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THE SAGA OF
KING OLAF TRYGGWASON

*This Volume is the first of a new Series of Translations of
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Olafs saga Tryggvasonar

THE SAGA OF KING OLAF TRYGGWASON

WHO REIGNED OVER NORWAY

A.D. 995 TO A.D. 1000

TRANSLATED BY

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Þú hefir sagt sögu mína ; vil ek þat launa þér.

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IN MEMORIAM
ISLANDICI ERUDITISSIMI
GUDBRAND VIGFUSSON

PREFACE

THE translation of the Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason has been made from the text of the Fornmanna Sögur, printed at Copenhagen, in 1825. Occasionally a reading has been taken from the Flateyjarbok, printed at Christiania, in 1860. The text of the many verses of the poets, introduced in order to furnish contemporary evidence for the facts related in the Saga, is very variable. Messrs. Vigfusson and Powell, in their invaluable edition of the Northern Poetry, the "Corpus Poeticum Boreale," draw attention to the present condition of the Court poetry, and the alterations it has undergone; see especially the Preface, vol. i. pp. lxxxii to lxxxviii; vol. ii. p. 28. In many cases their text has been adopted. In others the Fornmanna text has been followed reluctantly, because the author of the Saga seems to have had the corrupt text before him when engaged on his work.

In the Prolegomena to the Oxford Edition of the Sturlunga, the present Saga is called the Great O. T. Saga, to distinguish it from the Heimskringla life of the King. It is to a large extent a compilation of other Sagas. King Olaf, the Apostle of Christianity to Iceland, held an important place in the Icelandic literature of the first part of the thirteenth century, and one of his admirers thought it desirable to collect into one complete story, and weld together, the notices respecting him. First and foremost of the author's sources is the Heimskringla life, by Snorri, which gives what may be called an historical picture of the hero. Next to this is a life written by Odd Monk at the close of the twelfth century. This work, written originally in Latin, is lost, but two free translations of it exist, and these give what may be called a legendary picture of the King. Both these lives fully described King Olaf's great work of bringing heathen Norway within the Christian fold, but only cursorily dealt with the conversion of Iceland and the other

outlands, the Orkneys and Shetland, the Faroes, and Greenland. Whatever matter the author of the present Saga found in Icelandic literature which bore upon the latter work, he has used and incorporated ; and in particular has embodied a full account of the discovery of Iceland, and notices of those of the early settlers who were favourable to Christianity. Thus he has inserted several extracts from the *Landnamabok*, and has largely expanded those parts of *Kristni Saga* which precede, and those which describe the establishment of Christianity by law. Again, there were two famous Icelanders, contemporaries of King Olaf, who were brought into close connection with him—the poet Hallfred and Kiartan. The author of the Great O. T. Saga has included in his work almost the whole of Hallfred's Saga, and such a part of the *Laxdæla Saga* as gives a full view of Kiartan's life, his relations with Gudrun, and his death. In a similar manner the intimacy of Sigmund Brestison with King Olaf has caused the author to include in his work a large portion of the *Fareyinga Saga*, so as to give Sigmund's life in full. Also, in imitation of the *Heimskringla*, he has inserted quotations from three late poems, the *Rekstefia*, the *Jomsvikinga Drapa*, and the *Bui Drapa*, in order to furnish evidence, though it is not contemporary evidence, for additional facts which he has introduced. To complete his view of King Olaf, the writer of the Great O. T. Saga has included many episodical stories, which not being now found elsewhere, would otherwise have been lost to us, such as the Saga of Thorwald Kodranson, the stories of Rognwald of *Ærwick*, of Swein and Finn, of Thorwald Tassel, of Eindridi Broadsole, of Gunnar Half, of Gaut, and others. And as he began his work with an account, taken from the *Heimskringla*, of the Kings preceding King Olaf ; so he has concluded it with a slight sketch, mostly from the same work, of succeeding Kings, that he might relate the fate of two great barons, favourites of Olaf ; and also introduce to the reader, in chronological order, the legendary notices respecting the King after his disappearance at the battle of Swold.

In comparing the Great O. T. Saga with its sources, and especially with the *Heimskringla* life, marked peculiarities show themselves. Its writer introduces long speeches and sermons, which he puts into the mouth of King Olaf and others, the simplest abridged statements given by the *Heimskringla* in the Third Person being expanded into long

discourses, often in the First Person. He is not fond of the Historic Present Tense, much used in the *Heimskringla*, and very frequently changes it into the Past Tense. Where the *Heimskringla* passes without notice from indirect to direct narration, the Great O. T. Saga writer is careful to mark the transition by "said he," "said they." He avoids positiveness in his statements, using "many" where the *Heimskringla* has "all," "very often" instead of "always," "slowish" instead of "slow;" and he makes more frequent use of the figure of speech, *litotes*. He is much given to the use of long adjectives and adverbs ending in "ly," and he qualifies harsh expressions and tones them down. His style, upon the whole, is more copious than that of the sources which he has used, and his rounded periods give an appearance of richness when compared with the original passages, that are often bald and meagre. But we are obliged to confess that the writer is not always so happy in his expressions as his originals are, and that his insertions sometimes cause his narrative to lack force in dramatic circumstances. Compare, for instance, his account of Thangbrand's escape, when the earth opened under him, in ch. 216, with the original passage in *Kristni Saga*. Again, in ch. 117 the insertion of "almost" quite spoils the original passage in *Landnamabok*. And where, in ch. 264, Hallfred first hears the news of the King's fall and is "deeply moved," Hallfred's Saga says that "he was struck as with a stone." The different stories which he weaves together do not always agree well. For example, the narrative of the battle of Hiorunga Bay, ch. 90, in which the Wickings of Jom were defeated by Earl Hakon, is a piece of clear and precise writing in *Heimskringla*. This narrative the Great O. T. Saga writer has enlarged by quotations from later poems, and in attempting to weave the new matter of these poems into the *Heimskringla* account, has rather injured its clearness and precision than otherwise.

The figure of the King under the varied light of the sources of the Great O. T. Saga assumes a superhuman aspect. The historical Olaf of the *Heimskringla* is the subject of prophecy, if the story of the hermit be not a later addition. The legendary Olaf of Odd Monk's life is the subject of miracle as well, and is gifted with a supernatural, spiritual insight. And the later sources endow him with miraculous powers. He discerns the messengers of the Evil One, sent in human shape on earth

to oppose his efforts for the establishment of Christianity (see chs. 197, 213). He foresees the murder of Sigmund Brestison, and would have prevented it if Sigmund himself had not stood in the way (ch. 207). He foresees the death of Kiartan at the hands of Bolli, and it is notable that the pity which he shows for Kiartan, as described in the *Laxdæla*, is extended in the following ch. 233A, to Bolli, because of Bolli's inability to resist destiny. Though his friends leave him, he knows what they do, and watches over them lest they should lose their religious faith (chs. 173, 219); and his care over them does not cease when they die (ch. 264). He is with them in the errands on which he sends them (ch. 200). When they are far distant he knows their troubles, and extricates them from their difficulties. Three times in the life of Hallfred, at critical moments, he appears to him in dreams, and guides him to a right course of action (chs. 219, 264). In a dream he encourages St. Olaf, when an exile in Garda, to attempt the recovery of his kingdom (ch. 279). The vision that appeared to Thorhall of Knappstead (ch. 227), bidding him pull down his temple and be cured of his leprosy, can be none other than King Olaf, though Thorhall knew him not. His presence and good luck go with his men on whatever expeditions he sends them, and ensure their success (chs. 172, 200). In the quotations from the *Rekstefia* (ch. 238), the most wonderful of his feats are regarded as miraculous, and the same is hinted in the story of Eindrídi Broadsole (see close of ch. 235). St. Martin visits him in a dream (ch. 141); he is allowed a glimpse of Paradise, and is honoured with the Divine commands (ch. 76); the miraculous light in which he disappeared at the battle of Swold was seen by many (chs. 255, 283); and thoughtful men in after days, reflecting upon his life, doubted whether he was a mere mortal man, and not rather a messenger sent from Heaven (ch. 240).

The writer of the Great O. T. Saga is not known, but there exists a MS. of it at Stockholm, containing a statement that it was "translated" by Abbot Berg. In the *Flateyjarbók*, vol. i. p. 511, there is a sentence to the effect that Gunnlaug, a monk of Thingeyrar, "composed and told in the Latin language many remarkable things concerning the renowned lord, King Olaf Tryggwason." In these two passages we have probably the origin of the theory, first put forward in modern times, I believe, by the editors of the Skalholt Edition of the Great O. T. Saga in 1689, that

its author was the monk Gunnlaug, who wrote it in Latin, and that it was translated into the vernacular by Abbot Berg. Professor Munch, in the exhaustive Preface to his edition of *Odd Monk's Life of King Olaf*, published at Christiania, in 1853, examines this theory, and at once sees the impossibility of accepting it in its entirety. In fact, whoever only cursorily examines how closely and verbally the author of the Saga follows his authorities, such as the *Heimskringla* life, the *Landnama*, *Hallfred's Saga*, and the *Fareyinga*, frequently adopting whole sentences almost without alteration, will find it impossible to regard the Saga as altogether translated from the Latin. Unwilling, however, to reject the statement concerning Berg, Professor Munch seems to accept him as the translator of large remaining portions of the Saga. He gives a list of these, which he is inclined to regard as taken from a lost life of the King by the monk Gunnlaug, a life written in Latin, bearing the same characteristics and going over the same ground as *Odd Monk's* legendary life of the King. The passages selected by Professor Munch may be put into two divisions—the one containing those smaller episodical Sagas already alluded to, such as that of *Thorwald Kodranson*; and the other containing all those portions which are likewise found in *Odd Monk's* work. The writer of the *Great O. T. Saga* cannot have translated these latter portions, for he had before him, apparently, when compiling his work, the already existing translation from the Latin of *Odd Monk's Life of King Olaf*, which is printed in the tenth volume of the *Fornmanna Sögur*. Let two corresponding passages be compared; for instance, the prophecy of King *Waldamar's* mother, as it is found in the translation of *Odd Monk*, with the same as presented by the *O. T. Saga* compiler (ch. 46 following). Not only does sentence follow sentence in the same order of thought, but words and phrases frequently appear which are verbally the same in both. Only one conclusion, therefore, seems possible: the Latin *Life of King Olaf* by the monk Gunnlaug can be none other than the lost *Life* that we know as *Odd Monk's*; which, being originally the work of *Odd*, was probably revised, enlarged, and rewritten by Gunnlaug. With respect to the other portion of that which is attributed by Professor Munch to Gunnlaug, namely, the short episodical Sagas already mentioned, it seems not improbable, from what we learn of Gunnlaug in the *Biskupa Sögur*, that he was the original

writer of the Saga of Thorwald Kodranson, and possibly of some others. Odd and Gunnlaug were fellow-monks of the same monastery in the north of Iceland, and Gunnlaug was probably a much younger man than Odd. The Annals place Gunnlaug's death in 1219.

If, then, we are precluded from regarding the Great O. T. Saga as a translation by Berg from a Latin original, what becomes of the statement concerning the Abbot? Did he compile and put together the whole Saga from older sources, or is he merely the reviser of another man's work? The latter alternative seems the more probable. On examining the text of the Saga, we find portions which by their tone and diction suggest a late hand; words of common use in Stjorn, Barlaam and Josaphat, and other ecclesiastical literature of the close of the thirteenth century; scattered sentences here and there; parts, and sometimes the whole, of such chapters as 76, 79, 91, 131, 141, 176, 196-198, 216, 225, 279, 280, and others. There is no reason why these should not be ascribed to the Abbot as the last reviser, supposing that he dealt with the Great O. T. Saga according to prevailing custom. An author had no copyright in his work. It was taken by the writer of a succeeding generation on the same subject, who appropriated the language of his predecessor as well as the matter. Thus the larger Sagas are all probably composite growths, having passed through several hands. Such may have been the Abbot's connection with the Great O. T. Saga. He took it, enlarged it, and made it his own. In his day Berg Sokkason had a great literary reputation. According to the Annals, he was chosen Abbot of the Monastery of Thweray, in the north of Iceland, in the year 1325; and (to quote Mr. Oliver Elton's translation of the Laurentius Saga) "he was a man of parts beyond most people then in Iceland, in scholarship, hand-writing, chanting, and eloquence; and he drew up many histories of the saints in Norse, which shall be known and famous while this country is peopled." In the "*Heilagra Manna Sögur*," edited by Unger, Christiania, 1877, there is a translation from the Latin of the life of Archbishop Nikolas of Myra, written by Berg, and also a "Saga" of the Archangel Michael. The portions of the Great O. T. Saga which suggest a late hand, show peculiarities of style which appear and are common in the acknowledged writings of Berg. Alliterative doublets, where two words are brought together beginning with the same letter, such as "to have

and to hold," "sickness and sorrow," "Mother of Mercy," "good and gracious," are a favourite use of the Abbot, though not peculiar to him, and occur frequently in these parts of the Great O. T. Saga. We find, too, the same occasional occurrence of Gerundives, of Past Participles as Adjectives, and of Dative Absolutes, probably due to the influence of Latin. In Berg's acknowledged writings there is a not infrequent use of Latin words, a characteristic of other ecclesiastical writers of his time; but in the Great O. T. Saga only two such words occur, *processionem* and *plenarium*, and the latter occurs in an extract taken from the Landnamabok. There is an interesting point of connection between Berg and the O. T. Saga, which should be mentioned. At the end of his life of the Archangel Michael he begs that "All God-fearing men who take up his book will remember on the Festival of Michaelmas the soul of Brother Sokkason with prayer or almsgiving." Evidently the Abbot felt an eminent interest in the Saint, and his request seems to throw light on the otherwise apparently superfluous sermon on the duties of St. Michael and the Angels, which is placed by the author of the Great O. T. Saga in the mouth of Thangbrand (ch. 216).

But though the peculiarities mentioned are a confirmation of Berg's connection with the Saga, yet the comparative rarity of their occurrence therein is a proof that Berg's actual literary work in it may be assumed to be small. And it is next to be observed that when we have excluded from the Saga the portions taken from other sources, and those which we may safely attribute to Berg or an ecclesiastical writer of his time, there is still much left, especially speeches put in the mouth of the actors, which it is difficult to attribute to any writer at or after the end of the thirteenth century. Such are the chapters, 98, 165, 167, 228, 229, 256, among others; also all those that are adapted from Odd Monk's Life; for in dealing with them the compiler has allowed himself a much freer hand than with his other original sources. It would appear, therefore, that there must have been another hand before Berg's in the compilation, a writer whose style is pure, showing little or no trace of the influence of Latin. And, in fact, the purer we find the style of these portions of the Saga, the further back in the century from 1300 will it be necessary to place its origin. As, too, the original sources used by the compiler of the Great O. T. Saga probably all existed in their present form before

1240, the compilation may perhaps be assigned to a date not later than the middle of the thirteenth century.

A remark may be made upon the chronology. Though the *Heimskringla* Life of King Olaf, and the Great O. T. Saga, adopt in the main the same chronology, yet there are vital differences between them in the sequence of events. The compiler of the latter work, in bringing other Sagas into his story, and in particular the *Laxdæla*, was compelled to adopt a sequence of his own as he attempted to weave together various narratives into one harmonious whole. But the chronology is unsettled, and perhaps hopelessly so. The late Dr. Vigfusson, in the "*Timatal*," his essay on the chronology of the Icelandic Sagas, adopts the old belief that the conversion of Iceland to Christianity took place the same year as the battle of Swold. Whereas in the "*Corpus Poeticum Boreale*," vol. ii. p. 86, he and his colleague, Mr. York Powell, maintain that the former event happened one year earlier than the latter.

For the convenience of the reader, it has been thought desirable to supply headings to the different chapters, many of which in the original text are without headings, and others have inappropriate ones. But the original headings have been used where possible; they are not without interest, and may yet yield something towards our knowledge of the growth of the Saga. One of the MSS. used by the editors of the *Fornmanna Sögur* dates from the close of the fourteenth century. In the heading of ch. 196 of that MS. (A.M. 54) occurs the word *höfundr*, which has been rendered by "author." If the heading is contemporaneous with the MS., it would seem that the passage in question contains the earliest use of the word in that meaning.

I have occasionally consulted with advantage the earlier translation of the *Heimskringla* made by Samuel Laing; and also the later one by Messrs. Morris and Magnusson. To the writings of Messrs. Vigfusson and York Powell my obligations are far too great to be recounted. For the geographical notices in the general index I am indebted almost entirely to "Munch's *Beskrivelse over Norge*," "Kaalund's *Beskrivelse af Island*," and the "*Antiquitates Americanæ*."

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THE SAGA OF KING OLAF TRYGGWASON

Genealogy of King Harold Fairhair. His vow and its fulfilment.

1. Harold Fairhair was King over the whole of Norway for a long time. Before his reign the country was divided, and subject to several kings, some of whom held sway over a single shire, and others over somewhat more. King Harold deprived all these kings of their rule. Some were slain, some fled from the country, others gave up their kingdoms; no one had the strength to retain the title of king but he alone, and he set an earl over each shire to govern the land and administer law. King Harold was the son of Halfdan the Black, King of the Uplands. Halfdan's father was Gudrod, the Hunter-king. He was the son of King Halfdan, who was surnamed the Money-free and the Meat-frugal, because he gave his men as much of gold coin for their hire as other kings gave of silver; but he starved them in their food. The mother of Halfdan the Black was Asa, daughter of Harold Redbeard, King of Agdi. The mother of Harold Fairhair was Ragnhild, daughter of Sigurd Hart, whose mother was Aslaug, daughter of Sigurd Snake i'th'eye, the son of Ragnar Lodbrok. The mother of Sigurd Snake i'th'eye was Aslaug, daughter of Sigurd Fafnisbane. Sigurd Hart married Thyri, daughter of Clack-Harold of Jutland. She was a sister of Thyri, surnamed Denmark's Gain, who was married to Gorm the Old, King of the Danes. Thyri was the mother of Ragnhild, the mother of Harold Fairhair.

Harold was ten years old when he succeeded his father in the

kingdom. He surpassed other men in height, strength, and handsome appearance; he was wise, and possessed a very noble character. Guthorm, son of Sigurd Hart, his mother's brother, was captain of the body-guard, directed the defence of the country, and commanded the levies. King Harold first reduced the Uplands, depriving of life all the chiefs who opposed his supreme rule. Then he sent his messengers to fetch a daughter of King Eric of Hordaland, named Gyda, whom he wished to have for himself, for she was a maid of great beauty and very ambitious. She was living in Waldres, under the fostering care of a powerful yeoman. When the messengers arrived and declared their errand to the maid, she answered thus: "I am not willing to give up my maiden state for the sake of a king who rules over no more than a few shires. It seems to me," she said, "a strange matter that there is no king who has the will to make Norway his own, and be its sole king, like as Gorm is king in Denmark, and Eric at Upsala." The messengers, thinking her answer a very haughty one, inquired of her what it meant, saying that Harold's kingly power made him a fit match for her. And although her answer to their message was quite contrary to what they wished, yet seeing no possibility at the moment of taking her away against her will, they made preparations for their return. When ready, they were led forth on their way, and Gyda said to them, "Take this message from me to King Harold. I will only consent to become his wife when for my sake he has subjected all Norway to his rule, and governs the kingdom with the same freedom from restraint that Eric enjoys in the empire of the Swedes, and Gorm in Denmark. For only then, it seems to me, can he be called a great king." The messengers returned to Harold and reported all that the maid had said. They declared that she was wonderfully bold and foolish, and would be deservedly treated if the King should send a force to take her, without regard to her honour. King Harold answered that the maid had not spoken ill, or done anything which was worthy of vengeance. "Let her rather have many thanks for her speech," he said, "for she has put me in mind of matters which, strange to think, I have not hitherto considered. Now I make a solemn vow, and declare before the God that made me, and rules over all, that I will never cut my hair or comb it until I have become possessed of the whole of Norway, tribute, tax, and rule; and I

will die rather than fail." Then Guthorm, the commander, thanked him for the vow, saying that a thorough fulfilment would befit his royalty. Thereupon King Harold proceeded to conquer the whole of Norway and bring it under his rule, as his Saga relates. And when he had become sole King over the whole country he remembered the speech of the proud maiden. He therefore sent his men to fetch her, and she became his wife.

*King Harold's sons and daughters. He divides his kingdom.
The fate of five of his sons.*

2. King Harold had many wives and many children. Twenty sons or more he had, all able men. They were of noble descent on the mother's side, and many of them were brought up by their mother's relations. King Harold took to wife Ragnhild, daughter of Eric, King of Jutland. She was called Ragnhild the Great. Their son was Eric Bloodaxe, who was brought up in the Firths, at the house of Thori, the baron, son of Rohall. Guthorm, Rerek, and Gunnrod, who is also called Gudrod, were the sons of Gyda, the daughter of Eric, King of Hordaland, mentioned above. They were brought up in childhood among their mother's family. Halfdan the Black and Halfdan the White were twin sons of Asa, daughter of Earl Hakon of Ladi, the son of Griotgard; Sigrod was a third son. They were all brought up in Throndham, and Halfdan the Black was the most prominent of the brothers. Olaf, Biorn, Sigtrygg, who is also called Tryggwi, Frodi, and Thorgils, were the sons of Hild, or Swanhild, daughter of Eystein, Earl of Heidmark. King Harold made him Earl of Westfold, and committed the children to his care. Sigurd Brushwood, Halfdan Longshanks, Gudrod Sheen, and Rognwald Spindleshanks were the sons of Sniofrid, a Finn maiden. Dag, Ring, and Ragnar Rykill were the sons of Alfhild, daughter of Ring, son of Dag of Ringarick, and were brought up in the Uplands. Ingigerd and Aloh Arbot were daughters of King Harold. Another daughter was Ingibiorg, married to Earl Halfdan. Their daughter Gunnhild married Finn, surnamed Skialg, or the Squinter, and their children were Eywind the Plagiartist, Nial, Sigurd, and Thora. Nial's daughter Astrid

became the mother of Steinkel, King of the Swedes. King Harold had yet more daughters. He married Alop to Earl Thori the Silent, and their daughter was Bergliot, mother of Hakon the Great. King Harold kept his daughters in the country, marrying them to his earls.

After King Harold had waged war in the land and fought battles, he became sole possessor of the whole country, owning all the freehold estates, both homesteads and mountain pastures, outlying islands, and all forests, as well as all the waste lands; while the yeomen and farmers became his liegemen or tenants. Harold Fairhair was ten years old, as we have already said, when he succeeded to the kingdom, and he ruled over the land for seventy-three years. Now, when he was sixty years old, many of his sons were quite grown up, and some were dead. Of those who were grown up several behaved like tyrants in the land, and were even at variance with one another. They deprived the King's earls of their possessions, slaying some of them. The King therefore called together a numerous Assembly in the east of the country, to which he summoned the Uplanders. At this Assembly he drew up laws, and gave to all his sons the title of king; and in the laws he ordained that the men of his family should succeed to the dignity of king, each one after his father, and those who were of his kindred by the female side should inherit the dignity of earl. The King then divided the land among his sons. Wingulmark, Raumarick, Westfold, and Thelamark he gave to Olaf, Biorn, Sigtrygg, Frodi, and Thorgils; Heidmark and Gudbrandsdale he gave to Dag, Ring, and Ragnar. To the sons of Sniofrid he gave Ringarick, Hadaland, Thoten, and whatever belonged to these districts. He charged his son Guthorm with the defence of the country on the eastern boundary, and gave him the right of visitation and entertainment over Ranrick, from the river Elf to Swinasound. King Harold dwelt for the most part in the middle of the country; Røerek and Gudrod were constantly with him, forming part of his body-guard, and drew large revenues from Sogn and Hordaland. Eric remained chiefly with his father. The King loved him most of all his sons, and esteemed him highest, because his family on the mother's side was the most noble. He was the son of Queen Ragnhild of Denmark, as we have already said. King Harold is related to have put away

nine of his wives when he married Ragnhild. So says Thorbiorn Hornklofi :—

“The maids of the Hords, and of the isles of Rogaland,
Of the Heins and of the race of Halogaland,
Were all forsaken of the high-born King
When he married his Danish wife.”

Queen Ragnhild the Great lived three years after she came to Norway. King Harold gave Halogaland, North More, and Raumsdale to his son Eric; and to Halfdan the Black, Halfdan the White, and Sigrod, he gave the right of visitation and entertainment over Throntham in the north. Half the revenues of each shire King Harold kept for himself, and the other half he gave to his sons; they had also the privilege of sitting in the high-seat, one step lower than the King himself, and one step higher than his other sons. Each son meant to have the high-seat for himself after Harold's day. The King himself intended it for Eric, the Thronds for Halfdan the Black, while the men of Wick and the Uplanders strove to get the over-lordship for those whom they supported. Here was a new cause of much dissension among the brothers. And because in their own opinion they had kingdoms of small extent to govern, they sailed forth on plundering expeditions. Thus the Sagas relate that Guthorm fell at the mouths of the river Elf, fighting against Solvaklofi, and Olaf took the government which he had held. Halfdan the White fell in Eistland, and Halfdan Longshanks in the Orkneys. To Thorgils and Frodi, King Harold gave ships of war, and they went on a Wicking expedition to the west, where they harried Scotland, Bretland, and Ireland. They were the first Northmen who gained possession of Dublin, in Ireland. Frodi, it is said, had a drink given him, mixed with poison, which caused his death; but Thorgils was for a long time King over Dublin, and at length fell there by the treachery of the Irish.

Eric Bloodaxe meets with Gunnhild in Finnmark, and marries her.

3. Eric made up his mind to become supreme King over all his brothers, a project which fell in with the wishes of his father,

King Harold. From his early life Eric was distinguished as a great warrior, and hence he received the name of Eric Bloodaxe. When he was twelve years old King Harold gave him five war-ships, which he led first of all on a plundering expedition, east to the Baltic, whence he sailed south by Denmark, Frisland, and Saxland. In this expedition he spent four years. Then he went west over-sea and harried Scotland, Bretland, Ireland, and Walland for another four years. Afterwards he sailed north to Finnmark, and as far as Biarmaland, where he fought a battle and was victorious. Thence he returned to Finnmark, where his men found in a Finnish dwelling a woman more beautiful than any they had ever before seen. She called herself Gunnhild, and said to them, "My father lives in Halogaland, and his name is Osur Toti. I have come here to learn sorcery from two Finns who are the most learned men in the border country. They are now away hunting. Both are in love with me, and both are so clever that they follow tracks like dogs, over thawed or frozen ground, and they are so swift on their snow-skates that nothing can escape them, man or beast. They hit whatever they shoot at, and so have killed every person who has come near. When they are angry the earth trembles as they look at it, and if any living thing then comes into their sight, it drops down dead instantly; you must on no account come in their way. I will conceal you here in my hut, and we will then try if we can succeed in slaying them." To this they agreed. As soon as she had hid the men, she took a linen sack containing ashes, as they thought, which she sprinkled all about the hut, both within and without. In a little while the Finns returned and inquired who had come; but she answered that no one had come. It seemed strange to them that they had traced footsteps right up to the hut, and yet found no person there. They then made a fire and prepared their food, and when they had eaten, Gunnhild got their bed ready. Hitherto, because of jealousy, it had happened that each of them kept watch over the other. But this time Gunnhild said to them, "Come here and lie by me, one of you on each side." They gladly did as she bade them, and she herself lay with one arm round the neck of each. They fell asleep at once, and she awoke them. A second time they fell asleep quickly, and then she woke them with difficulty. The third time they fell so sound asleep that she failed altogether

to awake them, though she lifted them up. She then took two large sealskins, which she cast over their heads, and bound tight under their arms, and yet they slept. Gunnhild next made a sign to the King's men, who jumped up quickly, attacked the Finns with their weapons, and slew them. They then dragged them out of the hut; and there were angry claps of thunder, so loud that they were quite unable to stir out. In the morning they returned to their ships, taking with them Gunnhild, whom they brought to Eric. He then proceeded on his journey, and when he came to Halogaland he sent for Osur Toti, saying that he wished to marry his daughter. Osur consented, and Eric then married Gunnhild, and took her with him into the south of the country.

King Harold's son Rognwald Spindleshanks is burnt to death by Eric Bloodaxe. Death of Gudrod Sheen.

4. Rognwald Spindleshanks, the ruler of Hadaland, learnt witchcraft and became a sorcerer; and all sorcerers were evil in the eyes of King Harold. In Hordaland there dwelt one named Witgeir, and to him the King sent, bidding him cease his sorcery. Witgeir answered in the following verse:—

“That we the sons of common folk enchantments use
Is no great harm; when Rognwald,
The spindle-shanked famous son of Harold,
By witchcraft works in Hadaland.”

On this being told to King Harold, Eric Bloodaxe, with his consent set out for the Uplands; and coming to Hadaland he burnt the house over Rognwald's head, and eighty sorcerers who were with him; which deed was highly praised.

Gudrod Sheen was drowned off Jadar.

Death of King Harold's son Biorn the Merchant. Dissension between Eric Bloodaxe and Halfdan the Black.

5. King Harold's son Biorn ruled over Westfold, residing chiefly in Tunsberg, and engaging but little in expeditions for plunder.

Tunsberg was a great resort of merchants, who came thither from all parts of the Wick and the north of the country, and likewise from Denmark and Saxland in the south. King Biorn also owned ships that made trading voyages to other lands, and thus he acquired valuable chattels and other property that he wanted; his brothers therefore called him Biorn the Merchant, and Farman, or Traveller. He was a discreet man, of very calm temperament, and fitted, so men thought, to exercise power. He made a good, suitable marriage, and had, by his wife, a son named Gudrod. As Eric Bloodaxe, with his warships and a large force, was returning from an expedition to the Baltic, he came to his brother Biorn and requested him to pay over the tribute and the taxes due to King Harold from Westfold. Hitherto Biorn had been accustomed to take the money himself to his father, or to send messengers with it, and wished to do the same on the present occasion. He was unwilling, therefore, to part with the money, though Eric said that he was in need of provisions, drink, and tent-coverings. The brothers contended eagerly about the matter, and Eric being no nearer gaining his point, went away from the house. In the evening Biorn rode up to Sœham. At night Eric followed after him, and came to Sœham while Biorn and his men sat drinking. Eric beset the house, and Biorn and his men came out; and in the battle which followed, Biorn fell, with many of his men. Eric then proceeded on his voyage to the north of the country, having got possession of much booty. This deed greatly displeased the men of Wick, and Eric became an object of much abhorrence among them. A rumour arose that King Olaf would avenge Biorn if Eric should come within his reach. King Biorn lies in Farmanshowe at Sœham.

The following winter King Eric sailed north to More, and was entertained at Solvi within Agdaness. And when Halfdan the Black heard thereof, he went with a great host and beset the homestead where he was. Eric was sleeping in a detached out-building, and escaped into the wood with four others; but Halfdan burned the homestead and everybody in it. Eric came to King Harold with these tidings, and the King was very angry, and straightway collecting a host, sailed north against the Thronds. When the news reached Halfdan the Black, he summoned a levy of men and ships in great numbers, and sailing out to Stad, lay

within Thorsbiorg. King Harold lay at anchor with his fleet off Reinslate, and efforts were made to mediate between them. Guthorm Cinder, an honourable man, and of high lineage, was with the host of Halfdan the Black at the time. He had formerly been with King Harold, and was a special friend of both. He was a great poet, and had composed poems in honour both of father and son, for which they had offered to reward him, but he had refused, asking that they would grant him a boon, and this they had consented to do. Guthorm went to King Harold with offers of mediation, and begged him, as he had begged Halfdan, to grant him his boon that they would be reconciled. The Kings had such a high respect for him that they were reconciled at his request. Many other honourable men assisted Guthorm in pleading for reconciliation, and an agreement was come to that King Halfdan should retain the whole of his kingdom, and leave his brother Eric unmolested. Jorun, the Maiden Poet, composed the following verse upon the event :—

“ Halfdan’s bold deeds, I wot, were told
To Harold Fairhair ;
Black-hued deeds they seemed to him,
Wielder of the sword.”

Death of Earl Hakon.

6. Earl Hakon of Ladi, son of Griotgard, had the right of visitation and entertainment over Throntham whenever King Harold was in other parts of the country, and to him, of all the people in the district of the Thronds, was the highest honour shown by the King. On his death his son Sigurd succeeded to the earldom in Throntham, and dwelt at Ladi, as his father had done. The sons of King Harold, Halfdan the Black and Sigrod, who had been placed under the charge of Sigurd’s father, Hakon, had grown up with Sigurd, and were much of the same age with him. Earl Sigurd was a most sagacious man. He married Bergliot, daughter of Earl Thori the Silent. Bergliot’s mother was Alof Arbot, daughter of King Harold Fairhair.

Birth of King Harold's youngest son, Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan [918].

7. As King Harold began to grow old, he abode chiefly on his large estates in Hordaland, Alrekstead, Søham, or Fitia, and occasionally in Rogaland, at Utstein or Ogwaldsness in Kormt. He was near seventy years of age when he had a son by a woman named Thora, whose family belonged to Moster, in South Hordaland, and she was known as the Pole of Moster. She was a most beautiful woman, tall, and of good descent, for she was reckoned akin to Horda-Kari. Nevertheless, she was called the King's handmaid. At that time there were many persons bound to yield service to the King, though they were of good descent, both men and women. There was also a customary practice to make careful choice of persons who should sprinkle the children of great men with water and give them names. When the time came that Thora expected to become a mother, she desired to go to King Harold, who was then at Søham, north of Moster, where she was. She went, therefore, north by ship with Earl Sigurd. During the night the vessel lay near the shore, and Thora gave birth to a boy-child on a rocky table-land close to the gangway. Earl Sigurd sprinkled the boy with water and named him Hakon, after the name of his own father, Earl Hakon of Ladi. The boy rapidly grew tall. He was handsome and very like his father, and the King allowed him to live with his mother at the royal residences while he was yet very young. To the other sons of King Harold this affair of Hakon seemed a ridiculous one, and they called him the Moster-pole's son.

Athelstan, King of England, sends a sword to King Harold, and Harold sends his son Hakon to Athelstan.

8. At that time England was under the rule of Athelstan, surnamed the Victorious and the Faithful. Hesent an embassy to Norway, and bade the messenger charged with his errand to go into the presence of King Harold and offer him a sword. The boss, guard, and hilt of the sword were of gold; the scabbard, too,

was all ornamented with gold and silver, and set with precious stones. The messenger presented the handle of the sword towards the King and said, "Here is a sword which King Athelstan said you were to receive." The King took hold of the sword by the hilt, and the messenger then said, "You have received that sword as our King wished. You have now become his liegeman, having taken hold of his sword by the hilt." King Harold then perceived that this had been done to mock him, for he meant to be nobody's liegeman. But he had formed a habit, that whenever rage or anger suddenly possessed him, he would first calm himself and let his anger pass away, and afterwards look tranquilly into affairs. This habit he now called to mind and acted upon it. He brought the matter before his friends, who all agreed that device should be met with device. King Harold therefore suffered the messengers of King Athelstan to depart in freedom and with his full permission.

There was a man with King Harold named Hauk Habrok, who, in the errands on which he was sent, however difficult they were, was very successful; and he was much beloved by the King. The summer following the one in which occurred the event that we have just related, King Harold placed his son Hakon in charge of Hauk and sent him into the west to King Athelstan. He found the King in London, presiding over a great feast, and went into the royal hall, taking with him thirty men, to whom he had given the following instructions: "We must so order our entrance that whoever goes in last shall come out first. All will stand side by side opposite the King's table, and each man must carry his sword on his left side, and fasten his overcoat so that his sword be not seen." Hauk took the boy and held him in his arm. They then went in; he saluted the King, and the King bade him welcome. He placed the boy on King Athelstan's knee. The King looked at the boy and asked what was meant. Hauk then answered, "Harold, King of Norway, requests you to foster for him that child of his handmaid." Whereupon King Athelstan became very angry, and grasping the sword that was beside him, made as though he would slay the boy. Then Hauk said to him, "You have set the boy on your knee, O King, and you may slay him if you like, but you will not by so doing destroy all the sons of King Harold." He then went out with all his men, and they made

their way to the ship. When they were ready to start they put out to sea, and returned to Norway to King Harold. He was well pleased with the result of their journey, for there is a common saying that the foster-father of a child is inferior in rank to its father. Such proceedings of the Kings show that each of them wished to be greater than the other; yet they afford no reason why we should place the one unduly above the other in rank, for each of them was supreme king in his own kingdom until the day of his death.

The education of Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan.

9. King Athelstan caused Hakon to be baptized, and had him taught the true faith, good manners, and courteous bearing of every kind. He loved him more than he loved any other person, whether his own relative or not. And besides the King, every person loved Hakon that knew him, and he was known henceforward as Athelstan's foster-son. He was taller than other men, stronger, and handsomer; much skilled in manly exercises, wise, eloquent, and a good Christian. King Athelstan gave him a sword, the boss, guard, and hilt of which were of gold, but the blade was the better part; and with the sword he cut into a millstone up to the centre. This sword was henceforth known as the Quernbiter, and as the best sword that was brought into Norway.

King Olaf succeeds Biorn the Merchant. King Harold makes his son Eric king in his stead [928]. Death of Halfdan the Black.

10. After the death of Biorn the Merchant, his brother Olaf assumed the government of Westfold, and fostered Biorn's son Gudrod. A son of Olaf was Tryggwi; he and Gudrod were foster-brothers, nearly of the same age, both most promising, and possessed of great bodily endowments. Tryggwi was taller and stronger than other men.

When King Harold was eighty years of age he grew infirm. Therefore, thinking himself unable to travel over his kingdom and

manage kingly affairs, he led his son Eric into his own high-seat, and gave him the rule over the whole country. As soon as the other sons of King Harold heard of this, Halfdan the Black seated himself in the King's high-seat and assumed the administration of all Throntham; and all the Thronds supported him in his action. The men of Wick, learning what King Harold had done, made Olaf supreme King over all the Wick. Eric was greatly displeased at these doings. Two years afterwards Halfdan the Black died suddenly in Throntham, at an entertainment, and common report said that Gunnhild Kings'-mother had bargained with a woman that was a witch to poison his drink. The Thronds then made Sigrod their king.

Birth of Harold Grayfell. Death of King Harold Fairhair
[931].

11. King Harold lived for three years after he had made over to Eric the supreme government of his realm, passing the time on his great estates in Hordaland or Rogaland. King Eric and Gunnhild had a son, whom King Harold sprinkled with water, and called after his own name, saying that the child should be King after his father Eric. King Harold died in Rogaland from an illness one year after the sudden death of Halfdan the Black, which has been already mentioned, and was buried in a cairn at Hauga by Karmsound.

King Eric defeats his brothers Olaf and Sigrod at Tunsberg
[932]. *The children of Eric and Gunnhild.*

12. King Eric drew all the royal revenues and rents of the central parts of the kingdom, the winter following the death of King Harold; but King Olaf received those of the Wick district in the east, and their brother Sigrod those of the whole district of the Thronds. King Eric was therefore much displeased, and a rumour went forth that he would strive, by a warlike expedition against his brothers, to win possession of the supreme rule over the whole land, which his father had given him. When King Olaf and Sigrod heard of his intentions, they communicated

with one another. They then made an appointment to meet, and King Sigrod during the spring went overland, east, to Wick. At Tunsberg the meeting with King Olaf took place, and here they remained for a while. The same spring King Eric levied a great force of men and ships, and turned east towards Wick. Having a good fresh wind, he sailed day and night, and no intelligence of his journey preceded him. When he reached Tunsberg, Olaf and Sigrod went out east of the town to the slope, where they drew up their troops. Eric's force was much the more numerous, and he gained the victory. Olaf and Sigrod both fell in the battle, and the cairns in which they lie buried are on the slope where they were slain. Eric then passed over all the Wick country, reducing it to subjection, and remained there a long part of the summer. Tryggwi and Gudrod fled to the Uplands.

Eric was a handsome man of great stature, strong of body, a valiant and successful warrior, of an eager and stern disposition, unfriendly and silent. His wife Gunnhild was a most beautiful woman, wise and learned, gladsome of speech, but very guileful and stern in disposition. Their children were Gamli, the eldest, Guthorm, Harold, Ragnfrod, Ragnhild, Erling, Sigurd Slefa, and Gudrod. All Eric's children were fair and promising.

Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, is chosen King by the Thronlds
[933].

13. Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, was in the west, in England, when he heard of the death of his father King Harold, and straightway made ready to depart. King Athelstan supplied him with men and good store of ships, furthering his journey in a princely fashion. He reached Norway during the autumn, where he was told that his brothers were slain, and that King Eric was in the Wick. He then sailed north to Throndham, and went to visit Earl Sigurd of Ladi, the greatest of Norway's counsellors, who gave him a hearty welcome, and entered into a covenant with him. Hakon promised that if he should become king he would increase the dignity of Sigurd. They then caused a full Assembly to be summoned, at which Earl Sigurd spoke in support of Hakon, and offered him to the yeomen as their king. Hakon himself then

stood up to speak, and some of the men said among themselves that King Harold Fairhair had come among them, grown young once more. Hakon began his speech by asking the yeomen to give him the title of king; and with the title, to grant him assistance and force wherewith to uphold the kingdom. In return, he offered to make all the yeomen into born freeholders, and to give them the freehold of the estates on which they lived. At this speech there arose a great cheer, and the crowd of yeomen shouted and called out that they would have him for a king; and so it came to pass that the Thronds took Hakon as their king, over the whole of Throntham. Hakon was at that time fifteen years of age, and having selected for himself a body-guard, he began a progress over the country. Tidings were now brought to the Uplands that the Thronds had chosen over themselves a king, like in every respect to what Harold Fairhair had been; with this difference, that Harold had enslaved and enthralled all the people of the land, whereas this Hakon wished well to every man, and offered to restore to the yeomen all their freeholds, of which King Harold had deprived them. This news made every one glad; and as each told it to his fellow, it flew like wildfire eastwards to the very end of the country. Many of the Uplanders went to visit King Hakon; some sent messengers to him, others messages and tokens, all witnessing to the desire which they had to become his men. These offers Hakon accepted thankfully.

Hakon is chosen king by the Uplanders. He gives to Tryggwi and Gudrod the kingdoms which their fathers had held.

14. In the early part of winter King Hakon proceeded to the Uplands, where he summoned Assemblies, and all the folk that could attend crowded to see him. At all the Assemblies he was chosen king, and thus he made his way eastwards to the Wick. Here his brothers' sons, Tryggwi and Gudrod, came to him, with many others, recounting the sorrows they had suffered at the hand of Eric, his brother. Eric's unpopularity increased the more, as all men became attached to Hakon, and had greater confidence in opening their minds to him. To Tryggwi and Gudrod, Hakon gave the title of king, and the governments which

King Harold had given to their fathers. To Tryggwi he assigned Ranrick and Wingulmark, and to Gudrod, Westfold. And because they were young and boyish, he placed with them wise and honourable men to help them in governing the country. They held their kingdoms under the condition formerly prevailing, that they should share the taxes and tribute equally with him, the supreme King.

King Eric Bloodaxe flees from Norway [934]. He becomes ruler of Northimbraland.

15. When spring was come King Hakon returned north to Throntham by the land road over the Uplands, and after levying a great force all over Throntham, hastened to his ships. The men of Wick also put to sea with a large force, intending to join King Hakon. Eric gathered a force from the central parts of the country; but he had difficulty in getting a host together, because many of the chiefs slipped away from him, and went to join King Hakon. Therefore he sailed away over-sea into the west with such as were willing to accompany him. He went first to the Orkneys, where he collected a large force; thence he sailed south to England, and began plundering the country. As soon as King Athelstan heard of his doings, he sent messengers asking Eric to accept a fief from him, and saying that he would strive to prevent Hakon from committing any outrage on it. King Eric accepted the offer. Then, through messengers from one to the other, an agreement was made between the Kings that Eric should hold Northimbraland from King Athelstan, and defend it against the Danes, and likewise against Wickings. Eric, with his wife and children, should be baptized, and also all the host that had followed him thither. So Eric was baptized, and accepted the true faith. Northimbraland is reckoned a fifth part of England. Eric fixed his residence at York, where the sons of Lodbrok are said to have dwelt aforetime. Northimbraland was largely colonised by Northmen after the sons of Lodbrok had conquered the country; afterwards, when the rule over it had passed away from them, it was frequently pillaged by the Danes and Northmen. Many places in it derive their names from the Northern

tongue, such as Grimsker, Hauksfleet, and several others. And because King Eric ruled over a small extent of country, and at the same time maintained a multitude of Northmen who had come with him from the east, and also many friends who afterwards joined him from Norway, he always made plundering expeditions in the summer time, harrying Scotland, the Sudreys, Ireland, and Bretland, and by such means acquired wealth.

King Athelstan's death. Eric Bloodaxe is slain on a Wicking expedition. Gunnhild and her sons settle in the Orkneys.

16. King Athelstan died a natural death, after he had reigned fourteen years, eight weeks, and three days. He was succeeded in the kingly office and rule by his brother Edmund, who was no friend to the Northmen; neither was there any intimacy between him and King Eric; and a rumour went forth that King Edmund would probably set another chief over Northimbraland.

When this rumour reached King Eric, he set sail on a Wicking expedition to the west. Coming to the Orkneys, he took away with him thence Arnkel and Erlend, sons of Turf-Einar. From the Orkneys he sailed to the Sudreys, where many Wickings and sea-kings joined the force under him. Then with his whole fleet he sailed, first of all, to Ireland, where he increased his force with what help he could get. Afterwards he proceeded to Bretland, which he pillaged, and other places likewise; and whithersoever he went, the inhabitants all fled before him; and inasmuch as he was a man of great prowess, and had with him a numerous host, he relied confidently on his strength, going a long distance inland to gather booty. Over the district which he was plundering, King Edmund, for its defence, had set a king named Olaf, who gathered together an overwhelming force against King Eric, and when the hosts met there was a great battle. At first the loss was chiefly on the English side; but ever as one man fell three came forward to fill his place, and in the latter part of the day the slaughter was chiefly among the Northmen. Finally King Eric fell, and with him five kings and the sons of Earl Turf-Einar, Arnkel, and Erlend. The number of Northmen slain was very

great, and those who escaped went to Northimbraland with the tidings of the battle.

When Gunnhild and her sons heard that King Eric was dead, after plundering the territory of King Edmund, they felt that there would be no peace in the country for them; so they made ready at once to leave Northimbraland with all the ships that had belonged to King Eric. They took away all who were willing to accompany them, and also an immense store of wealth, which had been collected from England in tribute, and some which Eric had acquired by pillage. They directed their course to the Orkneys, where they settled themselves for a time. Thorfinn Skull-cleaver, a son of Turf-Einar, was then earl over the islands. Eric's sons assumed the rule of the Orkneys and Shetland, and received tribute from them. Here they abode in the winter time, and in the summer they led Wicking expeditions into the west, pillaging Scotland and Ireland. Glum Geirason makes mention thereof in the Praise of Grayfell:—

“The skilful seaman, that flooded ships with gore,
Made thence, when young, a gainful voyage to Skaney;
The spear-shaker vanquished sons of men in Scotland,
The Ulli of the shield sent to Gaut a sword-smitten host.

The friend of men, with thrusting spear, made glad the ravens of
the war-goddess;
A headlong rout ensued of folk of Irish race.
The Frey of the sword-land [shield] steeped blade-edges in blood,
Smiting men down. Great was his victory.”

King Hakon pursues a Wicking host, and fights a battle in Jutland.

17. King Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, made all Norway subject to him, after the flight of his brother Eric. He abode the first winter north in Throntham; but as there was no likelihood of peace if King Eric determined to bring his host over-sea from the west, King Hakon stayed with his force in the central parts chiefly of the country; the Firths, Sogn, Hordaland, or Rogaland. He set Earl Sigurd of Ladi over the whole district of the Thronds, the government which Sigurd himself had formerly held, as well

as Hakon his father, under King Harold Fairhair. When King Hakon heard of his brother Eric's death, and that Eric's sons had no longer a safe shelter in England, he supposed that little cause for fear would arise from them, and went one summer with his force east to Wick. At that time the Danes often plundered the Wick district, and did great damage; but when they heard of the arrival of King Hakon with a great host, they fled away; some went south to Halland, while those who were nearest to King Hakon sailed out to sea, and so south to Jutland. King Hakon, perceiving their flight, sailed after them with all his host, and as soon as he reached Jutland plundered the country. The inhabitants, becoming aware of these hostilities, straightway collected a force together, prepared to defend the country. They hastened to offer battle to King Hakon, and a great fight took place. King Hakon fought so boldly that he pressed forward in front of his standard, wearing neither helmet nor coat of mail. He won the victory, and pursued the flying foe far into the interior of the land. So says Guthorm Cinder in the Praise of Hakon :—

“The meet and bountiful king trod the ship's dark way with spray-splashed oars;

In the sword-storm of Mist, the war-nymph, he laid men prostrate;
The feeder of Odin's birds soon drove the rout as he willed;
His armour burst, as he delighted the ravens with drink.”

King Hakon defeats the Wickings in Eyra-sound, and pillages Denmark. Of Tryggvi Olafson.

18. King Hakon then led his host from the south to Zealand in search of the Wickings, and rowed with two smacks into Eyra-sound. Here he met with eleven of their smacks, and straightway joined battle with them. In the end he gained a victory, disabling all the Wicking ships. So says Guthorm Cinder :—

“The hero of missiles, fiery storm of shafts, sailed from the south
To the green ness of Zealand, having two bedecked ships;
Here the wrathful wielder of the sword, wand of death,
Cleared the Danish sloops, eleven in all.
Renowned was he henceforth, because of this feat.”

Hakon afterwards plundered Zealand far and wide, meeting with

no resistance; he pillaged the folk, slaying some, taking some captive, and forcing large payments from others. So says Guthorm:—

“The hero of fight then laid Zealand at his feet,
Yea, too, the strength of the choicest of the Wends,
By the coast of Skaney.”

King Hakon next sailed east along the coast of Skaney, plundering the whole way, taking tribute and payment from the country, and slaying the Wickings, Danes, and Wends, wherever he met with them. He sailed eastwards even along Gautland, plundering the country and exacting large payments from it. So says Guthorm:—

“Protected by sheet of Odin, the shield, he made the Gauts pay tribute;
The bountiful gold-giver won a battle in that raid.”

Having acquired boundless wealth, he returned with his fleet to the Wick, and here he remained to resist incursions of the Danes or Gauts.

The same autumn, Tryggwi, son of Olaf, returned from his Wicking cruise in the west, after plundering Scotland and Ireland. And in the spring, when King Hakon sailed to the north of the country, he set his nephew, King Tryggwi, over the Wick, to defend it from attack, and to retain such possession as he could of the lands in Denmark from which King Hakon had drawn tribute the previous summer. So says Guthorm Cinder:—

“O'er the oak-green daughter of Onar, land of the east,
The reddener of swords set the brave mind-strengtheners,
Guileless one, breaker of Sweigdi's hall [wall of shields],
Who thither had lately brought a host from Ireland,
On snow-skates of the swan-field [ships of the sea].

Gunnhild sails to Denmark with her sons. They take to free-bootery.

19. At that time Harold Gormson ruled over Denmark. He was much displeased at King Hakon for laying waste his country and kingdom, and a rumour went forth that he would avenge the deed; but he made no immediate attempt at reprisals. When Gunnhild and her sons heard in the Orkneys that there was war

between Denmark and Norway, they set about a voyage eastward. Before starting, they married Ragnhild, daughter of Eric and Gunnhild, to Arnfinn, son of Earl Thorfinn Skull-cleaver. Earl Thorfinn again took up his abode in the Orkneys, on the departure of Eric's sons. Gamli was slightly the eldest of the brothers, and he was not yet of full age. Gunnhild and her sons arrived in Denmark, and went straightway to see King Harold, who received them with a hearty welcome, and granted them large revenues in his kingdom, so that they were able to maintain themselves and their followers honourably. King Harold accepted Eric's son Harold as his foster-son, setting him on his knee, and the boy was brought up in the King's Court. Eric's sons went on a freebooting expedition as soon as they were old enough, and gained in this way much wealth, plundering in the Baltic. They were all handsome men, and riper in strength and accomplishments than in the number of their years. Glum Geirason speaks of this foray in the Praise of Grayfell:—

"The sovereign Lord, giver of gifts to many poets, subdued eastern lands;
In the encounter of shields he gained victory.
The gold-giving king made the sharp blades whistle;
The Regin of sword-play struck men to the earth."

Having ended their freebooting expedition in the east, Eric's sons turned north with their force to the Wick and pillaged it. King Tryggwi had a fleet at sea, which he kept there in order to oppose them, and many battles occurred with varied success. At times the sons of Eric pillaged the Wick, and at other times King Tryggwi pillaged Halland and Zealand.

*The prosperous reign of King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son.
The birth of Earl Sigurd's son Hakon.*

20. When Hakon was king in Norway, peace was well kept among the yeomen and merchants: no man injured another or another's property; land and sea were both abundantly fruitful. King Hakon was the most gladsome of men, excellent in speech, and most condescending. He was a man of great wisdom, and bestowed much thought on legislation. He ordained the laws of the Assembly at Gula, with the help of Thorleif the Wise, and

those of the Assembly at Frosta, with the help of Earl Sigurd, and others of the wisest Throlds. The Heidsœvi laws were first ordained by Halfdan the Black.

King Hakon was entertained at a Yule banquet in Throntham, which Earl Sigurd had prepared for him at Ladi. The first night of Yule, the Earl's wife, Bergliot, gave birth to a boy, and the following day King Hakon sprinkled the child with water, and called him after his own name. The boy grew up and became a great and honourable man, and succeeded to the government and earldom of his father. Earl Sigurd was a most attached friend of King Hakon.

King Hakon attempts the introduction of Christianity into Norway.

21. When King Hakon came to Norway he was a good Christian, but the whole land was heathen; heathen sacrifices were common, and there were many men of great influence. Feeling himself in great need of help and popular favour, he determined therefore to proceed with caution in the introduction of Christianity. He kept the Lord's day holy, fasted on Fridays, and held the chief festivals in remembrance. He ordained in the laws that the feast of Yule should begin at the same time that Christians kept Christmas, and that every man must then have a barrel of ale, or else pay a fine, and must keep holiday as long as the feast lasted. Before this time the Yule feast began on Hoka-night, that is to say, Mid-winter night, and was continued for three nights. The king intended to urge forward the preaching of Christianity, when he should become firmly established in the country, and have unrestrained power over the whole realm. At first he strove to persuade those to become Christians who were most attached to him. His entreaties and popularity thus induced many to allow themselves to be baptized, while others gave up heathen sacrifices. King Hakon abode chiefly in Throntham, because the main strength of the country lay there; and when he felt assured of the assistance of some of the chief men in the promotion of Christianity, he sent to England for a bishop, and also clerical teachers. On their arrival in Norway, the King openly declared his intention

to preach Christianity over the whole land. The men of More and Raumsdale decided to leave with the Thronds their answer to the King's bidding, when and where the Thronds should make their reply. The King then caused certain churches to be consecrated in More, and set priests over them. Coming north to Throntham, he summoned an Assembly of the yeomen, and bade them accept Christianity. They answered that they wished to leave the question to be settled by the Assembly at Frosta. "We desire to have men present there," they said, "from all the shires included in the district of the Thronds, and then we will give our answer to this difficult question."

King Hakon preaches Christianity to the Assembly at Frosta.

22. King Hakon came to the Assembly of Frosta, at which there was a very large attendance of yeomen. When the Assembly was formed, the King spoke, and thus began: "I make my request and prayer to all you yeomen and husbandmen, high and low; and besides you, to all the people, young and old, rich and poor, women as well as men, that you will all submit to be christened, and believe in one God, Christ the son of Mary; that you will forsake all sacrifices and heathen gods; that you will keep holy every seventh day, and rest from labour; and that you will fast every seventh day." As soon as the King had thus spoken in the hearing of all the people, there was a great uproar among the yeomen, because the King wished to deprive them of labour. They could not, they said, live in the land under such a condition. The labouring men, and thralls too, complained that they could not do work unless they were allowed to have food. It was a fault, they said, alike of King Hakon, of his father Harold, and of their kinsmen and ancestors, that they were sparing of food, though they were bountiful of gold.

The Assembly at Frosta refuses Christianity. The yeomen compel King Hakon to share their religious rites at Ladi, and again at the Mæri.

23. Then Asbiorn of Medalhouse in Gaulardale, an influential man, stood up and made answer to the King's speech in the following

manner: "O King Hakon, when you held an Assembly here in Thordham the first time, and we made you king over us, and you gave us back our freeholds, we yeomen thought that we had taken heaven in our grasp. But now we know not if we have received freedom at your hands, or if your wish is not rather to enthral us anew, though in a strange manner. For you wish us to abandon the faith that our fathers and all our forefathers held before us from the old time when the bodies of the dead were burnt, to the present, when they are buried, although that faith has done well for us, and our fathers were much more honourable men than we are. We have bestowed on you great affection, so far as to let you direct all law and right among us. Now it is the wish, the unanimous desire of us yeomen, to have and to hold the laws that you ordained at the Assembly here in Frosta, when we gave you our consent. We all wish to follow you, and have you for our king as long as any one of us yeomen now present at the Assembly remains alive, if you, O King, will show somewhat of moderation, in asking of us only that which we can give you, and that which we may not unworthily do. But if you put forward this business with so much harshness as to use force and tyranny against us, we have made our decision: we will all withdraw ourselves from you, and place over us another leader, that we may hold in freedom the faith that we wish to hold. You, O King, must now make your choice of these terms before the Assembly is dissolved." When they heard this speech, the yeomen gave a loud shout, saying that they desired the matter settled in agreement with what Asbiorn had said; whereupon a great din arose. When silence was obtained, Earl Sigurd spoke: "It is King Hakon's desire," he said, "to remain altogether in accord with you yeomen, and never to let anything sunder his friendship with you." The yeomen answered that they wished the King to offer sacrifice as his father had done, that they might enjoy prosperity and peace. The uproar then subsided, and at this point the Assembly was dissolved. Afterwards Earl Sigurd spoke with the king, and begged him not to refuse outright to do what the yeomen wished. "Nothing else will suffice," he said, "for as you may yourself hear, O King, the chiefs and all the people vehemently desire it. We must now find some good plan of action." So the King and Earl Sigurd then agreed upon what was to be done.

At harvest time, just as winter began, there was a great sacrificial banquet at Ladi, which the King attended. He had always been accustomed, whenever he was present at sacrifices, to take his food in a small room with few attendants. The yeomen found fault that the King did not sit in the high-seat at grand meetings and rejoicings, and Earl Sigurd said that the King would now act otherwise. Thus it happened that the King sat in his high-seat. When the cups were first filled, the toast was given by Earl Sigurd, who hallowed it to Odin, and drank to the King from the horn. The King then took the horn and made over it the sign of the Cross, whereupon a man named Kar, of Gryting, said, "Why does the King so behave? Will he not yet take part in the worship?" Earl Sigurd replied: "The King does as all men do who trust in their own might and strength, he hallows his toasts to Thor; before drinking from the cup, he made the sign of the Hammer over it." During the evening all was quiet, but the following day, at the time for eating, the yeomen pressed around the King and bade him eat of the horse-flesh, but by no means would he consent. They then bade him drink of the broth, and he decidedly refused. They next asked him to eat of the fat, but he refused that also. The yeomen were now on the point of attacking him. Then Earl Sigurd came forward, wishing to make peace, and bade the yeomen cease their uproar. The King, he declared, would open his mouth over the handle of the caldron. Now the steam from the boiling flesh had settled on the handle, and it was greasy. The King therefore approached the caldron, and, having bound a linen towel round the handle, opened his mouth over the caldron. Afterwards he went to his seat, but neither he nor the yeomen were well pleased.

The following winter preparations were made to entertain the King at a Yule feast up the Frith at the Mæri. As Yule drew nigh, a conference was held of the eight leaders who had chief direction of the sacrificial banquets in the community of the Thronds. Four of these were of Outer Throntham, Kar of Gryting, Asbiorn of Medalhouse, Thorberg of Warness, and Orm of Lyxa; and of the Inner Thronds there were Botolf of Olwishowe, Narfi of Staf in Weradale, Thronð Haka of Eggia, and Thori Skegg of Husaby in the island of Idri. These eight men bound themselves together, and agreed that the four Outer

Thronds should uproot Christianity, and the four Inner Thronds should compel the King to engage in heathen worship. The Outer Thronds then set sail with four ships south to More, where they slew three priests and burnt three churches before they returned. When King Hakon and Earl Sigurd came to the Mæri, each with his company of body-guards, they found the yeomen there present in large numbers. The first day of the feast the yeomen came to the King in a hostile manner, and bade him join in their worship, threatening him with evil results if he refused. Earl Sigurd brought about a reconciliation, and so it came to pass at length that the King ate some mouthfuls of the liver of a horse, and, without making the sign of the Cross, drank all the memorial toasts which the yeomen poured out for him. The feast being ended, the King and the Earl went away at once to Ladi. The King was in a most gloomy mood, and set out straightway to quit Throntham, with all his men, saying that he would come there a second time with a much greater following, and repay the Thronds the hostility they had shown him. Earl Sigurd begged the King not to make the conduct of the Thronds a cause of action against them. The King would gain nothing, said the Earl, by showing hatred towards the people of the country, or harrying them, least of all where the main strength of the land lay, as in Throntham. The King was so angry that no one might speak with him, and he went away south by the Frith to More, where he abode during the winter and the following spring. When summer came, he collected a force around him, and a rumour spread abroad that he was going to lead his host against the Thronds.

King Hakon defeats the sons of Gunnhild at Ogwaldsness in Kormt. Death of Guthorm, son of Eric Bloodaxe.

24. King Hakon, with a fine large force, had already embarked on his ships, when tidings came out of the south of the country that King Eric's sons had come from Denmark to the Wick; that they had driven King Tryggwi Olafson from his ships to Sotaness in the east; and that, after they had ravaged the Wick far and wide, many people had submitted to their authority. Feeling his need of help in the presence of this invasion, the King sent to Earl

Sigurd and other chiefs from whom he might expect aid. Earl Sigurd came, bringing a very powerful host, and with him came all the Throds who, in the past winter, had been foremost in the movement against the King to compel him to join in heathen worship; and, at the entreaties of the Earl, the King consented to renew friendly relations with them all. King Hakon then sailed by the coast, and having passed beyond Stad, was told that Eric's sons had reached North Agdi. The two fleets now directed their course against each other, and met at Kormt. Here the crews disembarked and fought at Ogwaldsness. The numbers on both sides were very large, and a fierce battle occurred. King Hakon pressed eagerly forwards until he encountered King Guthorm and his company, when the kings fought against each other. King Guthorm's banner was hewn down, and he himself was slain, with many of his troops. Then the sons of Eric with their force took to flight, and hastening to their ships, rowed away, leaving many dead. Guthorm Cinder tells of the fight in the Praise of Hakon:—

“The enricher of the goddess that chooses the slain, made the shields
clash
O'er the heads of shield-rattlers now fallen ;
The Niord of gold, fire of the broad domain of ships,
Left dead the Niord of the shield, moon of the din of swords.”

King Hakon embarked his men, and followed the sons of Gunnhild in their flight eastwards. Both fleets were urged forward at their utmost speed until they came to East Agdi, when Eric's sons passed out into the open sea and sailed south to Jutland. So says Guthorm Cinder:—

“Of the Aegir of the bow-shot, so I rememoer
That oft his brother's sons attempted the realm against the Balder of the
sword ;
He, eager for sea-fight, led forth his smacks, and drove all the sons of
Eric before him to the ocean.”

Then King Hakon sailed back again north to Norway, and the sons of Eric abode yet for a long time in Denmark.

*King Hakon defeats the sons of Gunnhild at Rastarcalf.
Death of Gamli [953].*

25. King Hakon had now been ruler over Norway for twenty years, and was staying on the island of Freida, in North More, at his estate of Birkistrand. He had no greater force with him than his body-guard, and the yeomen who were present by invitation. News was brought him that Gunnhild's sons were off Stad, coming north with a mighty host. King Hakon started forth at once to meet them with such force as he could get together. He had nine ships, and Eric's sons had more than twenty. They met in the Sound of Feey, close by the Freidaberg, and both armies disembarked and fought on Rastarcalf. There King Gamli, Eric's son, fell, and Hakon won the victory. King Hakon pressed forward eagerly in the fight, in no way shielding himself, but smiting his foes on the right hand and on the left. So says Guthorm Cinder :—

“ Before the distributer of gold the warrior host fled in fear ;
The spear-shaker pressed forward in front of the standards ;
The prince, plenteous gatherer of Od's wife's golden tears,
Heeded not to shield himself in the shock of the war-goddesses.”

The sons of Gunnhild again fled away south to Denmark with the remnant of their force that escaped.

The brothers, Gunnhild's sons, lead a fleet against King Hakon.

26. Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, had been king over Norway for twenty-six years, from the time that his brother left the country. Being on circuit in Hordaland, he was staying at Fitia, on the island of Stord, having with him his body-guard, and many yeomen whom he had invited. Eywind was there, his kinsman, known as Eywind the Plagiarist, the son of Finn Skialg. As King Hakon sat at the morning meal, his watchmen outside the house beheld, not far from the island, several ships in full sail coming from the south ; and one said to another, “ We must tell the

King that a hostile force appears to be coming." But none of them thought it an easy matter to carry news of war to the King, for he laid a heavy penalty on the bearer who was not certain of what he said. Yet as it seemed wicked to keep the King in ignorance of what they saw, one of them entered the room and said to Eywind Finnson, "Go out at once; there is the utmost need." So Eywind went out, and as soon as he could see the sails, he knew the ships to be ships of war. Returning straightway to the room, he went before the King and said, "Short is the passing hour, and long the time o'er meals." The King looked at him and asked, "What is the matter?" and Eywind recited a verse:—

"The avengers of Bloodaxe await, we are told, the sharp conflict
of swords;
Small time have we for sitting;
To tell our lord tidings of war is fraught with danger;
But, O King, I desire thy glory;
Let us haste to grasp our old weapons."

"You are so gallant a man, Eywind," said the King, "that you would not say war is at hand unless the news were true." Many persons then confirmed its truth. The King, therefore, ordered the tables to be removed, and went out to look at the ships, which he immediately perceived to be ships of war. "What shall our plan be?" said the King to his men. "Shall we fight them with the force that we have, or go to our ships and sail away north? If we fight, it is clear that we shall have to strive against much greater odds than were opposed to us some time ago. Our force, however, has often been seen inferior in numbers when we have joined battle with the sons of Gunnhild." As the men were slow in deciding, Eywind answered:—

"Lord of the sword-storm! To move more northerly
His ocean steed suits not the brave. We hate delay.
Now Harold from the south his broad fleet drives
O'er Rakni's roaring path; grip we our shields."

"You have spoken bravely, Eywind," said the King, "and agreeably to my mind; yet I should like to hear what opinion others have formed on the point." Many, thinking they now knew what the King wished to do, said they would rather die, sword in hand, than flee before the Danes, without striking a blow. "We have

often won victory," they said, "though our force was less numerous in the fight than it is now." The King thanked the men for the reply, and bade them take their weapons, which they did. He then armed himself. He wore a coat of ring-mail, and was girt with his sword Quernbiter; he carried a gilt helmet on his head, a halberd in his hand, and a shield at his side. Afterwards he drew up his body-guard and the yeomen, and set up his banner.

Harold Grayfell commands the expedition.

27. After the death of Gamli, Harold, the son of Eric, became head of the brothers' force, and they had now a huge host. In the expedition with them were their mother's brothers, Eywind the Braggart and Alf the Pirate, strong men and the worst of evil-doers. Eric's sons led their ships to the island, and having landed their men, drew them up in order of battle; and the superiority in numbers of their force is said to have been not less than that of six to one of Hakon's.

King Hakon defeats the sons of Gunnhild on the island of Stord, and is wounded.

28. King Hakon had already arranged his force, and before the battle began, took off, so it is said, his coat of mail. His body-guard was formed of picked men, chosen on account of their great might and prowess, like those of his father, King Harold; and one of them was Thoralf Skolmson, surnamed the Strong, who stood side by side with the King. He carried a helmet, shield, halberd, and a sword called Broadblade; King Hakon and he were said to be men of like strength. So Thord Siarekson tells us in the panegyric which he wrote on Thoralf:—

"Where fought the valiant crews of ocean's steeds on Stord at Fitia,
And eager to cross swords went forth the host;
There, next to the Northmen's king, he dared to march,
He, wielder of weapons, in the fiery storm,
Where the battle-axe crushes ships' moon-like shields."

As the hosts approached each other, drawn up in battle array,

they first of all threw their spears. Then swords were drawn, and a fierce and bloody fight occurred. King Hakon and Thoralf pushed beyond the standards, cutting down the foe on the right hand and on the left. The King was easily recognised, being taller than other men; and his helmet glittered brightly whenever the sun shone upon it, so that a shower of missiles was thrown at him. Therefore Eywind Finuson took a hood, and put it over the King's helmet. And Eywind the Braggart shouted with a loud voice, "Is the Northmen's king in hiding, or has he fled, for his gilt helmet is now out of sight?" Eywind and his brother Alf then pressed eagerly forward, as if furious and frantic, smiting on the one side and on the other. But King Hakon called aloud to Eywind, "Keep on straight in your course, if you wish to meet the Northmen's king." There was no long time to wait before Eywind came up, and brandishing his sword, struck at the King. Thoralf quickly pushed his shield against Eywind, causing him to stagger; and the King, holding his sword Quernbiter with both hands, struck at him, cleaving helmet and head right down to his shoulders. At the same moment Thoralf slew Alf the Pirate. Thus says Eywind the Plagiartist:—

"Smitten, I know, was the middling-honest shipman
By the King's sharp sword, wielded in both hands;
The scourge of the Danes, undaunted hero of the storm of Ali [battle],
Clove with his gold-hilted brand the hairy head of the frantic foe."

The two brothers being slain, King Hakon pressed forward so vigorously that every one recoiled before him; fear fell upon the host of the sons of Eric, and flight came with it. Now as King Hakon was in the forefront of his array, following hard upon the fugitives, and dealing many a fierce blow, a shaft or dart flew through the air and hit the King's arm on the muscle beneath the shoulder. There is a common story that Gunnhild's page-boy, whose name was Kisping, ran forward into the midst of the crowd, and shouting, "Room for the King's slayer," threw the dart at the King. But others say that no one knows who threw it. And this may well be the truth, for arrows, spears, and missiles of all sorts were flying thick, like flakes in a snowstorm. The slaughter on the side of the sons of Eric was very great; but the kings themselves all escaped, and embarking on their ships, rowed

away at once, while Hakon's men rowed after them. So says Thord Siarekson :—

"The destroyer of outlaws defended wide his coast-folk ;
Long life in the land the prince's people wished him.
Peace is ever broken. Trouble arose
When Gunnhild's sons, appearing from the south, were put to flight,
And the King, whose gold did ever fear him, fell.

The wounded yeomen showed their weakness seated at their hard rowlocks ;
One and another, not a few, breathed their last.
The mighty Niord, provider of Hugin's drink, proved his prowess,
When next the King he stood in such a stir of Gondul."

Death of Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan [960].

29. King Hakon then went on board his sloop, where he had his wound bound up ; but the bleeding was too profuse to be stopped, and by the close of day his strength was gone. He then said that he wished to sail north to his house at Alrekstead. When they reached Hakon's Rock, on their northern passage, they brought the ship to land, for the King was near death. Calling his friends around him, he declared to them the manner in which he wished to dispose of the kingdom ; for he had one only daughter, named Thora, and no son. He bade his friends send word to the sons of Eric that the kingdom of Norway was now theirs, and that he begged of them to hold his friends and kinsmen in affectionate regard. "If it is my fate to live," he said, "I shall leave this land, and go to a Christian land, where I can make amends for whatever I have done amiss against God. If I die here in heathendom, grant me such burial as seems good to you." Shortly afterwards King Hakon died, on the very rock on which his birth took place. He was deeply lamented. Both friends and foes wept at his death, and said that nevermore would a king arise over Norway like unto him in goodness. His friends carried his body north to Søham, in North Hordaland, where they made a great cairn, and placed the King therein, with all his weapons and dress, but no other treasure ; and at his burial they used the customary heathen rites.

*The sons of Gunnhild succeed Hakon, and rule over Norway.
King Harold Grayfell's poets.*

30. On the death of King Hakon the sons of Eric succeeded to the kingdom of Norway. Of the brothers who yet lived, Harold was the eldest, and the most esteemed. Their mother, Gunnhild, had a chief share in the government of the country, and was therefore called Kings'-mother. The ruling men at that time in Norway were King Tryggwi, son of Olaf, over Wick, in the east; King Gudrod, son of Biorn, over Westfold; and Earl Sigurd, of Ladi, over Throntham, in the north. The first winter Gunnhild's sons held possession of the central parts of the country. Then, by the interchange of communications between them and Kings Tryggwi and Gudrod, peace was made on the condition that Tryggwi and Gudrod should hold, under Gunnhild's sons, the like share of government that they held under King Hakon.

Glum Geirason was the poet of King Harold, the son of Gunnhild. After the death of King Hakon he composed a verse in which he boasted that King Harold had avenged the death of his brother Gamli:—

"Gamli has been well avenged by Harold, and wounded men have lost their lives.

The valiant leader won a glorious victory,
Where the dark ravens of the war-god drink Hakon's blood, beyond the sea.
Dyed in blood, I hear, was the reed of red wounds [sword]."

This verse became very popular with King Harold's body-guard. But when Eywind Finnson heard of it, he recited another, a counter verse:—

"Once, in Gamli's blood, the flight-hating King made red his sword, the gag of Fenri's mouth.

High swelled the rage of combatants,
When the undaunted King drave forth to sea the whole of Eric's sons.
His fall now grieves spear-guarding men."

These lines, too, were widely repeated. When King Harold heard them he laid the verse to Eywind's charge as a crime that deserved death; but their mutual friends reconciled them on condition that Eywind should become King Harold's poet, as he had formerly

been King Hakon's. Moreover, the kinship between them was a close one, for Eywind, as we have already said, was the son of Gunnhild, daughter of Earl Halfdan; and Gunnhild's mother was Ingibiorg, the daughter of King Harold Fairhair. Eywind then composed a verse on King Harold:—

"Land-warden of the Hords! thy courage faltered not
Though bows were bent, they say, and swords like hail on mail-shirts
crashed.
What time the naked, sharpened, icy blades
Whistled in thy hand, O Harold! and fed the wolves."

*Compact between the sons of Gunnhild and Earl Sigurd.
Harold Grayfell and Eywind the Plagiarist.*

31. The sons of Gunnhild abode chiefly in the central portions of the kingdom, for within reach of the Thronds or the Wickmen they did not consider themselves secure. These two communities had been the firm supporters of King Hakon, and among them were many men of great influence. From Throntham the sons of Gunnhild had hitherto received no revenues. Attempts were therefore made to settle the terms of an agreement between the sons of Gunnhild and Earl Sigurd; and a peace, confirmed by oaths, was at length brought about, on the condition that Earl Sigurd should hold under them the same rule in Throntham which he had formerly held under King Hakon. On these terms they were nominally reconciled.

The sons of Gunnhild were all avaricious, and were said to hide their money in the earth. Thus says Eywind the Plagiarist:—

"Ulli of the sword! All the days of Hakon we wore the seed of Fyri-
fields [gold]
On the resting-place of hawks [our wrists].
Now, the oppressor of his folk has hid
Within the bosom of the Giant-slayer's mother [earth]
The meal of Frodi's joyous maids [gold].

All the days of Hakon, on the resting-place of the shield [the arm]
Poets wore the shining sun of Fulla's head-dress [gold];
Now the elfin light of the river [gold]
Is hidden in the body of the Giant-slayer's mother.
Mighty is the control over a strong people."

King Harold heard of these verses, and sent a command to Eywind to come and see him. On his arrival the King said, "You wish to be my foe, Eywind. It is unseemly of you to show me unfaithfulness, for you made yourself my man." Then Eywind recited the following:—

"One lord I had before you, dear King, and I ask not for a third,
 Old age, Prince, oppresses me.
 True to my dear King have I been, I play no double part;
 I am of those that follow you, O leader!
 Old age falls upon me."

King Harold caused Eywind to make over to him the right to fix what penalty should be paid in the case. Now Eywind had a fine large gold bracelet, called Foldi, that had been taken out of the earth a long time ago. This bracelet the King said that he would have, and nothing else instead of it. Then Eywind recited this verse:—

"Bound am I, at last, to gain thy good favour, a breeze from the giants'
 home,
 O thou that sailest thy ships o'er the rock-set sea;
 For I have to yield thee, thou chooser of wrist-rings,
 A bracelet of gold, serpents' treasure, my father's long ago."

Eywind then returned home; and nothing is said of his ever meeting King Harold afterwards.

The rule of the sons of Gunnhild. Gunnhild urges them to attack Earl Sigurd.

32. Gunnhild's sons had adopted the Christian religion in England; but when they succeeded to the chief rule in Norway they were in no way able to bring about the conversion of the people; all they effected towards it was to break down temples, and put a stop to sacrifices, earning thereby great and general unpopularity. During their rule the harvests throughout the country soon became less plentiful. The kings were many, and as each of them had his own body-guard, they required large revenues to cover their expenses, and were most eager for money; moreover, they paid no great regard to the laws which King Hakon had

ordained. They were all handsome men, big and strong, possessing great skill in manly exercises. Thus speaks Glum Geirason of King Harold :—

“The cause of terror to the teeth of Hallinskidi [gold],
Of times foremost in fight,
He was skilled in twelve kingly accomplishments.”

The brothers were frequently to be found together, though at times they were apart. Stern and valiant they were, much given to war, and often victorious.

Gunnhild Kings'-mother and her sons frequently met and conversed on matters that concerned the government of the country; and on one of these occasions she asked them how they proposed to deal with the government of Throntham. “You bear, each of you, the title of King,” she said, “like your forefathers before you; but you have small extent of country under your rule, and there are many of you to share it. The Wick district in the east is held by Tryggwi and Gudrod, who have some claim thereto because of their descent. But Earl Sigurd rules over the whole district of the Thronds, and I know not what obligation lies on you to allow an earl to govern so large a portion of your kingdom. It seems to me wonderful that you go plundering in other lands, while you allow men at home to rob you of your own patrimony. Your grandfather, after whom you, Harold, are named, would not have deemed it an important business to deprive a single earl of life and power, seeing that he reduced the whole of Norway under his rule, and governed it till he reached old age.” “It is not so easy,” answered Harold, “to deprive Earl Sigurd of life as it is to kill a kid or a calf, for he is of high birth and has many kinsmen; he is wise and popular. If he learns that he must certainly expect hostility from us, I know that the Thronds will all stand by him, and then we have no business there but what will have an evil end, for all we brothers seem to me as if we regard any abode unsafe which the Thronds can reach.” To these words Gunnhild replied, “We will proceed with the design in an altogether different way. King Harold and I, with Erlend, will remain for the winter in North More, and try what success we may have.” And they did so.

The plot against Earl Sigurd.

33. Earl Sigurd had a brother named Griotgard, much younger than himself, and less highly esteemed. Griotgard had no title of rank; nevertheless he maintained a body of men, and led Wicking expeditions in the summer-time. King Harold sent messengers to Throntham with gifts of money and a friendly message to Earl Sigurd, saying that he wished to form a close friendship with him, such as had existed between King Hakon and the Earl. With the message was a request that the Earl would pay a visit to King Harold, when they would fully confirm their friendship and make it binding. Earl Sigurd welcomed the messengers and the King's friendly message, saying, however, that he was unable to pay the King a visit, because of his many duties; but he sent the King friendly gifts and kind words in return for his friendship. The messengers departed, and went on a similar errand to Griotgard, whom they invited to visit King Harold, offering him the King's friendship, and valuable presents therewith. They returned home with a promise on the part of Griotgard to visit King Harold and Gunnhild. On the appointed day he arrived, and they received him graciously. They became friendly with him, and admitted him to their confidence in secret matters. In his presence they spoke of the way in which for a long time the Earl had kept him under; and the King promised that if he would join in the plot with them, he should be made his Earl, and govern the whole realm which Earl Sigurd had hitherto governed. The result of this visit was an agreement made between them by special treaty, that Griotgard should keep watch, and send word to the King of the likeliest time to make an onslaught upon the Earl. After these things Griotgard returned home, taking with him valuable presents from the King.

Earl Sigurd is burnt to death in the homestead of Oglo [962.]

34. During the autumn Earl Sigurd went up the Frith into Stioradale on state visits, and continued his progress thence by sea to Oglo, where he was to receive due entertainment. The Earl had always with him a very numerous retinue so long as he

put little trust in the Kings; but at this time he had no great number of attendants, because of the friendly messages that had passed between him and King Harold. Griotgard therefore sent information to King Harold that no fitter time could be found than the present for the attack on the Earl. Straightway, the same night, Kings Harold and Erlend set out with four ships and a numerous force, and passed along Throntham by the Frith, sailing in the night by the light of the stars. Griotgard here came to meet them, and late at night they reached Oglo, where Earl Sigurd was visiting. They set fire to the buildings, and burnt down the homestead while the Earl was inside it, with all his force. Then early the next morning the Kings sailed out of the Frith, and so south to More, where they remained for a while. This event happened two years after the death of Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, according to the reckoning of Priest Ari, the historian, son of Thorgils.

Earl Hakon is chosen by the Thronds to succeed his father Sigurd. He makes peace with the sons of Gunnhild.

35. Hakon, the son of Earl Sigurd, was in the inner part of Throntham when the news reached him of his father's death, and the manner of it. Hakon was a man of high birth, and had many kinsmen; like his father, he was popular, and beloved by the whole country. He was well supported, for all the Thronds turned to him; and so great was the instant rush to arms all over Throntham, that every ship fit for war was dragged into the water. When the host came together they chose Hakon Sigurdson to be Earl, and leader over the force; he was then about twenty years of age. Hakon led his whole force out to sea by the Frith. When the sons of Gunnhild heard of what had been done, they sailed southwards to South More and into Raumsdale. Each side kept watch over the other. Earl Hakon, with the support of his friends, then held Throntham for three years, so that Gunnhild's sons drew no revenues therefrom, and not one of them was able to advance into Throntham beyond the entrance of the Frith. Hakon fought several battles with the sons of Gunnhild, wherein they slew one another's men in large numbers. Einar Rattlescale thus speaks in

the poem Wellekla, or Dearth of Gold, which he composed on Earl Hakon :—

“The oath-keeping spearman had a large fleet at sea ;
No delay the warrior made, rejoicing in the storms of Gondul ;
The prover of the red-moon of Hedin’s arms [shield] was eager to raise
aloft the war-shield,
That he might calm the fighting-temper of the Kings.”

And again :—

“Question not if the gladdener of ravens in the sword’s mighty rush,
Was present at the storm of arrows in the tempest of the war-goddess ;
The Rogni of fight shook the arrows from the sail of Lokk [his shield] ;
Unsparring of his sword, he bravely helped the wolves to live.”

“Many a violent storm of Ali there befell,
Before the sword’s heedful preserver won his fatherland by the will
of the gods.”

Einar also tells how Earl Hakon avenged his father :—

“Loudly I sing his praise ; for the warden of the ships, ravens of the
waves,
Avenged his father. There was need to draw the sword.”

“Force-giver to the sword-storm, on all sides he rained iron rain on the
lives of lords ;
The hero of war-shout augmented the host of Thund’s warriors [in
Walhall] ;
The Widur of the din of sea-fight, in the tempest of Har,
Renewed his deadly sword-blows on the franklins’ shields.”

Afterwards, friends of both sides came forward and proposed terms of peace between Eric’s sons and Earl Hakon, and thus it came to pass, through the entreaties of honourable men, that a reconciliation was effected ; the conditions of peace being that Hakon should hold the like rule in Throndham that his father Earl Sigurd had held, and the Kings should hold the like rule that King Hakon had held. This covenant was ratified in the fullest good faith. A close intimacy grew up between Earl Hakon and Gunnhild, though at times they dealt deceitfully with one another ; thus three other years passed by, during which the Earl abode at peace in his domain.

Birth of Earl Hakon's son Eric. Kings Harold and Gudrod, the sons of Eric Bloodaxe, plot to slay King Tryggwi of the Wick [968].

36. One winter-time Earl Hakon went to the Uplands, and there he met with a woman of low degree at a house where he was entertained. As time wore on the woman bore a man-child, to which the name of Eric was given. The mother brought the boy to Earl Hakon, who, she said, was the child's father; and the Earl had the boy brought up under the care of Thorleif the Wise, a wealthy, influential man that lived up the country in Medaldale, and was a great friend of the Earl. Eric soon showed signs of promise, for he quickly grew to be very handsome, tall, and strong; the Earl, however, treated him with coldness. Earl Hakon was the handsomest man of his time; not tall, but strong and highly skilled in manly exercises, wise in understanding, and a great warrior.

The Earl went one autumn to the Uplands, and being at Heidmark, King Tryggwi Olafson and King Gudrod Biornson came to see him; and Gudbrand of the Dales also came. They met by appointment, and sat a long time in conference. The upshot of their meeting was an agreement to make a friendly alliance with one another. Thereupon they separated, and each went home to his own kingdom. King Tryggwi Olafson was a great man and honourable, whom the Wickmen regarded as the King best fitted to rule over the whole country. King Gudrod Biornson was a dear friend of King Tryggwi.

Gunnhild and her sons, learning that these chiefs had spoken of friendly relations with one another, suspected them of hatching treason against the Kings. They therefore held frequent conferences and took counsel together. When the spring-time came, King Harold and his brother Gudrod gave out that they intended to lead a freebooting expedition, as was their wont, either over-sea to the west, or into the Baltic; collecting their force together, they launched their ships and made them ready. Before they set out, a parting banquet was held, at which there was deep drinking and much talk. The men amused themselves by comparing and pitting man against man, disputing who was the better, and by-and-by a

comparison was drawn between the Kings themselves. Then some one said that Harold was the foremost of the brothers in everything; at which King Gudrod grew very wroth, and declared that he would not accept a lower position than his brother Harold in anything; moreover, he was quite ready to put his claim to the proof. At length it came to pass that both brothers showed great anger, and disputed with such vehemence, that they challenged one another to single combat, and sprang to their weapons. But some who were present, wiser and less overcome by drink than the rest, intervened, and calmed them down. Both then proceeded to their ships; but it seemed quite hopeless to expect that they would all now go together on a joint expedition. In reality, as events afterwards showed, the quarrel was nothing but a trick of the two brothers, and a deceit which their mother Gunnhild had planned; so that, being apparently at enmity with one another, they might be less suspected of the treacherous deeds which they had brewed together, and afterwards brought about. King Gudrod sailed near the coast eastwards, and Harold directed his ships into the open sea, saying that he intended sailing across the ocean to the west. But when he had passed the islands he changed his course eastwards, following the land, though keeping well out at sea. King Gudrod sailed close to land by the ordinary eastward road to Wick. Having sailed past the Fold, he sent a message to King Tryggwi, bidding him come and confer with King Gudrod, and saying that they would go together on a plundering expedition into the Baltic. King Tryggwi received the message kindly and favourably, and learning that Gudrod's force was small, went to confer with him, taking only a single cutter. They met at the Weggi beyond Sotanness. As they were conferring together, King Gudrod's men rushed upon King Tryggwi, slaying him, and twelve of his men with him. He lies buried in what has since been called Tryggwi's Cairn.

King Harold slays Gudrod Biornson.

37. King Harold, having taken his ships by a course far out at sea, turned inwards to the Wick and reached Tunsberg at night-fall. Here he learnt that King Gudrod Biornson was at an enter-

tainment a short distance inland. The same night King Harold went at once with his men to the spot and beset the house. King Gudrod came forth with his body-guard, and after a feeble resistance was slain, together with many of his men. King Harold then left immediately, and having joined his force to that of his brother Gudrod, they brought the whole of the Wick into subjection.

Harold the Grenlander, son of King Gudrod Biornson, flees into Sweden. Of Skoglar-Tosti and Sigrid.

38. King Gudrod Biornson had made a good and suitable marriage. By his wife he had a son, named Harold, who was sent into Grenland, and there brought up as the foster-son of a baron named Roi the White. Roi's son was Rani, the Far-traveller, and he and Harold were of the same age, and foster-brothers. After the death of King Gudrod Biornson, his son Harold, who was known as Harold the Grenlander, fled with Rani his foster-brother and a few other men to the Uplands, where they abode awhile with his kinsmen. Eric's sons made diligent search after those who had wrongs to avenge upon them, and especially all who might be expected to rise up and seek redress. Therefore Harold the Grenlander was advised by his kinsmen and friends to leave the country. He went consequently east into Sweden, where he sought for a band of Wickings to whom he might attach himself, and thus acquire wealth, for he was a very valiant man.

Tosti was the name of a Swede, the most powerful and distinguished among those who bore no title of rank in the country. He was a great warrior, passing much of his time in Wicking expeditions; whence he was called Skoglar-Tosti. To this man's troop Harold the Grenlander joined himself. In the summer-time he accompanied Tosti on his plundering forays, and was greatly liked by everybody; in the winter-time he abode with Tosti. Thus he remained for the five years which followed the two that he had spent in the Uplands. Tosti had a daughter named Sigrid, young, beautiful, and of a lofty mien. Later on she was given in marriage to Eric, King of the Swedes, surnamed the Victorious, and their son was Olaf the Swede, who afterwards

became King in Sweden. Eric died a natural death in Upsala, ten years after the death of Styrbjorn.

The sons of Gunnhild prepare for hostilities against Earl Hakon, who takes to flight.

39. The sons of Gunnhild levied a great host from the Wick, and as they sailed north with it, keeping close to land, they were joined by men and ships from every shire. They then openly declared their intention to lead the host north to Throntham against Earl Hakon. Tidings of the expedition soon reached the Earl, who, without delay, collected around him a host, and hastened to his ships. But when he learnt how great was the host which the sons of Gunnhild had, he directed his fleet south to More, and plundered the country wherever he went, slaying all whom he met with, both rich and poor. Then he sent back his host of Throndish yeomen, and himself went plundering over North More, South More, and Raumsdale. He had scouts as far away as the south of Stad, to gather news of the force of Gunnhild's sons. And when he heard that their fleet was at the Firths, waiting there for a favourable wind to carry them north beyond Stad, he himself sailed south past Stad, standing so far out to sea that the sails of his ships could not be seen from land. Thus he proceeded east, following the coast-line until he arrived in Denmark, whence he sailed into the Baltic, and passed the summer plundering its shores. The sons of Gunnhild sailed with their fleet north to Throntham, and abode there a long while collecting tax and tribute from the yeomen. When summer drew to a close, two of the brothers, Sigurd Slefa and King Gudrod, remained behind and settled there; while Harold and the others returned to the east of the country with the force which had been levied there and had accompanied them to Throntham in the summer.

Earl Hakon's return to Throntham. Harold Grayfell's foray. Slaying of Sigurd Slefa.

40. During the autumn Earl Hakon sailed to Helsingialand. Here he beached his ships, and then passed westwards by the land

route over Jamtaland and Helsingialand, across the Kiol, and down into Throndham. Straightway a large force thronged around him, and he hastened to go on board ship. When the sons of Gunnhild heard of his return, they embarked on their ships and sailed out to sea along the Frith; but Earl Hakon went on to Ladi, where he remained during the winter. The sons of Gunnhild abode at More, and the two hostile parties made attacks on each other, and slew each other's men. Earl Hakon retained his rule over Throndham, where his winters were chiefly passed. The summers he spent on plundering expeditions in the Baltic, though at times he abode in Throndham during the summer, and had a fleet out at sea. The influence of the sons of Gunnhild did not then extend northwards beyond Stad.

Harold Grayfell sailed one summer with his force to Biarmland on a plundering expedition. On the banks of the Dwina he fought a great battle with the Biarms, whom he conquered, slaying many people. Afterwards he pillaged the country far and wide, gaining very much wealth. So says Glum Geirason:—

“In the east, the bold antagonist of Kings dyed his flaming sword north of the settlement.

Here he put to flight the children of the Biarms.

The pacifier of men gained a great fight in that foray on the banks of the Dwina.

The young prince won renown for himself.”

There was a high-born influential man in Hordaland, a baron named Klypp, the son of Thord, who was the son of Horda-Kari. His wife was Olof, daughter of Asbiorn, and sister of Jarn-Skeggi of Yria, in the north. Asbiorn's brother was Reidar, the father of Styrkar, the father of Eindridi, the father of Einar Thambaskelf. King Sigurd Slefa came to Klypp's house. The baron was not at home, but his wife Olof gave the King a hearty welcome. There was much carousing and excellent entertainment. King Sigurd passed the night there, against the will of Olof, and afterwards departed. The following autumn Kings Harold and Sigurd went up to Wors, where they summoned an Assembly of the yeomen. At that Assembly the yeomen planned an assault upon the Kings, and would have slain them, but they escaped by flight. King Harold then went north into Hardanger, and Sigurd to Alrek-

stead, where he fixed his abode. When the baron Klypp heard where Sigurd was staying, he called together his kinsmen and friends, and they planned an assault on the King. The leader of the expedition was one Wemund, surnamed the Knucklebreaker. Arrived at the house, they made an attack on King Sigurd, and Klypp thrust him through with a sword, causing his death. Klypp was slain at once on the spot.

Earl Hakon slays his uncle Griotgard in battle, and flees into Denmark.

41. King Harold Grayfell and his brother Gudrod gathered together a vast host, and set out with it, sailing north to Thronham. Earl Hakon, having received intelligence of the expedition, collected a force around him, and sailed south to More, which he plundered. His uncle Griotgard was placed over the district, charged with its defence, on behalf of the sons of Gunnhild, and by the Kings' orders he summoned a levy. Earl Hakon went forth to meet him, and a battle took place, in which Griotgard fell, together with two Earls' sons and many other people. So says Einar Rattlescale:—

"The daring helmeted King smote and conquered his foes,
Increasing the number of comrades in Odin's friendly hall [of the slain].
The adorning of his people covered himself with glory,
For three brave Earls' sons fell in Thund's fiery showers."

Earl Hakon then sailed out beyond the islands, on to the high seas, and following the southerly direction of the land, reached Denmark. Here he paid a visit to Harold Gormson, the King of the Danes, who received him with a hearty welcome, and he abode with the King during the winter. At that time there was staying also with the King his nephew Harold, son of Knut Gormson. He had returned from a Wicking voyage, on which he had spent a long time, pillaging and amassing immense wealth; wherefore he was called Gold-Harold. He was considered a very suitable man to be King over Denmark.

The rule of the sons of Gunnhild. Death of Erlend.

42. King Harold Grayfell and his brothers led their force north to Throntham, where they met with no resistance, because Earl Hakon was gone. They therefore collected the tribute, tax, and all the royal revenues. Over and above these, they caused the yeomen to make large payments, because for a long while the Kings had drawn little money from Throntham, while Earl Hakon abode there with a numerous retinue, and was at enmity with them. In the autumn King Harold sailed south into the country, taking with him all the men of the force whose homes were there; and King Erlend remained behind with his force. He continued to make large demands upon the yeomen, infringing upon their rights; whereupon they grumbled sorely, and made up their minds for action. Later on, in the winter, they gathered themselves together, and formed a large force, which afterwards went to attack King Erlend when he was paying a state visit. In the battle which took place King Erlend fell, and a large number of men with him.

Birth of Olaf Tryggwason.

43. King Tryggwi Olafson's wife was a woman named Astrid, the daughter of Eric Baldhead, an influential man living at Ofrustead. After the death of King Tryggwi, Astrid escaped and fled away secretly, taking with her such valuables as she could carry. She was accompanied by her foster-father, Thorolf Lusakegg, who never left her. Other trustworthy persons acted as scouts for her, to learn tidings of her foes and where they went. Astrid was with child by King Tryggwi, and caused herself to be removed to a lake, on an island of which she lay concealed with a few attendants. Here she gave birth to a boy, whom Thorolf sprinkled with water, and named Olaf after the child's grandfather. This event happened in the nine hundred and sixty-ninth year from the Incarnation of our Lord, in the thirty-second year of the reign of the Emperor Otto the Great, and in the first year

of Edward, King of England. Astrid remained in concealment on the island during the summer. When the nights became dark and the days began to shorten, and the weather grew cold, Astrid started to go away, accompanied by Thorolf and a few other persons. They passed close to houses by night only, when the darkness concealed them, and they met no one. At eventide one day they arrived at Ofrustead, the home of Eric, Astrid's father. Proceeding with caution, she sent to the homestead to inform Eric of her arrival. He caused the company to be taken into a detached building, where a table was prepared for them, with provisions of the best. After a short stay, Astrid's companions departed, and she herself remained behind with two maid-servants, her son Olaf, Thorolf Lusaskegg, and his son Thorgils, who was six years of age. And here they abode for the winter.

*Attempts of Gunnhild to find Olaf and his mother Astrid.
They make their escape to Sweden.*

44. After the slaying of King Tryggwi Olafson, King Harold Grayfell and his brother Gudrod visited the estates that had belonged to Tryggwi. Astrid was already gone away, and no tidings of her reached them. They heard a rumour that she was probably with child by King Tryggwi. In the autumn they sailed to the north of the country, of which voyage we have already made mention. When they came to their mother, Gunnhild, they told her the story of all that had happened in their expedition. She made careful inquiries where Astrid was, and they told her of the rumour which they had heard. "The rumour is probably true," answered Gunnhild, "and she will bring up a son to Tryggwi if nothing is done to prevent her." That autumn and the following winter Gunnhild's sons were engaged in contests with Earl Hakon, which have been already mentioned, and therefore no search was then made after Astrid and her son. But the following spring Gunnhild sent men to the Uplands and through all the Wick country, to find out what was become of them. When the spies returned to Gunnhild they were able to say, in the first place, that Astrid was very probably with her father at Ofrustead, and so there was thus a further likelihood that she was bringing

up King Tryggwi's son there; but they had not seen, so they said, either her or the boy.

Gunnhild had a very dear friend, an influential man named Hakon. She supplied this man with a company of thirty men, all well furnished with weapons and horses, and bade him go to Eric's house at Ofrustead, thence to take King Tryggwi's son and bring him to her. Hakon therefore proceeded on his way there, until he was not far from Ofrustead; but his journey and his business becoming then known to Eric's friends, they gave Eric intelligence of Gunnhild's messengers. It was late in the day when Eric received the information, and the same night without delay he prepared to send away his daughter Astrid. He found for her good guides, with whom she set off while the night was yet young. Eric led them out of the courtyard, and thus spake to Astrid: "You are taking your departure so hastily, because I can no longer retain you here in safety. Gunnhild is searching after your son, and wishes to take away his life. I will send you both to Sweden, to the house of a very dear friend of mine, known now as Hakon the Old. We were associated together as freebooters for a long time in the very closest fellowship; we had one purse between us, and I found him most faithful in all things. He has now great power and influence in Sweden, though he bears no title of rank. I trust he will have you in his good keeping for my sake." Then Eric returned to his house, and they proceeded on their way. At eventide they came to the district of Skaun, and seeing there a large house, they went up to it and asked for a night's lodging. They were poorly clad, being in disguise. The owner of the house was Biorn Atterboil, a wealthy and wicked man, who drove them away. The same evening they went to Wisli, another hamlet, a short distance thence. Here a yeoman lived, named Thorstein, who lodged them for the night, treated them hospitably, and found them good beds to sleep in. Hakon, Gunnhild's messenger, arrived with his company at Ofrustead early on the morning after Astrid's departure. Inquiring after Astrid and her son, he was told by Eric that she was not there. Hakon did not believe his word, and searched the house thoroughly, inside and out. He and his men remained there a long part of the day, and having obtained some information of Astrid's journey, they mounted their horses and rode off the same way that Astrid's com-

pany had gone. In the evening they arrived at Biorn Atterboil's house in Skaun, where they took up their quarters for the night, and Hakon asked Biorn if he could tell them anything of Astrid. In reply Biorn said: "There came some people here to-day, badly dressed, whom I took to be paupers, and they asked me for a night's lodging; but I drove them off, because all vagrants are loathsome to me. It comes now into my mind that in their troop there was a woman remarkably beautiful, although she was poorly dressed; she had with her a young boy-child, very handsome; there was also an elderly man, and a lad some years old. They will probably be lodging now somewhere hard by in the hamlets." The same evening one of Thorstein's labourers, coming forth from the wood, arrived at Biorn's house, which lay on his road. He observed that there were many guests, and got to know their errand; and when he reached home, told Thorstein of it all. While yet a third part of the night remained, Thorstein awoke his guests, and looking on them with a frowning aspect, addressed them with a harsh voice, and bade them move away quickly. When they had passed out of the courtyard, and were on their way, he took leave of them pleasantly, saying: "I have not called upon you so harshly and hastily to leave my premises from any sternness or ill-will, but rather because the messengers of Gunnhild Kings'-mother have come to Biorn Atterboil, purposing to lay hold of your son and King Tryggwi's, and carry him away to her. You must now follow my directions: go forward into the wood until you come to a lake; you will see in it an island overgrown with reeds, to which you may easily wade through the water; hide yourselves among the reeds, where you will wait until I come. I must now return home first, for I expect that Gunnhild's messengers will speedily come to seek for you; and if I go with them on the search, I shall use diligence rather to prevent your being discovered." Thorstein then turned back to his house, and they went forward to the wood till they came to the lake, and hid themselves on the island, as he had directed them. Early in the day Hakon rode away from Biorn to the hamlet, and wherever he went he inquired about Astrid. Coming to Thorstein, he asked if the fugitives had been to his house. Thorstein answered: "Some people were here in the night, and towards day they went away east into the wood." And Hakon replied, "You will go with us, I suppose, to search

for them; for doubtless you are well acquainted with all the roads and hiding-places in the wood." Thorstein consented, and got ready directly. When they were come to the wood, Thorstein said: "Let us now disperse ourselves, for the search is over a wide extent. You will watch closely if you perceive anything novel, for if they hear people talk, or if they feel any apprehension of danger, they will not improbably hide the child, and themselves escape. Search carefully into all the hiding-places that I point out to you." He then directed them to all such places as were out of the way of that wherein the fugitives were, and left himself alone. As soon as they could not see him he ran into the hamlet, and fetching thence a bondwoman's child, carried it into the thickest part of the wood, where he concealed it in a secret place. Shortly afterwards the child began to cry out, and the search party hearing the noise, all ran up to the spot, Thorstein being the last to arrive. As they looked at the child, he said: "This is no king's child. Whoever has brought it here has deceitfully made game of us, and clearly has intended to lead us astray in our search." All that day they sought over the wood, but came no nearer finding Astrid. Then the messengers went back to Gunnhild and told her the result of their journey. Astrid and her company remained on the island that day while the search was made for her in the wood; and the next night Thorstein came, as he had promised, bringing them provisions and other needful things, and likewise a man to accompany them who was acquainted with all the roads east into Sweden. Astrid and Thorstein took leave of each other with much friendliness, and Astrid rested not from her journey till she, her son, and her companions came to Hakon the Old, with whom they abode a long time in good cheer.

Gunnhild sends Hakon the Northman on a fruitless errand to Sweden to fetch Olaf.

45. Gunnhild Kings'-mother still pursued her inquiries after Astrid and her son Olaf. And when she heard that they were in Sweden, she sent the same man, her friend Hakon, to Eric, King of the Swedes, bearing gifts and friendly greetings. King Eric welcomed Gunnhild's messengers heartily, and they abode with

him in much favour. After a short while Hakon declared to King Eric the cause of his coming; and he said that Gunnhild had sent a request to King Eric that he would assist Hakon to obtain possession of the boy Olaf Tryggwason, and to bring him to her. King Eric answered: "I will readily grant you such aid as you think necessary; though I expect that you will not succeed in any business with Hakon unless he is well disposed to it." Now Hakon the Old had a son, Rognwald, who was at that time with King Eric, in close intimacy with him. Rognwald was present at the interview between the King and Hakon the Northman. As soon as possible he made himself ready, and with a few attendants rode home to his father, whom he informed of the speedy visit of the messengers of Gunnhild Kings'-mother with a large force, and also of their errand. Shortly afterwards Hakon the Northman arrived with a numerous company, obtained from King Eric, and Hakon the Old welcomed him heartily. Then the two namesakes talked together, and Hakon the Northman said: "Gunnhild Kings'-mother has sent me here on a mission, to offer a kindly and gracious fosterage to Olaf the son of King Tryggwi. To bring up the boy with honour, and as soon as he is of proper age to place him in the kingdom which is his birthright, will, she believes, be the best compensation she can make to the boy and his relatives, and will remedy the rashness of which her sons were guilty in slaying their kinsman King Tryggwi." To this speech Hakon the Old made answer: "You have shown your courage, and have declared your message in a manner worth hearing. But because Gunnhild is proved to be a woman full of deceit and treacherous cunning, the mother of the boy puts no faith in her smooth words and fair speech. There is no need, therefore, for delay in making answer that Olaf does not go away hence with you against the will of his mother, Astrid, and that he will never come into the power of Gunnhild so long as he and his mother are willing to abide under my protection." Thus they broke up the conversation, and the messengers returned to King Eric, to whom Hakon gave a full account of what had taken place between him and his namesake. To which the King answered: "Such issue was to be expected, for Hakon the Old has not failed to hold his own here in Sweden, in face of men more powerful even than you." Gunnhild's messengers then made ready to return home again

northwards to Norway; and once more they asked the King to aid them with a force sufficient to carry off the boy with them, whether Hakon the Old was willing or not. This request the King granted, supplying them with a larger force than they had the first time. Coming to Hakon the Old, they demanded the boy, so that he might go with them. Hakon heard the request calmly, and thus answered: "What I said before to you, namesake, when you came here, must still hold; Astrid must decide upon her own journeys, both for herself and her son Olaf. She has come under my control, and thus must not be constrained by you in anything." Hearing this speech, Hakon the Northman became very angry, and in violent language held out threats of evil unless his demands were met as he wished. To which threats Hakon the Old answered: "There is no need for you to use blustering language, for I lack not means to maintain my word, and uphold my rights, in face of more powerful men than you, though you are now supported by a strong body of men." Now Hakon the Old had a thrall whose name was Busti, a tall, strong man, and always thought to be rather violent in disposition. He, hearing the wrangle of the two Hakons as described, sprang forward to the Northman with a big filthy dung-fork in his hand, and in great anger spoke thus to him: "Who are you, bold and proud as never man was, that dares to abuse our chief? I give you your choice of terms, though both are much too good for you. Either take yourself off instantly, with all your men, or I'll put you to everlasting disgrace with this very fork." The messengers then perceived that there was no other suitable course for them but to depart as quickly as possible. Even so, they with difficulty escaped a beating from the thrall. They first went once again to King Eric, and afterwards north to Norway, where they told Gunnhild of the small success that had attended them on their journeys, and also that they had seen Olaf Tryggwason. At the result of this their journey she was much annoyed.

Prophecy concerning Olaf, uttered by the mother of Waldamar, King of Gardar. Olaf sold as a slave to Klerkon and others, is bought by a kinsman, and brought up in Gardar.

46. At the time when the sons of Gunnhild succeeded to the kingdom of Norway, there reigned over the realm of Gardar a

king named Waldamar. His wife was Allogia, a wise lady, and of a kindly disposition, though in those days the country was yet heathen. King Waldamar's mother was then very old and infirm, so that she could not rise from her bed; but she was able to prophesy, having a spirit of divination, like many other heathen persons who claimed to foretell future and unknown events. It was a custom of King Waldamar the first evening of Yule, when men were all seated in the King's hall, to have his mother carried in, and placed in front of his high-seat. She then spoke of any danger to peace which she knew to be impending over the King or his men, and she made answer, besides, to any inquiry addressed to her. It thus happened one winter that the old lady was present in the hall, according to custom, and the King asked if she perceived any foreign chiefs or warriors who looked upon his kingdom with desire or longing. "I know not, my son," she answered, "of any hurtful foray or evil fortune coming upon you or your kingdom, and yet I see a wonderful and notable vision. In the north, in Norway, a king's son was recently born who will find a nursing home here in the realm of Gardar, until he becomes a famous leader. No injury will he do to your kingdom; he will rather restore to it peace and freedom, augmenting your dignity manifold. At length when he is in the flower of his age he will return to his native land, and inherit the kingdom which is his by birth. He will shine with exceeding brightness and glory, and become a saviour to many nations in the northern region of the world; yet he will bear rule in Norway but a short time. Remove me now," she said; "I have spoken too much of this man, though true it be." She was then carried away.

Many young men, sons of influential persons, fled from Norway on account of the tyranny of the sons of Gunnhild. Some set out to various countries on freebooting expeditions; others placed themselves under foreign chiefs, seeking for honour, like as Harold the Grenlander did in Sweden, under Skoglar-Tosti, as we have already stated.

In the realm of Gardar in the east, there was a son of Eric of Ofurstead, named Sigurd, who was with King Waldamar, held by him in great esteem, and placed in a position of authority. To see him, his sister Astrid became desirous of journeying to Gardar, after she had been two years in Sweden with Hakon the Old.

Olaf, her son and King Tryggwi's, was then three years old. Hakon the Old placed her with a company of merchants, liberally furnishing her and her people with a sufficient store of everything needful for the journey. When they were come into the Baltic Sea, Wickings from Eistland fell upon them, seized both them and their property, slaying some of them, and sharing others among themselves for bondservants. Here Olaf was separated from his mother. A man named Klerkon took Olaf, Thorolf his foster-father, and Thorolf's son Thorgils. Klerkon, considering Thorolf too old for bondservice, and unfit for drudgery, slew him, and took the boys with him to Eistland, where he sold them to a man named Klerk, and in exchange received only a goat, but a fine one. Soon afterward Klerk sold Olaf to a third man for a good overcoat or rain-cloak. This purchaser was a man named Reas, who had a wife Rekon, and their son was Rekoni. With this master Olaf stayed for a long time, well-treated, because Reas loved him not a whit less than he loved his own son. Six years was Olaf in Eistland in this condition of exile. The yeoman Reas had also bought Thorgils, son of Thorolf Lusaskegg, of whom he made a bondservant, like his other purchased thralls. About this time Sigurd Ericson, the brother of Olaf's mother, was sent by Waldamar, King of Holmgard, to Eistland, that he might collect payment of the King's tribute from the country; and he went there in great state, attended by a numerous retinue. It happened one day, as Sigurd rode with his attendants into the courtyard of Reas, that the boy Olaf was there, playing with other youths; for Reas in his love for him would not put him to service, but practised him in manly exercises and good bearing, dressing him and treating him in all respects as his own son. Olaf, seeing strangers ride into the courtyard, turned to meet the troop, and greeted its chief courteously, and all the others after him. Sigurd returned the boy's greeting in a kindly manner, saying: "You are doubtless a foreigner here, my good boy, for I perceive that you are unlike the folk of this land in your speech and looks. Tell me your name and kindred, and in what land you were born." "My name is Olaf," the boy answered; "my family belong to Norway, and there was I born. My father was Tryggwi Olafson, and my mother Astrid, daughter of Eric of Ofrustead, an influential man." From this mention of his family, Sigurd knew the boy to

be his sister's son, and said to him: "How did you come here? What is now your condition?" Olaf then told him of all his journeyings, and what had befallen him. "Do you wish to be freed," asked Sigurd, "from bondage under Reas, and leave this place?" And the boy answered: "I have been well treated here, in comparison with my former state, for Reas, my foster-father, grants me all that I am able to ask; yet I will gladly go away hence if Thorgils, my foster-brother, be freed from thralldom, and go with me." At Sigurd's request Olaf went with him to the yeoman Reas, who welcomed him heartily and his men. As they conversed, Sigurd said: "There are two foreign boys in your possession whom I wish to purchase." And Reas answered: "The older boy you may have at such a price as we shall agree upon; but the younger is a much finer and cleverer boy. His purchase money, I tell you, will seem a heavy price to pay. In fact, I love that boy so much that I will never let him be sold into bondage. But as you are skilful to discern a worthy fellow, I will not refuse to let you redeem him, though at a great price, and take him away. You must, however, give me your word of truth that you will not part with him for money, and will in no respect treat him worse than he has hitherto been treated with me." And Sigurd replied: "Put on him what price you will, I will purchase him under all the reservations you have made. There will be no intention on my part to sell him when he comes into my possession, for he is my kinsman." At the end of their conversation, whether it was long or short, Sigurd purchased Thorgils for one mark of gold, and Olaf for nine. He took both the boys away with him to Holmgard, and while he let nothing be known of Olaf's family, behaved generously to him in all things. Olaf was then nine years of age.

Olaf slays Klerkon. His stay in Garda.

47. It happened one day, when Olaf Tryggwason was present in the market-place, that he recognised Klerkon, the man who had slain his foster-father, Thorolf Lusaskegg. Olaf had a small axe in his hand, and going up to Klerkon, smote the axe into his head so that it remained fixed in the brain. Then he ran home to

the house where he lived and told Sigurd, his kinsman, of what he had done. Sigurd took him instantly to the Queen's rooms, and told her what had happened, begging her to help the boy. She looked on him, and said, "It will not do to put so fine a boy to death." Then she ordered her men to come to her all fully armed. Holmgard was a sanctuary so inviolable that whoever therein slew a man not sentenced to death, should himself be slain. And now the whole people in defence of their laws and customs pressed forward in search of Olaf, intending to take him wherever he should be found, and put him to death, as their laws required. They heard that he was in the Queen's court, where a host of men fully armed were prepared to defend him. The affair came to the ears of the King, who proceeded to the spot quickly with his body-guard, to prevent the occurrence of any fighting. He brought about a truce, and then settled the terms of reconciliation, fixing the fine to be paid for the manslaughter of Klerkon. This payment the Queen discharged. After these things Olaf remained with the Queen, beloved by her, and in favour with all the people. There was a law of the realm of Gardar, that no person of royal descent should be allowed to remain therein without the King's consent. Sigurd therefore informed the Queen of Olaf's family, and also told her that he had come to Gardar, because, through the enmity and plots of his foes, he could not remain in his own country; and he entreated her to tell the King. She granted his request, and in telling the King, begged him at the same time to help one, a king's son, who had met with such evil fortune. Her persuasions so influenced the King that he consented to do all that she asked of him. He took Olaf, therefore, under his charge, and gave him such honourable treatment as a king's son ought to receive. Olaf abode with King Waldamar in the kingdom of Gardar for nine years. He was exceedingly handsome in appearance, very tall and strong, and skilled in manly exercises above all the Northmen whose deeds are told in Saga.

Earl Hakon and Gold-Harold.

48. Earl Hakon Sigurdson abode with King Harold Gormson in Denmark, the winter following his departure from Norway, when he fled away from his kingdom before the sons of Gunnhild. Such

anxious thoughts possessed him this winter that he lay in bed. He suffered much from sleeplessness, and took no more food and drink than sufficed to keep up his strength. In the autumn he had sent secretly to his friends in Throntham, laying on them the task of slaying King Erlend if they could, and saying that he would return to his kingdom on the approach of summer. In the winter the Thronds slew King Erlend, an event which we have already related. A close friendship existed between Hakon and Gold-Harold, and Gold-Harold disclosed his plans to Hakon. He said that he wished to settle in the country, and cease living as a free-booter; and asked if Hakon thought King Harold would give him a share of the kingdom, supposing that he demanded it. And Hakon answered: "In my opinion, Harold, King of the Danes, will not deal justly with you; but you will know that more clearly if you discuss the matter with the King: you will get no share of the kingdom, I imagine, unless you demand it."

Gold-Harold demands a share in the kingdom of Denmark, and is refused. The King consults Earl Hakon.

49. Shortly afterwards Gold-Harold spoke to his kinsman King Harold, in the presence of many influential men who were friends of both. He demanded that the King should divide the kingdom, and give him the half, to which he was entitled by his birth and lineage in the Danish Empire. At this demand King Harold became very angry, and thus answered: "No man dared to demand of King Gorm, my father, that he should make of himself half a King in the Empire of the Danes; no, nor yet of his father, Horda-Knut, nor of Sigurd Snake i'th'eye, nor of Ragnar Lod-brok." And then he worked himself into such a pitch of rage and fury that no one could speak to him.

Gold-Harold was consequently more discontented than ever. He was no nearer a kingdom than before, and the King was angry with him. He went, therefore, to his friend Hakon, and unburdened himself of his troubles, begging him for sound advice, if such there were, that would procure him the kingdom. He was most strongly inclined, he said, to prosecute his claim by force of arms. And Hakon answered: "You must not state your

intention openly, so that the King hear of it, or your life will be the penalty. Consider with yourself how far you can go. In such great undertakings a man needs to be daring and resolved and to shrink from neither good nor evil that will help forward his schemes. You cannot begin important enterprises, and afterwards relinquish them in disgrace." To which Gold-Harold replied: "I have begun this enterprise with a determination not to keep back my hands even from slaying the King if he refuses me the kingdom, which is my right." And here they ended their conversation.

Shortly afterwards King Harold went to visit Hakon, and they conversed together. The King informed Hakon of the claim that Gold-Harold had made upon him for a share of the kingdom, and of the answer that he had given him. "I will not impair my kingdom," said the King, "for any consideration; and if Gold-Harold persist in his demand, there is little to prevent me having him slain, for I shall put no trust in him if he will not withdraw his pretensions." "In my opinion," replied the Earl, "Gold-Harold has gone so far in this enterprise that he will not let it drop. I expect, too, that if he begins to make war in the land he will find plenty of assistance, chiefly because of his father's popularity. Moreover, to slay him, your kinsman, would be a monstrous crime, for he will unanimously be regarded as guiltless, so far as things have gone. On the other hand, I don't wish to say that I advise you to make yourself a smaller man than was your father, King Gorm, who greatly increased his kingdom, and no way impaired it." Then the King asked: "What is your advice, Hakon? I mean to keep the kingdom undivided, and rid myself of this fear." And the Earl answered: "Come to me in a few days. I should like to turn this difficult matter over in my mind, and then I will give you my opinion." So the King departed with his men.

Earl Hakon's advice to King Harold of Denmark.

50. Earl Hakon was now again engaged in anxious thoughts and plannings, and allowed few persons in the house with him. Some days later King Harold came to speak with him, and

inquired if the Earl had thought over their conversation of the former day. The Earl answered: "My thoughts have kept me awake night and day ever since; and I will tell you the plan that pleases me most. All that was your father's kingdom, to which you succeeded after him, you will have and hold; and you will procure for your kinsman Harold another kingdom wherein he may become a man of distinction." "What kingdom is there," replied the King, "full possession of which I may give to Harold, while keeping the realm of the Danes undivided?" "Norway, Sire," answered the Earl; "the Kings there are hated by all the people. Every one wishes them ill, and they deserve it." "Norway is a large country," said the King; "its people are hardy, and difficult of attack by a foreign force. That was our experience when Hakon Athelstan's foster-son defended the land, for we lost a large force, and won no victory. Moreover, Harold Ericson is my foster-son, and has sat on my knee." To which the Earl replied: "I knew long ago that you had given abundant assistance to the sons of Gunnhild, and they have made you no return but an evil one. Now we shall win Norway much more easily than by fighting with the whole Danish host on our side. Send a message to your foster-son Harold. Bid him come and visit you, offering him a fief in Denmark, the district which he and his brothers formerly held. Gold-Harold may then in a short time gain a kingdom in Norway from Harold Grayfell." And the King said: "It will be reckoned in me an evil deed to betray my foster-son." To which Hakon replied: "The Danes will reckon it a better expedient to slay a Wicking that is a Northman, than a nephew that is a Dane." After their conversation had lasted for a long while, the King and the Earl became agreed on the plan.

Harold Gormson invites Harold Grayfell to visit him in Denmark.

51. When Gold-Harold came again to see Earl Hakon, and they conversed together, Hakon said that he had now so far furthered Gold-Harold's plans that by all likelihood there was a kingdom lying ready for him in Norway. "We, too," said he,

"must hold firm our fellowship, and I shall be able to put great power into your hands in Norway. Get possession of that kingdom first. Your kinsman King Harold is an old man; he has one son to whom he shows little love, a son, moreover, who is illegitimate." Thus talked Hakon, until Gold-Harold was brought to like the scheme, and then they all talked together of it often, the King, the Earl, and Gold-Harold. Soon afterwards the Danish King equipped his messengers in a princely manner for the journey, and sent them north into Norway to Harold Grayfell, who gave them a hearty welcome. They brought the news that Earl Hakon was in Denmark, lying well-nigh insensible and at death's door. They stated, moreover, that Harold, King of the Danes, had sent an offer to his foster-son, Harold Grayfell, of the same royal revenues which he and his brothers had formerly held in Denmark; and Harold was invited to come to Jutland and accept them from the King. Harold Grayfell laid the matter before Gunnhild and his friends, whose opinions were much divided upon it. Some thought the message suspicious as it was there laid before them. But the more part desired that Harold should take the journey, because there was so great a famine in Norway that with difficulty were the Kings able to find food for their men. The frith near which the Kings generally abode was called Hardanger on account of this famine. Those who desired the acceptance of the Danish King's offer supposed that, as there was a fairly good harvest in Denmark at the time, food might be procured thence if Harold held a fief in the country, with rights of visitation and entertainment. Therefore it was decided before the embassy departed, that Harold should go to Denmark in the summer to visit the Danish King, and accept from him the offered benefit.

Harold Grayfell's journey to Denmark. Plot of the Danish King and Earl Hakon.

52. Harold Grayfell set out for Denmark in the summer, having six war-ships, one of which was commanded by Arinbiorn, a baron of the Firths. King Harold put to sea from the Wick, and sailed over to Limfirth, bringing his ships to anchor at Hals, where he heard that the Danish King would arrive shortly. And

when Gold-Harold heard of Grayfell's arrival, he sailed to meet him with nine ships, which he had already prepared as for a Wicking cruise. Earl Hakon also had made ready his force for a freebooting expedition, twelve ships, all of large size.

After the departure of Gold-Harold, Earl Hakon went to the King and thus spoke: "We are paying twice over, I almost think; just as if we obeyed the call to serve in war, and paid the fine for default. Gold-Harold will slay Harold Grayfell, and then seize upon his kingdom in Norway. Do you suppose, O King, that he will then be true to you, who are making him so powerful? He told me last year that he would slay you if he came within reach of you. You may now win Norway by my means. I will slay Gold-Harold if you will promise me reconciliation with you on easy terms afterwards. I will then become your Earl, and bind myself by oath to bring Norway into subjection to you, by your assistance, and hold the country under your sovereignty, paying you tribute. You will thus be a more powerful King than your father, for you will rule over two empires." The King and the Earl having agreed on this course, Hakon led his force to seek Gold-Harold.

Harold Grayfell is slain in battle against Gold-Harold [975].

53. As soon as Gold-Harold reached Hals in Limfirth he challenged Harold Grayfell to fight; and though Harold had a smaller force than Gold-Harold, he went on shore directly and drew up his force in readiness. Before the two armies joined battle Harold Grayfell boldly encouraged his troops, bidding them draw their swords and fight valiantly. He then went forward to the front of his array, and fought, dealing his blows to the right hand and the left. Thus says Glum Geirason in the Praise of Grayfell:—

"Cheering words to his men he spoke; he,
The Odin of trusty swords of iron,
Who dared for his folk to dye the ground with blood.
Harold, ruler of broad lands, his henchmen bade
To draw their swords for the slaughter.
Worthy of praise was their commander's word,
In the judgment of the men."

Here fell Harold Grayfell. Thus says Glum:—

“The ship-loving warder of shields, fence of Gamli’s ocean steeds,
Was doomed to lie on the wide shore of Limfirth.
The giver of gold, sea’s fire, fell on the sands at Hals;
Slain by the ready-tongued friend of kings.”

On that field fell the greater part of Harold’s force, and the baron Arinbiorn fell likewise. The battle was fought fifteen years after the death of Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, according to the reckoning of Priest Ari, the son of Thorgils; and thirteen years after the death of Earl Sigurd of Ladi. Olaf Tryggwason was then seven years of age, having been in exile four years in Eistland, after his two years in Sweden with Hakon the Old. Priest Ari says that Hakon Sigurdson had been thirteen years Earl over Throntham, in succession to his father, when Harold Grayfell was slain. The last six years of Harold Grayfell’s life were marked, according to Ari, by struggles between the sons of Gunnhild and Earl Hakon in Norway—exile being alternately the fate of both.

Earl Hakon slays Gold-Harold. King Harold of Denmark divides Norway between Earl Hakon and Harold the Grenlander.

54. The meeting between Earl Hakon and Gold-Harold took place shortly after Harold Grayfell’s death, and the Earl immediately offered battle. He was victorious, and Gold-Harold, being taken prisoner, was hanged on a gallows. Afterwards Hakon went to see Harold Gormson, who accepted easy terms of compensation for the slaying of his kinsman Gold-Harold. The King then made a levy throughout all his kingdom. He had with him at this time, besides Earl Hakon, Harold the Grenlander, son of King Gudrod Biorson, and many other influential men who had abandoned their freeholds in Norway on account of the sons of Gunnhild. Accompanied by these, the Danish King sailed with his fleet, six hundred ships, into the Wick from the south. Here the people of the land with one consent submitted to him. When Harold reached Tunsberg a great company thronged around him, and he placed under Hakon’s charge all the force which joined

him in Norway. King Harold granted Hakon the administration of Rogaland, Hordaland, Sogn, the Firths, South More, Raumsdale, and North More. These seven shires King Harold placed under the rule of Earl Hakon, reserving to himself the same rights that Harold Fairhair had reserved in the case of his sons; except that to Hakon was granted the ownership of all the royal estates, and the rents in these shires, as well as in Throntham. Moreover, he had the right to use whatever funds were necessary to defend the country against a hostile force. To Harold the Grenlander, King Harold gave Wingulmark, Westfold, and Agdi, as far as Lidandisness. He bestowed on him also the title of King, and granted him the kingdom with all the rights which his kinsmen had formerly held, and which Harold Fairhair had granted to his own sons. Harold the Grenlander was then eighteen years of age. Having made this division of Norway, Harold Gormson returned with his force to Denmark.

*Gunnhild and her sons flee to the Orkneys. Hakon's rule.
Invasion of Norway by Ragnfrod.*

55. Earl Hakon sailed north with his fleet, keeping close to land; and when Gunnhild and her sons heard of it, they gathered a force together. As, however, they obtained only a scanty following, they adopted their former plan and sailed over-sea westwards, with such troops as were willing to accompany them, going first to the Orkneys, where they abode for a time. Over these islands the sons of Thorfinn Skuldecleaver had ruled as earls; Lodwer, Arnfinn, Liot, and Skuli.

Earl Hakon then brought all the country into subjection under him, and abode in Throntham for the winter. Thus speaks Einar Rattlescale in the Wellekla:—

“Vice-shunning, the wearer of silken fillet, ornament of the head,
Brought under his rule seven shires. A blessing to the land.”

When Earl Hakon sailed from the south by the coast, in the summer, and all the people of the country submitted themselves to him, he commanded throughout his whole kingdom that men

should maintain the temples and offer sacrifices. And they did so. Thus says Einar Rattlescale :—

“The wise prince, renowned of all men, soon restored to their just use
The glebe-lands of Einridi and the holy places of the gods.
For they lay waste, before the Loridi of the spear-fence, whom the gods
guide,
Brought across the wide sea his ships, wolves of the blood of slain giants
[ocean].”

“The whole land north of the Wick is now subject to the Earl ;
Far and wide stretches the rule of Hakon, storm-raiser in battle.”

The first winter of Earl Hakon's rule, shoals of herrings penetrated into all parts of the country. In the previous autumn, wherever corn had been sown, there was a crop ; and the following spring every man procured seed for the sowing of his fields, and soon there was the promise of an abundant harvest. There was peace, yea, and it was well kept, within the borders of the land.

There were now only two sons of Gunnhild and King Eric remaining alive, Ragnfrod and Gudrod. Thus Glum Geirason says in the Praise of Grayfell :—

“Half my hopes of wealth were dashed to the ground,
When the sword-storm swept away the King's life.
Harold's death brought me no gain.
Both his brothers, I know, have promised me their favour ;
To them the crowd now looks for fortune.”

King Ragnfrod, Gunnhild's son, began his journey to Norway from the Western Islands, after he had been one year in the Orkneys. He had a fine host, and ships of large size. When he reached Norway he learnt that Earl Hakon was in Throntham. He therefore sailed north beyond Stad and plundered South More. Some of the people submitted to him ; a usual occurrence in such cases when warlike hosts pass over a district, and the inhabitants seek for help where each man thinks he may most likely obtain it. Earl Hakon, having received intelligence that there was fighting south in More, despatched the war-arrow through the land, and summoned his people to arms. Hastening to his ships, he made ready as quickly as possible, and with a very numerous force sailed along the Frith out to sea. His meeting with Ragnfrod

took place at the northern part of South More. Hakon, who had the larger force, but the smaller ships, began the fight immediately. There was a severe battle, and he had the worst of it. They fought across the prows of the ships, as the manner then was. There was a current in the straits where they fought, and it drove the ships all together towards the shore. Then Earl Hakon had his vessels rowed stern foremost towards the spot which seemed the most suitable landing-place, and when the ships touched ground the Earl and his men all went ashore and dragged the ships so far up the beach that their foes could not drag them back to sea. The Earl then arrayed his men on a neighbouring field, and incited Ragnfrod to come on shore. But Ragnfrod, unwilling to land his men, fought from his ships, and both sides exchanged shots for a long time. Then they separated. Ragnfrod took his fleet south beyond Stad, because he feared that the inhabitants of the country would throng around Hakon. And Hakon made no further attempt that summer to fight with Ragnfrod, because his ships seemed too greatly inferior in size to those of Ragnfrod. So he sailed north to Throntham in the autumn, and abode there during the winter. King Ragnfrod held possession of all the country south of Stad, namely, the Firths, Sogn, Hordaland, and Rogaland. During the winter he had a large retinue with him; and on the approach of spring he called out a levy, and gathered together a large force, collecting from all these shires, men, ships, and whatever stores he needed.

Earl Hakon defeats Ragnfrod in battle at Thinganes [977].

56. As soon as spring appeared, Earl Hakon made a levy in the north of the country, collecting a great force from Halogaland and Naumudale, and likewise from all the sea-board between Byrda and Stad. From all the districts of the Thronds and from Raumsdale the host gathered around him. He is said to have collected troops from four shires, and to have been accompanied by seven earls, each of whom had a numberless host. Thus says Einar:—

“Again, the defender of the Mores, eager for slaughter,
Sailed with his levy from the north to Sogn;
The Frey of Hedin’s war-storm moved forward the whole folk of four shires;
On them the Ulli of swords rested his defence.”

Also he says:—

“All Norway resounded when the heroes of Hedin’s wall [shield]
Went together forth to the meeting of the swords.
Around the ness floated many corpses.
Yea, seven rulers on soft-gliding planks of Meiti [ships]
Rushed to join the delighter of the birds of battle.”

With his force Earl Hakon sailed from the north. Off Stad he learnt that King Ragnfrod had sailed into Sogn, and he therefore turned his fleet thither. Having found him, he brought his ships to land, took his men on shore, and challenged Ragnfrod to a pitched battle on a chosen ground marked out by rods of hazel. Thus says Einar Rattlescale:—

“There was a famous slaughter by the queller of homicides in a second
fight:
Henceforth the renown of the Prince was highly magnified.
The wielder of the shield-crashing axe bade his men turn to land;
He fixed, by his front array, Odin’s twisted wands.”

The fight was very severe, and Hakon was victorious, because he had much the more numerous host. The field of battle was at Thinganess, where Sogn and Hordaland meet. King Rangfrod fled away to his ships, having lost of his force three hundred men. Thus says Einar in the Wellekla:—

“Fierce was the fight ere the foe-driver thrust three hundred warriors
under the claws of the vulture.
A strength to his men, and rich in booty, the commander
Passed from the field o’er the heads of his sea-brought foes.
Good fortune indeed.”

After this battle Ragnfrod fled from Norway, and Earl Hakon restored peace to the land. He sent home to the north the great host which had accompanied him, and himself remained in the south of the country during the autumn and following winter. It was in the summer of this year of which we have been speaking that Olaf Tryggwason came, as we have already related, to the realm of Garda in the east. He was then nine years of age.

Olaf Tryggwason's early years in Gardar.

57. At the time when Olaf Tryggwason came to the realm of Gardar, there were many persons in Holmgard who foretold various future events. These all, in their wisdom, agreed that the guardian spirits of some young and foreign person had come into the country. Such spirits they had never seen before, so glorious and auspicious in their aspect. Who the person was, or whence he came, the wise men knew not; but they affirmed again and again that the bright light which shone above him stretched over the whole realm of Gardar and other places, far and wide in the eastern region of the world. And as the Queen Allogia was the wisest woman in the land, she, too, directly she looked the first time upon Olaf, recognised in his countenance the lofty good fortune to which the words of the wise men pointed, and the great honour that he would win for the realm of Gardar. Therefore Olaf enjoyed the most gracious favour both of the King and Queen, as also the high esteem of wise and kindly men. He grew up in the realm of Gardar, mature in wisdom, strength, and full manly vigour beyond his years. King Waldamar loved Olaf as his own son, and had him instructed in feats of arms, chivalry, and manly exercises of all kinds, as well as princely behaviour; and Olaf was quick beyond all others to gain a knowledge of every accomplishment. There was one thing in him which the King disliked, and one only: he would never bow down to heathen gods, and he set his mind firmly against all sacrifice. Olaf attended the King regularly to the temple, but never went inside; he stood outside by the temple doors while the King made offerings to the gods. The King often spoke to Olaf about his conduct, and urged him not to bring on himself the anger of the gods, and thereby destroy the bright promise of his youth. "I beg you, therefore," said the King, "to honour the gods, and humble yourself with all lowliness before them; otherwise, I fear, they will pour out upon you some of the terrors of their stormy and fierce anger. Such is the great peril in which you are." To the King's appeal Olaf made answer: "I have never any fear of those gods whom you worship, for they neither hear nor see, nor can they speak; they have neither reason nor discernment. I think also that we may readily perceive of

what nature they are, in this way. Your kingly state and countenance, my foster-father, have always a blithe and bright aspect, except when you enter the temple and make offerings to the gods. Then your countenance has a dark and evil look to me. Wherefore I know that those gods whom you serve have darkness for their dominion, and rule over it, and so I will never worship them. But I do them no dishonour, because I wish not to offend you."

Olaf Tryggwason's early Wicking expeditions. King Waldamar listens to slander concerning him, and he leaves Garda [986].

58. When Olaf Tryggwason was twelve years of age, he is said to have asked his foster-father to grant him ships of war and troops. To this request the King yielded, and ships and troops were got ready speedily. Before sailing away, Olaf inquired of the King if there were any towns or districts formerly belonging to the King of Garda which were now lost to his realm. The King answered that there were many cities and wide kingdoms, long subject to Holmgard, which other chiefs and warriors had seized and forced into submission by acts of violence. As soon as the King had related all particulars of these, Olaf started from Garda on his first expedition with his ships of war, a fine but not large force. There was a custom among the Wickings to give those chiefs the title of King who were kings' sons, and in command of an expedition, though they had no lands under their rule. Thus Olaf's company gave him the title of King. The skill which he possessed as a commander of troops showed itself forthwith, though he was young in years; for he slew some chiefs, and others he drove away, who by injustice and violence had planted themselves on King Waldamar's tributary lands. He fought many battles, and was always victorious, winning back, during his first summer, all the kingdoms and tributary lands which had been lost to King Waldamar. In the autumn he returned to Holmgard, bringing the King and Queen many rare treasures, gold, precious stones, and fine garments. The King, the Queen, and all the people welcomed him with joy and gladness.

Thus for a time Olaf passed his summers, leading plundering expeditions, defending by his prowess and hardihood the realm of Garda from the attacks of the Wickings, and bringing under the rule of King Waldamar many towns and districts on the coast of the Baltic. During the winters he abode chiefly at Holmgard, honoured by the King, and beloved by the Queen. He now himself maintained a numerous body of warriors with the wealth which the King bestowed on him. Olaf was liberal of his money towards his men, and so became popular. Then there happened what may often be seen. Envy is excited when strangers in a country raise themselves to positions of rule, or surpass those who belong to it in the greatness of their renown. Thus men began to envy Olaf, because he was dear to the King, and no less so to the Queen. They therefore urged the King not to make Olaf too powerful; "For," said they, "such a man is most dangerous if he desires to harm you or your kingdom; because he so greatly surpasses other men in manly accomplishments, popularity, and natural gifts. We know not, also, what he and the Queen are always saying together." A custom prevailed in the Courts of the most powerful kings, that half the body-guard should be the Queen's, maintained at her own charge; for which purpose she received what she needed of the tribute and taxes. This custom held in the Court of King Waldamar. The Queen had as large a body-guard as the King, and the two bargained eagerly with one another for famous men, whom both wished to have. Now it happened that the King gave ear to the words of those who slandered Olaf, and became somewhat cold and irritable towards him. When Olaf perceived the change he spoke of it to the Queen, saying also that he wished to sail to Northern lands, where his kinsmen formerly held rule. "There," he said, "my strength would be most likely to reach full maturity." And the Queen bade him farewell, saying that in his own country he would be esteemed honourable, as well he might be. The *Rekstefia*, a poem composed on King Olaf Tryggwason, relates that he was brought up in Garda:—

"The glorious warder of the wide land was fostered in Garda.
The gold-giver, loftiest of men, performed princely deeds.
Olaf, reddener of the sword, the glitter of Throt's storm,
Soon ruled all-proudly a noble fleet of ships, his own possession."

Then Olaf, having got ready his ships and men, sailed away into the Eastern Sea, from Garda in the east. His ships were swift sailers, answering well to the wind, and carried each of them on both sides a row of shields. Sailing from the east, King Olaf arrived at Borgundarholm, on which he made a descent. As he was pillaging it, the inhabitants came down upon him and joined battle with him; but King Olaf was victorious, and won much booty. Thus speaks Hallfred the Troublesome Poet in the laudatory poem which he composed on King Olaf:—

“The leader caused his hard swords to be dyed in blood at Holm and Garda
in the east;
What man would deny it?”

After the battle Olaf lay with his fleet before Borgundarholm, and his ships encountered a gale of wind and a high sea, against which they could not stand. They sailed, therefore, south to the coast of Wendland, where they found a good harbour, and abode for a time wholly in quiet. The King of Wendland was named Burislaf, and he had three daughters; the first Geira, the second Gunnhild, and the third Astrid. Geira, who was a most beautiful and noble woman, had been married, and, her husband being dead, she ruled over his kingdom with the title of Queen. Her steward was named Dixin, a wise and popular man, and a powerful chief. The harbour in which Olaf found shelter from the storm was in Geira's realm, and the capital town in which she mostly abode lay inland a short distance from Olaf's ships of war.

Geira invites King Olaf to stay the winter with her. Olaf marries Geira, and by his prowess enlarges her kingdom.

59. It happened one day that the steward Dixin entered the Queen's apartments, and when she inquired what tidings there were, he answered saying: “I can tell you none except what you have heard. Certain strangers have come to our shores with several ships, and the fleet is commanded by one of famous race and noble presence, who calls himself Oli of Garda, and says that he is a merchant. To give my own opinion, he seems to be a valiant sea-king, for I never saw a man equal to him in beauty of

form and in bearing. His eyes are fair and keen, he is tall of stature, and his whole frame has the handsome and shapely mould that every goodly man would choose for himself." The Queen listened with attention to all that Dixin said, and then sent him to the ships with a message from her. Arrived there, he found Olaf, and thus spake: "It will be known to you that over this realm to which you have come rules a noble queen, whose name is Geira, daughter of King Burislaf. She has been informed that you come in peace, neither pillaging nor causing disturbances to her kingdom, and therefore she sends me with a message to you. She invites you and all your force to pass the winter in the capital town of her kingdom, wherein she herself resides, with her chiefs and company of guards. The summer is now far advanced, the weather is bad, and the gales are violent." King Olaf gladly accepted the invitation, and hauling his ships on shore, had them carefully fenced round; but the rigging and likewise the cargo were placed under the charge of the steward, Dixin. Then they proceeded to the town, where the Queen received them with the utmost cheerfulness and kindness, and they remained during the winter in much honour and esteem.

King Olaf and the Queen held long conversations together, and liked each other greatly, and during the winter King Olaf proposed to make Queen Geira his wife. She laid the proposal before her steward, Dixin, and others, her kinsmen and friends, and they were all of one opinion that it would be an excellent marriage for her. Dixin, speaking with truth, said that her whole position and her kingdom would be greatly strengthened if so noble a chief as Olaf would settle there and become attached to the place. So, in accordance with their decision, the marriage of King Olaf with Queen Geira was celebrated, and the marriage-feast was most splendid. He then shared with her the management of affairs and the government of the kingdom. He soon learnt that there were many towns and districts of Wendland which had been under the rule of Queen Geira, and had ceased altogether to pay tribute and afford obedience to her. To these towns King Olaf proceeded with his host during the winter. He laid siege to one of them, strong and well inhabited, and offered quarter to the townsmen if they would pay the tribute that was justly due; but the townsmen shouted out, saying they would never yield to him nor pay

him tribute. Then he fought against the town, using many stratagems, and at length won it. As for the townsmen, those only were spared who humbly begged for quarter. Olaf and his men here captured much booty.

Olaf now laid siege to another town, well inhabited and very strong, and the townsmen came forth upon the wall and thus spoke: "We have heard of your great might, and what a wretched lot befell those who rose up against you in stubbornness and ill-will. We desire to adopt another plan that seems to us wiser and better. We will of our own accord surrender to your power and mercy, rather than strive foolishly against the lofty good fortune that supports and strengthens you on all sides. For although in the order of nature a prosperous fortune has been hitherto our faithful companion, yet we know that reliance is by no means to be placed on her turning wheel, which often rolls away when men least expect it. And as a pledge of our goodwill, we give up our town, open our gates, and allow you to enter." King Olaf, pleased with this speech, promised them great and deserved reward, and straightway prepared with his host to enter the town. As soon as the King and a few others had passed inside, the gateway was suddenly closed with huge iron doors, and strongly barred. From the buildings and dwellings on all sides the townsmen rushed out fully armed, inciting one another not to let a single one of the King's men escape with his life. The King and his men withstood their onset boldly, and defended themselves with courage, standing all together at a spot by the wall. Seeing their critical position, the King said to his men: "Let all do as you see me do." He leapt on the town-wall, which was low on the inside; then down again on the outside; and though this was an exceedingly high leap he received no hurt, for the ground underneath was soft. His men leapt after him, and he caught them, so that they all came safe to the ground. Thereupon he directed a fierce attack upon the town with his whole host; so that in a short time wide breaches were made in the wall, by which his men entered. As the townsmen resisted, a terrible struggle followed, in which every person in the town was at length slain. Whatever was of any value was taken away as booty, and the place was burnt to ashes. King Olaf ceased not to wage war until he had conquered all the towns and districts that had

thrown off the rule and authority of Queen Geira. Then he returned to his own town, where he abode during the remainder of the winter. Mention is made in the Rekstefia of this warfare of King Olaf. Thus :—

“Speedily, the friend of wolves, Olaf, made war in the west, more than
all kings,
Yea, he devised the ruin of Wendish strongholds.
He was ever victorious in fight, a witness to the whizzing of the sword,
Skilled in battle, Swolni’s hall of judgment.”

In this passage we are told that King Olaf waged war more largely in Wendland than any other king that was before him, and had victory in every fight.

Early Kings in Jutland, and their wars with the Roman Emperors. The beginning of Christianity in Jutland.

60. There was a holy man named Arnulf, who was an Earl of Saxland, and afterwards Archbishop of Metzburg. His son was Angises, Duke of Frankland, who married Bega, Pippin’s daughter. Their son was Pippin, whose son Karl was the father of Pippin, that was King of the Franks, and father of the Emperor Charlemagne. Charlemagne was King of Frankland for thirty-four years, and afterwards for twelve years Emperor of the Romans. In his days the Greek Emperors at Mikilgard were Michael, Niceforus, and Leo. King Charlemagne’s Queen was Hildegarde, and their son was Lodwer, who succeeded his father as emperor, and reigned twenty-seven years. He was a man who never played or laughed. At the time when Charlemagne reigned, there ruled in Jutland a king whose name was Godefrid. He slew Rerek, chief of the Frisians, and made the Frisians pay tribute. Then King Charlemagne advanced with a great host against Godefrid, who was slain by his own men; and in his stead his brother’s son Heming was chosen king. He led an army against King Charlemagne, and they met by the river Egda, where they made peace with one another. The next year Heming died, and two kings reigned over Jutland, who collected armies, and contended for the sovereignty—Sigfrod, a kinsman of

Godefrid, and Ring Anulo. In a last great fight between them they both fell; and at the same time ten thousand nine hundred and forty men were slain. A man named Harold then became king, and after a reign of five years he fought a battle with Reinfrid, son of Godefrid. For the sake of victory, Harold vowed that if he came forth unscathed from the battle he would be baptized with all his household. He was victorious, and shortly afterwards he proceeded with his wife, and Harek, his brother's son, and a large Danish force, to visit the Emperor Lodwer, the son of Charlemagne. He was then baptized at Meginzaburg with his men, in the days of Pope Paschal, and returned home, accompanied by Bishop Anscarius, who baptized many people in Denmark. Harold died a natural death, and was succeeded by his kinsman Harek, who ruled over Jutland until his brother's son, Guthorm, made war upon him, in the eight hundred and sixty-second year after the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the battle they both fell, and with them the whole of the royal race, except one boy named Harek, who thereupon became king. Bishop Anscarius then went again to Denmark to meet Harek, and baptized him. Harek caused a church to be built at Ripa, one having previously been built at Heidaby by Harold. Bishop Anscarius died three years after the battle, and Harek is said to have then cast off the Christian faith, and to have died shortly afterwards. He was succeeded by heathen kings, Sigfrod and Halfdan.

Rimbertus was the next bishop after Anscarius, and in the twelfth year of his episcopate the Emperor Lodwer, son of Charlemagne, died, leaving four sons; Lothar, Lodwer, Karl, and Pippin. These divided their father's kingdom between them; Lothar taking Burgundy, Lotharingia, and the kingdom of Rome; Lodwer taking Frankland, with the title of Emperor; Karl taking Walland, and Pippin taking Aquitaine. When Rimbertus had been bishop twelve years, the Danes and Northmen plundered the country which the Northmen call Kerlingaland; against them Lodwer the Young, the son of Lodwer, led an expedition, and slew fourteen thousand of their host. Five years later Lodwer died, and the Danes and Northmen, seeking to avenge themselves, sailed with a great host up the Rhine, and burnt all the towns and churches. In the town of Aquisgranum they used the principal church as a stable for their horses.

They burnt Koln and all the towns up the Rhine as far as Meginza. Then Karl, the brother of Lothar, raised an army against them, and encountered them by the river Mosa. In the Danish host were Kings Sigfrod and Gudfrod, and the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok. They made peace with the Emperor, and submitted to baptism; but shortly afterwards they broke all the conditions of peace, and plundered Frankland in the west, as far as Paris, which they burnt. Arnaldus, who was then emperor, came against them with a numerous army, and slew nine hundred of them, whereby the advance of the Danish host was stopped. This event happened nine hundred years or thereabouts from the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Seventeen years later, Huno was consecrated Bishop of Brima, in Saxland. In the twelfth year after, Henry, the first emperor of the name, went to Denmark and caused the Danes to accept Christianity, by fair words, threats, and fighting, and desisted not from his purpose until they promised to accept the true faith. Bishop Huno then went to meet King Frodi, who at the time reigned in Jutland, and baptized him and all his people. The ruined churches at Heidaby and Ripa were rebuilt, and a church was likewise built at Aros. Afterwards Frodi sent men to Rome and had three bishops consecrated for Jutland, with the consent of Agapetus, the Pope. Heredus was consecrated Bishop of Heidaby; Livedagus, of Ripa; and Rimbrondus, of Aros. This event took place nine hundred and forty-eight years after the Incarnation of our Lord, and in the twelfth year of the reign of Otto the Great.

We turned from the line of kings after saying that Sigfrod and Halfdan ruled over Denmark. To them succeeded a king named Helgi, who fought a battle against Olaf, King of the Swedes, and was slain. After him, Olaf reigned for a long time over Denmark as well as Sweden, and died a natural death. Whereupon Gyrd and Knut succeeded to the kingdom in Denmark, and, after them, Siggeir.

Early Danish Kings of Northimbraland. Story of Knut the Foundling, who became king in Jutland.

61. Sigurd Ring, the father of Ragnar Lodbrok, ruled over the empire of the Swedes and that of the Danes. When he had

restored both kingdoms to a peaceful state, and set over them earls and tributary kings, he called to mind the realm in England which his kinsman Harold War-tooth had governed, and Iwar Wide-fathom before him. That realm was fallen under English rule, and was then governed by Ingiald, a powerful king, said to be the brother of Peter, King of the Saxons. King Ring raised a numerous levy from his kingdom and sailed west to England. Arrived in Northimbraland, he claimed a favourable reception, and much people submitted to him. When King Ingiald became aware of the invasion, he collected a great host and marched against King Ring. After several battles, in the last of which King Ingiald was slain, together with his son Ubbi and a large part of their force, King Ring took possession of Northimbraland and all King Ingiald's realm. Before leaving England with his fleet, he appointed Olaf tributary King over Northimbraland. Olaf's father was Kinrik, whose father is said to have been the brother of Moald the Stout, the mother of Iwar Wide-fathom. King Ring then returned to his own kingdom. King Olaf's rule over Northimbraland was a long one, and he reigned until a son of King Ubbi came to the kingdom, whose name was Eava. There were many battles between them, in the last of which King Olaf was put to flight, and Eava then brought the whole kingdom into subjection. King Olaf went to Sweden, to King Ring, who made him ruler over Jutland. Here Olaf ruled for a long time as a tributary King, first under King Ring, and afterwards under Ragnar Lodbrok. He was called Olaf the Englishman, and was succeeded in the kingly office and realm by his son Grim the Gray. Grim was the father of Audulf the Strong, tributary king in Jutland under Ragnar Lodbrok. Audulf's son was Gorm, who also was a tributary king in Jutland, and was called Gorm the Foolish. King Gorm had many thralls. Some of these he once sent into Holdseta to buy wine, and as they were bringing it from the south, packed on several horses, they passed through the forest of Myrkw-wood. Here they put up for the night, and the weather was fine. As they kept watch, they heard the cry of a child in the forest, and when dawn appeared they set out to seek the child. The forest was both dense and dark, but at last they came to the spot whence the cry proceeded, and found a child wrapped in a linen cloth, tied together in a knot over the child's breast. Untying

the knot, they found three gold rings, and saw that the child, a beautiful boy, was swaddled in silk. They took him, and showed him to King Gorm as they had found him. The King sprinkled the boy with water, giving him at the same time the name Knut, from the knot on the linen cloth in which he was found wrapped. He was brought up in the King's Court, and quickly showed cleverness, and skill in manly exercises beyond his contemporaries. King Gorm, having no son of his own, loved his foster-child, Knut, to such a degree that he adopted him as his own son, esteeming him so far above all his own kinsmen as to make him his successor in the kingdom. He was called Knut the Foundling. King Gorm's reign over the land was not of long duration, and he died a natural death; but before he expired he caused Knut to be chosen King over all the realm that he held in Jutland. King Gorm was buried in a cairn with the old rites.

King Knut inquires into his origin. He is succeeded in Jutland by his son, Gorm.

62. King Knut summoned a full Assembly, at which he declared before all the people, that whoever, be he stranger or born in the land, would give him true information concerning his family, should be made rich and powerful; and this declaration was spread broadcast through the country. One evening two Saxons are said to have come to the King's Court, and having obtained audience of the King, the leader of the two spoke and said: "Is it true, Sire, that you have promised great power to any man who can tell you of your family?" The King having confirmed his promise, and sworn that he would certainly fulfil it, the stranger asked whether the reward was meant for thralls equally with free men. Being answered by the King that it was all the same whether thrall or free man brought the information, he replied: "First of all, then, O King, I must tell you that I and my companion are thralls belonging to an Earl of Saxland, and we can give you truthful information of your family. Earl Arnfinn was a ruler over the land of Holdseta, and we two were thralls of his, in whom, however, he put trust. The Earl had a much-loved sister who became with child, but her condition was kept secret. As soon as

her child was born, it was swaddled in silk cloth, with an outer covering of linen tied into a knot, in which were placed three gold rings. The boy was then put into our hands, that we might make away with him. We carried the child far into the forest of Myrkwood, laid it at the roots of a tree, and left it there." These men then described all the marks whereby the spot could be known, so that it was recognised by the thralls who found the child. King Knut therefore gave the Saxon thralls money wherewith to purchase their freedom, and bade them come again to him. On their return to the King he gave freedom to the thralls who had found him; upon the two former freed men he bestowed earldoms, and made all of them powerful men, according to his promise. Wherefore he was called Thrall-Knut. He had a son whom he named Gorm, after his foster-father. The reign of Thrall-Knut was not a long one, and yet he was a famous king. After Knut, his son Gorm was made king, and reigned subject to the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok, being regarded with special favour by Sigurd Snake i'th'eye. King Gorm became foster-father to a son of Sigurd and Bleia, daughter of King Ella; he sprinkled the boy with water, and named him Knut, after his own father, Knut. This boy was afterwards known as Horda-Knut, because he was brought up at Hord, in Jutland.

Death of St. Edmund, King of the East Angles [870]. Of the sons of Ragnar Lodbrok. Rise of the kingdom of King Gorm the Old. His son Knut the Beloved.

63. The sons of Ragnar Lodbrok were great warriors, and slew King Ella of England in revenge for their father's death. Iwar the Boneless then became king of that part of the country which his kinsmen formerly held, and he extended his dominions in various ways. He slew King Edmund the Saint, and brought his kingdom into subjection. Of the sons of Lodbrok it is related that they were the greatest warriors of the old days. They led their plundering expeditions into England, Walland, Frankland, Saxland, and even into Lombardy; so far did they advance that they won the town of Luna, and for a time thought of winning Rome. When they returned home they made a division of their

dominions. Biorn Ironside took the realm of Upsala, all Sweden, the two Gautlands, and all the adjacent districts; Sigurd Snake i'th'eye had Eigotaland with all the Islands, Skaney and Halland; and Whitserk had Reidgotaland, and Wendland with it. Sigurd Snake i'th'eye married Blœia, daughter of King Ella, and their son, already mentioned, was Horda-Knut, who succeeded his father, Sigurd, as King over Zealand and Skaney, in Denmark. When Horda-Knut was of full age and married, he had by his wife a son whom he named Gorm, after his foster-father, Gorm, the son of Knut the Foundling. Gorm had been a very powerful king, for he governed all Denmark under the sons of Ragnar when they were absent on freebooting expeditions. Gorm the son of Horda-Knut grew up to be the handsomest man of his time: he was tall, strong, and excelled in every accomplishment; but he was not regarded as a wise man when compared with his kinsmen who lived before him. When he reached full age he took to wife Thyri, the daughter of Clack-Harold, Earl of Jutland. Thyri was very beautiful and very wise, said to have been the noblest woman of her time in Northern lands, and known as Thyri, Denmark's Gain. Earl Clack-Harold was said to be the wisest man of his time in Denmark; and when Gorm became king after his father, Horda-Knut, he relied greatly on the counsels of his father-in-law, Earl Harold, and of his wife, Thyri. King Gorm led an army into Reidgotaland, the kingdom of Denmark, which is now called Jutland. He fought several battles with a king named Gnupa, who then ruled over it, and succeeded in slaying him, acquiring all his kingdom. Gorm next advanced against a king named Silfrascall. He was victorious in every battle, and finally slew him. Then he passed south over Jutland, harrying the land, and destroying all its kings until he reached the river Sle. Continuing his progress, he conquered a great kingdom in Wendland, and fought many battles with the Saxons, making himself a most powerful king.

By his wife, Thyri, King Gorm had two sons; the elder, Knut, and the younger, Harold. Knut Gormson was the handsomest of men, and had the finest features ever seen. The King loved him from his childhood above every other person; and so popular was Knut in the whole country that every child of man loved him. He was called Knut the Beloved of the Danes. Harold was like

his mother's family, and his mother Thyri loved him no less than she loved Knut.

The sons of Gorm the Old pillage Northimbraland. The death of Knut the Beloved, and its effect on King Gorm.

64. The reign of Iwar the Boneless in England was one of long duration. He had no children, and no desire, it is said, to have any; but he was not lacking either in wisdom or sternness. He died in England of old age, the last of the sons of Lodbrok, and was buried in a cairn. His kingdom in England was taken by Ethelmund, the son of Edgar, who was a brother of St. Edmund. He did much to convert England to Christianity, and caused Northimbraland, which was heathen, to pay tribute. His successor was Ethelbert, an excellent king, who reached old age. In the early part of his reign, England was invaded by a Danish host, under the command of Knut and Harold, sons of Gorm the Old. They harried Northimbraland in all directions, and brought much people into subjection, claiming the land as their heritage, because it had been the possession of the sons of Lodbrok and of many others of their forefathers. King Ethelbert collected a large army, and encountered them north of Cleveland, slaying many of them. Some time after, the sons of Gorm and the Danes went up against Scarborough, where they fought a battle, in which they were victorious. Thence they sailed southwards by the coast, intending to go to York, having no apprehension of danger, as the people everywhere submitted to them. One day the heat of the sun induced them to bathe from their ships; and as the Kings swam about, their foes rushed down towards them from the land and shot at them. Knut was mortally wounded by an arrow, and his body taken on board his ship. As soon as the news of his death became known, the inhabitants of the country collected a great host, which was joined by King Ethelbert. All who had previously submitted to the Danes now turned to him, and the invaders, finding nowhere a place to land, on account of the gathering of the people, sailed away home to Denmark.

King Gorm was staying in Jutland when Knut's death occurred, and thither Harold proceeded and told his mother the tidings.

King Gorm had made a solemn vow to die if ever he should learn of the death of his son Knut, and whoever brought him the news should die also. Thyri therefore had the hall hung with gray hangings, and when the King came in to meat, all present kept silence. Whereupon the King asked: "Why are you all silent here; are there any tidings?" And the Queen answered him: "Sire, you had two hawks, one white and the other gray; the white hawk flew afar off into the wilderness and perched upon a tree. A great flock of crows here set upon him and plucked off all his feathers, so that the bird is now good for nothing. The gray hawk has come back, and will now catch birds for your table." The King then said: "Denmark droops, as if Knut, my son, were dead." "What you say, Sire, is doubtless true," said the Queen, and then all present confirmed its truth. That very day King Gorm fell ill, and died on the following day at the same hour, after a reign of one hundred years. A great cairn was raised over him. He was succeeded in his rule over the empire of the Danes by his son Harold, who reigned for a long time after him.

Line of Emperors to Otto the Young [983]. Earl Hakon's tribute, due to King Harold.

65. The Emperor Lodwer, son of Lodwer, and grandson of Charlemagne, reigned together with his brothers, as we have already mentioned. His reign lasted thirty-six years. He was succeeded by his son Karl, who reigned eleven years, with his two brothers Karlman and Lodwer. In his time Iceland was colonised, Gorm the Old was ruler over Denmark, and Harold Fairhair over Norway. After Karl Lodwerson, Arnaldus, the son of Karlman, reigned twelve years; then Lodwer, son of Arnaldus, twelve years. He was succeeded by Konrad Konradson, who reigned seven years, the first emperor that did not number Charlemagne in the line of his ancestors. Henry was the next emperor. He reigned eighteen years, and was succeeded by Otto the Great, who reigned thirty-eight years. Then his son Otto the Red reigned nine years, and after him his son Otto the Young eighteen years. In his days King Harold Gormson

ruled over Denmark and Norway, and Earl Hakon of Ladi held Norway under Harold, as we have already mentioned. Their friendship at that time was firmly maintained. Earl Hakon one summer sent sixty hawks to King Harold, but paid no tribute, because the Danish King, when in Norway, made over to him all the tribute in consideration of the trouble and expense required to defend the country against foes.

The Emperor Otto the Young resolves to make the Danes Christian.

66. The Emperor Otto, surnamed the Young, made a solemn vow to convert the Danes, if he could, to the true faith; and if he could not, to harry their country with all the force at his command for three successive summers, unless in the meantime the people became Christians. His vow being made, the Emperor sent a message to Harold Gormson, King of the Danes, bidding him and all the people over whom he ruled to accept the true faith and be baptized; adding, that on his refusal the Emperor would lead an army against him. When this message reached the King of the Danes he made ready his ships of war, caused the defences of the country to be put in order, and the bulwark known as the Danish wall or Danework to be strengthened. Then he sent messengers northwards to Norway, bidding Earl Hakon to come to him early in the spring with all the force that he could muster. Earl Hakon therefore raised a levy over all his kingdom during the spring, and sailed with his force to Denmark to meet the Danish King Harold, who welcomed him with grateful thanks. Many other chiefs, who had brought aid to the King, were there present, and the King made known his intention to proceed with the host against the Emperor Otto.

Repulse of the Emperor.

67. During the spring the Emperor Otto gathered a host together in Saxland, and with a numerous and fine array proceeded in the summer to Denmark. Here he encountered King Harold's fleet,

and the two joined battle at once, and fought all through the day until night. A great number fell on both sides, but the Emperor's loss was the greater. When darkness came on they agreed to a truce of three nights, that both sides might form their plans and make preparations. The three nights being past, the two armies went on land and prepared for battle. When their lines encountered, the onslaught was terrible, and the issue was very unfavourable to the Emperor, for the heaviest of the slaughter was among his men. As the day wore on a panic seized them, and they fled away to their ships. The Emperor, it is said, was on horseback all day, and fought with great bravery; but when the main body of his force took to flight, he also rode off to the ships. He carried a long lance mounted with gold, which was all covered with blood right up to his hand. This lance he fixed upright in the sea before him, and shouting in a loud voice, said: "Before Almighty God I declare that when I come a second time to Denmark I will make this land Christian, or lose my life in the attempt, and die here in the realm of the Danes." The Emperor with his men then went on board their ships, and sailing home to Saxland, remained there for the winter. Earl Hakon stayed with the Danish King. Many plans they formed together, and caused the Danework to be strengthened anew.

The Emperor prepares for a second attack, and sends an expedition to Norway.

68. The following spring the Emperor Otto collected together an overwhelming host from Saxland, Frankland, Frisland, and Wendland. He was joined by a large army under King Burislaf, and he had also a great force from Holdsetaland; all which host the Emperor led by sea to Denmark. Hearing that Earl Hakon was in Denmark with the object of aiding King Harold in battle against him, he sent an expedition to Norway, of thirty ships laden with men and weapons, under the command of two of his earls, Urguthriot and Brimiskiar, to Christianise the country in the absence of Hakon.

Battle between the Emperor and Earl Hakon at the Danework. Repulse of the Emperor.

69. Earl Hakon remained with King Harold in Denmark the whole winter ; and when they learnt of the Emperor's arrival with a large force, King Harold sent Earl Hakon and the Northern host under his command south to the Danework, there to defend the country, while he himself collected a force in Jutland. The Wellekla relates that Earl Hakon sailed with his host to Denmark, there to join the Danish King, and that the King sent him to defend the Danework ; for it says :—

“Under the wise leader, ships came from the north ;
They hastened south towards Denmark.
The lord of Dofra, ruler of the Hords, hooded with helm of terror,
Pressed forward to join the Danish chiefs.

“The generous King wished by fight to prove the Prince
Arrived from the north, land of dark forest.
For he bade the stern warder of the mail-shirt to defend the wall,
Against the Niords of the sword, stirrer of Hagbard's hurdle [shield].”

The Emperor Otto with his host arrived at the Danework from the south. This fortification lies between two friths which stretch into the land from opposite shores of Denmark. Between the heads of the friths the Danes had built a wall, like a town-wall, high and strong, formed of stone, turf, and wood, and having a deep ditch on the outside. At every hundred fathoms of its length there was a gate with a castle built over it, as a defence to the wall, because in front of each gate there was a bridge over the ditch. The Emperor Otto attacked with his host the Danework from the south side, and Earl Hakon defended the wall with his men. A fierce fight occurred, of which Einar Rattlescale makes mention in the Wellekla :—

“’Twas no easy task to oppose their host,
Though the Rogni of the fence of rushing spears strove hard ;
When he, Widur of battle, sailed from the south with summons to war,
Riding on sea-horses, with array of Frisians, Franks, and Wends.”

Earl Hakon set garrisons over all the gates ; but the greater part of his force he moved from place to place along the wall

for defence wherever the attack was fiercest. There was great slaughter among the Emperor's men; and when they were unable to gain possession of the wall, the Emperor turned straightway with his troops and went on board his ships. Thus says Einar:—

“A sound of battle arose when the heroes of the sword-game clashed shields together;

The appetizer of eagles was a match for his enemies.

Bold assaulter of sea-horses, the Prince put the Saxons to flight,

When, with his men, he so held the wall against foreign foes.”

The battle being over, the Earl returned to his ships, intending to sail northwards to Norway; but as no favourable wind blew, he lay at anchor a long while by the entrance of Limfirth.

King Olaf Tryggwason devises the capture of the Danework
[988]. *The Danes and Earl Hakon are baptized.*

70. King Olaf Tryggwason remained one winter in Wendland, as we have already mentioned. Early in the spring he made ready his ships and sailed forth, directing his course towards Skaney, on which he made a descent. The people of the country gathered themselves together and joined battle with him; but Olaf was victorious, and gained much booty. Thence he sailed east to Gotland, where he attacked a merchant ship owned by the Jamts, who made a vigorous defence from the ship. In the end Olaf won the ship, slaying many of the men, and seizing all their wealth. On Gotland itself he fought a third battle, in which he was victorious, and gained much booty. Thus says Hallfred the Troublesome Poet:—

“Of old, the sovereign Prince, foeman of temples,

Crushed in fight the people of the Jamts and Wends.

War was his wont from early life.

The dauntless lord of barons placed the lives of Gots in danger;

The generous scatterer of gold, I heard, fought a battle in Skaney.”

King Olaf then directed his ships along the coast of Denmark, as far south as the Sle, for he had learnt that the Emperor Otto was there, and with him Burislaf the Wendish King, Olaf's father-in-law, and, moreover, that they had need of assistance. When

Olaf came before the Emperor, he offered to help him with all his company. The Emperor looked on him, and asked who he was. Olaf answered: "My name is an easy one, Sire; I am called Oli." "You are a tall fellow," said the Emperor, "and you look fortunate; your men, too, have all a bold appearance; I will certainly accept your help." The Emperor called together an Assembly of his counsellors and of his chiefs, at which he spoke as follows: "Consider, O wise chiefs, and give your advice as to the course I must follow, for a great difficulty lies before us. All this numerous host gathered here together is in great want of provisions. The Danes have removed their live-stock and all their other possessions away into the country, where they will be kept, as they suppose, safe from our hands; so that on this side of the Danework there is nothing which they possess that can be used for human food. We have now fought several battles here, and have found the land hard to conquer. Advise now what must be our procedure, so as to preserve our honour." When the Emperor ceased speaking, most of the Assembly kept silence; but those who replied said that there were two courses before them—either to abandon their undertaking and go home to their own kingdom, or to kill their own animals to find sustenance for the army. The Emperor then answered: "There are great obstacles to our following that advice. It is a great profanation of Christianity, that baptized persons should eat horse-flesh, when they can prolong life otherwise. And if we now give up the contest without making further attempts, and go back to our kingdom, I can see that we shall not at any future time bring an army together, more numerous or better equipped, to conquer the realm of the Danes. Moreover, I should be guilty of wickedness, and the greatest dishonour would attach to me, if I were to break my word, for I have pledged myself before God, either to make Denmark Christian at this time, or else die. Therefore I will disregard both the courses advised. Let us hear what Oli has to say about the matter, the chief that has lately joined us." Oli thus made answer: "Sire, to be sparing in counsel, though not the fittest course, agrees with my condition. Yet I esteem my plans so highly that I will not on any account bring them forward unless you, Sire, and all your chiefs likewise, promise me to observe and follow what I say." The Emperor consented, and all present promised to follow

whatever counsel Oli gave. Oli then said: "I advise, first of all, that we seek for help where help is abundantly found. Let all the army fast for three days, to the end that the same God who created all things may give us victory over the Danes, and grant you to accomplish His errand upon which you have come. Secondly, I desire that, when the fast is over, all the army proceed to the forest lying nearest the Danework, and there every man shall cut for himself a bundle of faggots and carry them to the foot of the Danework, where we will afterwards decide what course is most expedient." Great cheering followed Oli's speech, and the host all praised his plan. Early in the morning they proceeded to the forest; and late in the evening they carried the faggots to the Danework. The following day they collected all the water-buckets they could find, which they filled with shavings, and soaked in tar; and then they made engines and catapults wherewith to throw them. By Oli's appointment some of the host had the special duty, whatever else was done, of throwing stones and missiles at the part of the wall that lay nearest them. The fortification could not be approached by day, because Earl Hakon before his departure had left a large number of men in all the castles to defend it if any force should happen to come against it. Late in the evening the Emperor's men set fire to the water-buckets, according to Oli's counsel, and hurled them by means of the catapults towards the fortification. The tarred shavings were soon ablaze, and the flame, spreading from the buckets, quickly fastened on the faggots laid at the foot of the fortification. The weather during the day had been calm and clear; but towards evening a brisk and dry south wind sprung up, which increased to a gale as night advanced. As the faggots blazed up, and the gale blew towards the fortification, the flames quickly caught the towers, which were made of wood, as was in great part the wall also. The progress of the fire then became so rapid, one part catching the flames from another, that on the following morning not a remnant of the Danework could be seen except the stones. After this success the Emperor moved away with all his force, and embarking on board his ships, passed over the frith to Jutland, where the host did not long remain without provisions, for they found live-stock of the Danes in abundance, which they seized.

When the Danish King Harold learnt that the Danework was burnt, and that the Emperor Otto had arrived in Jutland with a very great host, he led his forces against him. A fierce battle took place when the armies encountered each other. It lasted a long time; but in the end the Emperor was victorious, and King Harold fled away to Limfirth, where he found ships, and sailed over to Marsey. Communications were then opened with the Emperor, a truce was concluded, and a meeting between the Emperor Otto and Harold King of the Danes took place in Marsey. The Emperor was accompanied by a bishop named Poppo, who preached the true faith before King Harold, and related many wonderful works of Almighty God. After the Bishop had declared God's message fully and eloquently, King Harold thus answered: "I am unwilling to abandon the faith which all my life I have had and held, and my kinsmen and forefathers held before me. Although, therefore, your words are fair and gentle, they are insufficient of themselves. I will not give up my faith unless you show, by manifest signs which cannot be disavowed, that your faith is better and truer than ours." Then Bishop Poppo caused a red-hot iron bar to be placed in his right hand, and carried it for nine feet in the sight of all the people; afterwards showing to King Harold his hand unscorched. To the King this seemed a wonderful deed, and at the sight of it he accepted the true faith, and was baptized with all his host. Before this interview with the Emperor, while King Harold was in Marsey, he had sent a message to Earl Hakon bidding him come to the King's support. The Earl reached the island after the King had accepted baptism, and on receiving the King's command went to visit him. When they met, the King forced the Earl to submit to baptism. Earl Hakon was therefore baptized and all the men then with him; and the King placed under his charge priests and teachers, saying that the Earl ought to have all the people in Norway baptized. They now separated, and the Earl sailed out to Hals in Limfirth, and there waited for a favourable wind. The Emperor Otto, it is said, became godfather to Swein, King Harold's son, and gave him his own name; so that at his baptism he was called Otto Swein. And seeing that the plans of Oli had turned out a great success, the Emperor inquired of him in what country he was born, and from what family he was sprung. Oli

answered him: "I will not, Sire, keep you longer in ignorance. My name is Olaf; I am a Northman by race, and King Tryggwi Olafson was my father." "I have heard your father spoken of," said the Emperor; "but I have heard of you more. I should like you now to go with me to Saxland, where I will make of you a great chief in my kingdom." And Olaf answered: "I thank you for your offer; I have somewhat of a kingdom in Wendland, and I must needs take care of it; but I would gladly be your friend." And the Emperor replied that thus it should be. After these things Otto returned to his kingdom in Saxland; King Harold and he separated in a friendly manner; and the King held firmly by the Christian faith until the day of his death. King Burislafr returned to Wendland, accompanied by his son-in-law Olaf Tryggwason. Of this war waged in Denmark, Hallfred makes mention in his Praise of Olaf:—

"The ships' speed-quickener, south of Heidaby in Denmark,
Hewed the mail-shirts off his foes,
As one who strips birch-trees of their bark."

Earl Hakon casts off his Christian belief.

71. We left Earl Hakon waiting for a fair wind at Hals in Limfirth. When a breeze arose, strong enough, as he thought, to carry him out to sea, he sent ashore the men in Holy Orders, and sailed forth into the open sea. The wind turned to the south-west, and afterwards to the west. The Earl therefore sailed through Eyrasound, plundering the country on both sides of it. Thence he went eastwards along the coast of Skaney, plundering at every point where he touched land. Coming in his easterly course opposite the Gaut Skerries, he drove his ships to shore, and having landed, offered a great sacrifice. As the sacrifice was proceeding, two ravens appeared flying, and screaming loudly; wherefore the Earl believed that Odin had accepted his sacrifice and appointed him an early time for battle. Having then set fire to his ships and burnt them up, he advanced into the country with his men, laying it completely waste. Earl Ottar was the ruler of Gautland at that time, and he came with a large force against the Earl. In a great battle which they fought, Earl

Hakon was victorious, and Earl Ottar was slain with the greater part of his force. Earl Hakon then passed through both the Gautlands, laying the country waste along his march, until he arrived in Norway. Thus says Einar Rattlescale:—

“The slaughtering Niord of flying hosts enquired of the gods on the plain ;
 An early time to fight against foes was given to the wearer of armour,
 Hedin’s weeds ;
 The battle-summoner beheld great carrion vultures.
 The Tyr of divining rods desired to destroy the lives of the Gauts.

“An Assembly of swords was held by the Earl, where no man
 Under men’s heavenly cloud-home had yet come to plunder.
 Further from the sea had man not borne
 Shields with rims of gold, the lair of the ling-worm.
 All Gautland the Prince passed over, and vanquished.”

Earl Hakon, arrived in Norway, encourages heathenism.

72. As Earl Hakon passed from the east over Gautland on his hostile expedition, Urguthriot and Brimiskiar, the Earls whom the Emperor had sent to Norway, heard of his marchings and all his evil work. They were in the Wick country, the whole of which district they had Christianised as far as Lidandisness ; and thinking it unsafe to await the Earl, if on his coming the people of the land should rise up with him against them, they fled away with all the ships that they had brought, and eight others. Earl Hakon, coming into the Wick, soon became aware of what the Earls had done ; how they had destroyed the temples, and made Christians of all the people within their reach. He therefore caused all the temples which they had thrown down to be rebuilt, and sent a message over all the Wick that he would allow no man to hold the faith which the Earls had preached ; having so done, he went northwards overland to Throntham, where he abode quietly for some time. He was now sole ruler over Norway, and never afterwards paid tribute to the Danish King ; but he was henceforth a worse man in every respect, and more of a heathen than before he was baptized.

Expedition of Olaf Tryggwason against the Flemings.

73. It is said of Olaf Tryggwason that he never worshipped carved images, and greatly loathed all belief in them; but all that was told him concerning the God of Heaven and His mighty deeds pleased him greatly; and he pondered most carefully in his heart the miracles that he had seen in Denmark. The winter that followed his meeting with the Emperor Otto, Olaf passed in his Wendish realm; and in the spring he made ready his ships and went on a freebooting expedition, harrying first Frisland, then Saxland, and as far as the country of the Flemings. So says Hallfred:—

“Tryggwi’s royal son at last cut down misshapen Saxons for Leikn’s wary horse, the wolf;

The friend-gladdened King gave the dark blood of many Frisians, for drink, to the wolf, night-witch’s black steed.

“The mighty queller of men’s quarrels drew sword from sheath,

The summoner of hosts gave the flesh of Flemings, for a prey, to the ravens.”

Olaf Tryggwason receives from Thangbrand a shield marked with the sign of the Cross.

74. In those days the Bishop of Brima in Saxland was Albert, who had a scholar named Thangbrand, the son of Wilbald, Count of the city of Brima. Thangbrand was grown up when Hugbert, Bishop of Canterbury, invited Bishop Albert to pay him a visit, and presented him and all his company with goodly gifts. The Bishop was accompanied to the feast by Thangbrand, and when the gifts were all ready for presentation, Bishop Hugbert said to Thangbrand: “As you are a man of knightly manners, though you are a clerk, I give you a shield. Drawn upon it is the figure of the Holy Cross with the image of our Lord, which will show that you are a clerk.” Thangbrand thankfully accepted the shield. Bishop Albert then returned home from his visit, and when he reached Saxland, King Olaf Tryggwason was already there. Thangbrand was wearing the shield given him by Bishop Hugbert

when King Olaf met him; and the King, observing the shield, examined with attention the figure drawn on it, with which he was greatly pleased. Speaking to Thangbrand, he said: "Who is the person in agony on the Cross, whom you Christians magnify?" "'Tis our Lord Jesus Christ whom we magnify," answered Thangbrand. "What evil did He," asked the King, "that He thus suffered on the Cross?" Thereupon Thangbrand expounded to him minutely the passion of the Lord, and the wonders of the Cross. King Olaf then offered to purchase the shield, but Thangbrand gave it to him. And the King said: "This gift pleases me greatly. And if you should ever feel that you require help and protection from any one, come to me and I will reward you for the shield. I prefer, though, that you should accept from me some little money." Thangbrand consenting, the King caused him to be paid the worth of the shield, and they parted in a friendly manner. Then King Olaf sailed home to Wendland in the autumn, and there remained for the third winter.

King Olaf leaves Wendland on the death of Geira, and is saved from danger by the sign of the Cross.

75. When King Olaf Tryggwason had been three years in Wendland, an event happened which brought him and many others in the country great grief and sorrow; for Queen Geira, his wife, fell ill of the sickness that led to her death. Her loss was felt so acutely by King Olaf that he no longer found any pleasure in Wendland. He hastened, therefore, to his ships, and sailed straight to Denmark, intending to go thence eastwards to Garda; for in his great sorrow he would naturally seek first the spot where he had dwelt the longest and lived the happiest. But while his fleet lay at anchor off Denmark, waiting for a favourable wind, King Olaf went on land with some of his men one day, and made a foray after the manner of the Wickings. Which when the inhabitants of the place perceived, they gathered themselves together, and with a large force pursued the plunderers. The King and his men did not notice the pursuit till a great rush was made towards them from all sides, and when they sought to escape the danger they found no ready way, for the forest near them was

thick and dwarf, and was no safe hiding-place. Then King Olaf, having great confidence in the mercy of God, spoke thus to his men: "I know," said he, "that there is a mighty God who rules over Heaven and has created all things. To Him belongs, as I have also heard, a victorious token of great power; the sign of the Cross on which He suffered. Let us all now humbly pray to that God of Heaven to shelter us with the sign of His Cross. Let us lie down on the ground, and taking two twigs, place them upon us in the figure of a cross." As he bade them, so they all did. Their foes came towards them with a great din and clashing of arms, expecting to capture them readily, having just before seen them but a short distance off. But losing sight of them, the pursuers rushed in all directions through the wood, and failed to find them, though they lay at their feet. Thus the Holy Cross saved them by God's help, and the pursuers gave up the search. King Olaf and his company now arose from the ground, and were making their way to the ships, when the pursuers again saw them and followed hard after them. The King and his men found no other way of escape than the one that they had already tried; they lay down on the ground where they were, hoping for God's mercy. And as they lay in the open field they were unseen by the Danes, just as before when they lay in the thick forest.

King Olaf sails to Garda, where he has a dream. After a visit to Greece he assists Bishop Paul in the conversion of the realm of Garda to Christianity.

76. After this event Olaf directed his ships eastwards to Garda, where he received a hearty welcome from King Waldamar and Queen Allogia, and he remained in Holmgard, with his men, during the winter. One night there appeared to him in a dream a great and notable vision. He saw a great stone pillar that stretched up into the air as high as he could see, and had holes or steps in it on the outside. In his dream he climbed the pillar to such a height that he came above the clouds. Here he perceived an odour, fragrant beyond any that he had ever experienced; and looking round about, he beheld on all sides a delightful expanse of most charming flowers. Men, too, he saw there, radiant, wear-

ing white garments, and adorned in glorious sheen, full of joy beyond what words may describe. Then he heard a voice high above him which said: "Hear, Olaf, thou that hast in thee the promise of a righteous man. Thy labours for good shall be multiplied and eminently increased to the glory of God and to thine own honour both now and hereafter. Thou hast never worshipped graven images, accursed gods, nor bestowed on them heathen service, and therefore shall thy name become widely famous throughout the world. But one great thing thou lackest, in order to be a perfect servant of God; for thou hast as yet no knowledge, no full insight into Divine things, and hast not been cleansed in Holy Baptism." Then was Olaf afraid, and spake with much concern: "Who art Thou, Lord, that I may believe on Thee?" And the voice answered him: "Go thou to Greekland; the name of the Lord thy God shall there be made known to thee. And if thou believest rightly on Him, and observest faithfully His ordinances, then shalt thou guide many others from the dark paths of the error of heathen belief to the lightsome ways of the true faith. God has chosen thee that thou mayest bring home to Him much people; wherefore shalt thou inherit everlasting happiness, and greater glory than thou hast now here beheld."

Olaf, having seen and heard these things, prepared to descend the pillar; and looking beneath him he beheld many fearful abodes full of fiery torments, wherein he heard the wailing, the despair, and the pitiful weeping of the souls in torment. Among them he seemed to recognise many chiefs and friends of his who had put their trust in heathen gods; and here he saw the awful torments prepared for King Waldamar and Queen Allogia. As he beheld all this sight he was taken with great fear, and so strongly affected, that when he awoke his eyes were filled with tears.

The very same morning, as soon as he was dressed, he had his fleet made ready to depart. He directed his ships' course the quickest way to Greekland, where he met with many famous clerical teachers, who made known to him the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and he is said to have become a catechumen, being now first signed with the sign of the Cross. Olaf then entreated a bishop, whose name was Paul, to visit the realm of Garda, and there proclaim God's Christian faith to the heathen people. Bishop Paul was a great friend of God, and promised to visit the realm of

Garda if Olaf would go there before him, and plead his cause, so that the chiefs would make no opposition to the planting of God's Christian faith. King Olaf therefore returned to Garda, where he first preached the true faith privately to the King and Queen. The King resisted strongly at the beginning, while the Queen was altogether less opposed; but finally, on the urgent pressure of the Queen, the King caused a full Assembly to be summoned. Many great men and a crowd of others having arrived, the Assembly was opened, and Olaf Tryggwason stood up and thus spake: "My lord, O King, before whom I have made some mention of my subject beforehand, I trust that you in your wisdom will perceive the advantage which faith in the one true God will bring to you and to all others, high and low. He is the God that made heaven and earth, and all things visible and invisible; that gives eternal life, a life without end, to all who truly believe on Him and serve Him aright. 'Tis better that you should believe on Him than go astray in the thick darkness of a belief in false gods, carved images, which are so far from being able to give help to others, that they cannot move from the spot where they stand, unless borne or dragged away by others. Long ago, when I knew not God, I said to you that it seemed to me an altogether senseless thing to serve them. Therefore I shall never cease to preach God's name to you, in all labour and devotion, until I have led you, O King, and all this people, out of the dark path of error, in which you have walked far too long, into the bright way of the hope of everlasting salvation." To this speech King Waldamar thus made answer and said: "From the light which dawns on my reason through your fair persuasions, I believe the life of Christians to be better than ours; but long practice of the old religion restrains me, so that I am not able to fix my thoughts on what concerns the new. Moreover, my mind tells me that it scarcely fits with my simplicity to throw off the faith which my kinsmen and ancestors from time immemorial held, one after the other, all their days. Touching this difficult matter, therefore, I will first hear the advice of the Queen Allogia, who is much wiser than I, and afterwards that of all the chiefs and of my counsellors." Great applause followed the King's speech; and when silence obtained, the Queen began to speak: "This man Olaf came to you, O King, while he was yet a child in years, after suffering banishment and severe

bondage; you took him, a stranger and unknown, into your protection; you brought him up and fostered him as lovingly as if he had been your own son. And he was able to turn your care to your advantage; for he supported and strengthened your kingdom with the utmost goodwill, so soon as years and maturity enabled him to accomplish anything. Thenceforward he became endeared to all good men. Lately he has been absent for a time, making himself a gracious and wholesome counsellor to chiefs who had no such claims upon his gratitude as you had. He shows, moreover, great earnestness and anxiety to proclaim the important message which he carries, a message which must appear to all wise men a salutary one. Wherefore, O King, my mind leads me to discern clearly that he is the man whose presence your mother foresaw in days gone by. Many wise men, too, and soothsayers of this kingdom, foretold that a stranger would be brought up here, who should not only adorn the kingdom with the bright illumination of his knowledge and wisdom, but should be nobly renowned for his goodness far and wide elsewhere. I saw this long ago in his bearing, and both at that time and ever since have been better pleased with him than with other young men. And this statement of mine is more true than that which wicked men uttered when they suspected that unfaithfulness towards you underlay my intimacy with him." When the Queen had finished her speech, all present praised her eloquence and wisdom; and the Assembly was closed after they all, by the mercy of God and the Queen's entreaty, had promised to accept the true faith. At that time Bishop Paul arrived from Greekland under the protection of King Olaf, and baptized King Waldamar, Queen Allogia, and all their people, strengthening them in the Holy Faith.

In such wise did the faithful servant of the King of Heaven, while yet unbaptized, offer the first-fruits of his toil to his Lord, after the example of Saint Basil, who openly preached the Holy Faith before he was baptized. Nor is it wonderful that Almighty God should breathe His Spirit into the bosom of this man, signed with the sign of the Cross after confession of faith, and chosen by Him to proclaim His message before heathen nations. For in His Providence He chose Ambrose, while yet unbaptized, to fill the office of archbishop over His Christian people. And He sent His angel in visible form to show Cornelius the Centurion the way of

salvation by Holy Faith, to the end that he might reap the reward of the good works that he had previously performed. The same Jesus Christ our Lord openly showed Himself to a heathen chief, the Knight Placidus, and called him to His mercy, while he yet knew nought of Divine things, though he had done many good works.

These accounts which have now been given of the preaching of Christianity in the realm of Gardar by Olaf Tryggwason are not incredible; for a famous and learned book, of which the title is *Imago Mundi*, states clearly that the Russian, Polish, and Hungarian peoples became Christian in the days of the Emperor Otto, third of the name. In some books it is related that the Emperor Otto passed with his army into the east country, forcing the nations over a wide area to accept Christianity; and that he was accompanied by Olaf Tryggwason.

King Olaf leads a plundering force to the British Islands.

77. After these things, King Olaf, having got his men and ships ready, sailed away from the realm of Gardar in the east, to Denmark first, and thence westwards over-sea. So says Hallarstein:—

“A great host of smacks, bravely set out with shields,
Soon sailed from Gardar under the generous King;
The faithful Olaf, Tryggvi's heir, led his ships to the plunder
of western lands,
And clove the sons of men with his sword.”

King Olaf directed his course first to England, which he plundered in many places. So says Hallarstein:—

“The blood-stained brand of the people's prince whistled in England;
Heard I, that the sword-reddener caused loss of life to the English people.”

Then he sailed northwards along the coast, up to Northimbraland, where he fought a battle; and thence to Scotland, which he laid waste in many places. Thus Hallarstein relates:—

“Courageous, he reddened Scotland with his polished sword;
The wolves were surfeited,
The hard sword-point pierced the doomed Scots.”

From Scotland King Olaf sailed to the Sudreys, where he had several battles; thence he went south to Man and fought a battle. He plundered Ireland in various parts, and burnt the buildings. Thus says Hallarstein:—

“ Boldly, greedily, the fearless Frey of the shield-storm
Burnt up, of old, the dwellings of the Irish, far and wide.”

To Bretland next he sailed, and plundered the country in many spots. Thence he went west to Walland, which he also plundered. Describing the whole of this freebooting expedition, Hallfred the Troublesome Poet thus sings:—

“ The young King, unyielding, the English harassed,
Such death the weapon-showers’ augments devised for the Northumbrians.
Rejoicing in battle, the exciter of greedy wolves wasted far and wide the
Scots,
The gold-scatterer played with sword, a sword-game in Man.

“ The Aegir of the bow brought death to the Irish and the island-folk,
Eager for glory was the Tyr of priceless swords.
The Prince smote the dwellers of Bretland; he slew the folk of Walland;
The birds of the spear-storm satisfied their greedy hunger.”

*King Olaf is driven to the Scilly Islands, where a hermit
prophesies to him of the future.*

78. King Olaf Tryggwason sailed eastwards from Walland, intending to reach England; but the wind drove him from his course, and bore him to the islands called the Scilly Islands, which lie west of England, in the ocean; here he put into harbour and remained for a time. Four years had now elapsed since he left Wendland. While King Olaf was stopping at the Scilly Islands, he heard of a certain prophet there, who predicted future events, and his prophecies were by many believed to come to pass. The King felt a great curiosity to put the prophet’s skill to the test. Selecting, therefore, one of the tallest and handsomest of his men, he dressed him as grandly as possible, and bade him go to the anchorite and pretend that he was a king. For Olaf, because of his height and fine appearance, in which he excelled other men,

had become famous in all countries. Moreover, from the time when he first left the realm of Gardar, he had not kept to his proper name, but had called himself Oli, and stated that he belonged to Gardar. The messenger came then to the prophet, giving out that he was a king. The prophet answered: "You are no king, and I advise you to be faithful to your King," and said no more to him. The messenger returned to the King, and told him what had passed in the interview; so that King Olaf felt no doubt that the man was really a prophet, and he desired more than ever to see him. Olaf went, therefore, and had a conversation with the prophet, inquiring if he should succeed in attaining a kingdom, or other piece of good fortune. The anchorite answered by the holy spirit of prophecy: "You shall become a renowned king, and perform many famous deeds; you shall lead many to the true faith and holy baptism, thereby bringing both yourself and many others to salvation. And to the end that you doubt not of my answer, this shall be a sign to you: when you come to your ships you will meet with a hostile fleet and a band of foes. A battle will be fought, in which you will lose some of your men, and you yourself receive a wound, so severe that you will be like to die, and be carried on a shield to your ship. From that wound, however, you will make a recovery in seven nights, and forthwith receive baptism." After this answer Olaf returned to his ships, where he met with foes, who strove to destroy both him and his men. The battle resulted exactly as the anchorite had predicted: the King was borne wounded to his ship, and after seven nights became whole. He was now fully convinced of the truth of what had been declared to him, and that the prophet was a true prophet, from what source soever he had received the gift of prophecy. King Olaf went, therefore, a second time to meet and converse with him, inquiring diligently how the man had obtained his knowledge of future events. And the anchorite answered, that the God of Christians caused him to know all that he wished to know. He related to Olaf many of God's great works, and so wrought on him by his persuasions that Olaf promised to receive baptism. Thereupon Olaf returned to his ships.

Olaf Tryggwason baptized in the Scilly Islands [993].

79. There was in the Islands a famous abbot, the head of a great cloister, to which King Olaf next sailed with his ships and all his force. The man of God, the head of the cloister, knew by the spirit of prophecy of the King's approach. So he called together all the brethren over whom he ruled, and commanded them to put on their most gorgeous robes; "for," said he, "we shall form a procession to the shore, and receive in as honourable a manner as we can the naval force that is now on its way here." When the Abbot was ready, and the brethren all robed, he proceeded to the shore with them, accompanied by many clerks and ministers of Holy Church over whom he was set, and it was early in the day. King Olaf had come on shore with all his men; and when they saw a great brightness a long way off, they scarcely knew at first what it could be. It came from the reflected rays of the morning sun as it shone on the goodly garments wherewith the Abbot and his clerks were clothed. When the Abbot and the King met, the Abbot led him to the cloister, and after the chanting of service they welcomed each other with great friendliness. Olaf fell down on his knees before the Abbot in all humility, and the Abbot raised him up and kissed him, saying these words: "Who you are, and what you will become, was shown me and foretold a short time ago. For the Lord Jesus Christ sent you here to the Islands because it is meet that we preach wholesome doctrine to you, and perform on you and your men the holy office of baptism, whereby you and all the others who thus accept the Holy Faith may obtain everlasting help and salvation." In these and suchlike fair words did the Abbot eloquently declare to them his excellent message at full length, and afterwards, by the grace of God, he baptized King Olaf and all his company. Olaf remained there a long time with his men, being instructed in holy doctrine and good conduct by that man of God and the brethren of the cloister. And the Abbot told Olaf that he would become King over Norway, being chosen by God to direct many souls the right way to their Maker. King Olaf Tryggwason was twenty-five years of age when he was baptized, and his baptism took place nine hundred and ninety-three years after the Incarnation of our Lord

Jesus Christ, in the tenth year of the reign of the Emperor Otto the Young, and the twenty-first year of Ethelred, King of the English.

King Olaf marries Queen Gyda, in England.

80. In the autumn Olaf Tryggwason sailed to England from the Scilly Islands, taking with him thence priests and other ordained men. He lay at anchor in a certain haven on the English coast; and his visit was a peaceful one, for the land was a Christian land, and he, too, was Christian. Just at that time the inhabitants of the district were summoned to attend an Assembly, and when the Assembly was constituted, there arrived a queen named Gyda, sister to Olaf Kuaran, King of Dublin, in Ireland. She had been the wife of an English earl of high family, who had died, and she was then ruling in his stead. Under her rule there was a man named Alfwini, a great champion and duellist, who had offered to marry Queen Gyda. To his proposals she had answered, that she was willing to choose a husband for herself among those under her rule; and the Assembly had been called together, in order that she might make her choice. Alfwini was present, decked out in his best clothes, and, besides him, all the chiefs and mighty men were there, finely dressed. Olaf also attended the Assembly, dressed in his rain-clothes, and wearing an overcoat of fur with the hood pulled down over his face; he stood with his company apart from the rest. Gyda then went and looked at each one that seemed to possess a manly mien; and coming to the spot where Olaf stood, she regarded him on all sides, raised his hood, and, looking into his face, asked, "Who is this man?" "My name is Oli," he answered, "and I am a stranger." "If you will marry me," she said, "I will choose you for my husband." And he answered: "I will not say nay to that. What is your name, your family, and origin?" She answered: "I am a king's daughter from Ireland. I was given in marriage to the Earl that ruled over this land, and I have held the government of it since he died. Many have proposed marriage to me; but I would give myself to none of them; and my name is Gyda." She was young, and very fair to

look upon. They conversed together, and having agreed between themselves, Olaf betrothed Gyda; but Alfwini was ill-pleased therewith. There was a custom in England at that time, that if two men contended for possession of any object, a wager of battle should be arranged, in which the conqueror should win his suit and gain the object of contention. Alfwini therefore challenged Olaf to fight a wager of battle in this case, and they made an appointment for the combat, in which there were to be twelve on each side. As Olaf's men whom he had chosen for the fight were preparing themselves for the encounter, he gave them large axes, and bade them act as he did on meeting the bearsarks; he himself also had a huge axe. When they met on the place appointed for the combat, Alfwini attempted to strike Olaf with his sword; but Olaf with his axe knocked the sword out of his hands, and forthwith with a second blow struck him and stunned him. Olaf then took him and firmly bound him. All Alfwini's men were dealt with in the same way, and were led conquered and bound to Olaf's quarters. Olaf afterwards allowed Alfwini to leave England, commanding him never to return; and took possession of all his lands and property. Then he made his wedding-feast and took Gyda to wife, and they had a son, who was named Tryggwi, and was a promising youth.

Thangbrand comes to Olaf, after a combat with one of the Emperor's men.

81. The story returns to the point where we mentioned that King Olaf and Thangbrand separated on friendly terms. With the money which the King gave him, Thangbrand purchased a fair maid of Irish race, and when he returned home with Bishop Albert to the town of Brima, he took the maid with him. Shortly afterwards a bailiff of the Emperor wished to take the maid; but Thangbrand resisted, and would not let himself be robbed of her. The bailiff was a very great champion and duellist, and he challenged Thangbrand to single combat, to which Thangbrand consented. So they fought, and Thangbrand gained the victory, slaying the bailiff. He was forced, therefore, to flee from Saxland, and came to England to visit King Olaf. The King welcomed

him heartily, and had him consecrated to be chaplain of his body-guard.

King Olaf is presented with the dog Wigi.

82. After King Olaf married the English lady Queen Gyda, he abode in England, and occasionally in Ireland. He happened once to be present in Ireland with a large naval force engaged in war. A foray to get stores being necessary, the men went on land and drove towards the shore a multitude of sheep and cattle; and there followed them a yeoman, who begged Olaf to give him back his cows from among the flock that they were driving off. King Olaf answered: "Take your cows, if you know them, and are able to separate them from the rest without delaying our journey; but, I think, neither you nor any other man can do that feat among so many hundred cattle as are in the drove." The yeoman had a big cattle-dog with him. So he sent the dog among the herd as they were driven off together, and the dog ran up and down among them all, and soon picked out and put aside as many of the man's cattle as, in the yeoman's opinion, were there. As these were all marked with one and the same mark, it was evident that the dog must have had a perfect knowledge of them. Then the King said: "Wonderfully clever is your dog, yeoman; will you give him to me?" And the man answered: "I will gladly do so." Then the King straightway, in return, gave the yeoman a large gold bracelet, and promised him his friendship therewith. This dog, the best and most sensible of all dogs, was named Wigi, and Olaf had him for a long time afterwards.

Harold Gormson, King of the Danes, leads a plundering expedition to Norway.

83. Harold Gormson, King of the Danes, having learnt that Earl Hakon had cast off the Christian faith, and plundered his country in many places, as we have already mentioned, raised a levy of men and ships over Denmark, and sailed away to Norway. When he arrived with his host at the realm which Earl Hakon governed, he

set about plundering, and every man that he met with he slew. He burnt all the houses, and wasted the whole country wherever he went to such an extent that only five homesteads were left standing and unburnt at Lœradale in Sogn. All the inhabitants who could escape fled away into the woods and forests, taking with them whatever property they could save. King Harold came with his host to the Solundi Islands, where he anchored his whole force, which is said to have consisted of not less than twelve hundred ships. He intended to sail with all this fleet to Iceland, to revenge himself on the Icelanders in a body, who had lampooned him. They had passed a law that a libellous ditty should be composed, as by every man in the land, on the Danish King Harold. And this was the cause. A ship owned by Icelanders was shipwrecked in Denmark, and the Danes seized upon the whole cargo, calling it flotsam. The seizure was made by order of the King's steward Birgi; and the lampoon libelled both King Harold and Birgi, because the King would give no redress when complaint was made to him. King Harold's counsellors and chiefs dissuaded him from the voyage, saying, what was indeed true, that the extent of open sea between him and Iceland afforded no hope that a fleet of such magnitude would be able to keep together; that the Danes were ignorant of the harbours; and that the people of the country were valiant and difficult to deal with. The Danish King therefore gave up the expedition, turned his ships' course southward by the coast, and sailed thence to Denmark, leaving Norway to the rule of Earl Hakon. All the districts which Harold had laid waste with fire and sword the Earl caused to be again occupied, and no tribute paid he henceforth to the Danish King.

Death of King Harold Gormson. Rise of the Wickings of Jom under Palnatoki. He is succeeded by Sigwaldi, who proposes to wed Astrid, King Burislaf's daughter.

84. King Harold's son Swein, afterwards called Forkbeard, was brought up in youth by a powerful chief named Palnatoki, who ruled over Funen; and when he grew up to man's estate he requested of his father a share in the kingdom. But King Harold, as on a former occasion, was not willing to divide the empire of

the Danes, and no kingdom did Swein get from him. He therefore furnished himself with warships, saying that he would go forth as a Viking; and when he had collected his force together, he directed his ships to Zealand, and sailed into Isafirth, where his foster-father Palnatoki joined him with a large force. Swein's father King Harold, with ships and men, was then lying at anchor in the frith, preparing for a general muster of his naval forces. Swein made an attack on his father, and a fierce battle ensued; but, reinforcements coming to the aid of King Harold, Swein was overborne by superior numbers, and fled. King Harold received, however, mortal wounds, which, so it is said, were inflicted by Palnatoki.

Palnatoki was the son of Palni Tokason, and of Ingibiorg, the daughter of Ottar, Earl of Gautland. Funen had for a long period been under his rule and that of his kinsmen and forefathers. He became chief of the Wickings of Jom; and being charged with the defence of Wendland by King Burislaf, he appointed an earl named Aki to be ruler over Funen. Aki was of the same age as Swein, King Harold's son, and was Swein's foster-brother, both of them being brought up at the same time by Palnatoki, in Funen. Aki's mother was Alof, daughter of Stephen, an earl of Bretland. In those days Earl Harold, known as Strut-Harold, held rule over Skaney, in Denmark; his sons were Sigwaldi, Heming, and Thorkel the Tall. Sigwaldi was a tall man, with a long and pale face, a hooked nose, and fine eyes. Thorkel was exceedingly tall, strong, and handsome. Strut-Harold had also a daughter named Tofa. At that time the ruler of Borgundarholm was Weseti, whose wife was Hildigunn; their sons were Bui the Stout, and Sigurd, surnamed Cope. Weseti's daughter was Thorgunn, the wife of Aki, in Funen. They had a son named Wagn, who quickly grew both tall and strong; his appearance was handsome, his temper very difficult in youth, and most overbearing when he grew up. Bui, his mother's brother, was not handsome, and in temper he was unruly; he was both tall and stout, and his strength was so great that it was never known to fail him. Sigurd Cope, Bui's brother, was a fine man, of few words, and very composed, but of dauntless courage. He married Tofa, the daughter of Strut-Harold, Earl of Skaney. These young men of whom mention has been made, the sons of Strut-Harold, the sons of Weseti of Bor-

gundarholm, and Wagn Akason, all joined the Wickings of Jom at Jomsburg, in Wendland, before the death of Palnatoki, and promised obedience to the laws which Palnatoki had established. Soon after they joined the Wickings, Palnatoki fell ill and died. Sigwaldi, son of Strut-Harold, was then chosen leader; and no long time elapsed before the laws were relaxed in many points. Women were allowed to stay for long periods in the stronghold; wounds were given, and manslaughters took place among the Wickings themselves, and there were many other acts of lawlessness inside the walls.

It next happened that Earl Sigwaldi made a journey from Jomsburg into Wendland to visit King Burislaf. The King had two daughters still living, Astrid and Gunnhild; his third daughter, Queen Geira, who had married Olaf Tryggwason, was then dead. Astrid was a beautiful woman, and very clever. Sigwaldi had made but a short stay with the King, when he declared the cause of his visit, and thus spake: "It is known to you, Sire, that we Wickings of Jom have dwelt for a time here in the land, a source of freedom to yourself and your people; for we and our stronghold have long formed, as it were, a closed door to your kingdom, and have neglected our own governments and estates in Denmark. And now, to be frank with you, I am not willing any longer so to labour, and reap but little reward. I therefore offer you the choice of two things: either you give me your daughter Astrid to wife, or we Wickings of Jom will all leave the stronghold and go back to Denmark, where we have our own estates to look after." To this demand the King replied: "You will do a great injury to me and my kingdom if you desert Jomsburg. But as my daughter Astrid has shown herself at all times most wise in counsel, I must ask her advice, above all, in this matter. I had intended to marry her to a man of yet higher rank and title than yourself." Whereupon the King held a conversation with Astrid, and after a long conference between the two on the speech and suit of Sigwaldi, she decided that she would not on any account be married to him, though, because of her father's needs, she would give her consent under conditions, fixed by her and her father, rather than let the Wickings leave the stronghold and cease to defend the country. Sigwaldi was then called in, and the King thus spake to him: "We have decided to give you my daughter Astrid if you will

remain and defend the country as in the past, you and all the Wickings of Jom; but before the marriage takes place you must free us for ever from the tribute which we are bound to pay the King of the Danes; also, you must bring King Swein into our power." To these terms Sigwaldi consented, and thereupon returned to Jomsburg.

Earl Sigwaldi, by treachery, brings King Swein into the power of King Burislaf. Swein and Sigwaldi marry the daughters of Burislaf.

85. Swein Haroldson was chosen King of Denmark in succession to his father, and at once began to make a circuit through his kingdom. Sigwaldi now set out from Jomsburg to go to Denmark, taking with him three ships and one hundred and eighty men. He reached a haven near the spot where, according to information which he received, King Swein was staying with six hundred men, on his circuit. Here Sigwaldi caused his ships to be fastened together in line, stem to stern, pushing the gangway of the rear-most to shore, and casting anchors from the outer one. Then he sent messengers to the King, to tell him that Sigwaldi was ill and almost at the point of death. "Tell him also," said he, "that I beg of him to come and see me; his life and his kingdom depend entirely on my seeing him before I die." The messengers proceeded to the homestead where the King was staying, and gave him the message, as they were bidden. Meanwhile Sigwaldi instructed the crews of his ships how they should act if the King came. As soon as the King and thirty of his company were on board the ship which lay closest to land, the gangway from the shore was to be pulled in; when he reached the middle ship with twenty of his company, the gangway between the two ships was to be pulled in. "I shall lie on the outer ship," said Sigwaldi, "and when he has come on board with ten of his company, pull the gangway in, and then act as I shall bid you." As soon as King Swein heard of the Earl's dangerous illness, and had received the whole of the message, he set off for the shore hastily with all his troop. Everything happened as Sigwaldi had directed. Coming to the outer ship, King Swein inquired where the Earl lay,

and being told that he lay under the tent on the castle, he went and raised the curtain, and asked if the Earl was able to speak. The Earl answered in a very low voice, that he was able to speak, but had little strength. Then the King asked him: "What are the tidings of which you sent me word, all important for me to know." And the Earl answered: "Lean down over me, so that you may hear what I say, for my voice is very weak." As the King bent down over him, quite low, the Earl seized him with both arms and held him as tight as he could, showing very little sign of weakness now. Then he called out to his men and bade them row all the ships to sea as hard as they could. This was done, and they rowed away, having the King with them, and the thirty men who had accompanied him on board. All the rest of the King's men were left standing on the shore, as there were no ships near at hand in which they could follow. "What does this mean, Sigwaldi?" asked the King. "Do you mean to betray me?" "I have no wish to betray you," said Sigwaldi; "but you must go with me to Jomsburg, where to the best of my power I will treat you and your men with all honour, and you shall there be told what this means." "I must needs bide your will for the present," said the King. They sailed on their course, therefore, and when they arrived at Jomsburg, Sigwaldi said to the King: "Welcome you will now be, at the entertainment I have prepared for you. I and all my men will serve you with the utmost good-will." "To accept what is done for our honour," said the King, "is now the best that can be done in our difficulty." "I must also now tell you," said Sigwaldi, "for what reason I have brought you here. Induced by friendship for you, I have undertaken to get you a wife, Gunnhild, daughter of King Burislaf, a very beautiful and highly accomplished maiden, as I know. I did not wish you to miss such an excellent match, now that Burislaf has betrothed to me his other daughter Astrid, rightly her inferior in beauty and every other respect." This speech was confirmed by the Wickings of Jom, according as Sigwaldi had previously arranged. The Earl said, moreover, to the King: "You have now, Sire, to ponder over your course of action if you wish to bring about this marriage; for there is the condition attached to it, that you will remit in perpetuity to the Wends the tribute which they are bound to pay you; and if you refuse to accept this condition, I shall give you up into their

hands." King Swein seeing now, as he thought, the whole scheme of King Burislaf and Sigwaldi, and knowing that the Wends would torture him to death if he were in their power, consented that the terms of reconciliation between himself and King Burislaf should be decided by Sigwaldi alone. As the conclusion of the matter, Swein took to wife Gunnhild, the daughter of King Burislaf, and promised in return to give his sister Thyri, Harold's daughter, in marriage to King Burislaf; he also agreed that each of the two Kings should rule his own kingdom free from tribute to the other, and that the two realms should be at peace. Earl Sigwaldi then married Astrid. King Swein sailed home to Denmark, taking with him his wife Gunnhild, and they had two sons born to them, Harold, and Knut the Great. In those days the Danes oftentimes threatened to lead an expedition to Norway against Earl Hakon.

Solemn vows made by King Swein and the Wickings of Jom.

86. To celebrate the funeral feast of his father King Harold, King Swein made a great banquet, and summoned thereto all the chief men of his realm. Shortly before this time, Strut-Harold, earl in Skaney, had died, and also Weseti of Borgundarholm, father of Bui the Stout and Sigurd Cope. King Swein therefore sent a message to the Wickings of Jom, bidding Earl Sigwaldi, Bui, and their brothers to come and celebrate the funeral feast of their fathers at the banquet which he was preparing. The Wickings set out to attend the banquet, taking with them all the most valiant men of the force; and of their journey to Denmark, Bishop Biarni thus speaks in his poem, *The Praise of the Wickings of Jom* :—

"The strong reddeners of gory spears sailed with their ships to Denmark,
 Glory and might were theirs.
 The terrible wealth-givers there held the funeral feast of their fathers,
 And divers of them, I wot, made increase of labour for themselves."

Forty ships they took with them from Wendland, and twenty from Skaney, so that a great crowd of guests were present at the banquet. The first day of the feast, King Swein, before ascending the high-seat of his father, drank to his memory, and made a

solemn vow that before the expiration of three years he would lead an expedition to England, and either slay King Ethelred or drive him out of the country. All present at the banquet had then to drink this memorial toast, and for the Wicking chiefs were filled the largest horns with the strongest drink. This toast being over, the next to be drunk was one in memory of Christ, and the third, in memory of Michael. All joined in them, and full horns of the strongest drink were served to the Wickings, so that there was great joy in the banqueting-hall. "It is your turn now," said King Swein, "to seek renown for yourselves, O Wickings of Jom, and the more so, as the glory of your name is greater than that of all others in Northern lands." To this they agreed, saying that it was quite right not to permit the joy which the King had caused among them to fall away so suddenly. So says Bishop Biarni:—

"The men of rank, as became them, then sought renown,
Such as would be celebrated in song;
With hawk-like courage they made their vows;
No small merriment was there, I wot, over the ale."

Next, Earl Sigwaldi drank the memorial toast to his father, and made a solemn vow that before three years had expired he would be in Norway, having slain Earl Hakon or driven him out of the country. Thorkel the Tall then vowed that he would follow his brother Sigwaldi to Norway, and not flee from battle so long as his brother remained there to fight. And Bui the Stout then vowed that he would go with the brothers to Norway, and not flee from the face of Earl Hakon in battle. So says Bishop Biarni:—

"Revengeful Sigwaldi, I wot, was the first to vow,
Unyielding Bui was eager to add to the stir;
With ardour they vowed to drive Hakon from his land, or rob him
of life.
Dire was the wrath of fearless men."

Sigurd Cope then vowed that he would go to Norway, and not shirk battle so long as the larger half of the Wickings of Jom continued fighting. Next, Wagn Akason vowed that he would accompany them to Norway, and not return until he had slain Thorkel Leira, Baron of Wick in the east, and taken his daughter Ingibiorg to wife. Several other chiefs there made vows about

various matters, and the funeral feast lasted till close of day. The next morning when the Wickings of Jom were sober, their vows appeared to them somewhat of a boast, and they conferred with one another, discussing what plans to adopt in carrying out their purpose. They decided to prepare for the expedition as speedily as possible; and as soon as the entertainment was over, ships and men were made ready. So says Thorkel Gislason in the Praise of Bui:—

“To their ships, those hawks of the creeks, they bore their swords and
armour;
In favour of swift action, I wot, were they.”

These events occurred near the beginning of winter, and soon became widely known over the country. Two years had elapsed since the death of King Harold Gormson, and five years since King Olaf Tryggwason had left Wendland. Olaf was living at this time beyond sea in England, married to the English lady Gyda. We have already mentioned his baptism in the Scilly Islands; it took place one year before King Swein held his father's funeral feast in Denmark.

Earls Hakon and Eric collect a force to resist the Wickings of Jom.

87. Earl Eric, Hakon's son, was in Raumarick when he heard of the vows made by the Wickings of Jom, and all the preparation for war. He at once gathered a force around him, and set off to the Uplands, whence he passed over the fells into Throndham, to meet his father Earl Hakon. So says Thord Kolbeinson in the Praise of Eric:—

“Weighty tidings of the men of steel came of a truth from the south;
The brave yeomen saw war around them on all sides.
The long-planked cutters of the Danes lay thick upon the sea,
Launched o'er rollers in the south.
Such were the tidings told
To the lord of the steed of Sweidi's field [ocean].”

The Earls sent out the signal of war, an arrow, and the summons

to attend, over all the districts of the Thronds; southwards to North More, to South More, to Raumsdale; northwards to Naumudale and Halogaland, they despatched messengers, to raise a complete levy of the whole force of ships and men. So it is said in the Praise of Eric:—

“Upon the sea the shield-bearer showered in abundance smacks
and sloops and merchantmen.
Swell high the poet’s song, liberal of praise.
When the great spear-hardener with bucklers encircled his
father’s land,
Many were the shields off shore.”

Earl Hakon proceeded straightway south to More, to keep watch, and be a rallying-point for the forces of the district, while Earl Eric directed the gathering of the northern host and its journey southwards.

*The Wickings of Jom sail to Norway and begin plundering.
Earl Hakon has news of their approach.*

88. The Wickings of Jom moved with their fleet to Limfirth, whence they sailed into the open sea. The wind was fresh, and the ships went bravely. So it is said here:—

“A hard-blowing fresh breeze filled the sails of the prow-horses;
The ships leapt over the billows, the hills of lobsters;
Dark waves washed the ships’ sides;
The cold stream rebounded from the ocean-monsters
As the surging waters sped the keel onward.”

And again:—

“The sea-steeds bore the steadfast heroes to the lord of the lands;
Forward to the clatter of shields they pressed;
Wide Norway gathered ships’ sterns in plenty;
Swords dealt savagely with shields; fit food was there for ravens.”

The Wickings touched Norway at Agdi, and from this point directed their course northwards to Rogaland, beginning to plunder as soon as ever they reached the realm of Earl Hakon. They are

said to have made a descent during Yule night at Jadar, where they came upon a man named Geirmund, young and of good family, who was asleep with others in a detached upper room. The Wickings attacked the building and raised a war-cry. At the noise of the shout and the clash of weapons Geirmund awoke with his companions, and perceived the presence of foes. He dressed himself quickly, and jumped down from the room to the ground. The jump was from a great height, yet he lighted on his feet; and Wagn Akason, being near the spot, struck him a blow on the arm, which cut off his hand above the wrist. The night was pitch dark, and Geirmund got away; but he stopped a short distance from the homestead, for he wished to find out who were his foes. Mention is made of this hostile descent in the Praise of the Wickings of Jom:—

“On Yule night, so say those who try the force of red shields,
The Jom-Wickings brought their fleet to Jadar;
O’er greedily the men sought hard for plunder,
The reddeners of swords offered violence to Geirmund.”

Geirmund gathered around him some of his men, and taking a swift boat, hastened away north and appeared in More, where he met with Earl Hakon, and brought him the tidings that a plundering army from Denmark had landed in the south. When the Earl asked if he was certain of the fact, Geirmund held up his maimed arm. “Here,” said he, “is the token of the army’s presence in the land.” The Earl next inquired minutely about the foe; and Geirmund replied that they were the Wickings of Jom, and had slain many good fellows in plundering over a wide district. “They are coming on, nevertheless,” said he, “promptly and speedily, and you will not have long to wait, I think, before they are down here.” “How do you know them,” said the Earl, “to be the Wickings of Jom?” “I recognised them,” said Geirmund, “by the speech of one of them, who, when my hand was cut off, called out, ‘You are making money there, Wagn Akason,’ for there was a gold bracelet on the wrist. I also heard the name of Bui and of others of the Wickings of Jom when I stood a short way off.” Afterwards the Earl sailed over all the friths, passing into them by one shore, and out by the other, resting neither day nor night, sending scouts overland across the Eid, south into the

Firths; and likewise north, to Eric and the host that he was leading. Thus it is said in the Praise of Eric:—

“The war-skilled Earl, whose wooden steeds ne’er hugged the shore,
Set his high-stemmed ships to meet Sigwaldi;
Many an oar quivered as the blades cleft the waters,
But the consolors of the raven dreaded not death.”

The Wickings are told that Earl Hakon is in Hiorunga Bay.

89. Earl Sigwaldi moved his fleet north beyond Stad, directing his course first to the Hereys; but though his men met with many people of the district, they could get no accurate information of what the Earls were doing. The Wickings plundered every settlement in their way; and now turning their course inwards from the open sea, they landed on the island of Hod. The food and cattle which they here seized they brought to their ships; but they slew every man that was able to bear arms. As they were returning to the shore from a raid an old yeoman came up to that part of the plunderers’ band where Bui’s men were, and called out: “You are not behaving like brave men, driving cows and calves away to the shore; you would have a bigger catch if you went after the bear. He is already in the bear-pit.” “What say you, man,” they answered; “can you tell us anything of Earl Hakon?” “The Earl rowed yesterday into Hiorunga Bay,” replied the man, “with one or two ships, certainly not more than three, and he had no news of you.” Hearing this, Bui and his men rushed hastily forward to the ships, leaving behind them all the booty they had taken. “The information is ours,” said Bui; “let us make use of it, and be the first to win a victory.” Directly they reached their ships they rowed away from the shore; and when Earl Sigwaldi called out, asking what news they had heard, “Earl Hakon,” they answered, “is there in the frith.” Then Earl Sigwaldi put his fleet in motion and rowed round the north of the island of Hod into the frith.

The battle of Hiorunga Bay [994]. The Wickings are at first superior ; but Earl Hakon, after sacrificing his son, is aided by a hailstorm, and wins the day. Treatment of the prisoners by Earl Hakon.

90. Earl Hakon and his son Earl Eric were lying at anchor in Hallkelswick, where all their force was gathered together. They had one hundred and eighty ships ; and learning that the Wickings had left the open sea and landed at Hod, they rowed north to seek them. So says Bishop Biarni :—

“Promptly to the spear-storm the Earls of Norway challenged the
foes arrived from the south ;
The land-host, in full numbers, had assembled at short summons ;
Many were the combatants at the play of swords.”

Coming to Hiorunga Bay, they met with the Wickings, and both fleets then arrayed themselves for the battle. Sigwaldi's banner was in the centre of his fleet, where with twenty ships he placed himself in order to attack Hakon, who had sixty. The two chief men with Earl Hakon were Thori Hart of Halogaland, and Styrkar of Gimsa. One wing of Sigwaldi's fleet was composed of Bui the Stout and Sigurd Cope with twenty ships. They were opposed by Eric with sixty ships, who had three chief men with him, Gudbrand White of the Uplands, Thorkel Leira from the Wick, and a man named Armod, a great champion. Wagn Akason with twenty ships formed the other wing of Sigwaldi's fleet ; and against him was arrayed Hakon's son Swein with sixty ships. Skeggi of Up-howe in Yria, and Rognwald of Aerwick in Stad, were with Swein. So says Bishop Biarni :—

“Three valiant chiefs there were, present with each army ;
So men are told, and people hold it in remembrance ;
When the furious wielders of helmet-dinting weapons
Met on the broad bay of Hiorunga.
That was a famous encounter of men.”

The fleets were then rowed towards one another. In the Praise of Eric thus it is said :—

“To meet the Danish sloops in fight, glided the ships, birds of the
glittering sea ;
The fleet ran far down the coast.
At More the Earl cleared the sloops, though bravely manned,
Onward the ships were borne under a warm heap of slain.”

Both sides now set up their banners, and a fierce fight began, in which stones and arrows were the first weapons used. So it is said in the Praise of Bui:—

“The host raised aloft the standard ;
Fiercely fell the storm of sharp weapons upon armour, the shirt
of Hamdis.
Ships and men moved up to the attack.
Stones and shafts made havoc with the lives of men.
Shields broke as the grey spikes clashed against them.”

As the combatants came to closer quarters, there was great slaughter on both sides, but especially among Earl Hakon's men. Many heads and limbs hewn off were cast overboard into the sea. So says the Praise of Bui:—

“Mailshirts burst asunder.
Men's heads and arms alike were cast overboard.
The wolf began to scent the corpses.

Among those who came with the Wickings of Jom from Denmark, two are mentioned as hard in conflict beyond other men, and difficult to an opponent; one of these was Haward the Hewer, and the other, Aslak Holmscall, a man whom iron could not wound. They were fighting comrades of Bui, who himself dealt hard blows. So says Bishop Biarni:—

“Furious Gold-Bui clove helmets with Ygg's fire [sword],
Down into the shoulders he forced the ring-mail's ruin ;
Haward smote the hosts of men with huge heavy blows ;
’Twas an evil work, indeed, to face Aslak in fight.”

Wagn Akason made so fierce an attack on the force of Swein Hakonson that Swein slowly drew back his ships, and was on the verge of flight; but his brother Earl Eric came up to aid him, and pushed forward to the front of the array. Wagn then drew back, but, notwithstanding, he and all his men fought with great bravery and slew many of their foes. At this time Wagn slew

Armod, a mighty man and great champion, who was with Eric. Thus Bishop Biarni relates:—

“The foe found Wagn resistless in hard fight ;
By the side of the doughty hero his men pressed forward boldly ;
When the mighty son of Aki, I wot, in a trice laid low
Stout-hearted Armod in Ygg’s storm [battle].”

The onset of the whole Wicking host was most impetuous, for their blows fell hard and thick. So it is said in the Praise of Bui:—

“To close fight came the hosts ; fierce was the storm of swords ;
Eager were the blades, the bane of shields, to strike the land of helmets
[heads] ;
Warriors fell while arrows flew from the bows,
And swords made loud ring upon strong shields.”

The Wickings shot with such force that neither shields nor armour could withstand it, and the shower of missiles around Earl Hakon was so thick that his coat-of-mail was rent asunder, and, thus useless, he cast it away from him. So Tind Hallkelson relates:—

“When the Widur of the mail-coat flung aside
Hangi’s tinkling shirt, spoiled of its rings ;
’Twas no soft couch prepared for the Earl in the arms, shoulders’ curved
branches, of the Gerd of fire [lady].
The battle grew, din of the flames of Fiolni ;
Disabled were the ships, rolling horses of Wicking Rodi’s way.
There on the sands the mail-coat, ring-woven shirt of Sorli,
Was blown to pieces in sight of the Earl.
He, friend of his men, took note of it.”

The Wickings of Jom had the larger ships, but both sides made most valiant onsets ; there was then a heavy slaughter of the men of Earl Hakon’s force, struck by bolts and stones. So says the Praise of Bui:—

“The ravens screamed : sharp swords lopped men’s legs.
Combatants were maimed with stones.
Grey weapons crashed on heads, the pedestals of helmets.
Head-pieces split asunder.
No rest was there for men’s arms, the mountainous haunts of hawks.”

And when Earl Hakon perceived that his ships were growing bare of men, and began to fear that victory in this battle was not to be expected, as his fleet showed signs of giving way in all parts, he went on land, so we are told, and for the sake of victory sacrificed his son Erling, a boy seven years old, of great beauty and promise. So it is said in the Praise of the Wickings of Jom :—

“The tumult of spears increased in the host.
The franklins, on all sides, fell back, I wot, before the sword-storm
rousters, brave in fight ;
Ere Hakon, stern to men, sacrificed his son in the midst of the battle.
A dire calamity was brought about.”

After Earl Eric had straightened the curve in the line of battle caused by his brother Swein's giving way before Wagn, and the ships composing the wing commanded by Swein held again the same position that they previously had, he returned to his own fleet. There he found that his men had slowly given way, and that Bui, having cut the fastenings by which his ships were bound together, was preparing to drive Eric's ships before him. Earl Eric therefore placed his ship alongside that of Bui, and, being aided by two or three others of his own ships, fought a fierce hand-to-hand fight with Bui, who passed right through Eric's line. Thus it is said in the Praise of Bui :—

“Easily through their ranks passed Bui, I wot ;
The raven, bird of Hangi, rejoiced : the whiz of the spears arose.”

Earl Hakon now returned from land, and having embarked on board his own ship, urged his men eagerly on, saying that victory was now sure. And there arose a great tempest and hailstorm, which beat against the faces of the Wickings. So it is said in the Praise of the Wickings of Jom :—

“A raging storm the maid of Holgi then raised out of the north, I wot ;
Fierce hail loudly rattled on the helmets.
Stones from heaven, driven by the storm, beat into eyes that gleamed
like vipers' eyes.
Blood gurgled forth from the wounds.”

So large were the hailstones that each of them weighed an ounce. So it is said here :—

"Each hailstone weighed an ounce.
Gore spouted from the men's wounds into the sea ;
Swords were streaming with blood.
On all sides fell the dead ; the golden standard was seen to waver,
While the Earl's forces fought keenly from their ships."

As the weather cleared, the Wickings' fancy beheld a woman on Earl Hakon's ship, every one of whose fingers seemed to shoot forth arrows in swift succession, and every arrow was weighted with death to some one. So is it said here :—

"The frightful demon in her power shot forth sharp arrows from her fingers ;
Such lot befell heroes.
Storm and sleet from heaven fell fierce and thick on the mighty men.
Loud was the clattering on the shields."

Earl Sigwaldi therefore cut the ropes which bound his ship to the others, and turning her aside from the battle, took to flight. And when Wagn Akason shouted at him and bade him run not away, Sigwaldi gave no heed to what he said. Wagn then cast a spear at him, which struck the man at the helm, for Wagn knew not that Sigwaldi had left the helm and gone to the oars. Thirty-five ships sailed away with Sigwaldi, and twenty-five remained behind. So says Bishop Biarni :—

"To the courage of the faint-hearted Earl, the trial was greater than was needed ;
He turned aside his fleet from the fight, I wot.
Sigwaldi bade hoist the sails to the top, in the cold wind ;
Waves dashed upon the hulls, a gale swelled the sails."

Earl Hakon then placed his ship on the other side of Bui, leaving Bui's men small space for their blows between the two, Hakon and Eric. Among those on board Earl Eric's ship was Thorstein Middling, a great warrior, who had been at strife with Earl Hakon, but was now purchasing a reconciliation by the assistance that he and his company were affording to the Earls. There was an Icelander also, Thorleif Skuma, son of Thorkel the Wealthy, of Alwidra ; before the battle he had cut for himself a huge club, and had used this weapon throughout the day. Also aboard was Wigfus, a very strong man, son of Wiga-Glum ; he noticed how Aslak Holmscall was smiting and slaying men on

one side and the other, unprotected by either shield or armour, because no weapon could wound him. Lying on the deck was an anvil on which some one of the men had been riveting the clinch of his sword. Wigfus, catching up the anvil with both hands, brought it down on Aslak's head, so that the pointed end pierced the lower part of his brain and killed him. At the same moment Thorleif Skuma struck Haward the Hewer with his club, and breaking several of his bones, felled him to the ground. These events are told together in the Praise of the Wickings of Jom:—

“There Wigfus, eager for glory, made Aslak traverse the way to Hel;
No need is there to tell that story.
Thorleif, the hard-hitter, with his club broke the stout limbs of mightiest
Haward.
Heavy was the blow.”

Earl Eric's men in this onset boarded the ship of Bui, and advanced aft of the forecastle towards him. Here Thorstein Middling struck him a blow across the forehead, cutting through his visor, and making a frightful wound; whereupon Bui struck Thorstein a blow sideways which cut him right in two. Bui then seized two boxes, both full of gold, and shouting aloud, “Men of Bui, overboard all!” himself jumped overboard with the gold. So says the Praise of Bui:—

“The bold raven-feeder leapt o'er the side of the dock-horse.
Rejoiced was the bird of prey. . . .
A chest in each hand took valiant Bui;
His men, I ween, failed to find peace.

Some say that Sigmund Brestison of the Farey Islands was engaged in this battle, fighting for Earl Hakon, and that Bui's hands were struck off by him after Bui had slain Thorstein Middling. Those who make this statement say also that Bui inserted the stumps of his arms in the rings of the two boxes, and so leapt overboard with them. When Bui leapt into the sea, many of his men jumped overboard after him; some were slain on the ship, as there was no use in asking for quarter. The ship was then cleared from stem to stern, and so also the other ships one after another. Eric next laid his ship alongside

that of Wagn, from whom he met with a fierce resistance, and for a long time he unsuccessfully attempted to board the sloop. Thus it is said in the Praise of the Wickings of Jem :—

“Wagn and his men, I know well, held their sloop
After all the other thin-planked ships were cleared.
Not a man of the Prince could board her ;
Fiercely her crew drove back the men of Eric.”

Wagn defended himself most valiantly, smiting and slaying men on both sides of him ; but at last he was overborne by numbers, his ship was cleared, and he himself made prisoner with thirty of his men and taken ashore. So says the Praise of Bui :—

“Wagn beat down the body-guard ; blood flowed o’er the ship.
The keen-eyed raven had a choice of stiff corpses.
Successful now was Eric in quite clearing the ship of the gold-giver ;
Loud was the noise of weapons.”

Wagn and his comrades, being now taken on shore, were all tied together by a rope twisted round their ankles, their arms being left loose. As they all sat in a row on a log, Thorkel Leira went up to them and said : “You made a vow, Wagn, to slay me ; I think it is more probable that I shall slay you.” Thorkel carried a large axe, and first beheaded the outermost of the men on the log, and after him the next, and so on in turn. The Wickings all spoke out bravely, it is said, before they were slain. One of them said : “Here is a cloak-pin in my hand ; I will stick it into the ground if I have any consciousness when my head is off.” His head was then struck off, and the pin fell out of his hand to the ground, as might be expected. Eighteen of them were thus slain. So it is said :—

“There at one time eighteen men lost their lives by the will of Eric.
Wagn’s force, we wot, indeed, was then growing small.
The valiant heroes uttered words of courage among men ;
Sayings that the world holds in renown ;
Brave, indeed, was their conduct.”

When eighteen had been slain, the next in turn was a very handsome man with an abundance of hair, which he held up over his head as he stretched out his neck. “Don’t defile my hair with

blood," said he. So one of Earl Hakon's body-guard, taking the hair in his two hands, held it tight. Thorkel Leira raised his axe aloft and was striking a hard blow, when the Wicking jerked his head back strongly, compelling the man who held the hair to stoop forwards, and the axe struck off both his hands and sunk into the ground. Then Earl Eric came up and said: "Who are you, my handsome fellow?" "Men call me Sigurd," he answered; "I am a natural son of Bui. The Wickings of Jom are not all dead yet." "You are Bui's son, of a truth," said the Earl. "Will you accept quarter?" "That depends upon who offers it," answered the man. "He that offers it," said the Earl, "has the power to give it." "I will accept it then," answered Sigurd; and he was set free from the rope. Then spake Thorkel Leira: "Even if you are willing, O Earl, to give all these men quarter, Wagn Akason shall not escape with life;" and he rushed forward, holding his axe aloft; but Biorn the Bretlander, one of those tied in the rope, threw himself flat on the ground at Thorkel's feet. As Thorkel fell over him he lost his hold of the axe, which Wagn seized, and with it struck Thorkel a death-blow. This is told by Bishop Biarni:—

"Wielding his axe, helmet's giantess, advanced Thorkel Leira,
Where the treasure-giver was reciting love-verses on the Gna of
rings [maiden];
He essayed to cut down the hawk-tempered son of Aki;
Wagn forestalled him, and swift in revenge, slew him first."

Then Eric went up to Wagn, and asked if he would receive quarter. "Willingly," he answered, "if I be allowed to fulfil my vow." So it is said in the Praise of the Wickings of Jom:—

"The wise ring-giver, rouser of the storm of Ygg [battle],
Of Wagn asked, 'Will you your life accept?'
'Life will I not accept, unless to perform the vow that I made when
young.'
Ulli of the sword-storm such answer gave to the Earl."

Eric therefore ordered all the men to be set free from the rope. Twelve of the Wickings remained alive, to whom quarter was given as well as to Wagn. So says Bishop Biarni:—

"To Wagn, and to twelve proud fellows with him,
Generous Eric gave quarter and money:
And folk praise the deed highly."

Earl Hakon was seated on a log a short distance from the spot where the Wickings of Jom were slain, when the clang of a bow-string was heard on the ship that had belonged to Bui. The arrow that was shot struck Gisur, a baron of Waldres, who was sitting, gaily dressed, next the Earl, and he fell from the log, dead. Some of the men, having gone out to the ship, found Haward the Hewer, against the bulwarks, standing on his knees, for he had no feet to stand on. He had a bow in his hand, and as the men came on board he asked: "Who was it that dropped off the log?" "His name is Gisur," they answered. "I have not been as fortunate as I wished," he replied; "I meant that blow for the Earl." "Your ill fortune is quite sufficient," they said; "you shall make no more attempts;" and they slew him there. The bodies of the slain were then searched, and the booty taken away to be shared. Twenty-five of the Wickings' ships were cleared. So says Tind:—

"The feeder of the ravens' flock made sword-edge marks on the troop
of Wends,
And the shield-hound bit [sword],
Before the sword-wielders could clear twenty-five of the invading
war-sloops.
Dangerous work it was."

The Earls' force was now disbanded, and Hakon proceeded north to Throntham, much displeased because Eric had given quarter to Wagn. Eric went to the Uplands, and thence eastwards to the Wick, accompanied by Wagn, to whom he gave Ingibiorg in marriage, the daughter of Thorkel Leira. So says Bishop Biarni:—

"Noble-minded, the Ulli of shield-clashing came to marry fair Ingibiorg:
'Twas the desire of many."

The following spring Earl Eric bestowed on Wagn an excellent ship of war, fully equipped and manned; and the two parted very dear friends. Wagn then sailed away to his home in Denmark, taking with him his wife Ingibiorg, and settled in Funen. He became a distinguished chief, and many great men were descended from him. Biorn the Bretlander sailed west to Bretland, and settled

down on his own estates, where he was living when tidings of him were brought by ships that passed between land and land.

Meeting of King Olaf Tryggwason with Biorn the Bretlander, who tells him of events in Norway.

91. As King Olaf abode in the British Islands the desire came upon him to visit his kinsmen and patrimony in Norway. Thereupon he became eager for news of the doings of the chiefs in Norway and other lands lying east of the ocean. When Biorn the Bretlander came to England, King Olaf heard from him a full and truthful account of the battle against the Wickings of Jom, which had been fought in Norway the past winter; also that Earl Hakon, in order to obtain victory, had sacrificed his son. Olaf, at the same time, became assured that Earls Hakon and Eric had grown extremely popular with the people on account of the victory they had won over the Wickings of Jom, whereby the country had been freed from the ravages of the invaders. King Olaf, like other men, admired the prowess of the Wickings, but was much grieved that evil violence should be wrought in the land of his forefathers. These tidings greatly increased King Olaf's desire to sail eastwards over-sea. He determined in his mind that, if through God's grace he should win for himself a kingdom in Norway, he would strive to the uttermost to convert the folk to the true faith. He would strive the more earnestly because of the greater extent to which the Fiend had deceived the whole nation through his servant Earl Hakon, the blasphemer of God. On the other hand, considering the difficulty which the Wickings of Jom, with all their enormous force, had experienced in their contest with the Earls, father and son, there did not appear much hope that King Olaf would be able to win Norway with such small power as he possessed, while the Earls retained their great strength, and enjoyed a wide popularity among the people of the land. Moreover, King Olaf knew of none in Norway who either could or would afford him help; for his kinsmen there, though numerous and noble, could have no knowledge whether he was still alive or dead. Though they knew that he had gone out of the country when he was one year old, yet from the time that

he left Sweden at the age of three years they had no certain information of him; for few persons had even knowledge of his name after, as already told, he left Gardar. As King Olaf pondered over all these things, he perceived the impossibility of winning for himself a kingdom in Norway, unless the grace of God should strengthen him with yet greater strength than heretofore; and thenceforth he committed his cause wholly into the hands and the foresight of Almighty God.

King Olaf's mother Astrid is redeemed from bondage by Lodin, who marries her.

92. An event must now be related which had taken place long ago. There was a man named Lodin, of the Wick country, rich and of good family. He often took part in trading voyages, and sometimes in Wiking expeditions. One summer Lodin happened to be engaged in a trading voyage to the Baltic; he was the sole owner of the ship in which he sailed, and it carried a large cargo. He steered to Wendland, where he remained for the summer, buying and selling. While the market lasted, merchandise of various kinds was brought to the spot, and many thralls were offered for sale. Among these Lodin saw a woman who had been sold into bondage; and as he looked upon her he recognised Astrid, Eric's daughter, formerly the wife of King Tryggvi Olafson; changed, however, from what he had known her, for she was now pale and thin, and poorly clad. Going up to her, he inquired of her condition, and she answered him: "It grieves me to mention it. I was sold as a bondswoman, and now I am brought here to be again sold." Hereupon they renewed acquaintance with each other, for she knew him and his family. Astrid then begged him to purchase her, and take her home to her kinsmen; and Lodin answered: "I will offer to free you from bondage and take you home with me, on condition that you marry me." And inasmuch as Astrid was in a sore strait, and knew, moreover, that Lodin was valiant and rich and high-born, she promised to marry him, that she might obtain her freedom. Thereupon Lodin bought Astrid, and took her away with him to Norway, where he married her, with the consent of her kinsmen. Their children were Thorkel Neb, Ingirid,

and Ingigerd. The daughters of King Tryggwi Olafson and Astrid were Ingibjorg and Astrid. The sons of Eric Baldhead, and brothers of Astrid, were Sigurd, Jostein, Karlhead, and Thor-kel Tail. These were all distinguished men, and possessed large estates in the east of the land.

Earl Hakon's evil conduct. His inquiries concerning King Olaf Tryggwason, and his plot to entrap him. Birth of St. Olaf [995].

93. Earl Hakon's rule extended over all the outer portions of Norway by the sea, and he had under his government seventeen shires. King Harold Fairhair had arranged that there should be an earl over each shire, which arrangement held good long afterwards. Earl Hakon had thus sixteen earls under him. So it is said in the Wellekla :—

“Where can the age see, thus subject to one chief, a land and sixteen earls.

Let every man ponder.”

As long as Earl Hakon ruled over Norway, the land had prosperous seasons, and there was perfect peace among the yeomen, with whom the Earl was for a very long time exceedingly popular. But as he advanced in years, his evil conduct towards women greatly increased, and reached such a point that he caused wives and daughters of powerful men to be seized and taken to his house, whence after a week or two they were sent back home. By this conduct the Earl became an object of intense dislike to the kinsmen of these women, and the yeomen began to murmur in the way *Thronds* are wont to do whenever anything is displeasing to their minds.

Earl Hakon had heard a rumour that in the British Islands was one, calling himself Oli, who was honoured as King, and the Earl suspected, from the stories told to him, that the man belonged to the royal race of Norway. Oli gave out that he belonged to Garda; but the Earl had also learnt that Tryggwi Olafson had a son whose name was Olaf, removed east to the realm of Garda, and there brought up by King Waldamar. The Earl caused many

inquiries to be made about this Olaf, suspecting that he might then be in the British Islands. In the spring which followed his battle with the Wickings of Jom, the Earl summoned together many of his chiefs in the east of the land, and among those who obeyed his bidding were the two brothers Jostein and Karlhead, sons of Eric of Ofrustead. There was present also a great friend of Earl Hakon, named Thori Clack, a man who was wont to go on freebooting expeditions in the summer-time, but occasionally sailed with cargoes of merchandise to various countries, with which, therefore, he was well acquainted. At a council of the chiefs whom he had summoned, Earl Hakon thus spake: "We have learnt that there is a man in the British Islands called Oli of Garda, and I believe him to be Olaf the son of Tryggwi. If this be so, we must look for the utmost hostility from him if ever he acquires any power. With your consent I would therefore carry out a plan whereby we may hold this our kingdom in peace; for I abhor having to deal with such a hostile invasion as that of the Wickings of Jom a short time ago. I intend rather, if it is your will, by means of some device to bring him into our power, accompanied only by a small following." The chiefs agreed that the device was excellent, saying that they desired Earl Hakon for their ruler as long as he lived, and not a chief from abroad. The Earl next summoned his friend Thori Clack to his side, and thus spake: "You must this summer make a trading voyage, as is customary now with many, and go to Dublin in Ireland; but your real object must be to inquire concerning a man in the west called Oli of Garda, and find out who he is. Supposing you learn for certain that he is Olaf Tryggwason, or some other descendant of the royal race of Norway, deal treacherously with him if possible, and either bring him here into my power, or else slay him yourself." To this course Thori consented. Jostein and Karlhead were next summoned to speak with the Earl, who said to them: "You will proceed to the British Islands with this man, Thori Clack, having first sworn a most binding oath to support him in all that he does if you meet with Olaf Tryggwason; you will confirm all he says, and in no-wise reveal to Olaf the deceit which Thori is practising on him, until you are back here in Norway with him, and he has set foot on the mainland. I will take measures that no harm happen, even though you then make him aware of our plans. I am compelling

you rather than others to this business, because Olaf will be more ready to put trust in your story, for you are his kinsmen, than in that of others who are strangers to him. And, in the next place, you both are tried and honourable men, who will not break the oaths that you swear before me and all these chiefs here assembled." The two brothers answered at the same time: "Never shall so shameful a disgrace befall us, that we wickedly deceive our near kinsman in that manner." "If you like not this course," said the Earl, "there is yet another that lies before you: to be tormented to death with sore torments in the face of this assembled meeting. On the other hand, if you fully carry out this our command, you will obtain our friendship, and receive from us valuable rewards." In the end, whether their conversation about the matter was long or short, they consented to undertake the deceitful work, binding themselves by oath to Earl Hakon and all the chiefs present to observe all that the Earl commanded, rather than subject themselves by disobedience to such harsh measures as he had threatened them with. Thori then made ready for the voyage as quickly as possible, and with the two brothers sailed over-sea westwards.

King Harold the Grenlander, of Westfold, son of Gudrod Biorson, had married Asta, daughter of Gudbrand Hump, a distinguished man. In the spring of this year he went eastwards to Sweden, where he met with his death, for the house in which he was staying was burnt over his head, as is told in his Saga. The news of the event reached Thori before he and the brothers sailed away from Norway. Harold's wife was with child at the time, and in the following summer she gave birth to a boy, who was sprinkled with water, in accordance with the old heathen custom, and named Olaf.

Thori Clack persuades Olaf Tryggwason to accompany him to Norway. They reach the Orkneys.

94. Thori Clack arrived at Dublin in Ireland, where he learnt that Oli of Garda was staying with his kinsman Olaf Kuaran. Thori, who was clever in speech, soon got into conversation with Oli; and after frequent interviews Oli began to make inquiries about Norway, and especially the Upland Kings, asking which

of them were still alive, and what realms they governed. Thori told him all that he asked, and likewise that King Harold the Grenlander had died in Sweden. Oli next inquired about Earl Hakon, and asked concerning his popularity in the country; to which Thori answered: "Earl Hakon is so powerful that no one dares to speak or act otherwise than as he wishes; this, however, must be said, that nowhere else than to him can men look for protection. To tell you the truth, I know the temper of many worshipful chiefs, yea, and of the commons too; and they would most gladly see some descendant of Harold Fairhair come to Norway. We have no such man now within the borders of the land, for this special reason: experience seems to show that no man can prevail in battle against Earl Hakon since he fought the Wickings of Jom and their mighty force." When they had spoken together frequently of these things, Olaf revealed his name and family to Thori, and asked him: "Do you suppose, Thori, that if I went to Norway, the yeomen would be willing to accept me as King over the country?" Thori urged him with much eagerness to make the journey, praising him and his accomplishments highly. He said moreover: "You did well, Olaf, in not concealing yourself any longer from me, for I have heard many stories of your renown, and so has many another man in Norway. And to tell you the truth, I had a special errand here to the British Islands on this occasion. I came at the request of the Upland chiefs and other distinguished persons, kinsmen of yours, to ascertain who might be the Oli of Garda, of whom such famous deeds were constantly told; and if I could obtain certain proof, as I have done, that you were Olaf Tryggwason, it was the request of your kinsmen, and of all the people of Norway, that you would come among them as quickly as possible, and be made chief over the country. They said, and said truly, that the Earl had no power to hold the kingdom if the commons under a native chief rose against him, though he defended the country valiantly against foreign Wickings when he had the support of the land forces. This confirms what I said the day before yesterday," said Thori, "that the folk of Norway would like over them a king of the race of Harold Fairhair. And in order that you may not distrust this my story, I have acted under the advice of others, your kinsmen, and have brought with me here two of your mother's

brothers, Jostein and Karlhead." As soon as Olaf heard that his kinsmen had come, he sent for them and welcomed them with the utmost joy. Then he took counsel and conversed with all three of them together, inquiring the reason of their journey. Thori gave exactly the same account as before; Jostein and his brother said little, but confirmed what Thori said. Now, because Olaf put trust in their words, and, moreover, was himself anxious to proceed to Norway, he prepared for the voyage. As soon as he was ready, he sailed away from Ireland with five ships to the Sudreys, and thence to the Orkneys. His mother's brothers and Thori accompanied him on the voyage.

The conquest of the Orkneys by Harold Fairhair, who bestows the Earldom thereof on the family of Rognwald, Earl of More.

95. After King Harold Fairhair had brought North More and Raumsdale into subjection, and slain the Kings who ruled over them, as is told in his Saga, he went northwards to Throntham in the autumn of the year, and appointed Rognwald, son of Eystein Rattle, Earl over both the conquered shires. Rognwald was called The Mighty and The Sagacious, both of which epithets, in the general opinion, truthfully applied to him. Rognwald was a very dear friend of King Harold, in many of whose battles and expeditions he was present, and was highly esteemed by him. Earl Rognwald married Hild, daughter of Rolf Neb; their sons were Rolf, surnamed Gaungu-Rolf, and Thori the Silent. Earl Rognwald had also three natural sons, Hallad, Einar, and Rollaug, who were grown up when their legitimate brothers were born. During the hostilities that accompanied King Harold's seizure of supreme power in Norway, many men whom he outlawed fled west over-sea, and became Wickings. They made their home in the Orkneys and Sudreys during the winter-time; but in the summer they plundered the coasts of Norway, doing much damage. King Harold therefore raised a levy every summer for defence against them; but wherever his fleet came near them, they fled before it, mostly across the sea. Becoming tired of war and calling out the levy, King Harold sailed one summer to the British Islands, and

coming first to Shetland, slew there all the Wickings that failed to make their escape; thence he sailed south to the Orkneys, which he cleared altogether of Wickings; next he proceeded to the Sudreys, where he fought several battles, and was generally victorious, plundering the islands, and slaying many Wickings who had been captains of bands. Then he harried Scotland, where also he fought battles, and continuing his western course, came to Man, where at his approach the people all fled to Scotland, taking with them whatever property they could carry away; and when King Harold landed on the island he found no booty. So says Thorbiorn Hornklofi:—

“The wise ring-giver led many a shield against the sea-side homes.
The captain of ships, wolves of Nid, attacked his foes upon the sand.
The whole host of battle, song of shields, fled the land
Before the face of the mighty waster of the Scots.”

In this expedition of King Harold, Rognwald, Earl of More, and his brother Sigurd took part, and likewise a son of Rognwald, Iwar, who fell in it fighting. As compensation for the loss of his son Iwar, King Harold bestowed Shetland and the Orkneys on Rognwald, who gave both districts to his brother Sigurd. After Harold had sailed away home, Earl Sigurd formed an alliance with Thorstein the Red, son of Olaf the White, and Aud the Deep-minded. Together they led plundering expeditions to Scotland, and acquired possession of Caithness and Sutherland, up to the Ekkial. Earl Sigurd slew a Scotch Earl, named Melbrig-Tooth, whose head he fastened to the crupper of his saddle. In the head there was a projecting tooth, against which he struck the calf of his leg, causing a wound that festered, and led to his death. He was buried in a cairn on the banks of the Ekkial.

Earl Sigurd was succeeded by his son Guthorm, who ruled over the country for one year, and then died childless; whereupon the Wickings, Danes and Northmen, again settled there.

Earl Rognwald grants the Earldom of the Orkneys to his son Einar.

96. When Earl Rognwald, who was in Norway, heard of the death of his brother Sigurd, and also that the Wickings had again

formed settlements both in Shetland and the Orkneys, he sent into the west his son Hallad, upon whom King Harold bestowed the title of Earl. Hallad, accompanied by a large force, came to the Orkneys, and there established himself; but when the Wickings, who sailed by the Islands in autumn and spring, made descents on the headlands and drove away cattle to the shore, Earl Hallad grew tired of living there. So he formally rejected the position of Earl, and taking the rank of franklin, returned to Norway. His father Rognwald was much displeased at his return. "My sons," he said, "are not like my forefathers." To this remark of his father, Einar answered: "You give me little of your affection; it will be a very small matter to me to lose such regard as I have received from my childhood until now, and it cannot be my fate to find elsewhere less good fortune than I have had here. If, therefore, you will grant me some assistance, I will go to the Orkneys, and I promise you that I will never come back to Norway." "I shall be well pleased," the Earl answered, "if you come not again; but I have little hope that you will ever be an honour to your kinsmen, for your mother's family are all thrall-born." The Earl then gave Einar a ship of war, sufficiently well manned, and in the autumn he sailed to the west. Arrived at the Orkneys, he made war upon the Wickings who had settled there, and slew them. He then became Earl over the Islands, and was a great and powerful chief.

Earl Einar avenges his father Rognwald, slain by King Harold's sons. His successors in the Earldom of the Orkneys down to Sigurd.

97. When the sons of King Harold Fairhair were grown up, they became excessively overbearing in their conduct, slaying the King's Earls and other powerful men. One spring, Halfdan Longshanks and Gudrod Sheen, with a numerous array of followers, sailed south to More. Coming unawares upon Earl Rognwald, they surprised him in his house, to which they set fire, burning him and sixty other persons inside. Then Gudrod took to himself the authority exercised by the Earl; but shortly afterwards he placed

himself in his father's hands, and was reconciled to him. Whereupon King Harold granted to Earl Rognwald's son Thori all his father's inheritance, as well as the title of Earl, and gave him his daughter Olof Arbot to wife. Halfdan Longshanks, having equipped two warships, sailed with them west over-sea, directly after the death of Earl Rognwald. His arrival at the Orkneys was quite unexpected, and Einar at once quitted the Islands, but, unawares to Halfdan, he returned the same autumn. As the result of a contest between them, the Earl deprived Halfdan Longshanks of life, as is told in the Saga of the Earls of the Orkneymen. Soon afterwards King Harold sailed west with an army to the Orkneys, and when Earl Einar heard of his arrival, he passed over to Ness, reciting this verse:—

“Many a fine-bearded man, for stealing sheep is outlawed,
And I, for I have slain the King's young son in the isles;
There is danger, franklins say, from the bold-hearted ruler;
A notch I've cut in Harold's shield, but I feel no fear.”

Men and messages now passed between the King and the Earl; and a reconciliation was brought about on the terms that the Orkneymen should pay to the King sixty marks of gold. The yeomen thought the sum too large; whereupon Einar made them an offer to pay the whole of it himself, provided thereby that he became the owner of all the freeholds in the Orkneys. To this condition the yeomen consented, because all the poorer of them had but small estates, and the rich said they could redeem their freeholds as soon as they wished. So the Earl paid the whole fine to the King, who then sailed back to Norway in the autumn. For a considerable period afterwards the Earl of the Orkneys was the owner of all the freeholds in the Islands, until Earl Sigurd, son of Lodwer, restored them to the yeomen. Einar ruled over the Orkneys for a long time, and died a natural death, leaving three sons, Arnkel, Erlend, and Thorfinn Skullcleaver. The two, Arnkel and Erlend, fell in England along with Eric Bloodaxe, as already related; but Thorfinn was for a long time Earl in the Orkneys. He was a great and warlike chief, and died a natural death, leaving five sons, Arnfinn, Haward, Liot, Skuli, and Lodwer. Arnfinn married Ragnhild, daughter of Eric and Gunnhild, as already told; and Ragnhild, after plotting the death of her husband, married his

brother Haward. Haward was an excellent chief, and under him there were prosperous seasons; but he and Ragnhild did not live long together before she incited his sister's son Einar, surnamed Bread-and-Butter, to kill him; she promised Einar that if he did the deed, he should be Earl over the Islands, and she would marry him. But when Einar had slain the Earl, Ragnhild refused to marry him, declaring that it was a great falsehood to say she had shared in any plot to kill the Earl. Ragnhild then sent for another nephew of Earl Haward, Einar Hardmouth, whom she requested to avenge the Earl, making him the same promise that she had made to the other Einar; but when he had slain his kinsman, she refused to marry him. Afterwards she married Liot, the brother of Haward and Arnfinn, and he became Earl over the Islands, and was a great chief. At the instigation of Ragnhild, he caused Einar Hardmouth to be slain. Earl Liot's brother Skuli passed over into Scotland, where the King of the Scots conferred on him the title of Earl; thence he went down to Caithness, and raising a force there, sailed with it to the Orkneys, and contested the chieftainship with his brother Liot. Being defeated, he fled over to Ness, and in a second battle, fought at the Dales in Caithness, he was slain, and Earl Liot subjected the whole of Caithness to his rule. Earl Liot was a great warrior; his last battle was fought against a Scottish Earl named Magbiod; and although his numbers were less than half those of the Scots, Liot's attack was so vigorous that the Scots gave way, and before the battle had lasted any length of time many had fallen, and those who remained alive fled. Earl Liot gained the victory; but he received wounds that caused his death. After him his brother Lodwer took the Earldom in the Orkneys, and was a great chief. He married Edna, daughter of Kiarval, King of the Irish; their son was Sigurd the Stout. Earl Lodwer died a natural death, and was succeeded in the Earldom by his son Sigurd. Sigurd was a powerful earl, ruling over a wide extent of territory, for he held Caithness by main force against the Scots, and every summer he led forth a host to sea, with which he plundered in the Sudreys, Scotland, and Ireland. One summer an earl named Finnleik came from Scotland with an overwhelming host and challenged Earl Sigurd to fight on a fixed day a pitched battle, on a chosen spot marked out by rods of hazel at Skidamoor in Caithness. Earl Sigurd collected

a force together; but the Orkneymen were not eager to fight against overwhelming odds; odds, it is said, of seven Scots to one man of Sigurd's; and the Earl received no assistance from the Orkneys until he restored to the yeomen all the freeholds in the Islands as the price of their aid in battle. Then Earl Sigurd gained a victory over Finnleik, and the yeomen in the Orkneys became the owners of their freeholds.

King Olaf Tryggwason arrives at the Orkneys on his way to Norway, and compels Earl Sigurd to become a Christian.

98. King Olaf Tryggwason sailed from the west with his fleet, as we have already related; and because the Pentland Frith was not passable, he anchored his ships in Asmundar Bay, by Rognwaldsey of the Orkneys. Earl Sigurd Lodwerson happened to be there in the bay with a single warship, intending to sail over to Caithness; and as soon as King Olaf knew that it was Earl Sigurd who lay at anchor in front of him, he bade him come and speak with him. The Earl therefore came on board the King's ship, and the King thus addressed him: "Doubtless it is known to you, Earl Sigurd, that King Harold Fairhair sailed to the British Isles with a numerous force after he became possessed of the whole of Norway. He brought the Orkneys and Shetland into subjection, and widely extended his rule over other districts here in the west. These islands, together with Shetland, he gave to his Earl, Rognwald the Mighty, as compensation for the loss of his son. Rognwald gave them to his brother Sigurd, and Sigurd then became King Harold's Earl. A second time King Harold led a very numerous host hither, against Earl Einar, and through the mediation of well-disposed persons peace was made between them, the whole of the Orkneys and Shetland being claimed by the King as his own. In the end Earl Einar paid the King sixty marks of gold on account of the death of Halfdan Longshanks, the King's son, and held these lands as a fief under King Harold. Shortly afterwards, King Eric, Harold's son, came over here from Norway, and the Earls, Turf-Einar's sons, were then his liegemen, in proof

of which they supplied him with a large force for a freebooting expedition. A second time King Eric came to the Islands, and took away with him the two Earls, Arnkel and Erlend, leaving Earl Thorfinn, their brother, as ruler over the country. The Earls both fell in England along with King Eric. Afterwards the sons of King Eric came from England and exercised authority over the Islands, and on their departure they placed them under the rule of Earl Arnfinn, their brother-in-law. He was succeeded in the government by his brothers; first Haward, then Liot, and lastly Lodwer, your father. You, Sigurd, now hold the Earldom of this kingdom, which I claim as my inheritance, as I claim all the other dominions that King Harold Fairhair possessed, and his descendants, one after the other, inherited. And as it has come to pass that you are now in my power, there are two courses open to you. The one, that you accept the true faith, and allow yourself to be baptized with all your subjects. You may thus expect to hold under me the kingdom which you have hitherto held; and, moreover, which is of much greater importance, you may hope to reign with Almighty God for ever in the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven, if you hold fast His commandments. The other, a very wretched course, and unlike the former, that you now die; and after your death I will pass over the Islands with fire and flame, laying waste the whole realm, unless the folk will believe in the true God. If this is the course you accept, you will, after a speedy death, like all others who trust in carved images, suffer terrible torments with the Fiend in the fire of hell for ever." In this emergency the Earl chose the meeter course, and accepted the true faith; he was then baptized with all the folk in the Orkneys. Afterwards he became King Olaf's liegeman, binding himself to fidelity by oaths; whereupon he received his lands as a fief from the King, and placed in the King's hands, as a hostage, his son, whose name was Whelp or Hundi. King Olaf caused the boy to be baptized, giving him the name of Lodwer, and took him away to Norway. He then sailed away from the Orkneys, leaving behind him clerical teachers to reform the people and teach them holy doctrine. King Olaf and the Earl parted from each other in friendship.

King Olaf arrives in Norway, founds a church in Moster, and is informed at Agdaness of the treachery of Thori Clack [995].

99. Under a fair breeze King Olaf sailed away on the open sea in an easterly direction. He was in cheerful mood, for he had no suspicion of any plot against him, or of any danger either from his kinsmen or the others who were in his company; at the same time it was a constant wonder to him that his kinsmen Jostein and Karl-head remained silent, showing no sign of gladness from the time they met with him in Ireland. King Olaf reached land at Moster after the ocean voyage, and going on shore, had Mass sung in a tent; then he had the ground on which the service had been held marked out for a church. Craftsmen were obtained; all other things necessary for the work were procured; and on that spot the first church was built. King Olaf endowed it with money, and placed it under the charge of Thangbrand the priest. On arriving at Moster, Thori Clack said that the King's only plan was to let no one know who he was, but to proceed as rapidly as possible to Throntham and come upon Earl Hakon unawares. The King thought the plan well devised and wise, and acted in accordance with it. He sailed northwards day and night as the wind favoured him, following the land, but keeping to the open sea, outside the Islands. He nowhere touched the mainland on his voyage, and when the winds were contrary he anchored by the Islands that lay farthest out at sea. Now Thori had suggested this plan because he knew that the majority of the people of the land were eager for every change, and that Olaf Tryggwason had become famous in Norway by reason of the many stories told of him. He considered that Olaf had so many distinguished kinsmen and relations, especially in the east of the country, that if they should take him for their chief, as would certainly happen should his arrival among them become known, then the whole land force would hasten to his side and be content with nothing less than making him their King, and strengthening him in the kingdom. On the other hand, the strength of Hakon lay chiefly in the districts of the Thronds; and it did not seem to Thori a difficult matter for the Earl to put Olaf out of the way by cunning and by force, if he should show himself

in the north with no more troops than he had then with him; supposing that Thori had not already found means to slay Olaf, as he had devised with the Earl before leaving Norway. Thus, through the ships keeping to the open sea, the people of the land were ignorant of Olaf's arrival, until one day at evening Agdaness in the north was reached. Here they brought their ships to anchor and put up the awning. Conversing with those whom they met, they soon learnt that Earl Hakon was up the country in Throntham and had quarrelled with the yeomen. When Thori Clack heard of this, he was much amazed, as the news was quite different from anything that he expected; for after the battle against the Wickings of Jom all the people in Norway had become devoted friends of Earl Hakon, because of the victory whereby he had completely freed the country from hostilities. It was indeed a mishap, so it seemed to Thori, that a great chief had appeared at a moment when the yeomen were hostile to the Earl, not only in the land generally, but even at home in his own patrimony. Thori, therefore, summoning Jostein and Karlhead, held a long conference with them. When night was come and the men on board the ships were all asleep, the two brothers arose, and having dressed themselves quietly, took their weapons. Entering a boat, they rowed to King Olaf's ship, which they boarded secretly, and going to the King's bedside, told him there was a pressing need that he should go with them on shore, which he did. The King having seated himself, the brothers fell down together at his feet, showing much sorrow and concern. "We have committed," they said, "a grievous crime, for which we deserve, like wicked traitors, to die. We therefore now give up ourselves into your power, that you may either let us live or put us to death, whichever you will." "What is your trouble?" asked the King. Then they told him all; how Earl Hakon had forced them to join in his treacherous plans, and aid Thori Clack. "Yea," said they, "and a speedy death is now before you; this is the reason that we have always appeared anxious and never cheerful since we set out from Norway." The King answered: "Stand up quickly. I cannot feel anger towards you for what you have done, because this event, in my belief, like all others affecting me, has happened according to Divine foresight. You have acted well in your case, seeing the difficulty that beset

you, and now I ask you to put before me some good plan how to proceed." Then Jostein answered: "Last evening, when Thori heard the news from land, he held a conference with us both, and thanked us for the way in which we had kept our promises and oaths to Earl Hakon. Then he told us of his intention to ask you, early this morning, to go on shore alone with him, as if to arrange some plan of action. He would previously send, he said, two trustworthy men into the forest a short way off, who should rush up and slay you as soon as he gave the signal. Your death was planned between him and Earl Hakon before they parted; they intended that you should be slain before we reached land, and therefore we were both left free to tell you of their plot if we set foot on the mainland. As events have happened, you still live, and we are free from all our oaths and binding promises made to Earl Hakon and the chiefs. This is our advice, then, first and foremost, that you place in the forest men in whom you have trust, so that you may be beforehand with Thori, and take the dastard in the snare that he has laid for you." "All shall be done," said the King, "just as you have counselled. Will you two do the work, or shall I get other men for it?" Both at once replied that henceforth they would further all his plans, whatever he desired. So the King bade them go into the forest, whence they should rush up to him as soon as he held up his glove. Then he went on board his ship unobserved by any.

The slaying of Thori Clack.

100. Early in the morning Thori came to King Olaf's ship, and requested his company on shore, that the two might take counsel together; and the King said it would be well to do so. When they were come to land, and were about to sit down, Thori wished to sit where he would be the higher of the two; but the King refused to allow him, and held up his glove with his left hand. At this signal Jostein and his brother rushed out of the forest, and two other men at the same time; but the brothers were the swifter, and both at once smote that wicked traitor Thori, so that he died immediately. And when Thori's men, whom he had appointed to slay the King, saw what had happened, they stopped;

whereupon Jostein and his brother turned towards them, and slew them both. The other men of Thori, who were on board his ship, begged for quarter; and when the King granted it, they all became his men, confirming their submission by oath.

Earl Hakon's evil conduct rouses the yeomen.

101. Earl Hakon became a man of such very evil conduct towards women that he held them all equally at his disposal, mothers and daughters, sisters, high-born maidens or wives; and in many other matters his behaviour to his subjects was stern beyond measure, so that he was called Hakon the Bad, a name that has ever since clung to him. There was a man named Bryniolf, powerful and popular, who lived in Gaulardale; and his wife was beautiful and highly accomplished. One night Earl Hakon sent messengers to take away Bryniolf's wife and bring her to him. Bryniolf was already in bed when the Earl's men arrived at his homestead upon their errand and declared to him Hakon's command that he should send him his wife. "This Earl leaves little unsaid or undone that is bad," answered Bryniolf. "And he is so headstrong in his wickedness that we must expect his kingdom overthrown shortly, and himself miserably deprived of life; for this people that has to live under him is in great bondage and trouble. As for you, his messengers, choose for yourselves quickly whether you will withdraw hence, or abide the speedy disgrace which, you may pledge yourselves with both hands, will befall you." The messengers thought that, as matters looked, the most fitting choice was to return; and coming to the Earl, they told him how their business had ended. The Earl answered: "It will all have one end for Bryniolf; he shall either give up the woman or be slain." He then sent a great company to Bryniolf's homestead; and on arrival there they declared the Earl's message. "Likely enough," answered Bryniolf, "I have no force to meet you at this time; but, for all that, the Earl will at last meet with deserved disgrace and shame for his tyranny and outrage." With these words he sprang up, seized his clothes and weapons, and went off in a great rage, while the messengers took his wife and brought her to the Earl. Bryniolf went out into the neighbourhood, and

calling together the yeomen, complained to them of his injury, telling the dishonour that had been done to him. "I ask your aid now," he said; "let us gather a force together and march against the Earl, and either fight with him, or burn his house over his head. We shall be utterly disgraced if we dare not drive away such wickedness from our midst. And though this present dishonour touches me more closely than others, we shall not have long to wait before many will have to relate like troubles of their own, if nothing is done. Some of you possibly are yourselves too brave to suffer any dishonour at the hands of the Earl, though you are now unwilling to be moved by my necessities." The yeomen, as many as were there assembled, loudly applauded the speech of Bryniolf, and declared it a most grievous pity that a deed of such import should befall a valiant man. Little was now needed to produce open rebellion among them.

The yeomen rise up against the Earl, who takes refuge with his thrall Kark in a cave.

102. A short time after these things, Earl Hakon, being on circuit in Gaulardale, was staying at Medalhouse, and his ships were lying out at sea close by Wiggia. There was a powerful yeoman, named Orm Lugg, who dwelt at a homestead called Byness; and his wife, whose name was Gudrun, was a daughter of Bergthor of Lunda. She was known as the Lunda-Sun, because of her great beauty. Earl Hakon sent his thralls to Orm at Byness to fetch Orm's wife. Arrived there, they declared their errand, which Orm took in good part, inviting them to have supper first; but before they finished their meal there arrived a large number of people from the neighbourhood, to whom Orm had sent word, and then he refused to let Gudrun go away on any account. She herself spoke to the thralls and said: "Take this message from me to the Earl, that I will not come to him unless he sends Thora of Rimul to fetch me." Now Thora was a great lady, and a favourite of the Earl. The thralls went away in a great rage, loudly threatening the yeoman and his lady that they would repent of their conduct before long. "We shall come again a second time," they said, "and in such a way that you

will deem it the best course for both of you to obey the Earl's will." Thus they parted. Orm summoned the neighbourhood to war, sending the signal thereof, an arrow, to Halldor at Skerdingstead; but Halldor drove the bearer away. Then he despatched the arrow east, west, south, and north through the district, summoning all the fighting men to march in arms against Earl Hakon and slay him. In response to the summons, a great multitude of men hastened together, and the whole force pressed forward to Medallhouse. Earl Hakon, getting intelligence of the rising, left the homestead and retired into a deep dale, afterwards known as Earl's Dale, where he and his men concealed themselves. Later in the day he received full tidings of the host of the yeomen, who had seized upon all the roads, supposing that he would most likely make towards his ships, which were under the command of his son Erlend, a most promising man. When darkness came on, the Earl dismissed his men, ordering them to find their way by the forest paths to Orkadale; "No one," said he, "will do you harm if I am nowhere near you. Tell my son Erlend to take our ships seaward along the Frith, and go on south to More, where he will meet me, for I intend to go thither as soon as the yeomen's host is somewhat dispersed. I shall easily be able to find a hiding-place hard by, while their search is most active, and their force keeps together." The Earl's men therefore left him; some went away to the ships to see Erlend, others who had farms went home to their abodes, and the Earl remained behind with a thrall named Thormod Kark. This thrall had been a gift to Hakon when he was a child cutting his first tooth, and both men were of the same age. The Earl and Kark went to look for a place of refuge, the Earl riding, while Kark walked. Coming to the river Gaul, they found the ice on it much broken up with holes, and dismounting from his horse, the Earl led him into one of them; he also left his cloak there, fastened to the edge of the ice, to prevent its drifting away altogether. Thence they passed on to a cave, known afterwards as the Earl's Cave. Here they lay for a while and slept. On waking, the thrall said: "I had a dream just now, Sire;" and when the Earl asked what the dream was, he answered: "You and I, methought, were in this cave, and I saw a big ill-looking dark man come up from below; and we were afraid, fancying that he was about to come into the cave. I dreamt that he took his

stand at the entrance, and said: 'Ulli is now dead.' Then he went away up into the fell, and I awoke." The Earl said: "My son Erlend is then doubtless slain." Kark fell asleep a second time, and was again restless in his sleep, as before. When he awoke, the Earl asked him: "What was your dream this time?" and the thrall replied: "I saw the same man, as I thought, descend the mountain slope, and coming to the cave he said to me: 'Tell the Earl that all the straits are closed!'" Thereupon the Earl said: "You give us, then, but a short time to live."

Death of Erlend, the Earl's son. Thora of Rimul conceals the Earl.

103. After the death of Thori Clack, King Olaf, with five ships of war, entered the Frith from the open sea, at the same time that Erlend, Hakon's son, was sailing out of it with three ships. The weather was calm, and the fleets, rowing in opposite directions, quickly approached each other; and when there was but a short space between them, Erlend, suspecting the approaching fleet to be hostile, turned his ships towards land. King Olaf, seeing the warships row forth to meet him, thought Earl Hakon was with them, and when they turned away, he bade his men row after them with all speed. Erlend's men, having rowed their ships quite close to land, ran them aground, and immediately jumping overboard, made their way to shore by swimming. As King Olaf's ships came upon them, the King saw a man swimming, who was remarkably handsome, and seizing the tiller, hurled it at him. It struck the head of Erlend, the Earl's son, so that his skull was crushed in upon the brain, and he there lost his life. Many of his men were slain by Olaf's men; some escaped by flight; others, made prisoners, received quarter, and related to the King all that had happened. They told him that the man killed by the tiller was Erlend, Hakon's son; that the yeomen had risen up against the Earl, who had fled away from before them; and that all his force was dispersed.

After remaining a short time in the cave, Earl Hakon and Kark arose and walked to the homestead at Rimul; and the Earl sent Kark to find Thora, bidding her come and see him secretly.

This she did, and when they met, she welcomed him heartily. The Earl then asked her: "Do you know of any secret spot at your homestead where you could hide me for a few nights, until the yeomen break up their gathering?" And Thora answered: "It will not be an easy matter to keep you in secret here. Your foes will come and ransack every hole and corner of this homestead, and of all the neighbouring places of refuge. They will search for you here sooner than anywhere else, because many know that I will help you, if I can, to the best of my power. Yet there is a spot on this homestead where I should not think of searching for so great a chief as you, and that is the hog-sty." Thither Thora accompanied the Earl, and seeing it, he said: "The spot is well and wisely chosen for the purpose, and here we will make ourselves comfortable. To look after one's life is more needful now than to care whether one's lodging befits a great man or not." The thrall therefore proceeded to dig a large hole and to carry off the earth, while the Earl sat with Thora and conversed. She told the Earl of the tidings she had just learnt, that Olaf Tryggwason was come into the Frith and had slain his son Erlend. Afterwards the Earl, with his thrall Kark, went into the hole. Thora brought them sufficient meat and drink, lights also, and whatsoever else they needed. She next closed up the entrance with pieces of wood, upon which she swept earth and dung; and the swine, being driven over it, trod down the dung, so that no signs of late work were visible. Thora then returned to her homestead, no one except herself knowing that the Earl was there. The hog-sty in which the Earl was hidden lay under the shelter of a huge rock.

The yeomen choose Olaf to be their King, and search unsuccessfully for Earl Hakon. The Earl is slain by his thrall Kark, who takes his head to Olaf. Character of the Earl.

104. The yeomen who had taken part in the rising against Earl Hakon went to meet Olaf Tryggwason as soon as they heard of his arrival in the country; and greeting him with great gladness and friendliness, they thus spake: "This day is become a day

of bliss to us, seeing that we have met with you; and we are in hopes that it will be a day of bliss to you. After the battle against the Wickings of Jom we believed there was no chief like Earl Hakon, so happy was he in victory and in the possession besides of many qualities fitted for the chieftainship. The whole people of the country therefore desired nothing better than to maintain him in the kingdom. But since that time his wicked and shameful deeds have been so unexampled that endurance of them is not possible; his dishonourable conduct is hated by all men; and so far is he from retaining the kingdom any longer, that he shall lose his life as soon as we find him. Our search, we believe, will be successful with your aid and good fortune, who have so auspiciously effected the slaying of his son Erlend. We desire, therefore, to ask you to become King over this company, while you await higher honour; for we know that the whole people of the land would prefer being subject to a descendant of Harold Fairhair, even if there were no descendant now living so renowned as you are." This speech rejoiced Olaf; and the two parties made an alliance, the yeomen taking Olaf to be their King. As they all had the same desire to seek after the Earl, they went up into Gaulardale, thinking it most probable that he would be found at Rimul, if he were found anywhere in a human dwelling, because there was no friend so dear to him in that dale as Thora. Coming to the river Gaul, they found the Earl's cloak at a hole in the ice, and also the horse, which had drifted somewhat lower down the river, upon a bank. When they recognised the cloak, some said the Earl must have perished in the water, and there was no need to look for him any longer. Then spake an old man and said: "You don't understand the cunning of the Earl if you believe that he has perished in the stream; neither discern that this is a trick to delude you." The King assented to this opinion, and then all agreed to it, and proceeded on their journey until they arrived at the homestead of Rimul. There they broke into all the buildings, looking for the Earl inside and out, as Thora had said they would, but found him not. King Olaf therefore held a meeting outside in the yard, and standing on the large rock by the hog-sty, made a speech in a loud and clear voice. "You know," he said, "that we have made search for Earl Hakon; and as we have not found him at this present time,

be it known to all, that with fitting gift and liberal payment I will reward the man who shall slay him." After which speech King Olaf departed, with all his company, from the homestead of Rimul, and went and abode at Ladi.

Now Earl Hakon and his thrall were in the hole, and heard quite distinctly the speech of King Olaf. And when the King and his men were gone, the Earl said to Kark: "There is great and awful power in that man's speech. I have been placed in many trials and dangers, and it has never been said of me that I am very timid; yet at the mere words of this Olaf a dread horror seized my heart, such as I never felt before, and my mind was filled with anxiety and fear at his awful voice." Then looking at the thrall, the Earl saw his face and features change colour, becoming pale and dark by turns, and he said to him: "What makes you pale one minute and black as earth at another? Is it not that you wish to betray me?" "Not so," answered Kark. "But perhaps you will not think it strange that I, no less than you, am terrified by this man's speech." Then the Earl said: "It may be so, and there is a reason for it; we were born on the same day, and there will not be a long interval between my death and yours." When night came on they took their meal together, and drank from the same vessel. During the night the Earl kept himself awake, for he had little confidence in the thrall; while Kark slept long and heavily; awaking, however, at last, he saw that the Earl was awake. "I have had a dream once more, Sire," he said. "We two were together on a ship, and the steering fell to me." "You thus see that our lives both depend on you," answered the Earl. Then Kark slept a second time, and was restless in his sleep; and when he awoke, the Earl asked him of his dream. "I was at Ladi just now," he replied, "and Olaf Tryggwason put a chain of gold around my neck, and gave me, as I thought, a high horse." "Which means," said the Earl, "that Olaf will lay a blood-red ring about your neck if you go to him. Have a care, therefore, lest he cut off your head; it is not unlikely, even, that he may then have you hanged upon a gallows, to your disgrace, and so give you a horse to ride. From me, on the other hand, if you betray me not, you will get good as heretofore." Both of them now kept awake, as if they distrusted each other;

but towards day the Earl fell asleep. He soon became restless in his sleep, shouting fearfully, and starting from head to foot, as if he were about to rise. Whereupon the thrall was filled with fear and alarm, and drawing a large sharp knife from his belt, he drove it into the Earl's throat, which he cut from ear to ear. Such was the death of Earl Hakon. Kark then cut off the Earl's head, and hastened away with it, arriving the next day at Ladi. He carried the head to King Olaf, to whom he recounted all that had happened during his wanderings with the Earl, as we have told the story. Then King Olaf said to him: "What led you to betray the Earl?" And Kark answered: "I was led to kill him chiefly for the rewards you promised to whomsoever should slay him; and in the next place, because I scarcely knew what to do when his behaviour was so dreadful in his sleep." And the King said: "I will keep the promise which I made thereon, to let you have a fit reward for your labour, and so deter those who come after us from betraying their liege-lords. Though you were the servant of a wicked man, he was nevertheless your master, and you ought to have done him faithful service, and refrained from betraying him, no less than if he had been a good lord." The King then ordered him to be led out, and his head cut off. Afterwards taking Earl Hakon's head and Kark's, King Olaf, followed by a crowd of yeomen, sailed out to the island of Nidarholm, which was used in those days as a place of execution for thieves and evil-doers. There was a gallows on it, to which the King had the heads brought, and they were fastened thereon. And all the people went up to it, shouting and throwing stones at the Earl's head, and saying, "Let the scoundrel fare as other scoundrels." Then messengers were sent up into Gaulardale, who took the Earl's body out of the hole, dragged it off and burnt it. And so generally approved was the hostility which the Thronds showed to Earl Hakon that no one ever spoke of him by any other name than the Bad Earl; and that epithet was used of him all over Throntham, and wide districts both at home and abroad.

It may be said, however, of Earl Hakon, that he possessed many qualities befitting a ruler. He was a man of noble extraction in the whole of his pedigree, of a wise understanding if he had been inclined to use it for good, expert in all government,

dashing and valorous in battle, often fortunate in gaining victory over his foes. So says Thorleif Raudfellson :—

“No earl mightier than thou, O Hakon ! is known under the moon’s path.
Thou hast become famous in fight, thou leader of the nation’s seamen.”

Towards his retainers Earl Hakon was liberal of his wealth, and long enjoyed popularity with all the people throughout the country. Yet, in spite of his fitness as a ruler, he suffered great changes of fortune to the day of his death. This will not seem strange when we look at him in another aspect, for Earl Hakon was at all times guileful, faithless and treacherous to friend and foe, a most violent renegade, and worshipper of idols. Moreover, the time was come, foreordained by Almighty God, when idolatry and heathen worship, together with Earl Hakon, the wicked messenger of the Evil One, should receive condemnation ; and in their stead Holy Truth should arise, and a right faith flourish in beauty over all the Northern lands, through the good-will and devotion of Olaf Tryggwason, the messenger of the Blessed Lord God. At the time Hakon was slain he had been Earl for thirty-three years, reckoning from the death of his father Earl Sigurd. Hakon was twenty-five years of age when he succeeded to the Earldom, and fifty-eight when he was slain.

Olaf Tryggwason chosen King over Norway [995].

105. After the death of Earl Hakon, King Olaf abode first at Ladi. And when the tidings were spread abroad that Earl Hakon was slain and Olaf Tryggwason come in his place, all the chiefs and powerful men of the Thronds, and many other people likewise, came to visit him. All were of one mind in asking him to be their King, offering him their service and willing obedience. They declared to him that they could not long remain without a head, considering the events that had happened ; and they did but say the truth when they told him of their fear that Earls Eric and Swein would demand stern payment for the riotous attack on their father Earl Hakon. Olaf was well pleased with their discourse. It was therefore unanimously decided to summon an Assembly of the eight shires in Thronddam ; which Assembly was attended by

an exceedingly numerous crowd from all parts of the community of the Thronds. The Assembly being constituted, King Olaf stood up and called for silence, and then began to speak: "It is known to all men here assembled, that King Harold Fairhair reigned for a long period as sole King over all Norway. He succeeded peaceably to a part of his kingdom; part he won in warfare. And he made a law that every man of his descendants sprung from him uninterruptedly in the male line should be King and inherit the kingdom; son succeeding his father. And forasmuch as King Harold had many sons, he divided his kingdom among them as he thought best, and ordained that there should be one supreme King of the country at a time, although, having regard to descent, there might be many who were equally entitled to the honour. Now, as this people is without a head, and has for a long time past endured wrongful rule and authority, I willingly offer myself, in response to the request of many chiefs and powerful men, to be your King if you will be my subjects. On several grounds I think that an alliance between us will not be unsuitable, for we may thereby strengthen and support each other in a right course of conduct. You are faced by a great difficulty, being exposed to the heavy displeasure of Earl Hakon's sons, and other kinsmen and friends, on account of the Earl's violent death. You must expect from them the sternest treatment, as you yourselves have already pleaded, if you do not obtain the aid of powerful chiefs against them. And I, on the other hand, have so long endured the deprivation of my royal position that I have a difficult task before me; for the government of this country during a long period has been in the hands of robbers, while hatred and injustice have prevailed continuously. First of all, Eric Bloodaxe slew Olaf, my father's father, and many more of his own brothers, because, through lust of power, he wished to be sole ruler of their kingdoms. He was succeeded by Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, who bestowed honours on those of his kinsmen that did not rise up with violence against him. He set my father Tryggwi over the kingdom that his father ruled before him, and gave him the title of King; and Tryggwi held the kingdom so long as King Hakon, his father's brother, lived; and the two were very dear friends of one another. But when the sons of Eric succeeded to the kingdom they dealt treacherously

with my father King Tryggwi, and slew him in time of peace, by the advice of their mother Gunnhild; I being yet unborn. The same Gunnhild in her cunning laid many snares to take me and deprive me of life as soon as I was born. My mother Astrid and I were in hiding, the first year of my life, with her father Eric of Ofrustead; but because of the lying in wait and the devices of Gunnhild, he did not dare to keep us any longer in the country, and my mother, disguised and dressed like a beggar, took me eastwards into Sweden. There we dwelt two years in exile with Hakon the Old; and Gunnhild would have seized me treacherously by her emissaries, if that good man Hakon the Old had not saved me from her pursuit by his power and authority, because of his friendship for Eric, my mother's father. And afterwards, when I was three years old, my mother and I sailed from Sweden, intending to go east to the realm of Gardar, and visit her brother Sigurd. On the voyage we met with Wickings, and were taken captive and sold into bondage, some of our company being slain. My mother and I were separated, so that I have never since beheld her. Like other bondmen, I was then sold for money. Six years I remained in bondage in Eistland, until Sigurd, my mother's brother, ransomed me thence, and took me with him east to the realm of Gardar, I being then nine years old. Nine other years I lived in Gardar, still an exile, though I was maintained in comfort by the humanity of kind rulers. Three years I then passed in Wendland, and the next four years in the British Islands, living as a freebooter. During this period, as you may suppose, I endured fatigue and toil; freedom I enjoyed, but only among foreign and strange nations. To provision my force I had then almost nothing, beyond what I procured with the risk of my life and the lives of my men, thus endangering a worthier object to gain a less worthy. But at present I will not speak of this, for we robbed many an innocent man of his goods, and some of life as well, after the manner of warriors. The inheritance of my fathers, and our estates, were held meanwhile by unworthy persons, who sought my life and the lives of my kinsmen, as did Gunnhild King's-mother and her sons. Yet they had the ancestral title to be Kings, though they lusted after more power than rightfully belonged to them. And this chief, Earl Hakon, recently your ruler, had by birth the right

to inherit after his father, to bear the title of Earl, and to hold a fief from the rightful King of Norway. But it was the greatest wrong and illegality that he should be sole ruler of well-nigh all Norway, crushing partly in battle and partly by treachery the Kings whom he ought to have served. Yea, I myself should have been a victim if his evil will had commanded success; for he sent Thori Clack to the British Islands to bring me by craft from the west into his power; failing in this object, Thori had authority to slay me, as is known to some who are here present at the Assembly. And now I am of opinion that there is no man at present in the country who by legal right and by descent has as good a title to the office of King as I have, if such is the will of the chiefs, and if the people give their consent." When Olaf thus ended his speech, all present lamented the long misery and exile that he had suffered; and then the commons in a crowd started up and would listen to nothing else than that Olaf Tryggwason should be their King. Then was Olaf Tryggwason chosen at the General Assembly to be King over the whole extent of the country held by Harold Fairhair, and the rule thereof was made over to him in accordance with the old laws. The yeomen promised to give him large support, that he might win the realm and then retain it; the King, on his part, promised to observe laws and rights, and to defend the people against aggression and attack from the sons of Hakon, and all others who desired to avenge the Earl's death. King Olaf then chose his body-guard. Thord Kolbeinson in his Praise of Eric thus says:—

"Repeller of wolfish rovers!
 His people's treachery soon deprived Hakon of life.
 Man's lot looks for many changes.
 And to the land, won by the brave lord of the shield,
 Came the son of Tryggwi, I ween, with a force from the west."

Story of Sunnifa. Her voyage to the island of Selia, and her death.

106. In the days of Earl Hakon there died a King of Ireland in the west, who left a daughter named Sunnifa, wise from her earliest years, and a good Christian, for Ireland had long ago

been converted to Christianity. Sunnifa was a most beautiful maiden and ripe in years at the time of this story. She succeeded her father in the kingdom, and her rule was guided by her distinguished kinsmen and friends. As she ruled over a great kingdom, and was herself a woman of surpassing beauty, there came a heathen Wicking chieftain with a proposal to marry her. But so far was Sunnifa from wishing to marry herself to a heathen, that she had determined in her mind to serve in purity of life none but God alone, and to have no man for husband. The Wicking then began to harry her kingdom, and in many ways to harass her condition, purposing by this means to compel her to a union with him. Sunnifa therefore summoned an Assembly of her men; and her friends and kinsmen being present, she thus spoke: "I have called you together, my dearest friends, that you may give me your counsel touching this kingdom, which I have for some time guided with your help. I am feeling oppressed by the tyranny and aggression of wicked men, and of all who strive after the uncertain joys of this fleeting life. Wherefore I intend no longer, like a bondwoman, to bear the labour and anxiety of this unhappy kingdom, which is of no account in comparison with eternal joy; but rather, like a woman of high birth, will I assert my freedom, and place myself in the hands and under the protection of Jesus Christ my Lord. Thus, likewise, will those do who wish to follow me; but all shall be free and have full power to remain in their native land, though I remove myself away."

Sunnifa was so much beloved by all, that a crowd of people, both men and women, were eager to leave their lands and go away with her. She therefore procured ships, and a great multitude prepared for the voyage with her. As soon as they were ready, they left land in their ships, having neither sails nor oars, rudder nor rigging, weapons nor armour. In this way Sunnifa showed her trust in the power of Almighty God, rather than in worldly aids or help. She intrusted herself and all her company to the guidance of the living God, praying Him to point out the way for them, and to direct them whithersoever he would. Then they were driven across the open sea, away from land, until by God's help they reached two islands which lie close to Norway, south of Stad; one of them is called Selia, and the other Kinn. These islands

were uninhabited; but like most of the outer islands, they had cattle on them belonging to the people of the mainland, for there were many large farms near. Sunnifa, and the people that accompanied her, landed on Selia. There was a high mountain in the west of the island, with rocks and large caves; to this part they went, and abode in the caves. Here they dwelt for a long time, serving God with great zeal and much abstinence, and lived on the fish that Sunnifa's men caught in the waters. But when the inhabitants of the mainland became aware of people living on the islands, they imagined them to be robbers preying upon their cattle. The yeomen therefore went to see Earl Hakon and tell him that there was a crowd of robbers and outlaws on the islands of Selia and Kinn, doing much damage to the people's cattle; and they begged him to take a large company and slay those Wickings on the islands. The Earl did as they asked him, for he sailed to the islands with a large force armed as for battle. And when those good friends of God who lived there saw the force coming towards them, and knew that an attack was meant, they went into their caves and prayed Almighty God that He would grant to their souls eternal rest in the bliss of Paradise, whatever death they should die. They prayed also that God of His grace and mercy would grant them such burial that the wicked heathen might have no power over their bodies. And Almighty God granted their prayer. Huge rocks fell and blocked the entrance of the caves where they dwelt, and thus these saints of God ended their days; receiving the reward of everlasting happiness in return for their good deeds in this life. When the heathen reached the islands and made search for them, it seemed strange they could not find them, for they had seen them but a short time before they landed. Having finished their search, they returned.

Discovery of the holy relics of Sunnifa by two yeomen named Thord.

107. Some time afterwards, when Earl Hakon was dead, and Olaf Tryggwason had become King in Norway, it happened that two important yeomen, with their followers, were sailing from

the Firths northwards towards Throntham to visit Earl Hakon, not having yet learnt of the change of rulers. As they passed near the island of Selia, which lies close to the main route of ships going north or south, they perceived a beautiful bright beam of light which shone from heaven on the sea and enfolded the neighbouring island in its brightness. Deeming this a wonderful sight, they drew to shore, curious to find out upon what the light was shining. Having landed on the island, they found at a short distance from the shore, just where they had seen the light fall, a human head, bright and lovely, which gave forth a sweet odour, the like of which they had never before perceived. Being heathen men, they understood not what that remarkable odour signified; but yet it seemed to them a thing of great moment. Lifting up the head, therefore, with respect, they wrapped it in a clean cloth, and took it with them, intending to carry it to Earl Hakon, for they supposed that he, in his wisdom, would discern what it betokened. When they came beyond Stad on their voyage northwards, they learnt that Earl Hakon had been slain, and the famous King Olaf Tryggwason had succeeded him in the kingdom. The two men held on their journey, nevertheless, determining now to visit the new King, for they heard much of his graciousness and royal qualities. They stopped not on their journey northwards until they arrived at Ladi and saw King Olaf, who received them with great friendliness as soon as he knew who they were. He speedily began to preach the Holy Faith to them, and bade them accept baptism. "If you do as I bid you," said the King, "you shall have my steadfast friendship in return." They were not averse to his proposal, being desirous, as they said, of offering him their service. Then they conversed with him for a while, and the King inquired what tidings there were in the south of the country; and when they had answered his inquiries, they told him the events of their voyage, showing him the head which they had found in Selia. The King's Bishop, Sigurd, known as Sigurd the Great, whom he had brought with him from England, was a wise and good man and a great scholar. When the King and the Bishop saw the head, they said it was certainly the head of a saint. Then the King began to speak of the Faith to the men who had found the head, thus saying: "All good men and true believers will experience great joy and gladness in reflecting on

the mercy of Almighty God, though the eye may not see, nor the ear hear, nor the heart of man conceive, how excellent is the reward which He bestows on His servants in return for their toil in this life. This sign has been given to you by His great mercy, to the end that you may of your own freewill more readily leave the deluding worship of idols, and turn to the true Faith, and the acceptance of Holy Baptism. Yea, and all who reflect may see more clearly that the sublime King of Heaven will grant to the souls of His beloved ones very great glory in the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven, when He allows us to perceive a pleasant odour from the dead and decayed members of their bodies, such as may not be found in any sweet-scented herbage." Then these two good men were so greatly moved by the King's speech that they consented straightway to believe in the true God, and were thereupon baptized with their followers. The King invited them to be his guests, and entertained them nobly, while they wore their white baptismal robes ; and he caused them to be instructed in holy doctrine. Afterwards they returned to their own estates, taking with them to the south excellent gifts from the King, with the assurance of his friendship.

The King and the Bishop took the holy head into their safe keeping, until King Olaf held an Assembly in the south, at Drag-seid on Stad, of which mention will afterwards be made. The Assembly being over, the King made inquiries of those who dwelt nearest the island of Selia, if they had seen any strange appearance there ; and he was informed that a beautiful light was often to be seen at the spot. King Olaf and Bishop Sigurd therefore proceeded to the island of Selia with a large company, and when they came to the crags in the west of the island, they found that large caves had existed there which had been blocked by falling stones not many years before. Everywhere among the stones they discovered human bones, having a most delightful odour ; and at length coming to a spot where the rock had lately broken away from the mouth of a cave, they found the body of the holy maiden Sunnifa, perfect and uninjured ; the hair and the flesh appearing as if she had only just breathed her last. They took up the holy relics with reverent care and great joy, praising and exalting God. Afterwards, when the island became inhabited, churches were built on it, and the holy relics of the Blessed Sunnifa were worshipped

there until her adored body was removed south to Bergen, where she now rests in a large and beautiful shrine over the high altar in Christ Church.

Of Alban, the brother of Sunnifa.

108. King Olaf returned unceasing thanks to Almighty God, especially because He had vouchsafed of His great mercy to manifest in his days the glory of His handmaiden Sunnifa and of her blessed company. For discerning men were all quickened to a love of Almighty God and obedience towards the King, perceiving in the open display of such a marvellous work that the Faith as preached by King Olaf was a true one, and that only in the service of the living God is strength to be found. We find it written that a brother of Sunnifa, called Alban, was among the holy company that came with her from the British Islands; nothing is said of him here, because the fact is doubtful. For persons who have been to Selia, and know the island, say that it contains a large church consecrated to the martyr Alban, the first who suffered for God's name. They say, moreover, that the head of this martyr Alban, who was slain in England, is worshipped with great adoration in Selia. Close to the church consecrated to him is a monastery of Black Friars; and in the church are many shrines, large and small, made to contain the holy relics of the saints who accompanied Sunnifa. The church dedicated to Sunnifa lies on the mountain near the monastery. From the rock of the cave where the body of the blessed Sunnifa was found, a fountain is said to have sprung, giving rise to a small stream, of which many sick persons have drunk, to the recovery of their health. The Mass-day of God's maiden Sunnifa and her blessed company is observed by Northmen on the 8th of the month July, which day we call the Saints'-day of Selia. In Selia our Lord Jesus Christ performs many notable miracles on account of the merits of those His saints who are for ever glorified there.

The country submits to King Olaf. Flight of Earls Eric and Swein.

109. During the winter which followed King Olaf's election in Throntham he made a journey through the land, and it became subject to him. He was chosen King at every General Assembly, and the whole population of Norway turned obediently to him. The chiefs of the Uplands and of Wick, in the east part of the country, who had hitherto held their estates of the King of the Danes, now likewise became the liegemen of King Olaf, and of him held their lands and fiefs. Thus the King journeyed through the land his first winter and the following summer. Earl Eric Hakonson and his brother Swein, accompanied by their kinsmen and friends, fled from the country, and made their way eastwards into the realm of Sweden to Olaf, the Swedish King, who gave them a hearty reception. Thus says Thord Kolbeinson :—

“Against the giver of wealth Eric had more in mind than he spoke aloud.
Such was to be expected of him.
The indignant Thronthish Earl sought advice from the Swedish King.
No man forsook him, for stubbornness marks the Thronds.”

Iceland, the Thule of the ancients.

110. The holy Priest Bede, in the book which he wrote upon the Reckoning of Time, speaking of the geography of the world, says that the island called Thule in the books lies so far away in the northern hemisphere that it has no day in winter-time when the night is longest, and no night in summer when the day is longest. Wherefore learned men suppose Iceland to be Thule ; for in many places of the country the sun sets not during the nights at the time when the day is longest, and in many places the sun cannot be seen during the days when the night is longest. The holy Priest Bede died seven hundred and thirty-five years after the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, more than one hundred years before the Northmen settled in Iceland. But before Iceland was colonised from Norway, there were inhabitants on it whom the

Northmen call Papa. They were Christians; for after they left the island there were found Irish books, bells, croziers, and many other things, whence it is inferred that they were Christians who had come thither from the British Islands. English books also show that at that time there was intercourse between the two countries.

Date of the discovery of Iceland by the Northmen.

111. At the time of the discovery and colonisation of Iceland, Adrian was Pope of Rome; he was succeeded by John, the fifth of that name who occupied the seat of the Apostles; Lodwer Lodwerson was Emperor north of the Alps; Leo, and Alexander, his son, reigned over Mikilgard; Harold Fairhair reigned over Norway; Eric Eymundson and his son Biorn, over Sweden; Gorm the Old, in Denmark; Alfred the Great and his son Edward, in England; Kiarval, at Dublin in Ireland; and Sigurd the Great, brother of Earl Rognwald of More, was Earl in the Orkneys.

Distances between Iceland and neighbouring lands.

112. It is stated by well-informed persons, that from Stad in Norway to Horn in the east of Iceland is a seven days' voyage in a westerly direction; and to Greenland, from Snœfellsness, the nearest point of Iceland, is a four days' voyage in a westerly direction across the ocean. They say also that in sailing from Bergen to the Wharf in Greenland a vessel's course should lie a dozen miles to the south of Iceland; that from Reykianess in the south of Iceland to Jolduleap in Ireland is a five days' voyage across the ocean in a southerly direction; and that from Langaness in the north of Iceland to Swalbardi in the Polar Sea is a four days' voyage.

Iceland discovered by Nadd-Odd.

113. We are told that a ship's company, commanded, some say, by the Wicking Nadd-Odd, having to make a voyage from Norway

to the Fareys, were driven far over the ocean in a westerly direction. They came upon a large country, and landing on its eastern side, ascended a high hill, that they might have a wide prospect, and discover, if possible, any smoke or other indication that the country was inhabited; but they found none. In the autumn they sailed away to the Fareys; but before they set out, there was a heavy fall of snow on the mountains; they therefore gave the name of Snioland to the country, which they praised highly. The place where they landed is now called Reidafirth, and is in the Eastfirths district; so says Priest Sœmund the Historian.

Iceland visited by Gardar.

114. A man named Gardar Swavarson, of a Swedish family, set out to find Snioland by the direction of his mother, a prophetic woman, and of Odd. He reached the land east of the Eastern Horn, where was an excellent harbour. Gardar sailed round the country and discovered that it was an island. He entered the frith afterwards called Aspandi, and came to anchor on its east side, where he remained during the winter, building himself a house on the spot now called Husawick. In the following spring when Gardar was ready to sail away, one of his men called Nattfari, who was in a boat with a thrall and a bondwoman, became separated from him; and coming to land on the western side of the frith, settled there, at a spot afterwards known as Nattfara-wick. Gardar then sailed to Norway, and spoke in high praise of the country that he had discovered. It was then called Gardars-holm, and the portion of it which lay between the mountains and the shore was all covered by a low forest growth. Gardar was the father of Uni, who was the father of Roar, temple-chief of Tunga.

Iceland visited by Floki, Faxi, and others.

115. Floki Wigerdson was a great Wicking, who set out to seek for Gardarsholm, putting to sea from the spot known as Flokaward, where Rogaland and Hordaland meet. He sailed first of all to Shetland, and anchored in Floka Bay. Here his daughter Geirhild

perished in Geirhilds-water. Floki had with him on board a yeoman named Heriolf, a Northman, and another named Thorolf; there was also in his company a man from the Sudreys named Faxi. He took three ravens with him to sea. The first raven, when let loose, flew to the hinder part of the ship and away over the stern; the second flew up into the air, and then back again on board; the third flew to the fore part of the ship and over the prow, and in this direction they found land. They reached the island on the east side at Horn, and sailed along the south coast; and when on their westerly course they got beyond Reykianess, and the frith opened to their view, so that they saw Snœfellsness, Faxi said: "This will surely be a good land that we have discovered, for it has large streams." Here they saw a broad estuary opening into the sea, the same that was afterwards called Faxe-os. Thence Floki and his companions sailed in a westerly direction over Breidafirth, reaching land at Watsfirth by Bardastrand. Watsfirth was full of fish, and so intent were the men on their fishing that they neglected to make hay, and consequently in the winter their cattle all died; and the following spring was cold. Floki then ascended a high mountain, whence he looked over the fells towards the north, and saw a frith full of polar ice; wherefore they called the country Iceland, which name it has borne ever since. In the summer they resolved to leave the land, and being ready to start shortly before winter came on, they set sail, but could not round Reykianess. Their boat, too, with Heriolf on board, was separated from them, and driven to land at a spot now called Heriolds-haven. Floki remained in Borgarfirth during the winter, and met again with Heriolf. In the following summer they returned to Norway; and when they were asked about the country, Floki spoke ill of it, Heriolf said there was both good and bad in it, but Thorolf praised it highly, saying that butter dropped from every blade of grass; from which saying he was called Thorolf Butter.

*Ingolf and Hior-Leif leave Norway in consequence of feuds.
They become the first settlers in Iceland [874].*

116. There were two sons of Romund Gripson, Biornolf and Roald, who, on account of homicidal feuds, had left Thelamark and

settled at Dalsfirth of Fialir in Sogn. Biornolf had a son named Orn, who had two children, a son named Ingolf, and a daughter, Helga, a very beautiful woman. Roald had a son, Rodmar, and Rodmar a son, Leif. Ingolf and Leif were foster-brothers. At that time Atli the Slim was Earl at Gaula, and his sons were Hastein, Herstein, and Holmstein. The foster-brothers Ingolf and Leif were close friends of the sons of Atli, and they went forth all together on a plundering expedition, whence they returned in the autumn with much booty. Their intercourse with one another had been fortunate; they separated with feelings of friendship on both sides, and spoke of an expedition together in the following summer. In the winter the two foster-brothers entertained the Earl's sons; and at the banquet Holmstein made a solemn vow that he would marry Helga, Orn's daughter, and no other woman. This vow was received with silence by the hearers, Leif turning red in the face; and the guests were somewhat cold in their manner when they took their leave. In the following spring the foster-brothers made ready to go on their plundering raid, meaning to join the sons of Atli, as they had decided the previous autumn. But on their meeting, Holmstein and his brother made an attack on Leif's men, and fought with them. After the fight had lasted a while, a kinsman of Leif, Olmod the Old, a son of Horda-Kari, came up, bringing him assistance, so that Holmstein fell in the battle, and Herstein fled. Then Leif and his companions went on their foray in the summer, and returned home in the autumn. In the following winter Herstein went out to attack Ingolf and his men, intending to slay them; but Ingolf, having received intelligence of his journey, went to meet him, and in the fight which ensued Herstein fell. The friends of the foster-brothers from the district of the Firths now came forward, and messengers were sent to Earl Atli and Hastein to ask for peace; which was granted on condition that Leif and Ingolf yielded up their estates to their foes. They now prepared a large ship, intending to seek the land which Raven-Floki had discovered. They reached it, and having passed the winter at the southern Alptafirth, in the Eastfirths district, they made an exploration of the island, and found the south preferable to the north. The following summer they returned to Norway; and while Ingolf laid out all his money in preparation for a journey

to Iceland, Leif went on a Wicking foray to the British Islands, making Ireland the scene of his raids. Here he came upon a large underground dwelling, which he entered; it was quite dark inside until he perceived the glimmering of a sword in the hands of a man who had fled before him. Leif slew the man, and thus got possession of the sword and also much wealth. The sword was an excellent one, and he was known by the name of Hior-Leif, on account of it. Hior-Leif made forays over a wide district of the western lands during the summer, gathering stores of booty, and taking ten thralls, of whom one named Dufthak was the chief. After these things he sailed to Norway, where he met with his foster-brother Ingolf, whose sister Helga, Orn's daughter, he had married. The following winter Ingolf made a great sacrifice, to inquire of the gods concerning his future, and was directed to Iceland; but Hior-Leif would not sacrifice to the gods. In the spring the foster-brothers each got his ship ready for the voyage to Iceland, Hior-Leif taking on board all the booty he had acquired, and Ingolf having their common property; and as soon as they were ready they set sail.

The voyage in which Iceland was first discovered was made in the sixth year of the reign of King Harold Fairhair; and the voyage of which we speak, when Ingolf and Hior-Leif set out to settle in the land, took place seven years afterwards, that is, in the thirteenth year of the reign of Harold Fairhair, two years after the battle of Hafrsfirth, by which he became sole King of Norway, and four years after the death in England of King Edmund the Saint. Six thousand and seventy-three years had elapsed since the creation of the world, and eight hundred and seventy-four since the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ingolf and Hior-Leif held together until they came in sight of Iceland, when their ships became separated. As soon as Ingolf saw land he cast overboard his high-seat posts that he had brought with him, saying that he would settle on the spot where they were driven on shore. He reached land at a place now called Ingolfshead; but Hior-Leif was driven farther west, and suffered a scarcity of water. His Irish thralls, in order to slake their thirst, kneaded meal and butter together, which mixture they called Mindak; when it was ready for use, however, a heavy rain fell. They caught the rain-water in the awning of their ship,

and the Mindak, becoming musty, was thrown overboard ; the spot where it came to land was afterwards called Mindaksore. Hior-Leif reached land at Hiorleifshead, where was then a frith, and from the innermost part thereof the headland could be seen. Here he caused two halls to be erected ; eighteen fathoms was the length of one, and nineteen of the other, between the walls ; and here he remained during the winter. In the spring he wished to sow the ground ; he had one ox, and he made his thralls drag the plough. But while he and his men were engaged in building, and the thralls should have been ploughing, Dufthak plotted to kill the ox, and to say that a bear from the bush had slain it ; then if Hior-Leif and his men went to look for the bear, the thralls would fall upon them. So they brought word to Hior-Leif and his companions that a bear had killed the ox ; and when Hior-Leif and his men were dispersed in the bush seeking the bear, the thralls set upon every one of them and murdered them, though equal in number to themselves. Then taking the wives of the murdered men, their property, and the ship's boat, the thralls sailed over to some islands which were visible out at sea in the south-west, and here they settled. Ingolf had two thralls, Wivil and Karli, and he sent them in a westerly direction along the coast to look for the posts of his high-seat. Coming to Hiorleifshead, they found the dead body of Hior-Leif, and went back with the tidings to Ingolf. Ingolf was much moved at the death of Hior-Leif, and sailed west to Hiorleifshead. When he saw the dead body he said : " 'Tis a mean lot for a brave man, that he should come to be slain by thralls ; but many suffer a like fate, I find, when they will not sacrifice to the gods." He then caused Hior-Leif to be buried, and the ship and property to be sought after. Ascending the headland, he beheld islands out at sea to the south-west, and suspected the thralls of going thither, because the boat had disappeared. He sailed, therefore, to the islands and found the men on the one called Eid. They were at meat when Ingolf came upon them, and being seized with fear, they at once ran off in different directions ; but Ingolf killed them all ; some were slain with weapons, others jumped down from the rocks. From these events the places received their old names ; the islands themselves being called Westmaney, because the thralls were natives of the British Isles. Ingolf took the wives of the

murdered men back with him to Hiorleifshead, where he remained the second winter. The following spring he journeyed in a westerly direction, following the coast, and passed the third winter under Ingolfssfell to the west of the river Olfusay. In the time of harvest Wivil and Karli found Ingolf's seat-posts at Arnarhill, north of the heath; and the next spring Ingolf passed over the heath and set up house at the spot where they had been cast ashore. His homestead was called Reykiawick.

Of Ingolf's descendants.

117. Ingolf was the most distinguished of all the early settlers in Iceland, for he was the first to occupy land; all who came after him followed his mode. He married Hallweig, a daughter of Frodi, and sister of Lopt the Old; their son was Thorstein, who instituted the Assembly at Kialarness before the General Assembly was established. Thorstein's son was Thorkel Moon, the speaker of the General Assembly, who was almost the best example of a religious man that the heathen can show. In his last illness he ordered himself to be carried out into the sunshine, and committed himself into the hands of that God who had fashioned the sun. His life was as righteous as the life of almost the best of Christians. A son of Thorkel Moon was Thormod, the head temple-chief in Iceland when Christianity was established. His son was Hamal, the father of Mar, and Thormod, and Torfi.

Of the descendants of Biorn the Ungartered.

118. Biorn the Ungartered, a famous baron of Norway, was the son of Wether-Grim; and Grim's mother was Herwor, daughter of Thorgerd, who was the daughter of Eylaug, a baron of Sogn. From Biorn the Ungartered were descended almost all the great men of Iceland. Biorn's wife was Welaug, and they had three sons, Ketil Flatneb, Rapp, and Helgi, famous men, of whom and their descendants many Sagas are told. Thord Skeggi was a son of Rapp, son of Biorn the Ungartered. Thord married Wilborg, daughter of Oswald, and they had a daughter, Helga, who was

married to Ketilbiorn the Old. Thord Skeggi sailed to Iceland, and, under Ingolf's advice, settled at Skeggistead on Ingolf's land. From Thord Skeggi were descended many great men in Iceland.

Orlyg, a Christian from the Sudreys, settles in Iceland.

119. Orlyg, another son of Rapp Biornson, was brought up in the Sudreys as the foster-son of Bishop Patrick. When he desired to go to Iceland and asked guidance of Bishop Patrick, the Bishop answered: "You shall have my guidance if you will go by my counsel. You will find two hills and a valley in each of them, visible from the sea; choose there your settlement, and build your homestead under the southern hill, where you must also erect a church to the glory of God and St. Columba." The Bishop then furnished him with wood for the building of the church, an iron bell, a complete Missal, and consecrated earth, which he was told to place under the corner pillar of the church. The Bishop commanded him to hold firmly the true Faith which he had taught him. Orlyg then set sail with his company; but the voyage proved toilsome, and they knew not whither they went. To reach land, therefore, Orlyg made a vow to God, and also to Bishop Patrick, that the spot where he came ashore should be called its first name after the Bishop, if he would afford them help. They saw land shortly afterwards in the western part of the island, and reached the spot now called Orlygshaven; the frith which stretched thence up into the country they called Patrick'sfirth. Here they remained during the winter; and in the spring Orlyg got his ship ready and sailed south, past the glacier of Snœfell. Entering a frith, he beheld two hills with a valley in each. These he recognised as the hills to which Bishop Patrick had directed him, and sailed to the southern one, which was Kialarness, where Helgi Biola, his cousin, had already settled. Helgi Biola was a son of Ketil Flatneb, son of Biorn the Ungartered. Orlyg stayed with his kinsman Helgi during the winter, and in the spring he set up house by the advice of Helgi at Esiuberg, where he caused a church to be built, according to the promise he had made to Bishop Patrick. He held fast to the true Faith which the Bishop had taught him, and it is said of his son that he never offered sacrifice to idols.

There were many other persons who were already baptized Christians when they came to Iceland and took possession of unoccupied land; but they were greatly outnumbered by the heathen and idolatrous settlers. These, with all their might, withstood the true Faith, as will be told further on, wickedly annoying and persecuting the Christians who were but yet young in the Faith. Some of these, being but nominal Christians, turned again to the heathen religion. Several did not altogether abandon the Christian Faith; but nearly all their children and descendants became heathen, for there were no clerical teachers in the country, nor any that might direct the people in their religion.

Reason for introducing the early settlers of Iceland into the story.

120. We here write of some of the original settlers, feeling that it will not be regarded as unbecoming to this story to speak of the Icelanders who believed in the true God before Christianity was established by law, and to tell from what families they sprung. For, as forerunners, they prepared the way of that most happy change which afterwards occurred, when the whole land so completely turned away from the delusion of the Fiend to the service of the true God, that the Christian Faith has ever since stood firm and steadfast, and never lost ground.

Orlyg the Old at Esiuberg had many children and descendants.

Of Ketil Flatneb and his children.

121. King Harold Fairhair led an expedition to the British Islands, as we have already related; he subdued the whole of the Sudreys, pushing his conquests so far west that no succeeding king possessed so wide a realm. But as soon as he returned east to Norway, the Irish and Scotch Wickings descended on the Sudreys, robbing and plundering them in all parts; which when King Harold heard, he sent Ketil Flatneb, son of Biorn the Ungartered, into the west to win back for him the Sudreys. Ketil Flatneb married Yngwild, daughter of Ketil Wether, a baron of Ringarick;

their sons were Biorn the Easterling and Helgi Biola; their daughters, Aud the Deep-minded and Thorun Horn. Ketil left his son Biorn to look after his estates in Norway when he went into the west with his other children and his wife. Having reduced all the Sudreys, he made himself chief over them, and did not pay to King Harold the tribute expected from him. The King therefore took possession of all Ketil's estates in Norway, and drove away his son Biorn. Biorn first went over-sea to the Sudreys, but would not settle there, and thus he got his name of Biorn the Easterling. He then sailed to Iceland, and settling on land by Breidafirth, dwelt at Biarnarhaven. He was buried in a cairn at Borgarbrook, for he alone of all the children of Ketil Flatneb was not baptized. Ketil himself was baptized in the west, and all those of his household that were with him.

Aud the Deep-minded, Ketil Flatneb's daughter, settles in Iceland.

122. Olaf was a warrior-king, and was surnamed Olaf the White. He was the son of King Ingiald, son of Helgi, son of Gudrod, son of Halfdan Whiteleg, King of the Uplands. Olaf the White made plundering raids in the British Isles, and having conquered Dublin, in Ireland, and Dublinshire, made himself King over it. He married Aud the Deep-minded, daughter of Ketil Flatneb, and their son was Thorstein the Red. Olaf fell in battle in Ireland, and then Aud with her son Thorstein sailed over to the Sudreys, where Thorstein married Thurid, the daughter of Eywind, surnamed Eastman; she was a sister of Helgi the Lean, who married Thorun Horn, Ketil's daughter. Thorstein and Thurid had many children; Olaf Feilan was their son's name, and their daughters were Groa, Osk, Thorhild, Thorgerd, and Wigdis. Thorstein became a warrior-king, and undertook a joint-expedition with Earl Sigurd the Great, son of Eystein Rattle. They conquered Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Moray, and more than half Scotland, over which districts Thorstein ruled, until the Scots acted deceitfully towards him, and slew him in the battle that ensued. Aud was in Caithness when she heard of the death of her son. She then had a merchant-ship secretly built in the wood, and when it was ready

she sailed away to the Orkneys, where she settled Groa, Thorstein the Red's daughter, in marriage. Afterwards Aud made preparations to seek Iceland, taking sixty freedmen with her on the ship. The principal man of these was one named Koll, highly esteemed by Aud, and usually admitted to a share in her plans. He was a son of Wether-Grim, the son of Asi, a baron, and married Thorgerd, the daughter of Thorstein the Red. Aud first proceeded to the Fareys, where she settled Olof, Thorstein the Red's daughter, in marriage. Olof became the ancestress of the family of The Gate. Aud next sailed to find Iceland, and reached its south coast, on which at Wikarskeid she suffered shipwreck. Then she sailed to Kialarness to visit her brother Helgi Biola, who invited her and half her company to stay the winter with him. She thought his invitation wanting in respect, saying that she knew not whence he had learnt such meanness, and proceeded westwards to Breidafirth to her brother Biorn. Biorn knowing, as he said, the greatness and munificence of his sister, went to meet her, taking his men with him, and invited her and all her company to stay at his house. Aud thanked him for his invitation and accepted it. She stayed there during the winter with all her company, being treated right nobly; and in the following spring she went into Breidafirth to seek for land whereon to settle, took possession of all the Breidafirth dales, and fixed her home at Whamm. She assigned all Laxaydale to her kinsman Koll, who took to living in grand style, and was called Dale-Koll. Aud abode at Whamm, where she lived to old age on the spot now called Audartofts, by the mouth of the Aurridiay. She was a Christian woman, well grounded in the faith, and had crosses erected on the hills now called Crosshills, where she was wont to pray. Olaf Feilan was the youngest of Thorstein the Red's children, a tall, strong man, handsome, and highly accomplished in manly exercises. Aud esteemed him above all other men, and testified to every one that she intended him to be heir of all her possessions. By her advice he took a wife and married Aldis of Barra, daughter of Konal, son of Steinmod, son of Olwi Child's-friend. Aud was a very noble lady, and when she was worn out with age she invited her kinsmen and friends to a sumptuous banquet. After it had lasted three days she made over to her grandson Olaf, in the hearing of all the guests present,

her land in Whamm, and all her other possessions and estates not previously bestowed on her freedmen and the companions whom she had brought with her in her ship. Likewise she gave to Olaf all the personal property which she should leave at her death. She next distributed gifts among all her friends with much wholesome advice. Then she returned thanks to all her guests for their presence at the feast, saying that it would last for three days longer and be her funeral feast. The same night she died. Aud was buried on the seashore below high-water mark, in accordance with her own commands; for, as a baptized woman, she was unwilling to lie in unconsecrated ground. After her death her kinsmen went astray from the true Faith, and a temple was built at Crosshills when idolatrous worship prevailed in the land.

Of the descendants of Dale-Koll, who married Aud's granddaughter.

123. Dale-Koll married Thorgerd, daughter of Thorstein the Red, as we have already mentioned. Their children were Hoskuld, Groa, whom Weleif the Old married, and Thorkatla, whom Thorgeir the temple-chief married. Hoskuld Kollson dwelt in Laxaydale after his father was dead, at the homestead which was afterwards called Hoskuldstead. He married Hallfrid, daughter of Thorbiorn of Watn in Haukadale. Their son was Thorleik, who married Thurid, daughter of Arnbiorn, the son of Sleitubiorn. Thorleik and Thurid had a son named Bolli, who married Gudrun, Oswif's daughter. Hoskuld purchased Melkorka, daughter of Myrkiartan, King of the Irish, and had by her a son named Olaf Peacock. Olaf Peacock, the son of Hoskuld, married Thorgerd, daughter of Egil Skallagrimson, and their sons were Kiartan, Egil, Halldor, Steindor, and Thorberg. Kiartan married Refna, daughter of Asgeir Eiderhead; their sons were Asgeir and Skum. There was a daughter of Olaf Peacock named Thurid, who was married to Gudmund Solmundson of Asbiarnarness; their sons were Hall and Wiga-Bardi. A daughter of Hoskuld Kollson was Hallgerd Twist-plaid, who was married to Gunnar of Lidarend. Thorgerd,

the daughter of Thorstein the Red, was afterwards married to Heriolf, son of Eywind Eld, and his son was Rut of Kamsness.

• *Helgi the Lean settles in Iceland.*

124. Biorn was a famous man of Gautland, the son of Rolf of A. Biorn's wife was Lif, the daughter of Rolf, the son of Ingiald, the son of King Frodi; and their son was Eywind. Biorn had a quarrel with Sigfast, father-in-law of Solvar, King of the Gots, and burnt his house over his head, and over thirty men who were inside with him. Biorn then made his way to Norway with eleven men, and was hospitably received by the baron Grim, son of Kolbiorn the Snipper. Biorn remained with him for a year; but when Grim wished to slay him for the sake of his money, Biorn went to Ondot Kraki, who dwelt in Agdi at Whivisfirth. In the summer-time Biorn led Wicking expeditions to the British Isles, and in the winter-time he stayed with Ondot, until his wife Lif died in Gotland. Then his son Eywind arrived from the east, and he, taking his father's warships, went a plundering in the British Isles. He undertook the defence of the Irish coast, and having married Rafort, daughter of King Kiarnval, settled in Ireland. By Rafort he had a son named Helgi, who was sent to the Sudreys, to be brought up there; but when his parents went to see him two years afterwards, they found him such a starveling that they did not recognise him; they therefore took him away with them, and called him Helgi the Lean. He was brought up in Ireland, and when he was full-grown he became very highly esteemed. He married Thorun Horn, daughter of Ketil Flatneb, and they had several children; Rolf and Ingiald were the names of their sons. Helgi the Lean sailed to Iceland, taking with him his wife and children. He was a Christian in name, but his faith was a very mixed one; for though he was baptized, and declared his belief in Christ, he made vows to Thor whenever he was engaged in seafaring, or any matters that required hardihood. Helgi the Lean occupied all Eyafirth between Sigluness and Reyniness, and settled at Christness. To his son Ingiald he gave land on the east of Eyafirthay from Arnarhill to the outer Thweray. Ingiald settled by the southern Thweray,

where he built a large temple. He married Salgerd, daughter of Steinolf, and their son was Eyolf Heap. Eyolf married Astrid, daughter of Wigfus, Baron of Wors in Norway, and their son was Wiga-Glum. Wigfus of Wors, the father of Astrid, the mother of Wiga-Glum, was a son of Wicking-Kari; and Wicking-Kari was also the father of Eric Baldhead, the father of Astrid, who was the mother of King Olaf Tryggwason.

Ketil the Simpleton settles in Iceland.

125. There was a man named Ketil, the son of Jorun Mount o' Wit, who was a daughter of Ketil Flatneb. He sailed to Iceland from the Sudreys; and because he was a good Christian the heathen called him Ketil the Simpleton. He took possession of land at Wer, in the east, and dwelt at Kirkby, where heathen men found it impossible to dwell. Ketil was the father of Asbiorn, father of Thorstein, father of Surt, father of Sighvat the Speaker.

Ketil's homestead, Kirkby, is fatal to the heathen.

126. There was a man named Eystein the Stout, who went from Norway to Iceland, where he settled on land lying east of the Geirlandsay, and dwelt in Geirland, directly opposite to the settlement of Ketil the Simpleton. Eystein, son of Rani, the son of Hildi, came from Norway to Iceland, and having bought from Eystein the Stout the lands which he occupied, dwelt at Skard. His son was Hildar, who, after Ketil the Simpleton was dead, purposed to remove his household goods to Kirkby. He did not believe that heathen men were unable to live there as well as in other spots; but as soon as he came near the fence of the homestead at Kirkby he fell dead suddenly. He was buried at Hildishowe. A like fate befell many heathen men who, it is said, endeavoured to set up house at Kirkby; because God had made choice of that spot for His own honour, and it is now the seat of a nunnery.

Of Asolf the Christian and his settlement in Iceland.

127. Two brothers, one named Thormod and the other Ketil, occupied all Akraness in Borgarfirth; Ketil taking the part which lay west and north of Akrafell. His son was Jorund the Christian, who dwelt at Garda. Jorund of Garda had a kinsman named Asolf, who came to Osa in the east of Iceland. He was a good Christian, and would have no dealings with the heathen, nor receive food from them. He built himself a house under Eyafell, where now stands the Eastern Asolf-shed. There were no persons living near him; but the heathen, curious to know what he had for food, came and found plenty of fish in his house. They went therefore to the brook which ran close by, and found it full of fish, and thought they had never seen such a wonderful sight. When this was made known to the men of the country, they drove Asolf away, refusing to let him enjoy so great a blessing. Asolf then changed his abode to Midshed, where he lived for a time. Now the fish were found to have all disappeared from the former brook when the heathen came to catch them; and the stream beside Midshed, when they came to examine it, was found full of fish. Asolf was therefore again driven away from his home, and built for himself a house the third time. Again, just as before, the fish disappeared, and he was driven from his abode. He now sailed away to Akraness to his kinsman Jorund. Jorund welcomed him heartily, and invited him to remain; but Asolf had no wish to be where other men were; so Jorund built him a house at Inner Holm, and supplied him with food. There Asolf remained as long as he lived, and there was he buried.

A church is built over Asolf's grave.

128. There was a man named Ulf, the son of Grim of Halogaland, who was the son of Thori, the son of Gunnlaug, the son of Rolf, the son of Ketil the Seafarer. Ulf's mother was Swanlaug, Thormod's daughter, of Akraness. Ulf dwelt at Geirland in Whitayside. He had a son, Rolf the Wealthy, father of Halldora, who was

married to Gisur the White; their daughter was Wilborg, whom Hialti Skeggison married. A second son of Ulf was Roald, father of Rolf the younger, who married Thurid, the daughter of Walthiof, son of Orlyg the Old. Their son was Illugi the Red, who lived first at Raunsas, then at Hofstead in Reykiardale, and lastly at Inner Holm in Akraness. Illugi's son was Halldor, and he dwelt at Inner Holm after his father's death. Halldor was a good Christian, and one spring he had a dream. There appeared to him a man, bright and glorious, who thus spoke to him: "I wish to inform you, Halldor, that I am not pleased with your housemaid, who always wipes her feet upon my tomb when she comes from the milking shed. I tell you this, because you are intending to have a church built at your homestead, and I desire that the church stand over my tomb." Then Halldor in his dream inquired who was the speaker, and he answered: "My name is Asolf, and I came to Iceland a good Christian in the days of the early settlers, as you have doubtless heard. Almighty God has permitted me to speak to you of my burial-place." Halldor awoke after his dream and pondered over it. He remembered his father Illugi saying that Asolf was buried there, and concluded that it was true. Then he noticed the mound where the housemaid wiped her feet, and forbade her doing so henceforth. Early that summer Halldor sailed to Norway, whence he returned in the autumn with wood for building, and raised a church right over the tomb of Asolf, as he had been directed. Asolf is reckoned among the saints.

Biarni of Kalmanstongue vows to become a Christian.

129. Kalman, who came from the Sudreys, settled upon land to the west of the Whitay. He was the father of Sturla, the temple-chief; Sturla's son was Biarni, who, on the death of his father, lived on the family estate at Kalmanstongue. Biarni had a dispute with Rolf the younger about the Little Tongue, and he made a vow that he would accept Christianity if he succeeded in gaining the land that he claimed. After his vow the Whitay left its channel and formed for itself another, by which it now flows; and thus Biarni got possession of the Little Tongue, with the land down the river past Grind and Solmundarhead. There-

upon he faithfully performed his vow, and accepted the true Faith, holding it to the day of his death.

The early life of Thorwald the Far-traveller, son of Kodran.

130. There was a man called Eilif Eagle, after whom the highest mountain at Reykiastrand in Skagafirth takes its name. He was a son of Atli, son of Skidi the Old, son of Bard of Al. He married Thorlaug, daughter of Sœmund from the Sudreys, who settled at Sœmundslid, and they had three sons. The first was Solmund, father of Gudmund, the father of Wiga-Bardi and his brothers. The second was Atli the Strong, who married Herdis, the daughter of Thord of Hofdi; they had a daughter Thorlaug, who married Gudmund the Mighty of Maderwall. The third son of Eilif Eagle was Kodran, a wealthy man, who dwelt at Giliay in Watsdale. His wife was Jærngerð, and their sons were Orm and Thorwald. Kodran was very fond of his son Orm, but showed little or no love for Thorwald, whom he clothed meanly, and put to work as soon as the boy had strength for it. Treated in all respects as an outcast, in comparison with his brother, Thorwald performed with the utmost goodwill every service required of him in his father's house. At that time Thordis the Spæ-queen or prophetess lived away at Skagastrand, on the spot afterwards known as Spakonufell. As a friend of Kodran, she was invited one summer to an entertainment at Giliay, and noticing, while present there, the difference that was made between the two brothers, she said to Kodran: "Take my advice and show your son Thorwald more kindness henceforth than you have hitherto done; for I can see surely that he will become in many ways more famous than any other of your kinsmen. If you have but little affection for him, let him have money and send him away; perhaps while he is young some one will take charge of him." Kodran, perceiving that she had spoken from a kindly motive, answered that he would certainly give the boy money. He then brought out a purse and showed it to her; but when Thordis looked at the money she said: "He shall not have that money, for by force and tyranny you have wrung it from others in fines." Kodran next brought out a second purse and bade her look at it; but when she saw it

she said: "I will not accept that money on his account." "What fault do you find with this money?" asked Kodran; and Thordis replied: "You have amassed this wealth in greed, exacting higher rents and dues than were your right. It is not fit to be taken in trust for one who will grow just and gentle." Then Kodran showed her a heavy purse, full of money, from which Thordis weighed out three marks of silver on behalf of Thorwald, and returned the rest to Kodran. "Why do you prefer," said he, "to accept on my son's account this money, rather than what I have already offered you?" "Because," she replied, "you have come by this money fairly, for you inherited it on your father's death." On her departure from the feast Thordis was presented by Kodran with honourable gifts, and was assured of his friendship; and she took Thorwald home with her to Spakonufell, where he remained for a time thriving greatly, well cared for in clothes and other needful matters. When he was full grown he went abroad, by the advice of Thordis, stopping nowhere on his way until he reached Denmark. Here he met with Swein Fork-beard, who, sprung from a mean family on his mother's side, gave himself out to be a son of Harold Gormson, King of the Danes. As King Harold would not acknowledge him for his son, Swein was not at that time settled in Denmark, but spent his time chiefly on plundering expeditions, being styled King by his followers, after the manner of Wickings. Thorwald, meeting with Swein, was well received by him, and joining his force, accompanied him for several summers in his descents upon the British Islands. He had not been long a member of King Swein's company before the King began to esteem him beyond his other followers and all his friends, for Thorwald was a man of many devices, conspicuous at all times for sagacity and honesty, stout-hearted and strong, skilled in arms and active in fight, bountiful and open-handed with his money. His perfect faithfulness and humble service having been put to the test, he was endeared to his comrades and beloved by them; for even while he was still a heathen he showed himself to be just, beyond the manner of other heathen men. His whole share of the booty gained in the forays he bestowed on the needy, and gave it to purchase the freedom of captives, helping many in their distress; and if any captives fell by lot to his share, he sent them back to their fathers or

kinsmen, as he sent back those whom he had ransomed with his money. The other men of the force recognised his superior prowess in battle, and they therefore made a rule that he should have some valuable article of whatever booty was taken. He made use of this high privilege to select the sons of powerful men, or any objects which were a grievous loss to the losers, and his comrades would be less inclined than he to part with. These he sent back to their former owners, and thus it happened that he was beloved even by those who had suffered from the forays of Swein's force, and they spread abroad the praise of his goodness. Wherefore he readily obtained the freedom of his own comrades when they fell into the hands of their foes, as happened in the case of no less a person than King Swein himself. For once upon a time Swein was plundering in Bretland, and at first was victorious, getting possession of much booty; but as he advanced far into the country to a distance from his ships, he was met by a force on horseback, too numerous to be withstood; he himself was taken prisoner, bound, and cast into prison, with Thorwald Kodranson and many other distinguished and important men. The next day there came a powerful duke to the dark dungeon with a large force, to fetch Thorwald out of prison; because when his own sons had been captured a short time before, Thorwald had given them their freedom and sent them home to their father. The duke ordered Thorwald to come forth and go away free; but Thorwald swore that he would on no account leave the place alive unless King Swein were released and set free with all his men; and the duke permitted this for Thorwald's sake. King Swein afterwards bore witness to the deed when he was sitting at a grand banquet with two other Kings. As the meat was brought in, a steward of the King remarked that there would perhaps never again be seen a table so nobly furnished with guests as that one, at which three such powerful Kings were eating from one dish. And King Swein made answer, smiling: "Let me find that stranger, the yeoman's son, who himself alone will be held, where worth is rightly esteemed, in no less worship and honour than we three Kings all together." This answer produced great joy in the King's hall, and everybody asked with a laugh: "Who or what manner of person can he be whose renown is so highly extolled?" And the King said: "The man of whom I speak is as sagacious as a wise king ought to be,

as strong and stout-hearted as the most fearless bearsark, well-bred and well-mannered as the most courteous of counsellors ;” and then he related the story here written, how Thorwald procured the King’s freedom by means of his popularity and his many noble and praiseworthy deeds.

Thorwald is baptized by Bishop Frederick. They go together to Iceland, where Thorwald’s father becomes a Christian through the Bishop’s preaching and miraculous power [981].

131. After Thorwald had travelled over many countries, he accepted the true Faith, and was baptized by a Saxon Bishop named Frederick ; and after his baptism he begged and entreated the Bishop to go with him to Iceland, and there proclaim God’s message, and labour for the conversion of his father and mother, and his near kinsmen. To this request the Bishop willingly consented, and they had a prosperous voyage to Iceland. Kodran heartily welcomed his son Thorwald, who, with the Bishop and a company of eleven persons, spent the first winter at Giliay with Kodran. Thorwald began straightway to preach the Gospel to his kinsmen and all who came to see him, for the Bishop was ignorant of the language of the country ; and several persons were converted to the true Faith that winter, through the labours of Thorwald. We must now, first of all, tell how he induced his father and the people of the house to accept the true Faith. On a certain high-day, when Bishop Frederick and his clerks were engaged in divine service, and celebrating Mass, Kodran was standing by, more from curiosity than from any intention of conforming to their religion. He heard the ringing of the bells, the melodious chanting of the clerks, and smelt the sweet incense ; he beheld the magnificent vestments of the Bishop, the shining appearance of his assistants all clothed in white garments, and the illumination of the whole room from the bright light of the wax candles ; all these, and the other tokens which indicate the observance of a high-day, pleased him greatly. And the same day he went to his son Thorwald and said : “ I have now beheld the earnest service that you offer to your God, and pondered some-

what upon it. As far as I understand, our religions differ widely from one another; for your God rejoices in the light which our gods dread. Now, if my supposition is right, this man whom you call Bishop is your prophet; for I know that you learn from him all that you preach to us on behalf of your God. I, too, have a prophet, of great advantage to me; for he tells me many things of the future, he keeps watch over my cattle, he suggests to me what I must carry out and what I must avoid; I put, therefore, great trust in him, and have for many years worshipped him. To him you are an object of dislike, so also your prophet and the ways of your religion; and he dissuades me from showing you any respect, and especially from accepting your religion." "Where does your prophet live?" asked Thorwald. "He lives here by," answered Kodran, "a short distance from the homestead, in a large, fine stone." Thorwald inquired how long he had dwelt there. "A long time," answered Kodran. "Then I will make a compact with you, father," said Thorwald. "You say your prophet is very strong, and that you put much trust in him; the Bishop, whom you call my prophet, is a plain man of no great strength; but if he, through the might of the God of Heaven, in whom we believe, can drive out your prophet from his stronghold, then you may justly abandon your prophet and turn to the most mighty God your Creator. He is in truth God, and in no trial of strength can He be overpowered; He dwells in eternal light, to which He will bring all who believe in Him and serve Him faithfully, that they may live with Him in endless unspeakable bliss. If you are willing to turn to the sublime King of Heaven, you will soon perceive that this your prophet, who dissuades you from believing in Him, is a thorough deceiver, eager to drag you away from eternal light into endless darkness with himself; and if in your fancy he bestows any benefits on you, 'tis only that he may the more easily deceive you, the more you believe him to be kind and needful to you." To which speech Kodran replied: "I easily see that the gulf between him and you two is a wide one; and likewise that you and he advocate, each of you, his own cause with great eagerness: whatever you say of him, he says just the same of you. What need is there to say more? The compact you have proposed will make the truth clear." Thorwald was pleased with his father's speech, and related to the Bishop their

conversation, and all that had grown out of it. The day following, the Bishop, having consecrated holy water, went forth, with prayers and singing of psalms, to the stone, around which he sprinkled the holy water, and poured so much over it that the whole stone was wet. The next night the prophet, trembling as from fear, and having a sad countenance, appeared to Kodran in a dream, and said: "You have done wrong in inviting men here who plot against you, seeking to drive me from my home; they have poured boiling water over my dwelling, and my children suffer no slight torment from the burning drops that run through the roof; and though I myself suffer little harm, it pains me, nevertheless, to hear the wail of the little ones when the scalding makes them cry out." The morning being come, Kodran told his dream in reply to the inquiries of his son. Thorwald was pleased, and urged the Bishop to continue the work he had begun; wherefore the Bishop proceeded with his men to the stone, and repeated his action of the previous day, earnestly beseeching Almighty God to drive away the fiend, and lead Kodran into the way of salvation. On the following night the deceitful prophet presented himself to Kodran, greatly changed in appearance. Hitherto he had shown a bright and joyous countenance, and was dressed in a goodly dress; but now he appeared in a black and ragged skin-cloak, and his face was dark and hideous. In a trembling and sorrowful voice he said to the yeoman: "These men strive hard to rob both you and me of our goods and blessings, for they wish to force me from my inheritance, and to deprive you of my loving care and prophetic foresight. Behave now like a man, and drive them away, that we may not through their wickedness lose all our good things. I will never flee, though it will be hard to suffer much longer all the discomforts and evils they inflict." All these and many other utterances of the fiend, Kodran related to his son in the morning. On the third day the Bishop proceeded to the stone and acted in the same manner as before; and on the following night the wicked spirit appeared to the yeoman for the third time. His bearing was sorrowful, and in a whining voice he thus uttered his lament: "This wicked deceiver, the Christian Bishop, has ousted me from all my inheritance, has wasted my home, has poured boiling water over me, has soaked my clothes, torn and spoilt them, has scalded me and my family incurably, and forced

me thereby to go to the distant desert and into unwilling banishment. Our companionship and friendship must needs be now sundered, through nothing else but your faithlessness. Think now, who will henceforth watch over your property as faithfully as I have watched; you call yourself just and true, and you have rewarded me evil for good." To which lament Kodran replied: "I have worshipped you as a beneficent and mighty god, being ignorant of the true God; but now, having proved you full of deceit, and exceeding weak, it is no crime in me, but a rightful act, to forsake you and flee to the protection of a Divine Being who is better and stronger than you." Thus they separated with mutual aversion and no friendly utterances. Then was the yeoman Kodran baptized with his wife Jarngerd and all the people of his household, except his son Orm, who at this time was unwilling to accept baptism.

Bishop Frederick's contest with the bearsarks.

132. The following spring the Bishop and Thorwald, with their company, went into the west to Wididale, where they set up house at Lœkiameet, and lived four years, during which time they made journeys to various parts of Iceland to preach the Word of God. In the autumn of their first year at Lœkiameet, Thorwald asked in marriage the hand of Wigdis, daughter of Olaf of Haukagil, in Watsdale; and when he arrived with the Bishop at the wedding-feast they found a great array of invited heathen guests. The banquet-hall, according to the usual custom of the time, was of large dimensions, and across it flowed a little stream. It was well decorated; and as neither Christians nor heathen were willing to sit at the same table with the others, they had decided to hang a curtain between them right across the hall, near the little stream. The Bishop, with the Christians, occupied the outer portion of the hall towards the door, and the heathen were within the curtain. Among the other heathen guests two brothers were present, bearsarks of very great strength, much given to witchcraft, and both named Hauk; and as they prominently opposed the true Faith with all their might, and strove to bring the Christian religion to nought, they challenged the Bishop, if his courage would allow him, or if

he put any confidence in his God, to compete with them in their customary feats, in which they walked through burning flames, or fell upon their weapons, without suffering hurt. And the Bishop, trusting in God's mercy, did not refuse the challenge. A large fire was burning along the centre of the hall, from end to end, as was the custom in those days, whence arose the common saying, "Drink ale by the fireside." The Bishop, having put on all his robes, took water and consecrated it. Then, with mitre on head and crozier in hand, he went to the fire and consecrated it, sprinkling holy water over it. Next, the bearsarks approached, howling fearfully, and gnawing the rims of their shields. They carried drawn swords in their hands, and were now ready to pass through the fire. Quicker than they thought, they were close upon it, and stumbling against the burning logs, both fell forwards. The fire seized on them, and in a short time burnt them with such severity that they were dead when dragged out of it. They were carried up along the ravine and there buried, and the place was henceforth called Haukagil. Bishop Frederick, having made the sign of the Cross before him, walked into the fire, and passed through the midst of it from end to end of the hall, while the flames on both sides receded from him as if blown by the wind. And so far was the Bishop from being hurt by the heat of the fire, that not even the fringe of his robes was singed in the slightest degree. Thereupon many of the company who saw this great and glorious sign turned to God.

This event is told by Monk Gunnlaug, who says that he heard it from Glum Thorgilson, a trustworthy man; and Glum had learnt it from Arnor, the son of Arndis. Olaf, at his homestead of Haukagil, afterwards built a church, for which Thorwald found him the timber.

Further conversions. Of the church built by Thorward Spak Bodwarson in As.

133. The Bishop, Thorwald, and their company made at all times the strongest efforts to bring to God all the men they could, and preached God's Word not only in the districts neighbouring on their abode, but in many places throughout Iceland. On one of their journeys west they came to Whamam, in the dales of Breida-

firth. As it was the time of the General Assembly, the yeoman Thorarin was not at home, and his lady, Fridgerd, daughter of Thord of Hofdi, received them at first with a hearty welcome. But when Thorwald preached the Faith to the men of the house, Fridgerd cursed him from the inside, and they could hear one another's words. Fridgerd's remarks, as Thorwald spoke, were few and abusive; but Skeggi, her son and Thorarins, made a mock at everything he said. Thereupon Thorwald composed a verse:—

“With the precious word I came, but no man listened.

No worthy praise got we from the generous master.

The aged lady shouted at the poet from the heathen altar with rude words;
May God deal roughly with that priestess!”

We do not hear of any persons in the West Quarter of the island who accepted the Christian Faith through the preaching of Thorwald and the Bishop; but in the counties of the north through which they passed they made some distinguished converts. Among these were Onund of Reykiadale, son of Thorgils Greniadarson, Lenni of Saurby in Eyafirth, and Thorward of As by Hialtadale, who had two brothers named Arngeir and Thord. Thorward was a son of Spak-Bodwar, the son of Ondot, one of the early settlers who dwelt in Widwick. These and other men of the North Quarter fully accepted Christianity; but there were many who, though not willing to be baptized at the time, yet believed in Christ, abandoned the worship of idols and the entire heathen religion, and refused to pay tribute to the temples. Wherefore the chiefs were angry with Bishop Frederick, and showed hostility towards all who agreed with him. Thorward Spak-Bodwarson caused a church to be built on his homestead at As, and the Bishop supplied him with a priest to chant the Hours, and perform divine service. These proceedings roused the anger of Klaufi, a man of much importance, son of Thorwald Refson of Bard, in Flit. Klaufi had an interview with Arngeir and Thord, Thorward's brothers, in order to offer them the alternative whether they would slay the priest or burn the church down. To these proposals Arngeir answered: “I must dissuade you and every other friend of mine from slaying the priest, because my brother Thorward has on former occasions exacted stern revenge for wrongs, smaller in his opinion, as I think, than that one will be; but I

agree with the latter course, and urge you to burn the church." Thord, however, would not join with them in their design. Shortly afterwards Klaufi went by night, with nine men, to burn the church down; but as they came near it, and entered the churchyard, they perceived a fervent heat and great shower of sparks issuing from the window, so that they thought the church all on fire, and went away. Another time Arngeir took with him several men, intending to burn down the same church; and having broken up the door, he tried to make a blaze on the floor with dry birch-wood. But no flame appearing as quickly as he wished, he stretched himself down over the threshold to blow into the hot embers that failed to get hold of the wood. At that moment an arrow was shot, and stuck fast in the floor of the church, close by his head; and just after it came a second, which, passing between his body and the shirt he wore, pinned his clothes to the ground. Starting up, he said: "That arrow flew so close to my side that I am resolved not to wait here for a third." Thus did God protect His house. Arngeir and his men went away, and the heathen made no more the like attempts. This church was erected sixteen years before the Christian religion was established by law in Iceland, and has remained as it was first built, without alteration.

The Bishop and Thorwald are lampooned.

134. One summer, at the General Assembly, Thorwald Kodranson preached the Faith, by the Bishop's request, openly before all the people, and in eloquent language declared many true and mighty deeds of Almighty God. To answer him, the lead was taken by a distinguished man of high family, though heathen and stern, Hedin of Swalbard on the strand of Eyafirth; he was the son of Thorbiorn, the son of Skagi, the son of Skopti, and had married Ragneid, the step-daughter and niece of Eyolf Walgerdarsen. He spoke much evil of Thorwald, and uttered blasphemous language concerning Holy Truth; and by his ill-natured speech so got the ear of the people that no one believed in what Thorwald had said. On the contrary, rather, the heathen increased their ill-willed and hateful persecution of the Bishop and Thorwald to

such a point that they hired poets to compose a lampoon upon them, in which was the following couplet:—

“Nine children has the Bishop borne;
And Thorwald is father of them all.”

Two of the men that had a hand in this libel Thorwald slew; but the Bishop bore all their insults with the utmost meekness. After Thorwald had slain the men, he went to the Bishop to tell him what he had done. Now the Bishop was seated inside the booth, looking at a book, upon which fell two drops of blood, descending from above in front of the Bishop, before Thorwald entered. In this occurrence the Bishop saw a foreboding of what was to come. As Thorwald entered, the Bishop said: “Have you been engaged in manslaughter, or planning it in your mind?” and Thorwald told him what he had done. “Why did you act so?” asked the Bishop. “I could not suffer them,” answered Thorwald, “to call you and me effeminate.” “It was no heavy trial to bear,” said the Bishop, “though they lied in saying that you had children. You have taken the words in their worst meaning, for I might well bear your children if you had any. A Christian man should not seek to revenge himself though he be put to hateful scorn; rather should he endure shame and insult for God’s sake.”

Bishop Frederick baptizes the boy Ingimund.

135. Now, though they suffered many annoyances from wicked men, they nevertheless ceased not their journey through the counties, proclaiming God’s message. From the counties they came to Laxaydale, and remained for a while at Eilifsfell with Atli the Strong, Thorwald’s uncle. Atli and his men were baptized, and also many other persons who were present, for the grace of the Holy Spirit touched them through the preacher’s words. At that time, by the gift of God, the teaching of the Bishop sunk into the ears of a little boy five years old, named Ingimund, son of Hafr in Goddales, who was then living with foster-parents at Reykiastrand. One day, talking with his foster-father’s shepherd, he asked the man to go with him privately to Eilifsfell, to see the Bishop. The shepherd consented, and they passed over Kiar-tans-chasm, and west over the fell to Laxaydale. As soon as they

arrived at Atli's homestead at Eilífsfell the boy begged that he might be baptized. Atli took him by the hand and led him to the Bishop, thus saying: "This is the son of a worshipful but yet heathen man, and the boy begs you to baptize him without the knowledge and consent of his father and foster-father. Will you decide now what is to be done, for we may certainly expect that both of them will be displeased if the boy is baptized?" The Bishop answered, laughing: "So holy an office is not to be denied to a little boy, especially when he has a more wholesome discernment of what is good for him than his grown-up kinsmen have." Then the Bishop baptized Ingimund, and before the boy departed taught him what was most necessary for him to observe as a Christian.

Of Mani and the church he built in Holt.

136. Bishop Frederick is said to have baptized the man named Mani, who was called Mani the Christian, because in his practice of Holy Faith he was marked by many virtues and by goodness of life. He lived at Holt in Kolgummoors, where he built a church, in which he served God night and day with holy prayers, and works of charity of many kinds done to the poor. He owned a fishing-station in the stream a short distance off, which was called after him, Manaforce, and is so called to the present day; for once upon a time when there was great scarcity and famine, and he had no food wherewith to feed the hungry, he went to the stream, and in a hole under the waterfall found an abundance of salmon. This fishery he made over to the church in Holt, to which, as Monk Gunnlaug tells us, it has ever since belonged. Close to the church are to be seen also traces of the spot where he lived as a hermit; for as in mind he was far removed from the men of his time, so also in body he avoided encountering the popular turmoil. By the churchyard is to be seen also an enclosed piece of ground where he is said to have made hay in the summer-time to feed a single cow for his own sustenance; for he wished to gain his living by the labour of his own hands, rather than have intercourse with the heathen, who hated him. Since that time the field has been called Managerdi.

*An intended attack on Bishop Frederick miraculously fails.
He leaves Iceland.*

137. We must now say a little of the many injuries and persecutions that the heathen inflicted on Bishop Frederick and Thorwald on account of the true Faith which they preached. Once the two were riding to Hegraness, wishing to attend the Spring Assembly; but when they came nigh to the place of meeting, the whole crowd of heathen men rose up and ran to meet them with a great shout. Some threw stones at them, and others with noise and tumult shook their weapons and shields in their faces, calling upon the gods to overthrow their foes. The Bishop and Thorwald had no hope of reaching the Assembly, and the Bishop said: "This is the fulfilment of a dream of old days, when my mother dreamt there was wolf's hair on my head; for now we are cast out and driven away with a fearful shout and tumult as if we were wild beasts." They went home, therefore, to Lœkiammeet, where they abode during the summer. The same summer, after the General Assembly, some of the heathen chiefs collected a troop of two hundred and forty men, purposing to ride to Lœkiammeet and burn the house over the heads of the Bishop and all his men. When they had come within a short distance of the homestead at Lœkiammeet they got off their horses to bait them. After they had so done, and they had again mounted their horses, a flock of birds flew beside them all of a sudden; whereupon the horses were frightened, and became so wild that the riders all fell off. Some were hurt by falling on the rough stones, injuring their feet, hands, or other parts; others fell upon their weapons and received severe wounds; and others were trodden under foot by the horses and maimed. It was their least difficulty that their horses ran away, and they had before them a long walk to their houses at home. In this wise they turned back. Thus did Almighty God, of His mercy, protect His own people; and so far were the Bishop and his men from receiving at that time any harm through the ill-will and hostility of the heathen, that they were not even aware of their expedition and design. Thorwald and the Bishop abode for the fourth winter at Lœkiammeet, and the follow-

ing summer they went abroad, sailing first to Norway, where they lay at anchor in a certain haven. Hedin of Swalbard sailed also from Iceland, and having arrived at the same haven, went on shore into the forest to cut firewood. When Thorwald was aware of this, he summoned a thrall to his side, and going into the forest after Hedin, made the thrall slay him. Returning to the ship, he told the Bishop what he had done. "Through this manslaughter you and I must separate," said the Bishop; "you will not cease from killing people." Bishop Frederick then proceeded to Saxland, where he ended his life in high sanctity, receiving from Almighty God an everlasting reward in return for his goodness and earthly labours.

Thorwald the Far-traveller goes to the East, and there passes the remainder of his life.

138. Thorwald lived many years after these events; and being a man of high personal qualities, strong, and very courageous, and heedful of God's commands at all times with supreme devotion, he concluded that if he returned to his native land there was no certainty that he would always be able so to endure the hostility and injurious acts of his countrymen as for the love of God he ought to do. He determined, therefore, to make no more visits to Iceland. So he went forth into the world, and travelled as far as Jerusalem to visit holy places; thence over the realm of the Greeks until he came to Mikilgard, where the Emperor himself welcomed him with much honour, and bestowed upon him many friendly and noble gifts. So touched was Thorwald by God's grace, and so widely spread was his renown among the people wherever he came, that he was esteemed and honoured both by small and great as a pillar and upholder of Holy Truth. He was regarded as a glorious confessor of our Lord Jesus Christ, not only by the Emperor himself at Mikilgard, and all his nobles, but to an equal degree by the bishops and abbots throughout the whole of Greekland and Syrland. Over the East country he was held in especial honour, because the Emperor had sent him there, appointing him overseer and ruler of all the Kings in Russland and the whole realm of Garda. At Garda, Thorwald Kodranson founded

and erected a noble monastery, close by the high church dedicated to John the Baptist, and endowed it with much property. It has ever since borne the name of Thorwald's cloister, after him, and it stands under a high rock called Draufn. At this monastery he ended his life and was buried.

When Bishop Frederick and Thorwald came to Iceland, nine hundred and eighty-one years had elapsed since the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ; and one hundred and six from the beginning of the colonisation of Iceland. Three years after their arrival Thorward Spak-Bodwarson built the church in As.

Of Stephen Thorgilson.

139. There was a man named Stephen, son of Thorgils, son of Eilif, son of Helgi Biola, son of Ketil Flatneb, son of Biorn the Ungartered. He was born at Kialarness, where his childhood was spent. While yet young he went abroad, and having accepted the Christian Faith in Denmark, became a distinguished man. He met with Thorwald Kodranson, and travelled with him to many parts of the world, visiting holy places, and learning the ways of great men. At length Stephen returned to Northern lands, and having met with Olaf Tryggwason in the British Islands, became the King's man, and sailed with him from the west to Norway.

King Olaf gives two of his sisters in marriage. He preaches the Gospel in the Wick, and converts the people to Christianity [996].

140. Towards the end of the winter in which Olaf Tryggwason was chosen King in Throndham, he proceeded overland as far as the eastern limits of the country, laying the land under his rule, as we have already related; and early in the spring he reached the Wick with a large force. Here he stayed during a large part of the spring, and was visited by many powerful men, his kinsmen and others, friends of his father King Tryggwi; and they welcomed him with very great affection. There were two brothers, dwellers in the Wick, wealthy and of high family, one named

Thorgeir, and the other Hyrning, who came to see King Olaf. They had visited Lodin, the King's stepfather, to propose marriage with his daughters; and as Astrid, their mother, was the mother of King Olaf, Lodin, while receiving the proposal in a friendly manner, had referred the two brothers to the King, because the maidens were his sisters. One day the King summoned to a conference his mother's brothers, Jostein, Karlhead, and Thorkel Tail, his stepfather Lodin, and likewise Thorgeir and Hyrning, who were highly influential men in the Wick country, and with the utmost seriousness and earnestness thus addressed them: "I wish to make known to you my desire to begin the preaching of Christianity in this land, and that I will either succeed in Christianising the whole of Norway, or die in the attempt. And I wish you to support me in my endeavour, and aid me henceforth with all your might in that most noble mission, that the salutary project may be successfully carried out. I have informed you of my intention before mentioning it to others, because I think this preaching will be very likely to succeed, so far as power and influence can affect it, if you brothers Thorgeir and Hyrning are willing to assist; as for my kinsmen, I have great confidence in their goodwill towards me, also in that of Lodin, my stepfather, on account of our relationship." Then answered Thorgeir: "I am ready with my answer to this proposal. Are you willing, O King, to give to us brothers your sisters Ingirid and Ingigerd in marriage if their father Lodin and also their kinsmen consent? If so, we, with all our power and might, will aid you in whatever you undertake, and will bring over to your side all our friends and kinsmen whom we can influence either by advice or persuasion. You will have been informed of our lineage and large possessions by creditable persons, though you have not been long in the country." To this speech the King made answer: "I know that you are men of influence and high lineage, and also of tried fidelity and courage, personally. I will consent, therefore, to the marriages you propose if the maidens are willing and their kinsmen likewise. You, my relatives and kinsmen, all of you, I will advance both in power and dignity if you are willing to aid me in the promotion of Christianity; in giving your aid you are furthering what I regard as a matter of the highest importance." All present at the conference declared that they themselves and

all whom they could influence would support everything that the King wished to be done. Then the marriages were discussed, and it was determined that the two brothers should wed the daughters of Lodin and Astrid, and that the marriage feast should be held in the Wick in the early part of summer. The conference being over, King Olaf declared openly before all the people that he intended to urge the acceptance of Christianity upon all who were under his rule. The most important of those present, having already expressed, as we have mentioned, their willingness at the conference, were the first to accept Christianity at the King's bidding; and then, following their example, all the people throughout the Wick district east of the frith were baptized. Afterwards the King attended the wedding banquet of the two brothers, which was sumptuous, and passed off successfully. When it was finished, King Olaf went into the northern portion of the Wick and bade men accept the true Faith. On those who refused he inflicted severe punishment, killing some, maiming some in the hands or feet, and driving others out of the country. Thus it befell that throughout all the kingdom which his father King Tryggwi had possessed, and also that which King Harold the Grenlander, his kinsman, had possessed, the people all accepted the Christian Faith at the bidding of King Olaf; and so the whole district of the Wick was completely Christianised.

King Olaf preaches Christianity to the Assembly at Moster in South Hordaland.

141. King Olaf hastened on board his ships in the Wick, and sailed northwards to Agdi, having with him a large and fine force; and wheresoever he summoned an Assembly of the yeomen he bade them all submit to baptism. The yeomen, making no attempt to rise against him, accepted Christianity and were baptized wherever he went. An Assembly was summoned by King Olaf at Moster in South Hordaland; and when the King's summons reached the yeomen they came together in great numbers, conversing and taking counsel with one another, touching the difficulty wherein they were; for they had heard how at every Assembly King Olaf was preaching to the people of the land a

new and unknown Faith, which he commanded men to have and to hold, while the faith they had hitherto held they were to forsake, ruin, and destroy. They agreed among themselves to resist this demand with all their might, and then chose three men, the wisest and most eloquent of their number, to answer the King if he should bring forward his proposal, and to tell him boldly that they would submit to nothing contrary to the laws, even though the King should command it. The night before the Assembly was appointed to meet, there appeared to King Olaf in a dream, a vision of St. Martin the Bishop, who said to him: "It is a custom in this land, as in many other lands where the people are heathen, to consecrate ale to Thor and Odin at feasts and banquets, and to dedicate full cups to the Anses. It is my desire that you make a change in this custom at banquets and feasts where toasts are drunk, so that the evil habit exist no longer as heretofore; and that you cause my name to be proposed as a memorial toast with God and his Saints. I will then, when morning comes, support and strengthen your mission, so that it may have success; for there are many preparing to resist it, and I will evermore aid you and make your undertakings prosperous." After seeming in his dream to give his assent, the King awoke, and pondering on the vision, thought well of his dream. The following day he went to the Assembly, which was attended by a great crowd of yeomen, all under arms; and when the Assembly was constituted, the King stood on a rock, surrounded by his men, who were likewise armed, while the crowd of yeomen were seated farther off. We are told by well-informed persons that on the rock may still be seen small holes, made, as it were, by the butt-ends of the spears on which the King's men leaned as they stood around him; and also the footprints of King Olaf, just as if he had stood in half-thawed snow. The King addressed the yeomen graciously, and thus spoke: "There are assembled here many chiefs of great worth, and a numerous company of people with them. To all of you who have come to this Assembly at my summons I return thanks, for your attendance will, I trust, be an immediate as well as a lasting honour to us all. It is known to you that the people of the land have unanimously accepted me as head over all the realm of Norway, and promised obedience and hearty service to me in all respects according to my will. Now, because I have confidence

that all men will fully perform their promises, it behoves me not to require from you bondservice, as if you were purchased thralls, but to ask from you an honourable service such as a king may demand from courteous knights. Therefore I wish you not to remain without a wholesome reminder of the service that you may fitly render, and to whom you ought to render it. If you will give ear to me, I will make you knights of the Highest of Kings, who loves us all that serve Him truly, and not only enriches His servants with worldly power, but makes them the brethren of His dear Son, and fellow-heirs with Him of eternal joy. For an earthly kingdom is altogether valueless except we purchase there-with the heavenly kingdom, which never ends. Therefore you must believe in Almighty God the Father, Creator of all things; and in His blessed Son, who deigned to be born into this world of His blessed mother the Virgin Mary, for the redemption of all mankind; and in the Holy Ghost, one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Having this Faith, you must allow yourselves to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and thus become sons of Almighty God, and heirs of everlasting life. Moreover, you must renounce the Fiend, and all the belief in false gods in which he has entangled you, purposing to lead you, as he led your kinsmen aforetime, into everlasting torments with himself if you continue to serve him. And I say to you now, in short, that all, poor as well as rich, who are ready and willing to yield to my command shall surely enjoy my friendship, as well as an eternal reward from Almighty God; but those who gainsay it and refuse to hearken to this glad message, though it touches their happiness most closely, will expose themselves to my anger and whatever punishment can reach them." The King's harangue was long and eloquent; and when he ceased speaking, there rose up one of the yeomen, the most eloquent of them, who had been selected by the others as the first to answer the King and oppose the command to accept Christianity; but as soon as he essayed to speak he was seized with a violent convulsive cough, so that he sat down again unable to utter a word. Then, notwithstanding the ill-success of the first yeoman, a second stood up, unwilling to let the King's speech go unanswered; but when he began to speak he stammered so that not a word he said could be understood; and as all who were near him began to laugh, he, too, sat

down. A third now stood up to speak against the King, in great anger and presumption; he thought to avenge the discomfiture of his fellows by gentleness of speech and a flow of eloquence; but his voice became so harsh and hoarse that no one heard what he said, and thus he who rose up in haughtiness and arrogance sat down in shame and disgrace. After these, there was no one to speak against the King, and at length they all consented to do as he bade them, and he did not break up the Assembly until all present were baptized. He then charged Thangbrand the priest to baptize the women and children and all the neighbouring population that was not present at the Assembly. Wherever King Olaf journeyed, and the people of the land accepted the Christian Faith, he caused the temples and the high places there to be broken up and burnt. In their place he had churches erected, and he supplied priests wherever there seemed most need; he likewise destroyed all the images of the gods, breaking them up or burning them. Thus Hallarstein says:—

“Temples and howes in great number the generous chief did burn;
 The heathen gods he bade break in pieces.
 Zealous for religion, the leader taught the good faith to the intelligent sons
 of men.
 Mightiest King of men is he.”

Stephen Thorgilson, sent by King Olaf Tryggwason, preaches the Gospel unsuccessfully in Iceland.

142. Stephen the Iclander, as we have already mentioned, was with King Olaf; and the King conversed with him often, because Stephen was a wise man and had travelled in many lands. The King made many inquiries of him touching the conduct and manners of powerful rulers in foreign lands, and likewise of his travels with Thorwald Kodranson; and Stephen answered him whatever question he asked. The King next inquired if he had a mind to visit his kinsmen in Iceland, and preach the Holy Faith to them, and Stephen replied: “The manner in which Thorwald was generally received when he went on that errand to Iceland with Bishop Frederick, was not such as to make me desirous of preaching the Christian religion there; and he was in all respects

better fitted for the work than I am." Then the King said: "I have begun the preaching of Christianity here in Norway, fully determined, in my heart, not to cease from the labour until all the people of the land accept the true Faith; and with no less diligence will I strive earnestly to lead to God the inhabitants of Iceland and other Northern lands. Those lands lie under our influence, because their people come here to trade with us, transporting goods hither which we would not lack, and they have far less need of many things which we send to them than they have of Christianity. Moreover, it becomes not Christian men to defile their Faith by trading with the heathen, or having other friendly companionship such as they have with their brethren. I have made choice of you, as my messenger, to preach God's name in Iceland, and I abide the issue; for I know no one among us better fitted for the task than you, a native of the country, well connected, perfect in Holy Truth and in righteousness of life." "I will gladly carry your message," answered Stephen, "wherever you wish, to Iceland or any other place; but I fear that my journey will have small success, for the Icelanders, my kinsmen, are hard in their dealings, and do not readily abandon any opinion they hold." Stephen next got his ship ready for the voyage to Iceland, and set sail, taking with him learned clerks and other companions whom King Olaf found for him; and they had a prosperous voyage, the passage being both quick and smooth. Stephen brought his ship to land at Gufaros, a short time before the meeting of the General Assembly, and he began straightway to preach God's Word openly; but when people discovered that he was a Christian, and learnt what business he had in hand, they behaved uncivilly and inhumanly towards him; in which treatment his kinsmen were foremost. Stephen travelled boldly over the country, in the west and south, with a company of nine men; but seeing that no one in those districts was moved by his persuasions, because the people were heathen all over the south and West Quarter of the island, he was vexed, and with the assistance of his men began to break up the temples and high places, and burn the images of the gods. Whereupon the heathen collected together and put a stop to this destruction of their temples and the injury to their gods. In the course of the summer a law was passed at the General Assembly, that whoever blasphemed the gods, or inflicted any injury or disgrace on them, should be fined

and outlawed. The leaders in the prosecution were to be the kinsmen of the accused, third cousins, fourth cousins, and those whose relationship lay between these degrees, because the heathen men called Christianity a family disgrace. Consequently Stephen was prosecuted by his kinsmen Thorolf, Askel, Torrad, and Wandrad, the sons of Oswif, who was the son of Helgi, the son of Ottar, the son of Biorn, the son of Ketil Flatneb. Their brother Ospak was unwilling to take part in the prosecution. After sentence of condemnation was passed, Stephen said to his prosecutors: "The punishment to which you have condemned me will do me no harm; but many years will not elapse before great ill-luck and evil fortune will come upon you because of your action." Stephen had beached his ship at Gufaros for the winter, and when spring came and melted the snow on the fells, the swollen stream and a gale of wind drove it out to sea. In this occurrence the heathen saw the hand of the gods, who thus clearly showed their anger against Stephen. The following verse was then composed:—

"A crushing mountain storm has broken up Stephen's ship,
The stream from the fells passes over the vessel's hull;
The ice-laden river rolls its headlong course.
Surely 'tis the might of Thor that has caused this turmoil,
The gods are with us in the land."

Shortly afterwards, Stephen's ship was drifted on shore, having suffered little or no damage, and he sailed away in it from Iceland.

The family of Horda-Kari prepare to meet King Olaf at the Assembly at Gula.

143. The same summer in which Stephen sailed to Iceland, as we have just related, King Olaf, having Christianised all the people of the Wick, sailed by the coast in a northerly direction. Wherever he came he converted the people to Christianity, and taught them right forms of faith. At that time there were many powerful and famous men in Hordaland, who were sprung from the family of Horda-Kari. Horda-Kari had four sons: one was Thorleif the Wise; the second was Ogmund, father of Thorolf Skialg,

who was the father of Erling of Soli; the third was Thord, father of the Baron Klypp, who slew King Sigurd Slefa, son of Gunnhild; the fourth was Olmod the Old, father of Askel, the father of Aslak Fitiascall. The descendants of Horda-Kari were at that time the greatest and most distinguished men of Hordaland. When the family received the perplexing news that King Olaf was sailing towards them from the east, by the coast, with a great force, changing the old laws held by the people, and were told that all who opposed his will met with punishment and threats of evil, they had a meeting among themselves to decide upon a plan of action, knowing that the King would be upon them quickly. All being come together, the chief personage among them spoke, and said: "All we that are assembled here know that King Olaf Tryggwason will shortly visit us; he is a man famous for his accomplishments, his strength, and the mighty deeds by which he has won many lands. And as his fame and renown extend over all the northern portion of the world, so it is good and honourable to serve such a King, and obey all proper commands from him and fit requests. But this unknown religion which he preaches displeases us greatly. It is now my advice that we kinsmen submit not to the King's bidding unless he yield to our wish in some matter which will increase our reputation and honour." This plan was applauded by all, and the meeting ended after those present had come to a unanimous decision to attend the Assembly at Gula with a numerous array of followers, and there meet King Olaf if he wished.

Of Thorolf Skialg and his son Erling, of the family of Horda-Kari.

144. This body of kinsmen, descendants of Horda-Kari, had ruled over Hordaland for many years before these events. Thorolf, the son of Ogmund, ruled in Jadar; he was a powerful man, having many followers, and was a great warrior, tyrannical in his ways. Erling, whom we have mentioned above, was his son. When young he had been under the care of foster-parents, and soon grew tall and strong; he also was considered to be very overbearing in disposition.

*The story of Rognwald, who avenges his wrongs on Thorolf Skialg, and with his wife Sigrid settles at Ærwick.
The story of Rognwald's son.*

145. There was a man named Lodin, who lived at Ærwick, south of Stad. He was a rich man, and not remarkable for courage. His wife, a handsome woman, and very proud, was named Gyda. They had two sons, Rognwald and Ulf. Lodin was a friend of Thorolf Skialg, and Lodin's wife a yet greater friend; and Thorolf Skialg was often entertained at Lodin's house, where he made protracted visits. His conversations with Lodin's wife were always long, and there was a rumour that he scarcely made Lodin an honourable return for his hospitality and friendly gifts. It befell upon a day, when Skialg was staying at Ærwick, that there was a rush of men into the hall, before daylight, to tell him that the upper room, in which Lodin slept, had been forcibly entered, and Lodin himself slain, and that no one knew who had done the deed. Thorolf said that it was very annoying, but there is no record that he showed much concern about it; and as his sojourn there at the time seemed a remarkable coincidence, he was greatly suspected of having caused the murder, though no one ventured to say so aloud. Thorolf offered his protection to Gyda, and with her consent took her to his own house. He seized upon Lodin's property, personal and real, and wanted to bring Lodin's sons, Rognwald and Ulf, into bondage. Rognwald submitted; but not so Ulf, who was therefore sold as a slave into distant lands, and disappears from the present story. Rognwald quickly shot up to full growth, and became a big, strong man, of handsome appearance, soon able to perform a great amount of work with much skill. Thorolf kept him among his thralls; but when he was full-grown he set him over the other bondsmen to manage them and keep them to their work. One day Rognwald spoke to Thorolf and said: "I might be happy with you if you would give me a wife that would please me." "I see no difficulty therein," said Thorolf, "as there is no lack of thralls' families. There is a woman named Sigrid whom I will give you, the daughter of a small yeoman, who lives a short way off. She will

be a good match for you, and I wish you to be loyal to me in return." Rognwald replied that he had not been an unfaithful servant to Thorolf.

The plan was carried out, and Rognwald married Sigrid, a handsome woman of high personal qualities; and they had a son whom they named Gunnar. He grew tall rapidly, and was a handsome boy; and Thorolf Skialg took him from them, and loved him as his own son. Thus three years passed. Every summer Thorolf Skialg used to make freebooting expeditions, leaving Rognwald as steward over his estate; but during the winter he remained quietly at home, having always with him a large number of men. When the boy Gunnar, Rognwald's son, was three years old, Thorolf got ready in the spring-time, according to his custom, to go on a Wicking cruise; but before setting out he had a conversation with Rognwald. "It is my intention," he said, "to have more labour than usual done here this summer; I want a large banquetting-hall built, that shall be as fine as possible. You are an active and skilful man; I will leave you to superintend the work with the help of the thralls, and to procure craftsmen. I should be well satisfied with your management if I could feast my friends in the hall next autumn, and so rejoice over my return home." After Rognwald had given his consent, Thorolf proceeded on his cruise. Rognwald now made preparations for the building of the hall. He hired two very skilful craftsmen, of Wendish race, to whom he made excellent offers, not sparing Thorolf's money. With these men Rognwald formed a close friendship, and they proceeded rapidly and skilfully with the building of the hall. Having the whole superintendence of the work, Rognwald took care that the chips and shavings should be saved. When the hall and the passage round about it were finished, he caused the thralls to bring home a great quantity of firewood, which he piled all round in heaps as high as the walls; and the whole work was done before Thorolf returned home in the autumn. On his return Thorolf inspected the hall, which pleased him greatly, and he inquired of Rognwald why he had collected such a great store of firewood. "I am tired," answered Rognwald, "of always hearing complaints in the winter-time of the scarcity of firewood, which is constantly being wanted; besides, I did not wish the sun to cause rifts in the timber of the hall, which is not seasoned, and but slightly tarred."

Thorolf thought no more of the matter, but straightway began his preparations for a grand entertainment in the hall, to which he invited his friends. The ale was of the strongest, and liberally served; for Rognwald took the greatest pains and care in looking after it and seeing it brought in; while the Wendish craftsmen served it out to the guests. Rognwald was urgent to have the drink brought up with promptitude, as there was abundance of it, saying that, in view of the reports spread abroad after a great feast, it was all-important that the guests should have plenty of drink at the beginning. The cup-bearers were in league with him, and knew what were his intentions. Thorolf Skialg had shown great affection for Gunnar, whom he placed in the high-seat beside him, dressed in a scarlet kirtle, which he had ordered for the boy. The first evening the guests drank so hard that they fell asleep every man in his seat; but Rognwald's activity did not then cease, though there was no longer need to be urgent in supplying ale; his mind was bent on making use of the chips that he had saved in the summer. The Wendish craftsmen still aided him in his work; and having carried a great quantity of wood to the front of the hall-doors, and placed all the chips inside the hall, they set fire to the whole, and to the great piles of wood outside. The building was soon completely in a flame, and Rognwald, entering, seized his son Gunnar, who was asleep, and carried him out to his mother from the high-seat beside Thorolf. "It will be all the better for us," said he, "if he be slow to awaken, for we have much work before us;" to which remark she made a suitable answer. The guests in the hall were so dead-drunk that they did not awake before the flames reached them, and they all perished. Rognwald also set fire to the building in which were the thralls, and burnt to death all who were inside. Then taking his wife and child, he hurried to the strand, and accompanied by the Wends, went on board a ship which they rowed into the frith. Here the boy awoke, and observing the fire and the smoke on land, said: "What a wonderful change! Here am I now, and a short time ago I was asleep beside my foster-father. You wicked Rognwald! You are doubtless the cause of the great fire that I see there at the home-stand. I would much rather be yonder, by the side of my foster-father Thorolf, than here with you; for you will not be likely to deal well with me, now that you have behaved ill to him. Whereupon

Rognwald bade the witless boy hold his tongue. They sailed thence in a northerly direction, having with them much property in table appointments, and pure silver, which the Wendish craftsmen had carried on board while Rognwald was occupied at the fire. But their voyage was by no means prosperous, for south of Stad the ship capsized under them, and the Wends were drowned. All the property on board was lost; but Rognwald succeeded in saving his wife and son, and brought them to the homestead at Ærwick. The overseers of the property, who had been placed there by Thorolf Skialg, were men of little importance; Rognwald therefore got rid of them and took possession of the estate, and his kinsmen were pleased that he had recovered his wealth and his inheritance. On his arrival north at Ærwick, Rognwald said that Thorolf Skialg had given him his freedom, and restored to him all his estates on account of long and trustworthy service, which story seemed a credible one. The news of Thorolf's death by fire spread far and wide; but no one suspected who had been the cause of it, nor was there any exertion made to inquire into it, for his son Erling was only a child, and Thorolf was widely unpopular because of his harsh and wrongful dealings with others; moreover, most of his intimate friends had perished with him in the fire.

After Rognwald had lived a short time at Ærwick, he took his son Gunnar with him down to the sea-shore. Here he procured two boats, a smaller and a larger one; and having taken them a long distance out to sea, he tied the boy to the timbers inside the little boat, and let it drive where it would; but he himself rowed back to land. When his wife Sigrid inquired about the journey, and what had been done with her son, he replied that he had no other answer to give but one, that the boy would doubtless not tell who had burnt Skialg's house over his head. After these things Rognwald settled on his estate at Ærwick, and was reckoned a great man. We must now speak of the boy. The boat containing him was driven by wind and stream northwards along the coast until at length it reached a certain island. In tying the boy fast in the boat, so that he could not release himself, Rognwald had left his hands loose, so that he could reach the food left with him to sustain life. The chief yeoman of the island on which the boat drifted was an idolater, and the island contained a large temple dedicated to Thor. Coming upon the boat, the

yeoman was surprised to see the boy, whom he untied and questioned, but could get no answer from him. He therefore carried the child home to his wife. The two were childless, and the boy seemed a fine boy and worth keeping; but when they tried to induce him to speak they were unable to get a single word from him. The yeoman informed his neighbours of his discovery, seeking information from them, if any knew whence the boy had come; but no one could tell him. So he said: "As no one knows anything about the boy, what is there to be done, except that I should bring him up? I will call him my son, and give him the name of Raud, from the colour of his kirtle." The boy grew up to be a tall, fine man, much beloved by his foster-father, who made him heir to his estate. The idolatrous yeoman did not live to be an old man, and at his death Raud succeeded to the management of the property and possession of the whole estate. He became a great idolater, and by his many heathen practices he is said to have enchanted the image of Thor in the temple, so that a fiend made use of it to converse with him. The idol also could move itself, and was seen to walk out of doors in the day-time with Raud, who often took it with him about the island.

Rognwald's wife Sigrid separates herself from him and goes to Olaf Tryggwason in England, where she is baptized.

146. We must now speak of Sigrid, the wife of Rognwald of Ærwick. One day she conversed with her husband, and thus spake: "You and I have lived a long time together in love and affection; but I purpose now to put an end to our union, because, as I think, it is not advantageous for us in the present state of things. I shared your confidence and was taken into your counsel when those momentous deeds were committed with such great secrecy. As a matter of common experience, we know that no man preserves a prosperous career unbroken to the end of his life, if he has been guilty of the murder of even one man; and those crimes into which we fell are of far greater import than the killing of only one man. Now, I have heard that in many parts of the world a different religion is practised to that which we hold; and those who follow it take the name of Christians, from the God in

whom they trust, the White Christ. I have been told also that the White Christ is merciful, and refuses forgiveness to no man, whatever evil deeds he may have done, if he will become a Christian and hold the Faith in Christ. I have also learnt that there is one, a countryman of our own, Olaf, the son of King Tryggvi Olafson, who travels to distant lands preaching this religion. Therefore it is my intention to go and seek him, and if I find that all I have heard is true, I will accept the Faith that he preaches. Maybe this plan will bring to us the relief which acquiescence in our present condition will not bring." To this speech Rognwald made answer: "You must have your way; but I shall remain at home. If the decision lay with me, our condition would remain unchanged." Without more ado, Sigrid joined a company of merchants who were sailing to England, and found King Olaf in the British Islands. Obtaining opportunity of speech with him, she thus spoke: "I have come here because I have been told that you are preaching a different religion to the one that we hold in Norway; and now I am willing to be baptized, to have and to hold henceforth the Faith that you teach." "You come on a good errand," replied the King. "Few are so kindly disposed to Christianity, and I will gladly see the office done for you." Sigrid was then baptized. Speaking afterwards to the King, she said: "If you think my journey has turned out well for me, the proverb will apply to us which says, 'Gift ever looks for gift.' You will doubtless come and preach the right Faith in Norway, where I trust that your luck and good fortune will, with God's mercy, be superior to the ill-will and opposition of the people. Let me inform you that there is a rich and wealthy man, named Rognwald, who dwells at Ærwick, south of Stad; he is my husband, and it is my request to you, Sire, that when you come to Norway you will win him over to the true Faith with gentleness and fair words, for he is more likely to yield to kindness than to harshness. There is also another man, named Raud, the chief man of an island in the north over against Halogaland; what relationship exists between him and me I know not for certain; but both of them are great men, and have dispositions not unlike each other in many respects. It might be of importance to you, O King, that they should side with you rather than oppose you." Then she gave the King an exact account of all that had happened between Skialg and Rognwald, and added

other matters touching the position of the ruling men of the time in Norway. Before they took leave of each other, Sigrid presented King Olaf with valuable gifts, for she had brought much wealth with her from Norway. She then went forth into the world, where she ended her life in great sanctity. Shortly afterwards King Olaf Tryggwason sailed east to Norway, as we have already written.

Erling Skialgson marries Astrid, King Olaf's sister.

147. We must now go on with the story that was interrupted, and say that King Olaf summoned his men to the Assembly at Gula, because the yeomen had sent him word that they would give an answer there to his pleading. When the two parties met together at the Assembly, the King held a conversation, in the first place, with the chiefs. He declared his errand to them, and as he had commanded others, so he commanded them, to accept Christianity. To his bidding the most powerful of the chiefs thus made answer: "We kinsmen have talked over this business, O King, and have agreed among ourselves that if you determine to use force towards us in any matter, breaking our laws and driving us to accept Christianity under any compulsion whatever, we will resist you with all our might; and let those win the day to whom fate assigns the victory. But if you are content, O King, to confer some acceptable honour on us kinsmen, you will then succeed effectually in gaining the faithful service of us all." "What do you wish to have of me," said the King, "that there may exist between us the closest concord and agreement?" "It is our main request," said the chief, "that you will marry your sister Astrid, the daughter of King Tryggwi, to our kinsman Erling Skialgson, whom we regard as the most promising of all the young men now in Norway." And the King answered: "Without doubt such a marriage would be acceptable and honourable, for Erling is wealthy, of good family, and very handsome; but the answer to your suit lies with Astrid. I will therefore ask her how she is disposed to regard it, for I must do all that readily lies in my power to further the cause of God's Christianity." The King therefore broached the suit to his sister, asking her if at his desire she would marry Erling; and

she thus answered: "I shall reap little advantage in being a king's daughter and a king's own sister, born of the same father and mother, if I am to be given in marriage to a man without a title. I would rather wait for another offer, even if it were years in coming." With this reply their conversation closed, and she went away. There was a hawk that belonged to Astrid; this bird the King took, and causing it to be stripped of all its feathers, sent it to her. "My brother is angry with me now," said Astrid, and rising up straightway she went to find him. The King received her with a hearty welcome, and when she said that he might decide upon her marriage just as he wished, he answered her: "I thought I had the power to bestow titles in this country upon whomsoever I would." Then he sent for Erling and all his kinsmen, and discussed the marriage with them, with the result that Astrid was betrothed to Erling. The Assembly was afterwards constituted, and the King preached Christianity to the yeomen; and when Erling and all his kinsmen came forward as prominent supporters of the King's bidding, the whole people consented thereto; for there were none that would speak against the chiefs. They were all then baptized and made Christian. Soon afterwards Erling Skialgson celebrated his marriage, inviting a very large number of guests to the banquet. King Olaf was present, and offered to bestow on Erling the title of Earl, together with great power; but Erling answered: "My kinsmen have been barons in time past, and I will hold no title higher than theirs. Let me, O King, be the greatest man in the country with that title." King Olaf acceded to his request, and on his departure he bestowed on his brother-in-law Erling the government of the country from the frith of Sogn on the north, as far as Lidandisness in the east, with the same rights as King Harold Fairhair had bestowed on his sons. The King then sailed by the coast northwards, making visits of state, and proclaiming the name of God wheresoever he came.

King Olaf goes to visit Rognwald of Ærwick, and makes him prisoner.

148. King Olaf was on a visit of state, a short distance from Ærwick, when he remembered the story that he had heard in the

British Islands, from Sigrid, concerning her husband Rognwald, a story which we have related. He therefore sent messengers to Rognwald with a command to come and see him. But when the messengers found Rognwald and declared the King's command, Rognwald answered: "You are welcome; come in and accept of my entertainment, and remain as long as you think fit; but I incline to think that I have no business with the King, unless you know of any." So the messengers returned and repeated Rognwald's answer, word for word, to the King. "I shall have business with him," said the King, "if he has none with me, and visit him with a goodly company." Rognwald sent away all his men from the homestead when he heard that the King was coming with a troop, and on the King's approach there was only one man to be seen outside the house, and on inquiry the King was told that the man was the yeoman Rognwald. "He is a tall man," said the King, "and bears a look of good fortune." Rognwald, all alone, came forward to the King and welcomed him, and the King graciously accepted his greeting. Afterwards he said: "I have a message for you, Rognwald, as for all other people in this country: I wish you to believe in the one Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. Having this Faith, you must renounce the Devil, with all his works and deceits; and forsake all false gods and belief in them. Moreover, like every other man who would save his soul and inherit everlasting life, you must accept baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, with true repentance and confession of your sins. The God in whom you must believe is so mighty, gentle, and merciful, that He cleanses every man from all his sins in baptism, be he never so great an evil-doer, if he will go to the priest and be shrived, confessing his crimes with true repentance." The King's speech being ended, Rognwald answered: "For a long time past I have been lukewarm in my faith, and I find your preaching altogether acceptable, except the one part where you require us to go and be shrived, confessing our deeds; for far more incidents have befallen me than I may tell of. I am therefore, unwilling to accept your Faith, though I will not prevent others from becoming Christian." Then the King made Rognwald prisoner, and had him in his own keeping.

King Olaf preaches the Gospel to the Assembly of four shires at Dragsæid.

149. The same summer King Olaf summoned an Assembly, north, at Dragsæid in Stad, to which were bidden the peoples of the four shires, Sogn, the Firths, South More, and Raumsdale. He proceeded to the Assembly accompanied by a very large array, composed of the men who had followed him from the east, and of the force that had joined him in Rogaland and Hordaland. The yeomen attended the Assembly, as they were commanded, and when the King arrived with his company he preached Christianity to them, as he had done elsewhere. The yeomen appeared slow to comply with his bidding; he therefore at last placed before them the alternative, either to contend with him in battle, or to accept the true Faith and be baptized. The King had with him a strong and numerous force; wherefore the yeomen, seeing that they were too weak to oppose him in fight, at length decided to yield, and accepting the Christian Faith, received, all of them, holy baptism. The King next proceeded to the island of Selia, where he found the body of St. Sunnifa, and also the holy relics of that blessed company of her followers, of whom mention has been made. Thence he sailed with his force northwards to North More, and made that shire Christian.

King Olaf, having destroyed the temple at Ladi, visits Rognwald's son Raud, and makes him prisoner.

150. After these things King Olaf sailed up the Frith to Ladi, where he commanded the temple to be broken up. He seized all the valuables that were in it, together with the vestments of the idols; and he took from the door the large gold ring that Earl Hakon had caused to be made. Temple and idols were ordered to be burnt together. When the yeomen became aware of his doings they sent out the summons to war, an arrow, into all the neighbouring shires, and called out men, intending to make an attack in force on the King. King Olaf, passing out to sea along the

Frith with his force, sailed northwards, keeping near the coast, to Halogaland, which he purposed to make Christian. When he arrived off Naumudale he determined to sail out to sea and visit Raudsey, the abode of Raud. That morning Raud went, as his manner was, to his temple, where he found Thor in a gloomy mood, and though he questioned him, Thor gave him no answer. This conduct seemed very strange, and he tried in many ways to get speech out of him and learn the reason of his silence. At length Thor replied, though in a very wearied tone, that his conduct was not without reason. "I am greatly distressed," he said, "at the approach of some, now on their way to the island, for whom I have a deadly hate." "Who are they?" asked Raud. "King Olaf Tryggwason and his force," answered Thor. "Sound high the voice of your beard against them," said Raud, "and let us make a bold stand." But Thor replied that it would avail them little. However, they went forth, and Thor blew a hard blast into his beard, and sounded its voice aloud; straightway there arose a strong head-wind against the King, so that he could make no way, and had to put back to the harbour whence he started. This occurred several times; but the King with increased vigour urged forward his voyage to the island, and at length, by God's aid, his goodwill overcame the fiend that withstood him. Raud, coming again to the temple, found Thor much displeased and in a sad mood. "What is the cause?" asked he. "The King has reached the island," answered Thor. "Let us not give up at once," said Raud; "we must resist him with all our might." But Thor said resistance would effect but little. Then the King sent, commanding Raud to come and see him; but Raud calmly answered: "I am in no hurry to meet the King, for I take little pleasure in his visit, and the mighty Thor, my god, takes much less." The King therefore went to Raud's homestead, and summoned all the people of the island to meet him there. When they were assembled, the King preached God's word to Raud and to them all, with meekness, gentleness, and an absence of severity, endeavouring to lead Raud and the others into the right way. "My errand elsewhere is now my errand here," said he; "it is to lead you, Raud, and all your people from the paths of error in which you have too long walked in time past through the enticements of the Fiend, and to point you to the right path, which will

lead all to eternal joy who walk in it, and direct their course by the Divine commands. Those commands bid you to believe in the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to let yourselves be baptized in His name, and to do His will henceforth, keeping His blessed commandments; and they bid you to receive the reward, after having rightly striven to obtain it, of everlasting bliss with Almighty God. Now every rational person may perceive that the true God is He who in the beginning formed out of nothing heaven, earth and sea, sun, moon, and every creature; and has ever since directed and governed all His creation according to His own will, and in beautiful order. It is equally possible to perceive that those are no gods, though they are so called, which are images made after the likeness of evil men. So far are they from being able to help others, that they are themselves blind and deaf, dumb and lifeless, quite unable to stir from their place unless moved by man. Only by the fraud and illusion of the Fiend do they appear to move; for he trusts that he will the more easily deceive men who desire help for the furtherance of their evil deeds, if the false gods be made to appear capable of helping those that believe in them. And not only are those false gods far from possessing any true power whatever, but even the fiends themselves are weak indeed and powerless against the strength of Almighty God." To this speech of the King, Raud made answer: "Worthy of our attention, O King, is the speech that you have made us; but I have no great inclination to give up the faith I have held, taught me by my foster-father; nor must we say that our god Thor, who dwells in this temple, is powerless, seeing that he foretells events before they happen, and is a trustworthy aid to me in all my labours. So long, therefore, as he holds faithfully to me I must not break off my friendship with him; but I will not hinder others from holding the belief that seems good to each of them." "Most likely," said the King, "you will find little advantage in being the only one who resists, when all the others are willing to follow good counsel. You must also have heard how I have often called upon men at a moment's notice to leave the inheritance of their fathers when they would not listen to my offers to save them in their need." "Cease your threats, O King," said Raud; "such things move me not; but as you urge your case with extreme perseverance, saying that

your God is all-powerful and can do whatever He will, He will surely be ready to strengthen you so that you may perform great feats. You say that Thor is feeble and easily overcome; but I think you will find otherwise. I will have a large fire made, and you and Thor from opposite sides of it shall take hold of each other; whoever drags the other across the fire shall be considered the conqueror, and I think you will find Thor very strong in the arms." "Who ever heard such a proposal?" answered the King. "Hitherto no man to whom I have preached the Holy Faith has dared to prescribe to me a contest with devils; yet I will accept the trial, trusting through the mercy of Almighty God that the fiend will be powerless against the might of Jesus Christ. I enter on the contest, however, stipulating that neither Thor nor I spare the other's life when the needful moment comes, nor shall any person afford help to the one that is worsted." A great pile of wood was then heaped together and set on fire. Thor went up to it, though with reluctance, and he and the King took hold of each other. As they wrestled hard, Thor bent forwards, and striking his foot against a burning log, fell over into the fire, which burnt him quickly to ashes. The King was uninjured. "It is now clear to all," said he, "what a groundless faith is theirs who put their trust in Thor, seeing that he cannot even save himself from burning." To which Raud replied: "We have seen, O King, that you are the conqueror in your struggle with Thor, and therefore I will never more put faith in him; yet to submit now to baptism is far from me." Wherefore the King made Raud a prisoner, and kept him in his own custody; but neither Raud nor Rognwald knew about the other. Then all the rest of the islanders were baptized, accepting the true Faith. News now reached King Olaf that the people of Halogaland had a fleet at sea, in order to defend their country against him if he should go north. It was under the leadership of Harek of Thiotta, Thori Hart of Waga, and Eywind, surnamed Cheekrift. He therefore directed his course south and returned to Throndham, sailing into the Frith; for he had heard that the Thronds had disbanded their force as soon as they knew that he had sailed to sea out of the Frith, and that he intended to go north to Halogaland.

The story of Ottar and Awaldi.

151. During the latter part of the reign of Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, there lived in the north, on an island of Halogaland called Ylfi, a man named Thorwald, surnamed The Discreet; his wife Thorgerd was the daughter of Hallfred, and she had a brother named Galti, an influential man that lived in Sogn. Thorwald The Discreet had two sons, one named Ottar, and the other, who was illegitimate, Thorkel Silver. On the island of Ylfi there lived also a man named Ingiald, who had a son Awaldi. Ingiald was a friend of Thorwald, and the foster-father of Thorwald's son Ottar. Ottar and Awaldi, being much of the same age, soon became sworn brothers. There was a great Wicking named Sokki, an evil-doer, whose expeditions for the sake of robbery and plunder ranged far and wide. This man landed one summer night on the island of Ylfi with his force, and proceeded unawares to Thorwald's homestead, where all the inmates were asleep. "There is booty in plenty for us here," he said to his followers; "this is the house of a rich man, and there will be no resistance if we act with prudence. We will assault the place with fire and sword, carry away all the property, and burn the buildings with every man they contain. Some of us shall go to Ingiald's homestead and do the like there." None of his men dissuading him, the buildings were set on fire. Thorwald came forward to the door and asked who had given orders to burn the house. Sokki told his name, and Thorwald asked: "What is the reason? I am not conscious that we have wronged you." "We Wickings," answered Sokki, "do not need reasons for our conduct when we wish to have people's property or their lives." So they assaulted the homestead with fire and sword; few of the inmates escaped, and Thorwald with fourteen others was burnt to death. The Wickings carried off all the property that could be of use to them. Those of his band whom Sokki had sent to Ingiald's house set fire to it; and Ingiald, going to the door, begged that the inmates might be allowed to go out; but the Wickings would not grant the boon. Then Ingiald turned to the boys Ottar and Awaldi, saying: "By all likelihood my days are now over; but I would gladly save you two from the fire to enjoy a longer life.

There is a secret door in the house, through which I will slip you ; try and find your way through the smoke to the wood. You may have the opportunity of avenging this outrage if a prosperous future falls to your lot." They answered : " We may have the will to avenge it, but as things are, we are not likely to carry out our wish." Ingiald brought them to the secret door, and they made good their escape, for the Wickings failed to notice them, because of the noise and the raging fire ; besides, their time was not yet come. Finding their way to another part of the island, they soon met with a yeoman, and begged him to take them with all speed over to the mainland. The yeoman recognised the boys, and did as they asked him. On the mainland they gave themselves out to be poor boys, and passed on till they came to a herring-boat which had touched land, being on its way from Waga to a southern part of the country. They offered their services on board, and thus got the opportunity of sailing south along the coast. When they reached the frith of Sogn they wished to land, saying that they had kinsmen there. " We will land you, as you wish it," said the steersman ; " you can't be in a worse condition than you were when we took you in. You have served us well, and I have a conviction that ere long you will be men of more importance than now seems likely." They were then put on shore, and late in the day they arrived at the homestead of Galti, the uncle of Ottar, and sat down on the straw just inside the door. The yeoman came up and inquired who they were, and Ottar told his real name. " It is quite right for you to come here," said Galti ; " go forward to a seat." For seven or eight years they remained with Galti, in much favour, and grew up to be vigorous men. About this time occurred the battle of Fitia, in which Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, fell. The kingdom of Norway thus came into the hands of Gunnhild and her sons, of whom the Wicking Sokki was a great friend, like many another bad man. Once upon a time in spring Galti spoke to Ottar and Awaldi, and said : " I look upon you, nephew Ottar, as the leader of you two foster-brothers, and I expect you will become a successful man. The time has now arrived in Norway when I dare not keep you here at home with me, because the men who grievously wronged us by slaying your fathers will expect you to rise up and avenge your wrongs as soon as they know that you are alive. While you have been living these years with me,

I have sold your estates and got the money for them; and I think your best course is to go on a trading voyage to England and await the course of events." Ottar declared his wish to follow Galti's advice, and they sailed during the summer to England, where they found a satisfactory market. They spent three or four years in trading voyages, and amassed much wealth; then they sailed to the Orkneys, where they received, as they had done everywhere else, much honour from great persons.

Ottar and Awaldi avenge their wrongs on the Wicking Sokki, and then settle in Iceland. The early life of Ottar's son, the poet Hallfred, and his love for Kolfinna.

152. One day Ottar said to Awaldi: "I have a mind to buy an Icelandic trading-ship and remove to Iceland. I have been told that freedom and peace are to be enjoyed there, and many worthy fellows now find it not inconsistent with their dignity to settle there. I should like, though, to make a voyage first to Norway to see if we can come upon the Wicking Sokki; it would be more satisfactory for us, I think, not to leave Norway finally until we have avenged somewhat the death of our fathers." Awaldi bade him follow out his plan; so they bought a good Icelandic trader, and sailed with her east to Norway, directing their course to Sogn. Here they visited Galti, to whom they told all their purposes and plans. "This is the very time," said Galti; "the Wicking Sokki and his brother Soti are at this moment lying at anchor a short distance off with a single ship, and they come on shore at nights to sleep in an upper room. I will get you a man named Stein to go with you; he is an acquaintance of the Wickings, and they will have no suspicions on seeing him." Ottar and Awaldi then returned to their ship and lay off shore at anchor; and there was a good wind blowing. Afterwards the three, Ottar, Awaldi, and Stein, rowed to shore in a little boat, and having landed at a quiet spot a short distance from the homestead where Sokki and his men passed the night, they walked up from the strand. When they came near the house, Stein went in to see the Wickings, pretending to have some business or other, and after conversing with Sokki, spent the evening with them, drinking.

Afterwards, the night being far gone, they prepared for sleep, and Stein gave a signal to Ottar and Awaldi. The Wickings, seven in number, retired to their upper room and began to undress themselves; a bright light was burning inside the room, but there was thick darkness outside. Ottar and Awaldi were quickly on the spot, and having reached the bottom of the staircase as the last of the Wickings arrived at the top, flung themselves into the room. Ottar thrust his sword under Sokki's mail-shirt from below, causing his instant death; while Awaldi smote Soti with his sword as he was pulling off his mail-shirt. The two then rushed out, down the staircase, and Stein with them, trusting to the darkness for protection. They reached their boat and rowed to the ship. There was a good wind blowing, and at the earliest dawn they hoisted sail and steered their vessel out into the open sea, having carried out bravely, as they thought, their plan of revenge. Gunnhild Kings'-mother was informed of what had happened, and she said: "It is unfortunate not to have seen the men that slew and disgraced our friends; but as we know not who they are that are guilty of the deed, we can take no further steps in the matter."

Having a fair wind to Iceland, Ottar and Awaldi brought their ship to land in the north of the island, at the mouth of the river Blanday. The adjacent districts were all occupied and settled; Ottar therefore bought an estate at Grimstongue in Watsdale from a man named Einar, to whom he gave his merchant-ship in payment, and there he settled. The first winter, Awaldi, who was known as Awaldi Skegg, abode with Ottar. The following spring he bought an estate at Knook in Watsdale, and married Hild, the daughter of Eywind Grumbler; they had a daughter named Kolfinna, a handsome woman, and very fond of show. At Haukagil there lived a man named Olaf, wealthy and popular, whose wife was Thorhalla, daughter of Æwar the Old of Langadale, and they had a daughter named Asdis, to whom Ottar of Grimstongue proposed marriage. He was accepted, and received a large dowry with her, and they had a son, whom they called Hallfred, after Ottar's grandfather. Galti was their second son, and Walgerd their daughter, the most beautiful woman of her time in Watsdale. Hallfred was brought up in great comfort by his grandfather Olaf, as his foster-son, at Haukagil. He quickly grew tall of

stature and strong of body, manly in his whole frame. He was somewhat swarthy, and had a beautiful growth of brown hair, and though his features were well formed, had an ugly nose. As he grew to maturity he was considered to be very whimsical. From an early age he was a poet, much given to making satirical verses, and was not popular. When he was about twenty years of age he paid his addresses to Kolfinna, the daughter of Awaldi Skegg, and Awaldi, not wishing his daughter to be deceived, wanted to marry her to him; but Hallfred declined to marry. At that time there lived at Marstead a man named Mar, son of Jorund Hals. He was a friend of Awaldi Skegg, who paid him a visit to tell him of Hallfred's unfair conduct. Mar answered him: "There is a ready way out of your difficulty: I will find a man to ask for the hand of Kolfinna, your daughter. Gris is his name; he is the son of Sœming, and lives up in Langadale, at Geitascarf. He is a friend of mine, wealthy and popular, and has travelled much, having been out as far as Mikilgard, where he was held in high esteem by the Emperor." Awaldi then returned home, and Mar sent a message to his friend Gris, who came to him at Marstead. As they were conversing together, Mar said: "I am thinking of a marriage for you. You shall propose for Kolfinna, Awaldi Skegg's daughter; it will be an excellent match, for she is a handsome woman, and there is no lack of money." Gris consented, and rode with Mar and a company of five men to visit the yeoman Awaldi, who welcomed them heartily. They all went inside the house with him, and outside the door they left their spears, of which the one that belonged to Gris was mounted with gold. When conversation began, Mar brought forward, on behalf of Gris, the question of the marriage. It was favourably received by Awaldi, who said that he was quite willing to rely on Mar's advice in the matter. "And if the ladies," said he, "are as much pleased with the proposal as I am, Gris will not meet with a refusal." In the end Kolfinna was betrothed to Gris. Meanwhile, as they were busied with the suit inside the house, Hallfred came up with a companion to the homestead, and seeing the spears outside, said to his companion: "There are strangers here, come from a long distance. Do you watch our horses while I go to Kolfinna's bower." Having found Kolfinna, he inquired who the strangers were. "But I need not ask," he

said; "it must be Mar who has come to propose for you, and I don't think his journey will be a success as matters are." "Do you let those manage the affair," said Kolfinna, "whose business it is." "I shall manage it myself," he answered, "though you already think better of your suitor than of me." Then the two went out of the bower, and Hallfred drew Kolfinna to his knee by the side of the bower wall, and at that moment the others came out of the house. Gris was weak-sighted. "Who are those people," said he, "talking with one another so agreeably?" And Awaldi replied: "They are Hallfred Ottarson and my daughter Kolfinna." "Is that their usual manner?" asked Gris. "They often behave in that way," answered Awaldi; "but now that she is your betrothed wife, you will have to end these troubles." "I regard their conduct," said Gris, "as meant to provoke me." Then Hallfred spoke: "Be assured, Gris, of my thorough enmity if you go on with the marriage." To which Mar answered: "I care nothing for your threats, for that is the worth of them in this matter. It is Awaldi's business to arrange his daughter's marriage." Then Hallfred recited a verse:—

"He is angry; the effeminate heathen, the great cleaner of troughs,
And his anger is somewhat terrible to me.
Like a big old larder-hound is he, that mopes out of doors,
Especially if guests pass to and fro.
I make my song in the lady's hearing."

"And I pay no heed," said he, "to your interference, Mar the Sacrificer." "If you flout me," said Mar, "you will pay dearly for it." "I shall say what I please," answered Hallfred, and then he rode away with his companion. But Mar said the affair could not remain as it was; they must pursue Hallfred. For this purpose Awaldi lent them two men, so that they were now nine altogether. Hallfred was living at Haukagil; and his foster-father Olaf, being suspicious of the errand of Mar and Gris, had sent off without delay to tell Ottar of the whole state of the case, and to say that Hallfred would probably need help. Directly Ottar received the message he bestirred himself and got ready, and taking all the men he could, came to Haukagil. Here he found Olaf in arms and on horseback, with all the men of his household.

Hallfred, worsted in his contest with Gris, is compelled by his father to go abroad.

153. We must now speak of Hallfred, who rode away with his companion and was pursued by nine men. When the pursuers came in sight, Hallfred said to his companion: "They are following us; we must not let them chase us any longer." They were now riding alongside a certain copsewood, and at this point Hallfred resolved to prepare for defence. Gris and his company were quickly upon them, and began the attack; but in spite of a brave and manly defence, Hallfred and his companion proved the truth of the proverb, "Nought avails against numbers." The fight ended by both being made prisoners and put in bonds. Scarcely had Gris and his party mounted their horses when Gris said: "There is a troop riding towards us, and it can't be fewer than thirty in number; possibly our victory will not be long-lived." So they rode away at a great pace, seeking for a vantage-ground, and after crossing Watsdale river at a point where the road led through a gap, they halted. When Ottar came up to the river with his band of thirty, Gris saluted him and inquired what he wanted with so large a company. "Where is my son Hallfred?" asked Ottar. "He is in bonds, but not slain," answered Gris, "and he lies close by the copsewood where we encountered one another." "You have behaved to him in a disgraceful way," said Ottar, "though he may be somewhat to blame. Are you willing, Gris, to allow me the right of being sole judge in the dispute?" To this demand Gris made answer: "You know what is honourable, and I am willing that you should be sole judge." Having confirmed this agreement, they separated in peace. Ottar turned back with his men, and having found Hallfred and his companion, set them free. "This journey has not been to your honour, kinsman," said Ottar; to which Hallfred agreed, and asked if he had met with Gris. And when Ottar told him of their meeting and of the agreement they had made, Hallfred said: "I care not, father, how you adjudge the case, provided Gris does not marry Kolfinna." "'Tis not for you to decide," said Ottar. "He shall marry the woman, because he has trustfully made me judge in the case; you, kinsman, will have to go abroad, and there seek for

yourself greater honour and better fortune." "Twill be hard to find any to be true to me," said Hallfred, "when a father fails his son. Neither I nor you will be satisfied; you will not have the sole direction of the matter, for as soon as ever I meet Gris I will challenge him to a wager of battle." Thus the conversation between father and son ended; Ottar rode home to Grimstongue, and Hallfred to Haukagil, with Olaf. But after a few days Olaf sent a message to his son-in-law Ottar, begging him to put an end to the marriage of Gris and Kolfinna; "for, if not," said he, "troublesome difficulties will arise through Hallfred's temper." To this message Olaf and Hallfred received answer that Ottar would not resist their wishes if he could have a conversation with them; and he sent them word at the same time that he was very ill, and wished to see Hallfred as soon as possible, being desirous of arranging his money affairs before he was taken away. As soon as Hallfred heard of his father's illness he went to see him; but on his arrival at Grimstongue, Ottar was perfectly well, and had him seized immediately and put into fetters. "I give you the choice of two courses, Hallfred," said he; "you may either stay here a prisoner, or let me have the sole direction of this affair for you." "You show your enmity to me in no doubtful way," answered Hallfred; "but it is better that you should have the settling of the dispute, than that I should remain here in fetters and torment;" and thereupon his fetters were loosed. Gris married Kolfinna, and she went home with him, but showed little affection for him. Olaf at Haukagil was anxious that his kinsman and foster-son Hallfred should go abroad, and for this purpose promised him money, so that he might mix honourably with other men. The same desire was expressed by his father Ottar, who, when he gave judgment in the dispute between Hallfred and Gris, decided that Gris should pay half a hundred marks of silver, and that Hallfred should go abroad. But Hallfred declined to accept the money, saying to his father and Olaf: "I appreciate your loving advice to me. You will have your own way at present, to all appearances, as you insist so strongly that I must go abroad; but I have a foreboding that the contention between Gris and me will be long-lived." Hallfred then went off to a ship in the river Whitay, and sailed abroad in the summer.

Father-son
foster-son

*Events cause Ottar to remove from Grimstongue to Ottarstead.
Hallfred visits Earl Hakon, and after the Earl's death
meets with King Olaf Tryggwason.*

154. At that time Thorstein, son of Ingimund, lived at Hof, in Watsdale; he was a powerful chief and a wise man, kind and popular. He had two sons, Ingolf and Gudbrand. Ingolf was the handsomest man in the counties, and the following verse was made of him:—

“The grown-up maids would all with Ingolf go;
And she that was too young said ever, ‘Woe is me.’
‘I, too, will go with Ingolf,’ chimed in the aged crone,
‘As long as in my upper gum stick but a pair of teeth.’”

Ingolf used to visit at Grimstongue, where he conversed with Walgerd, the daughter of Ottar and sister of Hallfred; but Ottar found fault with his behaviour, and bade him cease his visits. In a taunting manner, Ingolf answered that, considering with whom lay the government of the Watsdale community, he would be his own judge as to where he went; and he made no alteration in his conduct. Then Ottar went to see Thorstein, and begged him to remonstrate with his son against provoking others; and to this request Thorstein gave a consenting answer. Shortly afterwards he held a conversation with Ingolf, and bade him cease talking with Walgerd, the daughter of yeoman Ottar. “I will certainly do as you bid me, father,” said Ingolf, and immediately ceased his visits to Grimstongue, but began writing love-songs about Walgerd. Ottar’s anger was greatly roused thereby, and he went again to Thorstein, and complained that he was treated with greater dishonour than ever. “I wish you would allow me,” he said, “to summon Ingolf, for I am not minded to leave the matter alone any longer; you must have heard of me in the past, that I don’t put up with outrages and provocations from others.” “I will not hinder you from summoning my son Ingolf,” answered Thorstein, “for you are not far wrong in what you say; but it is not a very advisable course, considering the temper of our family.” There was present at this conversation Jokul, the son of Ingimund and the brother of Thorstein; and he fell into a great rage and said

to Ottar: "It's a shameful business that you should bring a lawsuit against our family here in the county; but it will draw quick retribution on you." Afterwards at the Assembly of Hunawater, Thorstein offered to arbitrate in the case, and Ottar, by the advice and entreaty of his friends, consented. "My judgment is soon pronounced," said Thorstein, "whether you are pleased with it or not. I adjudge to Ottar half a hundred marks of silver in compensation for the libellous love-songs; and I decree that he must sell his estates and remove out of the county." Ottar felt that he had been treated with the utmost injustice in the arbitration; but Thorstein declared that he had consulted Ottar's advantage no less than others', considering the temper of both parties. Ottar therefore removed south over the heath, and settled in Northaydale, at the spot called Ottarstead. His son Hallfred had already during the summer sailed abroad from the Whitay.

Hallfred's voyage was a prosperous one, and he arrived in Norway, over which Earl Hakon Sigurdson then ruled. After a short time he sought an interview with the Earl, who graciously received his greeting, and asked who he was. Hallfred gave his name, saying that he was an Icelander. "My business, Sire," he said, "is to bring to your notice a poem that I have composed on you. I wish you would hear me recite it." "You seem a likely man," answered the Earl, "to be outspoken in your intercourse with chiefs; I will listen to your poem." Hallfred then, in a dignified manner, recited it. It was an heroic poem; and the Earl thanked him for it, presenting him with costly raiment and a large silver-mounted axe. He also invited him to be his guest during the winter, which invitation Hallfred accepted. The following summer he sailed to Iceland, and landed in the south. His father had removed from the north in the spring, and Hallfred remained with him the following winter. Then for several summers he employed himself in trading, and having grown rich, became the owner of a merchant-ship. He paid no visit to the north of Iceland. One summer, when he had sailed from Iceland, he chanced, as he lay off Agdaness, to converse with a man, who told him that there had occurred a change of rulers in Norway; that Earl Hakon was dead, and that King Olaf Tryggwason had succeeded to the kingdom. Hallfred was told also that the King was commanding all men to accept the Christian Faith. These tidings seemed to him

very important, and his companions unanimously agreed to call upon the gods for a favourable breeze, one that would carry them from Norway to some heathen land. They vowed to give a sheep and three casks of ale to Frey if they had a fair wind to Sweden, and to Thor or Odin if they were borne back to Iceland. But no wind came to carry them away. They were at length, therefore, obliged to sail inside the Frith, and direct their course to a harbour. But they could not even find a berth in it, because of the numerous warships about; and during the night, as they lay in the open Frith, a great gale of wind blew from the sea, straining violently their cables and anchors. They remained exposed to it for a short time, while the night was yet dark; but as soon as dawn appeared a man on one of the warships said: "Those men on the merchant-ship are in a dangerous position, for they lie there exposed to the full force of the wind. We should do well to aid them." Thirty of them therefore went on board a ship, and rowed towards the Icelanders, and the one who sat and steered it was a man of great stature, dressed in a green cloak. When they reached the ship the steersman said to the merchants: "You are not in a good position. There is a strong wind blowing, and there are rocks and shoals near. We will help you on your course." "What is your name?" asked Hallfred; and the man answered: "My name now is Anchor-hold." And even while they were speaking the cable of one of the anchors broke and parted asunder. Straightway the wearer of the cloak flung himself overboard, and having seized the sinking cable, brought it up on board. Just as the cable broke Hallfred recited the following:—

"Let us change our moorings.
The spray drives against the ship; the cable is strained.
Where is Anchor-hold?"

Now he of the cloak had come up into his own ship, and thus answered:—

"A man in green cape I've got for the cables,
'Tis he that pulls up anchor-ropes,
Yea, here is Anchor-hold,

if you would know where I am." Then they weighed anchor, and the ship's crew rowed the merchant-ship into a good berth.

But the merchants knew not who was the wearer of the cloak; though soon afterwards they were told that he was King Olaf. For the King had just arrived from Halogaland in the north, whither, as we have already related, he had gone, and was now on the way with his ships to Nidaros, where he abode, though occasionally he stayed at Ladi with his body-guard. Hallfred also took his ship to Nidaros.

Rognwald of Ærwick, and Raud, accept Christianity.

155. King Olaf held Rognwald of Ærwick, and Raud, in his own watchful keeping at this time; and he often talked with Rognwald, whose speech seemed to him very sagacious. One day, as they conversed, the King inquired if perchance he knew who was the cause of Thorolf Skialg's death by burning, at Jadar. "How should I know?" said Rognwald. "I was with Thorolf at Jadar for a long time, and he was well and cheerful before I left him; soon afterwards I was told of his death by fire, and always, whenever the event is mentioned, Raud of Raudsey comes into my mind." Nothing more of the matter did the King learn from Rognwald; and afterwards he went to Raud and inquired if he happened to know who had burnt Thorolf Skialg in his own house. "I know not," said Raud; "but whenever the event is mentioned, Rognwald of Ærwick comes into my mind." "Will you now submit to baptism?" asked the King. "Not until I know," answered Raud, "what Rognwald intends to do; but I don't give you that answer because I dislike him." The King next had the two together brought before him, and again asked the same question touching Thorolf. "I can only give you the same answer," replied Rognwald, "that I gave when you first asked me." "I see," said the King, "that you are both of you close. Now, as you are not willing to tell me, I will tell you something about it." Then he began and related the story, right to the end, of all that happened between Rognwald and Skialg, and said: "Such is the narrative given me, Rognwald, by your wife Sigrid; and there is hope that her merits will benefit you both now and hereafter. Many would expect me to avenge your deed, seeing that I have you in my power; but I will not act so sternly if you will both accept the true Faith,

submit to be baptized, and become unreservedly my friends." Then Rognwald replied: "Great is your good fortune, O King, and great your goodwill, of which we, with all who obey you, shall reap the benefit to eternity." He then made confession of the deed, and all the circumstances which the King had related; and afterwards he and Raud both consented to have and to hold the religion which the King proclaimed. They were then baptized, and admitted by the King to his friendship. The two discussed their relationship, and Rognwald acknowledged himself to be Raud's father. Subsequently, by the permission and with the wish of the King, they returned to their estates. Their allegiance to the true Faith, and their friendship with King Olaf, they retained as long as he ruled over Norway; but they are not said to have ever paid compensation to the kinsmen of Thorolf Skialg for his death.

The early life of the Icelanders Kiartan Olafson and Bolli.

156. Olaf Peacock, son of Hoskuld, the son of Dale-Koll, married Thorgerd, the daughter of Egil Skallagrimson, as we have already related. Their eldest son was Kiartan, so called after Myrkiartan, King of the Irish, the father of Olaf's mother. Olaf Peacock dwelt at Hiardarholt in Laxaydale; he was an influential and distinguished man, most popular and kind. Kiartan Olafson was brought up by his father at home in Hiardarholt. In bodily frame he was altogether the handsomest man of his time among native Icelanders. He had prominent and well-formed features, a fair complexion, and fine eyes; his hair was long, soft as silk, and fell in curls; he was very keen-sighted, tall and strong, as was his mother's father Egil, or Thorolf Skallagrimson. He was also accomplished beyond others; being most active, and skilled in arms, and a better swimmer than other men; yea, in all manly exercises he surpassed the men of his time in Iceland. He was a light-hearted man, condescending, and generous with his money; popular, a favourite of every human creature that knew of him; and his father Olaf loved him the most of all his children. A nephew of Olaf, Bolli, the son of Thorleik, was also brought up at Hiardarholt; and the two

cousins, Kiartan and Bolli, were much of the same age, and sworn brothers. Bolli was tall of stature, a very strong and handsome man, with a straight nose and rather long face; he had thick lips, though by no means an ugly mouth, prominent eyes, somewhat open and beautifully set; and his hair was of a light chestnut colour. Bolli was most gallant in his bearing, and very fond of dress. In all accomplishments he approached the nearest to Kiartan; and between the two foster-brothers there was a strong affection, so that wherever Kiartan went Bolli accompanied him.

Oswif Helgason of Lauga. The early life of his daughter Gudrun, and Kiartan's love for her.

157. At that time Oswif Helgason lived at Lauga in Sœlingsdale; he was a wealthy man, and remarkable for wisdom. On his father's side he was sprung from Ketil Flatneb, son of Biorn the Ungartered, as we have already related; and his mother was Nidbiorg, the daughter of Kathleen, who was the daughter of Gaungu-Rolf, son of Rognwald, Earl of More. Oswif married Thordis, daughter of Thorolf the Low of Medalfellstrand; and they had five sons, whose names have been already mentioned; Ospak was the oldest and most popular, and Thorolf the youngest. Gudrun was the name of Oswif's daughter; she surpassed all the women of her time in Iceland both in beauty and sagacity. She was also remarkable for her courtly appearance, so that in comparison with the elegance of her dress, the finery of other women seemed mere childish show. She was clever, well-spoken, and more bounteous than most other women. In all respects Gudrun was distinguished beyond other women in Iceland; and being the eldest of Oswif's children, she had great influence over her brothers. The homestead of Lauga stands on the north side of the Sœlingsdale river, opposite Tunga. When Gudrun, Oswif's daughter, was fifteen years old she was given in marriage to a man named Thorwald, a rich man, who lived at Garpsdale in Kroksfirth, and was the son of Halldor the temple-chief. She had little affection for him, and separated from him. She was then married to Thord, son of Glum Geirason, who was known as

Thord Ingunnarson, after the name of his mother, because she outlived his father Glum. Thord was drowned in Breidafirth. The son of Thord and Gudrun was Thord Cat, who was brought up at Helgafell by his foster-father Snorri, the temple-chief. Stuf the poet was the son of Thord Cat. After the death of her husband Thord, Gudrun remained for a while at Lauga in widowhood. At this time Olaf Hoskuldson abode on his estate at Hiardarholt in great honour; all his sons lived at home, and Bolli Thorleikson, their cousin, with them. Kiartan often went to the warm baths at Scelingsdale, and as Gudrun always happened to be at Lauga when Kiartan made these visits, he found delight in long conversations with her, for she was both wise and eloquent; it was also a common remark of people that Kiartan and Gudrun would make the best match in Iceland. A strong friendship existed between Oswif and Olaf Peacock, which was not impaired by the intimacy that grew up between the young people. On one occasion, however, Olaf spoke to Kiartan and said: "I know not why I always feel a strong repugnance to your visits at Lauga and conversations with Gudrun. Not that I don't consider her superior to all other women; she is, too, the only woman who seems to me a fitting match for you; but I have a foreboding, though I will not prophesy, that we kinsmen and the family of Lauga will not always be happy in our dealings and friendly intercourse with one another." "I will not act against your wish, father," replied Kiartan, "whenever it is in my power to obey you. I hope, however, that this affair will proceed more happily than your heart forebodes." Kiartan continued his customary visits to Lauga, and Bolli always accompanied him.

Of Asgeir and his family in Wididale.

158. At Asgeirsay, in Wididale, lived Asgeir, surnamed Eider-head; he was the son of Audun Pole, who came to Iceland, the first of his family, and settled in Wididale. Audun Pole was the son of Biorn, who was a son of Hundasteinar, an Earl of England, and Olof, daughter of Ragnar Lodbrok. A second son of Audun Pole was Thorgrim Hoaryhead, father of Asmund, the father of Gretti. A daughter of Audun Pole was named Thora; she was

the mother of Hall, the father of Ulfhild, the mother of Asta, who was married to King Harold the Grenlander, and by him became the mother of King Olaf the Saint. Asgeir, the son of Audun, married Jorun, daughter of Ingimund the Old; their son was Audun, the father of Asgeir, the father of Audun, the father of Egil, who married Ulfeid; and Ulfeid was the daughter of Eyolf the Halt, son of Gudmund the Mighty. A son of Egil and Ulfeid was Eyolf, who was slain at the General Assembly; he was the father of Orm, the chaplain of Bishop Thorlak. The second son of Asgeir Eiderhead was Thorwald, the father of Dalla, whom Bishop Isleif married. Bishop Gizur was a son of Bishop Isleif and Dalla. The third son of Asgeir was Kalf, who at the time of this story was engaged in trade, and was considered a very capable sailor. A daughter of Asgeir was Thurid; she was married to Thorkel Cog, son of Thord Gelli, and their son was Thorstein. A second daughter of Asgeir was Refna, who was the fairest woman in the counties of the north, and much beloved.

Kiartan sails to Norway with Bolli and Kalf Asgeirson.

159. Early one spring Kiartan Olafson is said to have made a journey south to Borgarfirth, accompanied by his foster-brother Bolli. Nothing happened on the way, and they arrived at Borg, where Thorstein Egilson, Kiartan's uncle, then lived. Thorstein welcomed his nephew Kiartan very heartily, and showed the utmost joy on his arrival, saying that he would owe him many thanks if he made a long stay. Kiartan and Bolli remained at Borg for a time. There was a ship which had been lying on the beach all winter at Gufaros; it belonged to Kalf Asgeirson, whom we have already mentioned, and Kalf had passed the winter with Thorstein at Borg. Speaking privately with Thorstein, Kiartan said that his particular reason for coming south was a wish to buy half of Kalf's ship, because he wanted to go abroad in the summer; and he asked Thorstein what he thought of Kalf's character. Thorstein replied: "I certainly consider Kalf a fine fellow, endowed with a good temper. You yourself, nephew, are much to be excused for wishing to be acquainted with the manners of other men. Your journey will in some way be a notable one,

and we, your kinsmen, feel that we have much at stake in you wherever you are." Kiartan thereupon bought half of Kalf's ship and became partner with him; they agreed that he should join the ship when ten weeks of the summer were over. Having received valuable gifts from Thorstein, Kiartan rode west to the Dales. When he reached home and told his father of the change that he purposed to make in his mode of life, Olaf answered: "You have decided this matter hurriedly, kinsman; but I will make no alteration in your plans." Shortly afterwards Kiartan rode to Lauga and told Gudrun of his intended voyage. She replied that he had acted rashly, and added other words from which Kiartan might perceive that she was displeased. "If you are not pleased at my going abroad," said Kiartan, "I must do something else to please you." "Keep your word," she answered; "I will soon let you know what I wish." Kiartan bade her speak out, and Gudrun said: "I wish you would take me abroad with you this summer, for I do not like Iceland, and you would thus compensate me for your rash resolve." "That cannot be," answered Kiartan, "for your brothers are unsteady and your father is old; if you leave the country they will be deprived of all guidance. Wait for me three years unmarried." Gudrun replied that she would make no such promise; and so they separated, he thinking his own way the best, and she, hers. Kiartan then rode home to Hiardarholt and made preparations for his voyage. In the summer Olaf Peacock rode to the Assembly, and Kiartan accompanied him from the Dales. They separated in Northaydale, and Kiartan rode off to the ship with nine companions, of whom his cousin Bolli was one. Kalf Asgeirson welcomed him heartily. As soon as they were all ready they set sail, and having a fair wind, they reached the north of Norway at Throntham. Directing their course by Agdaness, they there learnt the tidings that Earl Hakon was dead, that Olaf Tryggwason was come into the land, and that the people had all submitted to him and chosen him as their King. They learnt also that King Olaf was preaching a new form of religion in the country, very differently received by different people. Kiartan and his companions directed their ship to Nidaros. There were many Icelanders of good position at that time in Norway. In front of the landing-piers were three merchantmen owned by them; one belonged to Brand the Generous,

son of Wermund Thorgrimson; a second belonged to two brothers Biarni and Thorhall, sons of Breiday-Skeggi of Fliotslid in the east; the third belonged to Hallfred Ottarson the poet, who arrived just before Kiartan, having sailed from Iceland the same summer. The Icelanders, more especially Brand, all welcomed Kiartan heartily, for they were well acquainted with one another. They had made a general compact together, before Kiartan came among them, to reject the religion that King Olaf preached; and now they agreed to make inquiry what Kiartan would do. He, however, made light of the whole matter, but said that he would consent to whatever plan of action seemed desirable to the others.

Swimming feats of King Olaf and Kiartan in the river Nid.

160. King Olaf was then at Nidaros, with a goodly company of followers, engaged in important works; for he was establishing there a market town, and building a residence for himself above Skipacrook. There also he had a church built in the autumn. Alongside the river he had the ground laid out in portions which he afterwards assigned as he thought fit to those who were willing to build houses on them. It happened one fine day in the autumn that the people left their houses to go and swim in the river Nid; and when the Icelanders saw them, Kiartan said they, too, should go and watch the swimming feats of the townsmen. They did so; and in the course of the day he noticed one man who far surpassed all the others engaged in the sports. He then said to Hallfred Ottarson: "Will you go and compete with that man in swimming?" "Far from it," said Hallfred; "that is the man whom I should never expect to rival in anything." Then Kiartan asked his cousin Bolli if he would try his prowess in swimming against the townsman's; but Bolli said that he was no match for him. "You neither of you show any eagerness that I can see," said Kiartan. "If you dare not challenge him, I must." So he went forward to the river, opposite the place where the men were swimming; and he was dressed in a scarlet kirtle. Throwing off his clothes, he cast himself into the stream and swam up to the excellent swimmer, whom he ducked under water and held below

for a time. Then he let him rise; and after a short rest the townsman seized and thrust Kiartan under water; this time they remained below rather longer than Kiartan thought quite good. They came up, however, at length, but without speaking a word, plunged below the surface for the third time. They now remained under water for the longest time by far, and Kiartan scarcely knew how the sport would end, for he thought he had never before fallen into such a strait. The time, however, came when his opponent let him rise, and they both swam to land and began to dress themselves. The townsman, who seemed to Kiartan both tall and strong, asked who he was, and Kiartan told his name. "You are an excellent swimmer, Icelander," said the townsman; "are you as skilful in other exercises as in this one?" "I have gained no honour this time by my swimming," answered Kiartan; "nor should I, probably, in my other accomplishments, as they were called in my own country." "The fame you get from your accomplishments," said the townsman, "depends somewhat on the man who is opposed to you. Why don't you ask who I am?" Kiartan answered that he did not care about his name. "You are a most accomplished man, no doubt," said the townsman, "but you hold yourself very proudly. Nevertheless you shall know my name, and with whom you have contended in swimming; I am Olaf Tryggwason, now King in this place." Kiartan made no answer, and having put on his kirtle, was going away, when the King, who had dressed himself, called out and bade him go not so quickly. Somewhat slowly Kiartan turned back, and the King, taking from his own shoulders the cloak that he was wearing, said to him: "You shall not go to your companions without an upper dress, honourable man as you are, and having a look of good fortune: I will give you this cloak, and I wish you to look back upon our contest to-day with gladness and joy, as I shall do; for few, I think, will praise your skill as a swimmer any the less, because I have proved myself your equal." Kiartan, after thanking the King for his gift, returned to his fellows and displayed before them the cloak; it was a most valuable chattel. But the Icelanders were not greatly pleased at his acceptance of the gift, seeing in it an evidence that he had passed under the King's influence and become his friend. As autumn advanced, the weather became severe, with hard frosts and cold; and the heathen said

that such bad weather need cause no astonishment, for the gods were angry with the King most of all, and after him, with all those who had accepted the new Faith that he preached. Shortly afterwards the weather improved, and a large number of people, chiefly heathen, came to the town from the surrounding districts. The Icelanders hired for themselves a lodging in the town, intending to stay there together during the winter, and Kiartan took the lead among them.

King Olaf preaches the Gospel at Nidaros to the Icelanders among others. Conversation with Kiartan.

161. One day the King held an Assembly at Eyra, and it was attended by the people who had come to Nidaros. At this Assembly he discoursed of the Christian religion, making use of gentle language for a long time; but at the close he became very stern in speech, threatening with loss of life, or other severe measures, those who would not be converted by his words. Many of the people then accepted baptism, and the Assembly was therewith brought to an end. The same evening the King sent men to the lodging of the Icelanders to listen to their conversation. The Icelanders, seated over their drink, were in high spirits, and a cheerful noise was heard among them; they were speaking of the Assembly held that day, and of the charge which the King had delivered. And Kiartan said to Bolli: "Have you a mind, cousin, to accept that religion which the King preaches?" "No, I am not willing," said Bolli; "their religion seems to me weakly and very cheerless." "You and I regard it differently," said Kiartan; "the King's will, methinks, wins its way, so that in every Assembly people are converted at his bidding. Did he not seem, think you, to use threats to-day against those who were unwilling to submit to his command?" "Certainly," answered Bolli, "we did not think his language doubtful when speaking of the harsh measures that he would use with those who were unwilling to obey him and accept the Faith." "I will yield a forced obedience to no man," said Kiartan, "as long as I can wield a weapon. It is mean behaviour, methinks, in a bold fellow to let himself be slain like a brute creature without a cause; and 'tis a

much nobler course, if I knew my death determined on, to win some renown first that would live long after me." "What will you now do, cousin?" said Bolli. "That is quickly said," answered Kiartan; "if the King insists on bidding us accept the true Faith as he bids others, I see before us the choice of two courses, very different, however, from one another. The one, to submit gladly to the King's bidding, and to let there be no need of compulsion; and the other, to burn the King's house over his head if he is determined on severe measures with us." "I call the latter a manly course," replied Bolli; "but it will not succeed, in my opinion, for the King is without doubt lucky and a great favourite of fortune; he keeps, too, a strong guard around him night and day." "The proverb holds good, I see," said Kiartan, "that 'Courage is often wanting, even in the brave.' I spoke rather to try you, than from a serious desire to incite you." To which Bolli replied that it was not easy to see whether or not any man's courage needed to be challenged. Then several of the listeners agreed in saying that the talk was very mischievous; and the King's scouts returned to him carrying a report of the whole conversation. The next morning the King desired, it is said, to hold an Assembly, to which he had all the Icelanders summoned. When the Assembly was constituted the King stood up, and spoke, thanking all those for their presence who were willing to be his friends and accept the Faith; then he directed his speech to the Icelanders, and inquired if they would believe in the true God and submit to be baptized. As they made no prompt answer to the King's request, he asked: "To which of you Icelanders occurred the design of burning my house over my head?" Then Kiartan answered: "You are perhaps thinking, Sire, that the man will not have the frankness to confess; but you can here see in me the person who spoke of it." "I certainly see you," said the King, "and you are not a man of small devices; but to walk over my body will not be your lot. At the present moment people will rather say that you have given sufficient cause why you should be prevented from threatening to burn any more houses over the heads of kings who wish to teach you a better way. But because you have so manfully confessed, and it is not certain, moreover, that you were in earnest when the words were spoken, I shall not require your life for this offence. For to

endure the threats of one's equals is but a small matter compared with the causeless suffering endured by our Lord Jesus Christ, King of all kings, at the hands of His foes. It may also turn out, I hope, that as you are slow to accept Holy Faith, resisting it more strongly than others, so you will hold it the more firmly. Moreover, I have a belief, which I wish may become a reality, that on the day when you submit to baptism without compulsion, tens of Icelanders will be induced to accept the Faith; and I entertain the hope that when you reach Iceland your friends and kinsmen will be greatly moved by your persuasions. There are here assembled to-day many who have come from that country, and I have a conviction that you, Kiartan, will have a better religion when you sail away from Norway than you had when you came hither. Go then, all of you, from this meeting, in peace and safety, wherever you wish. I will not constrain you at this present time to accept Christianity; for the living God, the King of heaven, accepts service which is freely and willingly offered, and into His glory no unwilling person may enter." This speech of the King was followed by loud applause, especially from the Christians; and the Icelanders, turning to Kiartan, asked him to make such answer as he wished. Kiartan therefore replied to the King: "Many thanks, Sire, do all we Icelanders owe you for the assurance of peace that you have afforded us. In all probability you will succeed in inducing us to obey you because of your condescension and lenity in forgiving us our great offences against you, when you have us in your power, and can do as you please in our affairs. [I am not so foolish as to be ignorant that I spoke wrongly. The Icelanders, our kinsmen, have for a long time been headstrong in words and deeds. There is an old saying among us, the truth of which often appears, that 'Ale is another man,' for over his drink a man often hastily utters what he is quite unwilling to maintain when cautious reason returns to him. And now, Sire, in you and me the truth of the proverb is shown which says, 'The wiser always yields.' As to changing our religion, some Northmen will perhaps say of us that in yielding to fair means rather than to foul, we Icelanders are true to the obstinacy of our race.] For myself, I mean to accept the Christian Faith here in Norway, only so far as will show how little esteem I have for Thor, the next winter after reaching Iceland." "I see clearly," answered the King, with a

smile, "both by your words and demeanour, Kiartan, that you have more trust in your own strength and skill than you have in either Thor or Odin." The Assembly was then dissolved, and after the King returned to his residence he was urged by some of his followers to constrain Kiartan and the Icelanders to accept Christianity. It was imprudent for the King, they said, to allow so many heathen men about him that had not wholly refrained from threats and plots against him. But the King answered them angrily: "I will follow no such plan. Many who call themselves Christians are in some respects, I consider, men of no better morals than Kiartan and his company, for whom, being such as they are, we may certainly well wait. I know Kiartan's character so well now, that I am not afraid of his plotting against me henceforth." The autumn passed, and word was brought to the King that at the beginning of winter great sacrifices had been held by the Thronds, whereat they had made solemn vows to the gods not to allow King Olaf's preaching of the Christian religion to gain strength.

King Olaf preaches Christianity to the Assembly of the eight shires of Thronddham, at Frosta.

162. In the early part of winter King Olaf sent messengers over all Thronddham to call together an Assembly of the eight shires, at Frosta. The summons was turned by the yeomen into a summons to war, and they called together freemen and bondmen over the whole district, so that on the King's arrival at the Assembly he found there a mob of yeomen fully armed. After the Assembly was constituted, the King preached Christianity to the yeomen; but he had only spoken a short time when they raised a shout and bade him hold his tongue, "Else," said they, "we will make an assault on you here in the Assembly, and either slay you or drive you out of the country. Such was the choice we gave King Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, when he preached the same religion to us. He received our protest in good part, and peace was established between him and us; and both sides kept faith with one another. We do not esteem you more than him, and your best course is to follow the example of that good chief." When King Olaf per-

ceived the anger of the yeomen, and that he was unable to make a stand against their great force, he adopted a tone of conciliation, and thus spoke: "I will have no strife with the yeomen, for I bear in mind how you Thronds set me up and chose me, although I was a stranger, to be King over you, and raised me to the government of this realm. I will not, therefore, be so unfair as to return you evil for good; and if I were to engage in a contest with you, we should inflict on each other such losses that recovery would be slow, if it ever took place. So I prefer a plan which will be more advantageous to us both. Let us preserve and hold firmly the compact first made and established between us, to support and strengthen one another, that our undertakings may be prosperous. I will go to your great sacrifice and there observe your religious customs and rites; then we will all take counsel together concerning the faith to be held, and agree to hold the same henceforth." As soon as King Olaf spoke to the yeomen in a gentle manner, their feelings towards him softened, and all their talk among themselves was strongly in favour of peace. It was decided to hold the mid-winter sacrifice at the Mœri, whither all the principal yeomen and chiefs of the Thronds should come, according to their custom, and likewise King Olaf. The chief speaker against the King at the Assembly, and the chief opponent of Christianity among the yeomen, was a man named Skeggi, who was known as Iron-Skeggi or Yria-Skeggi. He lived at Up-howe in Yria, and was a powerful yeoman, one of the very greatest chiefs of the Thronds. The Assembly was dissolved after coming to the decision that we have mentioned; the yeomen returned to their homes, and King Olaf sailed with his men to Nidaros, where he remained.

Kiartan Olafson resolves to be baptized.

163. King Olaf had built for himself a residence at Nidaros during the autumn, and stored therein all the provisions needed for his stay there in the winter. He directed also the building of Clement's church, which was finished and ready by Yule; and he and the Bishop determined to hold in it the Yule services. On Yule Eve, Kiartan proposed to his companions that they should

rise in the night and go close to the church, whence they could behold the ceremonies, and hear the language used by the Christians in the service of their God. Many of them approved of his proposal as likely to afford them great entertainment. So Kiartan and Bolli went to the church in the night-time, accompanied by Hallfred Ottarson and many other Icelanders; and they listened to the ringing of the bells, and the beautiful chants that were sung, and marked the sweet smell of the incense. It was not until day-time after High Mass that they returned to their lodging, where they eagerly discussed their estimate of the religious ceremonies of the Christians, differing very widely from one another in their opinions. Then Kiartan was asked in what esteem he would hold the procedure of the Christians. To this question he answered: "It is of great weight with me that the rites of the Christians please me more the better I become acquainted with them. I have always felt remarkably well pleased with the King, and to-day his demeanour appeared much more noble than I have before seen it, so that I think those choose the better part who obey him and serve him with goodwill. And to say the truth, I think that our affairs and our good fortune are all bound up in a belief on the God whom he preaches. I am only delayed from going straight-way to the King and asking to be baptized, by the knowledge that he must by this time have sat down to meat; and I am unwilling to disturb either the King or the Christian clergy on this day, which they consider to be the chief high festival of their God. It will be a laborious task to perform baptism on all our company, and it will occupy much of the day when we present ourselves for the ceremony. King Olaf assuredly does not look forward more eagerly to the event than I; but it is undignified to act impetuously in any matter, showing neither moderation nor calmness of mind. Kinsman Bolli, how do you like this plan?" Bolli approved of it heartily, and bade Kiartan decide for both of them in the matter. As on the former occasion, the King had appointed men to listen to the conversation of the Icelanders during the day, so that all they had said was known to him before the day was over.

Kiartan and Bolli are baptized, and join the King's body-guard.

164. On the second day of Yule, as soon as the King was dressed, he sent and commanded the attendance of Kiartan, who came, therefore, with certain of his followers and greeted the King. The King welcomed him gladly, and after they had conversed a short time he bade Kiartan accept baptism. "I shall not now refuse to obey you, Sire," he answered, "if my consent wins your friendship." The King replied that he was willing to admit Kiartan to a complete enjoyment of his friendship, and said: "I have heard a full report of the conversation yesterday between you and your companions; and you, Kiartan, have confirmed the truth of a proverb which we Christians use, 'High days are lucky days.'" Thus they agreed upon the matter, and Kiartan, his kinsman Bolli, and all their shipmates were then baptized. King Olaf entertained Kiartan and Bolli at his Yule banquet, and was very friendly towards them; and it is the general belief that on the day when they laid aside their white baptismal robes Kiartan joined the body-guard of King Olaf.

Hallfred the poet is baptized. The King compels certain chiefs of the Thronds to accept baptism.

165. King Olaf was passing along the street one day when he met some men, and one of them, who was walking in front of the others, greeted him. The King asked the man his name; and he answered, "Hallfred." "Are you the poet?" asked the King; and he replied, "I can make verses." "You should bring yourself," said the King, "to believe in the true God, and put away witchcraft and a wrong belief. You are a frank and honest man, and clearly ought to serve fiends no longer." "You speak persuasively, O King!" answered Hallfred; "but I shall scarcely submit to baptism without some return." "What are your conditions?" asked the King. "You yourself, O King, must be my godfather; from no other man will I accept the service." And the King consented to undertake the office. Hallfred and his

shipmates were then all baptized, King Olaf presenting Hallfred for baptism. This circumstance is told by Hallfred in an heroic poem which he composed on King Olaf:—

“’Tis truth. The noblest man by far,
Beneath the Northern skies that Nordri’s sons uphold,
Him ’twas my lot to have for godfather.”

After the ceremony the King gave a charge to his mother’s brothers Karlhead and Jostein, to teach Hallfred the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. Afterwards the Christian Faith was accepted by Brand the Generous, and the two brothers, the sons of Breiday-Skeggi, and likewise by all the other Icelanders who were in the town.

Towards the end of Yule the King sent a summons up the Frith to Strind, and down the Frith to Gaulardale, and thence to Orkardale, commanding the chiefs and also the principal yeomen to come to him. And when those whom he had bidden were all present, the King welcomed them in most friendly terms, and had an excellent feast prepared for them. The first evening the attendants were so zealous that the newly-arrived yeomen all drank hard, and slept restfully during the night. The next morning, after the King was dressed, the Hours were chanted; and when Mass was over he summoned by sound of trumpet a House-Assembly, which he attended himself with his men. When the company arrived and the Assembly was formed, King Olaf stood up and thus spoke: “We held an Assembly up the Frith at Frosta, at which I bade the yeomen accept baptism, and they in return bade me engage in sacrifice with them. It was agreed between us to meet again at the Mœri and there offer a great sacrifice. Now all men know that I have in many places put the gods to shame, diminished their dues, broken up their images, burnt their temples and altars, and in all manner of ways laid waste their cult. I am conscious of the great obligation which lies upon me to do them a pleasure, that they may be willing to receive my service, turn from me their grievous anger, and allow me to retain my realm and dignity. If, then, I must have recourse to sacrifice, and sue the gods for mercy, I shall offer the highest sacrifice customary among men; and I will not make choice of

thralls or malefactors to offer as a sacrifice to them, but rather the noblest men and most powerful yeomen. For this purpose I shall select Orm Lugg of Medalhouse, Styrrkar of Gimsa, Kar of Gryting, Asbiorn Thorbergson of Orness, Orm of Lyxa, and Halldor of Skerdingstead, who are all here present. After them I shall select six others, the highest and worthiest men of the Inner Thronds, all of whom I will sacrifice, that the gods may send us peace and fruitful seasons. Now necessity demands of us to do something quickly, if not much, at this present time, to soothe the hateful wrath of the gods towards us, which for a long period has been growing in strength and intensity, on account of our manifold offences and hostile conduct towards them. And, moreover, you yourselves must be quite eager to receive from them the reward of your service; that final union with them in joy and fellowship for which you have so long and most earnestly striven. Therefore I shall straightway seize you who have been selected for sacrifice to the gods, and slay you with all speed, directing your way to that bliss which they will bestow on you for your life-long service of love. Now, you need not grow pale and livid at these my words, because, if your gods are good and powerful, as you say they are, they will give you everlasting happiness as your reward, all the more surely if, over and above your life-long labour, you suffer death also for their sakes. You appear to me somewhat distressed in countenance, and not as eager for the companionship of the gods as many would suppose you to be; if that be so, you show that you doubt their power. Now, if you possess, as I am convinced you do possess, the sound mind that I attribute to you, you will from this time forth no longer believe in fiends, who can only reward men's faithful service by sharing their own lot with them, the everlasting fire of hell's torments; and you will turn rather to that God, mighty, gentle, and kind, who bestows on every one of His faithful servants eternal happiness, and an everlasting kingdom with Himself in the glory of heaven, after the life of affliction which we live in this wretched world. That kingdom Almighty God bestows as surely on the poorest of His servants as on a mighty king, if he serves Him with true faith and good works. Yea, and to those who all their life long have opposed Him, and yet in old age turn unreservedly to His mercy, He will grant the same reward as to those who have served Him from childhood upwards."

When the King brought his speech to a close, all the yeomen who had come thither at his bidding sued for peace, and consented to believe in the true God. They were then all baptized, and swore upon oath that they would abide by the true Faith, and lay aside all heathen worship; and the King held them all in his keeping until they had placed hostages in his hands, their sons, their brothers, or other near kinsmen.

King Olaf's preaching at the Mæri is opposed by Iron-Skeggi
[1997].

166. After Yule, King Olaf sailed to Inner Throntham with his force, which was both numerous and fine, and in the company were Kiartan, Bolli, Hallfred Ottarson, and many other Icelanders. Arrived at the Mæri, he found there all the chiefs of the Thronds who were most opposed to Christianity, and with them all the great yeomen, who had hitherto been the firmest upholders of the heathen sacrifices held in that place. There was also a very full attendance of people, and according to the arrangement already made at Frosta, the King demanded the holding of an Assembly. Both sides attended it fully armed. After the noise and tumult of the opening had subsided, and silence obtained, King Olaf, as on the former occasion, preached Christianity to the yeomen. Iron-Skeggi, on their behalf, again made answer to the King's speech as before, saying: "O King! we yeomen are still of the same mind, unwilling that you should violate the laws under which we live. Our wish, the wish of us all, is that you should offer sacrifice as other kings before you have done in this land, and also other leaders of the Thronds, Earl Sigurd of Ladi, and he who was the last chief over the greater part of this land, Earl Hakon. He was a famous man for wisdom and valour, though he bore not the title of King, and his rule was very popular for a long period. He was deprived of his government, certainly, but not because either he or his father unlawfully forbade men to believe on the god whom they chose. King Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, was the only man who proclaimed such an ordinance, and thus roused the anger of the Thronds; and when they showed the King the danger which he incurred by his action, he thought fit to yield to the

yeomen, being persuaded thereto by Earl Sigurd and his other friends. The only plan proper for you is to act as we told you on the former occasion this winter, for our minds have undergone no change since that time in the matter of religion."

Iron-Skeggi is slain; the Thronds yield to King Olaf's commands and are baptized.

167. This speech of Skeggi was greatly applauded by the yeomen, who said that they wished everything to be done in accordance with it. The King then said: "I will do what was said at Frosta, and will now go into the temple to behold your ceremonies and the preparation for the sacrifices." This pleased the yeomen, and both sides then went to the temple, into which the King entered with a few of his men and some of the yeomen. Those who entered were all unarmed, and the King carried in his hand a gold-mounted staff. Inside the temple they beheld many images of the gods. Thor sat in the centre, at the place of honour, an image of great size, and all adorned with gold and silver. With uplifted staff the King struck him from his pedestal, so that he fell and was broken; whereupon those of the King's men who had entered the temple rushed up and swept all the other gods from their pedestals. And while this took place inside the temple, Iron-Skeggi was slain outside at the door by the King's men. The King now came out to his force, and bade the people all sit down; and when they had so done, he looked round upon them as he stood, and afterwards thus spoke: "A great multitude is here assembled, and it would be well if every one of you yeomen were as prudent in counsel for himself and others as you are bold in appearance. You have met in large numbers, but the Assembly at Frosta was even more numerous; and there I bade you change your religious customs, as I now do here; to renounce the Devil, laying aside his service and the worship of graven images; to trust in the true God, the Creator of all things, and serve Him with pureness of heart. I had scarcely begun this message to you at Frosta, before you raised a noise and tumult, and put forward one of your company in opposition with a message from the Fiend; and the Assembly was dissolved after deciding that

we should meet here at the Mœri. And now I would have declared to you the same message, my Lord's ordinance of mercy and salvation for us all, if you had been willing to respond to it; but you and your spokesman have been altogether bolder and keener in your opposition than before. You bade me, as you did at Frosta, to join with you in offering sacrifice, and you held up the example of Hakon, foster-son of Athelstan, saying that nothing would avail me but to imitate his example. King Hakon was a fine and handsome man, tall and strong, surpassing most others in all manly exercises; and in his whole frame he was the very counterpart of his father King Harold. He had the royal descent and other qualities necessary to be King over Norway; but you counted not these as a merit to him, and rightly so, for they were his by no effort of his own, being ordered and decreed by Almighty God, who likewise granted him a knowledge of His Holy Name. Yea more, God raised him to be the lofty head of his father's inheritance, and gave him, as He gives to all, liberty to do whatsoever he would, good or evil. What return did he make for God's gifts? You yeomen mentioned that Hakon preached to you the same message that we bring forward and support. How can the leader of a host direct his knights, when he blinds himself to all truth, and voluntarily permits wicked deceivers to lead him far from the right way into the power of the foes who will thrust him into the deep pit of eternal death? What shall we call that king who allows the meanest and wickedest thrall to govern him and his kingdom? You hold it to be a merit in Hakon, that he suffered himself to be so cowed by his thralls as to forsake the true Faith, to mock his Creator, and to dishonour himself by participating in the sacrifices. His conduct was unmanly and childish when, in order to gain this wretched kingdom, which is as nothing in comparison with eternal bliss, he denied his God and forsook the service of his Holy Master, who had done such great things for him, and had bestowed on him the honours that I have recounted. But his conduct was more miserable by far when he made himself a discredit to his family, and a coward; showing no desire to turn again to the truth, and reconciling himself with those who had treacherously lured him away from God. Never would his father have so acted. King Harold was a heathen, who knew not God; but he put to death all whom he found devoted to witchcraft and

the service of the Fiend. We find, too, from what he said, that he was not without trust in God who created him, though he knew not fully who God was. As to what you said of Earl Hakon, he must be regarded rather, I consider, as a Wicking than a chieftain; for although he inherited by birth the right to be Earl over his father's inheritance, he slew the Kings to whom this land belonged by right of descent, the chiefs whom it was his duty to serve; and after killing some in battle, and others by treachery and wiles, he took the government of the realm into his own hands. In Denmark, at the bidding of King Harold Gormson, he was baptized, though unwillingly, and all his men with him; and he promised King Harold, under oath, that he would make all the people in Norway Christian. But before he finally quitted Denmark he sent back all the teachers and clerks that Harold had given him, and became a vehement apostate; far worse than King Hakon, because his apostasy was accompanied by wickedness of his own, as well as deceit of the Fiend. It was to be expected that an evil growth would spring from an evil root; and his father Earl Sigurd, assisted by King Hakon's own weakness and the tyranny of other chiefs, was in the highest degree a guileful snare, and cause of grievous damage to the King. And although you praise the chieftainship of Earl Hakon and his hardihood, because of the victory over the Wickings of Jom that you attribute to him; yet it is more accurate to say that he did not win that victory by his own valour, but by the power of the Fiend, to whom he not only devoted himself, but with monstrous wickedness openly sacrificed his son, a boy of seven years old. Your hope is vain if you expect me to abandon the Holy Faith and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, because of your words, be they gentle or harsh; for I will never so dishonour my rank as to surrender myself to the will of the Foe, like those apostates of whom we have spoken. I need not prolong this speech to you; I bid you all accept the Christian religion from me now, or else prepare to fight with me. You must know, however, you men who are Inner Thronds, that there are here many more on my side than you imagine; and it seems to me that in the past I have had heavier tasks than to do battle with Throndish yeomen and villagers." With these words the King ended his speech, and Skeggi being dead, there was no man in the company of yeomen

who would come forward as their leader to bear the standard against King Olaf. They unanimously chose the alternative, to give themselves up into the power of the King and obey his commands. Thereupon the King ordered all who were unbaptized to submit to baptism, and took hostages from the yeomen, that they should hold fast their Christian profession. He next arranged that the clergy, escorted by his men, should pass through all the shires of Thronðham. No man uttered a word against Christianity, and thus the whole community of the Thronds was baptized. King Olaf then sailed with his force down the Frith to Nidaros, where he remained; and the yeomen removed the body of Iron-Skeggi to Yria, where he lies buried in Skeggi-howe at Austrad.

King Olaf marries Gudrun, in compensation for the death of Skeggi. She separates from him.

168. King Olaf appointed a day of meeting with the kinsmen of Iron-Skeggi, and offered them lawful compensation for his death; and many distinguished men took part in the case on the side of the prosecution and on that of the defence. Iron-Skeggi had an only daughter named Gudrun, and the final condition of reconciliation between the King and Iron-Skeggi's kinsmen was a marriage between the King and Gudrun. But after the wedding-banquet, when they came together, and Gudrun fancied the King was asleep, she took a knife, intending to slay him. The King, however, awoke, and instantly perceiving her purpose, wrested the knife from her; then he got up and went forth to tell his men what had happened. And Gudrun, taking with her all the attendants that had accompanied her thither, and also her apparel, went away, and never again had anything to do with King Olaf.

King Olaf builds The Crane. Of Kiartan.

169. During the same winter, King Olaf had a large ship of war built at Eyra, by the mouth of the river Nid. Many smiths were employed, and the ship, which was a smack, having thirty benches for rowers, made rapid progress. It was high in the bows, very

narrow, and did not rise high at the sides. The King named it *The Crane*.

Kiartan Olafson, and Bolli, after their baptism, stayed all this winter with the King, who esteemed Kiartan beyond all other Icelanders, on account of his family and accomplishments. Kiartan is commonly said to have been so popular among the King's body-guard that not a man of it wished him ill; and all agreed that no such man as he had in their time come from Iceland. His kinsman Bolli was also looked upon as a very manly fellow.

The poet Hallfred's encomium on King Olaf, who gives him the name of the Troublesome Poet.

170. Hallfred Ottarson the poet was staying with King Olaf, and composed a poem in his honour. One day he presented himself before the King and asked him to listen while he recited it; but the King declined to hear it. "You must have your own way, Sire," answered Hallfred; "but if you won't listen I shall forget the Christian instruction that you taught me; it is not more poetical than my poem." "You are a troublesome poet to deal with," said the King; "I will hear your poem." Hallfred then recited his composition in an excellent manner; it was an heroic poem; and when he came to the end the King said: "That is a good poem, and well put together; will you become my man, and continue with me?" "I was formerly," answered Hallfred, "in the body-guard of Earl Hakon, and I will not now become liegeman to you or to any other chief unless you promise me that no fault of mine shall induce you to cast me off or drive me from you." "Under that arrangement of yours," said the King, "there are many things you may see fit to do, and there is little you will shrink from. Stories of your temper are rife, which point, I think, to probable behaviour on your part that I cannot possibly put up with." "In that case," answered Hallfred, "I offer you a quick remedy: slay me." "You are indeed a troublesome poet," said the King; "but you shall be my man all the same." "And take that word as a surname," replied Hallfred. "But if I am to be called the Troublesome Poet, what present do you give me to confirm the new name?" "I see you wish to have that

surname," answered the King. "Accept this sword from me; it is a very fine one; but you will think it a great trouble, for I give you no scabbard with it. And you must keep it unsheathed three days and three nights without injury to any man." Then Hallfred recited the following:—

"The King of broad lands, I ween, a naked sword did send
To the verse-polisher, for something of his craft;
A jewel now I own, a precious daughter of Syr.
The hilt of the sword, the King's gift, is adorned;
When I brandish the terror, O King, I hold the point upwards."

And he took good care of the sword. Hallfred never blasphemed the gods; and when other men spoke ill of them he said: "There is no necessity to blame them, though men are unwilling to believe in them." Once he recited the following verse in the hearing of the King:—

"Time was, that with zeal I worshipped
Odin himself, the quick-tempered, Lord of Lidshef.
Men's fortunes have changed."

"That is a very bad verse," said the King, "and you ought to make amends for it." Then Hallfred recited the following:—

"To win Odin's favour, songs have been sung in all ages,
The precious work of our fathers of old is present to my mind.
But because I serve Christ,
To the old man, husband of Frigg, show I hatred;
Yet all unwilling, for the rule of Widri pleased the poet well."

"You show far too much inclination to praise the gods," said the King, "and such conduct ill befits you." Then Hallfred once more recited a verse:—

"O enricher of thy people! we reject the name divine
Of the Raven-worshipper, who with men's approval
Practised wiles in heathendom."

Again the King spoke: "You have made no amends, and what you have composed as such is worse than nothing. Recite

now a verse to make reparation." Then Hallfred recited the following:—

"Let Frey, Freya, and the mighty Thor be wroth with me!
Away with the children of Niord ! Let the fiends ask grace of Grimni !
With all my heart I will call on Christ, one Father and God ;
I cannot bear the wrath of the Son ; glorious is His might on earth."

"That verse," answered the King, "is better than nothing. Compose yet another ;" and Hallfred recited the following:—

"The King of Sogn forbids sacrifice in his religion ;
We reject the time-honoured Norns, and the fate they spin.
All men have ceased to supplicate Odin's race ;
Forced from the children of Niord, I pray to Christ."

Hallfred slays Ottar, one of the King's body-guard, and is pardoned after being condemned to die.

171. There was a man named Ottar, who belonged to an Upland family. He and his brother Kalf were at this time members of King Olaf's body-guard, and were greatly esteemed by the King, though not much liked generally. The two brothers bore malice to the poet Hallfred, who, as they thought, stood too high in the King's favour ; but Hallfred showed them a bold front. One evening as they sat drinking a great dispute arose among them. The King was present, and pronounced rather in favour of Ottar, seeing how impossible it was for him to avoid constant wrangles with Hallfred. But after the King had gone away they began anew their dispute, which at last broke forth into a quarrel, and Hallfred said that if they came to blows, Ottar would find himself in need of assistance. So the quarrel proceeded, until Hallfred at last jumped up and struck Ottar a blow with the axe that Earl Hakon had given him, and the wound was fatal. Kalf, with the help of others, then seized Hallfred, put his feet into fetters, and bound his hands together. Now, whoever slew a man in the King's palace was subject by law to death. Presently the King was informed by Kalf and the others of the manslaughter of Ottar. "You may now see," said they, "what kind of man Hallfred is." "He surely means to slay the whole guard

in this way," said Kalf, "one by one; and there is no certainty that he will spare its head if the head comes within his reach." In every possible way did Kalf and his companions slander Hallfred, until the King commanded them to slay him on the following day. At this result Kalf was rejoiced. During the night they kept watch over Hallfred, who was in irons, and in the morning they led him forth to put him to death. Then Hallfred asked: "Is the man dead that I struck?" and when he was assured of his death, he said: "You will think I quite deserve to die. But where is King Olaf?" "What matters that to you?" said Kalf; "he has condemned you to die now." And Hallfred said: "If there are any persons here present to whom I have ever done a good turn, let them now reward me for it by leading me into the presence of the King. I wish to thank him for making me one of his body-guard." And straightway the truth of the saying was seen: "Every man has a friend among his foes;" for some of those present, calling to mind kind actions on Hallfred's part, led him to the spot, a short way off, where the King was standing out of doors with Sigurd, his Court Bishop. When Hallfred was come near he said to the King: "I pray you, Sire, remember the promise you made me, never to cast me off, and make not yourself a promise-breaker towards me; else we shall live together a shorter time than I could wish. There is another matter to mention: you are my godfather." Then the Bishop spoke: "For God's sake, Sire," he said, "let the man reap the benefit of such a noble and excellent lot." "It shall be done as you request, my Lord Bishop," answered the King, and ordered Hallfred to be at once set free. This was done, but with very great reluctance on the part of Kalf. Hallfred continued with the body-guard; but the King treated him with much more reserve than formerly, although he paid compensation for the manslaughter which Hallfred had committed. It happened one day that Hallfred presented himself before the King, and fell down at his feet; and the King, seeing that he was in tears, inquired what moved him so deeply. "'Tis your anger, Sire, that touches me closely, and I would gladly do something to turn it away from me." "Very well," said the King; "you shall go on a journey for me, and if you succeed on your errand we will be reconciled. Have you the sword I gave you?" "Certainly, Sire, I have it," answered

Hallfred; "it has never been sheathed in a scabbard, and yet no man has been hurt by it." "A troublesome treasure," said the King, "is a suitable possession for a Troublesome Poet. Can you compose a stanza, bringing the sword into each half-line?" "I will try, Sire," answered Hallfred, "if you wish it; and thus strive to turn your anger from me." Then Hallfred recited the verse:—

"One sword of swords has made me rich in swords;
Sword-wielders to confront, I have swords in plenty now;
Sword I shall never lack; worth three swords I shall be,
When a scabbard inlaid with gems attends this sword."

The King thanked him for the stanza, and praised his great skill in verse-making. He also presented him with a very choice scabbard for the sword, saying at the same time: "We two are now reconciled, though you are not free from punishment. You shall not carry your sword to table, or to church, or on like occasions when other men do. Even thus you have been forgiven more easily than many others." Then Hallfred submissively thanked the King for his kindness.

*Hallfred is sent by the King to punish Thorleif the Wise.
He wreaks vengeance on Kalf.*

172. One day shortly after these occurrences the King happened to inquire where was Hallfred, and Kalf answered him: "He is most likely worshipping the gods in secret, according to his wont; of which you may see the sign in an ivory image of Thor which he carries in his purse. You are much mistaken in him, O King, and have not thoroughly tried him." Straightway the King had Hallfred summoned, and on his arrival said to him: "Are you guilty, Hallfred, of what is laid to your charge? You are said to have a likeness of Thor in your purse, and to worship him." "I keep no such thing," answered Hallfred, "and here is proof on the spot. Let my purse be searched at once. I can have used no evasion even if I desired it, for this is an unexpected charge." So he was searched; but there was no talisman found upon him answering to the accusation brought by Kalf against him. Then Hallfred said to Kalf: "Of a truth this is

deadly slander, which will bring trouble upon you if I catch you as I should like. You took me by force on a former occasion, and were prepared to kill me. There was some cause then for your hostility; but now there is none except your own falsehood and slander." "You two," said the King, "cannot live together. Kalf therefore must go to his homestead, where he will not slander either you or others to me. You, Hallfred, I will send on a message to the Uplands, to a man known as Thorleif the Wise, a grandson of Thorleif, son of Horda-Kari. He refuses to become a Christian; you shall therefore either slay or blind him. My luck and good fortune shall go with you on this journey, and you may take with you as many men as you like. On previous occasions I have sent messengers to Thorleif, but the errands on which I sent them have been fruitless." And Hallfred replied: "This journey does not seem a great business, but I will go gladly wherever you wish to send me. I should like your uncle Jostein to go with me, and other companions whom I will choose, making our numbers four-and-twenty altogether."

After preparations for the journey, they rode onward till they entered a wood a short distance from Thorleif's home, and coming to an open space in it, they got down from their horses. "I must now walk towards the homestead," said Hallfred, "and you will wait here for me, if need be, until the third day. If I don't return by that time, then go your way home." Jostein asked that he might go with him; but Hallfred would not consent. Hallfred then put on the apparel of a beggar, disguising his appearance as much as he could. He smeared his eyes with dye, and turned up his eyelids; he rubbed his face with mud and charcoal, and made a long beard, which he fastened to his chin and cheeks. He was thus quite unrecognisable, and appeared an old man. Then he laid over his back a longish rag-bag, in which he put the sword that the King had given him. Thus prepared, he went forth towards the homestead in the early morning. It was Thorleif's habit—a habit of many men in the olden time—to sit for long intervals out of doors, on a mound a short distance from his house; and there he chanced to be when Hallfred appeared. He came towards the mound, walking very slowly, and stumbling a great deal; and he coughed dreadfully, with much hawking and spitting. When he approached, peering with half-closed eyes, as if he were

short-sighted, to see if there was any one out of doors, Thorleif greeted him and inquired who he was. "I am a poor old man, as you may see," answered Hallfred, "infirm through fatigue, and now suffering specially from cold; for I have been wandering in the woods all the winter. Early last autumn I was in the north in Thordham, where I met with King Olaf's men, who took me before the King. He wished to force the Christian religion on me; but I ran away, unknown to him, after killing one of his men. Ever since that time, distressed with hunger and frost, I have moved about in stealth; but I should soon recover my strength if I were cared for. I have been told that you are a good and worthy man, helpful to many who have needed help, and therefore I have sought you out; I wish to ask you for some assistance." Thorleif replied: "I don't know what to say. At all events, if you are old, you must have travelled much and be a wise man; your speech, too, is not rude." Then he began to ask him many questions about various lands and the old names of places; to all of which the beggar answered intelligently. "Did there happen to be a man with King Olaf named Hallfred?" asked Thorleif; "I often dream of him, which is but a small matter. We shall soon, though, have the King's men here." "I have heard talk of that man Hallfred," answered the beggar, "but have seldom heard anything to his credit; I had full proof, too, that he was there with the King, for he was one of those who led me to him;" and as he answered he stumbled up the mound towards Thorleif. "I can't make out what sort of man you are," said Thorleif, "nor understand what you say; but you don't appear insignificant in my eyes." With these words he attempted to stand up; but Hallfred caught hold of him, and being much the stronger man, flung him to the ground, and himself upon him; then they rolled down to the foot of the mound, where Hallfred was uppermost. Straightway he planted his heel on one of Thorleif's eyes and forced it out of his head. And Thorleif said: "What I have long and anxiously dreaded from you, Hallfred, has befallen me; but you are not now acting in your own strength, for the King's luck is with you. I have no doubt that he bade you blind or slay me; I pray you, let me keep my other eye, and I will give you in exchange a knife and a belt, valuable treasures both. I will help you hereafter if I have the opportunity, and it is quite possible that the time will come

when you will need the help of others." "On no account," said Hallfred, "will I accept gifts or costly presents from you for violating the King's command; but I will take it altogether on myself to let you keep the other eye without recompense." Thorleif thanked Hallfred for his favour, and thus they separated. Hallfred returned to his men in the wood, and there was great joy among them; but Thorleif went home to his house, and told no man of his wound until Hallfred was gone far away.

Hallfred and his company now rode on, until their way brought them to Kalf's homestead; he was out of doors sowing corn in his fields. And Hallfred said: "It happens fortunately; we'll kill that knave Kalf." But Jostein answered: "Don't let us thus join ill fortune to good." "It is not a seemly arrangement," replied Hallfred, "that a good man should be maimed, and this wretched creature allowed to live. I have a mind to put a mark on him at the very least. So saying, he jumped from his horse, seized Kalf, and gouged out one of his eyes. Kalf was ill at ease under this injury, yet bore himself meekly, whereupon Hallfred said: "Now you show your meanness of spirit; there is a great difference, as might have been expected, between you and Thorleif the Wise, who showed stoutness and manliness." Hallfred and his company then rode on their way until they came to the King, who welcomed them and inquired of their journey. "I have blinded Thorleif," answered Hallfred. "You have done well," said the King; "show me his eyes." Then Hallfred took Kalf's eye and showed it to the King, who asked: "Where did you get such an eye? You have surely done more than I bade you, for Thorleif never owned that eye." Then Hallfred showed him the other eye. "That is Thorleif's eye," said the King. "Tell me truly now what you have done." And when Hallfred declared that he had blinded Thorleif of the one eye, and gouged the other out of Kalf, the King replied: "You have only half done my bidding; you must now show your willingness to go a second time and bring me the eye that Thorleif still has." "I am not willing," said Hallfred, "to rob Thorleif of the eye that I spared; but I will go back to Kalf, if you wish, and blind him altogether, or slay him; for I have as yet only half repaid what I owe him for the spear's prick he gave me, and for leading me to death in fetters as if I had been a thief. To say the truth, I did not inflict on him any graver injury, because it seemed

to me a useless business to have any dealings with that worthless fellow." The King replied that matters should stand as they were. Hallfred then remained with the King, held in much honour.

*Story of Ogmund Dint and his vengeance on Hallward.
Also of Gunnar Half and his personification of the
god Frey.*

173. In those days there were many distinguished men in Iceland who were akin to King Olaf Tryggwason. Among these was Wiga-Glum, already mentioned as the son of Eyolf Heap and Astrid, daughter of the baron Wigfus. A sister of Wiga-Glum was Helga, married to Steingrim of Sigluwick, and their son was Thorwald Tassel. Wiga-Glum brought up a man named Ogmund, son of Rafn, who was at that time a wealthy man, living in the north in Skagafirth. He had formerly been a thrall of Wiga-Glum and his mother Astrid; and Glum had released him from bondage, so that he was now Glum's freedman. Ogmund's mother belonged to the Goddales family, and was bound to Wiga-Glum by the tie of kinship; her name is not mentioned. Ogmund was a man of handsome appearance, tall and accomplished, and was in high favour with his kinsman Glum. Glum was advanced in years, and lived at Thwerbreck in Oxnadale at the time when his kinsman Ogmund was grown up; and Wigfus, Glum's son, was then with Earl Hakon in Norway. One spring Ogmund said to Glum that he wished to go abroad. "I should like," he said, "to buy me a ship at Gasi; I would risk sufficient of my father's money for the purpose, and ask you to help me, and bargain for me." Glum replied: "Many men go abroad who do not seem to be more promising than you. I think it, however, important that you should gain from your travels honour and respect, rather than much wealth, if both are not to be had." Glum then bought a ship for him from some Northmen, and Ogmund prepared for his voyage, his father supplying him with a large cargo of merchandise. The management was given to him both of the ship and crew, who were mostly Icelanders that had not been abroad before. It was rather late in the summer when they set sail, and they had strong and favourable winds for their voyage. Having crossed the ocean,

they came in sight of land as the day was closing; but as there was a fresh breeze blowing landward, the Northmen who were piloting the ship said it would be more prudent to lower the sail, let the ship drift during the night, and sail to land in full daylight. But Ogmund answered: "We ought not to miss so fair a breeze; there is no certainty that it will last till morning, and there will be plenty of moonlight." Accordingly they continued their voyage; and when they were only a short distance from land they came upon several ships of war lying fastened together in a narrow strait between two islands. No sooner did they see them than they collided with one of them and overturned it, and then went on their course to the mainland into harbour. Some of the merchantman's crew said that they had been very unwise to persist in their voyage; but Ogmund replied that both ships ought to have taken care of themselves. The warships were under the command of Earl Hakon, and the one that capsized belonged to a man named Hallward, a great friend of the Earl. The crew were saved, but everything else on board was lost. In the morning the Earl was informed of the disgrace and the injury done, and he became very angry on hearing the tidings, saying: "These fellows must be dolts on their first visit to other countries. You have my leave, Hallward, to chastise them and to avenge your disgrace. They will be unaided, and not too strong for you; and you lack neither the courage nor the hardihood to inflict on them the like shame, or even a greater one, whoever they may be." Then Wigfus, son of Wiga-Glum, spoke: "You will surely, Sire, accept reparation from these men and not require their lives, if they are willing to submit their case to your decision. I will go and find out who they are, and see if there is a possibility of reconciliation." "You may do so," said the Earl; "but when they come to pay the fines in a great suit like the present they will think, I fancy, that my plane is greedy of shavings." Wigfus therefore went to the merchant-ship and there recognised his kinsman Ogmund, whom he welcomed heartily. He next inquired of him the news of his father in Iceland, and Ogmund gave him the information he asked. Afterwards Wigfus said: "The accident that you caused is like to bring you great trouble;" and then he proceeded to tell him the issue of it, and also that Earl Hakon had shown no eagerness to accept reparation from them. "My intention in coming here

to you, kinsman," said he, "is to ask you to submit the case to the Earl's decision. I will support your suit to the utmost of my power, and perhaps, somehow, it may end well." Ogmund replied: "What I have heard about this Earl will of itself quite prevent me from submitting my case to his decision, especially if he uses evil threats, for he will probably carry them out; but I will not refuse satisfaction if he asks for it in a temperate manner." "You should consider," said Wigfus, "what is best for you. You have to deal with a man whose anger you will not be able to withstand if you refuse to submit the case to him." Wigfus went thence on board the Earl's ship, and informed him that among the newcomers were his foster-brothers and some of his kinsmen; "and they are willing," said he, "to put their case in your hand." Then one of the Earl's men made a remark: "You are not telling your lord the truth, Wigfus. The men made no offer of suitable reparation." "To say the truth," said Hallward, "it is right that I should avenge myself, and I need no help from others." "Whoever kills my kinsman Ogmund," said Wigfus, "I will kill, if I have my way." And Hallward answered: "Though you are very dauntless, you Icelanders, we may yet hope there are men in this land who will not endure outrages without seeking redress, either from kinsmen of Wiga-Glum or from others who think themselves somewhat." Thereupon Hallward rowed towards the merchantman, and the Earl placed a strong guard over Wigfus. On reaching the ship Hallward inquired who was the captain, and Ogmund answered, giving his name. Then Hallward said: "I and these my fellows have a grievous charge against you, and we come here to know if you are willing to offer any suitable reparation." "I will not refuse to make reparation," answered Ogmund, "if it is not harshly demanded." "Those who have part in this business," said Hallward, "will not accept small amends for great disgrace." "We shall refuse to give satisfaction," answered Ogmund, "if you behave towards us in a high-handed manner." "It is not very likely, I think," replied Hallward, "that we shall beg from you what you ought to offer;" and forthwith he jumped on board the merchantman and struck Ogmund a heavy blow with the back of his axe, so that he fell down in a swoon. Hallward then went straightway to tell the Earl, who said that much less punishment had been inflicted than was deserved. And Hallward

answered: "Their leader was the man specially in fault; and I thought it best not to do more at the present time than to strike him senseless. Disgrace is a fitting return for disgrace. We may take further vengeance, if we desire it, later on." When Wigfus heard of these things he was much displeased, and wanted to do Hallward bodily harm, or kill him if he could; but through the Earl's watchful care he had no opportunity. Ogmund recovered from the swoon; but he had received a severe wound, and lay ill a great part of the winter. At length, however, he recovered, and became the object of much derision because of what had happened, so that wherever he went he was called Ogmund Dint; but he behaved as though he understood not what everybody said. Wigfus often went to him, and bade him avenge himself. "I will help you," he said, "to wipe off your disgrace." But Ogmund answered: "I don't understand the case as you do, kinsman. It seems to me that I have suffered no more dishonour in the business than Hallward has. A smaller return was scarcely to be expected, if you consider how vigorously our side started the action at first. It would be an ill-advised step to take vengeance, for Hallward is a great friend of the Earl in whose power you are; and I owe Glum, your father, another recompense than to bring you through my conduct into peril, where you may certainly expect injury or death." "I owe you no thanks," answered Wigfus, "nor yet will my father. You talk as if it were your duty to consider my interest when I pay no regard to it myself. I suspect want of courage to be the motive of your conduct rather than prudence; and a man is bad company who carries a hare's heart in his bosom. Most likely you take after the thrallish side of your house rather than the family of Thweray." Thus they separated, Wigfus being very angry. Winter passed away and so did spring. In the summer Ogmund got his ship ready and sailed back to Iceland, having gained much wealth by the voyage. He brought his vessel into Eyafirth. Glum soon learnt of its arrival, and was informed of the disgrace that had befallen Ogmund. After disposing his ship and goods, Ogmund went to Thwerbreck, where he stayed for a time with Glum, who was very reserved with him, and let it be seen that he took no pleasure in his return. But Ogmund was very cheerful, and bore himself proudly. He went wherever men met together, and took a very active part in the affairs of others;

and if quarrels arose, there was no man more ready for bold action than he. He attended to all that Glum needed in the arrangements of the household and in procuring supplies; and his behaviour was excellent, though for a long time Glum would not speak with him. Howbeit, one day it happened that Glum said to him: "You must know, Ogmund, that I owe you no thanks for your labour; but rather wonder why you are so zealous and meddlesome in others' affairs which require no valour from you, after your own first journey abroad has been so dishonourable that I would gladly never see you again. You willingly accepted disgrace, and have become a reproach to all your kinsmen. The name of coward will stick to you for ever, because you dare not avenge yourself." Ogmund answered him: "You may see, kinsman, what caused the idea of vengeance to die away in me. I thought it would bring your son Wigfus into peril there." "It was no business of yours," said Glum, "to provide against the risk when he himself would not. If you had shown the courage to avenge yourself, the sight to me would have been worth the cost, even if the cost had been both your lives. Either, therefore, you are a man of fortitude and endurance beyond all others, and will give proof, though tardy, of your manhood; and after all you have scarcely the look of a coward; or else you are altogether worthless, the worse part in you overpowering the better, and showing the truth of the saying, 'There's oft a lack of courage in the race of bondmen.' Anyhow I will have you with me no longer." Then Ogmund went away to his father.

After Ogmund had remained two years in Iceland he got his ship ready and placed a crew in her. Then he sailed to Norway, which he reached at Throndham in the north, and sailing up the Frith, came to anchor late in the day under Nidarholm. Here he said: "I must now launch the boat and row into the river, for I should like to know the news of the country." Over his dress he put a cloak, a costly garment, ornamented with lace on the shoulders, and having the inside of a different colour from the outside. He took with him two men in the boat, and they rowed forward to the quay in the early morning. At the same instant there came down from the town a man wearing a hooded cape, made of a scarlet-coloured material, and embroidered all over. When he reached the quay he inquired who was in command of

the boat; and Ogmund answered, giving his name. "Are you Ogmund Dint?" said the townsman. "Some people call me so," answered Ogmund; "what is your name?" "My name," he answered, "is Gunnar Half. I am so called because I take pleasure in wearing clothes of two colours." "What news is there in the land here?" asked Ogmund. "The chief news at this time," answered Gunnar, "seems to be, that Earl Hakon is dead; and a noble King, Olaf Tryggwason, has succeeded him." "What know you," asked Ogmund, "of the whereabouts of a man named Hallward, a wealthy Thronde of high family?" "I am not surprised," answered Gunnar, "at your inquiry. He is now known as Hallward Neck; for last winter but one he was present with Earl Hakon in the battle against the Wickings of Jom, and was wounded severely in the neck behind the ear; since that time he carries his head on one side. He is now in the town here with King Olaf, and is greatly honoured by him. That is a fine cloak you are wearing, Ogmund, and its two colours show well. Will you sell it me?" "I won't sell the cloak," answered Ogmund; "but if you like it, I will give it you." "Bless you for your generosity," said Gunnar. "I wish I could recompense you for your gift. You must accept this hooded cape of me as a beginning; perhaps it may be of advantage to you." After this, Gunnar went up a short way into the town wearing the cloak, and Ogmund put on the cape. Then he said to his men: "Keep the boat lightly fastened by its stern to the bank, so that it may not drift while I am on shore; and sit on the benches, with your oars all ready for rowing." He next went up to the courtyard, finding scarcely any one about; but through the open door of a building he saw several men washing their hands, among whom was one, tall and handsome, that carried his head on one side; so that Ogmund recognised him as Hallward by Gunnar's description of him. As Ogmund approached the door the men inside all thought he was Gunnar Half. Speaking in a very low voice he asked Hallward to come out for a few moments, saying that he had necessary and pressing business with him. Then he turned away from the door and drew the sword that he held in his hand. As Gunnar Half was known to every one there, Hallward went out alone, and Ogmund struck him a death-blow as soon as he came near. Then he ran down to his boat, threw

off his cape, into the hood of which he fastened a stone, and flung it out into the river, where it sunk to the bottom. As he entered the boat he bade the men row out of the river, and having reached the ship, he said to his crew: "There are hostilities going on in the country, and as there is a land-breeze blowing, we will hoist sail and go back to Iceland." They replied that he was very timid in not daring to land because the people were at war with one another; but they carried out his orders and returned to Iceland, landing in Eyafirth. Ogmund went to visit Wiga-Glum, to tell of his journey and say that he had avenged himself on Hallward, though after a long delay. Glum therefore was well pleased; he had always felt, he said, that Ogmund would at last show himself an able man. And during the winter Ogmund stayed with Glum and was in high favour.

We must now relate that when Hallward appeared to his fellows to be very long in returning, they went out and found him lying dead in his blood. Tidings were at once sent to King Olaf, who was told that Gunnar Half was supposed to have slain him. The King answered: "I should not select him as likely to be guilty; but I will at once have search made for him, and have him hanged if he has done the deed." Now Gunnar Half had a brother named Sigurd, a rich man, much beloved by King Olaf, in whose body-guard he served. Sigurd happened to be in the town, and as soon as he became aware of the King's intention to put his brother to death he sought for him, and having found him, asked if he were guilty of the deed laid to his charge. When Gunnar denied having anything to do with it, Sigurd said: "You are generally believed to be guilty; but tell me what you know of the matter." "Not at this time," answered Gunnar, "will I say anything of it to you or any one else." "Make good your escape, then," said Sigurd; which advice Gunnar followed, and made his way into the wood, where he was not discovered. Thence, disguised, he passed over the fells in an easterly direction and across the Uplands, never stopping until he reached Sweden, where he happened to arrive at the time of the great sacrifices. These had been established long ago in special honour of Frey; and Frey's idol was so enchanted that a fiend made use of it in order to speak to men. In the service of Frey was a young and handsome woman; and the people believing that Frey was a living

person, as in some respects he appeared to be, supposed that the woman lived with him as his wife. Under Frey's guidance she had the chief management of the idol's shrine and all that belonged to it. When Gunnar Half arrived there after his long journey, he begged the help of Frey's wife, and asked that she would allow him to remain. Looking upon him, she asked who he was; and he answered that he was an outlandish tramp of no importance. "You can scarcely be a fortunate man in all respects," she said, "for Frey does not look upon you with a friendly eye. Remain here for the next three days, and I shall then know if he is pleased with you." "Your help and friendship," answered Gunnar, "will be more useful to me, I think, than Frey's." Gunnar was a cheerful man, and very amusing; and when the three days were past, he again inquired of Frey's wife touching his sojourn with them. "I am not quite clear about it," she said. "You have no money; possibly, though, you may be an excellent man, and therefore I am the more inclined to afford you protection. But Frey dislikes you, and I fear he will be angry. Remain here for a fortnight, and we will then see what happens." "Frey hates me and you help me," said Gunnar, "and thus matters are turning out just as I would desire them, for I look upon him as being a fiend of no mean kind." The longer Gunnar stayed, the more pleased were people with his amusing ways and with his manliness. When the fortnight was passed he once more consulted with Frey's wife about his affairs. "People like you," she answered, "though Frey is unfriendly towards you. It will be a good plan, I think, if you stay with us during the winter, and accompany us when Frey goes on a progress through the country to grant men fruitful seasons." Gunnar thanked her heartily, and at the appointed time they made ready to start on their journey. Frey and his wife were seated in a waggon, while the attendants had to walk in front. They had a long journey to make by way of certain fells, and as a great storm came upon them, they found travelling difficult. Gunnar had been ordered to walk alongside the waggon and lead the horse; and thus it happened that when all the attendants became at length parted from them, Gunnar alone remained with the two in the waggon—Frey and the woman. As he led the horse he began to grow very tired, and after persevering some time, he gave up walking, and sat on the waggon, leaving

the horse to go as it liked. Soon afterwards the woman said to Gunnar, "Help the horse again and lead him, or Frey will be upon you." Gunnar for a while obeyed, but becoming again very tired, he said, "I must risk a struggle with Frey if he attacks me." Then Frey came forth from the waggon, and they began wrestling with one another; but Gunnar's strength failed him greatly, and he saw that he was helpless in the struggle. Then he resolved in his mind that if he should succeed in overcoming the fiend, and if he were destined to see Norway again, he would return to the true Faith, and be reconciled to King Olaf if the King would accept him. Directly he formed this resolution Frey began to stagger, and soon fell down before him. Whereupon the fiend leapt forth from the idol in which he had lain concealed, and the mere stock of a tree remained, which Gunnar broke all in pieces. He then offered the woman her choice, whether he should leave her and go his own way, or she should declare him to be Frey when they reached the abodes of men. The woman gladly chose the latter course. He therefore dressed himself in the apparel of the idol, and the weather improving, they at length reached the entertainment provided for them, and found several of the attendants who should have come with them. What seemed remarkable to everyone was the power that Frey had shown in successfully reaching the place with his wife in face of such a storm, and forsaken by all their attendants. People were astonished also that he could walk with others, and eat and drink as they did. During the winter they were entertained at various places, and Frey remained perfectly silent, never speaking to any one. But it was observed that he would no longer allow, as of old, living creatures to be slain for him, nor permit any sacrifices, nor accept offerings and presents, except gold and silver, fine clothes and other valuables. Time passed on, and people began to notice a change in the appearance of Frey's wife; and a rumour of it becoming widely diffused, the Swedes made much of their god. The weather, too, was balmy, and the harvest promised to be more abundant than any one could remember. Tidings of the might displayed by the heathen god of the Swedes spread far and wide through the lands, and came to the ears of King Olaf Tryggwason, who suspected their real significance; and one day in the spring he sent for Sigurd, Gunnar Half's brother, to speak with him. The King

asked if he had heard anything of his brother Gunnar; and Sigurd replied that he had heard nothing. "I have a suspicion," said the King, "that this heathen god of the Swedes, called Frey, of whom numerous stories are told; is no other than your brother Gunnar; for the most effective worship is the worship of living persons. I would therefore send you after him to the east, for it pains me to see a Christian man's soul come to such grievous ruin. I will cease to be angry with him if he makes no difficulty in coming to me, for I know now that Ogmund Dint, and not he, was the slayer of Hallward." Sigurd started off at once and went to see Frey, in whom he recognised his brother Gunnar, and he told him the message and the words of King Olaf. "I should be willing," answered Gunnar, "to go and be reconciled to King Olaf; but if the Swedes become aware of the real facts they will want to take away my life." "We will try," said Sigurd, "to get away from this spot unobserved, in the well-founded confidence that the luck and good-will of King Olaf will prevail, by God's mercy, over the ill-will and pursuit of the Swedes." When ready for departure they took with them such wealth as they could carry, and set out secretly in the night-time. As soon as the Swedes became aware of their disappearance they understood the full meaning of what had occurred and sent after them; but the pursuers went astray after a short distance, and returned without finding the fugitives. Sigurd and his companions never halted in their journey until they stood before King Olaf, who received Gunnar again into favour, and caused his wife to be baptized. Henceforth the two adhered to the true Faith.

King Olaf offers to send Kiartan to Iceland to preach the Christian Faith.

174. The winter that Gunnar Half was in Sweden, Kiartan, Bolli, and Hallfred the Troublesome Poet were with King Olaf, as we have already mentioned. When the winter was past, and men were making preparations for travel, Kalf Asgeirson went to seek Kiartan, and asked what were his plans for the summer. "It was my main design," answered Kiartan, "that you and I should take our ship to England this summer, for Christians have

now great trading facilities in that country; but I will see the King before making a final decision, for, when you and I spoke of the voyage, he was not taken with it." After Kalf left him, Kiartan went to speak with the King, who received him with the utmost cheerfulness, as was always his manner, and inquired of what he and his companion had been speaking. Kiartan then told him what plan they had particularly in view, and that he had come specially to ask the King's leave for the voyage. The King replied: "I will give you an opportunity for travel, Kiartan; you shall go to Iceland this summer and compel its people by force or persuasion to accept Christianity. If you think the enterprise difficult, I will on no account release my hold upon you, for you appear to me better fitted to serve persons of high estate than to become a merchant and wander from country to country." "My choice is soon made, Sire," said Kiartan. "I would much rather remain here with you than contend with my kinsmen and friends. Probably, too, my father and my kinsmen will be less strongly opposed to your will if I am here in your power and kindly treated." "You have made both a wise and a generous choice," said the King. Then he presented Kiartan with a complete suit of scarlet clothes which had been made for himself. These fitted Kiartan exactly; for we are told that King Olaf Tryggwason and he were found to be of equal height when they were measured. Kalf Asgeirson sailed to England in the summer with Kiartan's goods and his own.

Hallfred the Troublesome Poet makes a journey to Denmark and afterwards to Gautland. His adventures on the way, and his marriage there.

175. One day during spring when Hallfred the Troublesome Poet was in the King's presence, he said: "I should like to get your leave, Sire, to go a trading voyage in the summer south to Haleyr." "I shall not hinder your going," said the King; "I am persuaded that you will be no less eager to return than you now are to go away; but many incidents must first befall you." "I must now run the risk," answered Hallfred. Soon afterward he made ready, and sailed south to Denmark, as he had purposed.

Having heard say of Earl Sigwaldi, that he was a mighty chief, Hallfred paid him a visit, saying that he had composed a poem in his honour. The Earl inquired who he was, and Hallfred gave his name. "Are you," said the Earl, "the poet of King Olaf Tryggwason?" "Yes," answered Hallfred, "and I should like you to give me a hearing while I recite my poem." The Earl replied: "Why should not that be an honourable procedure in us which King Olaf permits himself for his pleasure?" Hallfred then recited his composition—a short laudatory poem. The Earl thanked him, and gave him a gold bracelet which weighed half a mark, and invited him to stay there. "I thank you, Sire, for the invitation," said Hallfred, "but I have business in Sweden; though, before going thither, I must return to Norway, when I am ready to depart." The Earl bade him do as he wished. At the close of summer, Hallfred sailed from the south into the Wick, where he encountered a storm, in which his ship was wrecked on the east side of the frith, and all the cargo was lost. Thence he proceeded to Konungahella, where he abode for a time. One day as he walked forth a man met him, and after they had greeted each other, Hallfred asked him who he was. "My name is Audgisl," he answered; "I am from Gautland, where I have a house and a wife; but I have just come over-sea from England, and I am not without plenty of money. Are you Hallfred the Troublesome Poet?" And Hallfred said that he was. "I have heard," replied Audgisl, "that you were shipwrecked, and are now very destitute and in need of money. I should like to make a compact with you. Come with me east to Gautland, and stay with me during the winter, and I will give you ten marks of silver for your company, which, I am told, is well worth purchasing. The roads thither are said to be dangerous, and many people who wish to travel are afraid of the journey." Hallfred agreed to accept the offer. Thereupon they made ready for the journey, and taking with them five pack-horses, and one unloaded horse, the two together rode eastward to the forest. One day they observed a man coming to meet them; he was big and strong, and they asked him who he was. "My name is Onund," he answered; "I am of a Swedish family, and have come here from the east. What journey have you in hand?" And they told him. "Those who are unacquainted with the forest will find the journey east very difficult," he replied.

"They say, too, that the road is dangerous for people who have valuables with them. And although I have traversed it without peril, that fact proves nothing; for all the paths here are known to me, and I avoid all spots where robbers are wont to make their hiding-places. However, if you will hire me, I am willing to undertake the journey with you." "I am not desirous of having you with us," answered Audgisl, "for I know not what sort of a man you are." But Hallfred was very urgent that they should take the man; they hired him, therefore, agreeing to pay him twelve ounces of silver. At this time Hallfred was in the very prime of vigour, tall of stature, exceeding strong, valiant and of ready courage; Audgisl was advanced in years, and not a strong man. So the three proceeded on their journey, during the day, in company, though Onund kept in front of the others; and in the evening they arrived at a house of refuge. "We have work before us for all three," said Hallfred. "You, Onund, with your large axe, shall collect wood for firing, Audgisl shall make the fire, and I will fetch water." "It is most desirable," said Onund, "to bring a liberal supply of wood, for travellers may often come to this place and need firewood," and Hallfred quite agreed with him. Audgisl then said to Hallfred: "I prefer to go and seek for water, if you will make the fire." "Let it be so," answered Hallfred. They went out, therefore—Audgisl to find water, and Onund wood—while Hallfred in the meantime made a fire. He was long in lighting it, and fancied, too, that the others were slow in returning. He had removed his belt and thrown it round his neck. Attached to it by a strap was a large knife, such as men at that time usually carried; and when Hallfred lay down to kindle the fire, the knife lay across his back. While he was thus engaged, Onund came in with the wood, and having thrown it hastily down, turned towards Hallfred as sharply as he could, and brandishing his axe with both hands, struck him across the back. The axe came in contact with the knife, on both sides of which Hallfred received a slight wound in the loins, where the points of the axe-head touched him. At the moment of hearing the swing of the brandished axe, he hit on a device, and seizing Onund by the lower part of the legs, he called upon God, and said: "Help me now, O White Christ, that this human fiend overcome me

not, if you are as powerful as King Olaf my liege lord declares." Then, through the grace of God and King Olaf's good fortune, his constant protection, Hallfred succeeded in raising himself and lifting Onund, whom he hurled to the ground so heavily that the man lay in a swoon, and the axe fell from his hand. Hallfred then drew a short sword which he wore under his dress, and as Onund recovered his senses, Hallfred asked if he had killed Audgisl. When he confessed the fact, Hallfred ran the sword through him, dragged his body out of doors, and then shut himself up in the house. He intended to rest; but there was scarcely the opportunity, for Onund tried hard to break open the door, while Hallfred resisted on the inside. So passed the time until 'day. In the morning Hallfred found Audgisl dead at the well, and buried him, after removing from him a knife and belt, valuable chattels, which he took away with him. Then Hallfred comprehended that Onund was a robber, who slew men to get their wealth; for the building was full of money and wares of all kinds; and he recited the verse:—

"One that owned a weapon, the fire of raven's drink,
I there procured with my white money.
Never did I wish to deceive the wealth-giver.
To good purpose I dealt as I could with the rouser of ravens;
Against my life he plotted, that waster of gold, the fire of swords."

Hallfred then continued his journey east over the mountain; but his progress was not easy, because he was ignorant of the roads. One day at evening he heard the noise of an axe in front of him in the wood, and riding towards the spot, he came upon an open space, where was a man felling a tree. The man was big and stout, red-bearded, swarthy, and very ill-favoured. He greeted Hallfred, and asked who he was. Hallfred told his name, and inquired in return who the other was. "My name is Biorn," he answered; "I live here on the east side of the wood; come and lodge with me; I have a good dwelling, and am well able to guard your wares." Hallfred accepted the invitation, being unacquainted with the district, and accompanied the yeoman; though the man's looks bred suspicion, and Hallfred thought he saw signs of avarice about his eyes. Biorn was very hospitable towards him during the evening, and there were

many people in the house. When the time came for rest, the yeoman and his wife retired to bed, in a room furnished with a lock. There were two beds in the room, and the second had been prepared for Hallfred. After they were in bed, the door of the closet was shut, and fastened by a catch in front. This made Hallfred yet further suspicious of Biorn, and not having taken off his clothes, he got up and stood by the footboard of his bed, having his sword drawn, the sword that the King had given him. At that moment Biorn came to the bed, and Hallfred instantly struck him a fatal blow. The yeoman's wife then sprang up with a scream, and shouting for the servants, called for their help to seize the villain who had slain her guiltless husband. The men of the house rose immediately, a light was kindled, and the bedroom opened. Hallfred prepared to defend himself; but the housewife threw garments over his sword, and he was seized and put in fetters. Afterwards she sent for a man named Ubbi, known as Blot-Ubbi, to ask his advice how to deal with the stranger who had killed her husband; and he advised that Hallfred should be taken before the Assembly, and his case judged by the whole community. Ubbi had a brother Thorar, a rich man of the highest authority in the district, who was the father of Ingibiorg, the wife of Audgisl, a discreet woman and a lady of the highest distinction. A meeting was therefore summoned, which Thorar and Blot-Ubbi attended, and also Ingibiorg, Thorar's daughter. The manslaughter was discussed, and as the best thing to do, they agreed to reserve the foreign criminal for sacrifice. Then Ingibiorg spoke and said: "Would it not be wise to speak with this man, who has come here from a distance, and listen to his story before he is finally condemned to die?" Thorar answered: "Now and always you show yourself wiser than others here assembled; go you to the man and learn who he is, and what he has to say." Accordingly she went to the place where Hallfred was seated, closely bound, and inquired who he was; and Hallfred gave his name, saying that he was an Icelfander. "Are you Hallfred the Troublesome Poet?" she asked; and he answered that he was. "What drove you," inquired Ingibiorg, "Christian as you are, and a retainer of King Olaf, to wander east all alone to this heathen spot?" Then he began his story, and told her of all his travels

from the time that he sailed to Denmark in the summer until the time that he accepted a lodging with Biorn. "Now the outcome of my dealings with Biorn, you know," said Hallfred, "for I slew him, though not before he planned a treacherous assault on me. And if you are, as I imagine, the same Ingibiorg of whom Audgisl spoke, saying that she was his wife, I have nothing now to prove to you the truth of my story except the knife and the belt that I took from his dead body. All the moneys I brought with me Biorn took into his charge the evening I came to him. Audgisl would have reaped little advantage in hiring me at high wages to accompany him on his journey if I had not been bound to avenge his death and the attack made on me." Then Hallfred showed her the valuables, and recited the verse:—

"I grieve for the wearer of rings.
But vengeance fierce, O hero of the sword,
I took for my griefs in the clash of shields.
For after the din of fight in the south, I left the murderer of Audgisl
Lying dishonoured and dead. Thus I avenged us both."

Ingibiorg declared that she clearly recognised the articles as the property of Audgisl, and made careful inquiry of all that had occurred with Onund. And Hallfred said:—

"The houndish scatterer of gold, fire of the race-ground of fishes,
I flung in wrath to the ground. I laid hands upon the dog.
That wielder of swords, snow-skates of Lokk's storm,
No longer lives to practise wiles on folk.
In blood dyed I my sword, the fire of Ygg's storm."

"What you have told me is doubtless true," said Ingibiorg. "Biorn has for a long time past been under suspicion. You shall go home with me now, and I will hereafter test the truth of your story." Hallfred therefore went with her. He was greatly exhausted because of his bonds and the hard treatment he had experienced; but through Ingibiorg's care he soon recovered his strength. She and her father Thorar then proceeded to Biorn's homestead, where they found the moneys of Audgisl that Hallfred had brought there; and the whole of the property Ingibiorg took

into her own possession, for she and Audgisl were childless. Afterwards a search party which they sent to the mountain proved the whole truth of Hallfred's story. The immense wealth that Onund had amassed was removed into the settlement, and the people unanimously consented and decreed by their laws that the whole of it should belong to Hallfred, who had so manfully earned it. Hallfred remained in great comfort with Ingibiorg, and soon became the subject of much conversation among the people of the district. Ingibiorg was both discreet and fair, and Hallfred and she were well disposed to each other. No long time therefore elapsed before Hallfred spoke of marriage, and offered himself to be her husband. "On many grounds," answered Ingibiorg, "your proposal is an acceptable one; but you have not considered everything. You are a baptized Christian, a stranger in a place where great sacrifices are held, and people will not suffer you to retain the religion which in time past you adopted. On the other hand, if you abandon your Faith there is no certainty that you will be successful, though you are a fit man for prominent leadership. However, go to my father and press your suit before him." Which thing Hallfred did. He had a long conversation with Thorar on the subject of the marriage. There was complete agreement between them, and in the end Hallfred married Ingibiorg. He took up his abode with her on her estate, and they had money in plenty; and here Hallfred remained for a time, happy in his marriage.

Apology for the digressions in the Saga.

176. Although many speeches and stories are written down in this narrative which are not in evidently close connection with the Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason, this circumstance need cause no surprise. For just as running streams originating in different sources all fall into one place, so in like manner these stories of various origin have one end, namely, to prepare the way for the recital of events in which King Olaf and his men took part. This will clearly appear in what follows.

The settlement of the Farey Islands.

177. There was a man named Grim Kamban, the father of Thorstein, whose surname was Scrof. Thorstein was the father of Thorolf Butter, who was the father of Audun Rotin, the father of Einar, the father of Eyolf Walgerdason; and Eyolf was the father of Gudmund the Mighty and Einar of Thweray. The mother of Einar, the son of Audun, was Helga, daughter of Helgi the Lean. A daughter of Audun and Helga was Wigdis, the mother of Halli the White, who was the father of Orm, the father of Gelli, the father of Orm, the father of Halli, the father of Thorgeir, the father of Thorward and of Ari, who was the father of Bishop Gudmund. Grim Kamban is accounted the first settler in the Farey Islands. He came there in the days of Harold Fairhair, to avoid whose rule many men fled from Norway, some of whom landed in the Farey Islands, which they colonised; some sought out other uninhabited lands. We have already related that Aud the Deep-minded, daughter of Ketil Flatneb, when on her way to Iceland after the death of her son Thorstein the Red, landed on the Fareys. Here she arranged a marriage for Thorstein the Red's daughter Olof, from whom was descended the powerful family of the Gate.

Of Thronð O'Gate in the Fareys.

178. Thorbiorn, surnamed Gatebeard, dwelt on Austrey in the Fareys. His wife was Gudrun, and they had two sons—the elder, Thorlak, and the younger, Thronð—both of whom were tall men and strong. Thorlak got himself a wife in the islands, but lived at home with his father at the Gate. Thorbiorn, who was old at this time, soon afterwards died, and when his sons came to divide the heritage between them they both wished to have the mansion at the Gate, for it was a very fine property. On drawing lots, it fell to the share of Thronð. After the division, Thorlak, who had received movable property with his wife, asked if he might have the land belonging to the mansion, in exchange for the outlying

estates and the movable property that had come to him by lot. Thrond would not grant his request, but divided the land at the Gate among several tenants, whom he rack-rented. During the summer he sailed to Norway in merchants' company, though he had little merchandise himself. Here he passed the winter in a small out-house, and was considered a man whose character was difficult to understand. The following summer he sailed with the merchant seamen south to Haleyr, a much-frequented market at that time of the year. Here Thrond acquired considerable wealth by nothing else than guile and cunning. He now returned to Norway, where he purchased a fine large merchant-ship, in which he stored the great wealth he had gained in the summer; and then he sailed to the Fareys and set up house at the Gate. Thrond was a man of tall stature, with red hair and beard, freckled and ugly in the face, having a disposition hard to make out, ever sly and shrewd in device, overbearing and forceful towards common people, but towards his superiors fair in speech while false in heart.

Of other Farey Islanders, Hafgrim, Bresti, and Beini.

179. There was a man named Hafgrim, who lived in Sudrey of the Fareys, where he had a homestead called the Hof. He was an ardent worshipper of the gods, and a chief, holding one half of the Farey Islands as a grant from Harold Grayfell, who was then King over Norway. Hafgrim's wife was Gudrid, a daughter of Snœulf, who lived in Sanday. Snœulf belonged by birth to the Sudreys, whence he had fled on account of homicidal feuds. At the time of this story he was an elderly man, but not the less overbearing and hard to deal with. His son-in-law Hafgrim was a very impetuous man, and lacking in wisdom. In Skufey at this time there lived two brothers, Bresti and Beini by name, sons of Sigmund, a brother of Thorbiorn Gatebeard, the father of Thrond O'Gate. Bresti and Beini were wealthy men, and while Hafgrim held the lordship of one half of the Fareys, they held that of the other half as a grant from Earl Hakon Sigurdson, being members of his body-guard and his dear friends. Bresti was the tallest and

strongest of men, and the most expert in the use of arms of all the men of his time in the Fareys; he was also a handsome man, and skilled in all games. Beini was an accomplished man, like his brother, but not his equal. Though they were both unmarried, each had a son; Beini's son was Thori, and Bresti's was Sigmund, who was two years younger than his cousin. Notwithstanding the close relationship between the brothers and Thronð O'Gate, there was an absence of friendly feeling.

The brothers Bresti and Beini are attacked by Hafgrim, and slain.

180. Between Hafgrim and the two brothers in Skufey disputes now arose, as we are told in the Saga of the Farey Islanders; and to aid his cause, Hafgrim bought the assistance of Thronð O'Gate and Biarni of Swiney. This Biarni was a rich man, very cunning and unpopular, an uncle of Thronð O'Gate by his mother's side. The two brothers were at all times in full concord and agreement with each other, and lived together, as we have said, in Skufey; but they had another homestead in the Greater Dimun, and pastured their herds of sheep and cattle on the Lesser Dimun, on which island there were no dwellings. It happened on one occasion, when Bresti and Beini were staying at Dimun and were stocking their house, that they planned a journey to the Lesser Dimun to fetch cattle for slaughter. The boys Sigmund and Thori asked and obtained permission to go with them. Sigmund was then nine years old, tall and promising for his age; Thori was eleven years old. The two brothers took with them all their weapons, as they were wont to do. Nothing of note befell them in their journey until on their way home they came quite close to the Greater Dimun, when they were aware of three ships coming towards them with twelve men in each all fully armed. The captains of the ships were recognised as Hafgrim of Sudrey, Thronð O'Gate, and Biarni of Swiney. These men directed their ships so as to cut off Bresti and his brother from the island; and the brothers, not being able to reach their landing-

place, ran their ship on the pebbly beach at another spot. Here in front of them was a solitary crag, which they climbed, carrying their weapons, and set the boys down beside them. The crag was broad at the top, and afforded a spacious fighting ground. Hafgrim and his companions then came to land, and having dragged their boats to the edge of the beach, ran to the crag, and without further ado Hafgrim and Biarni with their men attacked the brothers, who resisted their onset manfully. Bresti defended the crag at the point most accessible to the assailants, who fought for a long time unable to get a footing on the summit. Meanwhile Thronð walked about on the beach with his men, taking no actual part in the attack. Then said Hafgrim to him: "I bargained with you, Thronð, to give me assistance, and paid you money for it." But Thronð answered: "You are a more miserable coward than ever, unable to overcome two single men with two dozen. It was always your habit to plant yourself behind others, not daring to bring yourself into danger; if there were any valour in you, you would be the first to mount the crag and face Bresti, letting the others follow you; but I see you are good for nothing." Thus Thronð incited him to the utmost. His words roused Hafgrim's anger, and he leapt to the top of the crag in face of Bresti, whom he thrust through with his spear. Bresti, anxious to avenge himself, for he felt the blow to be fatal, met the thrust until he could reach Hafgrim with his sword. Then he struck him on the shoulder, cleaving the whole of his left side, so that Hafgrim fell dead from the crag, and Bresti upon him. Beini was then attacked, and after a bold defence, he at length fell and lost his life. Bresti is said to have slain four men, and Beini two, before they fell. Thronð next proposed to kill the two boys Sigmund and Thori; but Biarni refused to slay them. "It amounts to this," said Thronð, "that if they are allowed to live they will be the cause of your own death, Biarni, as well as that of well-nigh every man present here." "For all that I will not slay them," replied Biarni. "I was not serious in my proposal," said Thronð; "my object was to see how far you were disposed to deal kindly with the boys. For my part, I am resolved to make reparation to them for the part I have taken in this expedition. I will be their foster-father, for they are my kinsmen, and support them till they reach manhood."

The boys meanwhile had remained seated on the rock, watching all that happened. When the two brothers Bresti and Beini were dead, Thori began to weep. "Don't let us weep, kinsman," said Sigmund; "let us rather fix this day in our memory." Then all left the place and went away. Thrond took the boys home with him to the Gate. He then seized all the estates of Bresti and Beini, and assumed the office of authority which they had held. Likewise also he assumed the government of that portion of the islands which King Harold, the son of Gunnhild, had granted to Hafgrim; and at the same time adopted, as his foster-son, Hafgrim's son Osur, who was then ten years old. Henceforth Thrond held sole command over the Fareys, and no one dared to utter a word against him.

Sigmund and Thori, sons of Bresti and Beini, are sent away to Norway.

181. The same summer in which the two brothers were slain, a ship reached the Fareys from Norway and anchored at Thorshaven, an excellent harbour of Straumsey. The captain was a man named Rafn of the Wick, and was surnamed Holmgard-farer, because he had made voyages to the realm of Gardar in the East. He was a rich man, and owned a house at Tunsberg. When the merchants were quite ready to sail home, Thrond O'Gate arrived one morning in a cutter. Entering into conversation with the captain, Thrond said that he had two promising young thralls to sell him; but Rafn declined to purchase until he had seen them. Thrond then brought forward two boys who were wearing white hoods and had their hair cut short. Their faces were handsome, and bore marks of deep grief. Rafn, seeing them, said: "These boys, Thrond, are the sons of Bresti and Beini, whom you slew lately; are they not?" "That is true, I believe," answered Thrond. "They shall not come into my possession by purchase," replied Rafn. "We will make an agreement, then," answered Thrond. "Here are five marks of silver that I will give you, if you will take these boys away, and make sure that they never come back to the Fareys;" and Thrond threw the silver into the captain's lap, counting and numbering it to him. The money appeared satisfac-

tory to Rafn, and he said: "I will accept the money, and remove the boys hence if you wish it; and I will neither send them back nor bring them myself; but if I sell them, or cease in any way to have authority over them, I must not be held responsible should they return." The bargain being concluded, Thronð departed, and Rafn sailed away with the boys to Norway, and during the winter they lived with him in comfort at Tunsberg. In the spring Rafn made ready to sail into the Baltic, and inquired of the boys what they thought of his treatment of them. "It has been excellent," answered Sigmund, "compared with that of Thronð when we were in his power." "Do you know the agreement that I made with Thronð?" asked Rafn. "Yes, we know," answered Sigmund. "'Twill be a good plan, I think," said Rafn, "to let you depart freely, as far as I am concerned, where you will. You shall have for your support the money that Thronð gave me; even so, you will be very helpless in a strange country. I brought you away mainly because I felt what a wretched life you would lead with Thronð under his control." Sigmund thanked him for his kindness, saying that he had placed them in such circumstances that they would now do very well. In the summer Rafn sailed away east to Garda, and the boys continued to live in the Wick for two years after he had freed them, by which time they had spent the money that he handed over to them. Sigmund was then twelve years of age, and Thori fourteen.

Sigmund and Thori lose their way on the Dofrafell, and receive shelter in the house of a yeoman, with whom they live six years.

182. The summer in which Bresti and Beini were slain in the Fareys and the boys came to Norway, King Harold Grayfell lost his life and realm. Earl Hakon then held the greater part of the kingdom of Norway as a grant from Harold Gormson, King of the Danes, and resided mostly at Thronðham, in the north. And as the two cousins Sigmund and Thori were now penniless and without means of subsistence in the Wick, they were anxious to go north and see the Earl, thinking this to be the best plan to

obtain help, for their fathers had been dear friends of the Earl, and his servants. They decided, therefore, to make the journey, and set out from the Wick. From the east of the land they first went to the Uplands, then passed across Heidmark, and reached the Dofrafell in the north. Though winter was beginning, they determined to cross the fell by themselves. Severe weather occurred, and as they were ignorant of the roads, they lost their way. Then snow fell, and progress was impossible. They remained in the open air without food for several days, and at length, unable to walk further, Thori lay down, begging Sigmund to look after himself and find a way off the fell. "It must never be," said Sigmund, "that you and I part in this way. We will either succeed in reaching shelter together, or else die." There was so much difference in strength between them that Sigmund, although the younger, took Thori on his back and carried him a good while. One day, as he, too, was becoming much exhausted, they observed that the ground began to slope a little, and that walking was somewhat easier. As evening drew on they reached a small valley, where they soon noticed a smell of smoke, and perceived a little farm-house in front, which they entered. In the sitting-room were two women, both handsome, one advanced in years, and the other young, who welcomed them heartily, took off their wet clothes, and supplied them with dry ones. Then they set the table and placed food before the boys, who, after the meal, were put to bed with every attention. The mistress of the house told them that she did not wish her husband to see them as soon as he came home, for he was somewhat hasty in temper. The two boys were roused from sleep by the entrance of a man dressed in a reindeer's skin, who was tall, and carried some animal on his back. He looked very stern, and inquired who had arrived. The mistress of the house told him of the coming of two boys that had been out on the fells for a long time, and were so exhausted from cold and want of food that they were come well-nigh to the last gasp. "I could not bear," she said, "that two such promising boys, brought here by chance, should die from exposure under our walls." "I told you long ago," said the yeoman, "that you would very soon drive us away hence if you took people under your care." However, he let the boys sleep the night through in peace. Early next morning he came to them and said: "The women wish you

to stay here for the day to rest yourselves, and I think it good for you." The boys replied that they would gladly do so. The yeoman told them that his name was Ulf, his wife's Ragnhild, and his daughter's Thurid—she was both a fine and handsome girl. He was absent from home all the day, but returned in the evening, and was most cheerful towards the boys, inquiring minutely who they were, whence they had come, and what was the object of their journey. Sigmund gave him all the particulars that he asked for. The second morning Ulf came and said to them: "You told me of your journey. It so happens that you have come across the fell, right away from the public road that you wished to follow. In every direction from this spot the distance to human dwellings is a long one. I think, therefore, that you would do well, as the mistress of the house suggests, to stay here during the winter, unless you prefer to follow some other plan. You will be ready to oblige her if she requires to ask your help on the farm at home, for I shall be absent always in the day-time, procuring food for us. The boys thanked the yeoman for his invitation, saying that they accepted it gladly; and they remained there in comfort during the winter. An evident liking for each other soon sprung up between Sigmund and the yeoman's daughter, and they conversed much with one another, without hindrance from her father and mother. Just when spring was giving place to summer Ulf said to the boys: "You have now been with us for the winter, and we all greatly like you. I will give you the opportunity of continuing here, if no other plan seems preferable to you; and we shall see if you increase somewhat in strength. But I must stipulate that you are not to be inquisitive, nor wander far away when I am absent; and especially I warn you not to go to the wood that lies north of the house." This invitation they accepted willingly. During the summer the yeoman spent much time at home, and taught the boys fencing, skill in archery, swimming, and other accomplishments; and they soon discovered that, besides being both tall and strong, he was a remarkable adept in all manly exercises.

When the two cousins had lived there three years, it happened one summer day, Ulf being absent from home, that Sigmund said to Thori: "I have a great curiosity to know what there can possibly be in the wood north of the house, which prevents us

from going there." Thori answered that he had no wish to pry into what his foster-father had strictly forbidden them. But he was overruled, and they went into the wood, Sigmund carrying in his hand a small axe with a short handle, used for cutting wood. As they advanced, they came to a fine open space. Here they heard a great crashing, and straightway a huge fierce black bear appeared, and rushed at them with excessive fury. The boys instantly ran back into the path towards the farm, and the bear after them. The path was very narrow, and as the bear entered it, Sigmund turned round, quick and sharp, and wielding the axe with both hands, struck him between the ears, so that the axe-head was buried. The bear fell down dead, and the boys, having raised him up into a standing position, ran off home. Here they found Ulf, who, with a stern look, asked where they had been. Sigmund replied: "We have come to no good, foster-father, in disobeying your orders; a big bear ran after us to-day." "Just what I expected," said Ulf, "and I was already on the road in search of you. It seems to me fortunate, indeed, that he has not hurt you. I should not like him to chase you often; and though he is an animal that I have somewhat shrunk from meeting, I must now try to find him." Taking a long spear, he ran forward along the path into the wood, followed by the boys, and as soon as he saw the bear, he quickened his pace, and coming up to him, thrust the spear into him with both hands. The bear fell to the ground, as might be expected; and Ulf, perceiving that he had been dead some time already, said to the boys: "You two are mocking me; which of you killed the animal?" "I don't lay claim to the deed," answered Thori; "Sigmund killed him with your wood-axe." "That is a valiant feat, Sigmund," said the yeoman, "and will be followed by many deeds of prowess on your part." Thenceforward Ulf held Sigmund in higher esteem than ever.

Fully six years the boys remained with Ulf, by which time Sigmund had reached the age of eighteen, and Thori of twenty; and Sigmund had already become most widely renowned among his contemporaries in Norway for stature, strength, accomplishments of every kind, and skill in bodily feats.

Sigmund Brestison determines to visit Earl Hakon. His foster-father Ulf, before bidding him farewell, tells his real name and adventures.

183. Sigmund now informed his foster-father Ulf that he wished to go away. "That is a matter for your own decision," said Ulf; "my cottage has been a shelter to you in your growth to a vigorous manhood." Then he had new clothes made for them, that they might be well furnished for their journey. On their departure northwards, Ulf went with them over the Dofrafell, until they came in sight of Orkadale. "I have brought you on your way from the house," he said to them, "as if you were my sons, and we have reached the spot where I must turn back. But before we separate, let us sit down. Now that the time of your departure is come, I feel your loss deeply, and the women feel it still more. I should like to know whom I have had under my fostering care; so tell me now of your family and your origin, and what befell you before you came to me." Then they told him, point by point, of their family and childhood, and how they had been shamefully driven from their patrimony and native land. "And now, foster-father," said Sigmund, "we should both like you to tell us of your family, and who you are." "My story," he answered, "is of no great moment; but first, I must tell you that my right name is Thorkel. My father's name was Steingrim. He was a wealthy man, and lived at Heidmark, in the Uplands. I was brought up at home, and in my youth was reckoned tall and strong. My father early taught me feats of agility, and skill in shooting, so that I soon became an excellent marksman. Each winter, when the waters were covered with ice, and the ground was hard with frost, I made a practice, as soon as I had the necessary age and strength, of going forth into the forests with my companions to hunt wild beasts. From that practice I got the name of Thorkel Dryfrost. A short distance from my father's house in Heidmark lived the chief man of the district, whose name was Thoralf, a sheriff of the Upland Kings. He was married to a woman named Idun, and they had a daughter Ragnhild, who was very beautiful. I asked

her in marriage; but Thoralf wished to give her to some man of higher rank. Shortly afterwards, when Thoralf was absent from home, I went with a companion, took Ragnhild away during the night, and brought her to my father's house. But as my father refused to keep me there unless I took her back home, I collected together a company of men of my own age, eleven in number, and we lived in the forest. As soon as Thoralf returned home and became aware of what had happened, he first went with a body of a hundred men to my father's house and ransacked every building. Then he went into the wood and searched it, having divided his men into companies for the purpose. Thoralf himself, with thirty men, discovered us, and attacked us; but we defended ourselves bravely. At the end of the contest twelve of Thoralf's men had been slain, and seven of mine. We who remained of my company, five in number, all fled wounded into the wood. Thoralf was mortally wounded, and carried home by his men, who took also his daughter Ragnhild. As soon as his house was reached, Thoralf died of his wounds; we five, kept in hiding by my father, recovered. The Upland Kings then summoned an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly, at which inquiry was made into the death of their sheriff Thoralf. I was declared an outlaw; my four companions arranged to pay wergild. As my father could then no longer keep me at home, he sent me to a cave, where I remained all alone for a while, feeling life very dull. One night, therefore, I proceeded to Thoralf's house, and took away Ragnhild for the second time. With her I wandered much from wood to wood, seeking a place of refuge, until at length we came down here, where I have lived for eighteen years, the age of my daughter Thurid." "Your story is an important one," said Sigmund, "as I expected. I will now confess to you that your fostering care and kindness have received a worse return from me than they deserved. Your daughter has given me the strongest proof of her affection for me, and I am going away now chiefly because I should not wish her condition to occasion discord between you and me. But I would ask of you, foster-father, not to give her in marriage to any other man, for I must either have her or none to wife." "I have known for a long while," answered Thorkel, "that you had a mutual

liking for each other, and I did not wish to hinder it; my daughter will never get a better husband than you. And, Sigmund, if you gain a position in Norway under its chieftains, I would ask you to bring about a reconciliation between me and my fellows, for I begin to feel a great loathing towards these desert regions." Sigmund consented to effect the reconciliation if ever he should have the power. Thereupon they separated, and Thorkel turned back home. Sigmund and Thori went north until they came to Earl Hakon, in Throntham, who received their greeting favourably, and inquired who they were. Sigmund told their names, saying: "I am a son of Bresti, and my cousin is a son of Beini, who some time ago were members of your body-guard and your sheriffs in the Fareys. They were slain nine years ago, and we two cousins and foster-brothers have at length arrived here, Sire, to see you. For we should like to be admitted to the number of your followers, hoping to receive honour and advancement from you, for the sake of our fathers." Earl Hakon replied: "I don't know how much truth there is in your story. I was told that the two brothers Bresti and Beini left behind them young sons, of whom different accounts have been received. There was one story, that they had been slain with their fathers; another, that they had been cared for in the Fareys. Some people, again, say that they were brought to Norway, and lived for a time in the Wick, in the east of the country, but that nothing has been heard of them since that time. I am willing to give you food; but you must yourself prove your relationship to your family by some deed of prowess or other before I believe that you are the son of my friend Bresti, though you are not unlike him in stature and looks." The Earl then appointed them seats among the lowest rank of his retainers. They remained with him throughout the winter; and as time passed on, the Earl, aided by his sons Swein and Earl Eric, treated them honourably. The following summer Sigmund and Thori sailed on a plundering expedition, and returned in the autumn with a great store of booty. The second winter the two cousins stayed in comfort with the Earl, and Sigmund entered into a close intimacy with him, becoming a member of his body-guard. At the General Assembly in the following summer, the Earl, at the request of Sigmund,

caused Thorkel Dryfrost to be relieved from the sentence of outlawry, and had him removed from the fell. The following winter Thorkel stayed with the Earl, having with him his wife, his daughter Thurid, and her child, a girl named Thora, who was born the winter after Sigmund left. Afterwards Earl Hakon appointed him to a stewardship in Orkadale. Four years thus passed by, during which Sigmund resided with the Earl in the winter-time, held in the highest regard, and in the summer-time he sailed on plundering expeditions, in which he acquired wealth and renown by his valiant exploits, and the many famous deeds which are related in his Saga. He was most wise in all points of leadership, most valiant, skilful in battle and onsets of all kinds. Often when fighting he performed a feat against which few opponents, though they were valiant Wickings, could protect themselves; for he would throw both sword and shield into the air at the same time, and catching the shield in his right hand and the sword in his left, would thus continue the fight; for he could use both hands with equal facility in feats of arms; and in all accomplishments Sigmund Brestison so far surpassed all the men of his time in Norway, that in physical force and manly exercises he was a match for King Olaf.

Sigmund Brestison obtains Earl Hakon's leave to visit the Fareys and avenge his father's death.

184. When Sigmund Brestison had been four years with Earl Hakon, he told the Earl that he would like to go to the Fareys and avenge his father; and he requested help to prepare for the journey, and advice as to how he should carry it out. "Certainly," said the Earl, "I will consider the matter with you. The voyage is rather difficult than long. Ships of war cannot reach the islands on account of the storms and currents, which are often found to be so strong that even merchant vessels can scarcely stand against them. 'Twill be my best course, I think, to have two merchant-ships built for your expedition, and you shall yourself man them with the bravest men you can get." Sigmund begged the Earl to accept thanks for his assistance and kind promises. This conversation took place towards the close of winter, and the Earl at

once began to build the ships. Sigmund made his preparations, and when spring was far spent, he put his tackle in good order, and got men together, purposing to have as many as fifty bold fellows in each ship. When the ships were afloat and all was ready for the voyage, the Earl went to see them, and said: "It seems to me, Sigmund, that your expedition is furnished with the best possible materials; but to inspire confidence, something more is wanting, for in Thronð O'Gate you have to pull against a strong man at the other end of the rope. I should therefore like to know, Sigmund, what faith you hold?" To this question Sigmund answered rather deliberately: "None worthy of note, Sire; none, except faith in my good luck and my fortune in war. That faith has been a great help to me in my forays." "It is not enough," said the Earl; "you must seek help from one in whom I have grounded all my trust, Thorgerð, the Maid of Holgi; let us go and visit her." They went, therefore, to the temple, where the Earl threw himself on the ground before the image of Thorgerð, and so remained for a long time. The image was very finely adorned, and wore a gold bracelet on its arm. When the Earl arose, he laid hold of the bracelet to draw it off; but the image, as it seemed to Sigmund, bent its wrist. "She has no friendly feeling to you, Sigmund," said the Earl, "and I know not if I shall be able to bring you into favour with her. Your acceptance will be shown by her sharing with us the bracelet on her arm." Then the Earl took a large amount of silver and laid it on the pedestal in front of her. A second time he prostrated himself on the floor before her, and Sigmund observed that he shed copious tears. After rising from the ground, he laid hold of the bracelet, which the goddess now yielded to him, and he gave it to Sigmund, saying: "This bracelet I give you for good luck; you must never part with it." Sigmund, having promised to keep the Earl's command, returned to his ships and his men, and they set sail, he himself directing one of the ships, and his cousin Thori the other. Before leaving Norway they learnt all the tidings from the Fareys. Osur Hafgrimson, who was brought up by Thronð as his foster-son, had grown into a vigorous man, and had inherited Sudrey, his father's estate. He shared with Thronð the government of the Farey Islands, and had, moreover, taken possession of all the estates which Brestí and

Beini had held. This was done by the advice of Thrond, who said that they would form the weregild for his father's death. Osur had residences in Sudrey and Dimun, and a third also in Skufey, where he usually abode. Round the house he had built a wall for defence, both high and strong; for the Farey Islanders had heard of the renown which Sigmund Brestison had won by his great feats.

Sigmund, having accepted the submission of Biarni, attacks Osur in Skufey and slays him.

185. We must now speak of Sigmund and his men. They had a fair wind for their voyage until they came to the Fareys, which they reached near the island recognised as Austrey by those who knew the district. Thus Sigmund's wish was gratified, for he wanted, as he said, to reduce Thrond to submission first of all. Shortly afterwards a great gale broke over them, and storm and current together drove them from the islands. The vessels, which had hitherto kept together, were now separated; but as Sigmund's ship was sufficiently manned and the men were stout, it succeeded in reaching Swiney. Here they arrived in the latter part of the night, and while ten men remained to guard the ship, forty proceeded immediately to Biarni's homestead. They broke into the room where he was sleeping, laid hands on him and led him out. When he inquired who was the leader of the force that was behaving with such violence, Sigmund gave his name. "I am aware," said Biarni, "that you must feel yourself to have grounds of complaint against me, because I was present at the fight when your father and father's brother were slain. But if you deal so hardly with me, you will indeed be stern with those who showed you nothing but ill-will, and proposed to slay both Thori and yourself. Do you remember, perhaps, what I said on that occasion?" "I remember clearly," answered Sigmund, "and you will now reap the advantage of it, in safety for life and limb. I demand the sole right to decide in every other matter." To this demand Biarni consented. "You must go with us straightway," said Sigmund, "and guide us to Austrey." "You can't

reach it by any means," answered Biarni, "while the wind is contrary, as we now have it." "Then show us the way to Skufey," said Sigmund, "if Osur is there." "I will do as you wish," answered Biarni; "I believe there is no doubt of his being there." He furnished them with all the men he could procure, and having set out at the beginning of night, they reached Skufey before night was over. Such is the form of Skufey that the summit is only accessible from the shore by a single path, and the island can never be taken, however great be the attacking force, if the path be defended by twenty men. Sigmund and his force had a clear passage to the summit, because no one defended the path; and on reaching the homestead they found Osur at the wall with thirty men. He asked who they were that had come, and Sigmund gave his own name and his father's. "You think, doubtless, that you have reasonable cause for coming here," said Osur. "I make you the offer, on my part, to come to terms with you on condition that all matters in dispute between us are submitted to the arbitration of the chief men of the islands." "I will agree to no reconciliation," answered Sigmund, "unless you make over to me the right to be sole judge." When this demand was promptly rejected by Osur, Sigmund ordered his men to attack the wall. He himself went round alone to the back of the buildings which it protected, where, unobserved by those within, he came to a part that was fallen somewhat into decay, and the ascent was easier than elsewhere. He carried a silver-mounted axe, which had a projecting horn; his head was protected by a helmet, and he was girt with a sword. He first walked backwards from the wall, and then by running towards it at full speed he was able, with a high bound, to hook the horn of his axe into the upper part of the wall. Drawing himself up by means of the handle, he quickly reached the top. Here he was seen by one of Osur's men, who turned to him instantly and struck at him with a sword; but Sigmund warded off the blow, and thrust his axe forward against the man, so that the horn sunk deep into his breast, and he fell back dead. Seeing the man fall, Osur rushed towards Sigmund and aimed a blow at him, which Sigmund warded off, and striking back at Osur, cut off his right arm, so that his sword

fell to the ground. Instantly Sigmund struck him a second blow deep in the chest, and he fell dead to the ground. Osur's men now crowded around Sigmund; but he made a spring backwards to the ground from the top of the wall and lighted on his feet. Then he offered to the defenders of the wall their choice: they must either, he said, give themselves up and make over to him the right to be sole judge in the quarrel, or he would burn and destroy the wall. Whereupon they submitted to him unreservedly.

Sigmund's dealings with Thronð. His further history to the death of Earl Hakon, including his fight with Bui.

186. We have now to say of Thori Beinison that he was carried by the storm to Sudrey, and joined Sigmund after the death of Osur. Communications next passed between Sigmund and Thronð. A truce was agreed upon, and a meeting for the purpose of reconciliation appointed to take place in Straumsey, where the Farey Islanders held their Assembly. Thither went Thronð in a most cheerful mood, with a large following; and when the terms of peace with Sigmund and Thori came to be discussed, he said: "It was not a graceful act on my part, cousin Sigmund, to go to the fight in which your father was killed. I will therefore make you such offers for peace as will highly augment your honour and be most acceptable to you. You shall arbitrate alone and unchallenged in all matters of dispute between us. I only stipulate to be allowed to reside undisturbed in the islands and to retain the position of authority I now hold." Sigmund replied: "I offer you, Thronð, the choice of two courses: the one, that both you and I go north to Norway and let Earl Hakon settle the terms of peace between us as he pleases; the other, that we remain unreconciled, and if our dealings with each other are hostile, it seems to me most proper that events should decide which of us is the better man." Thronð was very reluctant to visit Earl Hakon; but as Sigmund would not yield easily, and his second offer was the worse of the two, Thronð consented to Sigmund's demand, that they should both proceed to Norway in the summer. During the winter, therefore, there was quietness in the Fareys, and Sigmund lived

on his estate at Skufey in great munificence, keeping a large retinue of followers. In the summer he got his ship ready; Thronð, too, put in order a fine large merchant-ship which he owned; and each of the two knew of the other's preparations. As soon as Sigmund was ready he set sail, and after a prosperous voyage, visited the Earl, whom he informed of the reconciliation with Thronð. "You and Thronð have not shown the same cunning in the matter," answered the Earl; "it is very unlikely, I think, that he will soon come to visit me, now that you have not brought him with you." When the summer was far gone, people arrived from the Fareys, who brought word that Thronð had sailed out to sea and had been driven back; his ship suffering such injury that she was not sea-worthy. Then Sigmund asked the Earl to pronounce the award in the arbitration between Thronð and him, though Thronð had not arrived; and the Earl decided so to do. "I declare as my award," said he, "that Thronð shall pay a double weregild for the two brothers Bresti and Beini, and a third for the attempt on the lives of Thori and yourself, when he wished to have you slain; he must also pay a fourth weregild for selling you both as slaves. You shall assume the government of the half of the islands which your father held as a grant from me; the other half shall devolve into my possession, because Hafgrim and Thronð slew my retainers Bresti and Beini. No weregild shall be paid for Hafgrim, for he made an attack on innocent men, and slew Bresti. Neither shall any compensation be paid for Osur, because of the wrong which he did you in establishing himself on your estate, where he was slain. Thronð must discharge his payments to you within one year, and you and Thori will divide the moneys as you think fit." Sigmund, having thanked the Earl for his award, remained with him during the winter; and in the following spring he sailed to the Fareys, and summoned Thronð before the Assembly in Straumsey. At the meeting, Sigmund remarked that Thronð had failed to go to Norway; then he declared to him the Earl's award, and called upon him to decide quickly whether he would accept it, or refuse to have peace. Thronð again requested Sigmund himself to be sole judge in the suit between them; but when he found Sigmund firm in refusing, he chose rather to accept the Earl's award than live in a state of hostility. In the payment of the fines, however, he pleaded for

delay beyond the time fixed by the Earl. At the entreaties of others, Sigmund allowed the arrangement to be made that the money should be paid by instalments in three years. Thereupon they separated, at peace so to speak. Osur Hafgrimson had left behind him a young boy named Leif, whom Thronð offered to take as his foster-son; and he was brought up at the Gate. In the summer Sigmund got his ship ready for the voyage to Nórway, and Thronð at the same time paid one-third of his fines, though with very great reluctance. Before Sigmund's departure from the Fareys he collected the tribute for Earl Hakon, which he took with him to Norway. He abode with the Earl this summer, and fetched home his bride Thurid, the daughter of Thorkel Dryfrost. With his wife and daughter Thora he sailed in the autumn to the Fareys, where he remained during the winter. The following spring at the Assembly in Straumsey he demanded of Thronð the payment, then due, of the third part of the fines. To this demand Thronð made a deliberate, yet quite meek reply, saying: "I have a boy at home with me, cousin, as it happens, a foster-son named Leif. I must ask you, cousin, and my request will doubtless appear to you meet and right, to grant Leif some compensation for the death of his father Osur Hafgrimson, whom you slew. It would be a good thing if I could pay him as weregild for his father the money you expect to receive from me." "I will neither grant that request," answered Sigmund, "nor any other that you ask. No subterfuge shall here profit you. Pay me the money, or worse will befall you." Then Thronð paid up half of what was due, saying that he was not ready to pay more at the present time. Sigmund carried, as was his custom, the horned axe with which he had slain Osur; and when Thronð thus persisted making difficulties in the payment of the money, he went up to him and fixed the horn of the axe against his breast, saying: "One of two things, Thronð: you will either pay down, instantly, on the spot, the money that is now due, or I will give you a thrust with my axe which you will feel unmistakably." "You are a troublesome person," answered Thronð. "You show no more mercy to your kinsmen than to others." Therewith he ordered one of his men to go to his booth and see if perchance any money had been left in the purse there. The man returned with the purse, and offered it to Sigmund. The silver which it contained was then weighed

and found to be the exact sum due to Sigmund. Thus they parted. In the summer Sigmund again sailed east to Norway, taking with him the tribute for Earl Hakon; and having returned to the Fareys in the autumn, he passed the winter on his estate. He was universally popular in the islands. Biarni of Swiney held faithfully to the conditions of peace made with Sigmund, and was often able to adjust matters between him and Thronð when they were on the verge of being dangerous. The next spring when the Assembly met at Thorshaven in Straumsey, Sigmund demanded from Thronð the yet-unpaid third of the fines. Again Thronð, speaking for Leif, demanded weregild for the death of his father, and many of those present at the Assembly spoke in favour of coming to terms. "Leif will then pay Thronð's debts," answered Sigmund, "rather than receive any benefit from me. Yet, as the request comes from good men, the money shall stay where it is, though I will neither give it up to Thronð nor pay it over as a fine." And after this the Assembly broke up. When the summer was drawing to a close Sigmund made ready to sail to Norway with the tribute for Earl Hakon. He was somewhat late in his preparations, and set sail as soon as he was ready. He left his wife Thurid behind in the islands, but took with him Thori Beinison, who was his constant companion, whether he remained quietly at home, or travelled from place to place; for between the two there existed unbroken the fondest affection of foster-brothers, as well as the bond of cousinship. Sigmund and Thori reached Thronðham in the autumn, and passed the winter in the closest intimacy with the Earl. This was the winter in which the Wickings of Jom came to Norway to fight against Earl Hakon and his sons, as we have already related; and the two cousins were present in the battle with Earls Hakon and Eric. Sigmund is said to have been the first man who boarded the ship of Bui the Stout, as he was fighting most furiously, and Thori followed with a company of thirty men. When Sigmund and Bui were exchanging blows, and Sigmund discovered that he was no match for Bui in strength and hard hitting, he made use of a skilful feat of arms which he often practised. Throwing shield and sword into the air, he caught the shield in his right hand and the sword in his left. Against this device Bui had no defence, and Sigmund struck off his hands at the wrist. Followed by seven of his men,

Sigmund sprung back to his own ship. All the others who had followed Thori were slain. Bui then leapt overboard, and his ship was cleared, as we have already related. The following spring Earl Hakon bestowed rich gifts on Sigmund before they parted, and the two cousins sailed to the Fareys, where they settled down in peace ; and Sigmund had the sole direction of all affairs in the islands.

King Olaf sends for Sigmund. Stephen Thorgilson returns from Iceland.

187. We must now take up the story at the point where we turned aside. King Olaf Tryggwason had been two years in Norway, and in the second winter had Christianised all Throntham. In the following spring he sent a message to Sigmund Brestison, in the Fareys, bidding him come and visit him. The message was accompanied by a promise, that the voyage would bring honour to Sigmund, and the King would make him chief person in the Fareys if he would become his man.

In the summer Stephen Thorgilson returned from Iceland, whither the King had sent him the year before, as we have already related. The King welcomed him with the utmost joy, and Stephen stayed with the King's body-guard. He gave the King a full and truthful account of his journeys, telling him of the grievous reception that his message had met with in Iceland, and that, in his opinion, the conversion of the people to Christianity would prove to be a difficult undertaking.

King Olaf sends Thangbrand to convert Iceland.

188. King Olaf placed Thangbrand the priest over the church in Moster, as we related, and bade him baptize all the people of Hordaland that accepted the Christian religion and were not already baptized, before the King sailed away to the north. Now Thangbrand was an open-handed man, who lived well, and maintained his many followers liberally ; and the neighbouring wealthy men were young in the true Faith, and showed no eagerness to bestow alms for the support of priests and clerks ; therefore the estates

which King Olaf had attached to the church were quickly consumed. When Thangbrand perceived that he could not keep up his bounty and munificence without means, he began to rob and plunder those who were not Christians, and in this way supported himself and his company. His deeds brought upon him the anger of King Olaf, who had ordered the peace to be kept throughout his whole realm, forbidding all pillage and robbery within its limits, except what he himself permitted when punishing men for their evil deeds. He therefore summoned Thangbrand to come to him. Thangbrand went forth to Throntham to see the King, about the time of Stephen's return from Iceland, which we have just mentioned. When Thangbrand came into the presence of King Olaf, the King spoke severely to him, saying: "This is an evil change that you make in your methods. You undertake plundering expeditions like a heathen Wicking, supporting yourself and others by reaving and robbery, when you ought to serve God and be called His priest. Know of a certainty that you will receive no honour from me henceforth, and you must leave my kingdom." "I have acted very wrongly," answered Thangbrand, "yet I would beg of you, Sire, to deal mercifully with me. Lay upon me some hard task as a penance, rather than banish me or drive me from you. Most gladly would I do all that I can to turn away your wrath from me." The King replied: "If you consider my friendship of value, then you will proceed to Iceland, and there, God willing, convert the whole people to the true Faith. If you succeed in the task, you may hope to receive from me such honour and advancement as you have hitherto enjoyed, and even greater." "I will go wherever you wish to send me," answered Thangbrand, "and strive to perform God's errand and yours; but I know not what success I shall have." King Olaf therefore furnished Thangbrand with a suitable ship, and a company consisting both of clerks and laymen. He supplied him, too, with whatever he needed for religious purposes, and made the preparations for the journey as complete as possible in all respects. Thangbrand was tall of stature, and a man of great strength; eloquent of speech, a good clerk, warlike and full of dauntless valour, although a priest; not aggressive, but stern and unyielding both in word and deed whenever he was angry. King Olaf parted from him

at Nidaros, and Thangbrand sailed forth as soon as he was ready and had a fair wind.

King Olaf preaches the Christian religion to Sigmund Brestison.

189. Towards the close of summer King Olaf left Throntham and sailed south to South More, where he was entertained at the house of a wealthy yeoman. At this time Sigmund Brestison with his cousin Thori arrived from the Fareys, in answer to the King's bidding. When they met, the King welcomed him gladly, and they soon entered into conversation. "You have done well, Sigmund," said the King, "in making your voyage hither so promptly. I sent for you mainly because I heard much of your valour and accomplishments, and I will gladly be to you a steadfast friend if you will give ear to me in affairs that I regard of the highest importance. In the opinion of others, a friendship between us would not be unbecoming, for neither of us is reputed to be wanting in courage, and we both suffered many worries and afflictions before coming into possession of our rightful honours. Among the sufferings that we both alike endured were exile and bondage. You were a child and quite young when your innocent father was killed; and I was yet unborn when my father was treacherously slain, through the wickedness and ambition of his own kinsmen, and for no fault of his own. I have heard, too, that so far were your kinsmen from offering you compensation for the death of your father, that they even commanded you to be slain as well as him. You were then sold as a slave, or, to speak more correctly, money was given with you that you might be enslaved and enthralled. In this way you were banished and driven from your estates and your freeholds, and for a long period you lived in a strange land, where the only help you received was from the charity of persons unrelated to you, who afforded you a care and protection capable of all things. A treatment not unlike yours, as I have described it, was mine. As soon as I was born, my fellow-countrymen sought after me, and laid wait for me, purposing to slay me, so that my mother, in the guise of a beggar, had to forsake with me her father, her kinsmen, and all her

estates. Thus the first three years of my life were passed. Then we were both captured by Wickings, and I was separated from her, so that I saw her again no more. Three times was I sold into bondage, and dwelt in Eistland among entire strangers, until I was nine years old, when one of my kinsmen arrived there, who recognised his relationship to me, and after redeeming me from bondage, took me with him east to Garda. There I lived the next nine years, and though I was free, so to speak, was yet an exile. A vigorous manhood indeed was mine, whereby I obtained greater honours and esteem from King Waldamar than a stranger would be thought likely to receive; and in much the same manner you received honour from Earl Hakon. Now at length each of us has succeeded in regaining the inheritance of his fathers, and has returned to his native country in spite of long severance from happiness and honour. I have been told that you never worshipped carved images, after the manner of the heathen, for which reason, most of all, I have good hope that the sublime King of Heaven, the Creator of all things, will lead you by my persuasion to the knowledge of His glorious name and Holy Truth, and will make you my colleague in the right Faith, as He has made you my equal in strength, accomplishments, and other manifold gifts of His mercy. For as He bestowed His gifts upon me long before I had any knowledge of His glory, so He bestowed them upon you. May the same Almighty God now grant me the power to lead you to the true Faith, and attach you to His service, that, moved by my example and encouragement, you may succeed, through His mercy, in bringing all your retainers to His glory. Such is my hope. If you yield to the persuasion that I have used, and truly serve God with steadfastness, you will receive my friendship and esteem. These, however, are of no value in comparison with the honour and happiness which Almighty God the Father will bestow on you, as on all that give heed to His commands for love of His Holy Spirit. For He will grant you to reign everlastingly with His dear Son, the King of Kings, in the highest glory of the Kingdom of Heaven." When the King had finished his address, Sigmund answered: "You know, Sire, for you touched upon it in your speech, that I owed allegiance to Earl Hakon, who looked on me with much favour. And I was then well satisfied with my condition, for he was a gracious man and a good counsellor, boun-

teous and loving to his friends, though stern and treacherous to his foes. There is a wide difference between your religion and his. Yet, as I understand from your gracious persuasion that the religion you preach is in all respects purer and happier than the one held by heathen men, I am desirous of following your advice and acquiring your friendship. I never would worship carved images; for I perceived long ago the uselessness of such religion, though I knew of none better."

Sigmund is baptized, and makes an unsuccessful attempt to Christianise the Fareys.

190. King Olaf rejoiced that Sigmund accepted his proposal so reasonably. Sigmund and all his company were then baptized, and instructed in holy doctrine by the King's orders; and Sigmund remained with the King for a season, highly esteemed. On the approach of autumn the King said to Sigmund that he wished to send him out to the Fareys to Christianise the people that lived there. But Sigmund was unwilling to undertake the labour, though at length he consented to the King's wish; and the King then appointed him ruler over all the Fareys, and furnished him with priests to baptize the people and instruct them in the necessary doctrine. As soon as he was ready, Sigmund set sail, and had a prosperous voyage to the Fareys. On his arrival he summoned an Assembly of the yeomen at Straumsey, which was largely attended; and when it was constituted, Sigmund stood up and declared his errand, saying that he had been to Norway in the summer to visit King Olaf Tryggwason, and that the King had placed in his hands the government of all the islands. This statement was well received by the yeomen generally. Then Sigmund said: "I desire to make known to you that I have agreed to change my religion, and I am now a Christian; also that I have accepted the charge of King Olaf, and his bidding, to convert to the true Faith all the people of the islands." His declaration was answered by Thronð, who said that the yeomen ought to discuss this difficult question among themselves; and the yeomen assented, applauding him.

They followed Thronð, therefore, to another part of the ground, where he urged them to follow the clear course before them, and reject the proposal without hesitation; and persuaded by him, they concluded unanimously to do so. When Sigmund perceived that the whole meeting crowded after Thronð, so that none remained with him except his own men, who were Christians, he said: "I have given Thronð too much power." As the crowd came back to the spot where Sigmund and his men were seated, they were already brandishing their weapons and behaving in no peaceful manner. Sigmund and his men sprang up to meet them; but Thronð said: "Sit down, men, and don't behave with such rashness. It is my duty to tell you, cousin Sigmund, touching the message that you have brought us, that we yeomen are all unanimously agreed not to change our religion on any account; and we shall proceed to attack you in the Assembly, and slay you, unless you desist from your purpose, and make a firm promise never again to bring this proposal to the islands." And Sigmund, perceiving his want of success in promoting the Faith at the present time, and having no force with him sufficient to cope with the whole people, was led to make the required promise in the presence of witnesses; and after it was confirmed by the striking of hands, the Assembly came to an end. During the winter Sigmund remained at home in Skufey, very much displeased because the yeomen had overpowered him, but not allowing his feelings to be perceived.

Sigmund Brestison Christianises the Fareys, and attempts to take Thronð to King Olaf.

191. One day in the spring, when the currents were near their full strength, and the sea between the islands was regarded as impassable, Sigmund, with two ships and thirty men, sailed from his abode at Skufey. The time had come, he said, when the double danger must be faced; when he would either carry out the King's bidding, or else die in the attempt. They directed their course to Austrey, and succeeded in reaching the island unperceived, the night being far spent. Forming a ring round

the homestead at the Gate, they used logs of wood to break open the door of the room in which Thronð slept; they then laid hands upon him and led him out. "'Tis thus blow for blow, Thronð," said Sigmund; "you overpowered me in the autumn, and made me choose between two courses, both unpleasant. Now I offer you the choice of two courses, very unlike each other: the one, an advantageous course, to accept the true religion, and submit to be baptized; the other, if you like not the first, to be slain instantly on the spot. This would be an evil choice for you, because you would straightway lose the wealth and temporal bliss that you possess in this world, and would receive in their place misery and the everlasting torture of hell in another world." "I must not break with my old friends," answered Thronð. Then Sigmund called up a man to slay Thronð, handing him a large axe for the purpose; but as the man moved up to Thronð, holding the axe aloft, Thronð looked at him, and said: "Don't put me to death so speedily, man! I have something to say first. Where is my kinsman Sigmund?" "Here I am," he answered. "You shall be sole judge between us, kinsman," said Thronð, "and I will accept the religion that you wish." Then Thori Beinison said, "Put him to death, man;" but Sigmund answered, "He shall not be put to death at this time." "He will cause your own death and your friends'," said Thori, "if he now escapes." But Sigmund said the risk must be run. So the priest baptized Thronð and his household. Then Sigmund, taking Thronð with him, went over all the islands, and did not rest until all the people were baptized. Afterwards in the summer he made ready his ship, intending to sail to Norway with the King's tribute, and to take Thronð O'Gate with him. When Thronð became aware of Sigmund's intention to take him to the King, he excused himself from making the voyage; but Sigmund would allow no excuse, and as soon as a fair wind blew he loosed the ship from her moorings. They had not gone far out to sea before they met with currents and a strong gale. They were driven back to the Fareys, where the ship became a complete wreck, and all the cargo was lost; but the crew were nearly all saved, Thronð and many others owing their lives to Sigmund. Thronð said that if he were forced to go against his will, they would

never have a smooth voyage; but Sigmund answered that Thronð must go all the same, notwithstanding his dislike of the journey. He then took a second ship, and tribute for the King out of his own money, for he did not lack wealth. A second time he put to sea; but he made no further progress this voyage than the former, for winds strong and contrary drove back the ship, much damaged, to the Fareys. Sigmund said that an embargo seemed to be laid on the voyage; but Thronð said that, however often they made the attempt, they would never succeed as long as they forced him to go against his will. Sigmund therefore set Thronð free, on condition that he swore a faithful oath, "to have and to hold the true Faith; to be true and trusty to King Olaf and Sigmund; not to obstruct or oppose any islander who was loyal and obedient; and to further and fulfil in every respect the commands of King Olaf touching the Christian religion, and every other command which he sent to the Fareys." So Thronð swore eagerly to observe what Sigmund was most careful to pronounce. He then returned home to the Gate. Sigmund abode during the winter on his estate at Skufey, for the autumn was close at hand, when the stormy weather drove him back to the Fareys the second time. He had the ship repaired which had suffered the least damage; and all was quiet in the Fareys, nothing of importance happening during the winter.

King Olaf sails to the Wick.

192. Before saying more of Sigmund, we must tell what happened in Norway while he was away in the Fareys making the people Christian. After King Olaf and Sigmund separated, as we related, the King sailed south very leisurely, keeping to the coast, and paying visits of state. As soon as he had passed Stad on his southward journey, he summoned the yeomen to meet him, reformed their faith and improved their rites, wherever amendment seemed to be needed; and in the early part of winter arrived east in the Wick.

King Olaf proposes marriage to Queen Sigrid of Sweden.

193. Queen Sigrid, surnamed the Proud, resided on her estates in Sweden. Shortly after King Olaf arrived in the Wick, as we related above, he sent ambassadors to Queen Sigrid with an offer of marriage. The Queen viewed the proposal favourably, and it was settled by treaty that, to discuss the terms, they should meet in the winter when Yule was over, by the river Elf on the borders of the kingdom. King Olaf then sent to the Queen the large gold ring taken from the door of the temple at Ladi, a jewel of great value, in the opinion of all who saw it. Queen Sigrid accepted the King's gift, highly praising his liberality and generosity. When the ring was passed round her hall, that every one might see it, those present were unanimously of opinion that they had never beheld its equal. Her two goldsmiths happened to be there, and when the ring came round to them, they weighed it in their hands, but made no remark, except in a low voice, to one another. The Queen, observing their behaviour, called them to her side and inquired what they saw in the ring to make sport of; but they held their peace. She then said that they ought certainly to tell what they had discovered; and they answered that the ring was not all pure gold. It was then broken by the Queen's command, and inside it was found a wire of brass. Whereupon she became angry, saying that King Olaf had doubtless oftentimes been thus deceitful.

*The baptism of St. Olaf, and conversion of Ringarick.
King Olaf's interview with Queen Sigrid.*

194. Soon after the death of King Harold the Grenlander, his wife Asta, daughter of Gudbrand Hump, married a man named Sigurd Sow, King in Ringarick. King Sigurd Sow was a son of Halfdan, the son of Sigurd Brushwood, who was a son of Harold Fairhair. Olaf, the son of Harold the Grenlander and

Asta, was brought up in childhood at Ringarick by his stepfather King Sigurd and his mother Asta.

Being in the Wick this winter, King Olaf Tryggwason went up into Ringarick and preached the Christian religion. Then King Sigurd Sow and his wife Asta were baptized, as likewise her son Olaf, who was three years old, King Olaf himself standing godfather to the boy. The whole of Ringarick and large districts of the Uplands also became Christian.

After these things King Olaf returned to the Wick, and there stayed until his voyage east to Konungahella, the place previously appointed for the interview with Queen Sigrid, preparatory to their marriage. When Queen Sigrid appeared, and they conversed together, there was at first every likelihood that the King's proposals would be followed by a mutual agreement to marry. King Olaf then demanded that Queen Sigrid should be baptized and accept the true Faith. But she answered: "I shall not abandon the religion that I have had and held to the present moment, and my kinsmen held before me; though I shall not object to your believing in the god that you approve." This answer roused King Olaf to great anger, and he struck her with his glove on the face very rashly, and said: "Do you suppose, you wrinkled creature, that I will marry you, a worn-out old woman, and a heathen dog to boot? Don't imagine it, and don't make so bold as to blaspheme any more in my hearing the name of my Lord in your heathenish language, speaking of the sublime King of Heaven, in whom I believe, as a god." Then Sigrid answered: "All this shame and dishonour combined, to which you put me, Olaf, might well result in your death." Thus they broke off their conversation, both in great anger; and King Olaf proceeded to Wick, while the Queen went east into Sweden to her estates. Shortly afterwards she was married to Swein Forkbeard, King of the Danes; his former wife Gunnhild, daughter of Burislaf the Wendish King, being then dead. Through this connection a close friendship sprang up between Swein the Danish King, and King Olaf the Swede, son of Queen Sigrid.

Queen Thyri, the wife of Burislaf, comes to Norway, and is married to King Olaf. Destruction of the wizards and escape of Eywind Kelda [998].

195. Burislaf, King of the Wends, made frequent complaint to Earl Sigwaldi, his son-in-law, that the terms of the treaty which the Earl had brought about between him and King Swein had not been fulfilled. By that treaty Burislaf engaged to marry Thyri, the daughter of King Harold Gormson, and sister of King Swein. But the marriage had not taken place, as purposed and fixed, because Thyri with a flat denial refused to marry an old King that was a heathen. Thus matters remained for a while, Thyri being in Denmark with King Swein. King Burislaf, having ceased to expect that King Swein would send his sister to him, told Earl Sigwaldi that he wished the agreement to be carried out, and that the Earl must go to Denmark and fetch him his promised bride. Without delay, therefore, the Earl proceeded to King Swein and made a formal statement of the matter to him, adding that Swein's kingdom would of a certainty be subjected to forays and pillage from the Wends if the agreement made with King Burislaf were not carried out. The Earl's arguments prevailed, and he persuaded King Swein to deliver up to him his sister Thyri against her will; and in the journey from Denmark she was accompanied by several women, by her foster-father a wealthy man named Osur Agason, and by many others. A special treaty was made by King Swein with Earl Sigwaldi, whereby the estates in Wendland that had been held by Queen Gunnhild should come into the possession of Thyri as her dowry, besides other large estates. Thyri wept bitterly, and was most reluctant to depart. When they arrived in Wendland, King Burislaf held the wedding feast and married Queen Thyri; but for seven days, during the which she remained among heathen people, she would take from them neither meat nor drink. At the end of that time Queen Thyri and her foster-father Osur escaped by night into the woods, and, to tell the story shortly, succeeded in reaching Denmark. But Thyri, feeling certain that her brother Swein, as soon as he knew of her arrival, would send her back to Wendland,

dared by no means to remain in Denmark. In disguise, therefore, she and Osur sailed thence northwards, and came to Norway, where King Olaf welcomed them heartily, and they abode in good cheer. Thyri related to the King all her troubles, and prayed him for assistance, begging him to grant her an asylum in his kingdom. Thyri was an eloquent woman, and her conversation greatly pleased the King; she was also fair to look upon, and courteous in manners. To the King's mind a marriage with her presented itself as desirable; he consequently turned his conversation to the subject and asked if she would marry him. Thyri, considering on the one hand the condition into which she had fallen, and on the other how happy would be a marriage with so famous a King, found it difficult to refuse the offer, and requested the King to be her guardian and decide for her. The subject was further discussed, and King Olaf obtained the hand of Thyri, who betrothed herself to him with the advice of her foster-father Osur. King Olaf then made preparations for a sumptuous banquet, and held his wedding feast in Tunsberg. The marriage took place in the third year of his reign over Norway, shortly after his interview with Queen Sigrid at the river Elf; for it was directly after the King's return from the meeting that Queen Thyri visited him in the Wick. The banquet was most magnificent, and was attended by a large array of guests; for the King had invited all the great men and honourable yeomen from the Wick and many other parts. On the first day of the feast, when excellent drink had gladdened the company, and the King and his guests were all in a joyous mood, he called to his side a courteous page and bade him carry a message to the Queen. Standing before Queen Thyri, the page made a bow and said: "Lady, my lord has sent me to ask whether he shall choose for your Highness a bridal gift fit for a maiden, or such a one as becomes a woman that has had a former marriage?" "Go and ask your lord," she answered, "to consider with himself which would be the fittest gift, if I had been his wife for seven days as I was another King's; and then let him do what is most honourable for himself and for me." The boy carried her answer to the King, who was well pleased with it, and immediately sent her a cloak made of most beautiful furs, and finely ornamented.

At his banquet the King made a long discourse to all who were

present, on the reformation of religion, declaring openly before the whole company, that all those persons, be they men or women, known and proved to make use of spells and sorceries, wizards especially, must leave the land. And after the banquet he made search for all people of the kind throughout the Wick country and the whole of the neighbouring districts and settlements, commanding them all to present themselves before him. When they appeared before the King, there was a great crowd of them, and among them one, the leader of them all, Eywind Kelda, a very powerful enchanter and wizard. Eywind was a wealthy man of high family, grandson of Rognwald Spindle-shanks, the son of King Harold Fairhair. The King spoke to them graciously, bidding them to accept baptism and the true Faith, and to leave off witchcraft and sorcery; "Otherwise," said he, "you must leave my realm as outlaws, deprived of wealth and native land." On their refusal to yield to the King's commands, he placed them all in a large room; and great preparations were made to give them an excellent banquet, where the drink was of the strongest kind and plentifully served. When the day drew to a close, and the heathen men were drunk, for they had not refrained from drinking as much as they desired, the King came again to them and thus spoke: "Let it be clearly known that I am much concerned at losing you, for great and wasteful injury will be done to our realm if so numerous and lordly a company as is here assembled is obliged to leave it; and yet I care not to keep you if you will not abandon your errors. I desire earnestly that you will yield to my persuasions if possible; forsake your old beliefs, and accept in their place Christianity, with a true Faith in Almighty God. You can then retain your estates and native lands, having joy and honour with us, and likewise power and esteem such as I may fittingly bestow, and well-nigh as great as you are able to ask." Then Eywind Kelda answered for all, saying: "You need not ask it, O King. Neither specious words nor harsh conditions will induce us to abandon our faith or practices." The King therefore retired, bidding his men to continue serving them no less plentifully than before. They thus became so steeped in drink that every one of them fell asleep on the spot where he sat. In the evening the King had the building set on fire, and as the heathen men did not awake till the fire was playing

around them, the whole place was burnt down, and all inside it perished except Eywind Kelda. He, by witchcraft and the power of the Fiend, got out through the opening in the roof, and made good his escape, using every precaution at the time to avoid meeting King Olaf. When he had gone a great way off, he one day met some men, with whom he conversed, asking of their journey. They told him their purpose, which was to see King Olaf. "That is very fortunate," said Eywind; "you will do me the favour to take him a message from me, and say that Eywind Kelda escaped from the fire, and means never to put himself again into the power of King Olaf. He will practice his sorcery and witchcraft just as of old, only with additions." He then proceeded on his way. The men came to King Olaf and reported Eywind's message and all that he had said, as they were bid. The King was displeased when he heard that Eywind was still alive, and said that if he were caught once more, he should not boast in that manner.

King Olaf, on his journey north, reaches Ogwaldsness, at Easter. The author's reflections on the wiles of the Devil.

196. King Olaf sent forth a summons throughout the Wick district, commanding the levy of a force to sail in the summer to the north of the country. As soon as spring came in, he himself sailed forth to sea, with his body-guard, down the Wick, and on his way north visited his large estates. The Lenten fast was drawing to a close when he reached Agdi and Rogaland, and on Easter Eve he arrived at Ogwaldsness in Kormt. Here the Easter banquet was made ready for the King, who had with him Queen Thyri, Bishop Sigurd, and many other persons of rank; and his company consisted of near three hundred in number.

We have often heard and accepted as truth, that after Almighty God had created the sublime company of the heavenly powers, that they might serve Him, envy and excessive pride hurled the most nobly created angel down from the loftiest honour and bliss bestowed upon him by God; and the same fate likewise befell all

those who were of one mind with him in his haughtiness towards the Creator. And as when in his glorious height he was fairer and nobler in aspect than the other angels, so after his fall he became, and has ever since remained, uglier and more loathsome than all the devils of the nethermost hell. So full is he of wickedness and envy that with the aid of his evil spirits and messengers he employs his utmost endeavours to bring to nought every good counsel, and under various forms and appearances, gives men oftentimes to drink of his deceitful poison. For if by any chance he sees the crowd of his worshippers falling away, and the sheep of God's flock growing numerous through the fair-spoken, urgent persuasiveness of the messengers of Jesus Christ, then he strives in many ways to entrap, by some trick or other, those who, in his opinion, are bringing shame and harm upon him; and seeks to reinvolve in the manifold snares of error the same people whom he had aforetime, as he thought, involved in death and destruction. This may be seen in what follows.

King Olaf is visited by the Devil in the likeness of Odin.

197. We are told that on the first evening of the Easter festival which King Olaf kept at Ogwaldsness, an old man arrived there. He was prudent in speech, had only one eye, and it was weak, and he wore his hood over his face. This man came forward and talked with the King, who took pleasure in his conversation, because he could tell of all countries, old stories as well as new. The King asked many questions, and the stranger had a reply for every one of them. The evening passed, and the King, sitting up late, inquired at last of the old man what he knew of the Ogwald after whom the homestead and the ness were called. "Ogwald," answered the stranger, "was a King and a great warrior. He had a cow that he especially worshipped, and always took away with him wherever he went, whether by sea or land, for he thought it wholesome always to drink her milk. It was he that gave rise to the common proverb: 'Countryman and cow ever go together.' In a battle which he fought against King Warin, King Ogwald fell; and he was buried in a cairn on the ness a short distance

from the homestead, and the stones raised to his memory are still standing there. In another mound a short way hence the cow was laid." Many such stories did the stranger tell of former events and old-world kings. When they had sat up a long part of the night, the Bishop reminded the King that it was time to go to sleep; so the King retired, and after he was undressed and in bed, the old man, the stranger, came and sat down on the foot-board. He continued talking with the King for a long time, because every word he spoke seemed to the King to require another. In the closet next to the King's bed Bishop Sigurd lay; and after the King had kept awake for a long time, the Bishop said that it was time to sleep. The King therefore laid his head on the pillow, sorry to give up the conversation, and the stranger went out. The King soon fell sound asleep, snoring loudly. Shortly afterwards he awoke, and inquiring after the stranger, sent to call him; but though he was sought he could nowhere be found. The Bishop then arose and dressed himself, and the King inquired if it was the hour for service. When the Bishop answered that it was even so, the King dressed himself, and having ordered his cooks to be sent for, inquired if any stranger had lately come to them. "Certainly, Sire," they answered; "as we were preparing the banquet there came to us a very old man whom we knew not, and he told us that we were cooking the meat very badly. Such food, he said, ought not to be sent to the King's table on a high festival like the present, and then he gave us two sides of beef, plump and fat, which we cooked with the other flesh-meat." The King said: "I see clearly that he is the same man as the stranger who conversed with us yesterday evening. Go back instantly and burn the food that he brought, or throw it all into the sea, and prepare other food in its place. For the Fiend shall not so far deceive us that any of my men shall eat of his poisonous food. That person was not really a man, though he appeared to be one, but the Fiend, the enemy of all mankind, who changed himself into the form of the wicked Odin, in whom heathen men have for a long time past put their trust, holding him as their god. He shows by his visit here that he can no longer endure the torment

of his burning envy, as he sees the company of his followers fall away, while people submit themselves to the power of Almighty God with a willing service. Wherefore he seeks to catch us in the net of his evil cunning, a net laid with his crafty tricks. For, by hindering and delaying us from taking rest at the proper time for sleep, he supposed that we, weighed down by drowsiness, would disarrange or even neglect the appointed time for divine service. Possibly more of his cunning may show itself later on, though I now say nothing of it; for our assured foe, the Fiend, in delaying our sleep yesterday evening, has had some other design in view as well as the one I have mentioned; and I shall not be surprised if what I now allude to is accomplished in some way or other this very day." The King then went to service, and the Hours were chanted.

Eywind Kelda comes to Ogwaldsness. He and his company lose their lives.

198. We have now to relate that on the same Easter Eve Eywind Kelda arrived at the island in a large war-ship fully manned, filled with sorcerers and wizards. Having all come on shore, the company began to strengthen their power by magic arts. Eywind furnished them with helmets to make them invisible, and raised a thick dark fog, so that they might not be seen by the King and his men. But when they approached the homestead at Ogwaldsness, events happened quite otherwise than Eywind intended. The dark fog which he had raised by his witchcraft was lifted above him and his company, who all at once became as blind men, able to see no better in front of them than behind, and all walked round and round. The King's watchmen saw the crowd, and noticing their movements, could make nothing of them; they therefore told the King just after Matins had been sung. The King went out, and observing the movements of Eywind and his troop, bade his men take their weapons and go and find out who they were that behaved in so strange a fashion. The King's men, having done as they were bid, recognised Eywind Kelda, and brought the whole company

to the homestead, where they were led into the King's presence on his return from hearing Mass. Eywind then narrated the whole story of his journey, saying that his purpose was to come upon the King unawares, and either slay him in his sleep, or burn the house down over him and his men. And the King said: "You yourselves have happened to fall into the very snare and trap which you laid for others; into which they would have fallen, but for the blindness that fell on you and your men. It was to be expected that the mercy of Almighty God, and the might of His noble angels, whom He appoints to guard and watch over His people, would prevail over your witchcraft: yea, too, and over that cursed Fiend's messenger Odin, who with his amusing fables prevented our sleep at the proper time, that he might the more readily entice us into a soothing rest when the time arrived to wake up; as I discovered this morning. The sublime King of Heaven has fittingly ordained, by His power and will, that while these as well as all other events bring malediction and disgrace upon the Foe, they shall bring honour and victory to Himself; and to His dear Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who on this glorious day called His own body to life and rose from the dead; and to His Holy Spirit; one God in Trinity. And now, Eywind, as you have had full experience that your witchcraft and sorcery bring on you and others nothing but misfortune, you will surely be willing, both you and your followers, to abandon error henceforth, and at length to believe in the true God." But Eywind and his companions received the King's proposals with a flat denial. The King therefore had them all locked up in a building, and on the following day they were removed by his orders, fettered and blind, to a rock at a short distance from the island. Here Eywind and his fellows lost their lives, for the rock was covered by the sea at high tide; and it was henceforth known as Skrattaskerry. King Olaf remained at Ogwaldsness over Easter week, and after the High-days were past he had the two cairns on the ness opened, in the larger of which were found human bones, old and large in size; and in the smaller, the bones of a cow. Afterwards, in the spring and early part of the summer, the King sailed northwards, keeping close to land. His progress was

very slow, for he made long delays in various places at his large estates, and he was accompanied by a fine and numerous force.

Sigurd and Hauk of Halogaland meet with King Olaf.

199. There were two brothers, Sigurd and Hauk, who belonged to a family of Halogaland. They were young, tall and strong, and spent much time in travelling for the sake of trade. In the spring of this year when King Olaf sailed from the Wick, Sigurd and Hauk made a voyage west to England; and on their return to Norway, when the summer was far spent, as they sailed north near the coast, they met with King Olaf's force at North More. When the King was informed that merchants of Halogaland, who were heathen, had arrived from England, he sent for the captains and asked if they were willing to accept the true Faith and be baptized; but they straightway refused. The King made many attempts to persuade them by fair words, but could not obtain his desire. He therefore threatened them with harsh measures—loss of life or limb; but neither did his threats avail anything. He then had them placed in irons and took them away with him north to Throndham, where they remained for a time, bound with fetters. The King often spoke with them, at one time offering them his friendship together with honourable treatment, at another time threatening them with severe tortures. But he gained nothing from them, because they were men who yielded neither to fair means nor foul. One night they made their escape out of custody, leaving not a trace behind them; nor could any one find out how their flight had been effected, for their fetters were left behind unbroken, and the building wherein they had been confined was found locked. There was much discussion about the matter; but the King himself kept silent. He, however, blamed somewhat the guard, whose duty it was to watch, and accounted them wanting both in care and sense, in not having noticed the escape. Nothing, however, could be done; for although search was made for the fugitives, they were nowhere found. Late in the autumn they succeeded in reaching Halogaland, and went to Harek of Thiotta, who welcomed them heartily, and they remained with him during the winter in much favour.

Story of the Iclander Thorwald Tassel. He becomes one of King Olaf's body-guard. The King sends him to fetch Bard the Stout. Bard's baptism and death; and Thorwald's return to Iceland.

200. In the same summer of which we have been speaking, Thorwald Tassel came from Iceland to Norway. He was a son of Wiga-Plum's sister, a handsome man, tall, strong, and liberal with his money. His voyage over-sea brought him to Thron-dham, and he bent his ship's course within the Frith to Nidaros. King Olaf was then in the town, having just arrived from the south of the country; and as soon as he was told of the coming of heathen merchants from Iceland, he ordered Thorwald to come to him, and bade him accept baptism. To win the King's friendship, Thorwald consented to be baptized and to accept the Christian Faith; wherefore the King promised that he would bestow his friendship the more devotedly, as Thorwald had yielded the more readily to his word and bidding. Thorwald was then baptized, and also his shipmates, and he remained with the King during the winter, held in high esteem. In the King's body-guard were two men, Sigurd and Helgi, both men of stout heart, and dear to the King, but very unlike in disposition. Sigurd was popular with everybody; but Helgi was a difficult man, and underhand. It was arranged that Thorwald Tassel should sit between the two during the winter. Helgi envied Thorwald, and was always throwing discredit on him, while Sigurd was friendly with him; Helgi therefore left his place on the bench beside Thorwald, and would not sit near them. He next seized every opportunity of slandering Thorwald to the King, until the King bade him desist. "You need not speak ill," he said, "either of Thorwald or others that are with me; I wish to form my own judgment of my men." Then Helgi tried by his slanders to rouse Sigurd against Thorwald; but Sigurd answered: "I shall not show dislike to Thorwald, whatever you say; I have found him a good fellow, and you are a bad one." Helgi, however, persisted in his slanders, and would not cease, so that at length he caused the King to treat Thorwald with coldness. One day Helgi bade Thorwald ask

the King why he was so reserved; but Thorwald answered: "No provoking speeches of yours will induce me to do it. I don't suspect the King of believing your slander, though there is something in me that he does not like." "The Icelandic suet-eater still shows pride," said Helgi. One day shortly afterwards, Thorwald came into the King's presence and said to him: "Sire, I make bold to ask you the cause of your sadness? If 'tis illness, the remedy is hard to find; but if it be anxiety, or some cause of human origin, a remedy may be found with your luck and good fortune." "I am not ill," answered the King. "One is almost at one's journey's end," said Thorwald, "when the hardest part of the way is passed. Do you blame any for guilty conduct?" "Yes," answered the King, "and I may take vengeance. And as you, Thorwald, are the first to ask about my difficulty, on you falls the obligation to remove it." "All your men," replied Thorwald, "are bound to do whatever you bid them. Let me know where the difficulty lies, though I may be wanting in strength to remove it." The King then said: "There is a man of an Upland family, named Bard the Stout, who has much money, and an only daughter, Thora. He is far advanced in years, and lives at Ulfsdales in the Uplands, where he has a fine large homestead. His daughter lives with him; but we are not aware that he has many men about him. I am not pleased with Bard, because he refuses to accept the Faith, and will not come to see me, though I have twice sent a dozen men to him, not one of whom has returned." "Is this man Bard a great idolater?" asked Thorwald. "We don't know that he is," answered the King, "for there is no temple at his homestead; but he is a very strange man, and we are in doubt touching his conduct and way of life." Then Thorwald said: "Willingly would I cause you joy, Sire. I will visit Bard, if you desire it, whatever else may happen;" and the King replied that such was his desire. Helgi was pleased with what had occurred, expecting that Thorwald would no more be likely to return than those who had preceded him on the errand. Thorwald then began his preparations for the journey, and the King bade him take as many men with him as he wished. And Thorwald answered: "My table-companion Sigurd I know to be a good man and true; I should like him to go with me, and

I want no one else, for your luck and good fortune, Sire, will give us more help than men." And the King said: "My good wishes will be with you, certainly. You must go to a yeoman named Biorn, who lives a short distance from Bard. He is the fittest man, I think, to inform you of the habits of Bard, and show you the road to his house." The two then started on their journey and came to Biorn, who welcomed them heartily as soon as he knew that they were from the King; and they asked him about Bard's house and his ways. Biorn let them know that Bard's affairs were strangely managed; for not a single person, he said, could ever be seen by a stranger, and yet the whole work of the house was done in excellent order. In the night-time, as they slept, Thorwald had a dream, in which King Olaf appeared and said to him: "You will find a cloth under your head when you awake, and tied up in it is a writing containing the name of God. When morning comes, place the writing on your breast, then wind the cloth over it and round your body where Bard will grasp you. Under its protection you may boldly face him." Thorwald, on awakening, found the cloth, and wound it upon him as he had been directed. In the morning the yeoman Biorn led them out of his courtyard, and directed them to Bard's homestead. The road lay in a wood, which they passed through, and then saw a large house surrounded by a high wooden fence. Going forward to it, they found the lattice-gate of the fence open, and then in like manner the door into the house; but not a single person was to be seen outside. Having entered the porch, they looked about. The building was large, and the partitions newly planed. On one side lay the hall, well hung with curtains all round it, and in it sat Bard on his high-seat. He was a bald man, clad in scarlet, and held his deer-skin gloves in his hand. A tall handsome woman sat at her embroidery; but no one else was to be seen. "Who is there in the porch?" called out Bard. The two gave their names, and said they were King's men. "What is your business here?" said Bard, "two of you by yourselves." "Our force here at the door is quite numerous enough to take you to the King against your will if you will not go cheerfully." Bard then twisted his gloves and tore them asunder in his hands as he recited a verse:—

"I've shown at times, I think, a strength of hand
Alone will serve to hold a nimble greenhorn."

"Let me try your strength then," said Thorwald, "in a wrestling bout." He then set upon Bard, and they tugged hard at one another. The day was far advanced, and after struggling together for a while, Thorwald found his forces failing him, and silently prayed that God would give him strength against his foe. At that moment Bard was pressing on with all his might; but as breast met breast, he fell against the threshold just as if some one had caught and tripped him; and both the men were then too exhausted to wrestle longer. Bard then called out, "Help me, Thora." "I can't help you, father," she answered. "Sigurd and I have been tugging at each other, and are very well matched, for we are of equal strength." "I have come at last," said Bard, "to ask for help against a single foe, a fate that hitherto has never befallen me. Come forth now, you that live under the hall, and help me." Straightway forty men rushed up and seized Thorwald and Sigurd. "I have had good help, Thora, from the dwellers under the hall," said Bard, "and they will help me again if I should require them. There is no reason, therefore, to keep the men in fetters. As for you, troll that you are, though you call yourself Thorwald, I should not wish you to attack me often; you lack neither daring nor resource. It may be right to call you a man; but you must be a powerful wizard. I felt no lack of strength in wrestling with you at first; but you must, I think, have raised up mighty spirits against me to make me fall, for never before did I come to the ground in face of a single foe. You will both remain here during the night, though you may have your fears as to the reception that you will meet with." The table was then set for them, well appointed, and lacking neither meat nor excellent drink. When they had eaten their fill, Bard said to them: "I don't grudge you your food, but you seemed to eat with as much boldness as if you were among friends, and had no fear whatever." They were then shown to bed, and slept well during the night. In the morning, when they were ready to depart, Bard ordered his men to accompany them off the premises. Having passed forth, Thorwald looked round, and seeing no one, said: "Bard would like us to leave, and have nothing

more to do with him. This must not be; we must see him again before we depart." They went, therefore, into the house. "You are very strange men," said Bard. "You leave the house, but don't go away. Why can't you be moved by fear like other men; are you very eager to die?" "We turned back," said Thorwald, "because I had no desire to ruin either my own reputation or your honour. Certainly we are not so frightened that we dare not fully perform the King's business. And now I ask if you will go of your own accord with me to see the King." Then Bard asked, "Why don't you first ask me what is my belief?" "Because," answered Thorwald, "I have no curiosity to know it." "I wish, however, to make known to you," said Bard, "that I put trust neither in carved images nor in fiends. I have travelled from country to country, have met both with giants and negroes, and they never got the better of me; therefore I have long put faith in my own might and main. Now, for the first time, my faith has disappointed me. I see, too, that you would never have overcome me if you had not had the help of another. What was there at your breast when our bodies met in close contact? One, I suspect, of great power, judging from the consequence that resulted." "You are right," answered Thorwald, "in saying that He is mighty. I had there the name of the God in whom we Christians believe." "I am bound to think," said Bard, "that He is able to do everything which He determines in person to do, seeing that His name alone completely overcame me just now. I will go with you, therefore, to the King; for if we are to believe on any God, I perceive the advantage of believing on one who is so powerful. I had the cellar formed under my hall, and placed my men there, so as to have the advantage of numbers if a large force were sent against me; but if I were opposed by only two or three, I had no fear that they would have me at their mercy. There are here four-and-twenty of King Olaf's men whom he sent to me, all now in good condition, and not put to death, as the King perhaps supposes." After these things Bard made ready for departure, and taking with him all his men, accompanied Thorwald to the King. As they drew near the town of Nidaros, Bard said to Thorwald: "Go and tell the King that we would like to be baptized where we now are, for we don't wish to give the crowd cause for mirth when they see such old people, as we are,

undressed." Thorwald went forward and told the King all the story of his journey and the issue of it. King Olaf rejoiced, and taking priests with him, went straightway to meet Bard, who greeted him heartily, and said: "He is a mighty God whom you direct, Sire King, as I have found by experience; and I am willing now to believe in Him and be baptized." "You speak well, Bard," said the King, "and according to your light; it is an important truth that He is a mighty God who directs me and all things visible and invisible; and He claims as His own, though in various ways, all that are proper for His service." Bard was then baptized with all his men; and after the rite was performed, he asked, "Tell me, O King, am I now good?" and when the King assured him of it, Bard said: "Up to this time I have looked on myself as needing no man's help, and have served neither king nor yet chief; but I wish now, O King, to become one of your body-guard and to follow you through life. Thus, most likely, I shall not lose the goodness that I have now acquired. I should like you to be the guardian of my daughter Thora and all her property, and marry her to the Iclander Thorwald, whom it is our duty to reward." "That must not be," said Thorwald, "for I have already a wife in Iceland." Then the King answered Thorwald: "You shall bestow this lady on your friend Sigurd; they are well matched, as they are of equal strength." "Gladly will I do so," answered Thorwald. "And I must ask you, Sire, to dismiss Helgi from your service; though I feel that such treatment makes too small a difference between him and Sigurd. But if you grant me this request, I will for your sake interfere no further with him." To this request the King consented. Sigurd then married Thora, and they settled in the Uplands, on the estate which had belonged to Bard the Stout. Bard, shortly after being baptized, fell ill, and died while still wearing the white garments of the newly baptized. And Thorwald, much honoured by King Olaf, returned to Iceland, where he was regarded as a great and most valiant man.

Story of Swein and his sons Swein and Finn. Finn is baptized in Denmark.

201. We find written in books that in the days of Earl Hakon Sigurdson there lived north in Throntham a man named Swein.

He was a rich man, of high family, reserved and ordinarily quiet in disposition, but stiff and proud towards great men if he disliked them. According to the custom of his kinsmen and forefathers, he was a worshipper of heathen gods, like all the people of his time in Norway. At his homestead he had a large temple, finely adorned, containing many carved images of gods, though he honoured Thor most of all. Like other idolaters, he was a friend of Earl Hakon. Swein was married, and had two sons, Swein and Finn. Swein resembled his father in disposition. Finn was a very difficult man, self-willed and continually quarrelsome, meddlesome and exceeding boisterous, but sullen at times and refractory, and altogether most peculiar in temper. He was therefore considered by some to be deficient in common-sense. But he had not much faith in the heathen religion; for when he entered his father's temple, which happened rarely, he gave no praise to the gods, but rather showed scorn for them in every word. He said that they were squint-eyed, that they reeked with dust, and could not possibly help others when they had no power to cleanse themselves from dirt. Oftentimes he seized the gods and pulled them from their pedestals, though his father warned him that such evil conduct would stand in the way of his prosperity; for Thor's might, he said, had been shown in many great and valiant deeds, in piercing rocks and splitting crags; and victory in battle was the gift of Odin. But Finn answered: "Very little might is shown in breaking mountains and rocks, and labours of that kind; or in giving such victory as Odin gave—victory gained by trickery and not by power. He now is mighty, I think, who in the beginning made the rocks, the whole world, and the sea. What can you tell me of Him?" But his father had nothing to say. At Yule, one winter, when men were at the banquet, Finn spoke, and said: "Far and wide through the land this evening solemn vows will be made, but nowhere will they be more important than here. This is my vow: I will serve Him who is the highest of Kings, and altogether above others." This vow on the part of Finn was thought by those present to be ambiguous, and some said that Earl Hakon was the highest chief in Northern lands, and that Finn meant to serve him. But Finn answered that he knew the difference between King and Earl. Those who had little esteem for Finn

considered that he showed his folly no less in his reply than in his vow. After Yule he prepared to depart; and when his father asked him of his intentions, Finn answered: "I don't in the least know whither I shall travel; but I am about to seek the King whom I intend to serve, having only in view the complete fulfilment of my vow." Then he asked if his brother Swein would go with him; but Swein was unwilling. "That is satisfactory," said Finn; "you are doubtless intending to look after the property with our father, until I return." Then his father spoke: "Would you like me to furnish you with men and money for your journey?" "By no means," answered Finn; "I shall not be able to look well after a troop of men if I have not the wit to look after myself, as many of you assert, and I can't deny." After these things Finn departed and went south by the land route over the Uplands; and having reached the Wick, took a passage to Denmark with the crew of a merchantman. As soon as he set foot in Denmark he left the ship and went all alone into the woods without even bidding farewell to his companions. Nor did he ask any one to direct him to a house, but wandered about for a long time without shelter, until at length, having passed through the forest, he saw before him a shepherd boy. When they met they sat down and conversed; and on Finn asking if there were any houses near, the boy said there were. Then Finn asked him to exchange clothes, and the boy willingly consented. After the exchange, Finn said, "What is this that is fastened to your dress?" "We Christians call it a cross," answered the boy. "So you make yourself out to be a Christian," said Finn; "what does that mean?" The boy then gave such explanation as he could; and Finn in reply told him of Thor and Odin and their warlike deeds. "I easily see," said the boy, "that you will puzzle me. If you visit our Bishop, who lives a short way off, you will be less likely to influence him with mere folly and nonsense; for he will tell you more noteworthy things of the true Faith than I can." Finn then asked, "What is that Bishop of yours? is it a man or some other creature?" "Your folly does not grow less," said the boy; "you seem to me a fool or a simpleton, or else you are not so silly as you pretend to be. We give the name of Bishop to one who guides and leads us in the holy Christian Faith." Finn then

declared that he would certainly go and visit the Bishop. When he had found and greeted him, the Bishop asked who he was, and he answered that he was a Northman. "On whom do you believe?" asked the Bishop. "On Thor and Odin, like other Northmen," answered Finn. The Bishop replied, "That is a wicked faith; I must have you taught another and a better one." "I shall know when I have heard it," said Finn, "if that faith is to be esteemed a better one; but why will you have me taught it, and not teach it me yourself?" The Bishop then handed him over to a priest, whom he bade to teach Finn the Faith; but Finn quite confounded the priest so that he could do nothing. He therefore told the Bishop that the man was so hard to guide and so foolish that nothing could be done with him. "It appears to me," said the Bishop, "that he is not so foolish as peculiar." Then the Bishop began to relate and declare to him the wonderful works of Almighty God, and at length Finn said: "I heard in the past that there were no gods to compare with Thor and Odin in might. But it is far otherwise, as I now clearly perceive from what you say of the Christ whom you preach; who, although in this world He was at the mercy of almost every one, yet after death became renowned by waging war in hell, where He placed Thor, the chief of the heathen gods, in fetters, and after His victory not a creature could stand up against Him. He is the King, it seems to me, whom I solemnly vowed to serve, higher and loftier, greater and mightier, than all other Kings; henceforth, therefore, I shall believe in Him and serve Him according to your teaching." To this answer the Bishop replied: "God has given you the understanding to come to a right decision. The truth of what I said now shows itself; you are much wiser than you pretend to be." Finn was then baptized, and abode for a time in Denmark, holding steadfastly to his belief.

King Olaf sends for Swein and his son Swein, and induces them to be baptized.

202. King Olaf, we must say, was making the people of Norway Christian at this time. And although the common folk of Throntham were baptized by the Christian teachers whom

he sent through the land after the death of Yria-Skeggi, yet there were persons there, as in other parts of Norway, who were reluctant to accept the true Faith. Among these were Swein, whom we have just mentioned, his son Swein, and their household. When King Olaf learnt that neither father nor son would accept the Faith, he sent and bade them to come to him. On receiving the King's command the younger Swein said to his father that the time had come for accepting the religion that the King preached. But the elder Swein declared his unwillingness to change for another faith that which his kinsmen and forefathers had and held. The younger Swein, however, prevailed so far that they went to the King, who welcomed them heartily, and preached Christianity to them. The elder Swein replied, "I shall not give up my religion." "Your condition will then undergo a speedy change," said the King; "for I must have you put to death." "You may do so if you wish," said Swein; "I am an old man, and it is, methinks, of no great importance whether I die at home or abroad, a little earlier or a little later." Then the younger Swein addressed the King: "Spare my father, Sire, and put him not to death. He is a man of high family, and has many kinsmen; you will have against you a large array of great men if he is deprived of life." The King, perceiving that the younger Swein was altogether more yielding in temper than his father, said to him: "What is the chief reason that your father is so reluctant to accept the Faith; do fasting and penance appear burdensome to him?" "By no means," answered Swein; "for he is a bold fellow, and a man of stout heart, in spite of his age; but he is moved by the thought of losing the temple of Thor, a fine, handsome building, adorned and decorated at great cost. To demolish or burn it, I think, would touch him closely." "One or other will most likely be its lot," said the King. Then Swein said: "Would it not be a good plan, think you, to let the temple and its ornaments stand; you will gain your object, for we shall both accept the Faith that you preach, if so noble a building is not hurt; and we will keep our promise to have nothing further to do with Thor, and to let the gods find food for themselves." "I doubt if that is right," replied the King; "but as I perceive a good desire in you, and all men say that you are both excellent fellows, I will consent to let the

temple stand, under the condition offered by you, rather than see you refuse to become Christians and suffer swift destruction." Swein then went to find his father, to tell him the issue of the matter. "Why should the King accept this compromise?" asked the old man. "You may see thereby, father," answered Swein, "what an important matter, in his eyes, is our acceptance of that religion which is good for us; and likewise the trust he puts in our honour." The elder Swein replied: "I will make a promise, if the King wishes it, not to offer sacrifice to Thor, nor have any dealings with the heathen gods, on condition that he will allow the temple to stand uninjured." Then they were both baptized and became friends of King Olaf; for they held firmly to all their promises, and caused their whole household to be baptized.

Finn returns to Norway and visits King Olaf. He destroys the gods in his father's temple. His death.

203. We now return to Finn, in Denmark. When he heard of the change of religion in Norway he made his way northwards, and reached Throntham the same winter that King Olaf abode in Nidaros, after his summer voyage from the Wick in the east. On his arrival at the town, Finn went straight to the house where the King was at table. He was poorly clad, and asked the two door-keepers to let him enter and speak with the King. But they said that it was not the custom for strangers to disturb the King when he sat at meat. "We can't," they said, "let you in, or any other vagrant like you, ragged and silly." "To tell the real truth," answered Finn, "I don't think I need ask your leave, base thralls." Then seizing them, one with each hand, and flinging them from the door, he passed in. As soon as he entered the hall, a crowd came about him, and seeing nothing but his foul rags, wished to thrust him out again. This was not an easy task, for he made a somewhat firmer stand than they expected. Rough measures followed; some pulled and tore away from him the wretched rags that clothed him, others struck him with their fists; he meanwhile defended himself as well as he could. The disturbance attracted the notice of the King, who inquired what was the

matter, and was told that a silly rude fellow wanted to speak with him. "It is not right," said the King, "to treat him badly." He was therefore set free. The King then asked him who he was, and Finn in a sort answered him. "What is your business here with me?" asked the King; "do you wish to be baptized?" "I look on myself," answered Finn, "as no worse a Christian than you." When the King said that he could not understand the answer, Finn replied, "What kind of man am I, think you, O King?" "I know not," answered the King; "but I see that you have the air of a stout fellow. Others are bigger than you, but few are handsomer, and your look impresses me." "There is a difference in looks," said Finn; "the impressions they produce may be good or otherwise." "You don't look like a bad man," said the King. "It is pleasant to hear that remark from so noble a person," answered Finn. Then the King spake again: "I should take you to be an excellent fellow, confident in yourself, peculiar, and somewhat quick-tempered." "It is all quite true," replied Finn; "guess now, O King, of what family I am." "Most likely, as I think," said the King, "you are a son of my friend Swein." "It is true," said Finn, "that I am Swein's son; you yourself will know if he is your friend." "He is indeed my friend," answered the King, "and a good Christian; though at first there was a matter on which we disagreed. Close to his homestead there stands a temple dedicated to Thor; with whom, however, he has no dealings, I believe." On hearing this, Finn became furious: "Here's a scandalous affair," he said; "what sort of a good King are you, when your subjects and friends carry on their heathen worship in secret? Surely you must be a heretic." The King called him a very impetuous man, and Finn hastened out of the hall and went away to visit his father and brother. The night before he reached home his brother Swein had a dream, in which Thor, very displeased and sad, appeared to him, and said: "You and I are finding out the truth of the proverb, 'Friendship and enmity alike decay.' But though it is true in our case, I have one request to make of you. Remove me from my house into the wood, for your brother Finn is about to return home, and I expect no good from his coming." "I have made a promise to the King," answered Swein, "to have no further dealings with you, and I must keep my promise. You are no god, it seems to me, if you cannot save yourself

from danger, and retire of your own accord to whatever spot you wish." Then Thor disappeared, full of grief and sorrow, and Swein awoke. The following day Finn reached home, and received a hearty welcome from his father and brother. After being there a single night, he rose up early, and having procured a bag made of skin, he took a huge club in his hand and went to the temple. He found the door-posts looking decayed, the hinges rusty, and everything quite tarnished. Then he entered, and having removed the gods from their pedestals, he stripped and plundered them of all that was valuable, which he put in his bag. Afterwards, exerting all his might, he struck Thor three blows with his club, and the god fell. Finn next placed a cord round his neck and dragged him to the sea-shore. Here he put him in a boat to take him to King Olaf, and for a considerable part of the voyage he kept him overboard in the water, and occasionally beat him. When the King saw Thor, he said that Finn had not treated him honourably; and Finn answered: "My treatment of him shows that I have long disliked him; worse and more fitting disasters will befall him." Having said this, he clove Thor up into mere chips, which he threw into the fire and burnt to ashes. Of these, mixed with water, he made a porridge, which he gave to the dogs, saying, "It is right that the dogs should eat Thor, as he himself eat his own sons." Finn then became King Olaf's man and followed him. And whenever the King preached to men the true Faith, Finn became so excited and eager as to be dangerous to those who did not give a ready obedience to the King's wish. Finn was a religious man, of good morals, and regularly accompanied the King to the services of the Church. But one morning he was absent from Matins and from Mass; and when the King inquired how it was that he came not to the services, according to his custom, he was told that Finn was lying in bed. He went, therefore, to see him, and asked if he were unwell, and Finn acknowledged that he had a slight sickness. But the King thought the illness a grave one, and caused Finn to be prepared for death; and he himself affectionately remained at his side. Finn's illness proved fatal, and he made a good ending; and King Olaf felt his loss severely.

Of the Halogalanders Sigurd and Hauk. Harek of Thiotta and Eywind Cheekrift fall into the power of King Olaf. Death of Eywind (999).

204. We must now return to the two brothers Sigurd and Hauk of Halogaland. We left them, after relating that they escaped from the bonds and the prison in which King Olaf held them, and that they were passing the winter in comfort with Harek of Thiotta. On a fine day in the following spring, it happened that Harek was at home and felt dull. There were few persons about the house, and the two brothers kept always near him. Sigurd inquired of the yeoman if they should go and amuse themselves a little, and the suggestion pleased Harek highly. They went to the sea-shore, therefore, and put a six-oared boat on the water; and Sigurd fetched from the boat-house the sail and tackle which they usually took with the boat when they went to sea, though only for a short distance, to amuse themselves. Harek then went on board and fixed the rudder in its place. Sigurd and his brother had with them all their weapons, just as when they went about with the yeoman at home; both were very strong men. Before they entered the boat they threw into it some butter-chests and a bread-basket; and the two carried into it a cask of ale. Harek was busy in the stern of the boat and paid no heed to what the brothers were doing. They then rowed away from land; there was a slight wind from the north, and the weather was fine. After rowing a short distance from the island they hoisted sail, and the boat, steered by Harek, soon left the island behind. The brothers next went to the stern of the boat where Harek was seated and asked him what voyage he intended to make; and he said that they would amuse themselves by sailing to the nearest island. "The time has come, my good man," said Sigurd, "when you must make a speedy choice among the courses that we offer you: the first, that you allow us two brothers to control the voyage and the steering, in which case you will receive good treatment as one deserving of it; the second, that you submit to be put in fetters; and the third, that you may be slain." When Harek saw the

position in which he was placed, being no more than a match for one of the brothers, even if he were as well armed as they, he chose the course which seemed the best, and let them decide where they would take the boat. To this he bound himself by oath and pledged his word. Sigurd then took charge of the boat and steered it south, keeping near the coast. The two brothers were careful not to meet with any one, and under a very gentle and favourable breeze, they stopped nowhere until they reached Throntham and sailed up the Frith to Nidaros, where they found King Olaf. He sent for Harek to speak with him, and bade him submit to baptism; but Harek declined. Then the two conversed together many days, sometimes in the presence of several people, sometimes by themselves, but were able to come to no agreement. In the end the King said to Harek: "You shall now go home unharmed by me; in the first place, because we are near akin to one another, and in the second, because you would be able to say that I had seized you by treachery. Know this for certain, that I intend to sail north in the summer and visit you Halogalanders in your own country; you will then see if I can punish those who refuse to become Christians." Harek was well contented to get away as speedily as he could. King Olaf supplied him with a fine cutter which had benches for ten or twelve rowers on each side. This ship the King furnished in the very best manner with all kinds of provisions; and to accompany Harek, he placed on board thirty gallant men, all well equipped. As soon as Harek was ready he sailed away; but Hauk and Sigurd both remained behind with the King, and allowed themselves to be baptized.

Harek continued his voyage until he reached his home in Thiotta. He then immediately sent word to his friend Eywind Cheekrift to tell him that Harek of Thiotta had seen King Olaf and had not suffered the King to force Christianity upon him. He also sent word that the King intended to bring an army upon them in the summer, against which they ought to take precautions; and he invited Eywind to come and see him. When these messages reached Eywind he saw in them abundant reason for devising plans lest they should be at the mercy of King Olaf. With all speed, therefore, he started in a swift ship, taking but few followers with him. Arrived at Thiotta,

he received a hearty welcome from Harek, and forthwith the two together left the homestead in another direction to talk over matters. When they had conversed for a little time, the King's men who had accompanied Harek home from Nidaros came up, seized Eywind, and led him to their ship. They then sailed away with him, and never stopped on their voyage till they came south to Throntham and into Nidaros, where they found King Olaf, and presented Eywind before him. The King bade Eywind, as he had bidden others, to submit to baptism, and Eywind there and then refused. The King then in gentle terms begged him to accept the true Faith, using many arguments founded on the glorious miracles of Almighty God. The Bishop also spoke in like manner; but Eywind remained unmoved. The King offered him splendid gifts and extensive grants, together with the promise of his steadfast friendship, if he would abandon the heathen religion and accept baptism; but Eywind refused his offers with the utmost obstinacy. The King next threatened him with maiming or death; but Eywind was still unmoved. Therefore, at the command of the King, a basin full of hot embers was brought and placed against his stomach, which soon burst asunder. Eywind then spoke, and said, "Take the basin away; I wish to say something before I die." When it was removed, the King said, "Will you now, Eywind, believe in Christ?" "No," he answered, "I could not receive baptism even if I desired it. My father and mother, having no children, made rich presents to the wizards of the Finns, that by the aid of witchcraft they might have a son. The Finns declared the request an impossible one. 'Yet,' said they, 'it may be done if you promise with an oath that the child shall serve Thor and Odin till the day of its death, and that we may have him when he is old enough.' My parents acted as the Finns advised them, and I was born, and dedicated to Odin. When I grew up so as to act for myself, I renewed their promise, and from that time till now have in all devotion served Odin and become a mighty chief. I am now so completely given up to Odin that I can in no wise make a change, nor do I wish it." Eywind then died, having been a most powerful wizard.

Sigmund Brestison of the Fareys visits King Olaf.

205. After Sigmund Brestison had Christianised all the Fareys, as King Olaf Tryggwason bade him, he purposed to take Thronð O'Gate with him in the summer to Norway, but was twice driven back to the Fareys, and both his ships were wrecked. He then remained another winter in the islands, and repaired the ship which had suffered the least damage. Next spring he made it ready as soon as a voyage seemed practicable, and put to sea without delay, leaving Thronð behind, under the conditions already related. Sigmund's voyage was a prosperous one. At Nidaros in the north he found King Olaf, to whom he brought sufficient money, not only to pay the tribute now due, but also the lost tribute of the previous summer. He received a hearty welcome from the King, with whom he made a long stay during the spring. Sigmund related fully to the King all his dealings with Thronð and the other island folk. Whereupon the King remarked: "Thronð behaves badly in refusing to come and see me. Your island colony out there will suffer great injury so long as he is not driven from it; for I maintain that where he lives will be found the very worst man in all the regions of the North."

Of King Olaf's character and accomplishments.

206. King Olaf was the most expert Northman, of whom we have any account, in athletic exercises of every sort. Of his superiority to others in strength and agility many stories are written. When his men sat at their oars on a warship, he would pass from oar to oar outside the vessel. He played with three dirks at a time, tossing them so as always to have one aloft in the air, and catching them by the hilt as they fell. He used both hands equally well in fighting; hurled two spears at the same time; was a most dexterous archer with the long-bow and bows of all kinds; beat every one in swimming feats, and was more skilful than any one else in climbing rocks, of which skill we shall speak hereafter. King Olaf was the gayest

and most cheerful of men, gentle and condescending, open-handed and munificent, most impetuous over many things, and much given to show and finery. He surpassed all others in valour during battle, was the sternest of men when in anger, and a great harasser of his foes; some of whom he burnt by fire, some he tore asunder by savage dogs, others he disabled or cast over high precipices. Thus he became an object of affection to his friends, and of dread to his foes. His success in the furthering of Christianity and in other matters was great, both at home and abroad; because some did his will from friendship and a kindly feeling, and others through fear.

King Olaf and Sigmund compete in manly exercises. The King asks Sigmund for the bracelet that Earl Hakon had given him. Sigmund's death.

207. It happened on a day in spring that King Olaf said to Sigmund Brestison: "We will amuse ourselves together to-day, and put our athletic skill to the test." "I am not at all in fit condition, Sire," answered Sigmund; "yet in this matter, as in all others that depend on me, you must decide." Whereupon they tried their powers in swimming, shooting, and other feats of skill; and it is said that Sigmund, of all the men of his day in Norway, approached the nearest to King Olaf in many athletic accomplishments, but that even he fell short of the King when they were tried together.

A story is told that at a banquet which King Olaf gave to his body-guard and a large number of invited guests, Sigmund, who was on terms of close intimacy with the King, was seated at the table three places from him. As Sigmund laid his arms on the table, the King looked towards him and saw a heavy gold bracelet on one of them. "Let me see the bracelet," he said. Sigmund took it off and handed it to the King. The King then asked, "Will you give me this bracelet?" "It was my intention never to part with it," answered Sigmund. "I will give you another instead," said the King, "its inferior neither in beauty nor in weight." "I must not part with it," replied Sigmund, "for so I promised Earl Hakon when with

much earnest affection he gave it me; that promise I must keep. I thought the gift a gracious one, coming from an Earl who conferred many benefits on me." The King then said: "Let the donor appear to you as gracious as the gift is good; an evil fortune awaits you, for this bracelet will cause your death. I know whence it came, no less clearly than how you acquired it; and I asked you rather from a wish to keep trouble from my friends than from a desire to own the bracelet." The King's face was scarlet, and the conversation ceased; but never from that time onward was he as pleasant with Sigmund as he had been. Sigmund remained yet a while with the King, and afterwards, early in the summer, sailed to the Fareys. They separated on friendly terms, but Sigmund never saw the King again. He reached the Fareys and took up his abode on his estate in Skufey. But King Olaf's prophecy was afterwards fulfilled; for a man named Thorgrim the Bad, with the help of his two sons, murdered Sigmund Brestison, to get the bracelet that Hakon had given him. The murder took place at a spot named Sandwick in Sudrey, after Sigmund was quite exhausted with swimming. The story is told in the Saga of the Farey Islanders.

*Grim, King Olaf's marshal, is slain in Iceland by Sigurd.
The fate of Sigurd when he came into the power of
the King.*

208. There came a man one summer to Iceland whose name was Grim, an Icelander by birth, who had been abroad for many years. He belonged to King Olaf's body-guard, and at one time his place had been on the forecastle. He was both tall and strong. He stayed in Iceland during the winter, and in the following summer he rode to the General Assembly. At this time Thorkel Fringe, the son of Raudbiorn, lived at Swignasarf near Borgarfirth. Thorkel was present at the General Assembly, and in the procession to the Hill of Laws he happened to fall, and the crowd being great, he was trodden under foot. When he rose up again, he was very angry, and recognised Grim, whom we mentioned, as one who particularly had trodden upon him. In Thorkel's company at the Assembly

was one named Sigurd, a strong man of great athletic powers, and Thorkel bade him avenge his disgrace on Grim. Late in the evening, therefore, when Grim was undressed and ready for bed, Sigurd rushed into the booth unawares and attacked him, using weapons. Grim resisted boldly, but made only a poor defence, as he was weaponless, and was killed. A prosecution for manslaughter was instituted by Grim's kinsmen, and before the Assembly broke up, Sigurd was condemned to outlawry. Thorkel Fringe gave him assistance in the summer to go abroad, and he came in the autumn to Norway, passing under another name. When King Olaf learnt from the merchants who came from Iceland, that his former forecastle man, Grim, was killed, and that Grim's slayer was probably close by, he became exceedingly angry. With a troop of men he went straight to the merchant-ship to search for the man who had done the deed, and soon discovered him in spite of his concealment. Sigurd was seized and put in fetters. A crowded Assembly was then summoned, and Sigurd was brought before it. The King ordered him to be stripped, saying that the dogs should be set to worry him to death. Thereupon one of the King's body-guard came forward and spoke, saying: "Sire, the sentence of death passed on this man seems to us rather severe. Your followers offer you their council, and pray that you would let so valiant a man make atonement to you, and that you would take him, if it so please you, into your service in place of the slain man. He has the look of a warrior no less worthy than Grim." But the King answered: "The sentence that I passed on him he shall suffer, so that others may be afraid to kill my men without cause." When the guardsman perceived that his words had failed to move the King from his purpose, he went to find Bishop Sigurd and tell him of the matter. The Bishop sent him back to the King, with a request to give up the man. But the King said: "The Bishop is not able to judge of a man more clearly than I. Strip the man at once." This being done, a ring was formed round Sigurd, and the dogs were let loose upon him as he stood naked and bound. But the piercing flash of his eyes, it is said, had such an effect on the dogs, that they all turned from him, and not one was so savage that it dared attack him when he fixed his glance

on it. Then the King called up his keen dog Wigi, and stroking him, set him to attack the naked man. The dog was very reluctant; he stood up, however, and showing signs of anger flew at Sigurd, and with one bite tore open his side; then running back straight to the King, he lay down at his feet. And Sigurd, feeling the smart of the wound, gave a great spring, for his feet were loose, though his hands were tied, and jumping right over the ring of spectators, fell down dead. When the Bishop was told of it, he went and sternly reproved the King, who fell down truly repentant at his feet, and humbly sued for mercy, confessing, with tears, that by this horrible deed he had sinned greatly in the sight of God. And the Bishop, seeing the King's repentance, was ready on God's part to accept his reconciliation; nevertheless he set him to do penance openly for his deed.

King Olaf Christianises Halogaland.

209. During the spring, after the death of Eywind Cheekrift, King Olaf made ready his ships and men, himself taking the command of the *Crane*, a ship which he had built. When ready to start, he moved out to sea along the Frith with a large and well-equipped fleet, and sailed north, beyond Byrda, to Halogaland. Wherever he touched land he summoned an Assembly, and called upon the people to be baptized and accept the true Faith. No man had the boldness to speak against him, and the whole country became Christian wherever he went. King Olaf was entertained in Thiotta at the homestead of Harek, who was then baptized with all his household. Harek gave the King costly gifts, and became his man, receiving from the King large emoluments and the privileges of a baron. Henceforth intimacy and friendship existed between them as well as kinship. Harek of Thiotta was the son of Eywind the Plagiarist, and Eywind's father was Finn Skialg. The mother of Eywind the Plagiarist was Gunnhild, the daughter of Earl Halfdan and Ingibiorg, King Harold Fairhair's daughter. King Olaf was the son of King Tryggwi, who was the son of Olaf the son of Harold Fairhair.

*Raud the Strong and Thori Hart of Halogaland resist
King Olaf. The death of Thori.*

210. There was a wealthy and powerful yeoman named Raud who lived at the Godeys in Salpti, a frith of Halogaland. He kept a numerous household, and maintained his men in a noble fashion; for he was a mighty chief throughout the frith and over a large district in the north; and he had the support of a great company of Finns whenever he needed it. Raud was an ardent worshipper of the gods, completely devoted to witchcraft, and a close friend of one whom we have already mentioned, Thori Hart, chief man of Waga in the north. When these two great chiefs learnt that King Olaf was sailing from the south to Halogaland with a host of men, they gathered the people around them, called out ships, and got together a fine force. Raud had a large ship of war, the beak of which was a dragon's head all ornamented with gold. It had thirty benches for rowers, and there was room for more. Thori Hart also had a large ship. They sailed south with their force against King Olaf, keeping close to land, and when they met the King's fleet they began battle straightway. A great and hard fight took place, in which the troops of the heathen were soon thinned by slaughter, and their ships disabled. Then fear seized upon them and they fled. Raud rowed his dragon-ship out to sea, where he hoisted sail; through witchcraft and enchantments he always had a favourable wind wherever he wished to go. To speak briefly of his voyage, it may be said that he sailed north till he reached his home in the Godeys. Thori Hart and his force fled towards land and leapt off their ships. King Olaf and his men followed, and having leapt on shore, chased and slew them. The King himself was foremost in the pursuit, as was his wont in such tasks, and seeing Thori Hart, the fleetest of men, run away in front, he ran after him, followed by his dog Wigi. "Catch the Hart, Wigi," said the King, and the dog, running forward, soon overtook Thori, who then stopped. The King threw his halberd at him, and as Thori was giving the dog a thrust with his sword that wounded him severely, the halberd at the same

instant flew and pierced him under the arm, right through to the other side. Thus Thori lost his life. Wigi was borne wounded to the ships, where the King placed him under a man skilled in healing, and he recovered. King Olaf gave quarter to all who asked for it and were willing to accept the true Faith.

King Olaf captures Raud the Strong and puts him to death.

211. King Olaf sailed north with his force along the coast, making all the people Christian wherever he came. When he reached the frith of Salpti on his northern progress, he endeavoured to sail into it to visit Raud; but he met with gales and squalls. He lay to for a whole week; and while a continuous storm ever raged fiercely inside the frith, out at sea there was a fair wind blowing suitable for sailing north along the coast. The King therefore went as far north as Omd, where the people all accepted Christianity. He then turned south again, and reaching Salpti, was met by storm and sea-foam at the entrance of the frith. He waited several days, but the weather continued unchanged. Then he conferred with Bishop Sigurd, asking if he could suggest any plan of action; and the Bishop replied that he would try if God would put forth His strength to overcome this fiendish power. Having arrayed himself, therefore, in all his vestments, he went forward to the prow of the King's ship. Here he set up a crucifix, lighted wax candles, burnt incense, and after reading aloud the Gospel and many prayers besides, sprinkled all the ship with holy water. Then he ordered the men to take down the awnings and row into the frith; and to call out and bid the other ships row after them. At the pull of the oars the *Crane* went forward into the frith, and those on board perceived no wind against them. The line of the ship's wake remained steady as in a calm, and the spray raised by the oars on each side of the ship was so undisturbed that the hills could not be seen. One after the other the ships rowed on in the calm for the whole day; and the following night, just before dawn, they reached the Godeys. As they came in sight of Raud's homestead they beheld his great dragon-ship afloat close to land. King Olaf went with his men straight up to the house, and began an attack on the building in which Raud slept, and

broke it open. The King's men then rushed in, took Raud prisoner, and bound him; those of his men who were found inside were slain or made prisoners. They next went to the building in which his men-servants slept, and of these some were slain, others beaten or put into bonds. Raud was then brought before the King, who called upon him to submit to baptism. "If you can then behave well," said the King, "I will not deprive you of your possessions." But Raud cried out against it, and uttering many grievous blasphemies, said he would never believe in Christ. Whereupon the King became angry, and said that Raud should die the worst of deaths. He had him bound with his back against a beam, and a gag was placed between his teeth to keep his mouth open. A viper was then put to his mouth, but shrank back from entering, because Raud breathed hard against it. Then the King caused a hollow stalk of angelica, or a trumpet, as some say who tell the story, to be fixed in his mouth. In this stalk the viper was placed, and by means of a hot bar of iron, from the heat of which it shrank, it was driven into Raud's mouth, whence it passed through his breast to his heart, and forced its way through his left side. Thus Raud lost his life. King Olaf here acquired a great amount of wealth, in gold, silver, and other portable property, in weapons and valuable articles of many kinds. All Raud's followers who remained alive and were willing to accept the Faith were then baptized; those who were not willing were either slain or tortured. The King also took possession of Raud's dragon-ship, and steered it himself, because it was a much larger and finer vessel than the *Crane*. The prow ended in a dragon's head, the stern in the coils and tail of a dragon; both prow and stern, dragon's head and tail, were overlaid with gold. This ship the King named the *Serpent*, for the sail when hoisted represented a dragon's wings. It was the finest ship in the whole of Norway. The islands that Raud occupied are called Gilling and Hoering, and the whole group is called the Godeys. On the north, lying between them and the mainland, is the Godey current.

King Olaf's adventure with a man in a sculler.

212. After King Olaf had Christianised all the region round about the frith, he proceeded south, sailing close to land. Many

events happened on this voyage that have a place in stories; we are told that trolls and other evil beings scoffed at the King's men, yea, sometimes at the King himself. One day as they were on their voyage, they beheld a man in a sculler rowing landwards and making towards some rocks. As he sat in the boat he looked tall and broad-shouldered, and plied his oars vigorously. The King said to his men: "Put some spirit into your rowing; I want to come up with the tall man there in front, and see what sort of a youth he is." The tall man, seeing them quicken their stroke, did likewise. He pulled his oars sharply through the water, kept his shoulders down, and maintained his distance ahead. The King then urged his men to row still harder; ordering the oars to be brought into play until every bench on the *Serpent* was occupied. "Let two or three men," he said, "sit at every oar, and even so we shall need all your strength to overtake that fellow." They did, therefore, as the King bade them, and the *Serpent* began to gain on the boat. And now the boatman, observing the approach of his pursuers, was seen by the King to glance sharply around in all directions, and to look hard at the rocks as if measuring his distance from them. Putting forth his strength, he strove eagerly to keep in front; raising himself up as he pulled in his oars, and then sinking down into the hollow of the boat as he stretched forward. Nevertheless his distance ahead grew smaller, though very slowly. When the King thought the man was within hearing distance, he hailed him: "Stop there, you tall fellow; don't row away; we wish to speak with you." "Your treatment of all our friends," answered the boatman, "has never been such as to make me wish to speak with you; and I shall not wait for you. If we meet, the truth of the proverb will be seen: 'One man is no match for many.'" Then quoth he:—

"Far, far away is my bold grey-haired brother, mighty in thought and deed.
The dusky ship bears down upon my boat.
If we two sons of Hardrad, grey-haired men, were here together, we should
not flee.
O'er the foaming surf the *Serpent* glides."

"You would flee all the same," said the King, "though there

were two of you. Who are you?" "That is no business of yours," answered the man, and thus spoke :—

"On the sides of thy ship, the reindeer of the wind,
 Play sixty oars, for thee alone.
 A mightier prince on earth is scarcely seen.
 On my boat's sides there play in my grasp but one or two, to sweep the
 billows.
 Thus overpowered, I must yield."

"And yield you must now," said the King. "Though I yield," answered the man, "I am not to blame. Such a lot must needs befall an old fellow in face of so many young and gallant men; but for all that I shall never come into your power." Saying these words, he sprang up with a sudden start, flung away his oars, and upset the boat under him. In this way they separated, and the man was never seen again.

King Olaf meets with Thor. Conference of trolls overheard and reported to the King.

213. One day as King Olaf was sailing south along the coast, under a fair, light wind, there was a man standing on a rock who shouted to them and begged the favour of a passage towards the south of the country. King Olaf therefore steered the *Serpent* to the rock where the man stood, and he climbed on board. He was a young-looking man of tall stature, handsome, and he had a red beard. As soon as he came on board the dragon-ship he began jesting and wrestling with the King's men, who found his play rough whenever they tried their strength against him. He afforded much merriment, and the men amused themselves in bantering him and laughing at him. He in return made fun of the King's men, and laughed at them as being poor and weakly creatures. "You are not worthy," he said, "to serve so renowned a King and so fair a ship. This dragon-ship was valiantly manned when Raud the Strong owned it. He scarcely required the aid of such men as I am for the sake of their strength, but only for amusement and counsel, and in comparison with me you are but a feeble set." The King's men

asked if he had any stories to tell them, old or new; and he replied that there were few questions, in his opinion, which they could ask and he not answer. They took him, therefore, to the King, saying that he was a man of much knowledge. The King said to him, "Tell us, if you can, some tales of olden time." "I will begin, then, Sire," answered he, "with this land near which we are sailing. It was inhabited of yore by giants, who all chanced to come to a sudden end at one and the same time, except two, both women. Afterwards, when people came from the east to colonise the country, the two giant women lorded over them, and troubled them, straitening their condition. The evil lasted until the inhabitants resolved to call upon Redbeard for aid. So I grasped my Hammer, and slew both the giants. And the people have continued to call upon me for aid in time of need from that day, O King, until now that you have so greatly wasted all my friends in a way that merits vengeance." Having thus spoken, he looked over his shoulder at the King, and at the same instant, with a scornful grin, plunged overboard, swift as a bolt, into the deep, and was never seen again. Then the King said to his men: "Mark you how bold was the Fiend to come openly into our sight in broad day. We may thus see that it behoves Christians to be always on their guard against the wiles of the Evil Spirit, who is ever on the watch to entrap mankind both secretly and openly, and by his envious wickedness to bring to nought all men's good deeds. Whoever yields to his enticements and temptations, and falls by evil deeds completely into his power, him he takes captive and leads away to eternal torments. Wherefore we should always sign ourselves with the mark of victory, which is the holy Cross, in token that we belong to our God; for the sign of the Cross made with firm faith in Him is a very sure protection, and a defence both of body and soul against every foe visible or invisible. We were given to understand this clearly in Denmark, where we marked ourselves with that sign long before the time when we received holy baptism. And though devils have the boldness to tempt us openly, yet all the same they stand greatly in fear of Christians who put their trust in God and holy baptism. This has just been clearly made manifest, for the fiends that appeared to us to-day and the day

before yesterday, fled from our presence as soon as we found out who they were. Wherefore we must give manifold praise to our Lord Jesus Christ and His holy Cross unceasingly."

King Olaf then continued his voyage until he came to the district of Naumudale, where he stayed for a time with his force, having no longer a favourable wind south. Now rumours had reached the King's men that Naumudale was a greater haunt of trolls and other monsters than any other part of Norway; and indeed, after Earl Hakon's death, when King Olaf made Throntham a Christian land during his long winter residences in it, the trolls in Naumudale so greatly increased in number that the inhabitants could scarcely live there. Much curiosity was therefore felt by many of the King's men to know whether the rumours were based on truth or fable. There is a story that one night two of the King's body-guard left the ships and went on shore unobserved. After walking for a time in the darkness, they saw a fire burning in a cave, and hastening thereto, beheld several trolls seated around the fire conversing together. As they stopped in front of the cave's mouth, one of the trolls, who seemed to be chief of the whole band of foes, began thus to speak: "Do you know," said he, "that King Olaf Tryggwason has reached this land, and is close by with his force? If he stay here any length of time he will, in all likelihood, bring trouble upon us." The other fiends answered him; "We know far too well what grievous annoyance and ill-treatment he has inflicted on us since he came into this land. He leaves us no spot wherein to rest: some of our friends are slain; others have suffered a worse fate, for he has enticed them away from us by his wicked sophistries. He has driven us from our own haunts, and we know not if he will let us remain here undisturbed in this place of exile. Woe to us in our feebleness, that we can neither avenge on him our own disgraces nor our friends'! We must do what we can to lay waste the dwellings that lie nearest to us." Then the captain said, "Tell me in what struggles you have taken part." And one of the unclean spirits thus began to speak: "My home," he said, "was in Gaulardale, not far from Ladi, and Earl Hakon was my friend, making me excellent presents. When he was unworthily robbed of his kingdom and life, this stern man came as King in his stead. And one day as his body-guard were

practising their sports near my home, so that I could scarcely bear the noise and tumult that they made, I joined in their sports unobserved, and wrestled with one of them so effectually as to break his arm. The next day I broke the leg of a second; and there was no more sport for the injured men. The third day the King himself came and shared in the games, and I also joined in them again, intending to injure some man or other. They were all strangers to me, and I knew not one from another. However, I took hold of one with a tight grip; and he, seizing me in return, pressed his two arms so close against my sides that I could not have been in a worse plight if they had been formed of hot iron. With such strength did he squeeze me that I could scarce refrain from crying out; but at length I escaped from his grasp with much difficulty, greatly worsted in the encounter. Thereupon I abandoned my home, reluctant and unwilling, and came to this place." A second fiend then answered: "I must tell you about myself. I assumed the form of a handsome woman, and late one evening I entered the hall where King Olaf was holding a great feast. The guests had all drunk freely, and I held in my hand a fine horn full of liquor mixed with venom and many other baleful things, that I meant the King to drink. I was standing by the sideboard, which was supplied in a princely manner, when the King stretched out his hand towards me with a sign that I should wait upon him. I was delighted, as if I held his fate quite in my power, and went up to him, offering him my fine horn. He accepted it; but the drink that I had mixed for him with the poisonous venom in it he poured over me. Then lifting the horn, he brought it down on my head with a blow so heavy that I expect never to recover from the injury that he did me." Then a third unclean spirit also spoke. "Mine was a lot not unlike it," he said. "I took on myself the fair form of a gentlewoman elegantly dressed, and late one evening entered the room of King Olaf, where he sat barefoot tying on his linen breeks, while the Bishop was seated on one side of him. Having entered, I caused an itching in the sole of the King's foot. He beheld me standing where I was, handsome and well dressed, and called out, bidding me come and rub his foot, which I did, until he began to feel drowsy, and went to bed. Here I made the itching grow worse, and sitting down on the foot-board of the bed, rubbed his foot until both he

and the Bishop were fast asleep. Then reaching over to the King, I was about to destroy him with my powers of mischief, and inflict death on him, when he awoke suddenly, and struck me such a heavy blow on the head with a book that my skull was sore injured. Thus hurt, I fled away, and since that day I have never carried my head erect, or have been without pain." The King's men, having seen and heard these things, turned away and went back noiselessly to the ships, so as to awake no one; but in the morning they related the whole story to the King and his men. "What you say is quite true," replied the King, "and I can confirm it. After my foot was rubbed, I awoke the Bishop, and asked him to see if it had suffered any injury from the presence of the fiend that had come visibly into our room, deceiving our sight by its human form. When the Bishop came near and looked, he found on my foot a livid spot, made raw by venom. This spot, with the flesh and the blood, the Bishop caused to be excised, and though the wound was afterwards quite healed, the scar will be visible as long as I live. However, I forbid my men to leave the ships and go on shore in the night-time merely to gratify such useless and altogether needless curiosity." After these things King Olaf, accompanied by the Bishop and all the best of his troops, went over the whole of the neighbouring districts with crosses and relics. They sprinkled holy water over rocks and crags, dales and hills; and aided by holy prayers and God's help, they quite cleansed the country of wicked monsters and unclean spirits, and thus freed the whole people from the oppression and tyranny of their foes. Afterwards they returned to their ships and sailed south along the coast. It was autumn when they reached Throndham, and King Olaf sailed with his force up the Frith to Nidaros, where he made preparations to pass the winter.

Of King Harold Fairhair and Rognwald, Earl of More. Rognwald's son Rollaug settles in Iceland, and becomes the ancestor of Hall O' Side and his distinguished posterity.

214. King Harold Fairhair, having acquired the whole realm of Norway, paid a visit of state to Rognwald, Earl of More. At his

house he took a bath, and had his hair combed, which was then cut by Earl Rognwald. It had remained uncut for ten years, and the King was therefore called Harold Shockhead. But now the Earl gave him another surname, calling him Harold Fairhair, a surname declared to be peculiarly appropriate by all who beheld the abundance and the beauty of his hair. Some time afterwards King Harold led an expedition to the British Isles, and brought wide realms into subjection, as we have already mentioned. Before returning from the west, he bestowed the Orkneys and Shetland on Earl Rognwald as compensation for the death of Rognwald's son. Rognwald's brother Sigurd became Earl over the islands, and Earl Rognwald went back with King Harold to Norway, where he settled on his own Earldom. When he learnt of the death of his brother Sigurd, he sent his son Hallad to the Orkneys; but Hallad abdicated the Earldom, and returned home to his father. Rognwald then called his sons together and asked which of them would accept the Earldom of the Orkneys. Thori answered that he would leave the decision to his father, whether he should go into the west or not. "You answer well," said the Earl; "but you are a legitimate son, well fitted to be a chief, and you must hold rule here, and inherit after me." Then Rolf came forward and offered himself. "You are well fitted both in strength and acquirements," replied the Earl; "but I think there is an overbearing temper and a warlike ambition in you, too great to let you thus settle quietly down to rule so small a kingdom." Rollaug next asked if his father wished him to go to the islands. "You may not be Earl," was the reply; "you have no disposition for war. The path that you must follow leads rather to Iceland, I think; in that land you will be held in honour and be blest in your posterity. It is not your destiny to remain here." The Earl then sent his son Einar to the Orkneys. Rollaug went to King Harold, with whom he remained for a time, and made an excellent marriage. Afterwards, taking with him his wife and sons, he sailed to Iceland, which he reached near Horn in the east. Here he threw overboard the pillars of his high-seat which came to land in Hornafirth, but he himself was driven in a westerly direction along the coast. After a hard voyage, in which the ship fell short of water, he reached land at the cape in Leiru Bay, where he passed his first winter. Then having heard tidings of

his pillars, he sailed eastwards to find them, and passed his second winter under Ingolfssfell. Thence he proceeded east to Hornafirth, where he first fixed his abode under Skarsbreck; but afterwards he lived at Breidabolstead in Fellswerfi. Rollaug was a powerful chief, and kept up his friendship with King Harold, though he never left Iceland. King Harold sent him a good sword, an alehorn, and a gold bracelet weighing five ounces. The sword came afterwards into the possession of Kol, son of Hall O'Side, and the horn was seen by Kolskegg the Historian. The general opinion, looking at Rollaug's ancestry and descendants, regards him as the most distinguished of the original settlers in the Eastern Quarter of the island. He was the father of Osur Wedge, who married Groa, the daughter of Thord Illugason, and their daughter was Thordis, Hall O'Side's mother. Hall O'Side married Joreid, daughter of Thidrandi; their son was Thorstein, the father of Magnus, the father of Einar, the father of Bishop Magnus. Egil was another son of Hall O'Side; he was the father of Thorgerd, the mother of Bishop John, who was canonised. Thorward, a son of Hall O'Side, was the father of Thordis, the mother of Jorun, the mother of Priest Hall, who was the father of Gizur, the father of Bishop Magnus. Yngwild, a daughter of Hall O'Side, was the mother of Thorey, the mother of Priest Sœmund the Historian. Thorstein, son of Hall O'Side, was the father of Gudrid, the mother of Joreid, who was the mother of Priest Ari the Historian. Thorgerd, a daughter of Hall O'Side, was the mother of Yngwild, the mother of Liot, the father of Jarngerð, the mother of Walgerd, the mother of Bodwar, the father of Gudny, the mother of the Sturlusons.

Thorhall the Prophet settles in Iceland. Death of Thidrandi, Hall O'Side's son, foreshadowing the advent of Christianity.

215. Thorhall was a Northman, who came to Iceland in the days of Earl Hakon Sigurdson. He chose a settlement at Sylrœkiaros, and dwelt at Horgsland. He was a wise man of much foresight, and was called Thorhall the Prophet. At the time when he lived at Horgsland, Hall O'Side lived at Hof in Alptafirth, and there

was a very close friendship between them. Every summer when Hall O'Side rode to the Assembly he passed a night at Horgsland, and Thorhall was often invited east to Hof, where he made long visits. Hall's eldest son was named Thidrandi, a very handsome and promising man, and Hall loved him the most of all his sons. When Thidrandi was old enough he made voyages abroad, and wherever he went he was highly popular, for he was an accomplished athlete, gentle and cheerful with everybody. It happened one summer as Hall was returning from the Assembly that he invited his friend Thorhall to visit him, and Thorhall proceeded shortly afterwards to pay the visit. Hall welcomed him with the utmost gladness, as he always did, and Thorhall remained with him the rest of the summer, for Hall would not allow him to return home before the harvest feast was over. Thidrandi, who was then eighteen years old, returned from abroad that summer, landing at Berufirth. Thence he went home to his father, and every one was greatly delighted with him, praising his accomplishments, as they had often done on former occasions; but Thorhall the Prophet always remained silent when Thidrandi's praise was sounded most loudly. Hall inquired of him the reason of his silence; "Your opinion, Thorhall," he said, "I always consider noteworthy." Thorhall answered: "'Tis not because I dislike anything either in him or you; nor do I fail to see what others see, that he is a most remarkable man. My silence proceeds from another cause. Men praise him, and he deserves their praise for many reasons, though he esteems himself but lightly. Possibly their enjoyment of him will not last long; and your grief at the loss of so fine a son will be deep enough, though his accomplishments be not praised in your hearing by every one." As the summer drew to a close Thorhall grew very cheerless, and Hall asked the reason of his melancholy. "I look forward with apprehension to the approach of your harvest feast," answered Thorhall, "for I have a foreboding that a prophet will be slain at the banquet." "I can throw light on that," said the yeoman. "I have an ox ten years old that I call a prophet, because he is more intelligent than all the other cattle, and I am going to kill him for the harvest feast. You need not, therefore, be low-spirited, for I intend that this banquet, like the others that I have given, shall be an honour to you and my other friends." "It was no fear

about my life," said Thorhall, "that caused my dejection, but a foreboding of stranger and more weighty events which I may not at present declare." There is no need then to countermand the feast," said Hall. "'Twill avail nothing to do so," answered Thorhall; "whatever is purposed will come to pass." They made ready to celebrate the feast on the first days of winter; but the guests were few in number, for there blew a violent gale difficult to stand against. In the evening when they sat down to meat, Thorhall spoke, and said: "May I beg you to follow my advice. Let no one go out of the house to-night, for great harm may befall us if this request is disregarded. And whatever noises occur, let no attention be paid to them, for any answer is ominous of evil." Hall asked the attention of the company to Thorhall's words; "Because," said he, "they never fail, and it is easier to dress a whole limb than a broken one." Thidrandi busied himself in hospitable offices, gentle and courteous in these as in other matters, and at the time for sleep he gave up his own bed to the guests, and threw himself down on the seat nearest the end of the hall. When they were mostly fast asleep, a voice was heard at the door, but no one pretended to hear it. Three times was it heard, and then Thidrandi sprang up, saying: "What a great shame that we should all pretend to be asleep! Surely 'tis the arrival of guests." He took his sword in his hand and went out; but seeing no one, he supposed that some of the guests, who had ridden on ahead to the house, had turned back to meet others coming on behind. Then he went close to the wood-stack and heard the noise of horses' feet on the paddock as if from the north, and beheld nine women all dressed in black and holding drawn swords. From the south, too, he heard the noise of horses' feet on the paddock, and beheld nine women all dressed in white and riding on white horses. Then he attempted to turn into the house to tell others of the sight; but before he could carry out his wish the women in black fell upon him, and he defended himself manfully. Long afterwards Thorhall awoke and asked if Thidrandi were up; receiving no answer, he said, "It is too late." Then they went out; the night was frosty and moonlight, and they found Thidrandi lying wounded on the ground. He was carried in, and as they talked with him he told them all that he had seen. At daybreak of the same morning he died, and he was buried in a cairn, with heathen rites. Inquiries

were then made about people who had come and gone, but no one expected to find that Thidrandi had enemies. Hall asked Thorhall what could be the meaning of the strange occurrence. "I know not," answered Thorhall; "but I imagine those women were no other than the ghostly wraiths of your kinsmen. A change is coming over the land, I think, and our religion will give place to a better one. Those dark goddesses of yours, associated with the present faith, doubtless knew of the coming change, and that you would become in their sight as cast-off kinsmen. Displeased, I think, at not first receiving tribute from you, they have taken Thidrandi to themselves. The more excellent goddesses wished doubtless to aid him, but as yet were unable. You and your kinsmen will enjoy their aid when you accept the unknown religion which they foreshadow and with which they are associated." This event, and many others similar, did indeed foreshadow, as Thorhall said, the joyful time that followed, when Almighty God deigned with merciful eyes to look upon the inhabitants of Iceland, and to free the people, by His messengers, from the long thralldom in which the Fiend had held them; that He might henceforth bring all who serve Him faithfully and steadfastly, with good works, into the everlasting inheritance promised to His adopted children. Moreover, the Enemy of the whole human race no less clearly showed in such events, and many others that appear in story, how unwillingly he relinquished his grasp upon his prey, the people that he had held captive through all past time in the bonds of error, worshipping his cursed false gods. For he whetted his fierce anger by such attacks on those who were in his power, knowing that his disgrace was near at hand in the merited loss of his prey.

Hall felt the loss of his son Thidrandi so deeply that he could no longer bear to live at Hof, but removed his home to Thwattay. Here Thorhall the Prophet happened once to be staying, being invited by Hall to a banquet. Hall slept in a room furnished with a lock, and Thorhall occupied the second bed in it; there was a window in the roof. One morning when they were both awake, Thorhall smiled. "What are you now smiling at?" asked Hall. "I am smiling," answered Thorhall, "to see so many hills laid open, and their inhabitants, small and great, packing up their baggage for a change of abode." Not long afterwards occurred the events which we must now relate.

Thangbrand reaches Iceland. He baptizes Hall O'Side, preaches the Gospel at the General Assembly, and slays the poet Weterlid. His adventure with a bearsark, and return to Norway.

216. King Olaf Tryggwason had ruled two years over Norway, when he sent Priest Thangbrand to Iceland. His ship came to land at Sel Bay in the Northern Alptafirth. But when the men of the district learnt that he and his company were Christians, they would neither speak with them nor direct them to a haven; and the householders would not show them any kindness or afford them help. At that time Hall O'Side lived at Thwattay. He had made a journey north to Flotsdale on necessary business, and as he was returning south he was met by Thangbrand, who accosted him and greeted him becomingly. He then told Hall the reason of his coming to Iceland, and conveyed to him at the same time King Olaf's request, "that if Thangbrand landed in the Eastern Quarter, Hall would afford him whatever protection he might need." Thangbrand then asked Hall to direct his ship to a haven, and give him help in other needful matters. King Olaf's message and Thangbrand's speech were received kindly and favourably by Hall, who at once sent men to bring the ship into Leiru Bay in the Southern Alptafirth, where it was beached at a spot afterwards known as Thangbrand's haven or shed. Hall removed the whole of the cargo into the field surrounding his own house, where he erected a booth, in which the crew stayed during the winter. In this booth Thangbrand sang Mass, and performed divine service. Hall was well disposed to Thangbrand and his men, giving them all they needed, and passing much time with them in their booth. In the autumn, on the eve of the great festival of Michaelmas, it happened that Thangbrand's men left off work in the afternoon; and the yeoman Hall, being present, inquired the reason. "The day after this day," answered Thangbrand, "we keep holy; it is a high festival in honour of St. Michael, the archangel of God." "Who was Michael, in himself?" asked Hall, "and what is he like?" "Michael was not a man," answered Thangbrand, "but a spirit, ordained by Almighty God to be chief of the other angels,

whom He has appointed to war against the Devil and his fiendish messengers, and to defend all true-believing Christian folk against the harmful shafts of unclean spirits. To the archangel Michael in particular, God has given power over the souls of Christian men when they depart this life, that he may receive them and conduct them to the sublime repose of Paradise, the abode of unspeakable joy and gladness, of honour, happiness, and every blessing in abundance; where there is no death, neither sorrow nor sickness, neither grief nor misery, but unending health and eternal life. Men who have served their Creator in righteousness and pureness of living, there join the angels in God's service. In beauty and brightness the angels surpass the light of the sun; their odour transcends all sweetness; their swiftness, power, and might are greater than the thought of man can conceive; and the innumerable multitude of them is divided into nine orders for the appointed service of God. To some of them is given the charge and authority to oppose and crush all the power of evil-disposed spirits that lie in wait unceasingly, desiring to harm mankind. Others avert from men diseases, bodily harm, and whatever may cause injury, and instead thereof they bestow perfect health and all that is necessary to mortal men's prosperity. Others stand continually in the presence of their Creator. Yet of all alike is it the general duty and occupation to praise Almighty God unceasingly and unspeakably, and delight Him with harmonious voices, always admiring His beauty, and desiring evermore to look upon His face." After Thangbrand with eloquent speech had uttered these and other such words, Hall replied: "Though I am but a man, I seem dimly to perceive and understand how exceeding glorious He must be whom such noble angels serve." And Thangbrand answered: "Of a truth the Holy Spirit has inspired you with this understanding, though you are a heathen." When the yeoman Hall sat down to meat with his men in the evening, he said to them: "Thangbrand and his company hold high festival on the coming morn, in honour of the one God whom he serves. You shall have leisure to keep the day holy with them. They will allow us to attend, to see the rites of their religion and to hear the service." The next morning after Hall was dressed he went to the booth with the men of his household. Standing outside, they heard the bells ringing, and listened to the sweet voices of the choristers whom they now heard

for the first time. Great was their astonishment; but it increased when Mass was sung; when they saw the clerks dressed in goodly vestments, and the candles shining with a beautiful light; when they smelt the exceeding sweetness of the incense. After Hall returned to his house he asked his men what they thought of the rites of the Christians, and they replied that all which they had seen and heard of the religion and the service seemed very fine and beautiful. Priest Thangbrand frequently appealed to Hall, urging him to adopt the practice of the Christian Faith; and Hall on one occasion made the following answer: "I have with me, as it happens, at the present time, two very old women, worn out and infirm, bedridden and unable of themselves to rise. You have my leave to baptize them; and if after baptism they are able to move themselves ever so little, or are somewhat less infirm than before, instead of growing worse by being moved and placed in the water, I shall know that great power attends the Christian religion, and both I and all my household will receive baptism." Then Hall urged the old women to accept the Faith preached by Thangbrand; and after they had confessed their belief in the Trinity, in response to the threefold inquiry of the priest, and had also in due form requested baptism, they were baptized by Priest Thangbrand in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and were then clothed in white garments. The following day, when Hall, the master of the house, came and inquired how they felt, they both at once answered, and said: "We two feel very well, for though it is natural to old age that our limbs should be weak, the sickness and pain which long oppressed and troubled us have altogether disappeared, being replaced by perfect comfort and bodily health. Our joints are all supple, and our limbs serve us with ease, performing their parts as if we were young once more. Fear and dread have left us, together with all weariness of life, and we have gained joy and gladness with a true hope of eternal happiness and future bliss." This answer rejoiced the yeoman, and he promised to accept the true Faith. He was baptized and all his household on the Saturday before Easter, in his own little brook, to which Priest Thangbrand gave the name of Thwattay, the name by which the homestead has since been known. Priest Thangbrand accompanied Hall to the General

Assembly in the summer; and when on their journey south they arrived at Skogasweit, the heathen made a bargain with Hedin O'Charms, a man most famous throughout Iceland for witchcraft, that by his sorceries he should cause Priest Thangbrand to sink down alive into the earth. Hall and Thangbrand passed the night at Kirkby. Here abode Surt, the son of Asbiorn, the son of Thorstein, the son of Ketil the Simpleton; all of whom were Christians, and one after the other had dwelt at Kirkby, a homestead where no heathen man could live. On the day when Hall and Thangbrand rode from Kirkby, the ground opened suddenly under Thangbrand, and his horse sank into the cleft; he himself sprang off the horse's back, and escaped by God's aid and the help of his companions. Thangbrand arrived at the Assembly, where he converted to the true Faith many who had come from the South Quarter, and from the counties of Eyafirth Quarter in the North. The latter converts invited him to visit them, and in the summer he went north to Oxarfirth, where he baptized many in the brook near Skinnastead, afterwards known as Thangbrand's Brook. At Mywater he baptized men in Thangbrand's Pool; but through the influence of the Eyafirth people he could not go further west than Skialfandifleet. The same summer Thangbrand, aided by Gudleif, the son of Ari, the son of Mar, slew the poet Weterlid in Fljotslid, because of a lampoon and blasphemy. Touching this manslaughter the following verse was composed [referring to Gudleif]:—

“The wielder of the sword, foe of rust on shields,
Bore in the south the weapons of the Balder of the prayer-house cushion.
Bold in fight, the reformer of religion
Let the death-hammer then ring
On the anvil-head of Weterlid the bard.”

Another man also composed a lampoon on Thangbrand and Gudleif. He was called Thorwald the Ailing, and lived at Heywick in Grimsness. He sent the following verse to Ulf Uggason:—

“A message straight I'll send to Uggi's son,
Ulf, Ygg's protecting hide;
Not shy am I with one that uses arms of steel.
Let him headlong drive the Powers' reviler,
God's craven wolf, the giant's steed.
The other I will see to.”

Such were his lines, and he composed many others more violent. Ulf recited the following answer :—

“Though sea’s explorer bid,
I’ll not accept the winged message from the mouth
Of the Hardbard of divine mead ;
’Tis not for me to take the fly of him that delights in ships,
Great harm I shun ; ill plans are afoot.”

Thereupon Thangbrand and Gudleif slew Thorwald the Ailing at Hestbrook. And Thangbrand afterwards proceeded east to his ship, which he prepared for a voyage abroad ; setting sail as soon as he was ready to start. He saw that his success had been small in preaching the Gospel ; for those who willingly and humbly accepted God’s message and received holy baptism were few in number compared with those who set themselves against Christianity with a downright evil will, seeking at all costs to crush it. When he had sailed a short distance from land, he was met by contrary winds and gales which drove him back to Iceland, and he landed in Borgarfirth, a short distance from the Whitay. At that time Gisur the White dwelt at Skalholt. He was the son of Teit, the son of Ketilbiorn ; and when he learnt that Thangbrand was driven back, he invited him to his house, and Thangbrand abode at Skalholt during the winter. Meanwhile his ship was exposed to a gale which somewhat injured it, and Steinunn, the mother of the poet Ref, composed a verse on the disaster :—

“Far from her resting-place has Thor removed
Thangbrand’s ship, the beast of Thummil.
He shook and beat her sides, and dashed her to the ground.
No longer fit for sea, lie the snow-skates of Atal’s plain.
The ship is left in bits by the storm that Thor has sent.”

And again another :—

“The Feller of Mella’s kin completely crushed
The Bell-warden’s ship, bison of the sea-mew’s couch.
The gods wrecked the hawk of the strand.
Christ helped not when the oar-pulled horse was swamped.
Little guard, methinks, was kept by God, o’er Gylfi’s reindeer.”

Thangbrand repaired the ship and called her *Jarnmeis*, whence

the neighbouring headland was called Jarnmeishead. In the spring he went west to Breidafirth and over to Bardastrand, where he abode for a while with Gest Oddleifson, and was challenged by a foreign bearsark to fight a wager of battle. Thangbrand replied that he was quite ready for the fight. "You will not dare to have a duel with me," said the bearsark, "when you see the feats I can perform." "What are they?" inquired Thangbrand. "I pass with bare feet through burning fire," he answered; "and unprotected by armour I fall on my sword's point, and it injures me not." "God shall decide," said Thangbrand. Then a great fire was kindled, and after Thangbrand had hallowed it, the bearsark fearlessly walked into it, and had his feet much burnt. Then he fell upon his sword, and his death instantly followed, for Thangbrand had made the sign of the Cross over the sword's point. The bearsark's death was a source of joy not only to the Christians, but equally so to the heathen; for he had exercised great tyranny and oppression over them. Gest then became a catechumen, and likewise others in the west who were Gest's friends. After these things Thangbrand went on board his ship, the *Jarnmeis*, and sailed abroad in the summer. He had a prosperous voyage, and having reached Throntham, steered his ship within the Frith to Nidaros.

Certain Icelanders, among whom are Hialti Skeggison and Gisur the White, visit Norway. The cause of Hialti's banishment from Iceland.

217. Before proceeding further we must speak of the Icelanders who left Iceland this summer and arrived at Nidaros shortly before King Olaf returned thither from Halogaland. One of them was Halldor, the son of Gudmund the Mighty of Maderwall; another was Kolbein, son of Thord Frey's priest, and brother of Flosi of the Burning; a third was Swerting, son of Runolf the Temple-chief. Thorarin Nefiofson was also there in command of a ship. They were all heathens, as were many others who came with them, both great and small. These men who have been mentioned, endeavoured with their shipmates to sail away as soon as King Olaf came south from Halogaland,

because they were told that the King forced every man to become Christian. As soon as the King entered the town they sailed out of the river and along the Frith towards the sea. But meeting straightway with contrary winds, they were driven back, and took shelter under the island of Nidarholm. Word was brought to King Olaf that Icelanders, all heathen men, lay at anchor in several ships under shelter of the island, anxious to avoid meeting with him. The King immediately sent and forbade their departure, commanding them at the same time to return to the town; which command they obeyed, but without removing their goods from the ships.

At that time there arrived from Iceland two distinguished worthy men who had become Christian through the labours of Priest Thangbrand; these were Gisur the White and Hialti Skeggison of Thiorsaydale. Hialti had married Wilborg, Gisur's daughter, and his journey to Norway was the result of a squib which he had thrown off during the General Assembly in the summer:—

“To deride the gods is not my wish.
A dog, methinks, is Freya. One of the twain,
Odin or Freya, a dog will ever be.”

The first person who made a legal matter of this squib was Runolf the Temple-chief, the son of Ulf, the son of Jorund. He declared it to be blasphemy, and pressed the case in order to have Hialti outlawed. In this business, which was no easy one, he displayed his zeal and power, rather than his justice. He was unable to hold a Court on account of Hialti's popularity, until he fixed it on the bridge over the Oxaray, and had the two ends of the bridge defended by armed men. Even then he was unable to find a foreman who would sum up his side of the case, until Thorbiorn, the son of Thorkel, of Goddales, took his seat at the Court for the purpose. Hialti was sentenced by the Court, for blasphemy of the gods, to the penalty of the Lesser Outlawry. The same summer he made preparations to go abroad on a ship which was built for him at his home in Thiorsaydale. When he was ready for the voyage he sailed along the Western Rangay to the sea; and as the ship went down the stream, a tall man, whom they knew not, ran along the bank carrying a shield and

spear. Hialti suspected that the man had been sent after him, and called to him, saying, "You tall fellow, there is a wisp of straw in your bosom where the heart should be." Whereupon the man flung his spear at Hialti with such force that it went through the shield that Hialti held. The man was caught, and when Hialti asked who he was, and who had sent him on that business, he answered: "My name is Narfi. I was sent by Runolf the Temple-chief to release myself from outlawry by killing you." "I will show you a better way of freeing yourself from outlawry," said Hialti; "come abroad with me and be my attendant." To this course the man assented. Gisur and Hialti then sailed abroad, and at Nidaros they found King Olaf, who welcomed them gladly as soon as he knew that they were Christians.

Thangbrand tells King Olaf the result of his labours in Iceland. The noble conduct of Hialti and Gisur.

218. Shortly afterwards, Thangbrand, lately arrived from Iceland, came to King Olaf and told him of the bad reception that he had met with from the Icelanders. "Some of them," he said, "lampooned me; others would have slain me; and at last I was made an outlaw at the General Assembly. The people of that country, with few exceptions, will of a surety never accept the Faith." On hearing this complaint from Thangbrand, the King fell into a furious rage, and instantly called an Assembly, to which he summoned all the Icelanders in the town or on board ship. Then he gave orders to seize, plunder, maim, or slay all of them that were heathen. But the Icelandic chiefs Kiartan Olafson, Gisur, Hialti, and others that were Christians, went into the King's presence and begged him to give the Icelanders peace. "Do not, Sire King," they said, "go against your own words. You said that however greatly a man provoked you to anger, you would forgive him if he consented to be baptized and leave off heathen worship. The Icelanders who are here are all willing to accept the true Faith and be baptized, and we shall find a way for the introduction of Christianity into Iceland. There are many powerful Icelanders who have sons at this time in

Norway, and for their sons' sake they will greatly help its promotion. In dealing with a stern heathen people, it behoves us to employ wise methods; to use meekness and forbearance, which are often more effectual than sternness and vehemence in proportion as opponents are bolder and harder. Thangbrand made few friends in Iceland; but you are not ignorant, Sire, how he behaved aforetime when he was with you, and his temper there was the same as here. He acted harshly and arrogantly, slaying those who displeased him; such conduct people did not endure." After Gisur and Hialti had ended their long and eloquent speech, the King spoke, and asked: "Who are these well-spoken men, and of what family do they come?" And Gisur replied: "Hialti is the son of Skeggi, the son of Thorgeir, the son of Eilif, the son of Ketil One-handed; and his mother is Thorgerd, the daughter of Lif, the daughter of Earl Turf-Einar, who was the son of Rognwald, Earl of More. And I," he continued, "am the son of Teit, the son of Ketilbiorn, the son of Ketil, a mighty man of Naumudale. Ketilbiorn's mother was Æsa, the daughter of Earl Hakon, son of Griotgard; the mother of my father Teit was Helga, the daughter of Thord Skeggi, the son of Rapp, the son of Biorn the Ungartered, the son of Wether-Grim. My mother was Alof, daughter of Bodwar, son of Wicking-Kari; which Bodwar, O King, was a brother of Eric of Ofrustead, your grandfather. It was on account of my kinship with you, O King, that I invited Thangbrand to my house when he was hated by others." As soon as the King knew how close akin he was to them, he was greatly pleased, and said: "You two kinsmen shall be made welcome by us this winter, and if you promise your aid and help so that my desire for the furtherance of Christianity in Iceland may be accomplished, then all these Icelanders shall go free, so far as we are concerned, except the four whom you regard as the most honourable among them. These I shall hold as hostages until the Christian religion is either established by law in Iceland, or else absolutely rejected. One that I select is Kiartan Olafson, who has lived a while with us here, a brave and gallant man, as we know; then Halldor Gudmundson; Kolbein, son of Thord Frey's priest; and Swerting Runolfson. The fathers and kinsmen of these men have the decision greatly in their own hands, whether I send them home with honour or

have them slain." Hialti and Gisur then answered: "We gladly make the promise that you ask of us, so that the Icelanders may go free; and we especially request that you treat kindly the men whom you have selected as hostages." "What is your interest in these men," asked the King, "that you plead so earnestly for them? Is it kinship or marriage?" Whereupon a Northman very foolishly put himself forward to answer the King, and said: "I was at the General Assembly of the Icelanders last summer, when Runolf, the father of this man Swerting, outlawed Hialti." Then Thangbrand spoke, and after sharply bidding the man hold his tongue, said: "Do well, O King, to Hialti and Gisur. They are men who have often shown that they reward with kindness those who do them ill. Hialti showed it even at the moment of leaving Iceland, for he took as his companion on the voyage hither, the man that was sent to slay him and that made an attempt upon him." Afterwards those of the Icelanders who were unbaptized, all received baptism. Gisur and Hialti passed the winter with King Olaf in the greatest honour, enjoying the intimacy of the King; the hostages also remained with the King in comfort during the winter.

Hallfred's return to King Olaf; and the death of his wife Ingibiorg.

219. We must now return to the story of Hallfred the Troublesome Poet. After living two years in Gautland, where he married a heathen woman, he went to visit the Swedish King Olaf, in honour of whom he had composed a eulogistic poem. This poem he recited before the King, who rewarded him with excellent gifts. The second winter that Hallfred was in Gautland, King Olaf appeared to him one night in a dream. He looked angry as he spoke, and said: "You do wrong to cast away so completely your Christian belief. You had better pay me a visit with your household, and renew your faith." When Hallfred awoke he sighed deeply. "What have you dreamt?" asked Ingibiorg. And Hallfred told her of the vision, and said: "What think you? Would you be willing to go with me and visit King Olaf? I owe you a return for your great kindness to me, and I should best

repay you by bringing you to the true Faith and to salvation." "I fully expected," she answered, "that you would be drawn thither. Certainly I will go with you, for I perceive the superiority of that religion over the one that we have held hitherto." They had one son, a promising boy, named Audgisl, who was a year old, and Ingibjorg was again with child. Having made their preparations in the spring, they departed from the east, taking Audgisl with them; and without stopping anywhere on the journey north, they arrived in Throntham during autumn, and went to see King Olaf. The King received Hallfred with a hearty welcome, though he censured him somewhat for having so long lived among the heathen, and for having married a heathen wife. He caused a priest to set him a penance, and Hallfred gladly submitted to all that was enjoined him. In a short time his wife Ingibjorg gave birth to a boy, whom Hallfred named after himself; and she was then baptized, together with the two boys. Afterwards the King said to Hallfred: "You have yet a further amends to make to God, because you so far forsook your faith. I will have you compose now a poem on the Creation, as a ransom for your soul, and not use for evil purposes only the ability that God has given you." Hallfred expressed his eagerness, in this matter as in all others, gladly to do his utmost in obeying the will of King Olaf. He passed the winter with the King in high respect, and began his poem, a very fine one, on the Creation. His wife Ingibjorg died during the winter, and her loss was a very great affliction to Hallfred.

Of Eric the Red and the settlement of Greenland.

220. There was a man named Thorwald, the son of Aswald, the son of Ulf, the son of Oxna-Thori. He and his son Eric the Red left Jadar, because of homicides, and went to Iceland, many portions of which were already occupied. They first fixed their abode at Dranga in Hornstrand, and here Thorwald died. Eric then married Thorhild, daughter of Jorund Atlason and Thorbjorg Shipbreast, who at the time of Thorhild's marriage was the wife of Thorbiorn of Haukadale. Leif was a son of Eric and Thorhild. Eric then removed from the north, and set up house at Ericstead

near Watshorn; but after the manslaughter of Eyolf Sour and Duelling-Rafn he was banished from Haukadale. Going west to Breidafirth, he settled at Ericstead in Oxney. While he abode there he lent the pillars of his high-seat to Thorgest of Breidabolstead, but could not get them back when he claimed them. Hence arose quarrels and fights between Eric and Thorgest, of which Eric's Saga tells. In the consequent lawsuits Eric had the support of Styr Thorgrimson, Eyolf of Swiney, Thorbrand of Alptafirth, and Thorbiorn Wifilson; while Thorgest's part was upheld by the sons of Thord Gelli and Thorgeir of Hitardale. Eric was outlawed by the Assembly at Thorsness, and he fitted out his ship in Eric's Bay for a voyage. When he was ready to sail, Styr and his other supporters accompanied him beyond the islands. He told them that he intended to go in search of the land seen by Gunnbiorn, son of Ulf Crow, who, when driven by a storm past Iceland, had discovered Gunnbiorn's Skerry. Eric said that he would revisit his friends if he were successful in his search. He sailed past Snœfellsness and came to the land, reaching it at a spot which he named Mid-Glacier, now known as Blaserk. Thence he sailed south by the coast to look for habitable districts. He passed the first winter in Ericsey, near the middle of the Eastern Settlement. The following spring he sailed to Ericsfirth, where he fixed his abode. In the summer he sailed to the Western Settlement, and passed his second winter at Ericsholm near Wharfpeak. The third summer he sailed north as far as Snœfell and into Rafnsfirth, there reaching, so he said, the head of Ericsfirth. Then he turned back and passed the third winter in Ericsey, which is at the entrance of Ericsfirth. The following summer he sailed to Iceland, steering his ship into Breidafirth. The land which he had discovered he called Greenland; "For," said he, "people will be much more eager to migrate thither if the land has a tempting name." After remaining in Iceland during the winter, he returned in the following summer to colonise Greenland, and settled at Brattalid in Ericsfirth. Historians say that in the course of the summer in which Eric the Red went forth to colonise Greenland, five-and-twenty ships set sail thither from Breidafirth and Borgarfirth. Fourteen of these arrived at their destination; others were driven back, and some were lost. This colonisation

took place the same summer that Bishop Frederick and Thorwald Kodranson sailed away from Iceland, fifteen years before Christianity was by law established there.

Eric's son Leif sails to Norway, and is there baptized.

221. Fourteen years after the colonisation of Greenland by Eric the Red, Leif, the son of Eric, sailed from Greenland to Norway. He reached Throntham in the autumn, after King Olaf Tryggwason's return from his northern voyage to Halogaland. Leif steered his ship up the Frith to Nidaros, and went straightway to see King Olaf, who preached the Faith to him, as he did to other heathen men that came to visit him. The King had an easy task with Leif, who was then baptized with all his shipmates, and stayed with the King in comfort during the winter.

*Invasion of Norway by King Gudrod, son of Eric Bloodaxe.
The death of Gudrod.*

222. King Gudrod, son of Eric Bloodaxe and Gunnhild, lived the life of a freebooter in the British Isles after he fled from Norway to avoid Earl Hakon. But during the summer of which we have been speaking, King Olaf Tryggwason having now reigned four years in Norway, Gudrod sailed thither from England with several ships of war. And when he was come near Norway he turned his course south in the direction of the coast line, hoping the more easily to escape a meeting with King Olaf. Then he sailed east and to the Wick, and as soon as he touched land he began to plunder the people and bring them into subjection, claiming to be received as their King. The inhabitants of the country, seeing the great warlike host brought against them, begged for a truce and peace, offering to despatch a summons over the land to call together an Assembly. "They would rather," they said, "accept him than suffer his hostile force, and would summon a full Assembly to choose him King." A long delay was demanded, that the summons to meet might be carried over the whole of the Wick. The King therefore

called upon them to contribute food in the meanwhile; but the yeomen chose rather to entertain him at their houses during the necessary interval while the summoning of the Assembly was in progress. King Gudrod accepted their choice, and with a portion of his force went on circuit through the country, leaving the remainder to guard the ships. Now, whenever King Olaf was in the north of the land, he left his brothers-in-law, the brothers Thorgeir and Hyrning, to bear rule on his behalf over all the Wick district. To them, therefore, the yeomen sent a message in much less time than was needed to summon the Assembly, telling of King Gudrod's plundering raid, and the terms they had made with him. As soon as the brothers received the tidings, they sent out an arrow, the summons to war, by four ways, and having collected a force from all the neighbouring districts, they took ship and sailed north into the Wick. Coming one night with their force to the house where King Gudrod was receiving entertainment, they made an assault on it both with fire and with arms, and slew the King, together with most of his men. Thence they went against those who had been left to guard the ships. Some of them they slew; others escaped, and fled far away. All the sons of Eric and Gunnhild were now dead. And when King Olaf received the tidings, he was well pleased with what had been done, and thanked his brothers-in-law for the daring and prowess which they had shown.

The building of the Long Serpent.

223. In the winter which followed King Olaf's return from Halogaland he had a ship built under the cliffs of Ladi. She was much larger than other ships of the time in Norway, and the stocks on which she was built may still be seen. The designer of the ship's hull was a man named Thorberg, son of Skaffhogg. He was head workman, and directed the work at first; but many others were engaged in it, felling the trees, shaping them, forging the nails, bringing up the wood, and whatever else was needed. Everything was done with elaborate pains; the ship was both long and broad, the sides were high, and the timbers large. When the men were raising the bulwarks,

Thorberg was obliged to go home to his house on necessary business, which delayed him for a long time. On his return he found the bulwarks completed; and the same evening the King, taking Thorberg with him, went to view the ship and examine its form; and there was a unanimous opinion among all who looked upon her that a ship of war so large and fine had never been seen; and the King then returned to the town. Early next morning he went again to the ship, and Thorberg with him. The workmen were there before them, and were all standing around doing nothing. The King inquired the cause, and they told him that the ship was spoilt; that some one had gone with an axe from prow to castle and marked the upper part of the ship's side with notch after notch. The King went up to the ship, and seeing the marks, declared instantly with an oath that if he knew who had thus spoilt the ship in envy, he would slay the man. "And whoever can tell me of him," said he, "will have many good things from me." "I shall be able to tell you, Sire," said Thorberg, "who has done the deed." And the King replied, "No other man rouses in me more hope than you, that he will fortunately find out and tell me who did it." "I must tell you, Sire," answered Thorberg, "that I did it." "Then you shall make amends," said the King, "by restoring the ship to as fine a condition as before, if not finer. Your life depends on your work." Thorberg then went up to the ship and shaped her side until all the notches had disappeared. This being done, the King and the other beholders all agreed that the ship was now much handsomer on the side that had been notched. He therefore bade Thorberg make both sides alike, and thanked him warmly for his work. Thorberg was now head workman on the ship until she was quite finished. She was a dragon-ship, made after the model of the one that King Olaf had brought from Halogaland, but very much larger and more carefully built in all respects. The King named this dragon-ship the *Long Serpent*, and the other one the *Short Serpent*. The *Long Serpent* had thirty-four benches, each for two oars. The head and coils of the dragon's tail were all ornamented with gold, and the sides were as high as those of sea-going ships. The *Long Serpent* was the finest ship built in Norway, and the most costly.

Winter at Nidaros and the events that occurred.

224. King Olaf and Queen Thyri abode at Nidaros the winter after the King Christianised Halogaland. In the previous summer Queen Thyri had given birth to a boy, the son of King Olaf. He was a fine, promising child, and was called Harold, after his mother's father. The King and Queen loved him greatly, hopefully imagining that he would grow up to be his father's heir and rule after him; but he did not live a full year from the time of his birth, and his loss greatly affected them both. There were several Icelanders with the King this winter, as we have already mentioned, and many other honourable persons. Ingibiorg, the daughter of Tryggwi, and sister of King Olaf, was at this time with the Court. She was a handsome woman, gentle and agreeable to all, with a strong will and a noble disposition; and she was highly popular. She was very friendly to all the Icelanders at Nidaros; but Kiartan Olafson was the most intimate with her, for he had stayed with the King longer than the others, and he took great delight in frequent conversations with her, for she was discreet and well-spoken. King Olaf was always cheerful and pleasant with his men, and whenever he was visited by persons who had come from Denmark or Sweden, he made many inquiries touching the manners and princely qualities of the great men of the neighbouring lands. Hallfred the Troublesome Poet had arrived in the summer from Gautland in the east, and had seen Earl Rognwald Ulfson, who had lately obtained the government of West Gautland. Ulf, the father of Earl Rognwald, was brother to Sigrid the Proud, so that King Olaf the Swede and Earl Rognwald were first cousins. Hallfred spoke much of the Earl to King Olaf Tryggwason, saying that he was a valiant chief, fitted to rule, generous, noble-minded, and gracious to his friends. He said also that the Earl was much inclined to be friendly with King Olaf of Norway, and had spoken to him of his intention to propose for the hand of Ingibiorg, Tryggwi's daughter. In the winter, messengers sent by Rognwald arrived from Gautland in the east, and came north to King Olaf at Nidaros. In the King's presence they

declared the Earl's message, and it was exactly such as Hallfred had already said; namely, that the Earl wished to become a fast friend to King Olaf, and sought relationship with him by proposing to marry his sister Ingibiorg. Clear tokens of the truthfulness of their message were then shown by the messengers to the King, who heartily welcomed the proposals which they had brought, but said that Ingibiorg herself must have the chief voice in the question of her marriage. Then the King spoke of the marriage to his sister, and asked what she thought of it. She thus replied: "I have lived with you for a time, and you have given me your brotherly care and loving esteem on all occasions since you came into the country; I willingly, therefore, submit to your guidance in this matter of my marriage, for I trust that you will not marry me to one that is a heathen. The King assented to her wish, and in a conference with Rognwald's messengers before their departure, it was agreed that if the Earl wished to form a steadfast friendship with King Olaf, he should meet the King and confer with him in the east, some time in the autumn. They could themselves then discuss together the Earl's proposal of marriage when they met. The messengers returned to the east, bearing the King's answer; and the King abode at Nidaros during the winter, having a large retinue with him, and keeping a liberal house.

Reflections. Philanthropy of Thorward the Christian, son of Spak-Bodwar, at the time of a great famine in Iceland.

225. Great and manifold is the mercy of Almighty God in all things; and glorious are His judgments, in that He permits no good desire to perish, but in His gracious loving-kindness calls those who as yet are ignorant of Him, to see and to perceive, to glorify and to love their Redeemer. This truth was made manifest by our Lord Jesus Christ, the living Son of God, in many events, of which, however, we relate but a few, that heralded the merciful approach of the full establishment of the Christian Faith in Iceland. God Himself also shows in the stories which follow, that He aids and confirms to men's advantage the good deeds which they perform; but that He scatters and brings

to nought the evil designs and cruelties of the wicked, who often themselves perish in the snares which they have laid for others.

Some time after the departure of Bishop Frederick and Thorwald Kodranson from Iceland, there occurred a famine so severe that many died of hunger. There lived at that time in Skagafirth a man named Swadi, at a spot since known as Swadistead. He was of good standing; and his disposition was very stern. One morning he called together a great number of poor people, whom he set to dig a large deep grave, at a short distance from the public road; and they were glad to think that from the wages of their labour they might be able to appease somewhat their sore hunger. In the evening, their work at the grave being finished, Swadi led them all into a small building. When they were inside and the door was fastened, he called out to them: "Rejoice and be glad, for your misery will soon come to an end. Here you remain for the night. In the morning you will be slain and buried in the large grave that you yourselves have dug." Hearing this stern doom, in which death was decreed them in return for their labour, they began to cry aloud, and bewailed their sore affliction the whole night. Now it happened that Thorward the Christian, son of Spak-Bodwar, was going that very night through the district on business, and his road in the early morning led him past the building wherein the poor people were confined. When he heard their piteous cries, he inquired what was their grief. Learning the cause, he said to them: "Are you willing to make an agreement with me? If you will believe in the true God, in whom I believe, and do according as I charge you, I will release you from this building. You shall then come to me at As, where I will give you all food." To this course they assented eagerly. Thorward took the bars from the door; and they went off at once in great haste and with joy to his homestead down in As. When Swadi heard what had happened he became very angry; set about instantly to arm himself and his men, and in all haste rode after the fugitives, wishing to catch and slay them. Moreover, he had a mind to repay sternly those who had released the captives, for the disgrace which he felt that he had suffered from them. But his wickedness and cruelty fell upon his own head; for as he was riding forward at a quick pace near the grave, he fell off his horse, and died as he reached the ground. And in the very grave that

he had prepared for the innocent, he himself, a wicked heathen, was buried by his followers according to the ancient rites; his dog and horse being buried with him. Thorward caused the priest who lived with him at As to baptize the poor people whom he had released from death, and to instruct them in holy doctrine; and as long as the scarcity lasted he fed them all at his own house. It is generally said that Thorward Spak-Bodwarson was baptized by Bishop Frederick; but Monk Gunnlaug tells us that, in the opinion of some, he was baptized in England, whence he brought the wood for the church that he built at his homestead. The mother of Thorward Spak-Bodwarson was named Arnfrid. She was a daughter of Sleitubiorn, the son of Roar. Sleitubiorn's mother was Groa, the daughter of Herfinn, the son of Thorgils, the son of Gorm, a famous lord of Sweden. The mother of Thorgils Gormson was Thora, daughter of King Eric of Upsala. The mother of Herfinn Ericson was Ellen, daughter of King Burislaf of Garda in the east; and the mother of Ellen was Ingigerd, the sister of Dagstyg, King of the Risa.

The kindness of Arnor of Mikilby to the poor.

226. At the very time of which we have just spoken a meeting of the inhabitants of the district at the head of Skagafirth decided, on account of the famine and the bad harvest, to grant permission to abandon old people and give them no food, and likewise those who were lame or in any way disabled. Even to refuse them shelter was permitted, though there was a biting frost, and violent snow-storms raged. The most powerful chief in the community at the time was Arnor Carlineneb, who dwelt at Mikilby in Oslandslid. On his return from the meeting he was met by his mother Thurid, daughter of Ref of Bard, who blamed him exceedingly for having consented to so cruel a decision. In highly reasonable and fitting language she pointed out at length how wicked and monstrous was the inhumanity of one who should hand over to so cruel a death his father, mother, or other near kinsmen. "Know of a certainty," she said, "that though you yourself be not guilty of such conduct, nevertheless you are by no means innocent or without a share in this wicked manslaughter, if you, the ruler and chief of

others, give permission to those who are under you to deny a shelter in the storm to their parents or near kinsmen. Yea, though you give not your permission, you are equally to blame if you oppose not such misdeeds with all your power." Arnor recognised his mother's good-will; and taking her censure in good part, was full of anxiety as to what he should do. He decided, however, to send his servants to the neighbouring homesteads to collect together all the old people and the outcasts. These were brought to him and relieved with all tenderness. The following day he summoned the yeomen together in large numbers, and at the meeting he thus addressed them: "It is known to you that a short time ago we held a public meeting. I have since considered our common necessity, and struggled with the inhuman plan, to which we all consented, of giving permission to refuse food to the old and all who cannot earn their own livelihood, and so deprive them of life. But convinced by sound reasoning, I repent me of a deed so exceedingly wicked and unexampled. And reflecting thereon, I have formed a plan which we must all adopt and follow: to show them mercy and humanity. Let every man help his kinsmen, in particular his father and his mother, to the utmost of his means. Let those who can do more, save also their other near relations from starvation and death. To preserve life in them we must use up our supplies and our cattle; yea, to prevent our kinsmen dying of hunger, we must aid them by killing our horses until every yeoman has reduced the number at his homestead to two. Moreover, there is a very evil custom prevailing among us of keeping large numbers of dogs that consume food on which many human beings might live. These dogs we must kill, letting few or none survive; and the food that we have been wont to give them we must use to support mankind. To speak briefly, we will on no account allow any of you to abandon father or mother when you can possibly afford them help. Whoever has not the means to support his parents or near kinsmen, let him bring them to me at Mikilby, where I will feed them. Whoever has the means, and will not help his nearest kinsmen, him will I sternly repay with the harshest measures. And now, my dearest friends and companions, rather than my subjects, let us show the fullest mercy and humanity to our near kinsmen, and not give our foes the opportunity to reproach us for having, with excess of folly, treated our neighbours

unworthily. And if He is the true God who created the sun to give light and heat to the world, and if gentleness and righteousness delight Him, as we have heard, let Him in His mercy give us convincing proof that He is the Creator of man, and can rule and govern the whole world. We shall henceforth believe in Him, and honour no God but Him alone, who is true and blest in His dominion." After all those present had declared their full assent to the proposals made by Arnor, the Assembly was brought to an end. On the day of the meeting, and for a long time before it, the cold and frost had been most severe, and the north winds most biting. Ice and hard-frozen snow had covered the earth so completely that the ground could nowhere be seen. But the next night after the meeting so rapid a change occurred in the weather through Divine Providence, that on the following morning the severe frost was gone altogether, and succeeded by a rapid thaw under a warm southern wind. Thenceforth there was kindly weather; and under warm and genial sunshine the grass shot up day by day from the earth, until in a short time there was enough pasture for the sustenance of all the cattle. A general feeling of great joy was felt by the yeomen that they had listened to the counsels of mercy laid before them. So abundant was the immediate benefit which the liegemen of Arnor received from the Divine gift, that they were all ready and glad with their chief to adopt the holy practice of the true Faith shortly afterwards preached to them; for in a few years the Christian religion was by law established over the whole of Iceland. Arnor Carlineneb was a son of Biorn, the son of Thord of Hofdi. Biorn's mother Thorgerd was a daughter of Thori Laggard and of Fridgerd, the daughter of Kiarval, King of the Irish. Thord of Hofdi was the son of Biorn Buttertrough, son of Roald Ruk, son of Aslak, son of Biorn Ironside, son of Ragnar Lodbrok.

King Olaf appears in a vision to Thorhall of Knappstead.

227. There was a man named Thorhall, whose surname was Knapp. He lived at Knappstead in Flot, where his ancestors, an honourable family, had lived before him. Thorhall was a man of good morals, although he was a heathen like all the people of

those parts at the time. He was a leper, greatly afflicted, and his leprosy weighed upon him. Thorhall sacrificed to carved images, after the manner of his kinsmen; and not far distant from his homestead there was a rich temple where the people of Flit assembled and held every year great sacrificial feasts. One night when Thorhall was asleep in bed he had a dream. He dreamt that, being out of doors, he saw a man of bright appearance riding towards his homestead on a white horse. He was clad in royal robes, and carried in his hand a spear ornamented with gold. As Thorhall saw the man approaching he was seized with fear, and attempted to get back into the house; but the knight was quicker than he, and leaping from his horse, stood before the door, and thus spake: "Fear not, there shall no harm happen to you from my coming here. My presence will rather bring you health and joy, if you follow my counsels. Do you bewail your infirmity? But I need not ask the question, for I know that you bewail it. Come now, follow me, and I will show you a sure plan whereby you may recover." The stranger led him forth to a spot near the fence of the field surrounding his homestead, and said: "In this place you shall raise a building, after the manner that I shall show you, to the honour of the one true God, who will be made known to you this very year at the General Assembly, for you will certainly ride thither in the summer. If with a pure heart you worship the God who will there be preached to you, you will become whole; and with bodily health you will be cheered by peace and prosperity in this life, and enjoy everlasting honour and bliss in the life to come." Then with the butt-end of his spear he traced out for Thorhall the ground plan of the building, and thus spake to him: "In this fashion you shall raise the building, and use the wood you already possess in the temple here, a short distance from the homestead, where the men of the district are wont to meet every year and hold their sacrificial feasts. Early in the morning, as soon as you rise, you shall have the temple pulled down, and nevermore henceforth worship the false gods that you have hitherto honoured. Now, if you believe my words, and take heed without hesitation to perform what I have bidden you, your health will improve quickly, and you will grow better day by day." With these words the vision

in his dream disappeared from Thorhall, and he awoke, believing in its reality. At daybreak he ordered all his workmen to go with haste, break down the temple, and bring the wood to his house. Though they murmured against him, and said to one another that his conduct was mad, they nevertheless dared not oppose his bidding, but carried out his orders fully; and Thorhall began at once to construct the building exactly in the form and size that had been shown him in his dream. At the next homestead, a short distance away, there lived at that time one named Thorhild, a woman of strong powers, and much given to witchcraft. The very night in which the aforesaid vision appeared to Thorhall, Thorhild aroused her men before daybreak, saying: "Make haste, go and collect together and drive home from the pastures all our cattle—cows, sheep, and horses; shut them up in the stalls and folds, for no creature left out of doors this day will live. My neighbour Thorhall of Knappstead has become senseless and mad. He is sending his men to break down the fine temple that stands by his house; and the famous gods who have there been worshipped in the past are therefore about to flee away, in an unwilling and wrathful mood, to find a shelter and a dwelling for themselves right in the north at Sigluness. I do not wish them to meet with my cattle in their way, for in so angry and bitter a mood, they will spare nothing that comes before them." Her men did as she commanded. Her cattle were all driven home and placed in security, except one horse, which remained behind in the pastures, and was afterwards found dead. Everything came to pass with Thorhall of Knappstead which the vision had foretold. Day by day he recovered from his illness, and his strength increased. In the summer he rode to the Assembly, where he met with the preachers of the Christian religion, of whom we shall soon speak. He accepted the true Faith, and after he was baptized, became for the first time perfectly whole in body. He returned to his homestead, rejoicing, and all the days of his life worshipped Almighty God with a pure service, in the church which he consecrated to Him. This was the first church built in Fliot, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God in Three, to whom be glory and honour for ever and ever. Amen.

King Olaf sends Gisur and Hialti to preach the Gospel in Iceland. Their reception, and the events that occurred at the General Assembly.

228. We have already mentioned that Gisur the White and Hialti Skeggison, his son-in-law, abode with King Olaf Tryggwason at the market town of Nidaros in the north, during the fifth winter of his kingly rule over Norway. Early the following spring the King said that he would send them to Iceland to preach the true Faith there again. They accepted the mission heartily, and made ready their ship as soon as the voyage between the two countries was practicable. Swerting Runolfson also prepared his ship at the same time for a voyage to Iceland in the summer. It was floating on the water, off the pier, when Swerting went to visit King Olaf to declare his intention, and beg for leave to depart. "It is very important to me, Sire," he said, "that we should not remove our cargo from the ship, now that we are ready to start." The King answered him rather angrily: "You used your own judgment in making your preparations without leave, and it is a good thing that the son of an idolater should remain where he least prefers. The arrangement that I made last autumn must be carried out in full. I, and not you, am master here, though in Iceland you pay little heed to my commands." With these words they separated, and Swerting stayed where he was for the time. Gisur and Hialti put to sea as soon as they were ready to start, having with them a priest named Thormod, whom the King found for them, and several other men in orders to help the priest in divine service. After a somewhat slow voyage, though the winds were fair, they arrived opposite Durholmaos, the same day that Flosi of the Burning rode over Arnarstacksheath on his way to the General Assembly. Some boatmen rowed out to speak with Gisur's ship, and from them Flosi learnt of the tidings from Norway, and that his brother Kolbein was detained by King Olaf as a hostage with three others, and he brought word to the Assembly of the return of Hialti, and the other news that he had learnt. The same day on which

Flosi heard of their arrival, Gisur and Hialti touched the Westmaneyns and landed at Horgore. Here they put ashore the timber hewed for them by command of King Olaf, who at the same time bade them build a church with it on the spot where they should first touch land. They drew lots on which side of the creek the church should stand, and as the lot decided, they raised it on the north side. There was a heathen temple already on the spot, at which great sacrifices were held, and this temple they completely destroyed. After they had stayed two days in the island and raised the scaffolding of the church, they sailed thence, and reached Eyasand on the day when members arrived at the meeting-place of the General Assembly. On the mainland Gisur and Hialti could obtain neither horse nor conveyance from the inhabitants on the east side of the Northay, because it was altogether peopled by the liegemen of Runolf the Temple-chief. They walked, therefore, the whole way west until they came to Haf, where Skeggi Asgautson dwelt, and his son Thorwald, who had married Koltorfa, the sister of Hialti Skeggison. Thorwald, Hialti's brother-in-law, had gone to the Assembly; but Skeggi found horses for all the company, and everything else necessary. Thence they rode to Laugardale, where Gisur and the others begged Hialti to remain until they had first made terms for him and obtained a truce; for by going to the Assembly he would place himself in the hands of his foes who had outlawed him the previous summer. Hialti, persuaded by Gisur and his other friends, allowed the arrangement to be made, and remained behind with a retinue of eleven men; while Gisur and his company rode on until they reached the Wellan-Kettle by Olfus-Water. From this point Gisur sent word to the Assembly, begging his friends, kinsmen, and all who wished to aid him, that they would come forth to meet him, for he had learnt that his foes and Hialti's intended by force of arms to bar his approach to the meeting-place of the Assembly. Therefore all Gisur's friends and abettors, to whom he had sent word, came to him, and they were a large number; but before they moved forward Hialti rode up with all those who had remained behind with him in Laugardale. Gisur and Hialti, with their company, now rode in array to the Assembly, and instantly the heathen all ran together under arms. A fight was imminent; but through God's mercy the heathen lost heart and dared not begin the attack,

and Asgrim Ellidagrimson, the nephew of Gisur, received him and all the company into his booth. The following day Priest Thormod sung Mass on the Giabank, beside the booth of the West Quarter men; and after Mass, seven clerks, clad in robes, walked up to the Hill of Laws, carrying before them two large crosses. These are the same crosses that are now at Outer Skard; and one of them marks the height of King Olaf Tryggwason, and the other that of Hialti Skeggison. At the Hill of Laws there was a great crowd. Here the priests laid incense on glowing embers, and the sweet odour spread against the wind, equally as well as with it. In the midst of a deep silence Hialti and Gisur next declared, with much skill and aptness of speech, the errand on which they had come. They related, in the first place, what had occurred in their journeys; then they proclaimed with great boldness the message of King Olaf touching the Christian religion; and lastly, they turned their speech into a gentle appeal to the whole people. In friendly terms and persuasive utterances they besought all persons to bring their life under the control of wisdom, and yield themselves to the authority of the King, who is above all kings, and serve him. If they accepted baptism and held the true Faith they would obtain from God Himself the eternal reward of unending joys in the glory of the Kingdom of Heaven. After the confident and eloquent delivery of this message, there arose a great noise and tumult, Christians and heathens declaring that they would not live under the others' laws, and one man after another calling witnesses to his declaration. At that moment a boy came running to the Assembly, and reported in great excitement that a stream of fire had burst from the earth and was rushing headlong down to the homestead of Thorodd, the Temple-chief, threatening his whole estate with quick and complete destruction. As the heathens heard these tidings, one of them said, "No wonder the gods are angry at such speeches as we have just heard delivered." But Snorri Thorgrimson, the Temple-chief, asked, saying, "What made the gods angry when the ground on which we now stand was aflame?" From the Hill of Laws the men went home to their booths. The Christians then conferred among themselves, and requested Hall O'Side to pronounce for them the laws that as Christians they should observe. But Hall freed himself from

the task by feeing Thorgeir to pronounce what laws should be valid in a Christian state. Thorgeir was Temple-chief of the Lioswater men, and held at that time the office of Speaker, to declare the laws binding on the whole country; he was yet a heathen. Hall is said to have paid him a fee of sixty marks of silver, stipulating that three articles which they, Hall, Gisur, and Hialti, laid before him, should form part of his pronouncement, whatever other laws he should ordain. The three articles were the following: First, that all persons in Iceland should become Christian, and those who were yet unbaptized should receive baptism; next, that all temples and carved images should lose their sacred character; and lastly, that the Lesser Outlawry should be the penalty for every sacrifice to the gods attested by witnesses. When Thorgeir came into his booth he lay down, covering his head with his cloak, and remained thus for a whole day without speaking a word. Meanwhile the heathens held a crowded meeting, and deliberated what plans should be adopted to oppose and bring to nought this new preaching of the Christian Faith; and to induce the gods to prevent its spreading over the land, they agreed to make a solemn vow and select two men from each Quarter of the island for sacrifice. When this resolve became known to Gisur and Hialti, they summoned all the Christians to a meeting, at which Hialti stood up and thus spoke: "A report has been brought to us of a meeting of our opponents in which the heathens have vowed to sacrifice to their gods two men from each Quarter of this land, in order that by the aid of their false gods they may crush and bring to nought the Christian religion; or rather, to speak truly, they are striving by such device and instigation of the Fiend to prevent the healing and salvation of their own souls. It will not be unworthy of us Christians to make choice on our part of an equal number of men, whom we may devote and consecrate to our living God, the true and the blessed. Not that we shall inflict on them bodily death. Let it rather be our purpose, that those who are chosen to be an offering for victory should mortify in themselves bodily vices and sinful lusts of the flesh, and shun worldly desires; that they should live a temperate, righteous, and sober life in this world, continually offering themselves, by their good works, to be a holy sacrifice to our Lord Jesus Christ; and that they should at length inherit

life eternal with Him in the Kingdom of Heaven, where their bliss will be more complete in proportion as their life here is more godly. The heathens choose the greatest criminals to give to their gods, and sacrifice them by a wretched though merited death, on account of their evil deeds, casting them down from rocks or into chasms. We, on the other hand, will choose those whom we find the fittest in our land for a good life, that their virtues may make them a living and holy sacrifice, pure and acceptable to God. May Almighty God of His mercy, through their merits, grant that no evil designs of His envious foes against His true believers may prosper; and the worship of devilish idols being overthrown and destroyed, may the knowledge of our Lord's name be so spread abroad that the whole people of the land will gladly and eagerly submit to the salutary laws of the Christian Faith. If, therefore, it pleases you, Gisur and I, representing the men of the South Quarter, will gladly be the first to make the vow and be an offering for victory." The Christians unanimously declared that the proposal pleased them, and inquiry was made who would volunteer from among the men of the other Quarters to undertake the vow. For the men of the East Quarter, Hall O'Side came forward, and Thorleif of Crosswick, surnamed Thorleif the Christian. This Thorleif was the man whom Stout-Ketil, at the advice and instigation of Brodd-Helgi, summoned before the Assembly because he was a Christian. The story is told in the Saga of the men of Wapnfirth, [and Thorleif was accused of not paying the temple-dues]. The same day that Ketil served the summons, a violent storm arose on his return home, and he and his company lost their way; and at length Ketil saw no hope of life for himself and his men but that of going back to Thorleif's house. They were received with the greatest kindness and cheerfulness, and while they were detained by the storm, Thorleif afforded them hospitality to the utmost of his power, such as he would have afforded to a son or a brother. Ketil, in consequence, allowed all his suits against Thorleif to drop, and was ever his steadfast friend henceforth. For the men of the North Quarter, Lenni of Saurby in Eyafirth, the son of Orm Trunkback, and Thorward Spak-Bodwarson of Skagafirth, consented to take the vow. For the men of the West Quarter, only Gest Oddleifson came for-

ward; and as no second man offered himself, Gisur and Hialti felt dispirited. When inquiry was made if some one would volunteer, Orm Kodranson, the brother of Thorwald the Far-Traveller, of whom we have already spoken, answered, saying: "There would certainly have been one to come forward and fulfil this your praiseworthy vow if my brother Thorwald had been present at the Assembly. But as his abode is far away, whether he is alive or dead, I will gladly now take his place if you will make use of me, though I am unworthy. It is, however, a bold thing in me thus to speak, for I am but a catechumen, and not baptized." The chiefs and the other Christians who were present all accepted his offer with thanks, and Orm was then baptized. He was living as one of the household at Gilsbank, with his brother-in-law Hermund, the husband of his sister Gunnhild.

The Speaker, Thorgeir, pronounces at the General Assembly the laws under which Christianity is henceforth established in Iceland [1000].

229. Thorgeir, the Temple-chief of the men of Lioswater, lay down all day and the following night, as we have already said. The next morning he rose up, and commanded all the members of the Assembly to attend at the Hill of Laws, whether they were Christian or heathen. All being present together, there was at first great noise and tumult; but as soon as they were seated and silence obtained, Thorgeir began to speak as follows:—"Listen to my words, ye wise men, and let all the people attend carefully to what I say. It appears to me that our whole settlement will fall into a condition of perilous trouble and unhappy ruin if the people of the land are not bound by one law and one religion; peace will be broken if there are two sets of laws. For differences will arise among men, and discord, to be followed by open enmity, hostility, and battles; so that in a short time our land will be desolate if we are not helped by the wholesome counsel of a wise foresight. We must therefore be zealously on our guard, and beware lest so evil a fortune befall, that we wage war stubbornly with one another, who are kinsmen and fellow-countrymen. Let us rather strive

in all reasonableness and good-will to establish and confirm, to have and to hold, peace, harmony, and unbroken concord among ourselves in this our inheritance and native land. You have heard, I think, of certain Kings of Norway and Denmark who for a long time waged war with one another, and fought great battles, until the land chiefs of the two kingdoms became so tired of the turbulence and disorder that they established peace and brought about a reconciliation between the two countries against the will of the Kings. The action of the chiefs was a happy one; for the Kings, who had long been at enmity with one another, became dear friends, through the good-will of their counsellors and subjects, and sent to one another presents and costly gifts. And the peace thus made lasted as long as the Kings lived. Now, although our chiefs are not so powerful as kings in other lands, and we have not the wisdom of the royal counsellors, yet it befits us to follow the example of their prudent counsels. We must therefore make such a compromise between the leaders of the opposing parties that each side will gain something of its cause, and neither side win absolutely. Thus we shall be able to rejoice all together in a sound settlement, brought about by prudent counsels. We shall be one people under one law. Having one faith and religion, we shall all be called by one name, held together in the land of our inheritance by peace and prosperity, and sharing in one harmonious covenant. For, believe me, that as soon as ever we have two rules of law, peace will be destroyed in our midst. This, then, is the beginning and the end of what I urge upon you and advise you, that by a covenant, one and inviolable, we all observe one law, and thus exclude all fear of misfortune and cause of discord." When Thorgeir brought his speech to an end, the Divine bounty mercifully gave such great success to his eloquence that all present at the Assembly, heathens and Christians alike, with one immediate consent, and without the opposition of a single voice, agreed to have and to hold the law in every respect as he should pronounce it. Thorgeir then spake, and said: "I declare the basis of our law to be such as the Christians desire it. . . Every person in Iceland, great and small, shall be Christian, and accept baptism. All temples and carved images shall lose their sacredness and be destroyed; and whoever shall offer sacrifice to carved images in the presence of witnesses shall be liable to the penalty

of the Lesser Outlawry. There are two things in Christianity which those who have most strongly opposed it can scarcely understand to be consistent with one another—namely, the requirement to bring up all children brought into the world, whether born of poor or rich parents; and the prohibition that denies and prevents the use, for human food, of meat which is most nourishing to the people. The demand of the opponents of Christianity must therefore be allowed, and the old laws which permitted the exposure of infants and the eating of horse-flesh shall stand. Also, no man shall be liable to prosecution whose sacrifices to the gods are made in secret, and cannot be proved by witnesses. So likewise we shall retain all the other old laws that are not clearly opposed to a Christian state.” After Thorgeir had ended his speech, all praised the law; for he had declared that no one should prevent or hinder another from serving Christ as heartily as he desired; and they were not altogether denied the old customs of their religion by harsh means of the utmost severity; though they received baptism at first, and took the name of Christian, rather from compulsion than from a perfect love of God felt at the time, and their own desire. However, through the mercy and grace of our Lord, it came about that the heathen practices just mentioned, of sacrificing in secret, of exposing infants, and of eating horse-flesh, were done away and abolished, after the delay of a few years, by the advice of the chiefs, and with the consent of the people. The Assembly was then dissolved, the Christian religion being established by law over the whole of Iceland. All present at the Assembly were made catechumens, and many who were previously heathen, though not all, were baptized. For the men of the North and East Quarters refused to enter cold water, and the greater part of them were afterwards baptized at the hot spring of Reyki in Laugardale. Hialti Skeggison was sponsor for the Temple-chief, Runolf Ulfson, who had outlawed him the previous summer. When Runolf was made a catechumen, Hialti said, “We will now teach the old Temple-chief to mumble the salt.” The members of the Assembly having returned to their several districts, the whole people were baptized as soon as possible during the summer; and not a man raised his voice against the Christian religion, which from that time to the present has never shown decay, but has increased in numbers and strength.

The King, Queen, and the angelica stalk. King Olaf calls out the levy over the whole of Norway.

230. The winter that Gisur and Hialti passed in Nidaros with King Olaf was a season of great plenty in Norway, and of complete tranquillity within its borders. When it drew to a close and was succeeded by spring, Queen Thyri made frequent complaints to the King with many tears, that though in Wendland she had large estates, in Norway she had not the wealth befitting a Queen. Sometimes with persuasive speech she begged the King to get her property for her, saying that King Burislaf was so good a friend of his that as soon as ever they met he would give him all that he demanded. King Olaf's friends, becoming aware of her request, unanimously dissuaded the King from making a voyage to Wendland, notwithstanding the urgent instigation of the Queen. A mild winter was followed by early growths in spring. We are told that as King Olaf was walking along the street on Palm Sunday, he met a man carrying several angelica plants, remarkably large for the time of the year. The King took a stalk in his hand and went home to his house. Coming to Queen Thyri, he found her in her sitting-room, weeping, and said, "See this fine stalk of angelica that I give you." She pushed it aside with her hand, and replied: "Harold Gormson, my father, was more liberal with his gifts, and was less afraid of leaving his country to claim his due honours than you now are. This was proved when he came over here to Norway and laid waste the greater part of it, making it all his own, subject to tax and tribute. You may see for yourself the truth of my frequent complaints, how wretchedly poor I came to this country, and how shamefully and wrongfully I am deprived of large estates in Wendland; yet because of my brother King Swein you dare not sail through the Danish Empire, to claim my estates, and the honour due to you." At these words King Olaf sprang up and answered in a loud voice: "I shall never be afraid of your brother King Swein; and if we meet, he will have to yield." Soon afterwards King Olaf summoned an Assembly in the town, at which he declared before all the people his intention to lead a force to sea

in the summer, and to make a levy both of men and ships from each shire; he said at the same time how many ships he required from the Thronds of the Frith. Messengers were sent forth north and south over the country, both by land and sea, to summon the force; the *Long Serpent* was then moved into the water, and likewise all the other ships of the King, both small and large.

King Olaf sends Leif to Christianise Greenland. He receives the name of Leif the Lucky.

231. It was during this spring that King Olaf, as we have already mentioned, sent Gisur and Hialti to Iceland. Also he sent Leif Ericson to preach the Christian religion in Greenland, and furnished him with a priest and other men in orders, that he might baptize the people and instruct them in the true Faith. Leif sailed to Greenland in the summer. While he was at sea he rescued a ship's crew that he found disabled on a broken wreck; and in the same voyage he discovered Wineland the Good. Towards the end of summer he reached Greenland, and proceeded to Brattalid, to his father Eric. He was henceforth called Leif the Lucky; but his father Eric said that his good fortune in saving a ship's crew and preserving their lives was balanced by his bringing the juggler to Greenland; for thus Eric called the priest. Nevertheless, being advised and urged by Leif, Eric was baptized, and likewise all the people of Greenland.

Hallfred's voyage to Iceland. His behaviour to Kolfinna and his meeting with Gris.

232. A little later in the spring, after Leif Ericson had been sent to Greenland, Hallfred the Troublesome Poet came before King Olaf one day and requested leave to sail to Iceland in the summer. "It shall be as you wish," answered the King; "I have found you an excellent fellow, and knowing your disposition, I fully expect the day will yet come when you will wish to be with me rather than in Iceland or elsewhere. As future meetings between us are uncertain if we now separate, I will give you a velvet cloak, a helmet, and a bracelet weighing six ounces. Keep

these treasures as memorials that you have served me, and do not part with them; let them be buried with your body at church, or be placed in the coffin with you if you die at sea." Then Hallfred made his ship ready for the voyage to Iceland. He sent his son Audgisl east into Sweden, to be brought up by the boy's grandfather Thorar; and for his son Hallfred he found a good fostering home in Throntham. When ready to start, he went into the King's presence to take leave, and it was evident how deeply affected Hallfred was at parting on this occasion from King Olaf. Afterwards he set sail and brought his ship to the mouth of the Kolbeinsay in Skagafirth, after the holding of the General Assembly. His ship was now unloaded and beached. Leaving a man in charge to watch his cargo and sell it during the winter, Hallfred rode away west, with a company of eleven men, to the counties of Skagafirth, meaning to ride thence south over the heath, which he did. The horsemen were all in coloured dress. Having ridden west from Skagafirth, they turned and came to the mountain sheds belonging to Gris of Skard. These lay between Skagafirth and Langadale, up from Laxaydale; and Kolfinna, the daughter of Awaldi, and wife of Gris, was staying there with several of her women. There were women, too, in other neighbouring sheds that belonged to the yeomen of Langa-dale. A shepherd of Gris beheld the company of horsemen all in coloured dress as they were riding towards the sheds, and told Kolfinna. "They cannot know their way," she answered. "I am not so sure of that," the man replied; "they don't ride as if they were ignorant of it." When they came up, Kolfinna went forth and greeted Hallfred, inquiring what tidings there were. "Tidings are few," answered Hallfred, "and we can speak of them at leisure, for we wish to stay the night here." She answered that she would give them food. They alighted, therefore, from their horses, and partook of her kind hospitality. Hallfred stayed with Kolfinna; and there being many mountain sheds in the place, his men found lodgings for themselves. When Hallfred arose in the morning he recited several verses, which need not be quoted, containing expressions of love for Kolfinna, and unseemly language towards Gris. Thereupon Kolfinna said: "It is strange that you, valiant man as you are, will recite such offensive lines. You have behaved far too dishonour-

ably towards Gris, even though you were to refrain from putting him to scorn with your scurrilous work. He will not compose verses about you, for he is a kindly man, and not given to offence, except under great provocation. Both now and formerly in your quarrel with him you have acted in such a way that you ought rather to make him amends than to flout him; for he will show himself a man of prowess when he has to defend himself, and his honour is attacked." And Hallfred said:—

"Danger have I risked for the fair. But I should care not
Though by the side of the noble dame I were warily slain,
If I had held the Sif of the wardrobe to rest in my arms.
I cannot refrain from loving the fair lady of the lock."

Now Gris's shepherd had hurried away in the night from the shed to tell his master what had happened; and Gris, as soon as ever he knew, called up his men, and rode away in the morning, attended by fourteen of them. In the morning, too, Hallfred and his company prepared to depart, and as he mounted his horse he smiled. "Why do you smile?" asked Kolfinna; and Hallfred replied:—

"My love o'erflows for the Ilm of the light-of-the-wave [gold].
What will rise, I know not, to the lips of the Modi of sea-embers [gold]
When kindly men, gladdened by giants'-speech [gold], ask what pleases me.
I've stripped from Gris the boar his goat-skin [sluggishness]."

Hallfred wished to present Kolfinna with the cloak that the King had given him, but she would not accept it; and before riding off he said:—

"The smooth-skinned wearers of the flame-of-the-sea [gold]
All come from the mountain sheds. Fair are the maids.
Though the Syn of the ale-bench is somewhat ruffled,
I now give up my charge. Let each man take his own."

Now came Gris with his men to the sheds, when Hallfred and his company were gone; and seeing Kolfinna heavy at heart, Gris recited the following:—

"Lady! methinks some trouble sure has come
While absent I have been. 'Twill lead to strife, I see.
Strangers here have done us fiendish wrong,
My wife comes forth with sobs. The comely dame
Her eyes is drying."

Gris had in his company a cousin, a man named Einar, son of Thori, the son of Thrand. When they arrived at the sheds and found Hallfred gone, Gris said to his men that he would ride after them. Kolfinna begged him not to go. "It is unlikely," she said, "that your position will be improved by an encounter with Hallfred." But Gris followed his own course, and rode forward with his men, passing Audolfstead. As they reached the Blanday, Hallfred and his company were in mid-stream, crossing the river, and Gris threw a spear at him, which Hallfred caught in the air as it was flying, and threw back at Gris. Einar Thorison attempted to ward it off with his axe, but he missed it, and it struck him in the breast and killed him. Then Gris called out, "You are running now, Hallfred." "I shall not ride further away than out of the river," answered Hallfred, "if you wish to pursue us." But Gris did not enter the stream, and they spoke with one another across it. The men of both parties proposed that they should agree to a settlement, and that Hallfred should make amends to Gris for all the dishonour that he had done him. Hallfred inquired what amends Gris demanded, and Gris answered: "I have been told that you have two handsome gold bracelets, one given you by King Olaf, and the other by Earl Sigwaldi. If I get both the bracelets, I shall be content." To this demand Hallfred answered: "Something else must first happen." Thus leaving matters as they were, they separated unreconciled. Hallfred rode south to Ottarstead to visit his brother Galti, for his father was now dead; and he remained at Ottarstead during the winter.

Of King Olaf's champions, that manned the Long Serpent.

233. Spring passed on to its close, as King Olaf was engaged in fitting out his ships off Nidaros. He determined to steer the *Long Serpent* himself; for she was the largest and finest ship of war in Norway, and he had built her the previous winter. In manning the ship, the selection of the crew was made with such care that it contained no one older than sixty years of age or younger than twenty, and the men were specially chosen for their

strength and valour. Foremost among them were King Olaf's guardsmen, for, in forming the body-guard, the strongest and stoutest men at home and abroad had been chosen wherever found. King Olaf's standard-bearer was Ulf the Red, and his place was on the prow. Next to him was Kolbiorn the Marshal, then Thorstein Oxleg, and Wikar of Tiundaland, the brother of Arnliot Gellini. On the prow by the forecastle were Wak Raumason of the Elf, Bersi the Strong, An the Archer of Jamtaland, Thronð the Mighty of Thelamark, and his brother Uthyrmi; from Halogaland came Thronð the Squinter, Ogmund Sandi, Lodwer the Long of Saltwick, and Harek the Keen; from Inner Thronðham, Ketil the High, Thorfinn Eisli; from Orkadale, Haward and his brother. Amidships in the fore-room were the following: Biorn of Studla, and Bork of the Firths, Thorgrim Thiodolfson of Whin, Asgrim and Orm, Thord of Mardalake, Thorstein the White of Ofrustead, Arnor the More-man, Hallstein, Eywind Snake, Bergthor Bestil, Hallkel from Fialir, Olaf Dreng, Arnfinn of Sogn, Sigurd Bild, Einar the Hord, Ketil of Rogaland, and Griotgard of Raumsdale. In the narrow-room towards the stern was Einar Thambaskelf, who was not considered up to the standard, for he was only eighteen years of age; also Hallstein Lifarson, Thorolf, Iwar Smetta, and Orm Shawneb. Many other famous men were on the *Serpent*, though we cannot give their names; there were eight in the neck-room by the bow, chosen man by man, and thirty in the fore-room. It was a common saying, that the selected crew of the *Serpent* surpassed other crews in fine appearance, strength, and valour, no less than the *Long Serpent* surpassed other ships. Thorkel Neb, the King's brother, had the command of the *Short Serpent*, and the *Crane* was under Thorkel Tail and Jostein, the King's uncles. Both these ships were excellently manned. Thronðham furnished King Olaf with nine large ships, besides twenty-oared ships and smaller ones. Much progress having been made in the preparation of the fleet off Nidaros, King Olaf appointed bailiffs and stewards over all the districts of the Thronðs. Summer was now far advanced, and there had been long delay on the part of the King, so that ships were arriving in Norway from Iceland and other countries.

*Kiartan bids farewell to King Olaf and sails to Iceland.
His marriage and death.*

233A. Tidings were now brought to Norway that the Christian religion had been established by law in Iceland, and all the people baptized. King Olaf was exceeding glad thereat, and having summoned a meeting of his body-guard, stood up and thus spoke: "We have received the joyful tidings from Iceland that the people have all been baptized, and we give thanks to God for it. All those who have remained here as hostages for the Icelanders have now our leave to go freely wherever they please." The first to respond to the King's speech was Kiartan Olafson, who said: "We give you hearty thanks, Sire, for the permission, and we will now take the opportunity of sailing to Iceland this summer." And the King replied: "We will not now withdraw what we said: though in saying it we thought of others more than you, Kiartan; for we consider that you have stayed with us rather as a dear and familiar friend than a hostage. Though you have many honourable kinsmen in Iceland, I have no wish that you should desire to visit them. If you remain with us, you will attain great honour, and make such a marriage as, we must say, there would be no chance of making out there." "May God reward you, Sire," answered Kiartan, "for all the honour you have done me since I became subject to you. I would still hope that you will give me the same leave to visit my kinsmen and friends in Iceland as you have given to the other men detained here for a time." "Most certainly, Kiartan," replied the King; "but it is difficult to find, methinks, such a man as you not holding a position of rank." Kalf Asgeirson had passed the winter in Norway, and had now returned from a summer voyage west to England with the ship and cargo that he and Kiartan together owned. As soon, therefore, as Kiartan had obtained King Olaf's permission to go to Iceland, he and Kalf made busy preparations for the voyage. The ship being ready to start, Kiartan paid a visit to the King's sister Ingibiorg, who welcomed him heartily, and made room for him to sit beside her. He told her, as they conversed, that he was

now ready to sail to Iceland. "I suppose, Kiartan," she said, "that you have decided to make this journey of your own free-will and desire, rather than under pressure from others." Nothing further was said of the journey; but from a small box which stood by her side she took a velvet bag wherein was a lady's head-dress of pure white, heavily embroidered with gold, goodly and precious. As she presented it to Kiartan, she said: "You will give this head-dress as a bridal gift to Gudrun, Oswif's daughter. Let her wear it, for it will become her well. I wish the Icelandic ladies to see that she with whom you conversed here in Norway was not a woman of ignoble origin. I shall not be present to see you start on your journey; so now farewell." Kiartan thereupon rose up and kissed Ingibjorg; and men have ever held it truth that they parted most unwillingly. Kiartan next went to see the King and inform him that he was ready; and King Olaf, attended by a large crowd of people from the town, accompanied him on the way. When they reached the ship, which was ready floating on the water, the King spoke, and said: "Here is a sword, Kiartan, that I give you at our parting. Let it be your constant companion. As long as you carry it, no weapon, I believe, will ever slay you." The sword was of the sharpest, and highly ornamented. Kiartan thanked the King in eloquent language for the gift, and likewise for all the honour and esteem bestowed on him while in Norway. "Farewell, Kiartan," said the King; "hold firmly to your Faith, and love God." The King and Kiartan parted most affectionately, and Kiartan then walked along the gangway on board the ship. As the King watched him, he said: "An evil weird is at work over Kiartan and some of his kinsmen; and much sorrow do we often feel that the man destined to bring it about cannot resist his fate." King Olaf turned back to the town as soon as Kiartan and Kalf sailed out to sea. The winds were favourable, and after a quick voyage they arrived at the haven of the Whitay in Borgarfirth. Here Kiartan learnt that Bolli Thorleikson, his kinsman and foster-brother, had married Gudrun, Oswif's daughter; but the news did not visibly affect him. The following winter Kiartan abode in the west at Hiardarholt, with his father. He kept the fast of Lent, and was the first man in Iceland who while Lent lasted ate only dry food, the fruits of the earth; and

his action brought him much renown. He also observed many other good religious customs, wherein he was in advance of all the men of his time in Iceland. The following spring he married, taking to wife Refna Asgeir's daughter, to whom he gave, as a bridal gift, the head-dress that he had received from Ingibjorg. In the autumn, a fortnight before winter, at a banquet at Hiardarholt, Thorolf Oswifson stole from Kiartan the sword that the King had given him, and when he was pursued he thrust the sword into a bog. The sword, but not the scabbard, was afterwards found. Shortly afterwards, at a harvest feast at Lauga, Refna's head-dress disappeared and was never again found. Hence arose a feeling of unfriendliness between Kiartan and the family at Lauga, which grew into downright hostility as the winter passed. In the following spring, on Thursday in Easter week, Oswif's sons, with Bolli and others, making nine in number, instigated by Gudrun, lay in wait for Kiartan at Hafrgil in Swinadale, as he was riding east from Saurby with two companions. A fight took place, and when one of his companions had fallen, and the other was engaged with two antagonists, Kiartan was assailed by six at one time. The sword which he used was worthless in the fight, so that again and again he had to straighten it with his foot; yet he slew one of his opponents, and wounded another. Bolli stood aside, taking no part in the fray; but when Oswif's sons saw that they could not prevail against Kiartan, Ospak tried every means to incite Bolli, saying: "Will you not see, Bolli, what a disgrace it is to you to have come with us and promised us your help, and now to be of no use to us when we need you? Kiartan was heavy upon us when he had less reason than now; and if he escapes this time, there will soon be harsh measure dealt out to you as well as to us." Then Bolli drew his sword Footbiter, and turned to Kiartan, who said: "Surely you are bent upon dastard's work now; but it is better, methinks, that I should meet death at your hands, kinsman, than you at mine. I will not defend myself against you;" and so saying, he threw down his weapons. His wounds were slight as yet, but he was very weary. Bolli made no answer to Kiartan's speech, but struck him a fatal blow. The instant the deed was done, he repented; and seating himself on the ground, supported the shoulders of Kiartan, who died on Bolli's knees. The events relating to the families of Lauga and

Hiardarholt, both before this time and afterwards, are all told in the Saga of the men of Laxaydale, and only a short account is here given. The dead body of Kiartan lay on the bier for a week. Thorstein Egilson, Kiartan's uncle, had built a church by his homestead at Borg, and thither Kiartan was carried. It is said that the church had only lately been consecrated, and was still hung with white at the time of the burial. The sons of Oswif were all outlawed for the manslaughter of Kiartan, but on payment of fines they were allowed to go abroad. Not one of them ever returned, and thus was fulfilled what was said of them by their kinsman Stephen Thorgilson, whom they outlawed at the General Assembly, as we have already related, because he preached the Christian religion. So also was fulfilled what King Olaf uttered, on taking leave of Kiartan, concerning the evil weird at work through Bolli and Bolli's ill-fortune in bringing about the death of Kiartan.

The story of Eindridi Broadsole. On his declining to come to King Olaf, the King goes to visit him. They compete with one another in various feats of skill and strength. Eindridi is baptized.

235. The preparations of the fleet off Nidaros being far advanced, King Olaf is said to have given an entertainment one day to his body-guard and the levy, at which there was much carousing. He was in the merriest humour, and all his guests likewise. As usually happens at a banquet, there was plenty of conversation, one subject of which was the introduction of the Christian religion into Norway. The question was asked whether the whole land was yet Christian, and all the people baptized. And Ulf the Red, King Olaf's standard-bearer, made answer: "So far am I from supposing," he said, "that every one in the land is baptized, I think that we may find unbaptized people not far away from us." Ulf's remark was quickly carried to the King, who called him near and spoke to him: "Do you say, Ulf, that there are people, yet heathen, living close to us?" "My words have been hastily caught up, Sire," answered Ulf; "but yet I will maintain what I merely hinted at." "Is this a

surmise of yours," said the King, "or do you know of a certainty the fact?" "One thing I will say in your presence, Sire," replied Ulf; "I have some ground for my speech." "You must then tell us definitely," said the King, "to what you refer." "Very well," answered Ulf. "There is a man up in Throntham, Eindridi, surnamed Broadsole. He is young in years, unmarried, and has lately come into his father's estate. He is wealthy, tall of stature, and handsome; his strength and bodily accomplishments are not exactly known; he is liberal with his money, and highly popular. Of this Eindridi, Sire, I have been told that he is unbaptized." The King replied: "You speak so favourably of this man that it is a great pity if he knows not his Creator. There is only one course for you, after what you have stated. Take with you as many men as you wish; go, visit Eindridi, and endeavour to bring him to me." "I will go, Sire, if you wish it," said Ulf, "but not with a large company, for Eindridi is not one who can be compelled to do what he does not wish; we shall be twenty-four in all." Ulf then procured a ship with oars, and rowed with his men until he came near Eindridi's abode. Leaving twelve of them to take care of the ship, he went with the others to Eindridi's homestead. Eindridi was out of doors, and welcomed him heartily; and as he was acquainted with Ulf, invited him with all his men to make as long a stay as he wished. Ulf gladly accepted the invitation, and they went indoors. The house was large and richly furnished. Having come into the sitting-room, they sat down together, and Eindridi spoke: "I happen to know," he said, "that you have accepted a religion different from the one held by me and my men; but I will offer you a suitable and sincere hospitality. You shall have your choice whether we all feast together, or each party in a separate room." "It will be pleasanter, I think, to both of us," answered Ulf, "if we all feast together. I can bring forward at leisure the business on which I have come; and our King is so noble that he readily, and with good-will, cleanses us from any impurity contracted by fellowship with men of a different religion." "Your decision is agreeable to me," said Eindridi; "how many are there with you?" and Ulf answered that he had twelve other men below at the ship. "I will find men to look after your goods," said Eindridi; "and your own men shall come up to the house, where you will all be

welcome." And so 'twas done. Afterwards the ale was brought in; there was a large array of servants, and the entertainment was of the best. Ulf sat beside Eindridi; and his men sat next to him, towards the door. When all were merry, Eindridi inquired of Ulf about the errand on which he had come, and whether his business would take him further. And Ulf answered: "King Olaf sent me here with a message; he invites you, as he has invited many others, in friendship and honour, to an entertainment at Nidaros. He added to his invitation many entreaties, that you would not delay to make the journey, for he had received a good report of you." "The King has my thanks," replied Eindridi, "for his invitation and honourable message to me. I will give you my answer in the morning when we are all sober and under the full influence of reason." The men were very merry over their ale all the evening, and slept well during the night. In the morning, when they were all seated, Eindridi spoke to Ulf, and said: "In reply to your message, I wish to say that you will be hospitably treated here as long as you desire to remain; but my journey to the King must be put off. I have no business with him at present, and I will pay him a visit as soon as the necessity is evident. My intention is to remain at home; and if the King wishes to visit me I shall not seek to avoid him. You may also say to the King that I will be his friend if he will deal well with me." Their whole conversation with one another was friendly to its close; and as soon as Ulf was ready he sailed away down the Frith, and Eindridi remained behind. Ulf gave the King a full and accurate account of the way that he had performed his errand and of Eindridi's answer. The King then asked what he had made out of Eindridi's religion, and if he was much given to sacrificing. "I saw no sign that he worshipped idols," answered Ulf, "and no man could give me information of it, for there was no temple at the homestead." "It will not be long," said the King, "before I go and see him unawares in his own house, as he will not come and visit me." As soon as Ulf heard the King declare his intention, he hastily and secretly mounted his page-boy on a horse, ordering him to ride as hard as he could and tell Eindridi that the King would be there shortly. King Olaf, having got ready as quickly as possible, sailed up the Frith during the night with three hundred men, and

arrived early next day at Eindridi's abode. As he was walking up to the homestead with his whole company, and when he was yet but a short distance from the strand, he was met by Eindridi with a large company of followers. Eindridi welcomed him with much friendliness, and invited him and all his men to his house, saying that he would be thankful if the King would accept the entertainment prepared for him. Eindridi's invitation was gladly accepted by the King, and when they entered the sitting-room Eindridi said to him: "I must not conceal from you, Sire, that, as it happens, our religions are commonly said to have no intercourse with each other; and therefore, if you will not admit us to the same table with you, you will perhaps occupy this room which has been prepared for you, and we will seek another for ourselves." "You shall yourself occupy your own room with your men," answered the King; "we will set up our tents near it out of doors, and you shall make provision for us while we remain here." The King's plan was then carried out. There was no lack of anything; a magnificent banquet was prepared, and was served in corresponding style. The first day of the entertainment King Olaf sent for Eindridi, who greeted the King as he entered. The King received his greeting favourably, and spoke thus: "Though I desire no intercourse with heathen men in general, yet I would like you to sit here, for I wish to talk with you;" and Eindridi replied that he would do as the King commanded. We are told that when he came before the King into the tent he was dressed in a scarlet tunic. His hair was tied up with gold lace, and on his head was a gold-embroidered silk cap. On his right arm he wore a heavy gold bracelet, and in his left he carried a very fair little boy, of four or five years old, who resembled him greatly in feature. A chair was brought for him, and he sat down in front of the King's table, holding the boy on his knees. "You are a tall and handsome man," said the King; "and if your accomplishments answer to your appearance, you will not have many equals in Norway. It behoves you to know your Creator, and learn to praise God for His gifts. Are you married?" "No," answered Eindridi, "I am not." "Is that handsome boy yours, however, sitting on your knee?" asked the King. "I have no child, Sire," answered Eindridi; "this boy is my sister's son. But if I may have a voice in his future, his lot will be the same

as if he were mine, for I could not love him more if he were my own son." Then the King asked, "Is there any temple on your estate?" and Eindridi answered, "There is no temple here." "What is your religion," asked the King, "if you are a heathen and yet offer no sacrifices?" Eindridi answered: "I shall seem, I fear, to talk very foolishly; but I would rather that you had spoken of some other matter that pleased you, and made no inquiries about my belief, for I don't think that I have any. I have determined with myself to put no trust in stocks or stones, images formed after the likeness of fiends or men, of whose deeds I know nothing. They are very powerful, I have been told; but the statement does not seem very probable, since, in my experience, those images, called gods, are altogether uglier and have less strength than I myself." "Why," the King asked, "do you not believe in the true God, who can do all things, and accept baptism in His name?" And Eindridi answered: "For one reason, neither you nor any one on your part has, before this time, come here to tell me of the works of that God whom you call Almighty. Then, also, there is the weightier reason, that while I would not believe what my father, and my kinsmen likewise, told me of their gods, I resolved never to accept your religion, which is altogether opposed to their belief, unless I perceived with my whole understanding that your God is as almighty as you say." The King therefore turned to his men, whom after the death of Skeggi of Yria he had sent all over Throntham to Christianise the people, and inquired if Eindridi's statement were true, that they had not preached to him the name of God. "It is true," they answered; "for at the time of our visit he was absent on a plundering expedition with his followers, and we forgot afterwards to make the fact known to you." The King then said to Eindridi: "Have you not heard, Eindridi, how I have punished those who would not yield to my words when I bade them become Christian?" "I have heard," answered Eindridi; "but I have no fear that you will inflict punishment on me. And to tell you the truth, I will yield compulsory service to no chief, and will rather suffer death than the tyranny of any man. And though you may have overawed others, yet you should know that our settlement here is so well manned that I need obey no man unwillingly. If you

threaten me not, with harsh terms, I will deal fairly with you according to my knowledge, while I continue to practise the same mode of life that I have hitherto practised." "Your words show me," said the King, "that you are bold in speech, and have the wisdom finally to recognise the truth; but at present we will speak no more of the subject than seems right to you. Let us now speak of something I have heard, which I feel sure is true. You are a very accomplished man; what are the accomplishments in which you think yourself more than ordinarily skilled?" "My answer is a short one, Sire," replied Eindridi; "I am not skilled in any accomplishments. I am a young man, little removed from childhood. I lost my father a short time ago, and since his death I have applied my mind chiefly to the management of the estate and the maintenance of the household. While he was alive, and I was a youth, he loved me so deeply that he never cared to thwart my wish; and from the time that I knew him and my kinsmen I behaved like many other children, making no effort to learn good breeding, but devoting myself to the heedless joys of boyhood until he died." "You might tell me the truth," said the King, "for I shall not grudge you your accomplishments; perhaps, if you speak candidly with me, He who first of all endowed you will cause your good breeding to be of advantage to you." "You press the matter hard," answered Eindridi; "let me say that I don't count myself an accomplished swimmer, though I look on when boys amuse themselves in the water." "It is good to avoid all self-praise and self-esteem," said the King; "you speak truly, however, when you say that a man may be a spectator at many sports before he is skilled in them himself. What next have you to speak of?" "I see that I shall not escape your importunity," answered Eindridi, "unless I make some answer to your request. I handled a bow when other boys shot at marks, but I am not a skilful archer." "Possibly," said the King, "you don't shoot straight at first. What do you reckon as your third accomplishment?" "You catch my words up sharply, Sire," replied Eindridi, "and I find it difficult to sail between the rock and the billow. To be silent with you is not becoming, and you turn my words, as seems good to you, into something different from what I meant to say. When I was a boy I used to play,

though awkwardly, with daggers, and I don't now reckon myself to be skilled in the game." "Possibly," said the King, "you may not play that game expertly before you have practised yourself in it. However, you have agreeably occupied us, and may now for this day be at liberty." Eindridi then went forth from the tent to his men.

The following day, after the King had sat awhile at table, he sent for Eindridi, and said to him, "Will you now allow yourself to be baptized, and accept the true Faith unresistingly?" "I am not so untrustworthy," answered Eindridi, "as to be of one mind yesterday and of another to-day." "I have thought out an agreement to make with you," said the King; "I will find one of my men to compete with you in the accomplishments that you mentioned yesterday; and if you are beaten, you shall believe in the true Lord Jesus Christ; if you are the better man, you shall be relieved from my importunity, and hold what religion you will." "I have not laid claim to any accomplishments," answered Eindridi, "for I have none. But 'a master's word is strong.' You shall decide between us on all occasions, if you will not show tyranny in compelling me to act contrary to my own words. Who is the man that you put forward as my opponent?" "I shall most likely compete with you myself, I think," said the King; "for in that case I shall best perceive what you are; and whichever of us proves the better, no disgrace will befall you. For if you surpass me, you will be renowned as a most accomplished man; but your victory will be yet far greater if I win in our contests and you accept the Christian religion, as I said." "Though I were the most skilled of men in all accomplishments," answered Eindridi, "as I now am in few or none, I must not compete with you." "'Twill be your best choice, I think," said the King, "not to compete, but to acknowledge yourself vanquished." "That choice will remain for me," answered Eindridi, "though I should first see you swim." After this the King and Eindridi went to the strand, accompanied by all the people, and having taken off their clothes, swam out from land. They then sported together for a long time, holding each other down beneath the water. At the last dive they remained so long below that there seemed small hope of their coming up again; but finally King Olaf appeared,

swam to land, and came on shore, where he rested without dressing himself. No one knew what had happened to Eindridi, or dared to ask the King about him. After a long while he was seen riding on something. He had caught a large seal, and was seated on its back guiding it, and holding its whiskers on both sides. Having come close to land, he let the seal go. Then the King sprang up and swam out to him, plunged him under water and held him below a long time. When they rose to the surface the King swam to land; but Eindridi was so exhausted that he could not recover himself; and the King, seeing his distress, swam out and assisted him. After Eindridi had regained his strength, and they had dressed, the King spoke, and said: "You have great skill, Eindridi, in feats of swimming, though you have to thank God that you were inferior to me, as all could see when I had to bring you ashore." "It is your privilege to place whatever value you wish on the deed," answered Eindridi. And the King asked him, "Why did you not kill the seal and drag him to land?" "Because," answered Eindridi, "I did not wish to give you the power of saying that I had found him dead."

The night now passed, and on the following day the King said that they would try their skill in shooting; and Eindridi answered: "I quite think, Sire, that you have taken unfair advantage of what I said about my accomplishments. There is no need for me to compete, for I happen to be even less acquainted with this art than the other." "I should be pleased if it were so," said the King; "you have again the choice of refusing and confessing yourself vanquished." "That choice will not be made for a good while," replied Eindridi; "but I imagine nobody can be over-pleased, even if he thinks it sport, to see the long distance between your skill and my awkward attempts." Thereupon they went to the wood which lay a short distance from the homestead. Here the King took off his cloak and fixed up a target at the butts, intending to shoot at long range. A bow and arrow were brought to him, with which he shot, and the arrow struck the outer portion of the target, where it remained fixed. Then Eindridi shot an arrow, hitting the target nearer, but not in, the centre. A second time the King shot, and the spectators, going up to the target, found the arrow fixed in the centre; it was a famous shot, they said. Eindridi

also praised the marksmanship of the King, saying there was no further need for him to shoot, he supposed. The King bade him retire from the contest if he wished, and confess himself surpassed in this accomplishment; but Eindridi replied that the opportunity to confess his inferiority would not be lost, though he should try his prowess first. Then he shot, and his arrow struck the notch at the head of the arrow that the King last shot, and both arrows remained fixed. Whereupon the King said: "You have won great renown, Eindridi, by your skill; of which, however, we must make a further trial. We will take the fair child whom you love so greatly, as you said the other day, and put him instead of a target in the way I will arrange." Thus they did, and the King ordered a chessman to be placed on the boy's head. "We shall now," he said, "strike the piece off without hurting the boy." "You can do as you wish," said Eindridi; "but if any injury is done to the boy, I shall want to avenge it." A long linen kerchief was then by the King's order tied round the boy's head, and the ends of it were held by two men, so that he could not make the slightest movement on hearing the whiz of the arrow. The King then went to the spot where he had to stand. Here he signed himself with the sign of the Cross, and made the same sign over the point of the arrow, causing Eindridi to colour deeply. The arrow flew, and passed under the chessman, leaving it behind on the boy's head; and the arrow grazed the boy's skull so closely that blood almost seemed to be oozing from the crown. The King then bade Eindridi to come to the place and shoot after him, if he would. But on the other side came up Eindridi's mother and sister and with many tears begged him to forbear. "I have no fear of injuring the boy if I shoot," he said to the King; "but I will not venture at this time." "You seem to me," replied the King, "as if you were vanquished." "Look upon my refusal as seems good to you," answered Eindridi; "doubtless you so construe it, as on the former occasion when I thought you biassed in your judgment of what passed between us." "Certainly I have been biassed," said the King, "but at all events you will reap the advantage." Then they all returned to the homestead, the King being in a most cheerful mood, and Eindridi likewise.

On the third day the King said to Eindridi, "The weather is

mild and calm; we must now try our skill at playing with the daggers." They all therefore went forth. Two daggers apiece were fetched for the King and Eindridi, with which they played for a while [throwing them into the air and catching them]. Then a third was brought for each of them; and as they played [keeping the three in the air at the same time], every dagger in turn was seen aloft and was caught by the hilt as it fell; and no one could discover any difference in the agility of the players. Thus they played for a long time, until the King said, "We have not yet made a full trial of our skill in this game." They went, therefore, to the strand, and on board a large warship off shore. Bidding the oarsmen to hold their oars on the water from one end of the ship to the other, the King walked along them, outside the ship, the whole length. At the same time he played with three daggers as skilfully as he had done on land; so likewise did Eindridi. All through the game the King preceded, and Eindridi followed. A second time, in the same manner as before, the King walked along the oars placed as for rowing, passing alongside the ship. He neither let the daggers fall on this occasion any more than on the first, nor did he wet his feet. He next went back along the oars on the other side, and thence up into the ship; but no one could understand how he performed the last feat. When he was come up into the ship, Eindridi stood before him and looked up to him in silence. "Why do you stand," said the King, "and cease to follow me in the game?" "You could not have done that feat, Sire, of your own unaided skill in any way. You have been helped by the power of the God in whom you trust. I perceive that He is all-powerful, and henceforth I shall believe that He only is God, and there is none other." King Olaf rejoiced to hear these words, and gave manifold praise to God, because He had granted such discernment to Eindridi. Then the King declared to him many mighty works of Almighty God, and Eindridi was afterwards baptized with all his followers. He became also a member of the King's body-guard, and sailed with him to Nidaros; and some say that he was with King Olaf on the *Long Serpent* and was slain in the battle [of Swold].

Quotations from the poet Hallarstein, bearing on King Olaf's greatness.

234, 236. We must now say that as King Olaf Tryggwason surpassed every other man of his time belonging to Northern lands, in height, strength, and skill in athletic feats, so he likewise excelled all kings in the extent of his munificence and in his liberality towards his men. Thus says Hallarstein:—

“War's mighty leader scattered gold, and gifts bestowed, of weapons, shields, and cloaks.

A source of song has he been to the wearers of gold.
The great-hearted lord of peace gave painted ships;
The prince's generous deeds no man did equal.”

In the winter-time King Olaf dwelt for the most part peacefully in his abode, attended by a large retinue, entertaining his friends and body-guard. Wherever the King was, there was no dearth of great feasting and gladness. Of this, Hallarstein makes mention:—

“Each winter-time, that night of bears, the royal guards
Could clasp the golden horns, made of the flour-of-the sea [gold].
And with them drank the joyous King.
The mighty generous prince of wide renown
Wine for his henchmen chose.”

In the summer-time King Olaf was ever out at sea on his war-ships, and sailed by the coast with his force. So says Hallarstein:—

“The eager whetter of blades oft passed his time on his sloops at sea.
The timbers were soaked; the billows fell.
The warlike leader let his gilded ship-sides gleam far from the havens,
And the dragons' mouths did gape.
Olaf is mightiest of the Kings of men
Beneath the dome of glorious sun,
Yea foremost altogether.”

When King Olaf's men rowed near land, along the coast, the King often afterwards walked along the oars outside the ship,

and at the same time with this feat, played with daggers. Thus says Hallarstein :—

“I reckon up the prince’s deeds.
Two skilful feats at once the King performed,
That few sword-warders e’er have done, I wot.
The hero of white shields, the reddener of shafts, skilled in many works,
Played cleverly with dirks, and walked upon the oars.”

Two of the King’s men lay a wager on their skill in climbing. King Olaf helps one of them in his distress.

237. King Olaf started from the north with his force, leaving Throntham as soon as he was ready, and sailed south by the coast. He made rather slow progress, for he lingered in several places to reform the faith of the people where he thought there was need, and to appoint stewards and bailiffs wherever he came. On this voyage there occurred many wonderful events which have found a place in story or in song.

King Olaf had brought his ships into a haven, close to which was a very high crag with exceeding steep precipices; and it happened one day that two of the King’s guardsmen were talking about their accomplishments, each thinking himself a better athlete than the other, and more expert in all feats of activity. They fell into dispute as to whether of the two was the more skilful in climbing steep rocks, and argued the matter with so much heat that at length they made a wager upon it, one of them laying his head against a gold bracelet of the other. Thus Hallarstein says :—

“Let all men know what I learnt.
Two royal guards, not weak of hand, a wager made ;
The one his head did risk, the other a bracelet bright.
These men, the King’s sword-polishers, each claimed
The other to surpass in climbing rocks.
Many great feats the warlike King performed.”

After their angry dispute and the laying of the wager, the two began to climb the rock. One advanced until he reached a dangerous spot and was on the point of falling, but made his way

back in terror, and succeeded, though with the utmost difficulty, in escaping uninjured. The other, advancing further, came high up on the face of the mountain. Here he neither dared go forward nor return, nor even stir, for there was but little hold either for hand or foot. Into such a position of extreme peril had he come that a fall was imminent, and certain death stared him in the face, if he should make the slightest attempt to move from the spot. In great terror he began to call out for the help of King Olaf or his men. So says Hallarstein :—

“ One of the prince’s men essayed the rock, undaunted,
The path was steep before the swayer of steel.
High on the face of the rock, nor up nor down could he move ;
For the wearer of gold, the flame of the sea,
Life was at an end.”

King Olaf heard his cry, and when he learnt the cause of it, bade his followers save the man. “ So valiant a deed,” said he, “ if one could succeed in it, would make a man a nobler fellow.” But seeing none come forward to make the attempt, he threw off his cloak and set off. Up the rock he ran towards the man, and coming to a level spot near him took hold of him under the arms and climbed yet further up the face of the precipice. So says Hallarstein :—

“ Eager the prince went forth to the steep rock,
And bravely followed the man, I wot.
Heeding his own good counsel, up the cliff the leader ran.
The King, for courage famed, took his guardsman under the arms,
And yet higher up the hill the ruler bore him.
’Twas a deed of the days of old.”

Then still holding the man under the arms, the King turned back down the rock, and set him unhurt on level ground. All present confessed King Olaf’s feat to be a deed of lofty courage, and it became widely celebrated afterwards.

King Olaf’s nightly wanderings, and Thorkel Tail’s injudicious curiosity. Of Thorkel’s cloak.

238. It used often to happen, when King Olaf passed the night on board his ships in harbour, and there were men on land keeping

watch, that the King came upon the watchmen unawares in the night, from the land side, while they thought he was asleep on board. They had not seen him go on shore, and no one knew how he got there, in spite of their watching and keeping ward. Moreover, though there might be a heavy and widespread dew on the ground, they were neither roused by his shoes nor the long garments that he wore, nor did they ever perceive any dew-track that marked his recent passage, though the grass was as thick as a fleece. The King's followers were very curious to know how this could happen, but no one ventured to ask him about it. One night Thorkel Tail, the King's uncle, kept watch that he might find out how the King thus passed to land from the *Serpent* without the knowledge of the watchmen, though they were on the lookout. When all were asleep on the *Serpent*, he rose up and dressed himself, and as he passed out of the castle on the poop, he noticed that King Olaf was then lying in bed. Thorkel went on shore, and sat down on a log of wood near the end of the gangway that stretched from the ship to the shore. He turned his back to land, and fixed his eyes on the ship, keeping himself awake, so that the King could not possibly leave the castle without his knowledge. Thorkel was fond of finery, and both in dress and all other expenses held himself like a great man. He was wearing at this time, it is said, a costly velvet cloak, lined with the best grey furs. In the morning, as dawn was appearing, Thorkel found himself seized by the shoulders, without warning, and cast suddenly into the water from off the log on which he was sitting. 'Twas King Olaf, from the land side; and as he flung Thorkel into the water he said, "Take that for your curiosity." Immediately afterwards he threw him a rope and pulled him on board the *Serpent*. Thus says Hallarstein:—

"I now record the fourth one of the mighty works,
 Marks of the glory of the warlike King,
 Who raised the rolling cloudy tempest of Skogul's board [war-shields].
 The high-souled speeder of the storm of hard brands
 Flung the bold Thorkel overboard from the *Serpent*."

The King, seeing Thorkel's eyes fixed on his cloak, said, "What now, kinsman, has your tail got wet?" Thorkel, supposing the King to be bantering him, made no answer, but threw the cloak

off in rather an angry mood. "Hold yourself cheerful and glad-some, kinsman," said the King; "'twas in pleasantry and jest I did it, and not to shame you. Why so recklessly throw away such a costly thing?" "It was really a good cloak," answered Thorkel; "but to say the truth, though it is now spoilt and useless, it is not the cloak that vexes me so, but the fear that you are displeased at my doings." "Nothing of what you do displeases me, kinsman Thorkel," said the King; "perhaps, too, the cloak has suffered no harm." Thorkel then regained all his cheerfulness. The King, taking up the cloak, spread it before him, and after holding his hands upon it for a little while, returned it to Thorkel. The velvet and fur lining were both dry, and the cloak was altogether such as before it was wet, if not better. Thus says Hallarstein :—

"The warder great of many lands wrought harm to the spearman's precious cloak ;

The ruler spared not to redress the wrong.

Under the prince's hand, in the twinkling of an eye,

Fair as before, if not more fair, was made

Both velvet and grey skin."

Thorkel Tail was the best of loving friends to King Olaf, as well as his kinsman, and the King bestowed on him all that he thought fit to ask. He also told Thorkel many things in confidence that he would not have others know. In one of Thorkel's many conversations with the King when they were together by themselves, he boldly asked why the King went on shore with such secrecy in the night; saying that he acted unwarily, and not like a chief, in going to a distance from the ships, alone and unaccompanied. To which remark the King made no reply, except that no harm would happen to him.

The vision of Thorkel Tail, in which he sees King Olaf in the company of angels.

239. Though Thorkel Tail was reckoned captain of the *Crane*, conjointly with his brother Jostein, he was continually on the *Long Serpent* with the King, and lay at nights in the fore-room

by the castle. One night he felt his feet gently touched, and following up the hand that touched him, he found King Olaf there. He then dressed himself quickly and without a word; and the King, taking him by the arm, passed with him over the gangway. When they were come on shore, the King said to him: "If, as you say, you are so desirous to know with what object I go ashore by myself in the night season, you shall now go with me. But you must first promise me not to tell any man of what you see or hear this night, as long as I am King over Norway, and you know that I am alive. Be assured that your life depends on your secrecy." Thorkel at once made him the promise in perfect good faith. Then they entered the wood, and walked until they reached an open space, wherein was a beautiful building, towards which they went. Coming to one of the side walls close by the entrance, the King ordered Thorkel to wait there for him; he himself opened the door, went in, and closed it from the inside. Going near, Thorkel found a hole in the door, through which he looked and beheld King Olaf on his knees in prayer, his hands raised above his head. The whole room next became full of a light shining on the King, so brilliant that Thorkel could scarcely bear to look at it, and with the light was an exquisite odour, the like of which he had never experienced. Then he beheld men, clad in snow-white garments and shining like the sun, enter the room and approach the King. They placed their hands over his head, and clothed him with glorious royal apparel; and then all joined with sweet voice in a noble song of praise to God, such as Thorkel never heard before nor since. At this sight he was both rejoiced and overawed, so that he could scarcely stand upright; and falling down to the ground, he thanked God that he had been permitted to behold this glorious vision. Thus says Hallarstein:—

"Abundant falls the rain of poesy, mead of the dwarfs.
Clear witness unto all his glorious works was given
A fifth time to the arrow-reddener.
For victory eager, of virtue studious, the King,
Adorned and fairer than the sun, was seen
With the Lord's apparelled angels in a room."

Shortly afterwards the King came forth from the building, and

they then returned to the ships. Thorkel faithfully kept his promise to the King, and told no one of the occurrence till many years after King Olaf ceased to rule in Norway; and he then brought forward many proofs that he had seen and heard what we have now related. His story appeared credible to discreet persons, for he was accounted a man of note, and truthful.

Bishop Sigurd's vision of King Olaf.

240. A story is also told, that one day on a progress, after King Olaf had heard Mass, he went to his room and sat down to a banquet with all his men. Suddenly the King disappeared from the high-seat. They could not see him, and yet were all conscious that he had not left the room. Each man asked his neighbour where could be the King; but no one was able to answer the question. Bishop Sigurd heard the talking, and said: "I can tell you quite well where he is. He is standing right in the middle of the floor, and is speaking with one whom you cannot see, and therefore you see not the King. Shortly afterwards those present beheld the King seated in his place, and supposed, therefore, that he had been speaking with an angel of God. Every one thought the occurrence of great import; but no one dared speak of it further, or ask the King himself in what manner it happened. Two things God wished to make clear to men by this event: the merit of King Olaf, though the King himself would have hidden it; and the saintliness of Bishop Sigurd, who was privileged to see and to tell others what no man present could then know except the King. So too, when afterwards the fame of King Olaf Tryggwason was spread abroad, there was repeated a saying of discreet men concerning him. They said that on some grounds there seemed to them reason for doubt whether King Olaf was merely a mortal man, or a messenger from heaven sent by God for the salvation of mankind.

King Olaf marries his sister Ingibjorg to Rognwald, Earl of Gautland.

241. King Olaf sailed south with his force beyond Stad, having in his company Queen Thyri, and his sister Ingibjorg, Tryggwi's

daughter. He was here joined by many of his friends, powerful chiefs, prepared to accompany him on his voyage. Foremost of these was his brother-in-law Erling Skialgson, who brought with him his large sloop that had thirty benches for rowers, and was excellently manned. There arrived also his kinsmen from the Wick in the east, Hyrning and Thorgeir, each in command of a large ship. Many other chiefs joined the King, and the whole expedition sailed in a southerly direction, following the coast. When the King reached Rogaland, he delayed there, because Erling had prepared a splendid entertainment for him at Soli. Here Earl Rognwald Ulfson arrived from Gautland in the east. He had come to visit King Olaf, and see about the fulfilment of the agreement, made through an embassy in the winter, that he should marry Ingibjorg, the King's sister. King Olaf welcomed him heartily, and when the marriage was discussed, the King said that he would abide by his word and marry Ingibjorg to the Earl, if the Earl would adopt and hold the Christian religion, and baptize all those who were subject to his authority. To these terms the Earl consented, and was then baptized with all his company. The entertainment prepared by Erling was prolonged into a marriage feast, at which the Earl espoused Ingibjorg, Tryggwi's daughter. King Olaf had now given all his sisters in marriage. The Earl and Ingibjorg prepared for their journey home, and King Olaf supplied him with clergy to Christianise the Gautland folk, and instruct them in the true Faith. The King and the Earl separated on the most friendly terms.

The prophecy of the blind yeoman of Moster. King Olaf in Wendland.

242. After the marriage of his sister Ingibjorg, King Olaf made preparations for a hasty departure on his voyage. His force was both well equipped and numerous, and he had sixty ships of war. As he sailed by South Hordaland, he stopped at Moster with his whole fleet. In this island there was an old man, now blind, who was reputed to have great foresight and prophetic power. After the ships had come to anchor and all was ready, the King chose certain men to land with him on the island. Here they went to

the old man's house, and entering it, were asked by one in charge, "Who they were, and where were they going?" One of the company answered: "We are merchants from the country, travelling with our wares." "What can you tell us," said the man, "of King Olaf's voyage and his force?" They told him that King Olaf had brought his whole fleet close to the island. Then the old man heaved a deep sigh, and speaking with a troubled voice, said: "Ah me! in the departure of our King we shall suffer a heavy loss. 'Tis ill-hap to the men of Norway to lose in one voyage four things, the most noble of their kind that ever came into the land." Then the spokesman of the strangers asked him: "What are those four things, so noble, you say, that their like has never hitherto been seen?" The blind man answered: "First of the list, is the King Olaf Tryggwason, whose like has never been, as all may see, for on that point all wise men are agreed. To lose such a leader will be a heavy loss, for never has King ruled over the whole people so honourably and so hopefully as King Olaf. Second of the list, I reckon Queen Thyri; of her I hear all with one consent bear testimony that no such queen, for sense and goodness, has ever come into Norway. The third is King Olaf's ship the *Long Serpent*; concerning which all are agreed that no ship like it has been built in Norway. The fourth is the King's dog Wigi, more sagacious and clever by nature than any other dog in the land. We have cause to fear such an ill-fortune as often happens; the ill-fortune, to lose quickly, and after only a short possession, things that in their kind are much more noble than others." Then the King bade his men return to the ships. After they had gone outside and were standing before the door, the blind man said: "True it is, that to live to old age and suffer loss of sight is a grievous lot. Old people all travel by the same road; not only does their sight grow dim, but with bodily blindness comes decay of mental perception. I should not have said as much as I have said if I had known what I now know, that I was speaking to King Olaf himself. However, I cannot recall what I have said. Most probably, however, they will give little heed to my idle talk, though it were better to heed it." Then King Olaf, with his men, walked down to the ships.

As soon as there was a favourable wind, he sailed south with the whole fleet to Denmark, and after passing through Eyrasund

continued his voyage south and reached Wendland. Here he arranged a conference with King Burislaf; and when the Kings met to confer with one another about the estates which King Olaf claimed, the whole discussion passed off in a friendly manner; King Burislaf showing great readiness to accept King Olaf's interpretation of his rights. King Olaf made a long stay in Wendland during the summer, meeting many of his friends there. Astrid, King Burislaf's daughter, came to see him. She was the wife of Earl Sigwaldi, and a very special friend of King Olaf, both because of old ties, for the King had been married to her sister, and because of his former popularity when he lived as King in Wendland.

The doings of Earl Eric Hakonson after he fled from Norway to avoid King Olaf. He marries the daughter of Swein Forkbeard, the Danish King.

243. Earl Eric Hakonson fled from Norway after the death of his father Earl Hakon, as we have already related. He first went to Sweden to see Olaf the Swede, King of the Swedes, who received him kindly, and offered him an asylum. Olaf also bestowed on him large revenues, so that he could there maintain himself and his force in comfort. Thus says Thord Kolbeinson in his Praise of Belgskagi:—

“Repeller of wolfish rovers !” &c.

Earl Eric remained in Sweden throughout the winter, and collected around him a large force of men that fled from Norway on account of King Olaf Tryggwason. The following summer, Eric, having obtained ships, decided on making plundering expeditions to acquire wealth and increase his force. He first led his fleet to Gotland, where he remained a long part of the summer, waylaying Wickings and merchants who resorted thither with their ships. At times he went on shore and plundered far and wide in the districts bordering on the sea. As it is said in the Banda-Lay:—

“The warrior battles won, yet many more;
Of one besides the former we are told,
When he fought a Wali's-fence [battle] of hawks-of-Wirvil's-strand [ships],
Off much harried Gotland.”

Earl Eric afterwards sailed south to Wendland, and off Staur he came upon several ships under the command of Wickings, whom he attacked and defeated, causing great slaughter. As it is said in the Banda-Lay :—

“The ruler turned his prow-steed’s head to Staur.
Thus the prince arranged his men.
At the swords’ fierce meeting, by the sandy point,
The carrion sea-mew tore the heads of the Wickings.
Eric, eager for the spear-storm, joins battle,
[And subdues the land by the will of the gods.]
Rejoicing in war, the Earl henceforth rules the god-protected country.”

In the course of the summer Earl Eric sailed to Denmark to visit Swein Forkbeard, the King of the Danes, and proposed marriage to his daughter Gyda. His proposals were accepted, and Earl Eric married Gyda. The following winter they had a son, whom they called Hakon. After the marriage with Gyda, and the summer spent in plundering, he sailed back to Sweden in the autumn, and remained there the second winter. The next spring, after he had prepared his force, he sailed east into the Baltic. When he reached the realm of King Waldamar he began to plunder, slaying the inhabitants, burning their houses wherever he went, and laying the country waste. Arriving at Aldeigiaburg, he laid siege to it until he took it. Here he slew many people, burnt and destroyed the borough, and then harried the realm of Garda far and wide. So it is said in the Banda-Lay :—

“The sea-flame’s [gold] brightener went forth to waste
Waldamar’s land with the fire-of-battle [sword].
Whereat the storm increased.
Thou terror to men ! thou didst destroy Aldeigia.
A hard fight thou hadst when thou camest east to Garda with thy men.
We have understanding to learn.”

Five summers Earl Eric spent in all these plundering expeditions, and the winters he passed in Denmark with his father-in-law, King Swein Forkbeard ; but he abode occasionally in the realm of the Swedes. Swein, the Danish King, had married Gunnhild, daughter of Burislaf, King of the Wends, and after her death, as we have already related, he married Queen Sigrid the Proud, the mother

of Olaf, the Swedish King. A close intimacy sprung up between the Kings in consequence of their relationship by marriage, and both of them became intimate with Earl Eric.

King Swein is incited by Queen Sigrid the Proud to form a plot against King Olaf Tryggwason.

244. Queen Sigrid was a very great enemy of King Olaf Tryggwason ; and she had a reason for her hostility, for he had broken his agreement with her, and struck her on the face. She was continually pondering how, by some treacherous device, she might avenge her dishonour, and many a day she was sick at heart and sorrowful. She urgently incited King Swein to give battle to King Olaf Tryggwason, but for a long time he paid little heed to her words. Then in the spring, tidings came to Denmark that King Olaf had a fleet out at sea, purposing to sail to Wendland in the summer. One day it happened that King Swein came into Queen Sigrid's room, and finding her sad, inquired the cause. "The cause of my sadness," she answered, "will continue to vex me. I have married a King who dares not avenge upon Olaf Tryggwason the wrong that he has done me. But I cannot expect you to take vengeance for my dishonour when you neglect even to avenge your own disgrace." "What is that great disgrace," asked King Swein, "which you say Olaf has done me?" "It is a great dishonour to you," answered the Queen, "that he has taken your sister Thyri as he would take a mistress, not even paying you so much regard as to let you give her away." Then King Swein replied: "What disgrace was it to me when King Olaf married my sister? He is so famous a King that I could not have found her a better husband if I had made the match myself." "I agree with you," said Sigrid, "that Olaf Tryggwason is in many respects superior to all other Kings in Northern lands, and also that your sister is every way very well married in being his wife ; yet it is a very great shame to a King such as you consider yourself to be, that he made you his brother-in-law whether you wished it or not, and showed the little esteem he had for you by marrying your sister without your leave and without your knowledge. But he has done you yet a much greater disgrace. Without a word to

you, he has established himself in your dependency, a country that is yours by right of inheritance, and now holds the realm of Norway, paying you neither tax nor tribute. Your kinsmen that preceded you would not have suffered such things, one upon another; but you behave as if you were unconscious of any disgrace at all." "I suppose," answered the King, "that I have come to endure such wrongs because King Olaf is so experienced in battle, and performs such deeds of valour, he and his champions, that he has never been defeated, though he has had to fight against overwhelming odds. Further, I have neither the means nor the daring to attack him in his own realm, when I consider his popularity with the chiefs and the whole people within the confines of Norway." "I agree with you," said the Queen, "that Olaf Tryggwason is in many respects the foremost of all the Kings of Northern lands. But you will appear insignificant and degenerate if you dare not maintain your honour against other chiefs; for you would never suffer such injurious treatment if you desired to imitate your kinsmen and ancestors. I will take care that you neither need attack King Olaf in Norway, nor lack forces to lead against him, if your courage does not fail you."

Queen Sigrid had often speech of this kind in her mouth, and at length succeeded in persuading King Swein to become a thorough enemy of King Olaf; and he inquired of her by what means he might reach Olaf Tryggwason without leading a warlike force into Norway. "That will be easily done," she answered; "I have learnt that King Olaf is preparing to leave Norway with a naval force of no great size, and intends to sail south to Wendland in the summer. We will send word to my son Olaf, King of the Swedes, and to Earl Eric Hakonson, your son-in-law, and ask them to afford you assistance. Suppose they bring their warlike strength to your aid, which I feel sure they will be ready to do, you are no man, in my opinion, if you let Olaf Tryggwason sail south through your territory and back again free from attack; and if you don't either slay him, or drive him from his realm, because of the great wrongs that you have to avenge upon him. If you three chiefs, with all the warlike host of the Danes and Swedes, and the force of Earl Eric, feel that you cannot fearlessly face him, you shall send south to Earl Sigwaldi in Wendland. You have rightfully outlawed Sigwaldi from your realm. Let

him purchase his peace with you, and regain his possessions and residence in Denmark, by paying a visit to Olaf Tryggwason and devising deceitful plots against him. Let him either draw away Olaf's host from his side, or bring Olaf unawares within your reach; for if the force with the King is small, you will have no great work to do with your host in depriving him of life." Then did King Swein and Sigr d talk of the scheme, and decide upon the whole plan of action.

The allied conspirators assemble their forces. Sigvaldi's treachery. Dissatisfaction in King Olaf's fleet at the delay in Wendland.

245. Shortly afterwards King Swein sent messengers east to Sweden to King Olaf, his stepson, and Earl Eric, to inform them that Olaf, King of Norway, had a fleet at sea, and intended to sail south to Wendland in the summer. With these tidings he sent a request that Olaf, King of the Swedes, and the Earl, would collect their forces in the summer, and would then join him, that they might together all give battle to Olaf, King of Norway. When the King of the Swedes and Earl Eric were fully prepared for the voyage, and had collected together a large naval force from Sweden, they sailed south with it to Denmark, where they arrived after King Olaf had already passed on his voyage eastward. Halldor the Unchristian, in his poem on Earl Eric, relates that the Earl went to sea with a fleet from Sweden, accompanied by many volunteers:—

"The vanquisher of kings, fierce in the storm of swords,
Summoned from Sweden a numerous host.
The prince went south to battle.
Thou fattener of carrion-wasps! to follow thee
Each man was wishful, Eric.
The raven, mew of wounds, found drink at sea."

Olaf, King of the Swedes, and Earl Eric held on their course till they met with Swein, King of the Danes, and when their forces were all joined together, there was a countless host.

King Swein, following the advice that Queen Sigr d gave him,

had sent for Earl Sigwaldi, son of Strut-Harold of Skaney, and made peace with him. The King bade him go to Wendland during the summer to get information about the movements of King Olaf Tryggwason, and contrive so that King Swein and King Olaf might meet. Sigwaldi then proceeded on his way, and having reached Wendland, went to Jomsburg, and afterwards to see Olaf Tryggwason; and by means of fair words and professions of friendship, worked himself into the closest intimacy with the King. Earl Sigwaldi was a shrewd and sagacious man, and having entered into the King's plans, greatly delayed his return voyage from the east by means of one pretext after another; but King Olaf's force, anxious to reach home, were very impatient at the long delay after they were quite ready to start and the wind promised to be favourable. Secret information from Denmark now came to Earl Sigwaldi, that the forces of the Swedish King Olaf and Earl Eric had arrived from the east, and also that the Danish King's force was ready; likewise that the three chiefs were about to sail with their whole host to the coast of Wendland, determined to await King Olaf Tryggwason at the island called Swold. And word was sent to the Earl that he should make such arrangements as would enable them there to meet with Olaf, King of Norway.

Then a rumour found its way to Wendland that the Danish King Swein had a fleet at sea; and a report spread quickly about that probably he had hostile intentions towards Olaf, King of Norway. When these things came to Earl Sigwaldi's hearing, he spoke to King Olaf and said: "This idle rumour that you have heard is a monstrous lie; for you have with you so large and fine a fleet that King Swein, with only the Danish force, has no wish to seek a battle with you. And if you have any suspicion that hostilities await you, I will join you with my fleet. Time was, that when the Wickings of Jom sided with chiefs, they were supposed to bring some strength with them. I will supply you with ten ships well manned." This offer the King accepted. The hostile rumour, coming to the ears of the King's men, made them complain still more loudly at having uselessly to remain there so long when they were prepared to sail. The King, being made aware of their complaints, summoned one morning an Assembly of his men, at which he stood up and thus spoke: "I wish to thank all

of you, my men, for your support and company afforded me this summer, and I excuse you for thinking that you have now been altogether too long absent from your estates. Wherefore I now give each of you permission to return home as soon as ever his ship is ready to sail; but I shall thank more heartily and reward liberally those who do not hurry their departure, but accompany me to Norway." Hearing this speech, the people were all well pleased, and expressed their thanks to the King. One powerful elderly man in the King's force stood up and thus spoke: "Our King that is over us is unlike other kings, surpassing them in might and accomplishments, and still further in liberality and universal good-nature. Now, though his indulgent kindness gives us permission to sail home, each as soon as we will, it behoves us to use this power to act for ourselves so as to afford him trust-worthy support. We must not separate ourselves from him so long as he is outside his own realm, especially as our ears have heard a rumour that his foes are devising treacherous plots against him. It will be our highest honour to afford him the support that he may need, a support the more valiant as we have a more famous leader than other warriors possess. Let us bear in mind that if the misfortune befall us, which God forbid, to lose him when we are not by his side, it will overwhelm us with a sorrow that will last to the end of life, and bring with it a calamity without redress." This speech received the applause of but few, and the whole host went away. King Olaf then ordered the ships to be loosed from their moorings, and the signal for departure being sounded, the crews hoisted sail. King Olaf had sixty ships under him, as we have before mentioned, and Earl Sigwaldi eleven, when they left the haven. Halldor the Unchristian mentions that the combined fleet consisted of seventy-one ships when they sailed away from Wendland. These are his words:—

"The King of the Isles sailed from the south with seventy ships and one;
The worthy lord of ships reddened swords in battle.
After the Earl had summoned from the Skaney folk
The masted reindeer-of-the-sea to a fight,
Peace was broken among the sons of men."

Astrid warns King Olaf of the plot against him.

246. The night before King Olaf's departure from Wendland, of which we shall next speak in the Saga, Astrid, the wife of Earl Sigwaldi, and daughter of King Burislaf, is said to have visited him. She told him, giving him clear proofs of the truth of what she said, that the Danish King, the Swedish King, and Earl Eric, with an overwhelming host, were lying in wait for him; and she begged the King, with much good-will, not to fall into the ambush prepared by his foes. But the King answered her: "I must not let such idle rumours turn me from my voyage when I know not how much truth there is in them. My friend Sigwaldi would doubtless inform me if he knew of any plots laid against me. And though I were convinced of the truth of what you say, I would not shirk an encounter with my foes, for God has the power to give the kingdom to whom He will." Then said Astrid: "I will ask you, therefore, to receive from me such help as I can give you, if you need it in retiring from the contest." "I will accept your aid," answered the King, "if there is need;" and after this conversation they parted.

King Olaf's departure from Wendland. The Wendish smack.

247. As the ships left the shelter of the land on the day that King Olaf let his fleet go from harbour, they met with a light and favourable wind, under which all the smaller craft made greater way, and sailed out first to sea. Earl Sigwaldi kept his ships close to the King's, and calling out, bade the King sail after him. "I know well," he said, "where lies the deepest water in the straits between the islands, and your large ships will need it." He then led the way with his fleet, and King Olaf followed with his large ships. As soon as Earl Sigwaldi came near the island of Swold, he was met by a crew of oarsmen in a skiff, who informed him that the hosts of the Danish and Swedish Kings lay in the harbour in front of him. The Earl then took in sail, and used the oars to bring his ships, though slowly withal, under

shelter of the island. He had with him ten ships that he had promised King Olaf if the King should need their help. There was an eleventh, a Wendish ship, said to be manned by Astrid's men, King Burislaf's daughter. This vessel, a smack, accompanied the Earl's ships as they turned to the island, but without coming very close to them. The Earl was followed in his northerly course by King Olaf with his large ships, of which he had eleven with him, the remainder of his host having all sailed away to sea. So says Hallarstein:—

“With eight sloops and three the arrow-reddener dared
To sail the last time to the mouth of the Swold.
Fair was the breeze,
O'er the domain of fishes glided the *Long Serpent*,
The leader steered ; his brave retainers plied the oars.”

*The Danes and Swedes watch King Olaf's fleet sailing by.
They admire the size of the Northmen's ships.*

248. Swein the Danish King, Olaf the Swedish King, and Earl Eric lay there under the island with their whole host, as we have already said. The wind was fair, and the sun shone bright. All the leaders of the fleet, attended by large companies of the host, then went up on the island. When they saw many of the Northmen's ships sail out together seawards, they rejoiced greatly, for the host was disappointed at lying idle so long, that to some of them the prospect of a meeting with Norway's King seemed hopeless. And then a large and splendid ship sailed forth, and the Kings both said, “That is a large ship, uncommonly fine ; it must be the *Long Serpent*.” “That is not the *Long Serpent*,” said Eric ; “the *Serpent* will be found a much larger and grander ship, though that one is both large and fine.” And the Earl was right, for that ship was owned by Styrkar of Gimsa. Soon after, they beheld another ship sailing forth, much larger than the former, and it had a beak. “Here will be the *Long Serpent*,” said King Swein ; “let us go now to our ships, that we be not too late to meet with them.” “That ship is not the *Long Serpent*,” answered Earl Eric, “though she is well built.” And the Earl was right,

for that ship belonged to Thorkel Neb, the brother of King Olaf; but Thorkel himself was not on board. Again they watched a large fine ship sail forth. "There you may now see the King's ship," said King Swein. "That is a large and splendid ship, of a truth," answered the Earl; "but the *Long Serpent* is a much more goodly vessel." Directly afterwards there came in view the fourth large ship. These two were owned by the Wick chiefs, the King's brothers-in-law, Thorgeir and Hyrning; who, however, were not on board commanding them, but were both on the *Long Serpent* with King Olaf. In a little time a fifth ship sailed forth, much larger than those that had gone before, and King Swein, laughing, said, "Olaf Tryggwason is afraid now; he dares not sail with the dragon's head on his ship." "That is not the King's ship," answered Earl Eric; "I know it well, and its striped sail; it belongs to Erling Skialgson of Jadar. Let it go; for there are valiant fellows on board that ship, I tell you of a truth; and if we give battle to Olaf Tryggwason, a vacant place in the King's fleet will suit us better than that ship, so well manned as she is, for Erling Skialgson himself, I imagine, is steering the sloop." Then Olaf, the Swedish King, spoke and said: "We must not be in too much dread of giving battle to Olaf Tryggwason, though he owns a large ship; for it will be an irreparable disgrace to us if we lie here with an overwhelming force while he sails away to sea on the high-road." "Sire," answered Earl Eric, "let that ship sail away as those that went before it; for I tell you good tidings and true, that King Olaf has not yet sailed past us. You will this day, certainly, have the chance of fighting with him. And though we three, leaders by name of this host, have each of us brought here a great force, we shall most likely feel such a shock of battle before the day is over that we shall consider ourselves to have quite enough to conquer, though the ship that has now sailed past be not engaged in the fray." And Earl Eric guessed truly, for Erling was on board his sloop, and many other valiant men with him, friends of the King, and he never again saw King Olaf, his brother-in-law, from whom he was now sailing away. Not long after these five large ships had sailed past, preceded by the whole fleet of smaller ones, the Kings recognised Earl Sigwaldi's ships, which bent their course directly towards the island. These were followed by three ships, one of which was a large

beaked ship. "Let the men go to their ships," said King Swein; "here comes now the *Long Serpent*." "They have many other large and splendid ships," answered Earl Eric, "besides the *Long Serpent*; few of these have yet sailed past; let us wait." Then several men spoke out and said: "You may see now that Earl Eric has no mind to fight against Olaf Tryggwason, and does not dare to avenge his father. What a disgrace will it be to us when the story is told over all the lands, that we lay here with so great a force, while Norway's King, with only a handful of men compared to our host, sailed forth to sea in our very sight." Earl Eric was very angry when he heard this, and bidding the men go all to their ships, said: "Though you Danes and Swedes now question greatly my courage, I expect that both of you will be no less tired of the fight than I and mine before the sun sinks this evening into the sea." As they moved down from the island they saw four great ships sailing forth, one of which was a large dragon ornamented with gold. "The Earl spoke truth," said several; "here comes now the *Long Serpent*. 'Tis a wonderfully fine and handsome ship. Never warship has been built in Northern lands its equal for beauty and size. No wonder the King is renowned far and wide, whose magnificence causes such splendid works to be done." King Swein then stood up and said: "The *Long Serpent* shall carry me on high this evening. I shall have the steering of her." On which Earl Eric remarked: "Though King Olaf Tryggwason had no bigger ship than the one we now see, King Swein, with nothing but his Danish host, would never be able to win it from him." Now the large beaked ships which they had taken to be the *Long Serpent*, were the *Crane* first, and after it the *Short Serpent*. All the people now hastened on board their ships and took down the awnings. The chiefs arranged the plan of battle, drawing lots, it is said, who should lead the attack on the King's ship, the *Long Serpent*. The lot fell on Swein the Danish King, to make the first onset, and after him on Olaf the Swedish King, and last of all on Earl Eric, if there should be need. It was agreed that each of the three should keep whichever ships he himself with his own force disabled and won from King Olaf. While the chiefs were engaged conferring with one another on the matters mentioned, three large ships appeared, followed by a fourth. As the prow of the latter ship came into sight,

they beheld a great dragon's head, ornamented so that it seemed of pure gold, and it gleamed far over the sea as the sun shone upon it. After the prow was seen, there was a long interval before the stern came into view; and the beholders were wonder-struck at the length of the ship, all, without a dissentient voice, recognising the *Long Serpent*. Many were silent at the sight, which shot instant fear and terror into the hearts of the crowd; and we cannot wonder, for that great ship was bearing death to many and many a man of them. "Right and proper is it," said Earl Eric, "that such a noble ship should belong to Olaf Tryggwason, for he is truly said to surpass other kings as much as the *Long Serpent* surpasses other ships."

*King Olaf falls into the snare. His preparations for battle.
The Wendish smack.*

249. When Thorkel Tail of the *Crane*, and the captains of the other ships that accompanied the *Crane*, saw that Earl Sigwaldi had lowered his sails and was rowing his ships close under the isle, they likewise lowered their sails and rowed after him. Thorkel called out to the Earl, and inquired why he did not proceed. The Earl replied that he wished to wait for King Olaf. "I fear greatly," he said, "that there is an enemy in front." Then they let their ships drift, until Thorkel Neb sailed up with the *Short Serpent* and the three other ships that accompanied her. The same tidings were told them, and they also lowered sail and let the ships drift, awaiting King Olaf. Meanwhile, as the allied fleets lay under shelter within harbour, they could not see how great a host the enemy had. When King Olaf sailed from the mainland towards the island, and saw that his men had lowered their sails and were waiting for him, he steered his ship to windward of them, and inquired why they did not proceed. They answered that there was a hostile force in the way, and begged him to flee. Hearing these tidings, the King stood up in the castle and called to his men: "Lower the sail as quick as possible; let some of you put your oars in the water and bring the ship to rest. I will gladly fight rather than flee; never yet have I fled from battle. God see to my life, I shall never take to flight, for

he is no true king that runs away from his foes in fear. Thus says Hallfred :—

“The famous foe of flight had never yet given way,
The shielder of men let see that courage pleased him more.”

The King's order was now obeyed, and the *Serpent* having glided past the other ships, their crews brought them up to it with their oars. Then from under shelter of the island the whole hostile fleet was rowed forward, the chiefs being greatly pleased at seeing King Olaf fallen into their snares. When King Olaf Tryggwason and all his men beheld the sea widely covered on every side of them with the warships of their foes, one of them, Thorkel Tail, a wise and valiant man, and the King's uncle, said to him: “Sire, the odds are too great to be resisted; let us hoist our sails and follow our force upon the high seas. We may easily do it while our foes are preparing for battle. It is not deemed cowardice in any man to adopt prudent measures for himself and his force.” With a loud voice King Olaf answered: “Tie the ships together, prepare yourselves for battle, and draw your swords. My men must not think of flight.” Thus says Hallfred the Troublesome Poet :—

“I'll tell the speech of the valorous King, men say that he spoke
To his heroes of battle, at the encounter of weapons,
The repeller of warlike hosts bade his men ‘think not of flight.’
The brave words of the people's comrade will live.”

King Olaf caused the signal to be sounded for laying side by side the eleven ships which he had with him. The King's ship was placed in the centre of his force, with the *Short Serpent* on one side and the *Crane* on the other, and the remaining ships were placed next to them, four on each side. Although the King's ships were large, his men formed but a small company beside the overwhelming host of his foes, and he now, as may be supposed, missed his absent host. By many sagacious men it has been said that King Olaf would speedily have gained the victory over his antagonists if there had been with him those five large ships of which we spoke, and all the fleet that had sailed away; for these missing ships had on board many a brave hero, and the three

hostile leaders, with their overwhelming host, had a hard task to overcome the King and such few ships as he had. Hallfred tells us that King Olaf felt the loss of the force that had sailed on ahead, and won for himself great renown in the battle. Thus he says:—

“When the King engaged in fight, I think of a surety
 He much missed the help of his Thronish heroes.
 Many people were turned to flight.
 Alone the skilful sovereign lord withstood two doughty Kings and the
 Earl, a third opponent.
 To tell of such deeds is a glorious custom.”

King Olaf's men were now placing the ships alongside each other at his bidding, when the King observed that they were fastening together the prows of the *Long Serpent* and the *Short Serpent*; and he called aloud: “Lay the big ship more in front. My place in this warlike host is not at the back of all my men, the furthest in the rear when battle begins.” Then Ulf the Red, standard-bearer and forecastle-man of the King, spoke and said: “If the *Serpent* lies beyond the other ships by as much as she is bigger and longer than they, there will be hard fighting in the prow.” “I had the *Serpent* built of greater length than other ships,” answered the King, “that she might stretch the more boldly beyond them in battle, and be easily recognised whether in fight or under sail. But I knew not then that I had a forecastle-man both red and recreant.” “Show not your back, O King, in defending the castle,” replied Ulf, “before I do in defending the prow.” The King had a bow in his hand, and laying an arrow on the bow-string, turned to Ulf, who said: “Not at me, Sire; shoot at your foes rather, where there is more need. What I win in fight, I win for you; maybe you will not think your men too numerous here, before evening comes.” The King removed the arrow without shooting; and while the two were talking, the Wendish smack, which had mostly held aloof from the other ships during the day in sailing from the south, was seen to run up to the hinder part of the *Serpent* at the castle, so swiftly that the eye could scarcely follow it. On its prow there stood up one who spoke with the King in a strange language, and the King answered in the same, so that the Northmen understood not. After they had spoken together for a short time, the little ship was rowed close to shore,

and there its crew cast anchor; and when the King's men asked who the strangers were that had been speaking with him, he answered, "They are our Wendish acquaintances."

Battle of Swold. The onset of the Danes repelled, and also that of the Swedes.

250. King Olaf was standing in the castle of the *Serpent*, thus having a commanding position. It was easy to distinguish him from others, for he carried a shield overlaid with gold, and was wearing a gilded helmet, and a short red silken kirtle over his coat of mail. When he saw the hosts of his opponents beginning to move, and the standards of the chiefs set up, he asked his men, "What chief is that whose standard is over against us?" and he was told that King Swein was there with the Danish host. "We are not afraid of those cravens," he replied. "There is no more courage in Danes than in goats of the forest. Danes have never won a victory over Northmen, and will not conquer us to-day any more than in time past. What chief is that whose standards are beyond, on the right hand?" He was told that King Olaf the Swede was there with the Swedish host. "The Swedes," he replied, "will deem it easier and pleasanter work to sit at home and lick their sacrificial bowls than to board the *Long Serpent* to-day in face of your weapons. I don't think we need be afraid of the horse-eating Swedes. Whose are those great ships that lie to seaward of the Danes?" "There," they answered, "is Earl Eric Hakonson." And King Olaf said: "They have arrayed their hostile force under men of high rank. Earl Eric will expect a worthy encounter with us, and we may look out for a fierce battle with him and his men, for they are Northmen like ourselves."

The Kings and the Earl next caused their ships to be rowed into position. Snorri Sturluson and nearly all other narrators say that Swein, the Danish King, with his force, led the attack on the *Long Serpent* and the largest of King Olaf's ships. But Hallarstein, in his Praise of Olaf, written in the double-stressed metre, says that the attack on Olaf Tryggwason was begun by Olaf the Swede, and that he was followed by Swein, the Danish

King. Snorri says that King Swein, with his ships, attacked the *Long Serpent*, and that Olaf the Swede retired, and drew up his ships with their prows against the outermost one of Olaf Tryggwason's to attack it; while Earl Eric attacked the outermost of the other side. The Earl had a very large armed ship, which he was wont to take on his Wicking expeditions. It had a beard on the upper part of both prow and stern, and below the beard it was plated with many plates of iron, the whole breadth of the prow, stretching right down into the water. The ship was therefore called the *Iron Ram*, and was the most strongly built ship afloat. The trumpets were then blown, and both sides having shouted their war-cry, a fierce fight arose. Earl Sigwaldi let his ships lie idle, and took no share in the fight at any time. There is little mention of him in connection with the battle, though Skuli Thorsteinson, who was with Earl Eric, thus says:—

“Fame I won when young; men see me now grown old.
I followed the Frisians' foe and Sigwaldi, where spears were whistling,
When in the din of helmets our reddened swords we bore
Against the opposing foe, south at the mouth of Swold.”

The battle now became exceeding fierce. At first arrows were shot, both from crossbows and longbows, and then spears and javelins were thrown; King Olaf, so they say, fighting the bravest of all. Hallfred the Troublesome Poet thus says in his Praise of Olaf:—

“High up in air the arrows quickly flew.
After the flight of shafts there was but little pause
Before they hurled their spears, those bracelet-breakers [generous men].
Wide Fame tells that at the clash of weapons south over the sea,
My world-renowned lord was fiercest in the fight.”

Hallarstein, who says that Olaf the Swede was the first to attack his namesake Olaf, and was beaten off with his force, thus speaks of King Swein's onset upon King Olaf Tryggwason with sixty ships:—

“With sixty ships a second time the arrow-shooters set upon the *Serpent*.
Fierce was the clash of the boards of Gondul [shields]
When the Danish host the dear lord attacked.
The guardsmen fell; the ravens screamed;
Many sank to the ground.”

King Swein's men pushed the prows of their ships as thickly as they could against both sides of the *Long Serpent*, where she stretched, because of her length, far beyond King Olaf's other ships. In like manner the Danes pressed closely on the *Short Serpent* and the *Crane*. The battle became most fierce, and many were slain. All the men on the *Serpent's* prow, in reach of the foe, fought hand to hand, while King Olaf himself and the men in the stern shot with their bows and threw daggers, ever slaying Danes as oft as they could, but some they wounded. So says Hallarstein :—

“ Firm stood the pole of the King's banner ;
The steel whistled ; the King shot ;
On the *Long Serpent* was heard a sound of strife.
The brave and able host of Norway's famous warder were nothing slow to
wound the Jutish men.

And though King Swein with sixty ships was making at this time a most furious attack on the Northmen, and the whole host both of Danes and Swedes kept within shooting distance, yet the defence made by King Olaf and his force was a famous one ; his men, however, were falling at this moment. So says Hallfred :—

“ The unnumbered host attacked the channel-steed,
Where the valiant leader put himself in peril,
And repelled the Danes with missiles.
Many of my dear friends there fell, around the lord of the ocean-strider
[*Serpent*].
'Twas a grief to me.

King Olaf fought with the utmost bravery, for the most part shooting with the bow, and throwing missiles ; but when the attack on the *Long Serpent* became especially violent, he went forward and engaged hand to hand in fight, cleaving the heads of many with the sword. Thus Hallfred relates :—

“ The thinner of hostile ranks in the south clove with his sword hard heads
of noted men.
Wrathfully he passed along the sloops.
The King in fight did cut to the quick the mail-covered flesh.
Smitten with his sharp sword, lay many a hero of battle.”

The Danes found the attack difficult, because the men belonging

to the *Serpent's* prow, and the forecastle men of the *Short Serpent* and the *Crane*, used anchors and grappling-hooks to hold King Swein's ships. And as the Northmen's ships were much larger and higher in the bulwarks, the men could employ their weapons to advantage in striking from above. They therefore cleared all the Danish ships which they succeeded in grappling, and King Swein, and such of his crews as escaped, fled to other ships, where, wounded and exhausted, they placed themselves out of range. Thus it befell this host according to the saying of King Olaf Tryggwason: "Danes do not conquer Northmen." So says Hallarstein:—

"The dark storm of sword-edges was harmful to Swein;
His men, I wot, were wounded and bleeding;
The Danes hasted away."

Snorri Sturluson says that when King Swein retired from the attack on the *Long Serpent*, his place was taken by Olaf the Swede. A battle of the fiercest and an onset of the sharpest began anew. A deafening noise arose as the men incited one another with loud shouts, and weapon clashed with weapon. King Olaf defended himself with great bravery; and his men supported him like heroes. So says Hallfred:—

"A mighty noise of fight arose under an arch of shields,
Around the crusher of Wends. I bear witness.
The spears did clash.
Gracious to wolves, the warden of the rolling-car-of-the-deep [ship], aided
by a troop of men,
Withstood many a thundery onset with his hard shield."

Hallarstein says that the Swedes brought up fifteen ships against the *Long Serpent*; and their attack was a fierce one, because they were fresh; but the Northmen defended themselves obstinately, slaying many of their foes and wounding others. So says Stein:—

"The wielders of gleaming swords bore down against the King
With fifteen Ekkil's-sea-steeds."

Just as it had happened to the Danes, so also it happened to the Swedes. The Northmen held their ships with grappling-hooks and anchors, and cleared all that they reached. One only law their

swords proclaimed for all Swedes whom blows could touch. So says Hallfred :—

“Shields’ foes [swords], enough for the doomed men,
Proclaimed the law aloud on bucklers’ ribs,
And soon the men did yield their lives.”

The Swedes became tired of continuing the fight when King Olaf Tryggwason with his chosen band of champions pressed most hardly upon them. Thus Hallfred the Troublesome Poet speaks :—

“The feeders of the flame-of-Leifi’s-path [gold]
Were loth, methinks, to meet the ruler of men
In the fearful Assembly of spears.
When wearing the hammer-forged ring-mail shirts,
The fair ship’s brave crew rallied by the side of Earls [Olaf].”

There was a conflict of the sharpest and loss of life, ’tis said, when the two Olafs fought together, before the Swede retired. Thus Stein speaks :—

“Two namesakes fought; sword against shield resounded;
Grey wolf with swollen jaws tore and tore the dead;
The Swedish host was reft of victory.
Swords made wounds; shafts of Poitou flew;
The strife increased; the warriors fled.”

The Swedes had lost many of their men as well as their large ships, and the greater part of Olaf the Swede’s force was wounded. He himself had added nothing to his reputation, and was glad to escape with his life from the contest. So says Hallarstein :—

“Right speedily the King might see at once
Two royal princes. Peace was not.
The sun-of-Swolni’s-storms [sword] tore up the shields.”

Olaf Tryggwason had now put to flight both the Danes and the Swedes. As Stein says :—

“There was a gleam of Skogul’s-fire [sword];
Two royal chiefs the King made run.
His glory was exalted with victory.”

And thus again the King’s saying was fulfilled.

Battle of Swold. Earl Eric clears the Northmen's ships, and in his turn attacks the Long Serpent.

251. We must now tell what Earl Eric had done while the Kings were fighting with Norway's King. As already mentioned, he began by attacking the outermost of those of King Olaf Tryggwason's ships which lay on one side of the *Long Serpent*. Placing his *Iron Ram* alongside, he cleared the ship, and at once cut the ropes which fastened it to the next one. This ship was then attacked, and Eric fought against it until he cleared it. The crews of the smaller ships jumped on the larger ships, and the Earl cut the fastenings of each ship as it was cleared. Thus, while the Danish and Swedish ships stood within shooting distance all around King Olaf's ships, Earl Eric lay continually alongside, engaged in a hand-to-hand fight. As men were slain on board his ships, their places were taken by Danish and Swedish blood-suckers who had been resting, and were unfatigued and unwounded. So says Halldor the Unchristian:—

"A clash of biting swords befell, around the *Long Serpent*;
 'Twas no short breach of peace the heroes made,
 Where whizzed the gilded spears.
 Danes and Swedes, wielders of the flashing sword,
 Helped him, 'tis said, in the play of battle in the south."

The fight was both fierce and sharp. Many of King Olaf's men fell, until at length his ships were all cleared except the *Long Serpent*; and upon it were gathered all the folk of Norway's King that were able to fight. Earl Eric then attacked the *Serpent* with five large ships. Thus Stein speaks:—

"Once more a fiercely keen attack, the third, was made,
 This time by the noble Earl, with his five ships,
 Upon the *Serpent* of the valiant hero of the storm of swords."

He placed the *Ram* alongside the *Serpent*, and there was the sternest battle and the most fearful conflict at close quarters that could possibly be. So says Halldor:—

"Into hard straits the *Serpent* came, a year ago.

Her moons [shields], the ornament of her prow, were cloven when swords clashed together.

The lord of the axe, against the *Serpent's* side, placed his high-bulwarked, bearded ship.

The Earl won, at the isle, the storm of the helmet [battle]."

Earl Eric was in the fore-room of his ship, encompassed by a wall of shields. His men were engaged in close combat, in thrusting with the spear, and in hurling everything that could be called a weapon and that hands could grasp; some were shooting with the bow, or throwing missiles. There was such a heavy shower of weapons on the *Long Serpent* that scarcely any shelter could be found; and spears and arrows were flying thick because the hostile warships were attacking the *Serpent* on all sides. King Olaf's men were thus roused to such a pitch of fury that to strike and slay their foes with the sword they leapt upon the bulwarks of the ship. But many of their foes would not come so near the *Long Serpent* as to engage in close combat, for it was not esteemed an easy matter to fight with King Olaf's champions. The Northmen, having nothing in their thoughts but to press eagerly and constantly forward to slay their opponents, and never considering in their vehemence and daring that they were not fighting on a level field, walked, many of them, right overboard, and fell with their weapons into the water between the ships. Thus Hallfred the Troublesome Poet speaks:—

"Wounded they fell off the *Serpent* in the heat of fight.

Hedin's ring-mail workers no effort made to spare themselves.

Heroes such, the *Serpent* long will lack,

When over-sea she glides, arrayed with warlike force,

Steered by a well-beloved King."

The following Icelanders are mentioned as being on board the *Ram* with Earl Eric: Skuli, son of Thorstein Egilson; Wigfus, son of Wiga-Glum; and Torfi Walbrandson. With the Earl there was also a Northman, Finn Eywindson of Herland, who, some say, was of Finnish extraction. He was reckoned the most skilful archer and the best marksman in Norway, and it was he that made the bow of Einar Thambaskelf. Einar was the hardest shooter of his time, and had his place in the narrow-room of the

Serpent, where he was shooting during the day. He shot at Earl Eric, but the arrow flew over the Earl's head and struck the top of the rudder with such force as to sink into it right up to the shaft. The Earl looked up, and asked his men if they knew who shot so hard; and the same instant there flew another arrow so close to him that it passed between his arm and side, piercing the head-board of his bedstead, so that the head of the arrow went completely through to the other side. The Earl then said to Finn Eywindson, "Shoot the tall man there in the narrow-room." "I can't hit that man," answered Finn, "he is not fated to die now; but I may spoil his bow for him." He then shot a bolt which struck the middle of Einar's bow at the moment when with his whole strength he was drawing it for the third time. The bow started asunder and broke with a loud crash. "What broke there, at that noise?" asked King Olaf. "Norway, from thy hand, O King," answered Einar. "No such great meaning in that crash," said the King; "my realm does not depend on your bow; it is in God's hand. Take my bow, and shoot." And the King threw his bow to Einar, who picked it up; but at the first shot with it he stretched it beyond the arrow-head. "Too weak! too weak! the great King's bow!" he said; and throwing it back to the King, took his shield and sword and fought valiantly.

Battle of Svold. Earl Eric boards the Long Serpent and is driven off.

252. King Olaf Tryggwason stood in the castle of the *Serpent* and shot most of the day, at one time using his bow, at another hurling javelins, which he always threw two at a time. Friends and foes present in the battle, and those who have made the most accurate inquiries touching the events that there occurred, all agree that they knew no man who fought more fearlessly than King Olaf Tryggwason. Thus Hallfred speaks:—

"Those who travel far declare they've never found
A braver man than battle-loving Olaf."

One custom King Olaf practised beyond other Kings, that of allowing himself to be easily recognised in battle. No example

is known of a King who showed himself so openly to his foes in fight, whatever were the overwhelming odds against him. King Olaf thus manifested his courage and stoutness of heart, that all might see there was no peril from which he shrank. So says Hallfred the Troublesome Poet :—

“The protector of broad lands, intrepid foe of the Bretons,
Shunned not the eager play of the heroes-of-Hedin [warriors].
He stained his bright weapon with blood in a true cause ;
Where the King was, the noise of swords increased ;
This I know of a surety.”

The more conspicuous and fearless the King showed himself in battle, so much the more stood men in awe and dread of him ; as Hallfred bears witness :—

“Every man beneath the sun’s domain
Was awed before the brave and steadfast son of Tryggwi.
Men dreaded an encounter in arms.”

As King Olaf looked along the ship towards the prow, he saw his men brandishing vigorously their swords and striking many blows ; but he noticed that the weapons made few cuts. He called aloud, therefore, “Are your swords used carelessly that, as I see, they make no wounds ?” And one answered, “Sire, our swords are both blunt and much indented.” The King descended, therefore, from the castle into the fore-room, where he opened the chest of the high-seat, and out of it he took many bright swords, very sharp, which he distributed among his men. As he stretched his right arm downwards, they saw blood falling from under the sleeve of his mail-shirt, but no one knew where he was wounded.

The stoutest defence on the *Serpent*, and the most fatal to the foe, was made by the men of the fore-castle and the fore-room ; because not only were the bulwarks of the ship highest at these parts, but those who were there stationed had been specially chosen for the place. When the *Serpent’s* men began to fall, they who were in the midships suffered most from wounds and exhaustion. If the strength of that brave troop had held out, so that they could have prolonged their defence to the very end,

their foes, so men say, would have been long in winning the *Serpent*. So says Hallfred:—

“Scarcely could the people clear the *Long Serpent* under its generous lord ;
O'er the vessel's sides flowed blood,
While the great King's guard on board fought to protect their friend with
their swords.
Bravely to death they fought.”

When but few men were left standing around the *Serpent's* mast, Earl Eric decided to board her, and succeeded in getting on board with fourteen others. Against him came Hyrning, King Olaf's brother-in-law, with a band of men, and a fierce combat arose between them, for Hyrning fought most valiantly. So says Hallarstein:—

“Hyrning, as they fought, inflicted smarting wounds
On the wielders of the sword, greedy of vengeance.”

At the end of the contest, Eric fell back on the *Ram* ; and of the men that boarded the *Serpent* with him, some were slain, and others were wounded. The onslaught brought great renown to Hyrning. Thus Thord Kolbeinson speaks:—

“Havoc was made with the blood-stained crofts [shields] of the helmeted
Ropt,
Great renown won Hyrning ; with his dark sword he defended the King.
The heavenly dome above high hills will fail before that deed is forgotten.”

After Earl Eric's retreat to his own ship, King Olaf spoke: “What ! have you flung the Earl from off the *Serpent* ?” and they answered that it was even so. “A valiant deed,” said the King, “and one to be expected ; the Earl will never vanquish us as long as he carries Thor on his ship's prow.” This speech was heard by many, and among them by Earl Eric. As there had now been great slaughter on the *Ram*, and the most part of those still alive were severely wounded, Earl Eric stood in for land, as also did all the Danes and Swedes ; and the chiefs then took counsel how they should act. “It will be an everlasting disgrace to us,” said Earl Eric, “told as long as men shall live in Northern lands, if we do not vanquish Olaf Tryggwason. We have yet

overwhelming numbers; he has now but one ship, and even it has lost many of its crew. I beg you, King of the Danes and King of the Swedes, give me help from your great numbers, that I may avenge my father, and avert disgrace equally from all of us; for, as I said, if King Olaf and his men escape us, all we chiefs will be covered with reproach, especially the most powerful of us." When Earl Eric had finished his speech, many applauded it greatly; and the Kings discussed the matter of it with the Earl. It was agreed among them that the Earl should have the aid of a large force to attack the *Long Serpent*, that he should have the vessel as his own, with all the property taken in it, and that each of them should possess a third share of Norway, if Earl Eric succeeded in vanquishing King Olaf. This agreement being confirmed by special treaty, the whole host of Danes and Swedes prepared to make a fresh onset. Plucking up their courage, they incited one another, saying that they would never desist till they had conquered King Olaf Tryggwason.

Battle of Swold. Earl Eric plans a second attack on the Long Serpent.

253. Earl Eric now removed his wounded men and the bodies of the dead from the *Ram*, supplying their places with others who were uninjured and fresh, selected from the Swedes and Danes. At this time also the Earl is said to have made a vow that he would receive baptism if he succeeded in winning the *Serpent*; and those who tell this say also, in proof of their statement, that he cast away Thor and set up a crucifix in his place on the prow of the *Ram*. His force being ready, he spoke to a wise man and great chief there present, Thorkel the Tall, brother of Earl Sigwaldi. "I have often been in battle," he said, "but I have never yet met with men so valiant and skilful in fight as the men on the *Serpent*, nor have I seen a vessel so difficult to win. Will you give me the best advice you can how to win her, for you are the wisest of men." "I can suggest no plan," answered Thorkel, "that is sure of success; but I can tell you of one that seems to me the likeliest to succeed. Take great logs of wood and let them fall from your ship on the *Serpent*, so that it may

lean sideways. When its bulwarks don't rise higher out of the water than those of other ships, you will be able to board it more easily. I have no other plan to suggest, if that does not succeed." And the Earl prepared to act according to Thorkel's advice.

Battle of Swold. King Olaf refuses to flee. The crew of the Wendish smack offer to help him.

254. While these plans were making, and there was a lull in the fight, King Olaf's men again urged him to try in some way to escape. They said truly that they themselves were in danger, chiefly because he was there; and they had good hope that his foes would spare the lives of all his men there present as soon as it was known that he had got away. They said, too, that it was quite possible to hoist sail on the *Serpent*, if he preferred that course, and sail out to sea, following his fleet northwards. But the King made them the same answer as before, that he would not flee from his foes as long as he could hold his ship safe. "It is not right for me," he said, "and I cannot believe that they will certainly win the *Serpent* as long as so many valiant hearts are here to defend her." While they were engaged in speaking, the Wendish smack was rowed up to the *Serpent*, the same vessel that had remained alone close to land all day, after its crew, as we related, had held a conversation with the King before the battle. The men on the smack, having fastened her aft of the *Serpent*, at the castle, proposed to King Olaf that they should come on board and aid him in the fight, saying that they would gladly die with him there, or if the fates permitted, escape with him. "It will do me no good," answered the King, "if you come on board the *Serpent* and aid us in the fight; but it may be of use to me if you will remain in the same spot where you have been all day." They rowed back, therefore, and again lay at anchor.

Battle of Swold. Earl Eric's second and successful attempt to board the Long Serpent. Disappearance of King Olaf.

255. Earl Eric, having made his preparations, attacked the *Serpent* a second time, and the whole host of Danes and Swedes

once more joined battle with King Olaf Tryggwason. Some placed the prows of their ships against the *Serpent*, while the whole multitude of the remaining host lay around within shooting distance of the Northmen, at whom they shot as fast as they could. The Earl again placed the *Ram* alongside the *Serpent*, and his reinforcements being fresh, made a furious onset. In this attack neither the Earl nor those of his men who had survived the former contest spared themselves. So says Halldor :—

“No quarter, methinks, was shown in the fight,
When the people vanquished the surrounded King.
The Earl, a year ago, the land did win bravely, sparing not himself.
Sif's horse [the wolf] his hunger satisfied, when stern in sea-fight
You brought the *Ram* into place by the side of the *Long Serpent*.”

King Olaf and his men defended themselves with the utmost valour and gallantry, and as long as they felt fresh after their rest, but little slaughter was made among them; although they slew many of their foes on the *Iron Ram* and the other attacking ships. Then Earl Eric, finding his attack stubbornly met, caused huge logs of wood to be lifted up and let fall from the *Ram* on the *Long Serpent*. The *Serpent*, so men say, would never have been won except by this method due to the advice given by Thorkel the Tall. Hallarstein tells this :—

“The battle increased.
The eager strife-enhancer bade his men, gold-wearers,
Let fall huge beams upon the *Long Serpent*;
The high-born Eric, in the din of spears, might never else the great ship win.”

As the great logs were let fall on one side of the *Serpent*, the ship began to heel over considerably, and a great slaughter of the defenders as well as of the assailants followed; and when the ranks of the defenders were thinned, Earl Eric tried to board her. He met with a fierce reception, for when King Olaf's forecastle men saw him upon the ship they fell back from the prows to defend it against him, and offered a furious resistance. The *Serpent's* men were now falling in large numbers, so that many parts of her bulwarks were undefended, and the Earl's men began to board her in several places; while the whole of the crew able to fight in her defence fell back aft of the ship to the place where

the King was. The Earl then urged his men forwards, as says Halldor the Unchristian :—

“The cheerful prince called upon his gallant helpful men,
When the sloops of the generous King of Halland [Swein] withdrew.
Back fell the folk to Olaf over the rowers’ benches.
There arose a shock of arms around the crusher of the Wends.”

Thorstein Oxleg is said to have been in the fore-room aft of the ship by the castle, and when the Earl’s men were boarding the *Serpent* in most furious manner, he spoke to the King: “Sire,” he said, “must each man do what he now can?” “Why should he not?” answered the King. Whereupon Thorstein, with his clenched fist, struck one of the Earl’s men who had leapt on the ship near him. The blow fell so heavily on the side of the man’s head that it knocked him far away into the sea, killing him. Then Thorstein became so frantic that he snatched up the sail-yard and fought therewith. When King Olaf saw him, he called out: “Take your weapons, man! and fight with them. Weapons were made to be used in battle, that men should not fight with their hands only, or with beams.” Thorstein then took his sword and used it valiantly in the fight, and for awhile the struggle in the fore-room was most furious. King Olaf was in the castle hurling javelins and spears both hard and fast. Thus Hallarstein says :—

“The impetuous King shot hard from the castle ;
There was a crashing of shields.
The *Long Serpent* began at length to look bare of defenders.”

When the King perceived that Earl Eric was come into the fore-room of the *Serpent*, he threw three short-shafted halberds at him. But they did not fly as King Olaf’s missiles were wont, for he was not one who missed his aim, whatever he shot at. None of the halberds touched the Earl ; the first flew past him on his right side, the second in like manner on his left side, and the third flew over the Earl’s head along the ship. “Never hitherto have I missed a man in that way,” said the King ; “great is this Earl’s good luck, and God wills him now at this time to have the realm of Norway. Nor is it wonderful, for I think that he has made a

change in the figure-head of the *Ram*. The event has shown the truth of what I said this day, that he would never be the conqueror in any contest between us as long as he kept Thor on the prow of his ship." Large numbers of the Earl's men had by this time come aboard the *Serpent*, as many even as the ship could hold; while the Earl's ships lay around on all sides. And as the *Serpent's* defenders were few in comparison with the great host of their foes, many of the King's champions fell within a short interval, though they were both strong and valiant. Among these were the two brothers Hyrning and Thorgeir, the King's brothers-in-law; also Wikar of Tiundaland, Ulf the Red, and many other doughty heroes who have left behind them a glorious renown.

Kolbiorn the marshal had been defending the fore part of the ship during the day, along with the others stationed in the prow. He was dressed exactly in the same way as King Olaf, and bore like weapons with him. He had dressed himself thus, with the intention of affording some sort of protection to the King if there should be any need. The time for this was now come. When the bravest of King Olaf's men began to fall in the fore-room, Kolbiorn went up to the King in the castle. It was not possible to distinguish readily between them, which was the King and which was Kolbiorn, for Kolbiorn was a very tall and handsome man. The shower of weapons in the castle was so great that the shields of both King Olaf and Kolbiorn had the appearance of being covered with tassels, so pierced were they with missiles. And as the Earl's men pressed into the hinder part of the ship to attack the castle, a great light seemed to spread over the King, so bright that no one could look upon it; and when the light passed off, King Olaf was nowhere to be seen.

The accounts of Snorri and others touching King Olaf's disappearance. Reasons why the battle of Svold is famous. The date of its occurrence.

256. Of the events which then occurred, there are several accounts. The following is Snorri Sturluson's. When King Olaf saw that nearly all his force had fallen, and that Earl Eric,

with a crowd of followers, was making a rush aft of the ship to the castle, he and Kolbiorn the marshal both leapt overboard, on different sides of the vessel. Now the Earl's men had placed small cutters about, and were slaying those that threw themselves into the water; and when the King himself leapt overboard, the men on the cutters wished to take him alive and bring him to the Earl, but King Olaf held his shield over his head and dived underneath. Kolbiorn the marshal held his shield down as a protection against the spears thrust at him from the ships below, and thus he fell into the sea with his shield under him, and was taken prisoner before he could escape by diving. Such is Snorri's account. Kolbiorn the marshal is himself the authority for the following story. When he came up into the castle and the King began shooting at Earl Eric, Kolbiorn saw what others had already seen, that blood was falling from underneath the King's mail-sleeve. Shortly afterwards he had a sudden glimpse of the King, as it seemed to him, leaping overboard. He was wearing the mail-shirt and all the dress that he had worn during the day, and raised his shield over him when his enemies wished to take him. At the same moment, Kolbiorn, glancing at the enemy, saw that they had boarded the *Serpent* in such numbers that the whole ship, so to speak, was full of them. Then, as he afterwards said, there crept over him a slight feeling of fear, and he turned towards the side of the vessel where King Olaf had been standing, and not seeing the King anywhere, leapt overboard, leaving his shield behind him. As he fell into the water, he was aware of a beautiful shield beneath him, which he thought he recognised as the one carried by King Olaf during the day. Coming down upon it, he noticed under it a man swimming with ease, who let go the shield as soon as he felt a weight upon it. Immediately afterwards Kolbiorn was seized and pulled up into a cutter by some who took him for King Olaf; and he was led before the Earl. But when the Earl found that his prisoner was Kolbiorn and not the King, he gave him quarter. At that instant there leapt overboard from the *Serpent* several of King Olaf's men who were yet alive, and whose defence of the ship had been so gallant that their prowess has been held in remembrance. Hallfred says, moreover, that Thorkel Neb was considered to have defended his brother King

Olaf the most nobly, and supported him the most firmly. Thus he says:—

“The battle increased, south of the sea.
Doomed men’s lives were taken by the sword.
’Tis good to ask diligently of men,
What hero the bearers of shields declare
To have followed Olaf the most bravely.
I polish my verse, drink of the race of Surt.”

And he bears full testimony that Thorkel was the last of all King Olaf’s men to leap overboard:—

“Liberal of gold, daring in fight, skilled in swimming,
Noble Thorkel, glad reddener of the spear in battle,
Saw the *Crane* float disabled, and the *Serpents* both,
Ere he turned from fierce fight on the otter-of-the-rope [ship].”

Thorkel swam to shore, and thus saved his life for the time; but he afterwards accepted quarter from Earl Eric, as did also other followers of King Olaf. Besides Kolbiorn the marshal, six men are said to have been picked up out of the water, to whom quarter was given: Einar Thambaskelf, Thronð the Squinter, Ogmund Sandi, Thorstein Oxleg, Biorn of Studla, and Asbiorn of Moster. Earl Sigwaldi, with his ten ships, had remained quiet during the day and taken no part in the battle; but when King Olaf leapt overboard, and the whole host raised a shout of victory, Sigwaldi and his men dashed their oars into the water and rowed to the place of battle. Halldor thus says:—

“The Wendish sloops moved up to the fight from far.
The thin steel-mouthed monsters gaped at the folk of Thridi’s land.
There was a sound of swords upon the water.
The eagle tore wolves’ food.
The beloved ruler of heroes won the day.
Many were the people put to flight.”

At the instant when the shout of victory was raised, and Sigwaldi rowed towards the warships, the crew of the Wendish smack, who during the day had twice held conversation with King Olaf Tryggwason, dashed their oars into the water and rowed away home as hard as they could under the Wendish coast. Many persons at once expressed their belief that King Olaf had thrown

off his mail-shirt under water, and by swimming under the long ships, had reached the Wendish smack; and that Astrid's men had conveyed him to land. King Olaf's escape is made to appear altogether probable when we consider what was last seen of him by those present at the battle, and the stories told of his travels afterwards. These stories, to the existence of which Snorri Sturluson bears witness, will be told hereafter, showing that he was recognised by travellers in foreign countries through the tokens that he himself sent home into Northern lands. A fact regarded by some as important is the universal belief among all who came out of the fight, that he did not die on the *Long Serpent*. Nevertheless Hallfred the Troublesome Poet thus says:—

“I know not whether he that I shall praise,
Who fed the hungry carrion birds of battle
(That din of shields that brighten Heiti's deer [ships]),
Be alive or dead. All truthfully men tell me
One and the other. Wounded the King must be
In any case, and tidings of him must be evil.”

Whichever way it was, King Olaf Tryggwason never afterwards returned to his realm of Norway. Hallfred, however, claims for those of the King's friends who were most deeply grieved at the loss of such a chief, that it would be an alleviation of their sorrow if he were still alive, though bereft of his realm and native land. Thus he says:—

“The warden of his country, thus 'twas told me,
Was reft beyond the sea of folk and land;
No greater woe can e'er betide us.
If the King yet lived the mind would be consoled,
Even though men, wearers of gold
(The fire of the resting-place-of-hawks [hand]),
Had so dealt treacherously with him.”

But although men of judgment, present in the battle, related what they each saw of Olaf at the last moment, yet no one seemed able to know for certain whether the King escaped thence or not. We have already related what Kolbiorn the marshal said, and he was standing nearest to King Olaf before the King leapt overboard. The following is Einar Thambaskelf's story. When Earl Eric, in the fore-room of the *Serpent*, made his assault aft upon the castle,

Einar, looking at King Olaf, saw drops of blood running down his cheek from under the helmet on his head. But just as he was desirous of observing what the King would do when the Earl reached him, Einar received, so he said, such a heavy blow on the side of the head from a stone that he fell to the ground in a swoon; and when he came to himself and stood up, he could nowhere see the King. Skuli Thorsteinson, the grandson of Egil of Borg, told the following. He was pressing towards the hinder part of the ship along with Earl Eric, and saw King Olaf standing in the castle. Skuli said that he then stooped, in order to roll away a dead body from the Earl's feet; and when he lifted himself up again, the King had disappeared. Shortly afterwards, when the shout of victory was raised, some of King Olaf's opponents saw a man in a red dress swimming towards the Wendish smack, on which vessel, as we said, were the followers of Astrid, the King's daughter, wife of Earl Sigwaldi. The crew of the smack stood up to receive him, and having pulled him into the ship, rowed away at their utmost speed, as we have already written. From that time to the present the opinion has been general that the crew of the Wendish smack took King Olaf away with them alive; though individual persons have argued against it. And we find that though Hallfred in his poetry thought it more probable that King Olaf did not escape out of the battle, because of the great odds against him, yet he acknowledged that most people held the King to be still alive. Thus he says:—

“A worthy warrior was he, when alive, who told me
Of the fate of Tryggwi's son, the hater of fraud;
That the King of men yet lived.
Men say that Olaf came out of the storm of steel;
Far from the truth are they in what they say.
The truth is worse.”

And again he says:—

“When the valiant prince was attacked by his foes,
The host of the land, I wot, as well as the guard,
It could not lie in the decrees of fate
That the much-loved diminisher of silver
Should come out from such a conflict.
Men seem to me to tell unlikely things.”

Although, therefore, there were at first different reports concerning the event, one affirming and the other denying that King Olaf had escaped out of the battle, as Hallfred says:—

“There are who tell me, poet skilled in verse,
That the King is wounded, and that from the clash of arms
He to the east escaped away.
But from the great fight south I have learnt the truth,
The King is dead.”

Yet when stories were brought to Iceland from foreign lands about King Olaf's travels, many ceased to doubt any longer that he had escaped out of the battle. Hallfred, however, as he himself bears witness, composed his poem according to the account first heard by him, and bewailed his lot in not being present at the fight by the side of King Olaf:—

“’Twas an evil chance when weapons clashed their loudest,
That I was far away from the feeder of hungry wolves ;
Though small the help that one can give.
Parted am I from the King, the battle is the cause ;
I yearn for the henchmen's lord all day long in utmost misery.”

This battle is acknowledged to have been for many reasons the most famous that was ever fought in Northern lands. For, first, there was the noble defence made by King Olaf and his men on board the *Long Serpent*. No instance is known where men have defended themselves so long and so valiantly against such overwhelming numbers of foes as they had to encounter. Then there was the fierce attack made by Earl Eric and his men, which has been held in wide renown. Thus Hallfred says:—

“The lord of brands, on the wide sound of the Wendish isle,
Raised up a storm of Hedin's-maid, fierce-fought with swords.
Many wounding blades were steeped in blood round Olaf
E'er Eric won the *Serpent*, and gained the victory.”

The battle was very famous, too, on account of the great slaughter, and the Earl's success in clearing a ship that up to that time was the largest built and the fairest in Norway ; of which shipmen said, that it would never, while floating on the sea, be won with arms in the face of such heroes as manned it. But for this reason,

above others, was the battle renowned, that in it was vanquished one who was held to be the noblest of kings wherever the Danish tongue was spoken. Thus Hallfred says:—

“He was my godfather;
Mightier he than any vengeance-seeking lord,
Beneath the Northern skies that Nordri's sons uphold.
He rallied fight, and cleft broad shields asunder,
Nought evermore to me will compensate his loss.”

So highly popular was King Olaf that in the opinion of all no such chief would ever again be born in Norway or elsewhere. So says Hallfred:—

“Heaven and earth shall rend in twain, ere there arise
A king, alike in excellence to cheerful Olaf.
He was the best of mortal men.
May Christ the Pure preserve the wise King's soul above the earth.”

The battle is said to have taken place on Monday the ninth day of September, one day after the later Mary-mass, and one thousand years after the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. This year was the twenty-eighth of the reign of Ethelred, King of England, and the eighth of Swein Forkbeard, the Danish King. In the same year died Otto, the third Emperor of the name, and was succeeded by Henry.

Queen Thyri dies of grief.

257. When the slaughter on board the *Serpent* was ended, and the ship was searched and cleared of dead bodies, Queen Thyri was brought up from below deck. Her face was swollen with grief, and she wept bitterly. As Earl Eric saw her, he went up to her, deeply affected, and thus spoke: “The fall of many honourable men here is a great calamity. We have brought much sorrow on you, O Queen, and not only on you, but on all the people of Norway, though you are the most nearly touched by it, as we should expect. But work done cannot be undone, and I will make amends as far as I can. If I acquire the rule over any part of Norway, I will make your dignity in that country as

high/as I can in every respect, and will honour you in all things." And the Queen answered him : "These your promises proceed from great goodness and nobility of mind, which doubtless you often display. Willingly would I live if I could, and accept your kindness; but my heart is sore wounded with grief, so that I have no hope of supporting life." And what the Queen said came to pass, for through sorrow she could neither eat nor drink. Then she inquired of Bishop Sigurd, what was the least amount of food that, before God, one might take for lengthening life; and when he told her the least amount permitted, so much she ate. Having shown this signal mark of obedience, Queen Thyri died after nine days.

The end of the Long Serpent.

258. Earl Eric Hakonson acquired the *Long Serpent* and a large share of booty by his victory. So says Halldor :—

"The *Long Serpent* thither bore to the great mail-meeting [fight]
The helm-hooded leader.
Then men adorned their sloops.
But at the battle in the south, the glad Earl took possession of the ship,
After he, intrepid brother of Heming, had stained his sword's edge in blood."

The Earl manned the *Serpent* with his most vigorous crew, and steered her himself. Thus says Hallfred :—

"The renowned King led the nobly-laden *Serpent* from the North against Eric;
The fierce war-goddess was present there.
But the avenger of Hakon steered from the south the even-hulled prow-horse,
After the battle had raged round the good King."

The *Long Serpent* being strongly manned with stout fellows, her crew succeeded, if we may so speak, in bringing her from the east into the Wick, though with the utmost difficulty; for she constantly leaned over to one side, and did not answer to the helm. Earl Eric therefore caused her to be broken up; or burnt so others say.

Death of King Olaf's dog Wigi.

259. Einar Thambaskelf and the other men to whom Earl Eric gave quarter after the battle, returned with the Earl to Norway. In the fore-room at the front of the castle was King Olaf's dog Wigi, not having stirred from the spot where he lay all the time of the fight. And when the Earl came to the Wick with the *Serpent*, Einar Thambaskelf, before going on shore, went to the dog as he lay there, and said, "We've no master now, Wigi!" At these words the dog sprang up growling, and with a loud yell, as if seized by anguish of heart, he ran on shore with Einar. There he went and lay down on the top of a mound, and would take no food from any one, though he drove away other dogs, beasts, and birds, from what was brought to him. From his eyes, tears coursed one another down his nose, and thus bewailing the loss of his liege-lord, he lay till he died.

So it came to pass that in this pitiful way, as the blind yeoman of Moster had foretold, the Northmen and their land lost the four most precious treasures that they possessed.

The Danish King, the Swedish King, and Earl Eric divide Norway.

260. Earl Swein Hakonson abode in Sweden, after his flight from Norway on the slaying of his father, and there married Holmfrid, sister of Olaf, King of the Swedes. On the division of Norway between the Danish King Swein, the Swedish King Olaf, and Earl Eric, Olaf the Swedish King obtained for his share four shires of Throntham, the two Mores, Raumsdale, and Eastern Ranrick from the Gaut-Elf to Swinasound. This realm King Olaf placed under the government of Swein Hakonson, his brother-in-law, subject to such conditions as those under which tributary Kings and Earls had held aforetime their lands from superior Kings; and with the realm he gave Swein the title of Earl. Earl Eric obtained four shires of Throntham, with Naumudale and Halogaland, the Firths and Fialir, Sogn, Hordaland, Roga-

land, and North Agdi, up to Lidandisness. So says Thord Kolbeinson :—

“ At first, I wot, the barons all but Erling were friendly to the Earls.
I praise the lord of the sea-fire [gold] ;
To him the land was subject after the fight, so I say,
From Weigistaf in the north, to Agdi in the south, or even further.”

And again he says :—

“ His folk were happy in their ruler ; under such
They were well pleased to live.
Bound was he to hold the men of Norway (so he said) in his safe keeping.
From the south comes news that Swein the King is dead, and desolate his
homesteads ;
Few evils fail to reach the many.”

Swein the Danish King took undivided possession of the Wick, which had formerly belonged to him, and he bestowed Raumarick and Heidmark on Earl Eric. Earls Eric and Swein both received baptism, and accepted the true Faith ; but while they ruled over Norway they allowed every man free choice whether he would hold the Christian religion or not, and they maintained in full force the old laws and customs of the land. They were popular men and wise rulers. In all their plans Earl Eric took far the most prominent part ; and Earl Swein was one of the handsomest men ever seen.

*Erling Skialgson makes no effort to be reconciled to Earl Eric.
His mode of life.*

261. When Erling Skialgson, King Olaf's brother-in-law, and the others who had sailed away in advance of King Olaf, heard of the great events that had happened in front of Swold, they were grieved and vexed that they had so thoughtlessly separated from him, and left him behind in such great peril. Erling, especially, was grieved at the loss of such a chief, because he was more closely bound than the others to King Olaf Tryggwason ; and of all the barons in Norway he was the only one who made no effort to be reconciled to Earls Eric and Swein when they took the realm. Earl Eric, after he was firmly established in the land and

supported by the allegiance of the great men and the whole of the commonalty, was displeased that Erling Skialgson should bear such extended rule, and draw the whole of the revenues that King Olaf had bestowed on him. For, as in King Olaf's days, Erling continued to collect land dues over the whole of Rogaland; and the inhabitants of this district therefore often paid dues twice over to prevent their farms being laid waste by Erling. Earl Eric, too, obtained but little from fines, because his bailiffs had no firm hold of the district; and he himself did not go on circuit there except when attended by a numerous retinue. Thus the Poet Sighvat says:—

“Such was Erling, brother-in-law of trusty Olaf, Tryggwi's son,
That he did awe the family of Earls, though a King could not.
The yeomen's keen lord [Olaf] next gave to Rognwald his second sister;
A life's good fortune did this marriage bring to Ulf's father.”

Earl Eric made no attempt to wage war against Erling; for his kinsmen were great and numerous, and he himself was powerful and popular, and always had about him a large retinue like the body-guard of a king. In summer-time Erling often went on plundering expeditions to acquire wealth, for he continued to display his customary liberality and magnificence, though his revenues were smaller and less available than in the days of his brother-in-law King Olaf. Erling was a very handsome man, of great height and strength; he was skilled beyond others in the practice of arms, and in many manly accomplishments closely approached King Olaf Tryggwason. He was a wise man, oftentimes impetuous, and a great warrior; so valiant and bold in attack that he was first and foremost in every fight. Thus Sighvat says:—

“No one among the barons more battles fought than Erling,
And none more boldly kept his ground.
The open-handed hero showed his prowess 'gainst attack;
In many and many a fight, he might be seen
The first to enter and the last to leave.”

The following were the children of Erling, and Astrid, Tryggwi's daughter: Aslak, Skialg, Sigurd, Lodin, Thori, and Ragnhild whom Thorberg Arnason married.

Men have always said that Erling was the most distinguished of the barons of Norway. He had ever with him ninety freedmen

or more, and both in winter and summer there was a measure of drink served out to each man at the morning meal, and unlimited drink at the evening meal. Whenever the Earls were near he kept about him two hundred men or more, and he never visited his estates or went upon any other business accompanied by less than two fully-manned twenty-oared ships. Erling had always thirty thralls at home, besides other people, and to these thralls he appointed their work for the day; when it was finished they had permission to employ the rest of their time in working for themselves. He gave them land for tillage, that every man might sow corn for himself, and increase his savings. Each thrall had a price fixed, at which he could be ransomed, and many of them ransomed themselves by the produce of one harvest or a second. There was no one of any thrift that did not free himself in three years. With the money obtained from one thrall's ransom Erling purchased another. Some of his freedmen he put to the herring-fishery, some to other ways of earning money; and some cleared the forest land and built farmsteads for themselves. All of them he helped to make prosperous one way or another.

Einar Thambaskelf marries into the Earl's family.

262. Earl Eric, as we have already mentioned, gave quarter to Einar Thambaskelf, the son of Eindridi Styrkarson. Einar was then eighteen years old. He is said to have been the strongest man, and the best archer that has ever been in Norway; he surpassed all other men in the strength of his shooting, for he shot a bolt clean through a raw ox-hide hanging on a pole; he was the swiftest runner on snow-skates; he was among the foremost in deeds of valour and manly exercises; he was wealthy and of noble birth. When he was come north to Norway after the battle of Swold, Earls Eric and Swein made peace with him, and gave him Bergliot, their sister, in marriage. She was a daughter of Earl Hakon, and a handsome woman of very noble character. They had a son whom they named Eindridi; he soon grew tall and strong, and resembled in many respects his father Einar. The Earls bestowed on Einar large revenues in Orkadale, and he became the most powerful and honourable of the Throndish barons, a very great support to the Earls, and their attached friend.

Stephen Thorgilson is slain by Earl Sigvaldi.

263. Stephen Thorgilson, after his return from Iceland, whither, so we wrote, King Olaf Tryggwason sent him, abode with the King, and was on the portion of the fleet that sailed away from Wendland in advance of the King. When the tidings came north to Norway that King Olaf had been driven by a plot from his realm, they were a great grief to Stephen, as well as to other dear friends of the King; the longer men had lived with King Olaf, and the more intimate they were with him, the greater the sorrow that afflicted them. Stephen felt no pleasure in Norway now that King Olaf was gone, and he resolved, therefore, to make a journey southwards, and went to Rome. When, on his return from the south, he reached Denmark, he came one day to a place where Earl Sigvaldi was present, and seeing the Earl, he recited this verse:—

“ His name I say not, but his mark I'll tell ;
 A crooked nose the craven has,
 Who lured King Swein forth from his land,
 And Tryggwi's son enticed
 Into the toils.”

These words were reported to the Earl, who recognised that the verse was aimed at him, and seizing Stephen, slew him. This was the one cause of Stephen's death.

Further adventures of Hallfred the Troublesome Poet. His meeting and reconciliation with Gris. His travels and death.

264. We must now turn to the point where we left Hallfred the Troublesome Poet. We related how he sailed forth to Iceland the summer before the fight took place on the *Serpent*, and having landed in the north, rode south over the heath. Discord arose anew between Hallfred and Gris Sœmingson, both on account of Kolfinna and the manslaughter of Einar Thorison. At that time Thorkel Scrabbler, son of Thorgrim, dwelt at Hof in Watsdale. He had married Wigdis, daughter of Olaf of Haukagil, and was a very powerful chief throughout the counties. At Moberg in Langadale lived Hunrod Wefredarson, and Gris was one of his

liegemen. The following winter Hallfred the Troublesome Poet abode with his brother Galti, and composed on Gris certain lines, termed a petty lampoon. Gris, hearing of them, went to see Hunrod, and having found him, said: "I have come here on business; I wish you to help me with your advice. In what fitting way can I proceed against Hallfred, so as no longer to suffer indignity from him, for his hostility to me only becomes more intense." "I advise you," answered Hunrod, "to bring a lawsuit against him at the Hunawater Assembly, and to base it on other grounds than Kolfinna." This advice Gris followed. In the spring he rode south to Redawater and summoned Hallfred before the Assembly at Hunawater, to answer for the manslaughter of Gris's kinsman Einar, and the verses. Then he rode away north. Hallfred, accompanied by his brother, rode from the south in the spring with thirty followers to ask for the support of his kinsman Thorkel Scrabbler. Thorkel promised to assist him in the suits if honourable terms were offered to Gris. "I am willing to offer such," answered Hallfred, "for I see that I have gone too far with Gris." But when they came to the Hunawater Assembly, Brand Awaldason, Kolfinna's brother, struck Galti Ottarson a fatal blow as he was coming out of Thorkel's booth. Hallfred made search for Brand, the slayer of his brother, but Brand escaped, and Hallfred then challenged Gris to fight a wager of battle at the Assembly. The night preceding the day appointed for the duel, Hallfred, asleep in his booth, had a dream, in which King Olaf Tryggwason appeared to him. Though somewhat afraid, he was pleased at the sight, and the King thus spoke to him in his dream: "You are asleep, Hallfred! but it will be the same as if you were awake. Your resolve to fight Gris is a wicked resolve, so bad is your cause; and he has prayed God that victory may fall to the man whose cause is the more righteous. Follow my advice; be thankful if no combat takes place, and choose rather to pay him compensation for the wrongs laid to your charge. Care not if men speak ill of you, saying you are afraid. In the morning when you are dressed, go forth to the copse where the roads meet, a short distance from the field of Assembly, there you will see men on horseback; speak to them; another matter will then probably seem to you more important than a duel with Gris." On awaking, Hallfred pondered upon what he had seen

in his dream, and told it to one of his companions in the booth. "You are afraid of the boar Gris," answered the man; "it would have been better for you to come to terms with him when he made you a fair offer. Your foes will consider that you dare not fight." "Let every man think as he will," replied Hallfred, "I shall take King Olaf's advice; it will prove to be the best for me now, as it has been in the past. Perhaps the prophecy is about to be fulfilled which he uttered before we last parted. I should soon," he said, "perceive that it would have been better for me to remain with him than to be here in Iceland." In the morning Hallfred went out to one of the roads in the copse, and saw men on horseback dressed in coloured garments. He went up to them and asked what tidings they brought, and they told him of the fall of King Olaf Tryggwason. Hallfred was deeply moved by the news, and having told it to the Assembly on his return, lay down in his bed in great sorrow of heart. This caused Gris's followers to say that Hallfred abandoned his suit in an unmanly way; but Gris answered them and said: "Not so; I received less honour from the King at Mikilgard than Hallfred has received from King Olaf; yet when I heard of the death of the great King I was much moved by it. Whoever loses his liege lord knows how warm the love for one's chief may become. It is good for me, I think, that I have not to fight against the King's luck, which doubtless goes with Hallfred at all times. Thorkel was mentioned at first as one who should arbitrate in the suits between me and Hallfred, and I am willing that it should be so." To this course Hallfred consented. Thorkel then gave his decision, saying, "This is my award. The slain men were of different rank; therefore the manslaughter of Galti shall counterbalance the manslaughter of Einar Thorison and the visit to Kolfinna. As compensation for the offensive verses that Hallfred composed upon Gris, he shall give Gris some object of value." Then, quoth Hallfred:—

"Earl and King endowed me with ringing gold.
On an evil day I earned my wealth right manfully,
If I must pay fool's fines to meat-dressing Gris for my least line,
And not have the lady."

Thorkel bade him cease making verses. "Bring forth now some valuable chattel for Gris," he said, "though it be not one of the

King's presents to you." Hallfred therefore gave up the ring that Sigvaldi had presented to him, and thus they parted. From the Assembly Hallfred first rode south over the heath to his homestead, where he abode for a time, seeing little joy; and afterwards he put his house under the management of his sister Walgerd, and rode north to Skagafirth, where, at the mouth of the Kolbeinsay, he made his ship ready for a voyage. Though the year was far advanced when his preparations were made, he started forth the same summer, and after touching at the Orkneys, sailed direct east to Norway. It was the beginning of winter when he arrived with his ship at Sogn. Here he heard anew the story of the events that had happened in the summer of the previous year, and composed straightway a poem on King Olaf. The loss of the King was so great a blow to him that he took no pleasure in anything, and he determined to sail south to Denmark or east to Sweden. His ship lay in a lonely creek, and the men were cautious in showing themselves. Hallfred learnt, however, that Earl Eric Hakonson was on land, not far distant; and he formed the design of slaying the Earl, even though his own death should immediately follow. The night after this resolve Hallfred had a dream, in which King Olaf appeared to him and spoke, saying: "The design of slaying Earl Eric, on which you are bent, Hallfred, is a useless one. Better compose a poem on him." Next morning Hallfred, leaving the ship, went on shore alone, and coming to the homestead at which Earl Eric was staying, went directly into the room where he was sitting at table. Several persons recognised him immediately. He was seized and taken before the Earl, who said that he would slay him because of the injury done to his friend Thorleif the Wise; and he ordered him to be put in fetters with all speed and taken out. As the men were about to put the fetters on him, Hallfred snatched them from their hands, and striking one of the men on the head, killed him on the spot. Whereupon the Earl ordered him to be slain instantly, lest he should do more harm. Then an old man seated at the table stood up, whom Hallfred recognised as Thorleif the Wise. He went up to the Earl and begged him to give Hallfred quarter. And the Earl answered: "It is most unmeet that you should ask me to spare his life and give him quarter. Don't you remember that he maimed you, blinding you of one eye?" "Hall-

fred had the power," answered Thorleif, "of doing with me what he would; and he spared my life and saved one of my eyes against the command of King Olaf, thus placing himself in peril for me. I wish, Sire, that Hallfred's life may be spared at my request." The Earl bade him do as he wished, and Thorleif took Hallfred into his charge, saying to him, "Are you willing, Hallfred, that I shall judge between you and Earl Eric?" "Quite willing," answered Hallfred. "Then you shall compose a poem on the Earl," said Thorleif, "and have it finished in three nights." Hallfred said it should be done, and after three nights were past he appeared before Earl Eric with the poem. It begins thus:—

"Worthy art thou, O warrior! to hear the song of praise I have made on thee."

The Earl rewarded him liberally for the poem. "But," said he, "I will not retain you with me, for King Olaf's sake." Thorleif then invited Hallfred to his house, and Hallfred accepted the invitation. He passed the winter with Thorleif, but enjoyed little happiness, though Thorleif proved himself an excellent fellow, and treated him with much kindness. The following summer he got his ship ready, and sailed to Iceland. Then he travelled from place to place for a time, but was ever a stranger to joy, so deeply did he feel the death of King Olaf. Finding no rest either in Iceland or Norway, he sailed east, to visit his son Audgisl, in Sweden. There also his property required his attention, because his father-in-law Thorar was dead. Having now determined to settle in the empire of the Swedes, he set out for Iceland to fetch his property, being at this time forty years of age. His brother Thorwald and his son Hallfred accompanied him on the voyage, which was a rough one, because of storms and waves that washed overboard. Hallfred did his part in pumping out the water, though he was very ill. Once after his labours at the pump he sat down on the sail-yard, but a wave washed him into the hold with the sail-yard upon him; and when Thorwald asked, "Are you hurt, brother?" he said:—

"The storm-raised wave has struck with the boom
My side against my heart.
The crested billows have grown monstrous in their height.
My ship is tossed by the sea, for this cause or for that.
Much drenched am I; the watery surge its poet will not spare."

Thorwald, perceiving that he was ill, led him to the hinder part of the ship and took care of him. When he asked what Hallfred thought of his own condition, Hallfred said:—

“The sedulous Rind, linen-clad, with her white hand will wipe her tender
eyelids [Kolfinna]
(A noble heart the lady has),
When the swordsmen lay my body overboard.
In days gone by, a cause of grief I was to the young lady.”

He then said to his son Hallfred: “I wish to give you, my son, the sword that King Olaf gave me; but his other precious gifts you shall place with me in the coffin if I die here on board. Then he uttered this verse:—

“Free from care I now should die, if I only knew my soul were safe.
Sharp of tongue was I in my youth.
All must die; let God decide where life shall cease.
I know no grief, but I dread the pains of Hell.”

The same day Hallfred died. He was laid in a coffin, in which were also placed, as he had directed, the valuable presents that he had received from the King, the cloak, bracelet, and helmet. The coffin was then cast overboard, and came to land at Holy Island, one of the Sudreys. It was found by the servants of an Abbot, lord of the island, and they, having broken it open, stole the property and sunk Hallfred's body in a quagmire. The next night the Abbot had a dream, in which King Olaf Tryggwason appeared to him, and with an angry look spoke and said: “You have a set of wicked servants. They have destroyed my poet's ship, stolen his property, tied a stone round his neck, and sunk him in a quagmire. Make them tell the truth, or strange accidents of every kind will overtake you.” The King then disappeared from his sight, and the Abbot, on awaking, ordered the men to be seized. They at once confessed the crime of which they were accused, and were then forgiven. Hallfred's body was found, and honourably buried at the church. The bracelet was made into a chalice, the velvet cloak into an altar cloth, and the helmet into candlesticks. Thorwald and the ship's company reached Iceland in the autumn, and abode at Ottarstead during the winter. Thorwald afterwards went abroad; but Hallfred set up house and dwelt

at Ottarstead. Like his father, he was surnamed Troublesome Poet. He became distinguished and powerful, and his descendants were numerous.

King Swein Forkbeard's conquest of England, and death.

265. Swein Forkbeard, the Danish King, having put in order the realm that came to him, when he divided Norway with Olaf the Swedish King and Earl Eric after the battle of Swold, proceeded south to Denmark and abode in his own realm. Soon afterwards he sailed west to England with his army against King Ethelred, the son of Edgar, with whom he fought several battles, in which sometimes one side gained the victory, and sometimes the other. At length King Ethelred fled out of the land, and the Danish King, having plundered and completely reduced it to subjection, remained there for several years with the Danish host. But nine years after the time when the *Long Serpent* was won from King Olaf Tryggwason over against Wendland, it happened in England that King Swein died suddenly in his bed during the night. Englishmen say that King Edmund the Saint slew him in the same manner that the giant Mercurius slew the Apostate Julian. When tidings of his death reached King Ethelred, who was in Flemingland, he returned immediately to England, where a large array of followers gathered round him, and he again took possession of his realm. Two years later he died, and his son Edmund succeeded to the kingdom of England.

Earl Eric joins Knut in England, and is with him at the taking of London. The Earl's death.

266. Knut, the son of King Swein, succeeded his father in the realm of Denmark. Before the end of the summer in which King Ethelred died, King Knut made ready his army to proceed west to England. He also sent word north to Norway, bidding his brother-in-law Earl Eric Hakonson to accompany him with an army to England. For Earl Eric had won great renown by his plundering expeditions, and the glorious victories that he had

gained in two battles, the most fiercely fought in Northern lands. These were the battle which he and his father Earl Hakon fought against the Wickings of Jom, and that which the Earl himself fought against King Olaf Tryggwason. Of Knut's message Thord Kolbeinson speaks in his Praise of Eric:—

"I begin my eulogy. The song-renowned chiefs, I wot,
 Their bidding sent to the fair-helmeted Earl, the leader of the country's
 barons,
 That Eric should once more in perfect duty come and meet his friends.
 I see what the King will surely want."

On receiving the message of his brother-in-law King Knut, the Earl hastened to make preparations for the journey abroad. He left his son Earl Hakon over the country, placing him under the control of his brother-in-law Einar Thambaskelf, that Einar might bear rule in Hakon's name, for Hakon was not more than seventeen years of age. Earl Swein and Hakon now shared the land between them. Earl Eric went to England to join King Knut, and was with him at the taking of London. In England he slew Ulfkel Snilling. Thus Thord says:—

"The judge-of-gold joined battle west of London ;
 The renowned Thund of the sea-horse won the land.
 Ulfkel, brave in the storm of battle, ugly blows received from the [Danish]
 guards,
 Where the dark sword-edges of the heroes quivered."

Earl Eric abode one year in England, where he fought several battles, and the following autumn he purposed making a pilgrimage to Rome. But before he started on the journey he sent for a surgeon to cut off his uvula. And as the surgeon was marking the spot where he should make the cut, a man came up, who, some say, was King Knut, but most people say was one of the men that were with King Olaf on the *Long Serpent*. This man said to the surgeon, "I should cut off somewhat more." "Why more?" asked the surgeon. "So that there would be no need to operate a second time," said the man, and then went away. The surgeon followed the man's advice, and cut off more of the Earl's uvula than he had intended. The wound then bled so violently that the bleeding could not be stopped, and caused

the Earl's death. This event took place thirteen years after the Earl's battle with King Olaf Tryggwason off the coast of Wendland.

King Olaf Tryggwason's journey to Rome after his escape from the Long Serpent.

267. We will now turn in our narrative to the stories which prove King Olaf to have come forth alive from the battle in which the *Long Serpent* was won. The story told by Astrid, the wife of Earl Sigwaldi, is the following:—After the battle, King Olaf was carried to Wendland, on board the same Wendish smack that we have previously mentioned. The King had received several wounds, all small, except two, which were somewhat serious. One of these, from a stone, was in his forehead; and the other, made by an arrow, that pierced the sleeve of his mail-shirt, was on his arm. This agrees with the former statement, that Kolbiorn the marshal and others on the *Serpent* observed blood flowing from under King Olaf's mail-sleeve; and that when Einar Thambaskelf last saw the King he noticed drops of blood falling down his cheek from under his helmet. King Olaf stayed with Astrid, and was cured of his wounds; and during his stay with her he was recognised by many. Powerful persons offered to aid him in recovering his kingdom, but he declared that he would not fight against his god-relatives. "I believe it to be God's will," he said, "that they should now hold the realm of Norway; also, I am not without fear lest God has been displeased with my government." Astrid then offered him her estates and the government that she held in Wendland, over which Earl Sigwaldi had no control; but he said that he did not desire them. "Would you like me to go with you west to England to see King Ethelred?" she asked; "he is so very friendly towards you that he will bestow on you whatever honour you are willing to receive." But King Olaf refused her offer. She then asked him, "What aid is there that I can give, and you will receive from me?" and he answered that he wished to go to Rome. With the utmost care, therefore, she made preparations for his journey thither, and herself, with a retinue of twelve, accompanied him south as far as the

Rhine. At parting from him she gave him, among many other valuable gifts, a pack-horse loaded with money, and, leaving with him eight of her followers, she returned home with four. King Olaf then proceeded south to Rome, and on his way thither many people attached themselves to his company, because he acted as interpreter for all the pilgrims who joined him, giving himself out to be a Northern merchant. At Rome he paid a visit to the Pope, to whom he told who he was and all his plans. At this point Astrid's story ends.

King Olaf visits Jerusalem.

268. Afterwards Olaf passed over-sea to Jerusalem, where he visited the Patriarch and the King of Jerusalem. They both received him with the highest honour, being greatly struck by his fine appearance, for they saw from his countenance that he was a man of high birth and noble disposition. When he told them that in his own country he had the title of King, they requested him to accept from them a large realm; but he refused their offer. Then they gave him two cities and three castles, which he accepted. Nevertheless he put on the habit of a monk.

King Olaf sends a book to King Ethelred, and presents to his sister Astrid, the wife of Erling Skialgson.

269. King Olaf Tryggwason had been five years absent from Norway when certain Englishmen visited Jerusalem. On their return to England they brought, with them a book which Olaf Tryggwason had placed in their hands to give King Ethelred, and they presented it to the King with evident proofs of the truth of what they said. This book contained the Saga of King Olaf Tryggwason and six other sagas of holy men. It described clearly the manner in which King Olaf had escaped from the battle, and told of his subsequent journeys, agreeing exactly with the story that we have just written, told by Astrid. Moreover, speaking expressly of the Wendish smack, on which King Olaf was borne to land, the Saga stated that it had on board Astrid, the sister of

Queen Geira, who had been the wife of King Olaf; and also Dixin, who was King Olaf's friend, and had been Queen Geira's counsellor. Further, that when on that day they twice held conversation with the King, they all planned together that the ship should lie by itself during the day until the close of the battle. Likewise, that after they arrived in Wendland they all remained together two days at Bustaburg. There is also a story told that about the time when this book was brought to King Æthelred in England, a sagacious and trustworthy man, whose name, however, is not given, came east to Norway, saying that he had been sent by Olaf Tryggwason to Erling, the King's brother-in-law, and Astrid, the King's sister. He asserted that King Olaf was alive in a monastery beyond the seas, and he brought with him to Astrid, as proofs of his story, a ring, a knife, and a belt, saying that her brother Olaf had sent them to her. Astrid recognised these treasures as having certainly belonged to King Olaf.

King Olaf Haroldson, called the Stout, and afterwards the Saint, defeats Earl Swein at Nesia, and becomes King of Norway [1015].

270. When Earl Swein Hakonson and Hakon Ericson ruled over Norway, they made peace with Erling Skialgson, and confirmed it by a marriage between Aslak, Erling's son, and Gunnhild, Swein's daughter. Moreover the Earls agreed that Erling and Aslak, father and son, should retain possession of all the revenues that King Olaf had assigned to them. Erling then attached himself unreservedly to the Earls as their friend, and the friendship was confirmed by mutual oaths. But after Earls Swein and Hakon had ruled over Norway two years from the time when Earl Eric left the country, Olaf Haroldson arrived from the British Islands. Sailing from England, he reached Norway at the island of Selia, which lies off Stad, having with him two merchant-ships, each containing sixty fighting-men. Thence he sailed south to Ulfasound, and over against Fialir, further south, he left the high-road and turned into Saudungsound, where he lay with his ships. In the sound, King Olaf took Earl Hakon Ericson prisoner, and many others with him, to all of whom he gave quarter, after

Earl Hakon had agreed to surrender all the realm which he claimed as his own in Norway. The Earl took an oath that he would never fight against Olaf, nor make war against him in defence of Norway, nor attack him. This event happened fourteen years after the battle of Swold. The following spring King Olaf fought a battle against Earl Swein Hakonson, off Nesia, on Palm Sunday. There were present in the battle Erling Skialgson; Einar Thambaskelf, and many other barons, fighting on the side of Swein. King Olaf's force was inferior in numbers, and yet he gained the victory. Swein fled; afterwards, leaving the country, he went to his brother-in-law, the Swedish King, to whom he told the story of his encounter with Olaf the Stout. Then in the summer he sailed into the Baltic and made descents on the realm of Garda. In the autumn he returned to Sweden, where he was seized with an illness which caused his death. Olaf Haroldson was accepted King in Norway, as we are told in his Saga.

Thord Siarekson's story of his meeting with King Olaf Tryggwason.

271. There was a man named Thord Siarekson, an Iclander by birth, who left his country in the days of King Olaf the Saint, purposing to go to Jerusalem. When he arrived beyond the seas in Syrland, he happened one day to be passing by a castle in the company of several pilgrims, and saw a very tall man of great size standing at an embrasure of the battlements; he wore a cowl, and was leaning against the wall. As the crowd of pilgrims passed he inquired in the Danish tongue if there were any Northmen among them, and they answered, saying that there were some; and Thord said that he was from Iceland. The man in the cowl then said that he knew something of that country, and inquired of Hialti Skeggison. Thord said that he was related to Hialti by marriage. Then the tall man asked where the company was going, and Thord told him of their intended visit to Jerusalem. "Turn back," said the man in the cowl; "the road is not safe, there are foes ahead." He then inquired who was King in Norway, and Thord answered that Olaf Haroldson was King. "Bear my greeting to Hialti

Skeggison," said the man in the cowl, "when you come to Iceland." Thord answered, "What shall I say to Hialti of him who sends the greeting?" "I will not tell my name," said the man in the cowl; "but you may say that I who send him greeting spoke with him at Ladi in Norway. I held a sword, and Hialti grasped it with his hands between my hands. He then went out to Iceland, and we never saw each other again." After these words Thord and the man broke off their conversation, and Thord then turned back from his intended journey, fearing hostilities. When he arrived in Iceland he told his story to Hialti, who said that the action described had been chosen by King Olaf Tryggwason and himself, before they parted at Ladi, to be a sign of the truth of any message they might afterwards send to one another. Thord Siarekson was a man of mark, sagacious, and a poet; he composed a funeral poem on King Olaf the Saint, which is called the *Rodadrapa*.

King Olaf Haroldson's dealings with Erling Skialgson.

272. The truth of Earl Swein Hakonson's death being known in Norway, submission was made to King Olaf Haroldson by many powerful men, who were unwilling to be his servants while they supposed the Earl was alive. King Olaf remained in the north at Nidaros during the winter, and when spring came he sailed towards the east of the country. While he lay in Karmsound, messages passed between him and Erling Skialgson, having for their purpose the making of peace between them; and a meeting to agree upon terms was fixed to take place at Whitingsey. In discussing the terms, Erling claimed that he should hold all the revenues that King Olaf Tryggwason had assigned to him. But the King would consent to no peace with Erling, except on condition that, as in other matters, he alone should decide as he wished how the revenues were to be shared. Erling was reluctant to agree to this condition; but at the request of his kinsmen and friends, he submitted to King Olaf, and accepted the terms which the King laid down. Thus they parted, reconciled to one another, so to speak. Erling Skialgson's rule extended from the Frith of Sogn in the north to Lidandisness in the east; within this district he was

supreme over the yeomen, but received a much smaller portion of the royal revenues than formerly. Nevertheless men stood in such awe of him that no one said or did anything against his will; and the stewards and bailiffs to whom the King had granted revenues which Erling previously enjoyed, were unable to stand against him. King Olaf thought that Erling used his power to excess, and summoned him into his presence; but friends who took a kindly interest in both, intervening, begged them to become reconciled. Through their persuasions it was agreed that Erling should enjoy such revenues as the King had already granted him, but no others, and that all causes of complaint which the King had against him should fall to the ground; likewise, that Erling's son Skialg should remain with King Olaf, and that Erling should not interfere with the freedom of the men whom the King appointed to his stewardships and bailiwicks. Upon these terms they parted, supposed to be at peace with one another. Erling returned to his estates, and carried on his government exactly in his former manner. Thus matters stood, until Erling and his sons collected a force together after the manslaughter of Sel-Thori. Taking with them fifteen hundred men, they sailed north to Ogwaldsness, where they released Asbiorn the manslayer of Sel-Thori from his fetters, and rescued him from the power of the King. The events which followed are related in the Saga of King Olaf. Dissension sprang up anew between the King and Erling, which grew into open enmity.

King Knut of Denmark and England lays claim to the kingdom of Norway [1025].

273. When King Olaf the Saint had ruled over Norway, ten years from the time that Earl Swein fled out of the country, there came ambassadors from Knut the Great, bearing with them Knut's claim to the whole realm of Norway. They found King Olaf at Tunsberg, and delivered to him King Knut's letter in which the claim was asserted. But King Olaf refused to give up the realm, and the ambassadors thereupon returned. King Olaf stayed in the Wick during summer; the winter he abode in Sarpsburg, King Knut being in Denmark. That winter Onund the Swedish

King, attended by more than thirty hundred men, rode across Western Gautland, and had a meeting with King Olaf in the river Elf, close to Konungahella, at which they took counsel together. After King Knut had passed over to England with his army, the two brothers-in-law, Olaf and Onund, separated in a friendly manner; King Onund returned to Gautland, and King Olaf sailed to the Wick, whence he continued his voyage northwards, keeping near the coast. In the Eikundasound he remained for a long time, waiting for a favourable wind; and he here learnt that Erling Skialgson and the people of Jadar had gathered together their forces and had a host of men. Erling owned a large sloop, which had thirty-two benches for rowers, and contained room for more. This ship he was wont to use when he went on plundering and other expeditions; it had a crew of two hundred men and upwards.

Erling joins Knut, who is accepted as King over Norway
[1028].

274. King Olaf sailed out of the Eikundasound north past Jadar as soon as he had a favourable wind, and went on a progress over Hordaland. The following winter, which was the thirteenth year of his reign, he abode north in the market-town of Nidaros. In the spring he made preparations to leave Nidaros, and having levied a force over the whole country, sailed south with it, keeping near the coast. Arrived at Hordaland, he was informed that Erling Skialgson had left the country on a visit to King Knut, and had gone west to England with a large force in four or five ships, himself commanding his large sloop. This summer Kings Olaf and Onund led plundering expeditions into the Danish Empire, as we are told in the Saga of King Olaf. In the autumn King Olaf, leaving his ships, passed overland north into Norway, and after staying at Sarpsburg during the winter, until Yule was past, went thence into the Uplands. Erling Skialgson and all his sons had been in King Knut's army during the summer; and in the autumn Erling had returned to Norway, with his force, bringing with him men from Knut, who, by gifts and fair promises, treacherously seduced from their allegiance to

King Olaf his land and subjects. This they did under Erling's protection. In the spring King Olaf left the Uplands and went down into the Wick; he remained a long time at Tunsberg, and sent to Sweden for his ships. Early in summer King Knut came to Norway with all his host. He had no fewer than twelve hundred ships, with which he sailed from Limfirth, directing his course north towards the Wick. He proceeded rapidly, keeping at a distance from the land east of the frith; and King Olaf was in Tunsberg as he sailed past the Fold on the high seas. He lay for a while in the Eikundasound, and Erling Skialgson came with a large force to visit him. They confirmed anew their friendship, King Knut promising to Erling that he should have the administration of the country from Stad to the Rygiabit. King Knut then sailed north as far as Throndham, bringing the whole country under his sway, for nobody dared to raise a voice against him. The right of visitation over the whole land of Norway he gave to his kinsman Earl Hakon Ericson. King Knut then sailed south along the coast. In every shire he held an Assembly, and at every Assembly he was accepted as King, and received the sworn allegiance of the country.

: *King Olaf Haroldson prepares to attack Erling.*

275. When King Olaf's ships arrived from Sweden he moved them up into the Frith of Oslo, and thence into the lake called Rond. Here he stayed during the summer, until King Knut had sailed south to Denmark, and then he brought his ships down to Tunsberg. Afterwards, with the force that was willing to follow him, he prepared to go to the north of the country, and with thirteen ships sailed out to sea down the Wick. It was now the early part of winter. He was rather slow in beginning his voyage, and his ships lay for a very long time at the Soleys. Here he learnt that Erling had collected a large force in Jadar, and that his sloop lay off land in complete readiness, and with it a large number of other ships owned by the yeomen. The King proceeded with his troops on his northern course, and lay for a time in Eikundasound; and now the two fleets had tidings of each other. Erling then augmented his host to the utmost.

*King Olaf Haroldson defeats Erling Skialgson, who is slain
after the battle.*

276. On St. Thomas's day, before Yule, as soon as dawn appeared, King Olaf, under a favourable and somewhat strong wind, left the harbour where he lay. As he sailed past Jadar, the news was carried immediately across country. Erling at once gave his men the signal to go on board, and they all hastened to their ships and prepared for battle. Beyond Jadar the King's ships soon came close to land, for he determined to sail along the inner road between the islands and the mainland, intending to enter the friths for supplies of men and cattle. Erling followed with a host of men and a crowd of ships, which, having nothing on board but men and weapons, made rapid progress; and when his own sloop drew considerably ahead of the other ships he gave orders to furl the sails and wait for the rest of the fleet. The King's ships were heavy and water-soaked, for they had been afloat all summer and autumn, and so much of the winter as was already gone; and the King noticed how rapidly Erling gained on him. He perceived also that if he encountered the whole of the pursuing force at one time, the odds in numbers would be very greatly against him. He therefore passed the word from ship to ship to lower the sails, though as gradually as possible, and to reef them below. This was done. Erling soon observed that the King's sails were sinking in the water, and shouted out to his fleet, calling on them to sail faster. "Don't you see," said he, "the sinking of their sails; they are escaping from us." Then he had the sail of his sloop unfurled in all haste, and she rapidly ran ahead of the other ships. King Olaf directed his ships within the Frith of Bokn, and now the fleets were hidden from each other. Then he ordered his men to haul the sails down and row the ships forward into the sound, where they were all brought together. A headland lay between them and the open sea, so that as Erling sailed to the sound he did not see the King's ships before their crews were all rowing towards him. Then a fight of the fiercest arose, and all Erling's men in the sloop fell, and he alone remained standing; but he defended himself so gallantly that no similar

case is known of a single man that withstood as long as he the onset of so many foes. He made no effort to evade the fight, until the King bade him yield, and he consented. Desisting from his defence, he took off his helmet and was then openly slain, contrary to the wish of King Olaf, as we are told in King Olaf's Saga.

The character of Erling Skialgson.

277. It is generally said that Erling is the most remarkable of the men of Norway that have not borne a title of high rank. He is especially remarkable by reason of his family and his marriage, his capacities and his manly accomplishments, his estates and his riches, his hospitality and widespread munificence. Also, he was gracious to all his subjects, and a good adviser to those who placed themselves unreservedly under his power and authority. So great was his ambition to rule, that when dealing with greater men than himself he would never endure submission to any chief unless he were granted all that he asked, authority as well as other things, and unless he managed everything as he wished. His imperiousness, shown in his disregard of moderation in his conduct, brought him much ill fortune. Of this he had experience when, with excessive haste and eagerness to be gone, he sailed away in his sloop, leaving his brother-in-law King Olaf Tryggwason behind, the man whom he would have aided as zealously as he would have defended his own life. A second time the experience befell him, when, with intemperate vehemence, he hurried to his death, urging onward the same sloop far ahead of all his fleet to meet his foes. We cannot wonder that his imperiousness was the cause of his death, when he, a yeoman's son, took upon himself to strive with so renowned a King as Olaf Haroldson, who, moreover, had already made peace with him twice, or oftener. They were, too, related by marriage; for Astrid, Tryggwi's daughter, Erling's wife, was third cousin to King Olaf. Erling's death took place in the fourteenth year after the battle of Nesia.

Einar Thambaskelf becomes a partisan of King Knut.

278. After the battle of Nesia, Einar Thambaskelf left the country, along with his brother-in-law Earl Swein, to go east to Sweden

and after the Earl's death he remained with Olaf the Swedish King until the King's death. Then he returned to Norway, and meeting with King Olaf Haroldson in the east of the country, became so far reconciled to him that he was allowed to go north to Throntham and retain possession of all his own lands, and also the estates that had been the marriage portion of his wife Bergliot. Einar therefore proceeded north and abode on his estates, taking no service under the King; and although he enjoyed no royal revenues, he maintained himself and his retainers in honourable state, for he had very great possessions. When King Knut laid Norway under subjection, and committed the defence of the country to Earl Hakon, Einar associated himself with his brother-in-law, the Earl, and took again all the revenues that he had formerly held when the Earls ruled the land. King Knut bestowed large gifts on Einar, thus binding him closely to his side, and promised that, as long as his power lasted, Einar should be the greatest and most honourable of those that bore no title of rank in Norway. Knut likewise added that Einar, on account of his family, seemed to him the most suitable man in Norway to bear such a title, if there were no Earl Hakon; and next to Einar, his son Eindridi.

King Olaf Haroldson leaves Norway and takes refuge in Garda, where King Olaf Tryggwason appears to him in a dream.

279. After the death of Erling Skialgson, King Olaf, keeping close to land, sailed north with his ships; but when he was quite beyond Stad he learnt that Earl Hakon was coming from the north against him, and he turned back eastwards, still hugging the coast. He soon discovered which of his men had served him with fidelity, for a great part of his force now left him and went to join Earl Hakon, so that the King had not more than six ships when he turned into Rodrafirth. Sailing to Waldale, he drew his ships on shore, and thence proceeded up the valley to Lesia, God performing many great miracles on his behalf, which are related in his Saga. Following the land-route eastwards, King Olaf journeyed all the way to Neriki, where he stayed for a long time in the spring. Having obtained ships, he sailed east in the summer to

the realm of Garda, where he was heartily welcomed by King Jarisleif and Queen Ingigerd. He abode with them during the winter, anxiously considering in his mind what plan to take; for King Jarisleif invited him to stay there as long as he wished, and offered him a wide realm to govern. This offer the King pondered over. There was another plan which he had in mind: to abdicate the royal dignity and travel to Jerusalem or other holy places and enter a cloister, as his kinsman King Olaf Tryggwason was then said by some to have done. But chiefly was his mind occupied in considering how to acquire the means that would enable him to regain his realm of Norway. When he had wearied himself with such cares, he referred the whole matter to the direction and will of Almighty God, asking that He would make known to him the plan which He knew to be most meet for him and all those under him. Much of the night-time he passed waking, and made intercession to God for the whole people, for his enemies as well as his friends. One night it happened that King Olaf was lying in bed, wearied by his great cares, and after he had chanted his prayers according to his habit, sleep stole upon him, but so slight that he thought he was awake and saw all that happened in the room. There appeared standing before his bed a tall noble-looking man in goodly raiment, and the King in his dream imagined that King Olaf Tryggwason was come. The man spoke to him and said: "Are you very anxious about your project? I wonder why you hesitate what plan to adopt, and ponder upon abdicating the royal dignity which God has bestowed on you, or upon remaining here to accept a kingdom from foreign rulers that are strangers to you. Return rather to the realm that you have inherited and long ruled over with the strength that God has given you, and let not your subjects put you in fear. A king's renown lies in conquering his foes; and to fall with your men on the field of battle is a glorious death. Perhaps you doubt a little whether you have right on your side in this quarrel? Do not hide the truth from yourself; you may boldly go and lay claim to the country, for God will bear witness to you that it is your own." King Olaf then awoke, and had a glimpse, as he fancied, of the man disappearing. He thanked God for the vision, and from that time onward he strengthened his heart, and firmly resolved to return to Norway. This design was the one that he

had been most wishful to follow, and had found the most acceptable to all his men. And he encouraged himself by the thought that the land would now be easily won, being without a head; for he had been told by persons lately arrived from Norway that Earl Hakon, returning from England, had perished at sea with all his crew. When he communicated this design to his men they all heard it thankfully.

It is not incredible that God should thus make known to the King, by means of his kinsman Olaf Tryggwason, that which He had foreordained; for the King, with godly endeavours, had striven at all times that the holy Christian religion should be generally and completely accepted, of which work Olaf Tryggwason had only laid the foundation. King Olaf Haroldson brought about the acceptance of Holy Truth by the whole people of Norway, a great part of whom had turned away from the right Faith which the elder Olaf taught them, and had followed heathenish error and the worship of graven images. Also in much of their conduct the two greatly resembled each other. They were alike just in their judgments, and punished evil men with severity, showing no difference between man and man when gentle means were powerless to persuade. And, like as Olaf Tryggwason's foes, led on by cupidity and ill-will, persecuted him because he would not suffer foreign lords, or rather pirate Wickings, to exercise an unjust authority over his native land; so also there was no other reason for the revolt against King Olaf Haroldson of his countrymen except their intolerance of his just judgments, and his willingness to lose life and realm rather than forego justice. It is also credible, for another reason, that he who appeared in the dream to make known God's message to King Olaf Haroldson was Olaf Tryggwason; for the King was of an age to have seen Olaf Tryggwason before the voyage to Wendland, and was thus able to recognise him if ever in his waking hours he should behold him.

During the spring King Olaf prepared his ships for the voyage; and leaving his son Magnus behind in the realm of Garda, sailed from the east to Sweden, whence he afterwards passed north by land into Norway. On this journey, too, many remarkable visions appeared to him, both in his waking and sleeping hours, and they are related in his Saga.

King Olaf Haroldson's vision the night before the battle of Stikklestead, in which he was slain [1030].

280. We must not pass over the vision which appeared to King Olaf in a dream, when, newly come over the fells from the east, he lay with his host at Weradale in Throntham, the night immediately before the battle of Stikklestead. The King slept little, and for the greater part of the night lay awake, praying to God for himself and his men. Towards day drowsiness stole upon him, and being fallen asleep, he beheld near him our Lord Jesus Christ, shining with ineffable brightness; and when the King seemed in his dream to fall, as it were, into a heavy swoon, owing to the weakness of his mortal nature and sudden fear at so grand and sublime a sight, the living God addressed him graciously in these words: "Come, my beloved! The time is at hand when you will receive and enjoy the surpassing sweetness of an abundant recompense for your sufferings, a recompense earned by your beneficent toil and zeal." Whereupon the holy King Olaf awoke, more gladdened in mind than we can describe by this heavenly consolation and promise; strengthened also by the gracious brightness which, proceeding from the divine appearance, illuminated his heart in this sublime vision. He went forth joyfully to battle against his opponents, and in the encounter made a noble exchange; he exchanged an earthly kingdom for a heavenly, and by the outpouring of his blood gained a crown of victory. Wounded to death by his foes, a martyr to sacred justice and truth, he passed from the wretched camp of this miserable life into the lofty hall of the kingdom of heaven, where he now beholds the King of all kings in His glory, Jesus Christ our Lord, and reigns evermore with Him in eternal peace and joy.

*King Knut breaks his promises to Einar Thambaskelf.
Einar's absence from the battle of Stikklestead.*

281. Einar Thambaskelf felt heavy grief and lasting sorrow at the death of King Olaf Tryggwason, like many other dear friends of the King. He was seldom in a very cheerful mood, and passed

most of his time in quietness after he returned from Sweden, and was reconciled to King Olaf the Saint. One summer he left the country, and after a voyage west to England, went thence south as far as Rome. He was absent for a year, and returned home the following summer. He again settled down in quietness, though he had now received from Earl Hakon the grant of large revenues in Throntham, of which we have spoken above; and the position of a great chief being once more attained, he became the most distinguished of all the barons in the community of the Thronds. But after there was no doubt that Earl Hakon had perished at sea, not a vestige of anything on board his ship coming to land, Einar prepared to make a voyage to England. He sailed thither in the spring of the year that St. Olaf left Gardar; and coming to King Knut, was heartily welcomed. Einar then declared the reason of his visit; saying that he had come to claim performance of King Knut's promise that he would bestow on him the title of Earl in Norway if there were no Earl Hakon. "That business has now a totally different aspect," answered the King; "I have sent messengers to Denmark with tokens showing that I have bestowed all the realm of Norway on my son Swein. He shall be King over the country, and I will maintain my friendship with you. You shall have the rank to which your birth entitles you, that of baron. Einar now perceived what was Knut's design. He wished Einar and the other chiefs to give battle to King Olaf; but they should receive no accession to the power they already wielded, even if they deprived Olaf of his kingdom. Einar then again called to mind King Olaf Tryggwason, and the great calamity that befell all the men of Norway when they lost a chief who never in such manner broke his promises to his friends. He turned to Olaf Tryggwason with hearty affection, for his experience of him was of another kind than his experience of Knut. Olaf surpassed all chiefs in nobility of character and the fulfilment of all kind promises made to his men; and to those who served him with faithfulness he refused no honour that was in his power to bestow. Then pondering upon the designs which the men of Norway would have in hand during the summer against King Olaf Haroldson if he returned from the east—designs that would bring no benefit to Einar if he participated in them—he made his return from the west in a very

leisurely fashion. Events turned out as he expected, and he did not reach Norway until after the death of St. Olaf. Ever since that time there has been a general opinion that Einar was fortunate in never fighting against King Olaf after they were reconciled to each other. Moreover Einar was foremost among the great men to uphold with all honour and worship the sanctity of King Olaf.

Knut's son Swein, King of Norway. Invasion of the land by Tryggwi, son of Olaf Tryggwason. Magnus and Harold Sigurdson, Kings of Norway.

282. King Knut's son Swein, called Swein Alfufuson, from his mother, had already arrived in the Wick from the east when the battle of Sticklestead took place, and was now accepted King over Norway. After he had reigned three years, being held in little esteem by the people of the country, tidings came to Norway that Tryggwi, son of King Olaf Tryggwason and the English lady Gyda, had collected a force in the British Islands. At that time King Swein was in Throntham, and when the news concerning Tryggwi reached him he made a levy of men and ships, and summoned the barons to his side. Einar Thambaskelf remained at home, unwilling to accompany King Swein, who, when his preparations were complete, sailed south with his force, keeping near the coast, and then east as far as the Wick. Tryggwi, leading his force from the west in the summer, crossed the ocean to Hordaland. The two fleets now had news of each other, and King Swein sailed by the coast with his force from the south, while Tryggwi sailed from the north to meet him. The poem on Tryggwi so says :—

“ Eager for glory, Tryggwi sailed forth from the north ;
King Swein from the south his forces led to battle.
And quickly, where they met, the fight took place.
Near their tumult was I ; 'twas a clash of swords,
Whereat a host of Hords were slain.”

They encountered each other, and there was a fierce contest to the north of Jadar in Soknasound, within the Frith of Bokn, near

the spot where Erling Skialgson fell. They fought on a Sunday, as we are told in the poem composed upon Swein Alfifuson :—

“Lady! that Sunday was not such a morn
As when a maiden serves the men with leeks or ale.
Many fell by the sword’s edge.
For Swein the King had bidden his crews
To bind his sloops together by the prows.
The ravens had raw flesh to tear.”

King Swein gained the victory, and Tryggwi fell with the greatest part of his force in this battle, which took place thirty-three years after the time when Tryggwi’s father, King Olaf, fought on the *Serpent*. King Swein’s rule over the land continued during the following winter. The next spring Einar Thambaskelf sailed east to the realm of Gardar to fetch Magnus, the son of St. Olaf, and in the winter following they arrived from the east. King Swein fled from Norway as soon as Magnus appeared, who was then chosen King over the whole land. King Magnus the Good, son of King Olaf the Saint, had ruled over the land thirteen years, when Harold Sigurdson, his father’s brother, arrived in Norway. King Magnus then shared the realm with him, and they had reigned both together for one year as Kings of Norway, when King Magnus died, and Harold became sole King.

Olaf Tryggwason is seen in southern lands by Gaut, a traveller from Norway [1046].

283. The same year in which the two kinsmen Magnus the Good and Harold Sigurdson ruled together over Norway, a Northman named Gauti left the country, intending to make a journey to Rome. On his way south he had reached Saxland, and passed through Koln, when he met a man named Gaut, who also was a Northman, and had formerly been his companion. Gaut was just come from Rome. Gauti asked if he could lend him some money, and Gaut answered, “I will not only lend you such money as I have, but also will myself go with you where you wish to travel.” They first went to Rome, and then over-sea to Jerusalem, and next, for the sake of curiosity, they wished to go as far as the Red Sea to behold the way by which Moses led the children of Israel out of

the land of Egypt. When they had made considerable progress on their way to Egypt, they lost their way in the desert, and Gauti fell ill and died. After this Gaut wandered alone for a long time in the wilderness, suffering distress and hunger, trying to find his way back, but having no clear knowledge whither he went. One day, coming forth from the wilderness, he arrived at a broad river, on the other side of which he beheld a large monastery. A strong desire seized him to cross the river and reach the monastery, for he hoped to procure alms there; but he passed along the bank, up and down the stream, without finding either bridge or boat. So exhausted had he become from hunger, thirst, and heavy toil, that he was moved to shed tears because he could not get across the river. In grief and sorrow he threw himself down on the bank of the stream, opposite the monastery, and fell asleep. It was now the third hour of the day, and while he slept he saw a vision in which a man came to him and said, "You are sleeping heedlessly; if you wish to cross the river, rise up without delay, and you will find, close to the bank, a small boat lying on the water." At these words Gaut awoke, and fancied that he had a glimpse of the speaker at the moment of opening his eyes. He sprang up forthwith, and going down the bank, found on the river a little boat, having oars laid in the oar-loops. Having entered it, he rowed across the stream and fastened the boat to the bank. As he walked up from the river, and before he reached the monastery, he beheld a beautiful stone-house, in which was seated an elderly man, handsome, and of a venerable appearance. He seemed to Gaut very like the man that appeared to him in his dream. Before Gaut reached the stone-house the man fell on his knees to pray; and when Gaut approached the door he rose up to meet him, and inquired, in the Danish tongue, who he was, whence he came, and what journey he was on. And Gaut told him precisely and fully how his journey stood. The man then came forward and welcomed him pleasantly, kissed him, and led him into the building, saying, "Rest yourself here till evening, and tell me the news from Norway. I will then go with you to the monastery and interpret for you." The handsome man then inquired concerning Earl Eric Hakonson and his brother Swein, and their doings. Gaut told him that they had been long dead. Then he inquired about Erling Skialgson and his wife Astrid; and Gaut told him of

the death of Erling, giving a precise account of his dealings with King Olaf Haroldson. He then inquired about St. Olaf; and Gaut told him of the King's death, and said that Swein Alfifuson had succeeded him as King over Norway. He also told him of the arrival of Tryggwi, son of King Olaf Tryggwason, from the Western Islands; of the battle which he fought with Swein; of Swein's victory and Tryggwi's death. On hearing this story the venerable man became very sorrowful, but asked, nevertheless, who was King over Norway when Gaut left the land. Gaut told him that Magnus, the son of St. Olaf, had reigned twelve years; "the year in which I left the country," he said, "was his thirteenth year, and Harold Sigurdson had come to share the realm with him." The elderly man then said: "I feel well-disposed towards Magnus the Good, because of the stories told of him by many who come here from Norway; but Harold Sigurdson seems to me as much a pirate Wicking as a King; I heard many things of him when he was in Greekland. But what say you? Do the Northmen retain any recollection of Olaf Tryggwason?" "His memory," answered Gaut, "is glorious, and he is held in high honour, because he brought the Christian religion into Northern lands." The stately man then said: "Tell me what is supposed to have been the fate of Olaf Tryggwason in the fight on the *Serpent*?" "Men hold different opinions," answered Gaut; "some say that he dived into the sea when he was severely wounded, and being clothed in his mail-shirt and other armour, sank down and so died." The venerable man replied: "Why should men suppose him so frightened as to dive into the sea to kill himself, if at the same time he knew that he was so wounded and exhausted that he could not escape? He could not have been so skilled in manly exercises as he was reputed to be, if a mail-shirt or other armour could long be such an encumbrance to him in the water that he could not get rid of it. Men should not believe such things. Tell me what others suppose?" "Some think," said Gaut, "that God in His might took the King to Himself, or placed him in some other spot, at the moment when the great light was seen encircling him." To this the handsome man answered: "The supposition is doubtful, yea incredible, that the King's holiness fitted him to receive such honour from God, as that he was taken alive, by the might of Heaven, from among

living men; for though King Olaf did some good deeds, he was guilty of many sins. Such a belief must not be held; it is more credible that, because of his humility, he was able, by God's aid, to escape the danger to his life. Tell me yet what others suppose?" "Some say," answered Gaut, "that as he was swimming, he was picked up and taken to land by the same ship that was lying all day not far distant from the battle." "That we may accept," replied he, "rather than believe that he was taken up into heaven. Wise and truthful men among us here in the south say that he was alive after the battle, and lived right up to the time of the present Kings of Norway, a period little short of fifty years. But tell me now if Einar Thambaskelf yet lives?" "Einar lives," answered Gaut, "and dwells at Gimsa. His wife is Bergliot, the daughter of Earl Hakon Sigurdson, and he is now the greatest and most distinguished of the barons in the district of the Thronds, much beloved by King Magnus." The venerable man replied: "I saw Einar Thambaskelf on the *Serpent*, fighting like the strongest, young as he was; for though he was only eighteen years of age, he was a match for the most valiant of the King's champions." Then Gaut looked into the face of the speaker, pondering how he could talk so intimately of the battle and the King's men. "When I was a young child," he said, "I saw King Olaf Tryggwason. You are much like him, though you are old. Tell me now if you are King Olaf?" "I claim neither the glory nor the name of King Olaf," he answered. At that moment the bells in the castle began to ring for evensong, and at the first stroke the man sprang up, and taking Gaut with him, went to church. He was so tall that Gaut scarcely reached up to his shoulders as they walked together. As soon as they entered the church, where many people were present, the monks and clerks who had been waiting for him began the service; and Gaut observed that he was taller by the head and neck than any other person present. Many stood around him, prepared to do him service; and as he was taller than others, so his appearance was in all respects more noble than theirs. When evensong was over, the tall man went forth from the church, and summoning two stewards of the monastery, bade them give hospitable entertainment to Gaut. They led him, therefore, to the guest-chamber and offered him a most hearty welcome. The next

morning they made a bath ready for him, and brought him a clean dress. After Mass on this day, when the tall man left the church, he summoned Gaut and said to him: "Salute Einar Thambaskelf for me when you reach Norway, and tell him, I bear witness that no one on the *Serpent* fought more bravely than he; and as a proof to him that you are the bearer of a true message, take him this knife and belt which I send him." Then having placed in Gaut's hands the knife and belt, valuable treasures of their kind, he went to the stone-house, and the stewards led Gaut to the guest-chamber. Such was the esteem in which, as Gaut perceived the venerable man was held, that all matters in the castle were done as he willed them, just as if he had been its King. The same day Gaut visited the stone-house of the tall man, to examine further and make himself more certain who the man was; but he found the building shut, and returned to the guest-chamber. Early on the third day Gaut set forth on his journey, and by the orders of the tall man he was furnished with guides and interpreters all the way north till he had crossed the sea to Greekland. He then continued his journey without delay until he came home to Norway, where he visited Einar Thambaskelf, and gave him the knife and belt, telling the whole story of his travels, and relating his conversations with the tall man. When Einar heard the story, he said, with tears in his eyes: "Believe me, brother Gaut, you have certainly met with Olaf Tryggwason, and it is he that has sent me these chattels." This story, with the account of the vision, was related by a man of mark, Thorarin Thorwaldson, in the hearing of Teit Asgeirson, and Thorarin heard it from Einar Thambaskelf himself.

Einar Thambaskelf is treacherously slain by King Harold Sigurdson.

284. After the death of King Magnus Olafson, King Harold Sigurdson became sole King over Norway. It appeared to him that Einar Thambaskelf exercised too much power in Throntham. He therefore charged him with several offences, and deprived him of all the royal revenues that King Magnus had bestowed on him. But Einar continued to display the same state and hospitality as

hitherto, though he enjoyed no longer any royal revenues. Then much dissension arose between them, because Einar would on no account yield to King Harold. Shortly after these things Gaut's return from Jerusalem happened, which we have already mentioned; and his story produced in Einar a revival of the loving interest that he had felt in Olaf Tryggwason. He preserved this renewed interest till the day of his death, though he might not approach him in the body and have intercourse with him. The more heavily King Harold pressed upon him, the stiffer and prouder became Einar. Well-intentioned friends of both intervened to bring about a reconciliation between them, and it was arranged that they should confer together at Nidaros. When they met, King Harold, pretending a desire for reconciliation, caused Einar and his son Eindridi to be treacherously slain, as we are told in the lives of the Kings of Norway.

Kings of England from Ethelred to Edward the Confessor.

285. King Ethelred, the son of Edwy, had reigned over England twenty-seven years when King Olaf Tryggwason fought in the battle off the coast of Wendland; and after that event he reigned eleven years. He was a great friend of Olaf Tryggwason, as we have already mentioned. He was succeeded by his son Edmund, who had reigned one year when King Knut came with a host to England and made war for eight years against the sons of Ethelred. Then Knut reigned over England for sixteen years; and after him, his son Harold by Queen Emma, who had been the wife of King Ethelred, reigned three years. Horda-Knut then reigned for two years; and after him Edward the Good, son of King Ethelred, was chosen King. King Edward held in remembrance the friendship that had existed between his father King Ethelred and King Olaf Tryggwason.

King Edward's affection for the memory of King Olaf Tryggwason.

286. King Edward made it a custom to relate the Saga of Olaf Tryggwason to his great men and his body-guard on the first day

of Easter; and he chose that day rather than any other for the telling of the Saga, saying that Olaf Tryggwason was superior to other kings as much as Easter-day is superior to the other days of the whole year. There was a man named Orm, Thorliot's son, a wise and truthful man, who lived at Dyrness in the Orkneys when Edward was King of England. Orm declared that he heard King Edward read the Saga of Olaf Tryggwason out of the very book that Olaf himself had sent to King Ethelred from Jerusalem. One year when the King had read before his great men and all his body-guard the account of the battle on the *Serpent*, with the story of King Olaf's escape, exactly as we have related it; and had told them of his journeys beyond sea to Jerusalem, and how he had fixed his abode at a cloister in Syrland—he added to the story, by announcing the death of Olaf Tryggwason, tidings of which had lately been brought to England by travellers from Syrland.

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