-working and uncanny Finns, who, when pursued, cast behind them successively three pebbles, which become to their enemies' eyes mountains, then snow, which appeared like a roaring torrent. But they could not cast the glamour on Arngrim a third time, and were forced to submit. The glamour here and in the case of the breaking of Balder's barrow is akin to that which the Druid puts on the sons of Uisnach.

The tale of the king who shuts up his daughter in an "earth-house" or underground chamber with treasures (weapons and gold and silver), in fear of invasion, looks like a bit of folk-tale, such as the "Hind in the Wood", but it may have a traditional base of some kind here.

A folk-tale, very imperfectly narrated, is the "Clever King's Daughter", who evidently in the original story had to choose her suitor by his feet (as the giantess in the prose Edda chooses her husband), and was able to do so by the device she had practised of sewing up her ring in his leg sometime before, so that when she touched the flesh she could feel the hardness of the ring beneath the scar.

Bits of folk-tales are the "Device for escaping threatened death by putting a log in one's bed" (as in our Jack the Giant-Killer). The device, as old as David's wife, of dressing up a dummy (here a basket with a dog inside, covered outside with clothes), while the hero escapes, is told of Eormenric, the mighty Gothic King of Kings, who, like Walter of Aquitaine, Theodoric of Varona, Ecgherht, and Arminius, was an exile in his youth. This traditional escape of the two lads from the Scyths should be compared with the true story in Paul the Deacon of his little ancestor's captivity and bold and successful stroke for freedom.

"Disguise" plays a great part in the folk-tales used by Saxo. Woden disguises himself in a cowl on his earthly travels, and heroes do the same; a king disguises himself as a slave at his rival's court, to try and find occasion of slaying him; a hero wraps himself up in skins, like Alleleirah.

"Escaped recognition" is accordingly a feature in many of these simple but artistic plots. A son is not known by his mother in the story of Hrolf.

Other "Devices" are exemplified, such as the "booby-trap" loaded with a millstone, which slays a hateful and despised tyrant, imposed by a foreign conqueror; evasion by secret passages, and concealment in underground vaults or earth-houses. The feigning of madness to escape death occurs, as well as in the better-known Hamlet story. These stratagems are universal in folk-history.

To Eric, the clever and quick of speech, is ascribed an excellent sailor's smuggling trick to hide slaughtered cattle, by sinking them till the search is over.

The "Hero's Mighty Childhood" (like David's) of course occurs when he binds a bear with his girdle. Sciold is full grown at fifteen, and Hadding is full grown in extreme youth. The hero in his boyhood slays a full-grown man and champion. The cinder-biting, lazy stage of a mighty youth is exemplified.

The "fierce eyes" of the hero or heroine, which can daunt an assassin as could the piercing glance of Marius, are the "falcon eyes" of the Eddic Lays.

The shining, effulgent, "illuminating hair" of the hero, which gives light in the darkness, is noticed here, as it obtains in Cuaran's thirteenth century English legend.

The wide-spread tale of the "City founded on a site marked out by a hide cut into finest thongs", occurs, told of Hella and Iwarus exactly as our Kentishmen told it of Hengist, and as it is also told of Dido.

The incidents of the "hero sleeping by a rill", of the guarded king's daughter, with her thirty attendants, the king's son keeping sheep, are part of the regular stock incidents in European folk-tales. So are the Nausicaa incident of the "king's daughter going a washing", the hero disguising himself as a woman and winding wool (like a second Heracles).

There are a certain number of stories, which only occur in Saxo and in our other Northern sources with attributions, though they are of course legendary; such are:

The "Everlasting Battle" between Hedhin and Hogne, a legend connected with the great Brisinga-men story, and paralleled by the Cordelia-tale among the Britons.

The story of the "Children preserved" is not very clearly told, and Saxo seems to have euhemerized. It is evidently of the same type as the Lionel-Lancelot story in the Arthurian cycle. Two children, ordered to be killed, are saved by the slaying of other children in their place; and afterwards by their being kept and named as dogs; they come to their own and avenge their wrongs.

The "Journey to Hell" story is told of Eric, who goes to a far land to fetch a princess back, and is successful. It is apparently an adventure of Swipdag, if everyone had their rights. It is also told of Thorkill, whose adventures are rather of the "True Thomas" type.

The "Test of Endurance" by sitting between fires, and the relief of the tortured and patient hero by a kindly trick, is a variant of the famous Eddic Lays concerning Agnar.

The "Robbers of the Island", evidently comes from an Icelandic source (cf. The historic "Holmveria Saga" and Icelandic folk-tales of later date), the incident of the hero slaying his slave, that the body might be mistaken for his, is archaic in tone; the powerful horse recalls Grani, Bayard, and even Sleipner; the dog which had once belonged to Unfoot (Ofote), the giant shepherd (cf. its analogues in old Welsh tales), is not quite assimilated or properly used in this story. It seems (as Dr. Rydberg suspects) a mythical story coloured by the Icelandic relater with memory full of the robber-hands of his own land.

The stratagem of "Starcad", who tried even in death to slay his slayer, seems an integral part of the Starcad story; as much as the doom of three crimes which are to be the price for the threefold life that a triple man or giant should enjoy. The noose story in Starcad (cf. that told of Bicce in the Eormenric story), is also integral.

SAXO'S MYTHOLOGY

No one has commented upon Saxo's mythology with such brilliancy, such minute consideration, and such success as the Swedish scholar, Victor Rydberg. More than occasionally he is over-ingenious and over-anxious to reduce chaos to order; sometimes he almost loses his faithful reader in the maze he treads so easily and confidently, and sometimes he stumbles badly. But he has placed the whole subject on a fresh footing, and much that is to follow will be drawn from his "Teutonic Mythology" (cited here from the English version by Rasmus B. Anderson, London, 1889, as "T.M.").

Let us take first some of the incontestable results of his investigations that affect Saxo.

SCIOLD is the father of Gram in Saxo, and the son of Sceaf in other older authorities. Dr. Rydberg (97-101) forms the following equations for the Sciolding patriarchs:—

a. Scef—Heimdal—Rig.
b. Sciold—Borgar—Jarl.
c. Gram—Halfdan—Koming.

Chief among the mythic tales that concern Saxo are the various portions of the Swipdag-Myth, which Dr. Rydberg has been able to complete with much success. They may be resumed briefly as follows:—

Swipdag, helped by the incantations of his dead mother, whom he had raised from the dead to teach him spells of protection, sets forth on his quests. He is the Odusseus of the Teutonic mythology. He desires to avenge his father on Halfdan that slew him. To this end he must have a weapon of might against Halfdan's club. The Moon-god tells him of the blade Thiasse has forged. It has been stolen by Mimer, who has gone out into the cold wilderness on the rim of the world. Swipdag achieves the sword, and defeats and slays Halfdan. He now buys a wife, Menglad, of her kinsmen the gods by the gift of the sword, which thus passes into Frey's hands.

How he established a claim upon Frey, and who Menglad was, is explained in Saxo's story of Eric, where the characters may be identified thus:—

Swipdag—Eric
Freya—Gunwara
Frey—Frode III
Niord—Fridlaf
Wuldor—Roller
Thor—Brac
Giants—The Greps
Giants—Coller.

Frey and Freya had been carried off by the giants, and Swipdag and his faithful friend resolve to get them back for the Anses, who bewail their absence. They journey to Monster-land, win back the lady, who ultimately is to become the hero's wife, and return her to her kindred; but her brother can only be rescued by his father Niord. It is by wit rather than by force that Swipdag is successful here.

The third journey of Swipdag is undertaken on Frey's behalf; he goes under the name of Scirner to woo giant Gymer's daughter Gerth for his brother-in-law, buying her with the sword that he himself had paid to Frey as his sister's bride-price. So the sword gets back to the giants again.

Swipdag's dead foe Halfdan left two young "avengers", Hadding and Guthorm, whom he seeks to slay. But Thor-Brache gives them in charge of two giant brothers. Wainhead took care of Hadding, Hafle of Guthorm. Swipdag made peace with Guthorm, in a way not fully explained to us, but Hadding took up the blood-feud as soon as he was old enough.

Hadding was befriended by a woman, who took him to the Underworld—the story is only half told in Saxo, unluckily—and by Woden, who took him over-sea wrapt in his mantle as they rode

Sleipner over the waves; but here again Saxo either had not the whole story before him, or he wished to abridge it for some reason or prejudice, and the only result of this astonishing pilgrimage is that Woden gives the young hero some useful counsels. He falls into captivity, entrapped by Loke (for what reason again we are left to guess), and is exposed to wild beasts, but he slays the wolf that attacks him, and eating its heart as Woden had bidden him, he gains wisdom and foresight.

Prepared by these adventures, he gets Guthorm to join him (how or why the peace between him and Swipdag was broken, we know not), and they attack their father's slayer, but are defeated, though Woden sunk Asmund Swipdag's son's ship, Grio, at Hlessey, and Wainhead and Hardgrip his daughter fought for Hadding.

Hadding wanders off to the East with his foster-sister and mistress and Hardgrip, who is slain protecting him against an angry ghost raised from the Underworld by her spells. However, helped by Heimdal and Woden (who at this time was an exile), Hadding's ultimate success is assured.

When Woden came back to power, Swipdag, whose violence and pride grew horribly upon him, was exiled, possibly by some device of his foes, and took upon him, whether by will or doom, a sea-monster's shape. His faithful wife follows him over land and sea, but is not able to save him. He is met by Hadding and, after a fierce fight, slain. Swipdag's wife cursed the conqueror, and he was obliged to institute an annual sacrifice to Frey (her brother) at Upsale, who annuls the curse. Loke, in seal's guise, tried to steal the necklace of Freya at the Reef of Treasures, where Swipdag was slain, but Haimdal, also in sealskin, fought him, and recovered it for the gods.

Other myths having reference to the goddesses appear in Saxo. There is the story of "Heimdall and Sol", which Dr. Rydberg has recognised in the tale of Alf and Alfhild. The same tale of how the god won the sun for his wife appears in the mediaeval German King Ruther (in which title Dr. Ryuberg sees Hrutr, a name of the ram-headed god).

The story of "Othar" (Od) and "Syritha" (Sigrid) is obviously that of Freya and her lover. She has been stolen by the giants, owing to the wiles of her waiting-maid, Loke's helper, the evil witch Angrbode. Od seeks her, finds her, slays the evil giant who keeps her in the cave; but she is still bewitched, her hair knotted into a hard, horny mass, her eyes void of brightness. Unable to gain recognition he lets her go, and she is made by a giantess to herd her flocks. Again found by Od, and again refusing to recognise him, she is let go again. But this time she flies to the world of men, and takes service with Od's mother and father. Here, after a trial of her love, she and Od are reconciled. Sywald (Sigwald), her father, weds Od's sister.

The tale of the vengeance of Balder is more clearly given by the Dane, and with a comic force that recalls the Aristophanic fun of Loka-senna. It appears that the story had a sequel which only Saxo gives. Woden had the giantess Angrbode, who stole Freya, punished. Frey, whose mother-in-law she was, took up her quarrel, and accusing Woden of sorcery and dressing up like a woman to betray Wrind, got him banished. While in exile Wuldor takes Woden's place and name, and Woden lives on earth, part of the time at least, with Scathe Thiasse's daughter, who had parted from Niord.

The giants now resolved to attack Ansegard; and Woden, under the name of Yggr, warned the gods, who recall him after ten years' exile.

But for Saxo this part of the story of the wars of the gods would be very fragmentary.

The "Hildiger story", where a father slays his son unwittingly, and then falls at his brother's hand, a tale combining the Rustam and the Balin-Balan types, is one of the Hilding tragedies, and curiously preserved in the late "Saga of Asmund the Champions' bane". It is an antithesis, as Dr. Rydberg remarks, to the Hildebrand and Hadubrand story, where father and son must fight and are reconciled.

The "story of Orwandel" (the analogue of Orion the Hunter) must be gathered chiefly from the prose Edda. He was a huntsman, big enough and brave enough to cope with giants. He was the friend of Thor, the husband of Groa, the father of Swipdag, the enemy of giant Coller and the monster Sela. The story of his birth, and of his being blinded, are lost apparently in the Teutonic stories, unless we

may suppose that the bleeding of Robin Hood till he could not see by the traitorous prioress is the last remains of the story of the great archer's death.

Great part of the troubles which befell the gods arose from the antagonism of the sons of Iwalde and the brethren Sindre and Brokk (Cinder and Brank), rival artist families; and it was owing to the retirement of their artist foster-parents that Frey and Freya were left among the giants. The Hniflung hoard is also supposed to have consisted of the treasures of one band of primaeval artists, the Iwaldings.

Whether we have here the phenomenon of mythological doublets belonging to different tribes, or whether we have already among these early names that descent of story which has led to an adventure of Moses being attributed to Garibaldi, given to Theodoric the king the adventures of Theodoric the god, taken Arthur to Rome, and Charles the Great to Constantinople, it is hard to say.

The skeleton-key of identification, used even as ably as Dr. Rydberg uses it, will not pick every mythologic lock, though it undoubtedly has opened many hitherto closed. The truth is that man is a finite animal; that he has a limited number of types of legend; that these legends, as long as they live and exist, are excessively prehensile; that, like the opossum, they can swing from tree to tree without falling; as one tree dies out of memory they pass on to another. When they are scared away by what is called exact intelligence from the tall forest of great personalities, they contrive to live humbly clinging to such bare plain stocks and poles (Tis and Jack and Cinderella) as enable them to find a precarious perch.

To drop similitudes, we must be prepared, in unravelling our tangled mythology, to go through several processes. We must, of course, note the parallelisms and get back to the earliest attribution-names we can find. But all system is of late creation, it does not begin till a certain political stage, a stage where the myths of coalescing clans come into contact, and an official settlement is attempted by some school of poets or priests. Moreover, systematization is never so complete that it effaces all the earlier state of things. Behind the official systems of Homer and Hesiod lies the actual chaos of local faiths preserved for us by Pausanias and other mythographers. The common factors in the various local faiths are much the majority among the factors they each possess; and many of these common factors are exceedingly primitive, and resolve themselves into answers to the questions that children still ask, still receiving no answer but myth—that is, poetic and subjective hypothesis, containing as much truth as they can receive or their inventors can grasp.

Who were our forbears? How did day and night, sun and moon, earth and water, and fire come? How did the animals come? Why has the bear no tail? Why are fishes dumb, the swallow cleft-tail? How did evil come? Why did men begin to quarrel? How did death arise? What will the end be? Why do dead persons come back? What do the dead do? What is the earth shaped like? Who invented tools and weapons, and musical instruments, and how? When did kings and chiefs first come?

From accepted answers to such questions most of the huge mass of mythology arises. Man makes his gods in his own image, and the doctrines of omen, coincidence, and correspondence helped by incessant and imperfect observation and logic, bring about a system of religious observance, of magic and ritual, and all the masses of folly and cruelty, hope and faith, and even charity, that group about their inventions, and seem to be the necessary steps in the onward path of progressive races.

When to these we add the true and exaggerated memories of actual heroes, the material before the student is pretty completely comprised. Though he must be prepared to meet the difficulties caused in the contact of races, of civilisations, by the conversion of persons holding one set of mythical ideas to belief in another set of different, more attractive, and often more advanced stage.

The task of arriving at the scientific, speculative ethic, and the actual practice of our remote ancestry (for to that end is the student of mythology and folk-lore aiming) is not therefore easy. Nor is the record perfect, though it is not so poor in most cases as was once believed. The Brothers Grimm, patriarchs alike as mythologists and folk-lorists, the Castor and Pollox of our studies, have proved

this as regards the Teutonic nations, just as they showed us, by many a striking example, that in great part folk-lore was the mythology of to-day, and mythology the folk-lore of yesterday.

In many cases we are helped by quite modern material to make out some puzzle that an old tale presents, and there is little doubt but that the present activity in the field of folklore will not only result in fresh matter but in fresh methods freshly applied.

The Scandinavian material, at all events, is particularly rich: there is the extensive Icelandic written literature touching the ninth and tenth and eleventh centuries; the noble, if fragmentary remains of Old Northern poetry of the Wickingtide; and lastly, the mass of tradition which, surviving in oral form, and changing in colour from generation to generation, was first recorded in part in the seventeenth, and again in part, in the present century; and all these yield a plentiful field for research. But their evidence gains immensely by the existence of Saxo's nine books of traditional and mythic lore, collected and written down in an age when much that was antique and heathen was passing away forever. The gratitude due to the Welshman of the twelfth century, whose garnered hoard has enriched so many poets and romances from his day to now, is no less due to the twelfth-century Dane, whose faithful and eloquent enthusiasm has swept much dust from antique time, and saved us such a story as Shakespeare has not disdained to consecrate to highest use. Not only Celtic and Teutonic lore are the richer for these two men, but the whole Western world of thought and speech. In the history of modern literature, it is but right that by the side of Geoffrey an honourable place should be maintained for Saxo, and

"awake remembrance of these mighty dead."

–Oliver Elton

THE DANISH HISTORY OF SAXO GRAMMATICUS

PREFACE

Forasmuch as all other nations are wont to vaunt the glory of their achievements, and reap joy from the remembrance of their forefathers: Absalon, Chief Pontiff of the Danes, whose zeal ever burned high for the glorification of our land, and who would not suffer it to be defrauded of like renown and record, cast upon me, the least of his followers—since all the rest refused the task—the work of compiling into a chronicle the history of Denmark, and by the authority of his constant admonition spurred my weak faculty to enter on a labour too heavy for its strength. For who could write a record of the deeds of Denmark? It had but lately been admitted to the common faith: it still languished as strange to Latin as to religion. But now that the holy ritual brought also the command of the Latin tongue, men were as slothful now as they were unskilled before, and their sluggishness proved as faultful as that former neediness. Thus it came about that my lowliness, though perceiving itself too feeble for the aforesaid burden, yet chose rather to strain beyond its strength than to resist his bidding; fearing that while our neighbours rejoiced and transmitted records of their deeds, the repute of our own people might appear not to possess any written chronicle, but rather to be sunk in oblivion and antiquity. Thus I, forced to put my shoulder, which was unused to the task, to a burden unfamiliar to all authors of preceding time, and dreading to slight his command, have obeyed more boldly than effectually, borrowing from the greatness of my admonisher that good heart which the weakness of my own wit denied me.

And since, ere my enterprise reached its goal, his death outran it; I entreat thee chiefly, Andrew, who wast chosen by a most wholesome and accordant vote to be successor in the same office and to headship of spiritual things, to direct and inspire my theme; that I may baulk by the defence of so great an advocate that spiteful detraction which ever reviles what is most conspicuous. For thy breast, very fruitful in knowledge, and covered with great store of worshipful doctrines, is to be deemed a kind of shrine of heavenly treasures. Thou who hast searched through Gaul and Italy and Britain also in order to gather knowledge of letters and amass them abundantly, didst after thy long wandering obtain a most illustrious post in a foreign school, and proved such a pillar thereof, that thou seemedst to confer more grace on thy degree than it did on thee. Then being made, on account of the height of thy honours and the desert of thy virtues, Secretary to the King, thou didst adorn that employment, in itself bounded and insignificant, with such works of wisdom as to leave it a piece of promotion for men of greatest rank to covet afterwards, when thou wert transferred to that office which now thou holdest. Wherefore Skaane has been found to leap for joy that she has borrowed a Pontiff from her neighbours rather than chosen one from her own people; inasmuch as she both elected nobly and deserved joy of her election. Being a shining light, therefore, in lineage, in letters, and in parts, and guiding the people with the most fruitful labours of thy teaching, thou hast won the deepest love of thy flock, and by thy boldness in thy famous administration hast conducted the service thou hast undertaken unto the summit of renown. And lest thou shouldst seem to acquire ownership on the strength of prescription, thou hast, by a pious and bountiful will, made over a very rich inheritance to Holy Church; choosing rather honourably to reject riches (which are covered with the rust of cares) than to be shackled with the greed of them and with their burden. Likewise thou hast set about an amazing work upon the reverend tenets of the faith; and in thy zeal to set the service of public religion before thy private concerns, hast, by the lesson of thy wholesome admonitions, driven those men who refused payment of the dues belonging to religion to do to holy things the homage that they ought; and by thy pious gift of treasure hast atoned for the ancient neglect of sacred buildings. Further, those who pursued a wanton life, and yielded to the stress of incontinence above measure,

thou hast redeemed from nerveless sloth to a more upright state of mind, partly by continuing instant in wholesome reproof, and partly by the noble example of simple living; leaving it in doubt whether thou hast edified them more by word or deed. Thus thou, by mere counsels of wisdom, hast achieved what it was not granted to any of thy forerunners to obtain.

And I would not have it forgotten that the more ancient of the Danes, when any notable deeds of mettle had been done, were filled with emulation of glory, and imitated the Roman style; not only by relating in a choice kind of composition, which might be called a poetical work, the roll of their lordly deeds; but also by having graven upon rocks and cliffs, in the characters of their own language, the works of their forefathers, which were commonly known in poems in the mother tongue. In the footsteps of these poems, being as it were classic books of antiquity, I have trod; and keeping true step with them as I translated, in the endeavour to preserve their drift, I have taken care to render verses by verses; so that the chronicle of what I shall have to write, being founded upon these, may thus be known, not for a modern fabrication, but for the utterance of antiquity; since this present work promises not a trumpery dazzle of language, but faithful information concerning times past.

Moreover, how many histories must we suppose that men of such genius would have written, could they have had skill in Latin and so slaked their thirst for writing! Men who though they lacked acquaintance with, the speech of Rome, were yet seized with such a passion for bequeathing some record of their history, that they encompassed huge boulders instead of scrolls, borrowing rocks for the usage of books.

Nor may the pains of the men of Thule be blotted in oblivion; for though they lack all that can foster luxury (so naturally barren is the soil), yet they make up for their neediness by their wit, by keeping continually every observance of soberness, and devoting every instant of their lives to perfecting our knowledge of the deeds of foreigners. Indeed, they account it a delight to learn and to consign to remembrance the history of all nations, deeming it as great a glory to set forth the excellences of others as to display their own. Their stores, which are stocked with attestations of historical events, I have examined somewhat closely, and have woven together no small portion of the present work by following their narrative, not despising the judgment of men whom I know to be so well versed in the knowledge of antiquity. And I have taken equal care to follow the statements of Absalon, and with obedient mind and pen to include both his own doings and other men's doings of which he learnt; treasuring the witness of his August narrative as though it were some teaching from the skies.

Wherefore, Waldemar,[3] healthful Prince and Father of us all, shining light of thy land, whose lineage, most glorious from times of old, I am to relate, I beseech thee let thy grace attend the faltering course of this work; for I am fettered under the weight of my purpose, and dread that I may rather expose my unskillfulness and the feebleness of my parts, than portray thy descent as I duly should. For, not to speak of thy rich inheritance from thy fathers, thou hast nobly increased thy realm by conquering thy neighbours, and in the toil of spreading thy sovereignty hast encompassed the ebbing and flowing waves of Elbe, thus adding to thy crowded roll of honours no mean portion of fame. And after outstripping the renown and repute of thy forerunners by the greatness of thy deeds, thou didst not forbear to make armed, assault even upon part of the Roman empire. And though thou art deemed to be well endowed with courage and generosity, thou hast left it in doubt whether thou dost more terrify to thy foes in warfare or melt thy people by thy mildness. Also thy most illustrious grandsire, who was sanctioned with the honours of public worship, and earned the glory of immortality by an unmerited death, now dazzles by the refulgence of his holiness those whom living he annexed in his conquests. And from his most holy wounds more virtue than blood hath flowed.

Moreover I, bound by an old and inherited duty of obedience, have set my heart on fighting for thee, if it be only with all the forces of my mind; my father and grandfather being known to have

[3] Waldemar the Second (1203-42); Saxo does not reach his history.

served thy illustrious sire in camp with loyal endurance of the toils of war. Relying therefore on thy guidance and regard, I have resolved to begin with the position and configuration of our own country; for I shall relate all things as they come more vividly, if the course of this history first traverse the places to which the events belong, and take their situation as the starting-point for its narrative.

The extremes, then, of this country are partly bounded by a frontier of another land, and partly enclosed by the waters of the adjacent sea. The interior is washed and encompassed by the ocean; and this, through the circuitous winds of the interstices, now straitens into the narrows of a firth, now advances into ampler bays, forming a number of islands. Hence Denmark is cut in pieces by the intervening waves of ocean, and has but few portions of firm and continuous territory; these being divided by the mass of waters that break them up, in ways varying with the different angle of the bend of the sea. Of all these, Jutland, being the largest and first settled, holds the chief place in the Danish kingdom. It both lies fore-most and stretches furthest, reaching to the frontiers of Teutonland, from contact with which it is severed by the bed of the river Eyder. Northwards it swells somewhat in breadth, and runs out to the shore of the Noric Channel (Skagerrak). In this part is to be found the fjord called Liim, which is so full of fish that it seems to yield the natives as much food as the whole soil.

Close by this fjord also lies Lesser (North) Friesland, which curves in from the promontory of Jutland in a cove of sinking plains and shelving lap, and by the favour of the flooding ocean yields immense crops of grain. But whether this violent inundation bring the inhabitants more profit or peril, remains a vexed question. For when the (dykes of the) estuaries, whereby the waves of the sea are commonly checked among that people, are broken through by the greatness of the storm, such a mass of waters is wont to overrun the fields that it sometimes overwhelms not only the tilled lands, but people and their dwellings likewise.

Eastwards, after Jutland, comes the Isle of Funen, cut off from the mainland by a very narrow sound of sea. This faces Jutland on the west, and on the east Zealand, which is famed for its remarkable richness in the necessaries of life. This latter island, being by far the most delightful of all the provinces of our country, is held to occupy the heart of Denmark, being divided by equal distances from the extreme frontier; on its eastern side the sea breaks through and cuts off the western side of Skaane; and this sea commonly yields each year an abundant haul to the nets of the fishers. Indeed, the whole sound is apt to be so thronged with fish that any craft which strikes on them is with difficulty got off by hard rowing, and the prize is captured no longer by tackle, but by simple use of the hands.

Moreover, Halland and Bleking, shooting forth from the mass of the Skaane like two branches from a parent trunk, are linked to Gothland and to Norway, though with wide deviations of course, and with various gaps consisting of fjords. Now in Bleking is to be seen a rock which travellers can visit, dotted with letters in a strange character. For there stretches from the southern sea into the desert of Vaarnsland a road of rock, contained between two lines a little way apart and very prolonged, between which is visible in the midst a level space, graven all over with characters made to be read. And though this lies so unevenly as sometimes to break through the tops of the hills, sometimes to pass along the valley bottoms, yet it can be discerned to preserve continuous traces of the characters. Now Waldemar, well-starred son of holy Canute, marvelled at these, and desired to know their purport, and sent men to go along the rock and gather with close search the series of the characters that were to be seen there; they were then to denote them with certain marks, using letters of similar shape. These men could not gather any sort of interpretation of them, because owing to the hollow space of the graving being partly smeared up with mud and partly worn by the feet of travellers in the trampling of the road, the long line that had been drawn became blurred. Hence it is plain that crevices, even in the solid rock, if long drenched with wet, become choked either by the solid washings of dirt or the moistening drip of showers.

But since this country, by its closeness of language as much as of position, includes Sweden and Norway, I will record their divisions and their climates also as I have those of Denmark. These

territories, lying under the northern pole, and facing Bootes and the Great Bear, reach with their utmost outlying parts the latitude of the freezing zone; and beyond these the extraordinary sharpness of the cold suffers not human habitation. Of these two, Norway has been allotted by the choice of nature a forbidding rocky site. Craggy and barren, it is beset all around by cliffs, and the huge desolate boulders give it the aspect of a rugged and a gloomy land; in its furthest part the day-star is not hidden even by night; so that the sun, scorning the vicissitudes of day and night, ministers in unbroken presence an equal share of his radiance to either season.

On the west of Norway comes the island called Iceland, with the mighty ocean washing round it: a land very squalid to dwell in, but noteworthy for marvels, both strange occurrences and objects that pass belief. A spring is there which, by the malignant reek of its water, destroys the original nature of anything whatsoever. Indeed, all that is sprinkled with the breath of its vapour is changed into the hardness of stone. It remains a doubt whether it be more marvellous or more perilous, that soft and flowing water should be invested with such a stiffness, as by a sudden change to transmute into the nature of stone whatsoever is put to it and drenched with its reeking fume, nought but the shape surviving. Here also are said to be other springs, which now are fed with floods of rising water, and, overflowing in full channels, cast a mass of spray upwards; and now again their bubbling flags, and they can scarce be seen below at the bottom, and are swallowed into deep hiding far under ground. Hence, when they are gushing over, they bespatter everything about them with the white spume, but when they are spent the sharpest eye cannot discern them. In this island there is likewise a mountain, whose floods of incessant fire make it look like a glowing rock, and which, by belching out flames, keeps its crest in an everlasting blaze. This thing awakens our wonder as much as those aforesaid; namely, when a land lying close to the extreme of cold can have such abundance of matter to keep up the heat, as to furnish eternal fires with unseen fuel, and supply an endless provocative to feed the burning. To this isle also, at fixed and appointed seasons, there drifts a boundless mass of ice, and when it approaches and begins to dash upon the rugged reefs, then, just as if the cliffs rang reply, there is heard from the deep a roar of voices and a changing din of extraordinary clamour. Whence it is supposed that spirits, doomed to torture for the iniquity of their guilty life, do here pay, by that bitter cold, the penalty of their sins. And so any portion of this mass that is cut off when the aforesaid ice breaks away from the land, soon slips its bonds and bars, though it be made fast with ever so great joins and knots. The mind stands dazed in wonder, that a thing which is covered with bolts past picking, and shut in by manifold and intricate barriers, should so depart after that mass whereof it was a portion, as by its enforced and inevitable flight to baffle the wariest watching. There also, set among the ridges and crags of the mountains, is another kind of ice which is known periodically to change and in a way reverse its position, the upper parts sinking to the bottom, and the lower again returning to the top. For proof of this story it is told that certain men, while they chanced to be running over the level of ice, rolled into the abyss before them, and into the depths of the yawning crevasses, and were a little later picked up dead without the smallest chink of ice above them. Hence it is common for many to imagine that the urn of the sling of ice first swallows them, and then a little after turns upside down and restores them. Here also, is reported to bubble up the water of a pestilent flood, which if a man taste, he falls struck as though by poison. Also there are other springs, whose gushing waters are said to resemble the quality of the bowl of Ceres. There are also fires, which, though they cannot consume linen, yet devour so fluent a thing as water. Also there is a rock, which flies over mountain-steeps, not from any outward impulse, but of its innate and proper motion.

And now to unfold somewhat more thoroughly our delineation of Norway. It should be known that on the east it is conterminous with Sweden and Gothland, and is bounded on both sides by the waters of the neighbouring ocean. Also on the north it faces a region whose position and name are unknown, and which lacks all civilisation, but teems with peoples of monstrous strangeness; and a vast interspace of flowing sea severs it from the portion of Norway opposite. This sea is found hazardous for navigation, and suffers few that venture thereon to return in peace.

Moreover, the upper bend of the ocean, which cuts through Denmark and flows past it, washes the southern side of Gothland with a gulf of some width; while its lower channel, passing the northern sides of Gothland and Norway, turns eastwards, widening much in breadth, and is bounded by a curve of firm land. This limit of the sea the elders of our race called Grandvik. Thus between Grandvik and the Southern Sea there lies a short span of mainland, facing the seas that wash on either shore; and but that nature had set this as a boundary where the billows almost meet, the tides of the two seas would have flowed into one, and cut off Sweden and Norway into an island. The regions on the east of these lands are inhabited by the Skric-Finns. This people is used to an extraordinary kind of carriage, and in its passion for the chase strives to climb untrodden mountains, and attains the coveted ground at the cost of a slippery circuit. For no crag juts out so high, but they can reach its crest by fetching a cunning compass. For when they first leave the deep valleys, they glide twisting and circling among the bases of the rocks, thus making the route very roundabout by dint of continually swerving aside, until, passing along the winding curves of the tracks, they conquer the appointed summit. This same people is wont to use the skins of certain beasts for merchandise with its neighbours.

Now Sweden faces Denmark and Norway on the west, but on the south and on much of its eastern side it is skirted by the ocean. Past this eastward is to be found a vast accumulation of motley barbarism.

That the country of Denmark was once cultivated and worked by giants, is attested by the enormous stones attached to the barrows and caves of the ancients. Should any man question that this is accomplished by superhuman force, let him look up at the tops of certain mountains and say, if he knows how, what man hath carried such immense boulders up to their crests. For anyone considering this marvel will mark that it is inconceivable how a mass, hardly at all or but with difficulty movable upon a level, could have been raised to so mighty a peak of so lofty a mountain by mere human effort, or by the ordinary exertion of human strength. But as to whether, after the Deluge went forth, there existed giants who could do such deeds, or men endowed beyond others with bodily force, there is scant tradition to tell us.

But, as our countrymen aver, those who even to-day are said to dwell in that rugged and inaccessible desert aforesaid, are, by the mutable nature of their bodies, vouchsafed the power of being now near, now far, and of appearing and vanishing in turn. The approach to this desert is beset with perils of a fearful kind, and has seldom granted to those who attempted it an unscathed return. Now I will let my pen pass to my theme.

BOOK ONE

Now Dan and Angul, with whom the stock of the Danes begins, were begotten of Humble, their father, and were the governors and not only the founders of our race. (Yet Dudo, the historian of Normandy, considers that the Danes are sprung and named from the Danai.) And these two men, though by the wish and favour of their country they gained the lordship of the realm, and, owing to the wondrous deserts of their bravery, got the supreme power by the consenting voice of their countrymen, yet lived without the name of king: the usage whereof was not then commonly resorted to by any authority among our people.

Of these two, Angul, the fountain, so runs the tradition, of the beginnings of the Anglian race, caused his name to be applied to the district which he ruled. This was an easy kind of memorial wherewith to immortalise his fame: for his successors a little later, when they gained possession of Britain, changed the original name of the island for a fresh title, that of their own land. This action was much thought of by the ancients: witness Bede, no mean figure among the writers of the Church, who was a native of England, and made it his care to embody the doings of his country in the most hallowed treasury of his pages; deeming it equally a religious duty to glorify in writing the deeds of his land, and to chronicle the history of the Church.

From Dan, however, so saith antiquity; the pedigrees of our kings have flowed in glorious series, like channels from some parent spring. Grytha, a matron most highly revered among the Teutons, bore him two sons, HUMBLE and LOTHER.

The ancients, when they were to choose a king, were wont to stand on stones planted in the ground, and to proclaim their votes, in order to foreshadow from the steadfastness of the stones that the deed would be lasting. By this ceremony Humble was elected king at his father's death, thus winning a novel favour from his country; but by the malice of ensuing fate he fell from a king into a common man. For he was taken by Lother in war, and bought his life by yielding up his crown; such, in truth, were the only terms of escape offered him in his defeat. Forced, therefore, by the injustice of a brother to lay down his sovereignty, he furnished the lesson to mankind, that there is less safety, though more pomp, in the palace than in the cottage. Also, he bore his wrong so meekly that he seemed to rejoice at his loss of title as though it were a blessing; and I think he had a shrewd sense of the quality of a king's estate. But Lother played the king as insupportably as he had played the soldier, inaugurating his reign straightway with arrogance and crime; for he counted it uprightness to strip all the most eminent of life or goods, and to clear his country of its loyal citizens, thinking all his equals in birth his rivals for the crown. He was soon chastised for his wickedness; for he met his end in an insurrection of his country; which had once bestowed on him his kingdom, and now bereft him of his life.

SKIOLD, his son, inherited his natural bent, but not his behaviour; avoiding his inborn perversity by great discretion in his tender years, and thus escaping all traces of his father's taint. So he appropriated what was alike the more excellent and the earlier share of the family character; for he wisely departed from his father's sins, and became a happy counterpart of his grandsire's virtues. This man was famous in his youth among the huntsmen of his father for his conquest of a monstrous beast: a marvellous incident, which augured his future prowess. For he chanced to obtain leave from his guardians, who were rearing him very carefully, to go and see the hunting. A bear of extraordinary size met him; he had no spear, but with the girdle that he commonly wore he contrived to bind it, and gave it to his escort to kill. More than this, many champions of tried prowess were at the same time of his life vanquished by him singly; of these Attal and Skat were renowned and famous. While but fifteen years of age he was of unusual bodily size and displayed mortal strength in its perfection, and so mighty were the proofs of his powers that the rest of the kings of the Danes were called after him by a common title, the SKIOLDUNG'S. Those who were wont to live an abandoned and flaccid life,

and to sap their self-control by wantonness, this man vigilantly spurred to the practice of virtue in an active career. Thus the ripeness of Skiold's spirit outstripped the fulness of his strength, and he fought battles at which one of his tender years could scarce look on. And as he thus waxed in years and valour he beheld the perfect beauty of Alfhild, daughter of the King of the Saxons, sued for her hand, and, for her sake, in the sight of the armies of the Teutons and the Danes, challenged and fought with Skat, governor of Allemannia, and a suitor for the same maiden; whom he slew, afterwards crushing the whole nation of the Allemannians, and forcing them to pay tribute, they being subjugated by the death of their captain. Skiold was eminent for patriotism as well as arms. For he annulled unrighteous laws, and most heedfully executed whatsoever made for the amendment of his country's condition. Further, he regained by his virtue the realm that his father's wickedness had lost. He was the first to proclaim the law abolishing manumissions. A slave, to whom he had chanced to grant his freedom, had attempted his life by stealthy treachery, and he exacted a bitter penalty; as though it were just that the guilt of one freedman should be visited upon all. He paid off all men's debts from his own treasury, and contended, so to say, with all other monarchs in courage, bounty, and generous dealing. The sick he used to foster, and charitably gave medicines to those sore stricken; bearing witness that he had taken on him the care of his country and not of himself. He used to enrich his nobles not only with home taxes, but also with plunder taken in war; being wont to aver that the prize-money should flow to the soldiers, and the glory to the general.

Thus delivered of his bitterest rival in wooing, he took as the prize of combat the maiden, for the love of whom he had fought, and wedded her in marriage. Soon after, he had by her a son, GRAM, whose wondrous parts savoured so strongly of his father's virtues that he was deemed to tread in their very footsteps. The days of Gram's youth were enriched with surpassing gifts of mind and body, and he raised them to the crest of renown. Posterity did such homage to his greatness that in the most ancient poems of the Danes royal dignity is implied in his very name. He practiced with the most zealous training whatsoever serves to sharpen and strengthen the bodily powers. Taught by the fencers, he trained himself by sedulous practice to parrying and dealing blows. He took to wife the daughter of his upbringer, Roar, she being his foster-sister and of his own years, in order the better to show his gratefulness for his nursing. A little while after he gave her in marriage to a certain Bess, since he had ofttimes used his strenuous service. In this partner of his warlike deeds he put his trust; and he has left it a question whether he has won more renown by Bess's valour or his own.

Gram, chancing to hear that Groa, daughter of Sigtryg, King of the Swedes, was plighted to a certain giant, and holding accursed an union so unworthy of the blood royal, entered on a Swedish war; being destined to emulate the prowess of Hercules in resisting the attempts of monsters. He went into Gothland, and, in order to frighten people out of his path, strode on clad in goats' skins, swathed in the motley hides of beasts, and grasping in his right hand a dreadful weapon, thus feigning the attire of a giant; when he met Groa herself riding with a very small escort of women on foot, and making her way, as it chanced, to the forest-pools to bathe, she thought it was her betrothed who had hastened to meet her, and was scared with feminine alarm at so strange a garb: so, flinging up the reins, and shaking terribly all over, she began in the song of her country, thus:

"I see that a giant, hated of the king, has come, and darkens the highways with his stride. Or my eyes play me false; for it has oft befallen bold warriors to skulk behind the skin of a beast."

Then began Bess: "Maiden, seated on the shoulders of the steed, tell me, pouring forth in thy turn words of answer, what is thy name, and of what line art thou born?"

Groa replied: "Groa is my name; my sire is a king, glorious in blood, gleaming in armour. Disclose to us, thou also, who thou art, or whence sprung!"

To whom Bess: "I am Bess, brave in battle, ruthless to foes, a terror to nations, and oft drenching my right hand in the blood of foes."

Then said Groa: "Who, prithee, commands your lines? Under what captain raise ye the war-standards? What prince controls the battle? Under whose guidance is the war made ready?"

Bess in answer: "Gram, the blest in battle, rules the array: force nor fear can swerve him; flaming pyre and cruel sword and ocean billow have never made him afraid. Led by him, maiden, we raise the golden standards of war."

Groa once more: "Turn your feet and go back hence, lest Sigtryg vanquish you all with his own array, and fasten you to a cruel stake, your throats haltered with the cord, and doom your carcases to the stiff noose, and, glaring evilly, thrust out your corpses to the hungry raven."

Bess again: "Gram, ere he shall shut his own eyes in death, shall first make him a ghost, and, smiting him on the crest, shall send him to Tartarus. We fear no camp of the Swedes. Why threaten us with ghastly dooms, maiden?"

Groa answered him: "Behold, I will ride thence to see again the roof of my father which I know, that I may not rashly set eyes on the array of my brother who is coming. And I pray that your death-doom may tarry for you who abide."

Bess replied: "Daughter, to thy father go back with good cheer; nor imprecate swift death upon us, nor let choler shake thy bosom. For often has a woman, harsh at first and hard to a wooer, yielded the second time."

Whereupon Gram could brook no longer to be silent, and pitching his tones gruffly, so as to mimic a gruesome and superhuman voice, accosted the maiden thus:

"Let not the maiden fear the brother of the fleet giant, nor turn pale because I am nigh her. For I am sent by Grip, and never seek the couch and embrace of damsels save when their wish matches mine."

Groa answered: "Who so mad as to wish to be the leman of giants? Or what woman could love the bed that genders monsters? Who could be the wife of demons, and know the seed whose fruit is monstrous? Or who would fain share her couch with a barbarous giant? Who caresses thorns with her fingers? Who would mingle honest kisses with mire? Who would unite shaggy limbs to smooth ones which correspond not? Full ease of love cannot be taken when nature cries out against it: nor doth the love customary in the use of women sort with monsters."

Gram rejoined: "Oft with conquering hand I have tamed the necks of mighty kings, defeating with stronger arm their insolent pride. Thence take red-glowing gold, that the troth may be made firm by the gift, and that the faith to be brought to our wedlock may stand fast."

Thus speaking, he cast off his disguises, and revealed his natural comeliness; and by a single sight of him he filled the damsel with well-nigh as much joy as he had struck her with fear before at his counterfeit. She was even incited to his embraces by the splendour of his beauty; nor did he fail to offer her the gifts of love.

Having won Groa, Bess proceeded and learnt that the road was beset by two robbers. These he slew simply by charging them as they rushed covetously forth to despoil him. This done, loth to seem to have done any service to the soil of an enemy, he put timbers under the carcases of the slain, fastened them thereto, and stretched them so as to counterfeit an upright standing position; so that in their death they might menace in seeming those whom their life had harmed in truth; and that, terrible even after their decease, they might block the road in effigy as much as they had once in deed. Whence it appears that in slaying the robbers he took thought for himself and not for Sweden: for he betokened by so singular an act how great a hatred of Sweden filled him. Having heard from the diviners that Sigtryg could only be conquered by gold, he straightway fixed a knob of gold to a wooden mace, equipped himself therewith in the war wherein he attacked the king, and obtained his desire. This exploit was besung by Bess in a most zealous strain of eulogy:

"Gram, the fierce wielder of the prosperous mace, knowing not the steel, rained blows on the outstretched sword, and with a stock beat off the lances of the mighty.

"Following the decrees and will of the gods, he brought low the glory of the powerless Swedes, doing their king to death and crushing him with the stiff gold.

"For he pondered on the arts of war: he wielded in his clasp the ruddy-flashing wood, and victoriously with noble stroke made their fallen captain writhe.

"Shrewdly he conquered with the hardness of gold him whom fate forbade should be slain by steel; unsworded, waging war with the worthier metal.

"This treasure, for which its deviser claims glory and the height of honour, shall abide yet more illustrious hereafter, known far and wide in ampler fame."

Having now slain Sigtryg, the King of Sweden, Gram desired to confirm his possession of the empire which he had won in war; and therefore, suspecting Swarin the governor of Gothland of aspiring to the crown, he challenged him to combat, and slew him. This man's brethren, of whom he had seven lawfully born, and nine the sons of a concubine, sought to avenge their brother's death, but Gram, in an unequal contest, cut them off.

Gram, for his marvellous prowess, was granted a share in the sovereignty by his father, who was now in extreme age, and thought it better and likewise more convenient to give his own blood a portion of the supremacy of the realm, than now in the setting of his life to administer it without a partner. Therefore Ring, a nobly-born Zealander, stirred the greater part of the Danes with desire for insurrection; fancying that one of these men was unripe for his rank, and that the other had run the course of his powers, alleging the weakness in years of both, and declaring that the wandering wit of an old man made the one, and that of a boy the other, unfit for royal power. But they fought and crushed him, making him an example to all men, that no season of life is to be deemed incompatible with valour.

Many other deeds also King Gram did. He declared war against Sumble, King of the Finns; but when he set eyes upon the King's daughter, Signe, he laid down his arms, the foeman turned into the suitor, and, promising to put away his own wife, he plighted troth with her. But, while much busied with a war against Norway, which he had taken up against King Swipdag for debauching his sister and his daughter, he heard from a messenger that Signe had, by Sumble's treachery, been promised in marriage to Henry, King of Saxony. Then, inclining to love the maiden more than his soldiers, he left his army, privily made his way to Finland, and came in upon the wedding, which was already begun. Putting on a garb of the utmost meanness, he lay down at the table in a seat of no honour. When asked what he brought, he professed skill in leechcraft. At last, when all were drenched in drunkenness, he gazed at the maiden, and amid the revels of the riotous banquet, cursing deep the fickleness of women, and vaunting loud his own deeds of valour, he poured out the greatness of his wrath in a song like this:

"Singly against eight at once I drove the darts of death, and smote nine with a back-swung sword, when I slew Swarin, who wrongfully assumed his honours and tried to win fame unmerited; wherefore I have oft dyed in foreign blood my blade red with death and reeking with slaughter, and have never blenched at the clash of dagger or the sheen of helmet. Now Signe, the daughter of Sumble, vilely spurns me, and endures vows not mine, cursing her ancient troth; and, conceiving an ill-ordered love, commits a notable act of female lightness; for she entangles, lures, and bestains princes, rebuffing beyond all others the lordly of birth; yet remaining firm to none, but ever wavering, and bringing to birth impulses doubtful and divided."

And as he spoke he leapt up from where he lay, and there he cut Henry down while at the sacred board and the embraces of his friends, carried off his bride from amongst the bridesmaids, felled most of the guests, and bore her off with him in his ship. Thus the bridal was turned into a funeral; and the Finns might learn the lesson, that hands should not be laid upon the loves of other men.

After this SWIPDAG, King of Norway, destroyed Gram, who was attempting to avenge the outrage on his sister and the attempt on his daughter's chastity. This battle was notable for the presence of the Saxon forces, who were incited to help Swipdag, not so much by love of him, as by desire to avenge Henry.

GUTHORM and HADDING, the son of Gram (Groa being the mother of the first and Signe of the second), were sent over to Sweden in a ship by their foster-father, Brage (Swipdag being now master of Denmark), and put in charge of the giants Wagnhofde and Hafle, for guard as well as rearing.

As I shall have briefly to relate doings of these folk, and would fain not seem to fabricate what conflicts with common belief or outsteps the faithful truth, it is worth the knowing that there were in old times three kinds of magicians who by diverse sleights practiced extraordinary marvels. The first of these were men of monstrous stock, termed by antiquity giants; these by their exceeding great bodily stature surpassed the size natural to mankind. Those who came after these were the first who gained skill in divination from entrails, and attained the Pythonic art. These surpassed the former in briskness of mental parts as much as they fell behind them in bodily condition. Constant wars for the supremacy were waged between these and the giants; till at last the sorcerers prevailed, subdued the tribe of giants by arms, and acquired not merely the privilege of ruling, but also the repute of being divine. Both of these kinds had extreme skill in deluding the eyesight, knowing how to obscure their own faces and those of others with divers semblances, and to darken the true aspects of things with beguiling shapes. But the third kind of men, springing from the natural union of the first two, did not answer to the nature of their parents either in bodily size or in practice of magic arts; yet these gained credit for divinity with minds that were befooled by their jugglings.

Nor must we marvel if, tempted by the prodigious miracles of these folk, the barbaric world fell to worshipping a false religion, when others like unto these, who were mere mortals, but were reverenced with divine honours, beguiled even the shrewdness of the Latins. I have touched on these things lest, when I relate of sleights and marvels, I be checked by the disbelief of the reader. Now I will leave these matters and return to my theme.

Swipdag, now that he had slain Gram, was enriched with the realms of Denmark and Sweden; and because of the frequent importunities of his wife he brought back from banishment her brother Guthorm, upon his promising tribute, and made him ruler of the Danes. But Hadding preferred to avenge his father rather than take a boon from his foe.

This man's nature so waxed and throve that in the early season of his youth he was granted the prime of manhood. Leaving the pursuit of pleasure, he was constantly zealous in warlike exercises; remembering that he was the son of a fighting father, and was bound to spend his whole span of life in approved deeds of warfare. Hardgrep, daughter of Wagnhofde, tried to enfeeble his firm spirit with her lures of love, contending and constantly averring that he ought to offer the first dues of the marriage bed in wedlock with her, who had proffered to his childhood most zealous and careful fostering, and had furnished him with his first rattle.

Nor was she content with admonishing in plain words, but began a strain of song as follows:

"Why doth thy life thus waste and wander? Why dost thou pass thy years unwed, following arms, thirsting for throats? Nor does my beauty draw thy vows. Carried away by excess of frenzy, thou art little prone to love. Steeped in blood and slaughter, thou judgest wars better than the bed, nor refreshest thy soul with incitements. Thy fierceness finds no leisure; dalliance is far from thee, and savagery fostered. Nor is thy hand free from blasphemy while thou loathest the rites of love. Let this hateful strictness pass away, let that loving warmth approach, and plight the troth of love to me, who gave thee the first breasts of milk in childhood, and helped thee, playing a mother's part, duteous to thy needs."

When he answered that the size of her body was unwieldy for the embraces of a mortal, since doubtless her nature was framed in conformity to her giant stock, she said:

"Be not moved by my unwonted look of size. For my substance is sometimes thinner, sometimes ampler; now meagre, now abundant; and I alter and change at my pleasure the condition of my body, which is at one time shrivelled up and at another time expanded: now my tallness rises to the heavens, and now I settle down into a human being, under a more bounded shape."

As he still faltered, and was slow to believe her words, she added the following song:

"Youth, fear not the converse of my bed. I change my bodily outline in twofold wise, and am wont to enjoin a double law upon my sinews. For I conform to shapes of different figure in turn, and am altered at my own sweet will: now my neck is star-high, and soars nigh to the lofty Thunderer; then it falls and declines to human strength, and plants again on earth that head which was near the firmament. Thus I lightly shift my body into diverse phases, and am beheld in varying wise; for changefully now cramped stiffness draws in my limbs, now the virtue of my tall body unfolds them, and suffers them to touch the cloud-tops. Now I am short and straitened, now stretch out with loosened knee; and I have mutably changed myself like wax into strange aspects. He who knows of Proteus should not marvel at me. My shape never stays the same, and my aspect is twofold: at one time it contrasts its outstretched limbs, at another shoots them out when closed; now disentangling the members and now rolling them back into a coil. I dart out my ingathered limbs, and presently, while they are strained, I wrinkle them up, dividing my countenance between shapes twain, and adopting two forms; with the greater of these I daunt the fierce, while with the shorter I seek the embraces of men."

By thus averring she obtained the embraces of Hadding; and her love for the youth burned so high that when she found him desirous of revisiting his own land, she did not hesitate to follow him in man's attire, and counted it as joy to share his hardships and perils. While upon the journey she had undertaken, she chanced to enter in his company, in order to pass the night, a dwelling, the funeral of whose dead master was being conducted with melancholy rites. Here, desiring to pry into the purposes of heaven by the help of a magical espial, she graved on wood some very dreadful spells, and caused Hadding to put them under the dead man's tongue; thus forcing him to utter, with the voice so given, a strain terrible to hear:

"Perish accursed he who hath dragged me back from those below, let him be punished for calling a spirit out of bale!

"Whoso hath called me, who am lifeless and dead, back from the abode below, and hath brought me again into upper air, let him pay full penalty with his own death in the dreary shades beneath livid Styx. Behold, counter to my will and purpose, I must declare some bitter tidings. For as ye go away from this house ye will come to the narrow path of a grove, and will be a prey to demons all about. Then she who hath brought our death back from out of void, and has given us a sight of this light once more, by her prayers wondrously drawing forth the ghost and casting it into the bonds of the body, shall bitterly bewail her rash enterprise.

"Perish accursed he who hath dragged me back from those below, let him be punished for calling a spirit out of bale!

"For when the black pestilence of the blast that engenders monsters has crushed out the inmost entrails with stern effort, and when their hand has swept away the living with cruel nail, tearing off limbs and rending ravished bodies; then Hadding, thy life shall survive, nor shall the nether realms bear off thy ghost, nor thy spirit pass heavily to the waters of Styx; but the woman who hath made the wretched ghost come back hither, crushed by her own guilt, shall appease our dust; she shall be dust herself.

"Perish accursed he who hath dragged me back from those below, let him be punished for calling a spirit out of bale!"

So, while they were passing the night in the forest foretold them, in a shelter framed of twigs, a hand of extraordinary size was seen to wander over the inside of the dwelling. Terrified at this portent, Hadding entreated the aid of his nurse. Then Hardgrep, expanding her limbs and swelling to a mighty bigness, gripped the hand fast and held it to her foster-child to hew off. What flowed from the noisesome wounds he dealt was not so much blood as corrupt matter. But she paid the penalty of this act, presently being torn in pieces by her kindred of the same stock; nor did her constitution or her bodily size help her against feeling the attacks of her foes' claws.

Hadding, thus bereft of his foster-mother, chanced to be made an ally in a solemn covenant to a rover, Lysir, by a certain man of great age that had lost an eye, who took pity on his loneliness. Now the ancients, when about to make a league, were wont to besprinkle their footsteps with blood of one another, so to ratify their pledge of friendship by reciprocal barter of blood. Lysir and Hadding, being bound thus in the strictest league, declared war against Loker, the tyrant of the Kurlanders. They were defeated; and the old man aforementioned took Hadding, as he fled on horseback, to his own house, and there refreshed him with a certain pleasant draught, telling him that he would find himself quite brisk and sound in body. This prophetic advice he confirmed by a song as follows:

"As thou farest hence, a foe, thinking thee a deserter, will assail thee, that he may keep thee bound and cast thee to be devoured by the mangling jaws of beasts. But fill thou the ears of the warders with divers tales, and when they have done the feast and deep sleep holds them, snap off the fetters upon thee and the loathly chains. Turn thy feet thence, and when a little space has fled, with all thy might rise up against a swift lion who is wont to toss the carcases of the prisoners, and strive with thy stout arms against his savage shoulders, and with naked sword search his heart-strings. Straightway put thy throat to him and drink the steaming blood, and devour with ravenous jaws the banquet of his body. Then renewed strength will come to thy limbs, then shall undreamed-of might enter thy sinews, and an accumulation of stout force shall bespread and nerve thy frame through-out. I myself will pave the path to thy prayers, and will subdue the henchmen in sleep, and keep them snoring throughout the lingering night."

And as he spoke, he took back the young man on his horse, and set him where he had found him. Hadding cowered trembling under his mantle; but so extreme was his wonder at the event, that with keen vision he peered through its holes. And he saw that before the steps of the horse lay the sea; but was told not to steal a glimpse of the forbidden thing, and therefore turned aside his amazed eyes from the dread spectacle of the roads that he journeyed. Then he was taken by Loker, and found by very sure experience that every point of the prophecy was fulfilled upon him. So he assailed Handwan, king of the Hellespont, who was entrenched behind an impregnable defence of wall in his city Duna, and withstood him not in the field, but with battlements. Its summit defying all approach by a besieger, he ordered that the divers kinds of birds who were wont to nest in that spot should be caught by skilled fowlers, and he caused wicks which had been set on fire to be fastened beneath their wings. The birds sought the shelter of their own nests, and filled the city with a blaze; all the townsmen flocked to quench it, and left the gates defenceless. He attacked and captured Handwan, but suffered him to redeem his life with gold for ransom. Thus, when he might have cut off his foe, he preferred to grant him the breath of life; so far did his mercy qualify his rage.

After this he prevailed over a great force of men of the East, and came back to Sweden. Swipdag met him with a great fleet off Gottland; but Hadding attacked and destroyed him. And thus he advanced to a lofty pitch of renown, not only by the fruits of foreign spoil, but by the trophies of his vengeance for his brother and his father. And he exchanged exile for royalty, for he became king of his own land as soon as he regained it.

At this time there was one Odin, who was credited over all Europe with the honour, which was false, of godhead, but used more continually to sojourn at Upsala; and in this spot, either from the sloth of the inhabitants or from its own pleasantness, he vouchsafed to dwell with somewhat especial constancy. The kings of the North, desiring more zealously to worship his deity, embounded his likeness in a golden image; and this statue, which betokened their homage, they transmitted with much show of worship to Byzantium, fettering even the effigied arms with a serried mass of bracelets. Odin was overjoyed at such notoriety, and greeted warmly the devotion of the senders. But his queen Frigga, desiring to go forth more beautified, called smiths, and had the gold stripped from the statue. Odin hanged them, and mounted the statue upon a pedestal, which by the marvellous skill of his art he made to speak when a mortal touched it. But still Frigga preferred the splendour of her own apparel to the divine honours of her husband, and submitted herself to the embraces of one of her

servants; and it was by this man's device she broke down the image, and turned to the service of her private wantonness that gold which had been devoted to public idolatry. Little thought she of practicing unchastity, that she might the easier satisfy her greed, this woman so unworthy to be the consort of a god; but what should I here add, save that such a godhead was worthy of such a wife? So great was the error that of old befooled the minds of men. Thus Odin, wounded by the double trespass of his wife, resented the outrage to his image as keenly as that to his bed; and, ruffled by these two stinging dishonours, took to an exile overflowing with noble shame, imagining so to wipe off the slur of his ignominy.

When he had retired, one Mit-othin, who was famous for his juggling tricks, was likewise quickened, as though by inspiration from on high, to seize the opportunity of feigning to be a god; and, wrapping the minds of the barbarians in fresh darkness, he led them by the renown of his jugglings to pay holy observance to his name. He said that the wrath of the gods could never be appeased nor the outrage to their deity expiated by mixed and indiscriminate sacrifices, and therefore forbade that prayers for this end should be put up without distinction, appointing to each of those above his especial drink-offering. But when Odin was returning, he cast away all help of jugglings, went to Finland to hide himself, and was there attacked and slain by the inhabitants. Even in his death his abominations were made manifest, for those who came nigh his barrow were cut off by a kind of sudden death; and after his end, he spread such pestilence that he seemed almost to leave a filthier record in his death than in his life: it was as though he would extort from the guilty a punishment for his slaughter. The inhabitants, being in this trouble, took the body out of the mound, beheaded it, and impaled it through the breast with a sharp stake; and herein that people found relief.

The death of Odin's wife revived the ancient splendour of his name, and seemed to wipe out the disgrace upon his deity; so, returning from exile, he forced all those, who had used his absence to assume the honours of divine rank, to resign them as usurped; and the gangs of sorcerers that had arisen he scattered like a darkness before the advancing glory of his godhead. And he forced them by his power not only to lay down their divinity, but further to quit the country, deeming that they, who tried to foist themselves so iniquitously into the skies, ought to be outcasts from the earth.

Meanwhile Asmund, the son of Swipdag, fought with Hadding to avenge his father. And when he heard that Henry his son, his love for whom he set even before his own life, had fallen fighting valiantly, his soul longed for death, and loathed the light of day, and made a song in a strain like this:

"What brave hath dared put on my armour? The sheen of the helmet serves not him who tottereth, nor doth the breastplate fitly shelter him that is sore spent. Our son is slain, let us riot in battle; my eager love for him driveth me to my death, that I may not be left outliving my dear child. In each hand I am fain to grasp the sword; now without shield let us ply our warfare bare-breasted, with flashing blades. Let the rumour of our rage beacon forth: boldly let us grind to powder the column of the foe; nor let the battle be long and chafe us; nor let our onset be shattered in rout and be still."

When he had said this, he gripped his hilt with both hands, and, fearless of peril, swung his shield upon his back and slew many. Hadding therefore called on the powers with which he was allied to protect him, and on a sudden Wagnhofde rode up to fight on his side. And when Asmund saw his crooked sword, he cried out, and broke into the following strain:

"Why fightest thou with curved sword? The short sword shall prove thy doom, the javelin shall be flung and bring forth death. Thou shouldst conquer thy foe by thy hand, but thou trustest that he can be rent by spells; thou trustest more in words than rigour, and puttest thy strength in thy great resource. Why dost thus beat me back with thy shield, threatening with thy bold lance, when thou art so covered with wretched crimes and spotted all over? Thus hath the brand of shame bestained thee, rotting in sin, lubber-lipped."

While he thus clamoured, Hadding, flinging his spear by the thong, pierced him through. But Asmund lacked not comfort even for his death; for while his life flickered in the socket he wounded the foot of his slayer, and by this short instant of revenge he memorized his fall, punishing the other

with an incurable limp. Thus crippling of a limb befell one of them and loss of life the other. Asmund's body was buried in solemn state at Upsala and attended with royal obsequies. His wife Gunnhild, loth to outlive him, cut off her own life with the sword, choosing rather to follow her lord in death than to forsake him by living. Her friends, in consigning her body to burial, laid her with her husband's dust, thinking her worthy to share the mound of the man, her love for whom she had set above life. So there lies Gunnhild, clasping her lord somewhat more beautifully in the tomb than she had ever done in the bed.

After this Hadding, now triumphant, wasted Sweden. But Asmund's son, named Uffe, shrinking from a conflict, transported his army into Denmark, thinking it better to assail the house of his enemy than to guard his own, and deeming it a timely method of repelling his wrongs to retaliate upon his foe what he was suffering at his hands. Thus the Danes had to return and defend their own, preferring the safety of their land to lordship of a foreign realm; and Uffe went back to his own country, now rid of an enemy's arms.

Hadding, on returning from the Swedish war, perceived that his treasury, wherein he was wont to store the wealth he had gotten by the spoils of war, had been forced and robbed, and straightway hanged its keeper Glumer, proclaiming by a crafty device, that, if any of the culprits brought about the recovery of the stolen goods, he should have the same post of honour as Glumer had filled. Upon this promise, one of the guilty men became more zealous to reap the bounty than to hide his crime, and had the money brought back to the king. His confederates fancied he had been received into the king's closest friendship, and believed that the honours paid him were as real as they were lavish; and therefore they also, hoping to be as well rewarded, brought back their moneys and avowed their guilt. Their confession was received at first with promotion and favours, and soon visited with punishment, thus bequeathing a signal lesson against being too confiding. I should judge that men, whose foolish blabbing brought them to destruction, when wholesome silence could have ensured their safety, well deserved to atone upon the gallows for their breach of reticence.

After this Hadding passed the whole winter season in the utmost preparation for the renewal of the war. When the frosts had been melted by the springtime sun, he went back to Sweden and there spent five years in warfare. By dint of this prolonged expedition, his soldiers, having consumed all their provision, were reduced almost to the extremity of emaciation, and began to assuage their hunger with mushrooms from the wood. At last, under stress of extreme necessity, they devoured their horses, and finally satisfied themselves with the carcases of dogs. Worse still, they did not scruple to feed upon human limbs. So, when the Danes were brought unto the most desperate straits, there sounded in the camp, in the first sleep of the night, and no man uttering it, the following song:

"With foul augury have ye left the abode of your country, thinking to harry these fields in War. What idle notion mocks your minds? What blind self-confidence has seized your senses, that ye think this soil can thus be won. The might of Sweden cannot yield or quail before the War of the stranger; but the whole of your column shall melt away when it begins to assault our people in War. For when flight has broken up the furious onset, and the straggling part of the fighters wavers, then to those who prevail in the War is given free scope to slay those who turn their backs, and they have earned power to smite the harder when fate drives the renewer of the war headlong. Nor let him whom cowardice deters aim the spears."

This prophecy was accomplished on the morrow's dawn by a great slaughter of the Danes. On the next night the warriors of Sweden heard an utterance like this, none knowing who spake it:

"Why doth Uffe thus defy me with grievous rebellion? He shall pay the utmost penalty. For he shall be buried and transpierced under showers of lances, and shall fall lifeless in atonement for his insolent attempt. Nor shall the guilt of his wanton rancour be unpunished; and, as I forebode, as soon as he joins battle and fights, the points shall fasten in his limbs and strike his body everywhere, and his raw gaping wounds no bandage shall bind up; nor shall any remedy heal over thy wide gashes."

On that same night the armies fought; when two hairless old men, of appearance fouler than human, and displaying their horrid baldness in the twinkling starlight, divided their monstrous efforts with opposing ardour, one of them being zealous on the Danish side, and the other as fervent for the Swedes. Hadding was conquered and fled to Helsingland, where, while washing in the cold sea-water his body which was scorched with heat, he attacked and cut down with many blows a beast of unknown kind, and having killed it had it carried into camp. As he was exulting in this deed a woman met him and addressed him in these words:

"Whether thou tread the fields afoot, or spread canvas overseas, thou shalt suffer the hate of the gods, and through all the world shalt behold the elements oppose thy purposes. Afield thou shalt fall, on sea thou shalt be tossed, an eternal tempest shall attend the steps of thy wandering, nor shall frost-bind ever quit thy sails; nor shall thy roof-tree roof thee, but if thou seekest it, it shall fall smitten by the hurricane; thy herd shall perish of bitter chill. All things shall be tainted, and shall lament that thy lot is there. Thou shalt be shunned like a pestilent tetter, nor shall any plague be fouler than thou. Such chastisement doth the power of heaven mete out to thee, for truly thy sacrilegious hands have slain one of the dweller's above, disguised in a shape that was not his: thus here art thou, the slayer of a benignant god! But when the sea receives thee, the wrath of the prison of Eolus shall be loosed upon thy head. The West and the furious North, the South wind shall beat thee down, shall league and send forth their blasts in rivalry; until with better prayers thou hast melted the sternness of heaven, and hast lifted with appeasement the punishment thou hast earned."

So, when Hadding went back, he suffered all things after this one fashion, and his coming brought disquiet upon all peaceful places. For when he was at sea a mighty storm arose and destroyed his fleet in a great tempest: and when, a shipwrecked man, he sought entertainment, he found a sudden downfall of that house. Nor was there any cure for his trouble, ere he atoned by sacrifice for his crime, and was able to return into favour with heaven. For, in order to appease the deities, he sacrificed dusky victims to the god Frey. This manner of propitiation by sacrifice he repeated as an annual feast, and left posterity to follow. This rite the Swedes call Froblod (the sacrifice or feast of Frey).

Hadding chanced to hear that a certain giant had taken in troth Ragnhild, daughter of Hakon, King of the Nitherians; and, loathing so ignominious a state of affairs, and utterly abominating the destined union, he forestalled the marriage by noble daring. For he went to Norway and overcame by arms him that was so foul, a lover for a princess. For he thought so much more of valour than of ease, that, though he was free to enjoy all the pleasures of a king, he accounted it sweeter than any delight to repel the wrongs done, not only to himself, but to others. The maiden, not knowing him, ministered with healing tendance to the man that had done her kindness and was bruised with many wounds. And in order that lapse of time might not make her forget him, she shut up a ring in his wound, and thus left a mark on his leg. Afterwards her father granted her freedom to choose her own husband; so when the young men were assembled at banquet, she went along them and felt their bodies carefully, searching for the tokens she had stored up long ago. All the rest she rejected, but Hadding she discovered by the sign of the secret ring; then she embraced him, and gave herself to be the wife of him who had not suffered a giant to win her in marriage.

While Hadding was sojourning with her a marvellous portent befell him. While he was at supper, a woman bearing hemlocks was seen to raise her head beside the brazier, and, stretching out the lap of her robe, seemed to ask, "in what part of the world such fresh herbs had grown in winter?" The king desired to know; and, wrapping him in her mantle, she drew him with her underground, and vanished. I take it that the nether gods purposed that he should pay a visit in the flesh to the regions whither he must go when he died. So they first pierced through a certain dark misty cloud, and then advancing along a path that was worn away with long thoroughfaring, they beheld certain men wearing rich robes, and nobles clad in purple; these passed, they at last approached sunny regions which produced the herbs the woman had brought away. Going further, they came on a swift and tumbling river of leaden waters, whirling down on its rapid current divers sorts of missiles, and likewise made

passable by a bridge. When they had crossed this, they beheld two armies encountering one another with might and main. And when Hadding inquired of the woman about their estate: "These," she said, "are they who, having been slain by the sword, declare the manner of their death by a continual rehearsal, and enact the deeds of their past life in a living spectacle." Then a wall hard to approach and to climb blocked their further advance. The woman tried to leap it, but in vain, being unable to do so even with her slender wrinkled body; then she wrung off the head of a cock which she chanced to be taking down with her, and flung it beyond the barrier of the walls; and forthwith the bird came to life again, and testified by a loud crow to recovery of its breathing. Then Hadding turned back and began to make homewards with his wife; some rovers bore down on him, but by swift sailing he baffled their snares; for though it was almost the same wind that helped both, they were behind him as he clove the billows, and, as they had only just as much sail, could not overtake him.

Meantime Uffe, who had a marvellously fair daughter, decreed that the man who slew Hadding should have her. This sorely tempted one Thuning, who got together a band of men of Perm (Byarmenses), being fain so to win the desired advancement. Hadding was going to fall upon him, but while he was passing Norway in his fleet he saw upon the beach an old man signing to him, with many wavings of his mantle, to put into shore. His companions opposed it, and declared that it would be a ruinous diversion from their journey; but he took the man on board, and was instructed by him how to order his army. For this man, in arranging the system of the columns, used to take special care that the front row consisted of two, the second of four, while the third increased and was made up to eight, and likewise each row was double that in front of it. Also the old man bade the wings of the slingers go back to the extremity of the line, and put with them the ranks of the archers. So when the squadrons were arranged in the wedge, he stood himself behind the warriors, and from the wallet which was slung round his neck drew an arbalist. This seemed small at first, but soon projected with more prolonged tip, and accommodated ten arrows to its string at once, which were shot all at once at the enemy in a brisk volley, and inflicted as many wounds. Then the men of Perm, quitting arms for cunning, by their spells loosed the sky in clouds of rain, and melted the joyous visage of the air in dismal drenching showers. But the old man, on the other hand, drove back with a cloud the heavy mass of storm which had arisen, and checked the dripping rain by this barrier of mist. Thus Hadding prevailed. But the old man, when he parted from him, foretold that the death whereby he would perish would be inflicted, not by the might of an enemy, but by his own hand. Also he forbade him to prefer obscure wars to such as were glorious, and border wars to those remote.

Hadding, after leaving him, was bidden by Uffe to Upsala on pretence of a interview; but lost all his escort by treachery, and made his escape sheltered by the night. For when the Danes sought to leave the house into which they had been gathered on pretext of a banquet, they found one awaiting them, who mowed off the head of each of them with his sword as it was thrust out of the door. For this wrongful act Hadding retaliated and slew Uffe; but put away his hatred and consigned his body to a sepulchre of notable handiwork, thus avowing the greatness of his foe by his pains to beautify his tomb, and decking in death with costly distinctions the man whom he used to pursue in his life with hot enmity. Then, to win the hearts of the people he had subdued, he appointed Hunding, the brother of Uffe, over the realm, that the sovereignty might seem to be maintained in the house of Asmund, and not to have passed into the hand of a stranger.

Thus his enemy was now removed, and he passed several years without any stirring events and in utter disuse of arms; but at last he pleaded the long while he had been tilling the earth, and the immoderate time he had forborne from exploits on the seas; and seeming to think war a merrier thing than peace, he began to upbraid himself with slothfulness in a strain like this:

"Why loiter I thus in darksome hiding, in the folds of rugged hills, nor follow seafaring as of old? The continual howling of the band of wolves, and the plaintive cry of harmful beasts that rises to heaven, and the fierce impatient lions, all rob my eyes of sleep. Dreary are the ridges and the desolation to hearts that trusted to do wilder work. The stark rocks and the rugged lie of the ground

bar the way to spirits who are wont to love the sea. It were better service to sound the firths with the oars, to revel in plundered wares, to pursue the gold of others for my coffer, to gloat over sea-gotten gains, than to dwell in rough lands and winding woodlands and barren glades."

Then his wife, loving a life in the country, and weary of the marin harmony of the sea-birds, declared how great joy she found in frequenting the woodlands, in the following strain:

"The shrill bird vexes me as I tarry by the shore, and with its chattering rouses me when I cannot sleep. Wherefore the noisy sweep of its boisterous rush takes gentle rest from my sleeping eye, nor doth the loud-chattering sea-mew suffer me to rest in the night, forcing its wearisome tale into my dainty ears; nor when I would lie down doth it suffer me to be refreshed, clamouring with doleful modulation of its ill-boding voice. Safer and sweeter do I deem the enjoyment of the woods. How are the fruits of rest plucked less by day or night than by tarrying tossed on the shifting sea?"

At this time one Toste emerged, from the obscure spot of Jutland where he was born, into bloody notoriety. For by all manner of wanton attacks upon the common people he spread wide the fame of his cruelty, and gained so universal a repute for rancour, that he was branded with the name of the Wicked. Nor did he even refrain from wrongdoing to foreigners, but, after foully harrying his own land, went on to assault Saxony. The Saxon general Syfrid, when his men were hard put to it in the battle, entreated peace. Toste declared that he should have what he asked, but only if he would promise to become his ally in a war against Hadding. Syfrid demurred, dreading to fulfill the condition, but by sharp menaces Toste induced him to promise what he asked. For threats can sometimes gain a request which soft-dealing cannot compass. Hadding was conquered by this man in an affair by land; but in the midst of his flight he came on his enemy's fleet, and made it unseaworthy by boring the sides; then he got a skiff and steered it out to sea. Toste thought he was slain, but though he sought long among the indiscriminate heaps of dead, could not find him, and came back to his fleet; when he saw from afar off a light boat tossing on the ocean billows. Putting out some vessels, he resolved to give it chase, but was brought back by peril of shipwreck, and only just reached the shore. Then he quickly took some sound craft, and accomplished the journey which he had before begun. Hadding, seeing he was caught, proceeded to ask his companion whether he was a skilled and practised swimmer; and when the other said he was not, Hadding despairing of flight, deliberately turned the vessel over and held on inside to its hollow, thus making his pursuers think him dead. Then he attacked Toste, who, careless and unaware, was greedily watching over the remnants of his spoil; cut down his army, forced him to quit his plunder, and avenged his own rout by that of Toste.

But Toste lacked not heart to avenge himself. For, not having store enough in his own land to recruit his forces—so heavy was the blow he had received—he went to Britain, calling himself an ambassador. Upon his outward voyage, for sheer wantonness, he got his crew together to play dice, and when a wrangle arose from the throwing of the cubes, he taught them to wind it up with a fatal affray. And so, by means of this peaceful sport, he spread the spirit of strife through the whole ship, and the jest gave place to quarrelling, which engendered bloody combat. Also, fain to get some gain out of the misfortunes of others, he seized the moneys of the slain, and attached to him a certain rover then famous, named Koll; and a little after returned in his company to his own land, where he was challenged and slain by Hadding, who preferred to hazard his own fortune rather than that of his soldiers. For generals of antique valour were loth to accomplish by general massacre what could be decided by the lot of a few.

After these deeds the figure of Hadding's dead wife appeared before him in his sleep, and sang thus:

"A monster is born to thee that shall tame the rage of wild beasts, and crush with fierce mouth the fleet wolves."

Then she added a little: "Take thou heed; from thee hath issued a bird of harm, in choler a wild screech-owl, in tongue a tuneful swan."

On the morrow the king, when he had shaken off slumber, told the vision to a man skilled in interpretations, who explained the wolf to denote a son that would be truculent and the word swan as signifying a daughter; and foretold that the son would be deadly to enemies and the daughter treacherous to her father. The result answered to the prophecy. Hadding's daughter, Ulfhild, who was wife to a certain private person called Guthorm, was moved either by anger at her match, or with aspirations to glory, and throwing aside all heed of daughterly love, tempted her husband to slay her father; declaring that she preferred the name of queen to that of princess. I have resolved to set forth the manner of her exhortation almost in the words in which she uttered it; they were nearly these:

"Miserable am I, whose nobleness is shadowed by an unequal yoke! Hapless am I, to whose pedigree is bound the lowliness of a peasant! Luckless issue of a king, to whom a common man is equal by law of marriage! Pitiable daughter of a prince, whose comeliness her spiritless father hath made over to base and contemptible embraces! Unhappy child of thy mother, with thy happiness marred by consorting with this bed! thy purity is handled by the impurity of a peasant, thy nobility is bowed down by ignoble commonness, thy high birth is impaired by the estate of thy husband! But thou, if any pith be in thee, if valour reign in thy soul at all, if thou deem thyself fit husband for a king's daughter, wrest the sceptre from her father, retrieve thy lineage by thy valour, balance with courage thy lack of ancestry, requite by bravery thy detriment of blood. Power won by daring is more prosperous than that won by inheritance. Boldness climbs to the top better than inheritance, and worth wins power better than birth. Moreover, it is no shame to overthrow old age, which of its own weight sinks and totters to its fall. It shall be enough for my father to have borne the sceptre for so long; let the dotard's power fall to thee; if it elude thee, it will pass to another. Whatsoever rests on old age is near its fall. Think that his reign has been long enough, and be it thine, though late in the day, to be first. Further, I would rather have my husband than my father king—would rather be ranked a king's wife than daughter. It is better to embrace a monarch in one's home, than to give him homage from afar; it is nobler to be a king's bride than his courtier. Thou, too, must surely prefer thyself to thy wife's father for bearing the sceptre; for nature has made each one nearest to himself. If there be a will for the deed, a way will open; there is nothing but yields to the wit of man. The feast must be kept, the banquet decked, the preparations looked to, and my father bidden. The path to treachery shall be smoothed by a pretence of friendship, for nothing cloaks a snare better than the name of kindred. Also his soddenness shall open a short way to his slaughter; for when the king shall be intent upon the dressing of his hair, and his hand is upon his beard and his mind upon stories; when he has parted his knotted locks, either with hairpin or disentangling comb, then let him feel the touch of the steel in his flesh. Busy men commonly devise little precaution. Let thy hand draw near to punish all his sins. It is a righteous deed to put forth thy hand to avenge the wretched!"

Thus Ulfhild importuned, and her husband was overcome by her promptings, and promised his help to the treachery. But meantime Hadding was warned in a dream to beware of his son-in-law's guile. He went to the feast, which his daughter had made ready for him with a show of love, and posted an armed guard hard by to use against the treachery when need was. As he ate, the henchman who was employed to do the deed of guile silently awaited a fitting moment for his crime, his dagger hid under his robe. The king, remarking him, blew on the trumpet a signal to the soldiers who were stationed near; they straightway brought aid, and he made the guile recoil on its deviser.

Meanwhile Hunding, King of the Swedes, heard false tidings that Hadding was dead, and resolved to greet them with obsequies. So he gathered his nobles together, and filled a jar of extraordinary size with ale, and had this set in the midst of the feasters for their delight, and, to omit no mark of solemnity, himself assumed a servant's part, not hesitating to play the cupbearer. And while he was passing through the palace in fulfilment of his office, he stumbled and fell into the jar, and, being choked by the liquor, gave up the ghost; thus atoning either to Orcus, whom he was appeasing by a baseless performance of the rites, or to Hadding, about whose death he had spoken

falsely. Hadding, when he heard this, wished to pay like thanks to his worshipper, and, not enduring to survive his death, hanged himself in sight of the whole people.

BOOK TWO

HADDING was succeeded by FRODE, his son, whose fortunes were many and changeful. When he had passed the years of a stripling, he displayed the fulness of a warrior's prowess; and being loth that this should be spoilt by slothfulness, he sequestered his mind from delights and perseveringly constrained it to arms. Warfare having drained his father's treasury, he lacked a stock of pay to maintain his troops, and cast about diligently for the supplies that he required; and while thus employed, a man of the country met him and roused his hopes by the following strain:

"Not far off is an island rising in delicate slopes, hiding treasure in its hills and ware of its rich booty. Here a noble pile is kept by the occupant of the mount, who is a snake wreathed in coils, doubled in many a fold, and with tail drawn out in winding whorls, shaking his manifold spirals and shedding venom. If thou wouldst conquer him, thou must use thy shield and stretch thereon bulls' hides, and cover thy body with the skins of kine, nor let thy limbs lie bare to the sharp poison; his slaver burns up what it bespatters. Though the three-forked tongue flicker and leap out of the gaping mouth, and with awful yawn menace ghastly wounds remember to keep the dauntless temper of thy mind; nor let the point of the jagged tooth trouble thee, nor the starkness of the beast, nor the venom spat from the swift throat. Though the force of his scales spurn thy spears, yet know there is a place under his lowest belly whither thou mayst plunge the blade; aim at this with thy sword, and thou shalt probe the snake to his centre. Thence go fearless up to the hill, drive the mattock, dig and ransack the holes; soon fill thy pouch with treasure, and bring back to the shore thy craft laden."

Frode believed, and crossed alone to the island, loth to attack the beast with any stronger escort than that wherewith it was the custom for champions to attack. When it had drunk water and was repairing to its cave, its rough and sharp hide spurned the blow of Frode's steel. Also the darts that he flung against it rebounded idly, foiling the effort of the thrower. But when the hard back yielded not a whit, he noted the belly heedfully, and its softness gave entrance to the steel. The beast tried to retaliate by biting, but only struck the sharp point of its mouth upon the shield. Then it shot out its flickering tongue again and again, and gasped away life and venom together.

The money which the King found made him rich; and with this supply he approached in his fleet the region of the Kurlanders, whose king Dorn, dreading a perilous war, is said to have made a speech of the following kind to his soldiers:

"Nobles! Our enemy is a foreigner, begirt with the arms and the wealth of almost all the West; let us, by endeavouring to defer the battle for our profit, make him a prey to famine, which is all inward malady; and he will find it very hard to conquer a peril among his own people. It is easy to oppose the starving. Hunger will be a better weapon against our foe than arms; famine will be the sharpest lance we shall hurl at him. For lack of food nourishes the pestilence that eats away men's strength, and lack of victual undermines store of weapons. Let this whirl the spears while we sit still; let this take up the prerogative and the duty of fighting. Unimperilled, we shall be able to imperil others; we can drain their blood and lose no drop of ours. One may defeat an enemy by inaction. Who would not rather fight safely than at a loss? Who would strive to suffer chastisement when he may contend unhurt? Our success in arms will be more prosperous if hunger joins battle first. Let hunger captain us, and so let us take the first chance of conflict. Let it decide the day in our stead, and let our camp remain free from the stir of war; if hunger retreat beaten, we must break off idleness. He who is fresh easily overpowers him who is shaken with languor. The hand that is flaccid and withered will come fainter to the battle. He whom any hardship has first wearied, will bring slacker hands to the steel. When he that is wasted with sickness engages with the sturdy, the victory hastens. Thus, undamaged ourselves, we shall be able to deal damage to others."

Having said this, he wasted all the places which he saw would be hard to protect, distrusting his power to guard them, and he so far forestalled the ruthlessness of the foe in ravaging his own

land, that he left nothing untouched which could be seized by those who came after. Then he shut up the greater part of his forces in a town of undoubted strength, and suffered the enemy to blockade him. Frode, distrusting his power of attacking this town, commanded several trenches of unwonted depth to be made within the camp, and the earth to be secretly carried out in baskets and cast quietly into the river bordering the walls. Then he had a mass of turf put over the trenches to hide the trap: wishing to cut off the unwary enemy by tumbling them down headlong, and thinking that they would be overwhelmed unawares by the slip of the subsiding earth. Then he feigned a panic, and proceeded to forsake the camp for a short while. The townsmen fell upon it, missed their footing everywhere, rolled forward into the pits, and were massacred by him under a shower of spears.

Thence he travelled and fell in with Trannon, the monarch of the Ruthenians. Desiring to spy out the strength of his navy, he made a number of pegs out of sticks, and loaded a skiff with them; and in this he approached the enemy's fleet by night, and bored the hulls of the vessels with an auger. And to save them from a sudden influx of the waves, he plugged up the open holes with the pegs he had before provided, and by these pieces of wood he made good the damage done by the auger. But when he thought there were enough holes to drown the fleet, he took out the plugs, thus giving instant access to the waters, and then made haste to surround the enemy's fleet with his own. The Ruthenians were beset with a double peril, and wavered whether they should first withstand waves or weapons. Fighting to save their ships from the foe, they were shipwrecked. Within, the peril was more terrible than without: within, they fell back before the waves, while drawing the sword on those without. For the unhappy men were assaulted by two dangers at once; it was doubtful whether the swiftest way of safety was to swim or to battle to the end; and the fray was broken off at its hottest by a fresh cause of doom. Two forms of death advanced in a single onset; two paths of destruction offered united peril: it was hard to say whether the sword or the sea hurt them more. While one man was beating off the swords, the waters stole up silently and took him. Contrariwise, another was struggling with the waves, when the steel came up and encompassed him. The flowing waters were befouled with the gory spray. Thus the Ruthenians were conquered, and Frode made his way back home.

Finding that some envoys, whom he had sent into Russia to levy tribute, had been horribly murdered through the treachery of the inhabitants, Frode was stung by the double wrong and besieged closely their town Rotel. Loth that the intervening river should delay his capture of the town, he divided the entire mass of the waters by making new and different streams, thus changing what had been a channel of unknown depth into passable fords; not ceasing till the speed of the eddy, slackened by the division of its outlet, rolled its waves onward in fainter current, and winding along its slender reaches, slowly thinned and dwindled into a shallow. Thus he prevailed over the river; and the town, which lacked natural defences, he overthrew, his soldiers breaking in without resistance. This done, he took his army to the city of Paltisca. Thinking no force could overcome it, he exchanged war for guile. He went into a dark and unknown hiding-place, only a very few being in the secret, and ordered a report of his death to be spread abroad, so as to inspire the enemy with less fear; his obsequies being also held, and a barrow raised, to give the tale credit. Even the soldiers bewailed his supposed death with a mourning which was in the secret of the trick. This rumour led Vespasins, the king of the city, to show so faint and feeble a defence, as though the victory was already his, that the enemy got a chance of breaking in, and slew him as he sported at his ease.

Frode, when he had taken this town, aspired to the Empire of the East, and attacked the city of Handwan. This king, warned by Hadding's having once fired his town, accordingly cleared the tame birds out of all his houses, to save himself from the peril of like punishment. But Frode was not at a loss for new trickery. He exchanged garments with a serving-maid, and feigned himself to be a maiden skilled in fighting; and having thus laid aside the garb of man and imitated that of woman, he went to the town, calling himself a deserter. Here he reconnoitred everything narrowly, and on the next day sent out an attendant with orders that the army should be up at the walls, promising that he would see to it that the gates were opened. Thus the sentries were eluded and the city despoiled

while it was buried in sleep; so that it paid for its heedlessness with destruction, and was more pitiable for its own sloth than by reason of the valour of the foe. For in warfare nought is found to be more ruinous than that a man, made foolhardy by ease, should neglect and slacken his affairs and doze in arrogant self-confidence.

Handwan, seeing that the fortunes of his country were lost and overthrown, put all his royal wealth on shipboard and drowned it in the sea, so as to enrich the waves rather than his enemy. Yet it had been better to forestall the goodwill of his adversaries with gifts of money than to begrudge the profit of it to the service of mankind. After this, when Frode sent ambassadors to ask for the hand of his daughter, he answered, that he must take heed not to be spoiled by his thriving fortunes, or to turn his triumph into haughtiness; but let him rather bethink him to spare the conquered, and in this their abject estate to respect their former bright condition; let him learn to honour their past fortune in their present pitiable lot. Therefore, said Handwan, he must mind that he did not rob of his empire the man with whom he sought alliance, nor bespatter her with the filth of ignobleness whom he desired to honour with marriage: else he would tarnish the honour of the union with covetousness. The courtliness of this saying not only won him his conqueror for son-in-law, but saved the freedom of his realm.

Meantime Thorhild, wife of Hunding, King of the Swedes, possessed with a boundless hatred for her stepsons Ragnar and Thorwald, and fain to entangle them in divers perils, at last made them the king's shepherds. But Swanhwid, daughter of Hadding, wished to arrest by woman's wit the ruin of natures so noble; and taking her sisters to serve as retinue, journeyed to Sweden. Seeing the said youths beset with sundry prodigies while busy watching at night over their flocks, she forbade her sisters, who desired to dismount, in a poem of the following strain:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.