

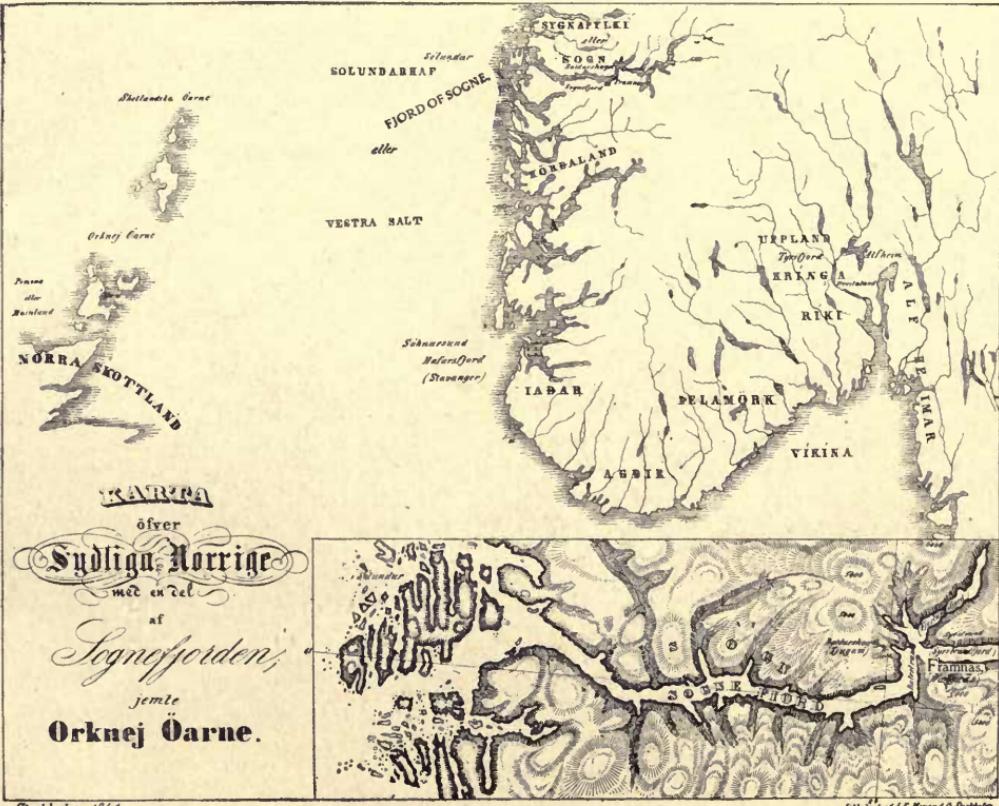
Frithiof's Saga.



Clement B. Shum.

KARTA
öfver
Sydliga Norriga
med en del af
Sognoffjorden;
jemte
Orknej Öarne.

Stockholm 1841.



ANCIENT NORWAY AND THE FJORD OF SOGNE.



VIEW ON SOGNE FJORD.
(Urland.)

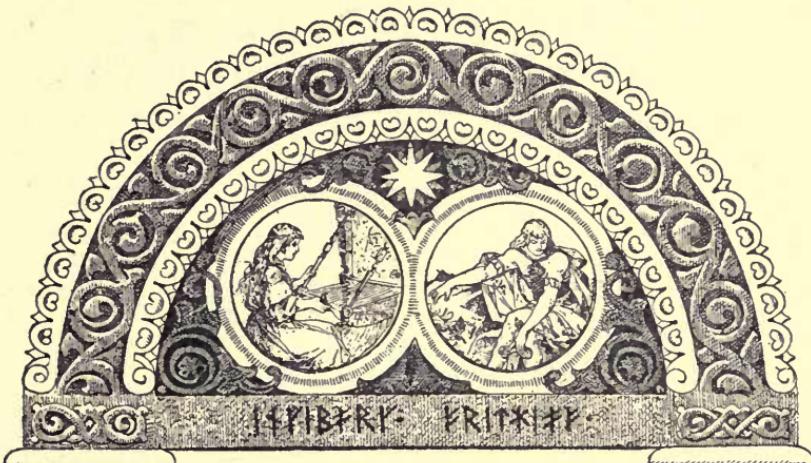


FRITHIOF'S SAGA

BY
E. TEGNÉR



"If you prefer the significant and profound,—that which ministers to seriousness and contemplation; if you delight in the gigantic but pale forms that float upon the mist and darkly whisper of the world of spirits and of the vanity of all things save true honor;—then must I refer you to the hoary, Sagastored North, where Vala chanted the keynote of creation, whilst the moon shone upon the cliffs, the brook trilled its monotonous lay, and the night-bird, seated upon the summit of a gilded birch, sang an elegy upon the brief Summer—a dirge over expiring Nature."—*Bishop Tegner's PRELECTIONS.*



Frithiof's Saga

A Legend of Ancient Norway

TRANSLATED FROM THE SWEDISH OF

ESAIAS TEGNER

IN THE ORIGINAL METERS

BY

Clement B. Shaw, A. M.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, FOREWORD, ANNOTATIONS, THE
TWELVE ORIGINAL SONGS OF CRUSELL,
AND OTHER ADDENDA

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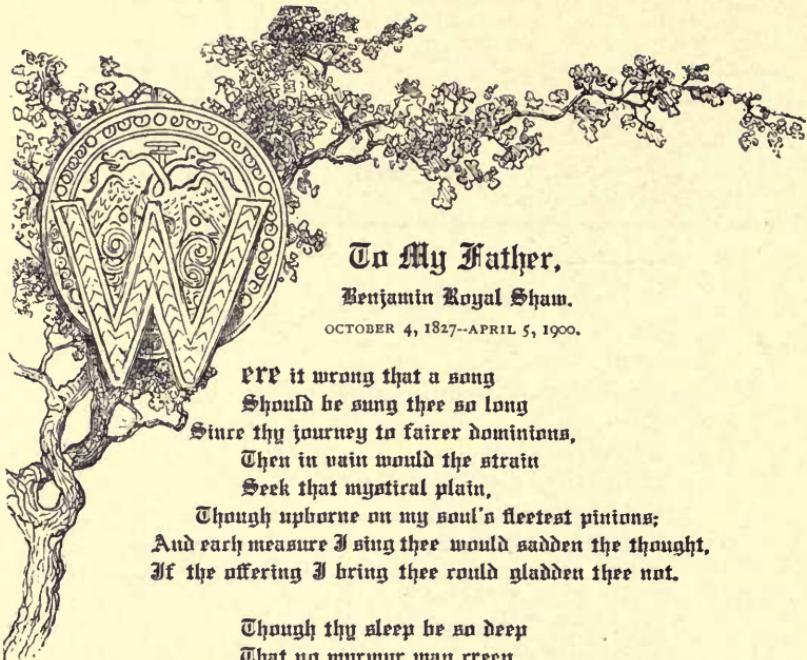
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To My Father,

Benjamin Royal Shaw.

OCTOBER 4, 1827--APRIL 5, 1900.

WER it wrong that a song
Should be sung thee so long
Since thy journey to fairer dominions,
Then in vain would the strain
Seek that mystical plain,
Though upborne on my soul's fleetest pinions;
And each measure I sing thee would sadden the thought,
If the offering I bring thee could gladden thee not.

Though thy sleep be so deep
That no murmur may creep
O'er thy sense from the Norways above thee,
May thine ear yet not hear
More transcendently clear
Words unvoiced of the earth-friends that love thee?
May a thought o'er thy pillow not waken a gleam,
Nor by fir nor by willow be shaken thy dream.

When I come to thy home
Neath the evergreen dome
With each summer, and list for some token,
No reply soundeth nigh
Save the fir-trees' low sigh
In the silence that else is unbroken;
Yet afar thou dost voice me thy numbers in sleep,
And they deepest rejoice me when slumbers are deep.

If I stray far away
And in strange lands delay,
Where new stars in the firmament wander,
Not less near to mine ear
Breathes thy spirit-voice clear
In the night hours alone as I ponder;
If with strains softly blended I speak thee aright,
Wouldst o'er star-fields transcended not seek me to-night?

If there gleam in my dream
Some unusual beam—
Transient ray from the rapture supernal,—
Then I know that its glow,
Like the tremulous bow,
Links our night with thy morning eternal,—
Presaging our sadness to-morrow is o'er,
And charming to gladness our sorrow once more.

Were a thought hither brought
With the purity fraught
Of the snow-flakes by Allfather shaken
Softly down from heaven's crown,
Lighting meadows else brown,—
To its power thou didst here ever waken;
Could the Song-god my measure his beauty but lend,
Must thy soul not in pleasure and duty attend?

For to thine, more than mine,
Now is given a sign
Of the substance naught ever shall banish;
And I know I must go
From the cloud-realm below
To thy light, ere the shadows will vanish;
And we each through the portal Elysian must soar,
Ere the healing immortal our vision restore.

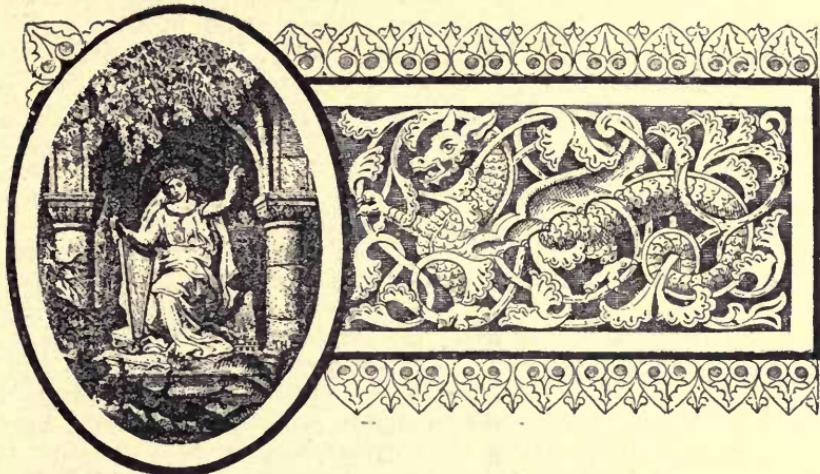
Not in vain were my strain
If thy realm it could gain,
Thou true Bard whose own songs grow no dimmer
Than the ray on its way
From a sun in decay,
Destined yet through the ages to shimmer;
And the years we are parted will utter thy worth
Long as thoughts by thee started still flutter to earth.

Evermore on this shore
Let me draw, as of yore,
Life anew from the love thou dost cherish,
Such as flowers that are ours
Draw from freshening showers,
Lest their bloom with their blossom-dust perish;
And when nearer I wing me to treasures above,
Then I clearer may sing thee in measures of love.





ALLEGORICAL FIGURE OF ICELAND.



The Literature of the North.

It is to be deplored that Scandinavian literature is so little known throughout Southern Europe and America. All our research has been elsewhere directed; and our scholars, profoundly ignorant of the mythology and poetry of the North, believe the only classic literature to be that of Greece and Rome.

Yet the North is replete with lyric gems that have never been rendered into other tongues. The great human heart has spoken here. Its strains are simple, sincere and mighty. Its thoughts are fresh as the native breezes, rugged as the craggy mountains, deep as the waters of the interjacent fjords.

The Teutonic and Scandinavian races once had a common mythology, and claimed Oden as their father.

Iceland has preserved faithfully these ancient mythological records, and embodied them in the Elder, or Poetic, Edda, compiled by Sæmund the Wise, one of the Christian priests of the twelfth century. Its thirty-nine books, or cantos, are made up of legends, songs, traditions and philosophy, put in metric form, and enunciating truths of such tremendous magnitude and universal application as to furnish food for the thought of all generations.

This is the Solomon's Song of the North. He who has not pondered over its precepts has not mastered the history of Philosophy.

A time will come when the Edda and Saga will be placed upon their proper pedestals,—when the romantic material and

poetic imagery of the Icelandic skalds will be seen equal to that of Homer and Virgil,—when their heroic measures will seem as majestic, their conceptions as lofty, their invention as skillful and exhaustless.

He who has gleaned only in modern fields these vital grains of thought profound, should have first found them here postured in all their pristine vigor and original garb;—before they had grown savorless and sterile. No thoughts are so strong as these spontaneous primeval ones—before they become distorted by the multiplicity of eternally surging thoughts that in these artificial latter years overwhelm the weary brain and heart.

The angle of incidence here is sharper than the angle of reflection. Reflection means attrition. The sense finally aches with kaleidescopic scenes. Human emotion is more acute before common discipline has changed its natural current. The Norse pictures are thrown upon a canvas of purest white.

If you cannot read the Elder Edda in its Ancient Norse tongue, then read its translation, and ponder well and deep its “unthoughtlike thoughts that are the souls of thought.”

Do not these voices from Scandinavia speak always worthily? Do they not call forth what is noble within us? Are not the truths they bring us fresh and sweet as the dew on flowers? Do they not breathe a faith unchanging, a friendship inviolate, a love sincere and destined to abide? Are not all our relations to nature, to our fellow mortals, to the Allfather, justly and faithfully portrayed?

Carlyle once said, “The best literature produces the impression that it might have been written by one of our own epoch; it is modern, contemporary.” And since the Scandinavian poetry lies so close to the universal nature, must it not be true poetry?

The Northern philosophers have always believed in the future life. This belief is grounded in the very mythology of the North. The brave warrior who fell in battle was taken by his spear-bearing Valkyrie on a flaming steed straight over the celestial bridge, Bifröst, the rainbow, and set down in Valhalla, the hero’s heaven,—there to battle and feast alternately, and be healed, by Andhrimnir’s food, of every wound received in the sportive daily contests of Asgård.

But the coward, who died the natural death, having no wounds as passports over this celestial bow, must go down to the realm of blue-white Hela, goddess of Death, daughter of Loke, and the Proserpina of the nether world. These conceptions of the future life were primeval, as were consequently those also of reward and retribution, urging ever to the right, warning

ever against the wrong. The hero must unbar the bridge to heaven. Heroism must ever keep its portals open. Far beyond the stars lay the hero's reward.

And so this natural religion, born in the Mythology of the North, became a part of the Scandinavian mind. Oden, the Allfather, was worshiped in Norway for a thousand years into the Christian Era, and to this day the Northern mind retains the stamp of this religion. To its thought, the ancient Balder, son of Oden, was as real as to ours the modern Christ, son of God.

Balder was the God of Light, most merciful and benignant of all the gods. He could forgive. His death by the hand of his blind brother, Höder, parallels the crucifixion of our Savior by his brother Jews.

The grief of Frigga, his mother, was like that of Mary. So great was her love for Balder, that when his death was foreshadowed, she tirelessly circled the whole earth, and exacted a promise from every animate and inanimate object, that it would do no harm to her son. But she forgot the mistletoe; and the alert Loke, father of Lies, guided the hand of Höder to cast this twig at Balder, by which alone he was vulnerable; and down to death sank the embodiment of the most lofty and beautiful heathen concept of a god in all the history of the world!

All hail to the pagan race that invented a god meriting the admiration, ay, the love, of every Christian man and woman!

The maternal grief is equaled only by that of Nanna, his wife, who died heart-broken at his death, and was buried with him on the funeral pyre.

The peace of the world dies with Balder, but he returns at Ragnarök, the day of the destruction of the world and the regeneration of gods and men.

We should search the world's literature in vain to find more lofty conceptions, more sublime descriptions, than the Edaic account of this last day, when Fenris (Time) shall devour the sun, Moongarm the moon, and Surtur and the sons of Muspel complete the earth's destruction by fire, and the Midgård serpent (Ocean) draw it down to its watery grave.

But there is a judgment day, when the wicked shall be punished in Nastrand, and the good be rewarded in Gimle, the permanent heaven, of which Valhalla is but a prelude. Balder shall live again, and over a human race restored shall Allfather reign forever.

The sublimity of loftiest poetry pervades all these myths, traditions and philosophy, all of which found their expression in Poesy's universal form—the alliterative—vehicle constantly



THE ORCHESTRA OF NATURE.

employed in the Elder Edda, and in nearly all Icelandic literature.

Mythology, poetry and religion are thus united by one inseparable band.

Now with this indissoluble union of mythology and religion, inborn and universal in the Northern mind, could the poet be sincere and not breathe the religious spirit in his heartfelt songs? Poetry is not a fiction. It is sincerity. It walks hand in hand with religion and mythology.

So Brage, the god of Poetry, becomes also historian and religious teacher. He becomes the exponent and interpreter of the true spirit of Norse tradition and belief. His words are the loftiest, his teaching the most impressive, of all teachers', in that he gives forth his lays in the voice of song. He is the God of Song. He finds his reflection in the skalds, or minstrels, who entertained at the feasts of warriors with songs of their own composition, called sagas, reciting heroic and historic tales, playing their own accompaniments upon the harp. If some Homer had but collected and woven together these sagas, Scandinavia would have had its Iliad.

There never lived so sincere and ardent a lover of nature as the Northern poet.

His religion has made him so. The Northern gods were personified natural forces. Their influence still is mighty. They speak across the ages. To ignore these forces in his poem would be sacrilege. Like Sæmund, the modern Scandinavian poet has a "lingering fondness for paganism,"—for personified nature.

In every song he sings, the great orchestra of nature must accompany him. What is so barren as an unaccompanied song?

Yes, he must unite the substance with the shadow—the seen with the unseen. To him every natural object typifies some psychic emotion.

In no other literature is so clearly pictured the parallelism between the objective and the subjective. No other authors have so strikingly unveiled the analogy between the external and the internal. Similes everywhere abound. We often wonder why we had never discovered these identities ourselves. In the Northern poet's similes, both the letter and the spirit give life. The scene is without and within. The thought ends not with the picture. It dwells in us.

And so these sincere poets find a living spirit in the morning dew, the scent of flowers, the golden fruit, the waving grain; they see it in the falling snow-flakes, the white-robed earth; the mountain's cumulated clouds, the eternally motionless polar sentinel; in the gold-dust tinged the Western oak-tops, in the golden city where the sun and ocean meet, in the de-



A ROCKY NORWEGIAN COAST.
(Hammerfest.)

scending of earth-refreshing Night, in the crimson Auroral rays, and in the rising of earth-awakening Day; they hear it in the harp's soft measures, in the clear tones of the quail and wood-thrush, in the torrents tearing down to the ocean, in the thundering of mighty Thor; in the night-winds of the forest, in the rustling of Autumn leaves, in the refrain of waves upon the strand, in the dirge of pine-trees over ancestral grave-mounds, and in the accents of the human voice divine; they feel it clearly in the mystic moonlight silently falling upon the white birches, in the night-shadows of the awful forest, in the darker depths of some midnight fjord, in the swiftness of the rolling of the seasons, in the "dead half year of the polar night," and in the blood-red glow of the midnight sun, when neither day nor night is reigning, but both united stand on the firmament, watching over the silenced and slumbering world.

In the contemplation of Nature, they look through and beyond.

They penetrate the clouds and reach the sun. Beyond the earthly shadows they see the celestial light.

So the poetry of the North is pure in its thought, inspiring in its hope, beautiful and all-sustaining in its faith.

The foreign-born Scandinavian should study the language of his forefathers, and discover the hidden treasures it contains.

The work of bringing to light and endeavoring to reproduce in our own tongue ere long some of the lyrical gems of Sweden, is an object to which the author sincerely aspires.

Chicago, Feb. 12, 1908.





THE ASH TREE YGGDRASIL.

This illustration of the great Mundane tree, originally copied from the *Eddalæren* of Finn Magnuson, pictures the earth (Midgård) as a disc floating in the ocean, and completely encircled by Jörmungand, the great Midgård serpent.

The circumjacent shores are the craggy mountains at Jötunheim, or Utgård, "the outermost parts of the earth."

Of the three stems of the tree, the main (infernal) springs from Nifelhem, the abode of Hela, and the realm of the dead; another (the terrestrial) issues from Mimer's Well in the North; the third (supernal) from the Urdar fountain in the South.

The main stem penetrates the earth and its central Olympian mountain, Asgård, home of the Asir (the gods), which latter is again connected by Bifrost, the rainbow, with the earth at its Southern boundary, and with the fount of Ursa.

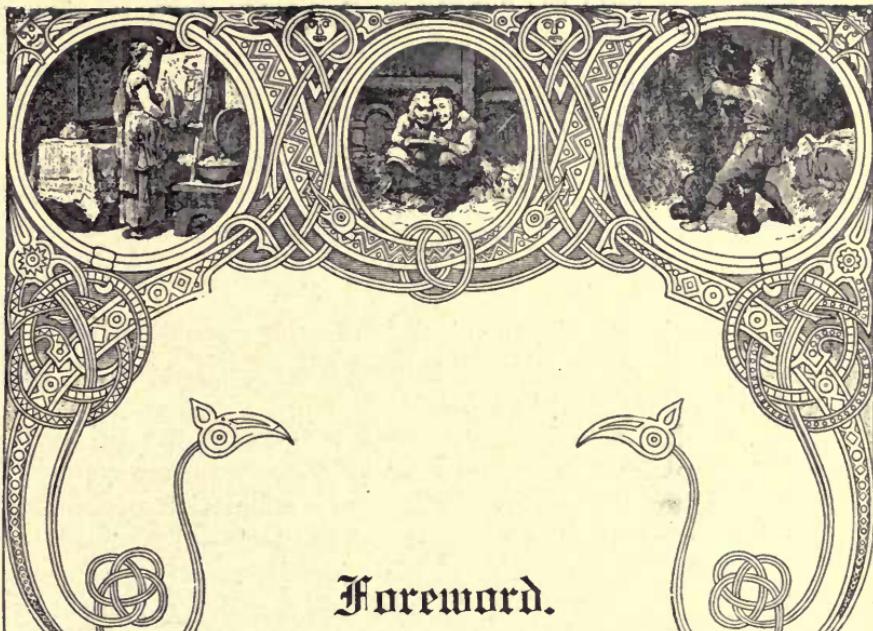
The branches of these three stems, uniting above, overshadow the whole earth. Nidhogg, the dragon of the nether world, with his countless serpents, eternally gnaws the root of Yggdrasil, but the norns continually sprinkle the tree with living waters, and keep it in everlasting verdure.

An all-observing eagle perches upon its branches.

A squirrel, Ratatösk, is running up and down it continually.

Four harts, Dain, Dvalin, Duneyr and Durathror, with bent necks bite its green leaves.

Yggdrasil is the tree of existence, and typifies the life of man. Its three roots symbolize, Spirit, Organization, and Matter.



Foreword.

The poem of Frithiof's Saga is the Iliad of Scandinavia, and its author, Esaias Tegner, is the Homer. This greatest epic work of the Swedish language is adapted from the ancient Norse legend of Frithiof the Bold and Fair Ingeborg, and also from the Saga of Thorsten, both these sagas being ascribed to the twelfth or thirteenth century, and their original authorship unknown.

While Tegner's version preserves the main features of the original, he has so clothed it with modernism, warmth and imagination, so elaborated it in its details, so incarnated its skeleton, so illuminated its fascinating story by his classic and refining touch, as to have caused his Frithiof's Saga to be called by Longfellow "one of the most remarkable works of modern times." It is the glory of the Scandinavian literature. It has been paraphrased into all modern European languages.

Each of its 24 cantos, or books, has its own peculiar form of stanza, rhyme and measure,—no two being alike—an innovation

which has caused some critics to declare the work lacking in unity. But each rhythmic form and metric combination will be found to be happily and strikingly adapted to the painting of its own scenes, situations and emotions.

Tegner was a master of trochees, iambuses, spondees and dactyls; and well he knew the use of dimeters, tetrameters, and hexameters; so that we not only understand, but see, the action of his poem. We hear the words of his characters, and feel their thoughts.

In adhering to the metrical forms, the translator is thus far assisted on his way; for the mould is an indispensable attribute of each of the 24 cantos.

A translation should produce the effect of the original. But this identity of emotional effect is by no means always to be secured by literal rendering. The word-combination might distort the force of the single words; and the expression might in one tongue be sublime, while in the other, bombastic, grotesque or ridiculous. The idioms often preclude verbatim treatment.

Moreover, the translator must translate—must faithfully reproduce the matter of the original,—no more, no less. He must not misquote. He must not create, he must not omit. He must not make a new poem. He must not destroy the old. He must maintain the emphasis upon the emphatic point. If the only word required to complete an otherwise most satisfactory and forcible translation of a line should not happen to exist in the translator's language, or if that word be a trochee when it must be an iambus—then must be regretfully abandoned what had seemed a promising project, and the fabric must be entirely re-constructed on an altered plan. One must not depart from his course for a rhyme too good to be lost; must not employ “mountains” to rhyme with “fountains,” when the original does not allude to mountains.

A single line should be translated by a single line, and the thoughts embodied in each should be mutually inclusive and identical. All the difficulties to be encountered are rendered cumulative by the necessity of preserving the meter, the rhyme (which is sometimes triple), the stanza form, and so far as possible the punctuation mark at the end of each individual line.

Moreover, the translation must never suggest itself to be

such—must not sound like one—but must, in every phrase, bear the hall-mark of an original work, and the spontaneity of its author.

A poem must be poetically rendered.

When there exist but two feet in a line, as in Canto XIV, the difficulty of uniting all these imperative conditions in the limited space of four syllables, will be seen to be tremendously enhanced. When several of these conditions co-exist, and are but partially surmountable, on account of linguistic limitations, then the most meritorious rendering is the one that surmounts the greatest number of the greatest obstacles.

The dactylic tetrameter of Canto XI, the Aristophanic anapaests of Canto XV, as well as the tragic senarius of Canto XXIV, were all introduced into Sweden by Tegner.

One of the specific obstacles to the paraphrasing of Swedish into English lies in the trochaic form of stanza, used in so many of the cantos of Frithiof's Saga, and preventing the definite article from being used at the beginning of a line. In Swedish, this article exists as a substantive-termination, not dislodging the ictus. In English, it is constantly in the way. We must then ingeniously posture our noun in some other portion of the line.

The following couplets from a well-known English translation of Canto XXI, every line of which must begin with a powerful trochaic accent, demonstrate the universal failure to reproduce this most common of Scandinavian meters:

Rocks with the burden
The | arch-bended bridge.
The | ASAR his hands glad
Hurry to grasp.
Far on a foray
Fights | puissant THOR, but

Here the syllables preceding the perpendicular lines have very impertinently and obstreperously assumed their inadmissible position, thus completely destroying the attempted rhythm, and being endurable to the translator himself only because of his unconsciousness of the Vaulundian lameness.

The claim of a translator to have reproduced the original trochaics, when a liberal percentage of iambics is interspersed throughout the entire poem, can be seriously or charitably re-

garded only by the hypothesis that the claimant is sincere, but unrhythymical;—as when one attempting to sing or play renders 7 or 9 eighth notes to a quadruple measure, in unconscious peculation against the metrical sense of his writhing auditors, and in sublime complacence emerges from the terrestrially unpardonable fiasco with a skull yet immune from the mallet of the rhythm-loving but merciful and Balder-like Thor!

Of another translator's work, the second couplet of every stanza throughout Canto IV ends with a masculine (one-syllable) rhyme, thus depicting the original falsely; as,

The songs are loud-pealing in Frithiof's hall,
And the praise of his sires is the burden of all;
But (the) | skalds' art is | vain,
He heeds not the music, and hears not the | strain.

Here the article, which I have parenthesized, and the succeeding dactylic foot, which should be trochaic, constitute, with the one-syllabled rhyme, triplicate examples of hundreds of the rhythm-annihilators by which this most ably annotated work is made to convey an entirely erroneous impression of the original measure.

Color-blindness, in its domination of subjects, must, with profound humility, succumb to metric blindness.

A defective pitch must similarly yield to a lame rhythmic perception, strangely unaccountable to one with true inborn rhythm.

So far as I have extended my research, no European English paraphrase of Frithiof's Saga preserves the Tegnerian measures with enough fidelity even to evince literary courtesy to the great poet.

Yet each translator claims to have done this very thing.

Two American translations, however,—perhaps the only metrical ones that have appeared on this side of the Atlantic—except for an occasional ictus-dislodging introductory syllable, have shown real faith to the Swedish author, and seem worthy of very high indorsement. These are the works of Mr. and Mrs. Holcomb, and of Professor Sherman. No consideration of nationality prompts the opinion that these two translations have not been equaled in England.

The meter of Canto III is the dactylic hexameter, which is

also the meter of the Iliad, the *Aeneid*, and of Longfellow's Evangeline. The line has six feet of dactyls and spondees interspersed, dactyls preponderating, and the two heavy syllables of the spondee occupying the same time as the one heavy and the two light syllables of the dactyl.

Now on account of the scarcity of English spondees, Poe declared the dactylic hexameter to be a metric impossibility. Deducting for his malice toward Evangeline's author, there yet remains much reason in his dictum. The translator must constantly employ these artifices: (1) Using compound words; as rune-stone, fir-tree, arm-ring, Yule-tide, coal-black; (2) Bringing a pause, written or caesural, between the two syllables, thus protracting a trochee into a spondee; (3) Using two separate words for the spondaic foot, each of which is important, and will be deliberately spoken; (4) Employing as the second syllable a word that is heavy with consonants, thus retarding the time.

The final foot of each line must, uniformly, be a spondee.

I here subjoin some lines selected from the third canto, wherein it is thus endeavored to employ these artifices for the artificial creation of spondees naturally wanting in our language, the spondaic feet being marked:

Flourished the | gold-hued | corn, and | man-high |
wavered the | rye-growth |

Held for the | green woods | too, where the | high-horned |
elks ever sportive

Wandered the | white-wooled | sheep, like | cumulate
masses of | fleece-clouds |

Stationed apart was the | drink-hall, | built of the
heart of the | fir-tree |

Now in the midst of the | straw-strown | floor, and |
bright on its | walled hearth |

Written all over the | green-clad | fields, with |
blossoms for | rune-marks |

Moreover, the Scandinavian is replete with feminine rhymes,—those of two syllables accented on the first,—as *bölja*, *följa*, *vingar*, *bringar*, etc.

They are, in fact, numerous as the Vallambrosian forest's autumnal leaves.

Our dissyllabic rhymes are few. The original author may indeed so mould his thought and expression as to employ almost any rhyming couplet; but the translator must adhere to the

original; and hence almost universally resorts to the artifice of the progressive form for his feminine rhymes.

Of the following two stanzas from Canto XXIII, the superiority of the second is unquestionable:

How fair the sunshine smiles, how grateful creeping
From bough to bough its tender beams appear!
Allfather's glance, in dews that eve is weeping,
As in his world-wide sea, shines pure and clear!
In crimson deep the mountain tops are steeping!
'Tis blood that Balder's altar doth besmear!
Soon o'er the land the night will be impending,
And in the wave the gold-shield be descending.

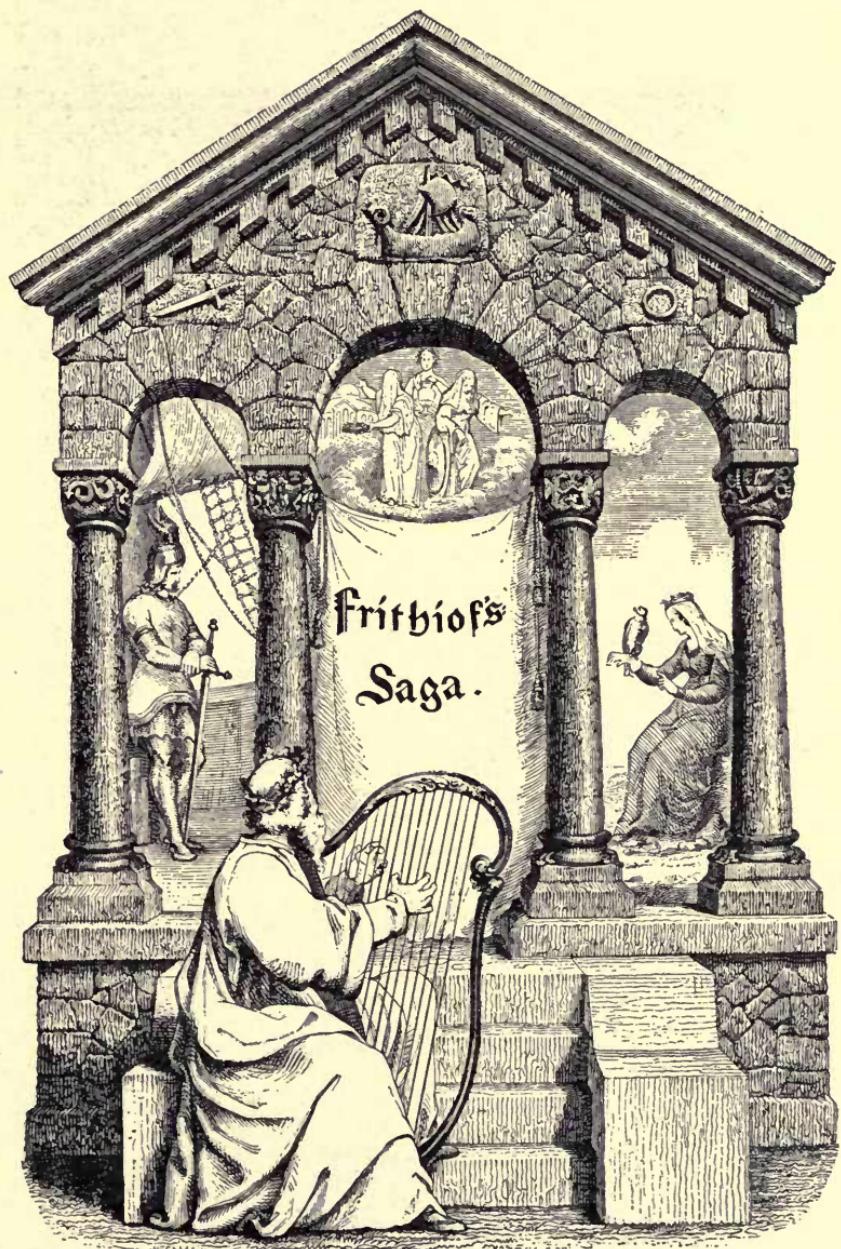
From the subjoined stanza (of the same canto) is at least eliminated the monotony of the progressives:

Is all unchanged? Stand Framnäs' halls paternal,
And Balder's fane still on the hallowed strand?
Ah! Fair the valleys in life's season vernal,
But through them passed the sword and fiery brand;
Both wrath of gods and men's revenge infernal
Speak to the wanderer o'er the fire-charred land.
Devoted pilgrim, come not here to ponder,
For untamed beasts in Balder's grove now wander.

To educate the literary amateur to regard a constantly recurring "ing" termination as inferior and wearisome, is in no way a difficult process. A fact worthy of more than mere passing allusion is that of the extreme paucity of English rhymes of any specific number of syllables whatever; to be convinced of this requires only that the doubter open his dictionary at any page, select any word, and search for its rhyme or rhymes.

This fact, and the necessity of preserving the simplicity of the original diction, combine with the metrical requirements to render of the utmost difficulty a poetical paraphrase from any language into another,—but perhaps also to afford indulgence for passages of which the genius of one tongue does not permit a rendering so felicitous as the original.

It is a mere fortuity when the fairest vehicle of the expression of a thought is similar in different languages; and it is hoped this work may be regarded only as a mirror,—reflecting to sincere hearts Bishop Tegner's most faithful portrayal of human emotion, in this greatest of all bequests to the skaldic literature of Scandinavia.





Canto First.

A tale of the long ago.

The scenes of this beautiful legend are, in the main, located about the Fjord of Sogne, in middle-western Norway; the date to be assigned, near the end of the eighth century.

The hero of the tale, Frithiof, and the heroine, Ingeborg, who are now little children, have been placed under the tutelage and guardianship of Hilding, an old and learned master.

Frithiof is the son of Thorsten, a wealthy peasant; Ingeborg, the daughter of Bele, king of Sogne-fylke. Though Thorsten is not of royal birth, he is Bele's most affluent subject, his constant companion, and trusted friend.

The childhood and early youth of Frithiof and Ingeborg, whose mutual affection has been coeval with their very memories, are here painted by the gifted Tegner with simple touches and wonderful colors,

Where once a fairy king and queen seemed dancing, now stand two youthful lovers, who can delineate each other's attributes only by similes drawn from types the most beautiful of earth and the most divine of Asgård.

All that to the Norseman's mind was heroic in man or noble in woman has the Swedish author, without unnecessary moralization, embodied in the personalities of Frithiof and Ingeborg, less as individuals than as poetical concepts of the ancient hero-epoch.

But the aged Hilding deems this love unfortunate, and seeks to dissuade Frithiof from its snares and dangers,—but in vain.





I.

Frithiof and Ingeborg.

THERE grew in Hilding's* garden fair
Two plants that felt his fostering care;
No two so fair the North e'er nourished
As those that in this garden flourished.

One as an oak its head upreared,
And like a lance its stalk appeared;
The quivering crown, by breezes shifted,
Like warrior's helm its circle lifted.[†]

* The foster-father and curator of Frithiof and Ingeborg, to whom their childhood's education had been entrusted, and in whose house they dwelt, according to the educational custom of the times.

"The collocation of two foster-children whose parents seem to have been both widowers, and both too much occupied by the pursuits of war to superintend the education of their offspring, is stated in the Chronicle; but his beautiful elaboration of the hint is due to the poet himself.

The custom of fosterage was not confined to the North, and the cement which it must have formed to bind the high and the humble, is obvious."—STRONG.

[†] As the Northern poet is the poet of nature, similes drawn from this source constantly appear.

3 The other blossomed as a rose
When Winter's blast no longer blows,
And Spring, from blossom yet unbidden,
Asleep within the bud lies hidden.

4 But tempests o'er the earth will blow,
Whose ravage wild the oak must know;
Spring suns will burn within the heaven,
Their warmth to opening rose-buds given.

5 So grew they up in playful glee,
And Frithiof was the young oak tree;
But in the verdant vale—a rare one—
The rose was Ingeborg, the fair one.

6 Shouldst thou by day behold them roam,
Wouldst think thyself in Freya's[†] home,
Where many a dancing bride-pair presses,
With rosy wings and golden tresses.

7 But shouldst thou, by the moon's pale ray,
Behold them whirl in woodland play,
Wouldst think, when neath the branches glancing,
The elf-king[‡] and his queen were dancing.

*It is also written Fridthjof and Frithjof, and signifies the "destroyer of peace."

"Frithjof, from his very youth, was versed in all manner of exploits; hereby got he the name of FRITHIOF THE BOLD, and was so happy in his friends that all men wished him well."—SAGA OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.

[†]Freya was the daughter of Njörd and Skade, the wife of Öder, and the goddess of love,—the Venus of the Scandinavian mythology.

[‡]"The Edda mentions another class of beings inferior to the gods, but still possessed of great power; these were called Elves.

The white spirits, or Elves of Light, were exceedingly fair, more brilliant than the sun, and clad in garments of a delicate and transparent texture.

They loved the light, were kindly disposed to mankind, and generally appeared as fair and lovely children. Their country was called Alfheim, and was the domain of Frey, the god of the sun, in whose light they were always sporting."—BULFINCH'S AGE OF FABLE.

"De spinna de mänsken sin högtids drägt,
Med llijehvit spelande hand."—STAGNELIUS.

From moonbeams they spin a bright nuptial attire,
With lily-white frolicsome hand.

Here is an old scene by Gran
Sorby



DANCE OF THE LIGHT-ELVES.

8

It was so joyous and so sweet
 When he his first rune* could repeat;
 A king was not like him in glory,
 When Ingeborg he taught the story.

9

With her how glad he steered his bark
 Across the waters blue and dark;
 How joyful, when the sail he shifted,
 She clapped her small white hands uplifted!

10

So high her nest the bird hides not,
 That for her sake he has not sought;
 The eagle, poised mid clouds and thunder,
 Of eggs and young he dares to plunder.

11

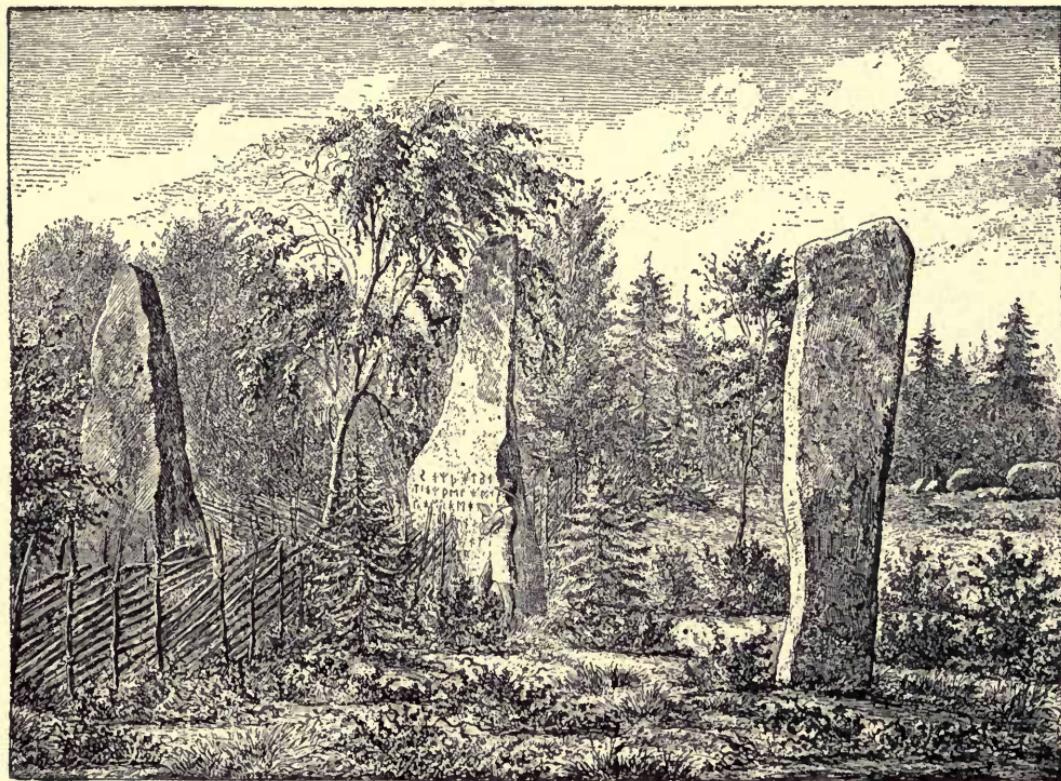
There speeds no stream, how swift soe'er,
 O'er which her form he does not bear;
 How sweet, when rushing waters frighten,
 Her small white arms around him tighten.

*The runes were the earliest alphabet of the nations of Northern Europe. There were three systems: The Norse (parent of all), numbering 16 characters; the German, 22; and the Anglo-Saxon, over 30. These three systems have a family likeness to each other. Oden is said to have invented the runes, and introduced them into Scandinavia about 100 years B. C. As they were designed for carving on wood, and as horizontal lines (in the direction of the grain) would be more easily obliterated, and as curved lines are also difficult to produce on wood, the runes consist only of perpendicular and slanting lines, as here shown:

THE RUNIC ALPHABET.

Form.	ᚠ.	ᚡ.	ᚢ.	ᚦ.	ᚱ.	ᚢ.	*	ᚩ.
Name.	Frej,	Ur,	Thor,	Os,	Reder,	Kön,	Hagel,	Nöðr
Pronounced.	F,F,V.	U,V,	Ā.	Th,D.	O.	R.	K.G.	H.
Form.	I.	ꝑ.	ꝑ.	ꝑ.	B.	ꝑ.	Y.	ꝑ.
Name.	Is,	Ar,	Sol,	Tyr,	Bjarkal,	Lager,	Madur,	Or.
Pronounced.	I.E.	A.Ā.	S.	T.D.	P.B.	L.	M.	O.R.

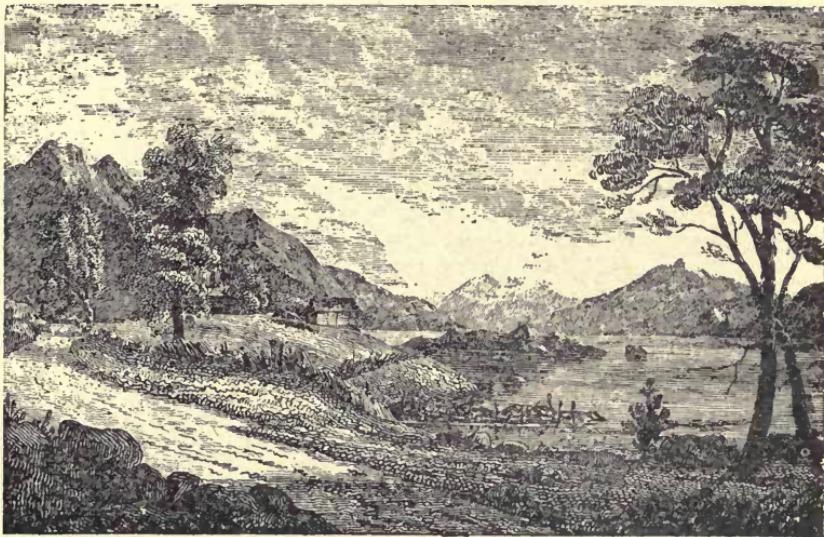
Of the first six runes, the term "futhorc" is formed, which signifies "rune." Runic inscriptions, also called runes, were often cut on stones or bark, and embodied epitaphs, laws, history and the laudation of departed heroes. The runes were not understood by the people, but only by the skalds (or bards) and the priests. ("Literarum secreta viri pariter ac foeminae ignorant," wrote Tacitus of the Germans. (Both the men and the women are ignorant of the secrets of letters.) The skalds chanted these runes, which, like the Homeric traditions, were committed by learners, and thus published. The term "rune" signifies secret, and was, in this sense, applied to any mysterious writing. Magical power was attributed to the runic writing, which was employed for augury, divination, witchcraft, the priests by their use playing upon the superstition and credulity of the people. The original language of the runes was the ancient Norse, still used with little modification in Iceland, from which language the Swedish, Danish and Norwegian have developed. Rune-stones are grave-stones which are carved with runes, and erected to the memory of the dead. In the provinces of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, about 1600 rune-stones are found.



RUNE-STONES AT BJÖRKETORP, SWEDEN.
(About 600, A. D.)

12

The foremost flower in spring-time's bed,
 The first strawberry turning red,
 The earliest ear that golden growtheth,
 He glad and true on her bestoweth.

*Engr. by J. C. Culmer*

FRAMNÄS, THORSTEN'S ESTATE.

Lith. by J. T. Blackdown

13

But childhood's days are quickly gone;—
 There stands an ardent youth anon,
 With pleading glance where hope is dwelling;
 There stands a maid with bosom swelling.

14

Young Frithiof seeks the chase by day,
 Whose risks would many a heart dismay;
 For without sword and without lances
 He fearless on the bear advances.*

*Such contests seem to have been frequent in the chase.

Finnbogi, a hero of the tenth century, is said to have brokeu the back of a bear in unarmed combat.

"Upon another occasion, Mr. Falk states, a badly wounded bear rushed upright on its hind legs on a peasant who had missed fire, and had seized him by the shoulders with its fore paws. The peasant, on his side, laid hold of the bear's ears and shaggy hair thereabouts. The bear and the hunter, a man of uncommon strength, were twice down and got up again without loosening their holds; during which time the bear had bitten through all the sinews of both arms, from the wrists upwards, and was at last approaching the exhausted peasant's throat, when the author in lucky time arrived, and by one shot ended the conflict."—LLOYD.



FRITHIOF'S FIRST BEAR.

- 15 The foes are struggling, breast to breast;
The hunter wins, though sorely pressed,
And home his shaggy prize is bearing;—
How shall a maid forget such daring?
- 16 For woman loveth valor rare;
The strong is worthy of the fair;
And each to each is fitly mated,
As helm for forehead is created.
- 17 When by the hearth-stone's lurid light
He read, in winter's silent night,
A song of bright Valhalla's* glory,
And gods and goddesses of story,—
- 18 "Golden," he mused, "is Freya's hair,
As grain-field moved by summer air;—
But Ingeborg's compares not illy
With net of gold round rose and lily.
- 19 "Iduna's† bosom, rich and rare,
Beneath the silken green heaves fair;
A silk I know, where soft reposes
A pair of light-elves decked with roses:

*Valhalla, Valhal, Walhalla or Valhöll (lit. the hall of the slain), is the hall of Oden (or Odin), the heaven of heroes, where the god receives all those who die violent deaths, and feasts them continually. In this glorified projection of their earth-life the heroes amuse themselves with daily combat, hewing each other down for pastime; and their wounds, however severe, are healed each day before feast-time. The flesh of the nightly-renewed boar Saehrimnir is their food; Andhrimnir is the cook, and Eldhrimnir the kettle. So it is said in Grimner's Song: "Andhrimnir cooks Sachrimnir in Eldhrimnir."

"Five hundred lofty doors, I ween,
In Valhall's shining halls are seen,
And twenty added twice thereto;
Einheriar chiefs, eight hundred men,
From each march out together, when
To battle 'gainst the wolf they go."

—GRIMNER'S SONG.

†Goddess of youth, and wife of Brage, king of poets. She guards the apples which she gives to the gods when they feel on-coming age, and thus at once restores them to youth. So will they be preserved until the end of the world.

Once, however, Iduna and her box of apples, through the scheming of Loke, the evil one, were carried away by the giant Thjasse to Jötunheim; and only threats of torture and death frightened Loke into securing her return.



IDUNA AND THE APPLES OF YOUTH.

20

"And Frigga's* eyes are quite as blue
 As heaven's cerulean skies to view;—
 But I know eyes beside whose sparkle
 The light-blue spring-day seems to darkle.

21

"Why praise the cheeks of Gerda† so,—
 Fresh snows in crimson North-light's glow?
 I have seen cheeks as radiant lighted
 As if two morning dawns united.

22

"A heart as true and sweet I know
 As Nanna's,* though not lauded so;
 Ne'er on the tongues of skalds** shall moulder
 Thy praise, O Nanna's happy Balder.||

23

"O would that I, as thou, might fade,
 Lamented by a faithful maid
 That would, like thy fond Nanna, languish;
 Then sweet to me were Hel's§ own anguish."—

24

But Ingeborg, the princess fair,
 Now sits and sings a hero-air,
 And weaves in cloth the hero's story,
 The blue sea's wave, the green wood's glory.

*Oden's wife, and queen of the gods. She was the Juno as well as the Ceres, of the Scandinavian mythology.

†Frey's wife, the most beautiful of women. From the Allfather's throne, which he had presumptuously ascended, the god Frey beheld in the North, issuing from a palace, a female form of such beauty that her glistening hair imparted its luster both to air and water. Being unable to obtain this mortal beauty, he gave to Skirner his sword as prize for obtaining her for him in marriage. A magic flame surrounded her, who was deaf to gifts and threats as well, and sorcery alone wrought the triumph.

‡Balder's wife, the embodiment of fidelity and purity, dying heart-broken at his death, and burned with him on the funeral pile.

**The skalds (or minstrels) enlivened the feasts of warriors with songs or recitals of the deeds of heroes. These compositions were rendered with accompaniment of the harp, and contained much history and tradition.

||The "White god" or "Golden-haired god," son of Oden and Frigga, and the mildest and most merciful of all the gods,—the god of light. "Oden's second son is Balder. The wisest of the asas is he, and the most sweetly speaking."—STURLESON'S EDDA.

§Hel, the lower world,—the realm of Hela the goddess of death. It is also called Helheim, and corresponds to the Southern Tartarus.



FRIGGA.

From Old Norse Stories
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- 25 Upon a ground of snow-white wool
Roll golden shields from off her spool;
And ruddy grow the battle lances,
While silver-stiff each mail-coat glances.
- 26 And as the strands mass, day by day,
They clearly Frithiof's face portray;
And as each woven feature brightens,
A blush of joy her visage lightens.*
- 27 But Frithiof, in his forest search,
An "I" and "F"[†] carves on the birch;
Each rune[‡] grows to the other near it
As to its mate a loving spirit.
- 28 When Day o'er arch of heaven stands fair
(The World-king of the golden hair),
And on life's tide man meets his brother,
Then think they only of each other.
- 29 When Night o'er arch of heaven stands fair
(Earth's mother, with the ebon hair),
And silence reigns, and stars move lonely,
Then dream they of each other only.
- 30 "Thou Earth, that dost in spring-time's hours
Adorn thy verdant locks with flowers,
Thy rarest give! A wreath designing
For Frithiof's brow will I be twining."

*Embroidery was one of the chief arts taught to young ladies in these ages.

"She, to glad me, marked in gold thread, Southland halls and Danish swans."—EDDA.

"We need not add that the celebrated Bayeux tapestry is the product of the Scandinavian needle."—STEVENS.

The Bayeux tapestry is a web 214 feet by 20 inches, preserved in the public library, Bayeux, on which is embroidered the scenes of William the Conqueror's conquest of England; the wonderful work is said to be of Matilda, wife of the Norman conqueror (d. 1083), presented to the cathedral of Bayeux in gratitude for its bishop Odo's assistance at the battle of Hastings. It has 1512 figures, and 72 historical sections, each having a Latin inscription.



- 31 "Thou Ocean, of whose darksome halls
 A thousand pearls bedeck the walls,
 Give me thy richest and thy rarest,
 For Ingeborg, of maids the fairest."
- 32 "Thou Summit of King Oden's* throne,
 Eye of the world, O golden Sun,
 Wert thou but mine, thy circle beaming
 A shield for Frithiof should be gleaming."
- 33 "Thou lamp that lightest Oden's night,
 O Moon, with thine all-pallid light,
 Wert thou but mine, I'd give with pleasure
 To my fair maid such jewel-treasure."
- 34 But Hilding said: "O foster-son,
 By hopeless love be not undone!
 A prouder life the norns allot her;
 The maiden is King Bele's† daughter.
- 35 "With Oden's self in star-lit skies
 Her race immortal took its rise;
 Thou art but Thorsten's son; take warning!
 For like to like must e'er be turning."
- 36 But Frithiof laughed: "My earliest breath
 Was taken in the vales of death.
 I slew the forest's king so brawny,—
 His shaggy race my patrimony.

* Oden, (or Odin), the father of the gods, also called Woden, Alfader, or Allfather, whose throne overlooks heaven and earth, and who rules the universe—the Jupiter (or Jove) of the Latins, and the Zeus of the Greeks. Two ravens, Hugin and Munin, sit upon his shoulders; two wolves, Geri and Freki, lie at his feet; and his spear, Gungnar, is always with him. Oden has been called the "center and focus of all Northern mythology."

† King Bele ruled over one of the most prosperous provinces of Norway, in the Western part, on the fjord of Sogne. He was noted for his noble deeds and his exploits in far-off lands; and in the great mead-hall of his palace, he and his friend Thorsten, would tell of their adventures in such manner that the champions forgot to drain their goblets.



X

37 "Seek not the free-born man to warn,—
To win the world the free was born;
For all her ills Fate respite beareth,
And Hope a crown imperial weareth.

38 "All strength is noble-born; for Thor*
Of Trudvang† is its ancestor;
Not birth, but worth, by him is treasured,
And lover by his sword is measured.

39 "For my young bride I'd pour my blood,
Though I must fight the thunder's god!‡
My spotless lily, fear thou never;
Woe be to him who us would sever!"

* The "Thunderer," eldest son of Oden, and second of the gods;—the god of the mighty hammer, the girdle of strength, and the iron gloves,—the strongest of all the gods — the Mars of the north.

** † Thor's castle in Valhalla,—"mansion of the strong."

‡ Thor.



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THOR AND HIS TEAM OF GOATS.

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Canto Second.

King Bele and Thorsten, now full of years, have summoned their sons to the royal palace, to listen to some words of admonition before the venerable fathers are to leave this earth.

Helge, the elder son of Bele, of gloomy and sinister disposition, was accustomed to spend the most of his time in the temple, where the priests taught him the mysteries of the oracle.

Halfdan, the younger son, was a laughing boy—almost a mere child,—not unworthy, but weak.

Frithiof, Thorsten's son, was greatly superior, both in physical and mental status, to the royal sons.

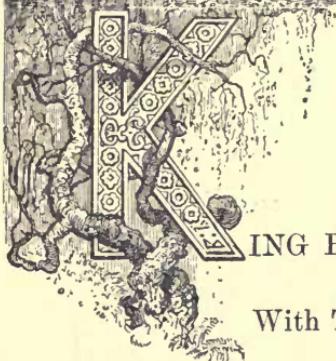
It was the hope of Bele and Thorsten to cement the friendship of their sons, in order to protect the kingdom, as their own united strength had safeguarded it heretofore. And now these last paternal utterances, inspired by the contemplation of eternal things, fall from the aged lips with all the repose of the evening of life, with all the solemnity of the morning of death.

With runic wisdom upon their tongues, they dismiss their beloved sons with the final blessing of Oden, Frey and Thor, desiring to be buried in cairns on directly opposite sides of the fjord, each on his own domain, and near the water's edge, where the murmur of the waves might forever fall upon their ears, and where their spirits, ascending from the tomb (which the departed Scandinavian spirit was believed to occupy) might, when the mellow moonlight melts upon the mountain, and the midnight dew descends upon the stone of death, calmly sit and hold counsel with each other, across the interjacent billows, upon all that the future held yet in store.



II.

King Bele and Thorsten.



ING BELE, sword-sustained, in his
palace stood, 1

With Thorsten,* son of Viking, and
peasant good,—

His centenarian comrade in martial glory,—

With visage scarred as rune-stone, with locks all hoary.

They stood like aged temples on mountains lone,

2

To heathen gods devoted, now half-o'erthrown;

But all their rune-carved walls are of wisdom telling,

And memories divine in their vaults are dwelling.

*Thorsten, Viking's son (Wikinson or Vikingsson), was the friend and companion of King Bele in all his expeditions. Thus the ancient Saga of Thorsten: "The noblest of them all was he in everything,—stout, tall-built, strong, friend-rich and upright, true-fast and to be depended on. Slow to attack, he was terrible in vengeance when another fell upon him." They were the bulwarks of the kingdom; and their friendship for each other, though Thorsten was not of royal birth, was one of changeless fidelity.

Thorsten married Ingeborg, the only sister of King Bele, the marvelous account of which alliance is given later.

- 3 "It grows fast toward the evening," said Bele King,
 "The mead tastes ill, the helmet weighs burdening;
 Before mine eye the fortunes of mortals darken;
 But Valhall nearer gleams, as to Death I harken.
- 4 "My sons I here have bidden, and likewise thine,
 Whose lives should be united, as thine and mine.
 Some counsel to the eaglets would I deliver,
 Ere on the tongue of death sleep all words forever."
- 5 Then at King Bele's signal they enter in;
 And first of all comes Helge,* of sullen mien;—
 He, who about the altar with spæmen† lingers,
 Appears with blood of victims upon his fingers.
- 6 And after him walked Halfdan,* a youth light-haired,
 Whose noble face both honor and weakness shared;
 He gaily bore the sword in his cincture gleaming,
 And of a maiden armored had all the seeming.
- 7 But after them came Frithiof‡ in mantle blue,
 By height of head surpassing the other two.
 He stood between the brothers, like Day unclouded
 Between the rosy Morn and the Night enshrouded.
- 8 "Children," the king addressed them, "my sun goes down!
 In peace and love fraternal maintain the crown;
 For concord binds together, and strength increases,
 As ferrule holds the lance lest it split in pieces.

* The two sons of King Bele, and brothers of Ingeborg. † Sacrificers, soothsayers.

‡ In warlike exploits Frithiof excelled, and became of men the most renowned.

The ancient Saga of Frithiof the Bold, affording the outline of this work of our great poet, thus describes the hero: "Frithiof seemed to excel all the other young men of his time, and the king's sons envied him that he got more renown than they."

Yet Frithiof was comrade, to Helge and Halfdan, and all was well between them until Frithiof's love for Ingeborg was revealed.



LAERDAL FJORD, SOGNE

- 9 "Let might now stand as guard to our nation's door,
 And peace unsullied flourish from shore to shore!
 The sword is for defense, not for slaying foemen,
 And shields were forged as locks for the barns of yeomen.*
- 10 "Who would oppress his land, were a foolish man,
 For kings can only do what their subjects can;
 The mountain tree now verdant will fade to-morrow,
 If from the earth no moisture its roots may borrow.



ANCIENT MEAD-HALL †

- 11 "Upheld by four great pillars, the heavens stand,*
 But law's support alone doth our throne demand;
 Unjust dominion hastens disaster's story,
 But right means people's welfare and ruler's glory.

*"It was the most noble maner in which a hero could employ his leisure, to polish his shield to the utmost brightness, and to represent upon it either some gallantfeat, or some emblematical figure expressive of his own inclinations or exploits; and this served to distinguish him, when, being armed at all points, his helmet hid his face. When a young warrior was at first enlisted, they gave him a white and smooth buckler. None but princes, or persons distinguished by their services, presumed to carry shields adorned by any symbol."—NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES.

†The old halls were characterized by the central fire, the host's high seat, the dais or guests' seat extending around the room, the shields, swords and spears decorating the walls, and the smoke-escapes in the raftered roof.

‡So the ancient Egyptians believed.

"Helge, in Disarsal* do the high gods dwell,—
But dwell they not, like snails, in a narrow shell;
As far as reaches tone or the light supernal,
As far as thought can fly, move the gods eternal.

12

"Oft false the signs of sacrificed hawk are shown,†
And myriad runes deceive, though engraved on stone;
But hearts sincere, O Helge, and upright ever,
Has Oden writ with runes that beguile us never.

13

"Be not austere, King Helge, be only staid!
The sword that keenest bites has the lithest blade.
A king is graced by mildness, as shield by flowers,
And springtime's sun the winter-born cold o'erpowers.

14

"A man of friends bereft, though he yet be strong,
Like oak despoiled of bark, cannot sojourn long!‡
With friends, he thrives as tree in the forest groweth,
Refreshed by brooks and safe from the storm that bloweth.

15

"Boast not ancestral glory! Each stands alone;
Canst thou not bend the bow, it is not thine own.
What wouldest thou do with merit that lieth buried?
By their own force the currents of seas|| are hurried.

16

* The hall of all the gods,—a pantheon.

† The falcon, or hawk, was the sacred bird of Oden, and augurship from its entrails was quite usual. Professional diviners, called prophets, whose dicta were held in high reverence, prevailed also in the North. They were said to have ever-present familiar spirits, and they forced upon the credulity of the people the belief that the runic letters, read only by the few, possessed magical powers, varying as employed in various combinations, especially for the presaging of coming events. The skalds also, in the words of Mallet, "boasted a power of disturbing the repose of the dead, and of dragging them out of their gloomy abodes by force of certain songs which they knew how to compose."

Human sacrifices, too, were offered, the examination of whose entrails and blood-efusion, determined the else uncertain future.

‡ "A tree withers,
Protects it neither bark nor leaves,
That on a hill-top stands;
Such is the man
Whom no one favors;
Why should he live long."—HAVAMAL.

|| The rivers pouring their mighty volumes of water far out into the ocean.



ODÉN ON HIS LOFTY THRONE.

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"A wise man's wealth, O Halfdan, from joy doth spring; 17
But babble graceth none—least of all, a king.
Both hops and honey join in the mead's formation;—
Put steel in swords, in pleasure put moderation.

Too wise is no man, howsoe'er wise he be, 18
And dim enough his light who no truth can see.
The untaught guest is scorned, although highly seated;
But to the wise, low-stationed, is honor meted.

"To foster-brother, Halfdan, or true-fast friend, 19
Short is the pathway, though it afar extend;
But distant lies thine enemy's habitation,
Though by the very wayside appear its station.

"Choose not the friendship first upon thee imposed; 20
An empty house stands open, the rich is closed.
Choose one; vain quest for others aside be throwing,—
The world doth know, O Halfdan, what three are knowing."

Thereafter uprose Thorsten, discoursing so: 21
"The king alone should never to Oden go.
Life's changes we, King Béle, have shared true-hearted,
And e'en in death I trust we shall not be parted.

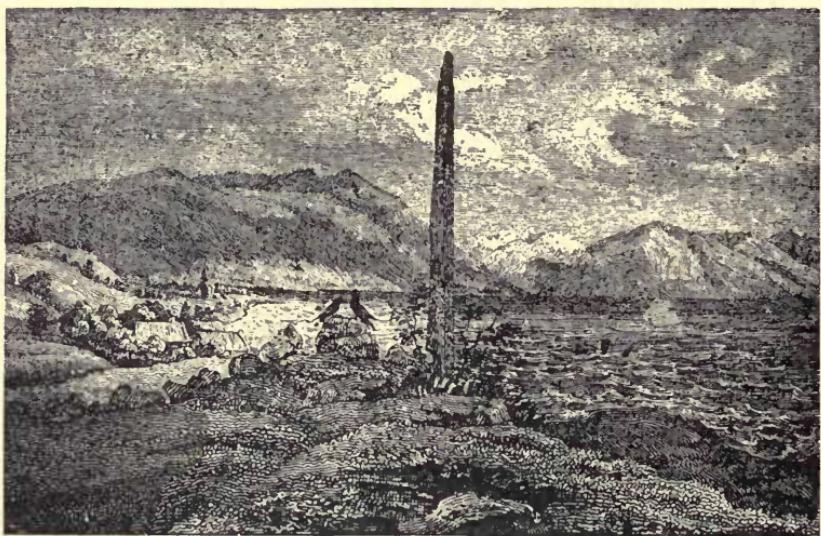
"Son Frithiof, Age has whispered within mine ear 22
Full many a word of warning which thou shouldst hear;
O'er Northern graves the ravens of Oden hover,*
And myriad truths the lips of the aged cover.

*Hugin (Observation) and Munin (Memory), the birds that daily flew around the earth, and nightly sat postured upon their accustomed pedestal, the shoulders of the god, and whispered in his ears the knowledge gleaned in their terrestrial tour.

The raven was placed as an ensign upon the national flag of Denmark.

This presageful bird has had its place in the mythical history of all nations. Its ebon plumage, grave bearing, and grotesque imitation of human speech, have stamped it as of ill-omen. Oden's ravens sit upon Frithiof's grave-mound in the cut (page 50) of his bauta-stone, erected on the Fjord of Sogne, 1100 years ago.

- 23 "Revere the high gods foremost; for good and ill,
 Like storm and sunshine, come but of heaven's will.
 The heart's lone vault, though closed, are the gods exploring;
 And years a moment's ruin must be restoring.
- 24 "Obey the king! One monarch should rule alone;
 Dark night has eyes unnumbered, the day but one.
 The better e'er proclaimeth the best ascendant,
 On trusty hilt is keenest of swords dependent.



Engraved by J. Calender

FRITHIOF'S BAUTA-STONE.
 (Bergen's Stift, Sogne.)

Engraved by J. Blacketstone

- 25 Great strength is given by heaven; but, Frithiof, know
 That power unlinked with wisdom can naught bestow.
 A bear with twelve men's strength is by one man mastered;
 The shield defeats the sword-thrust,—the law, the dastard.
- 26 "The proud is feared by few, but despised by all,
 And arrogance, O Frithiof, precedes a fall.
 Aloft have many soared now on crutches bending;—
 Crops come by weather, fortune the winds are sending.

* "Over all those men who any manly exploit have performed, should bauta-stones be raised."—YNGLINGA SAGA.

The day is better prized when its sun is sunk,*
And counsel best when heeded, and ale when drunk.
A young man's faith on shadows is often rested;
The blade by combat, friendship by need, is tested.

27

"Trust not the one-night ice, nor the spring-day snow,
Nor sleeping snake, nor suppliant maiden's vow;
For woman's heart is turned on a wheel that rolleth,
And neath the hue of lily caprice controlleth.

28

"To thee and thine comes death as the common lot,
But one thing know I, Frithiof, that dieth not:
The self-writ records left by the men who perish;
Choose therefore thou the right, and the noble cherish!"†

29

Thus warned the aged men in the palace hall,
As since the skald has chanted in Havamal.‡
And age has been these proverbs to age bequeathing,
And still from Northern tombs are their voices breathing.

30

Thus spoke the two, in many a heart-felt tone,
Of their unchanging friendship, in Northland known;
How, with a death-true faith, both in joy and sadness,
As two clasped hands, their lives had been one in gladness.

31

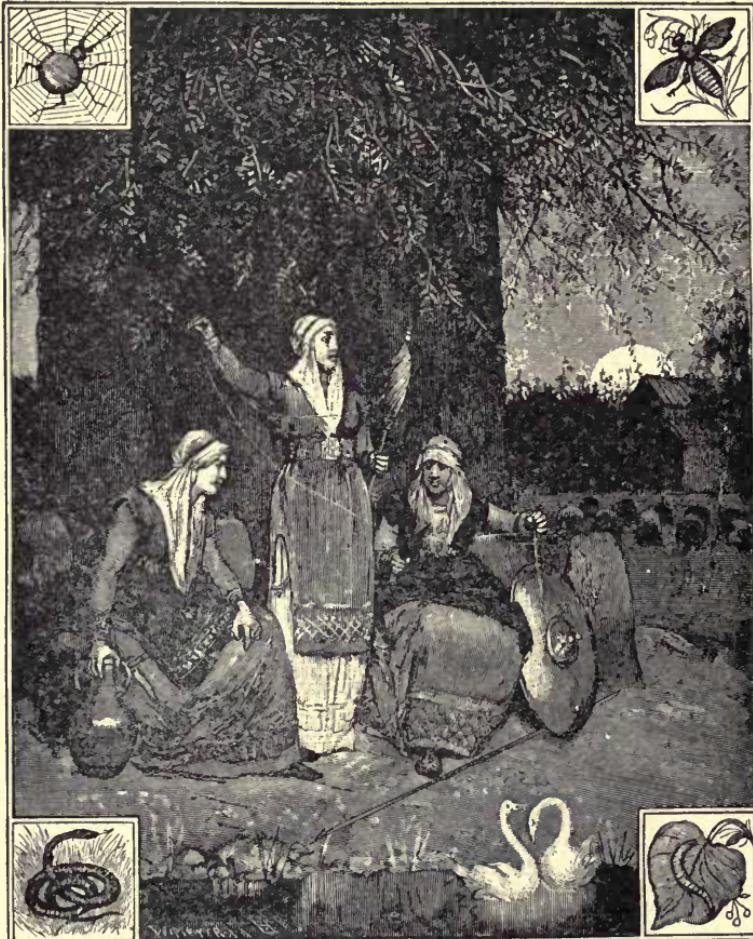
*"At eve the day is to be praised,
A woman after she is dead,
A sword after it is proved,
A maid after she is married,
Ice after it has been crossed,
Beer after it is drunk."—HAVAMAL.

†"Riches perish, kinsmen perish, thou must perish too;
This, I wot, dieth not,—doom to mortals due."—HAVAMAL.

‡The oldest Scandinavian songs, myths, traditions and philosophy, were compiled by Sæmund, a Christian priest of Iceland, about A. D. 1100, in a volume called the Elder, or Poetic, Edda. A century later, a prose synopsis of these poems, with other legends, was produced by Sturleson, an Icelander, and Skald or court-poet in Norway; and this book was called the Younger, or Prose, Edda. The name given to the second chapter of the Poetic Edda is Havamal or Havermal, the source of many of these apothegms.

"This sublime discourse is attributed to Oden himself, who is said to have given these precepts of wisdom to mankind. This piece is the only one of the kind now in the world. We have directly from the ancient Scythians themselves no other monument on the subject of morality."—MALLETT.

"The whole," says Stevens, "deserves immortality in every language on God's earth."



THE NORMS AT URD'S FOUNTAIN.

“With back to back we stood on the battle-field,
And when a norn* approached us, she met a shield!
Now aged we, ere ye, Valhall’s light discover;
And may your fathers’ spirits around you hover!”

32

The king was long discoursing of Frithiof’s worth,
His hero-strength outweighing all regal birth,
And long did Thorsten speak of the ancient glory
That crowned the god-born monarchs of Northern story.

33

“But hold ye fast together, O children three,
And conqueror—I know—shall the North ne’er see;
For power with kingly honor and greatness holden,
Is like a blue-steel border to shield all golden.

34

“And greet my daughter Ingeborg—rosebud sweet—
Who fostered was in quiet, as seemed it meet;
O guard her,—let no tempest above her lower,
And fasten in his helmet my fragile flower.

35

“On thee, King Helge, place I a father’s care;
Love as thine own mine Ingeborg, daughter fair!
Constraint provokes great spirits; but precepts tender
In man and woman honor and right engender.—

36

“But lay us now, ye children, in grave-mounds two,
On either side the fjord, by its billows blue;
Where still their song will gladden the souls that hear it,
Descending like a dirge on the resting spirit.

37

*The Norns are the fates, or destinies. They are three in number; they engrave the runic tablets, and weave the fate of men. They correspond to the Parcae of the Romans. The norn of the past is Urda; of the present, Verdandi; of the future, Skulda. In the cut of the norns they are seated by Urda’s fountain, under the great ash tree, Yggdrasil. In this stanza, the term norn personifies the death-bearing dart of the enemy.

“Thence come maidens much discerning,
Three from that hall which stands tree-crowned;
Staves they rune-scribe.”—VÖLUSPA.



FREY AND HIS STEED, GOLDEN-BRISTLE.

From Old Norse Stories
Copyright 1900, by
Sarah Powers Bradish.

"When streams the moon's pale light on the mountain 38
 blue,

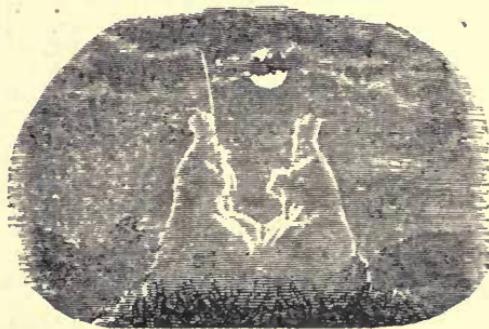
And o'er the bauta-stone falls the midnight dew,
Then will we mount, O Thorsten, our mounds entombing
And speak across the waters, of things forthcoming.

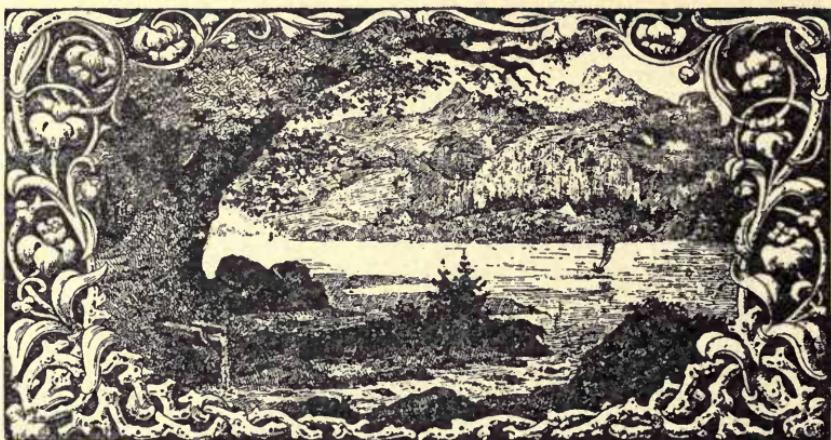
"And now, ye sons, farewell! Hither no more turn.* 39
Our course is to Allfather; for him we yearn,
Like weary rivers onward to ocean pressing;
May Oden, Frey[†] and Thor give to you their blessing!"

*The simultaneous farewell of the two aged men would indicate intended suicide,—the usual exit of aged heroes. This assumption better suited the purposes of our poet, although departing at this point from the old Saga.

[†]Or Freyr, one of the greatest of the gods, presiding over storm and sunshine, harvests and wealth. He is the brother of Freya.

"Frey is the chiefest among the gods; he ruleth over rain and sunshine and the produce of the earth, and on him it is good to call for harvests and for peace. Over the goods of men ruleth he also."—THE YOUNGER EDDA.





Canto Third.

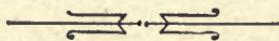
In this Canto the patrimony of Frithiof is described,—Framnäs, his father's estate, his broad acreage of many miles, and the great mead-hall, seating many hundreds of guests, in which Frithiof held the "grave-feast" in honor of his father's memory.

But of all Frithiof's heritage, three objects were of the greatest renown: Angurvadel, the golden-hilted sword; the arm-ring, or bracelet, made by Vaulund; and Ellida, the dragon-ship, which Agir, the sea-god, had given to Frithiof's grandfather, Viking.

The hall of Frithiof seems a palace in itself, and worthy in all respects even of a sovereign. Yet Frithiof is a sorrowful host, since the father to whom he was so devoted has left his halls forever.

Twelve armed warriors, or champions, constantly attend and guard the hero, of whom the youngest is Björn, foster-brother of Frithiof, whose mutual friendship through life remained unbroken.

The meter of this canto, the dactylic hexameter; called the "heroic" meter, is strictly Homeric—a mixture of dactyls and spondees. In all languages where spondees abound, this rhythm has no equal for the depicting of epic scenes. As the spondaic foot requires, for its two accented syllables, a compound word, or two monosyllables with plentiful consonants, or a pause (written or caesural) between the syllables, in order to retard the motion, this meter becomes extremely difficult in English, where accent, not quantity, is the measuring-rod of the poetic foot.





III.

Frithiof's Inheritance.

BOTH were now placed in their tombs,
King Bele and Thorsten, the old man,
Where they themselves had bidden; on either
side of the inlet,*
High rose the grave-mounds over the two fond
hearts death had severed.
Helge and Halfdan took jointly the throne of
Bele their father,
By the decree of the people; but Frithiof, being
the sole child,

*The Sogne Fjord, longest of all the Norwegian fjords, penetrates Norway to a distance of 106 miles, with a width of 2 to 4 miles.

Eastward its scenery grows wilder and grander, and sometimes its nearly perpendicular mile-high walls, whence numberless water-falls spin their silken threads, extend as far beneath as above the water's surface. King Bele's mound was on the North side, Thorsten's on the South side, of the fjord, whose width at that point was only 6,000 feet.

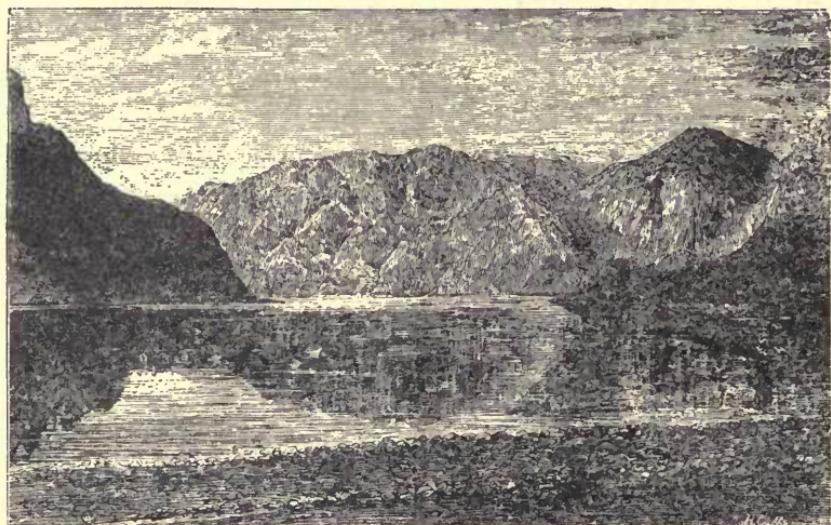
Portioned his fortune with none, in quietude dwelling at
Framnäs.*

Three miles[†] around extended the wealth of his ample
possessions;

Vale, hill, and mountain lined three sides, the fourth
was laved by the ocean.

Forests of birch crowned the hill-crests, upon whose
borders inclining,

10. Flourished the gold-hued corn, and man-high wavered
the rye-growth.



Many to tell were the lakes that their mirrors held for
the mountains,—

Held for the green woods, too, where the high-horned
elks ever sportive

Ranged in their royal life, and drank from hundreds
of brooklets.

But in the valleys around, were grazing, on velvety
greenswards,

*Frithiof's estate, occupying a promontory of the same name on the south side of the fjord—just across from Balholm, King Bele's realm. The modern Vangsnäs is identical with Framnäs. See map, frontispiece. †A Swedish mile equals 6.648 Eng. miles.

Herds with a glistening skin and udders that longed 15
for the milk-pail.

Scattered among them, anear and afar, in myriad num-
bers

Wandered the white-wooled sheep, like cumulate mass-
es of fleece-clouds

Flockwise borne through the vault of the azure by
breezes of spring-time.

Courser twice twelve, and impetuous, restless as winds
that are fettered,

Clamorous stamped their stalls, consuming the hay of 20
the meadows;

Knotted with red their manes, and their hoofs were
gleaming with steel shoes.

Stationed apart was the drink-hall, built of the heart of
the fir-tree;

Counting ten twelves to the hundred, five hundred
men were unable

This ample mead-hall to fill, when meeting to drink at
the Yule-tide.

Down through its length entire was extended a table 25
of stone-oak,

Polished till shining as steel; and carved of the wood of
the elm-tree,

Placed at the end of the board, two gods marked the
stations of honor,—

Oden with glance of a monarch, and Frey with the sun
on his helmet;

Lately between them both, on a bear-skin (its color
was coal-black,

*The duodecimal computation, in which the long or great hundred equals 120, was always employed by the Norsemen in numbering men, and is still common in some parts of Scandinavia.

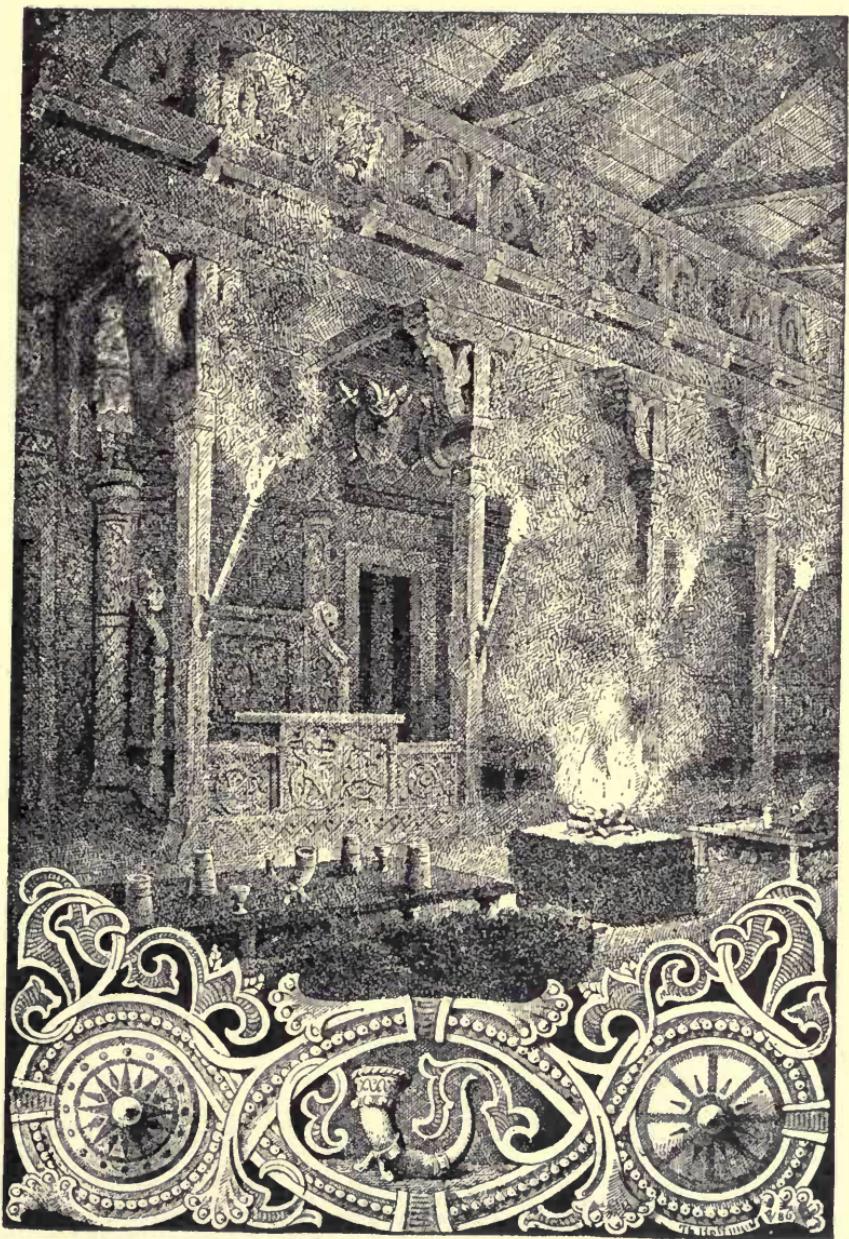
- 30 Having the mouth scarlet red, and the claws surmounted
with silver),
Thorsten had sat with his friends,—Hospitality wait-
ing on Gladness.
Oft' when the moon through the skies was flying,
related the old man
Wonders of distant lands he had seen, and his journeys
as viking,
Far on the Eastern* sea, the Western† brine, and the
Gandvik.‡
- 35 Mute sat the listening throng, their gaze on his lips
ever hanging,
As on its rose hangs the bee; but the skald was think-
of Brage,††
When with his silvery beard, and with runes on his
tongue, he is sitting
Under the shadowy beech, reciting a saga‡‡ by Mimer's||
Ceaselessly purling fountain, himself a saga abiding.
- 40 Now in the midst of the straw-strown floor, and bright
on its walled hearth,
Constant was glowing a fire; and down through the
great airy smoke-flue
Into the hall looked the friendly eyes of the planets su-
pernal.
Lining the walls, on nails of steel, in rows were sus-
pended
Helmets and coats-of-mail together, and frequent amid
them

*The Baltic Sea. †The North Sea. ‡The White Sea.

††Son of Oden and Frigga, the god of poetry and song;—written also Bragi. He was the husband of Iduna, and the greatest of all the skalds,—an old man with snow-white beard extending to his girdle, a golden harp in his hands, and a voice sweet, sonorous and fascinating. He was the self-accompanied Master of Song.

‡‡A tale or story.

||The keeper of the Fountain of Wisdom, open only to Oden and Brage. For a draught from this well, Oden parted with one of his eyes, which may yet be seen in the flood. Oden is always pictured as having but one eye.



FRITHIOF'S HALL.

45 Lightning-like glittered a sword, as shoots in the winter a night-star.

Yet, more brilliant than helmet and sword in the hall gleamed the war-shields,
Bright as the sun's golden circle, bright as the moon's disc of silver.

Passed there a maiden, betimes, round the board, refilling the mead-horns,

Casting her eye down and blushing; by shields was reflected her image,

50 Blushing as sweetly as she, and delighting the mead-drinking warriors.

Rich was the house, and wherever the eye were turned, it would fall on

Cellars well filled, and cupboards crammed, and bountiful store rooms.

Many a jewel likewise shone as a souvenir of conquest,—

Gold all engraven with runes, and rich-carved art-works of silver.

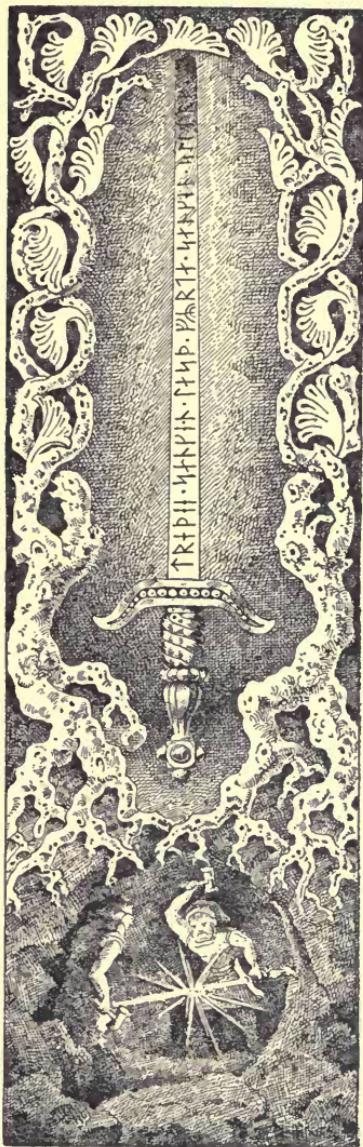
55 But of these jewels and treasures, three objects were valued the highest.

First of the three was a sword, to son from father descended,

Angurvadel* the name it bore, the Brother of Lighting.

Fashioned it was afar in the East, the saga declar- eth,

*Literally "grief-wader," or "ford of sorrow." The name was perhaps given from the blue color and transparency of the steel. It is also written Angurvaldil and Angrvat-hill. Many of the old swords of the North, like those of the Cimbri, were engraved with mysterious characters, and given names that were designed to inspire terror. Angurvadel was Frithiof's ever present comrade, mighty for defense, and ready for vengeance if needed.



Tempered in fire by the dwarfs,*
and wielded first by Björn Blå-
tand†

Björn was robbed of the sword 60
and his life, at one and the same
time,

South in the sound of Groning‡ in
combat with Vifell§ the mighty.
Vifell's sole son was Viking. At
Ulleraker** was dwelling,

Old and decrepit, a king, and with
him his beautiful daughter.

Lo! From the depths of the for-
est, there strutted a giant un-
shapely,

Greater of stature than men are, 65
and shaggy and wild and fero-
cious,

Hand-to-hand battle demanding,
or daughter of king and the king-
dom!

No one would venture the com-
bat, for no one the steel was pos-
sessing

Potent his skull to transfix,hence
Iron-skull did they call him.

Viking alone,who but late his fif-
teenth year had completed,

*The Dwarfs were supposed to have immigrated into Norway and Sweden from Lapland. They were the Cyclops of the North—miniature miners and mechanics, of hid-
eous forms and malignant dispositions, but of great skill. These pygmy artisans were engendered in the flesh of the giant Ymer, and dwelt in the rocks and caverns of the earth. Metal working and magic were their favorite arts. Giants and dwarfs seem to enter into the fabulous history of all nations.

†"Blue-tooooth." "His teeth were blue of color, and an ell and a half stood they out
of his mouth. Therewith slew he people in battle." ‡Between Seeland and Falster.

§Great-grandfather to Frithiof. ** Woolen Acre, a fylke-kingdom of Sweden.

Entered the fight, with hope in his arm and the great
Angurvadel,—

Cleft in the midst at one blow the dark fiend,* and res-
cued the fair one!"

Viking† bequeathed the sword to Thorsten, his son; and
from Thorsten

Came it to Frithiof, an heirloom. When-
e'er unsheathed in the mead-hall,
Flashed it coruscant as lightning or
gleam of the shimmering North-light.
Hammered of gold was the hilt, but the 75
blade was inscribed with rune-letters
Mystic, unknown in the Northland, but
known full well at the Sun's gates,
Home of our fathers once,[‡] ere the
asas^{††} had hither removed them.
Faintly its runes were showing, when
Peace reposed o'er the nation;
But when Hilder^{||} her sport began,
then flashed all the letters
Red as the comb of a cock when fight- 80
ing; destroyed was the foeman



THE DWARFS.

*He was named Harek, son of Kroppenbog of India. At seven years his head was bald and his skull hard as steel. Before entering the king's hall, he had slain the two door-keepers with his two-pronged spear, and tossed their bodies away. He was considered invincible.

The king had promised his daughter, Hunvor, and a dowry, to Viking, as prize for the subjugation of the giant. When Harek saw Viking's sword, he said: "I never should have fought thee, had I known thou hadst Angurvadel in thy hand!"

Then "Viking hewed Harek across the skull and clove him down all his length, so that the sword went deep into the earth, even up to the hilt thereof."—SAGA OF THORSTEN.

†Viking pirated until his 20th year,—then married Hunvor. One of their nine sons was Thorsten. The latter, in a Viking excursion, vanquished Jökul, who had seized the kingdom of Sogne, had killed the king, had banished his heir, Bele, and had changed Bele's beautiful sister, Ingeborg, into the form of an old witch.

Directed by her, Thorsten found Bele, re-instated him on his throne, exchanged foster-brothers' oaths with him, banished the evil spell that had clouded Ingeborg, married the fair princess, and lived with her at Framnäs, where Frithiof was born.

‡The principal city of the asas was Asgård, between the Black and Caspian seas. "Oden having united under his banners the youth of the neighboring nations, marched toward the west and north of Europe, subduing all the peoples he met on his way, and giving them to one or another of his sons for subjects."—NORSE MYTHOLOGY.

†† The gods. The first and oldest of the asas is Oden, maker of heaven and earth.

|| The goddess of battle,—one of the Valkyries.

Meeting in slaughter's night this blade with its red-flaming rune-marks;

Widely renowned was the sword, and of swords was the first in the Northland.

Next to the sword most prized was an arm-ring, widely reputed,

Forged by the Vulcan of Northern story, the limping smith Vaulund.*



VAULUND.

Three marks[†] it equaled in weight, and of purest gold 85
it was fashioned.

*Vaulund, Vaulunder, Velint, Velent, Volund, Völund, Volundar, or Wayland, the most renowned ancient artisan of Finland,—a king's son, and the Vulcan or Dædalus of the North.

"King Nidingur," so runs the Icelandic Saga, "reigned now in Jutland, and had in his train that excellent smith Velent, whom the Vaeringar (Sea-rangers) called Volund. He was so celebrated throughout the Northern world that all were unanimous in placing him at the head of his craft, and to denote the superior excellence of any production of the furnace, it became usual to say that the artist must have been a Vaulundur in skill."

Vaulund was small of stature, strongly built, but was lame, and hence was called the halting or limping smith.

Cf. the Greek mythus of how Vulcan, who made the thunderbolts of Zeus and Mt. Olympus, was, on account of his ugliness, hated by his mother, Hera, who took him by the leg and threw him out of heaven to the earth, breaking his leg and rendering him a cripple.

[†]A mark of gold or silver equals 8 ounces.

Heron the heavens were traced, with their castles
twelve of Immortals,*

Signs of the changing months, and named by skalds
the Sun-houses.

Alfhem[†] was pictured, Frey's castle; this was the sun
new appearing,

Starting once more to surmount heaven's height at the
season of Yule-tide.

90 Söqvabæk[‡] also was there, in whose hall sat Oden with
Saga,

Drinking his wine from a golden bowl, which bowl is
the Ocean.

Tinted with gold from the morning's glow; and Saga is
springtime

Written all over the green-clad fields, with blossoms for
rune-marks;

Balder was likewise seen on his throne, the sun of mid-
summer,

95 Who from the firmament pours down riches,—the im-
age of goodness;

Goodness shines ever as light, whereas the evil is
darkness;

Weary the sun grows with rising forever; the good also
languish,

Dizzy on arduous heights; with a sigh both downward
are sinking

E'en to the shade-land, to Hel;^{||} 'tis the funeral pyre
of good Balder.

*"The twelve immortals" are Thor, Frey, Balder, Njörd, Brage, Heimdal, Höder, Vidar, Vale, Uller, Forsete and Loke. Oden is not included. The twelve signs of the zodiac were named from the palaces of the Twelve Immortals.

[†]Literally, "elf-home." It is the fairy-land where dwell the elves of light, whose king is the god Frey.

[‡]The dwelling of Saga, goddess of story. She was the Clio of the North. She is Oden's daughter, and relates to him the fortunes of men.

^{||}The lower world, whose goddess is Hela. She is the Proserpina of the North, and daughter of Loke, the Scandinavian Satan.



ODEN WITH SAGA.

100 Glitner,* the Castle of Peace, was likewise seen. Met-
ing justice,

Sat Forsete[†] with scales in hand, o'er the autumn as-
sembly.

These and many more scenes were engraved, portray-
ing the warfare

Waged by the Light, both in heaven and in the spirits
of mortals;—

All by the master's hand were richly carved on the
arm-ring;[‡]

105 Crowned a rich ruby its rim, as the bright sun
crowneth its heaven.

Long had the bracelet an heirloom been, for the race
traced its story,

Though by the mother's side, back to Vaulund, re-
garded its founder.

Once, however, the jewel was stolen by Sote, the rob-
ber,

Pirating over the Northern seas, but afterwards seen
not.

110 Finally, Sote, 'twas said, had sailed to the shore of far
Britain,

Buried himself alive, with his ship and his wealth, in a
barrow;

*The dwelling of Forsete,—a hall of gold.

†The god of justice,—son of Balder.

‡On the opposite page is reproduced Prof. Liljegren's conception of the arm-ring as a Rune-calendar carved on the illustrious bracelet.

The circle of the ring represents the circle of the year, which the old Scandinavians reckoned as beginning in November. Hence this month is placed first upon the ring. Along the upper border are engraved the Latin names of the 12 months; under these are the 12 signs of the Zodiac, in as many separate circles, set at equal distances in a fantastically carved arabesque of antique design.

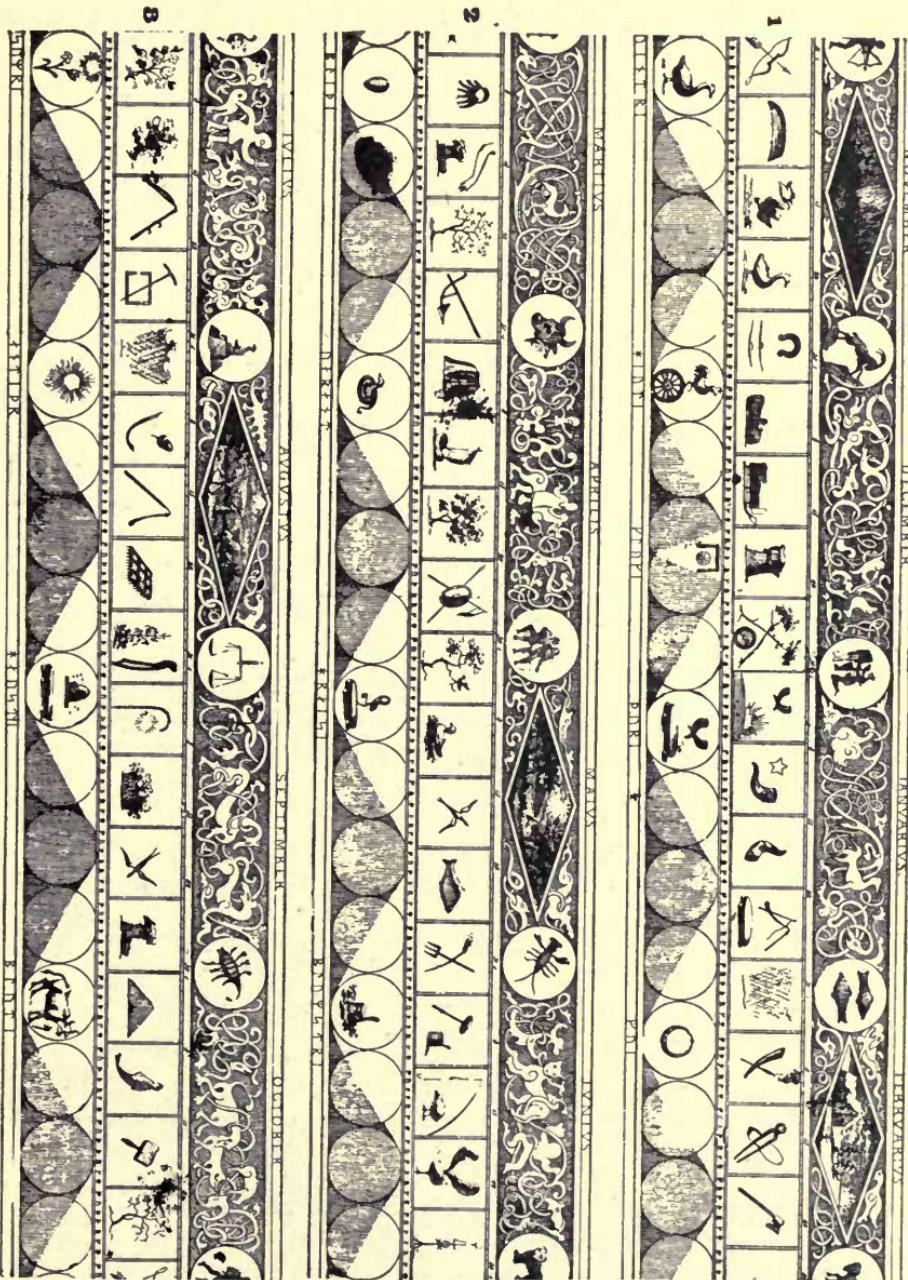
These Zodiacal signs were called the Sun-houses, each representing one of the cas-
tles of the 12 Immortals. The four diamond-shaped vignettes picture the 4 seasons.

Along the extreme lower border of the ring are engraved the ancient names of the
months in Runic letters.

Above these, and occupying the lower third of the ring, the waxing and waning of
the moon are portrayed by light and shade; and the figures inserted at equal intervals
picture events pertaining each to its own month.

Above this line is a row of 7 runes for the 7 days of the week, represented in the
same order for all the days of the year.

The middle portion of the ring (above the runes) is divided into 52 squares, each
representing a week, and containing symbols of the events pertaining to its own time.



FRITHIOF'S ARM-RING.

The band of the ring is here broken into three sections, in order to occupy but a single page; and is traced from left to right, as printed lines, and in the order of the numbered strips.

But that he found no peace, and a ghost ever haunted
his mound-grave.

Thorsten this rumor heard, and with Bele his dragon
ship entered,

Cleaving the foam-capped waves, and steered to the
barrow of Sote.

115 Wide as a temple-vault, or arch of a palace imbed-
ded

Deeply in gravel and green-grown turf, rose the sepul-
cher vaulted.

Light within was illumining the tomb. Through a chink
of the portal

Peered the two warriors in; and there the Viking-ship,
pitch-smeared,

Stood with its anchor and masts and yards; while high
on its stern-post

120 Sat a most horrible form arrayed in a fiery mantle!

Grim was he sitting, and scouring a sword-blade spot-
ted with blood-stains,

But to remove them prevailed not; and all the gold he
had plundered

Round him was lying in heaps, while circling his arm
was the arm-ring.

“March we,” breathed Bele, “down thither, and combat
bring to the monster,—

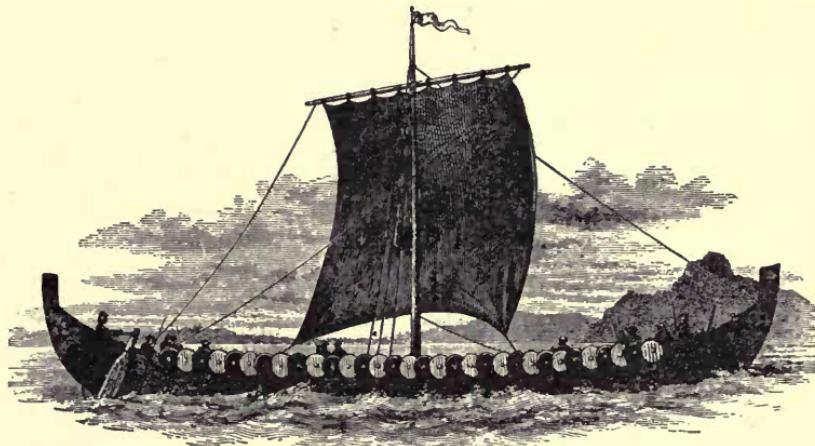
125 Two 'gainst one goblin of fire?” But quick answered
Thorsten, half angered:

“One against one was our fathers' custom;—I battle best
singly!”

Long was it then contended, which one should provoke
the encounter,

Trying the hazardous deed; but Bele, at last, took his
steel helm,

Shaking within it two lots; and there, by the shimmer of
starlight,
Thorsten saw his was the lot. Then swift, with one 130
thrust of his steel-lance,
Cleft he the bolts and the locks! He entered.—If ever
one asked him
What he beheld in that barrow* deep,—he replied not,
but shuddered.



THE VIKING SHIP OF GOKSTAD (Restored).

Bele at first heard a lay,—it was like the strain of a gob-
lin;
Then came a clashing sound, like the clang of encoun-
tering sword-blades!
Lastly, a terrible shriek! Then silence!—Out hasten- 135
ed Thorsten,

*A vast mound-grave. The spacious arched-stone tomb of the Northmen was usually covered with an earth-mound upon which the grave-stone was set. Burial while alive was not an infrequent method of heroic self-destruction, since it defeated natural death. It is exemplified thus in Romund Gripson's Saga: "And as he (Thrain) was now so old that he could fight no more, he caused himself, while yet living, to be placed within a barrow with much goods."

The above cut represents the celebrated Viking-ship unmounded at Gokstad, near Sandefjord, at the mouth of the Christiania fjord. It was of oak, 78 ft. long, 16 ft. wide, had 16 oars and shields a-side, was built to carry 120 warriors, and was buried in blue clay, which is an excellent timber preserver.

It contained the bones of a Northern chieftain, 3 horses, several dogs, and a partially decayed silk mantle; and showed signs of having been plundered for gold, weapons and ornaments, which should have been found beside the occupant, but were not. The Norseman's custom of burying warriors in their ships which they covered deep with earth-mounds, has given much light to the modern student of antiquities.

Pale of face, confounded, undone! For with Death he
had battled!

Yet, bore he with him the arm-ring! Often he said: "It
is dear bought;

Once in my life have I trembled,—'twas when I recov-
ered that arm-ring!"

Widely renowned was the jewel, of jewels the first in
the Northland.

- 140 Lastly Ellida, the dragon-ship, stood as a family treas-
ure.

Viking—they say—when returning one day from a voy-
age of conquest,

Close by his native shore was sailing, when lo! on a
ship's wreck,

Rocking and careless, appeared a man, as at play with
the sea-waves!

Towering, noble of form, he stood, with countenance
open,—

- 145 Joyous but mutable too, like the sea that sports in the
sunshine.

Blue was his mantle, and golden his belt, bestudded with
corals; .

White was his beard as the billows' foam, but his hair
it was sea-green.

Thither steered Viking his dragon, the destitute man
to deliver,

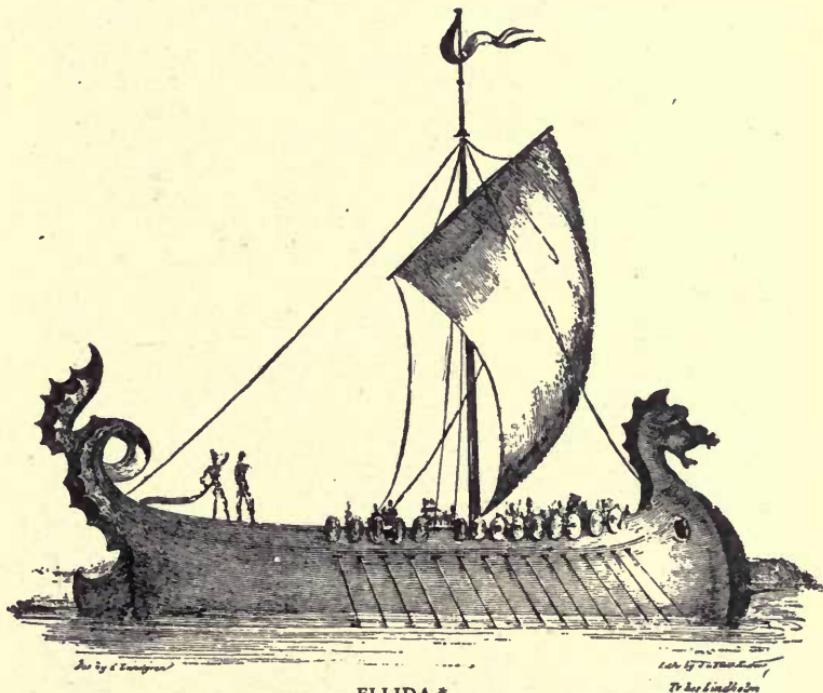
Rescued the shivering seaman, and at his own hearth
entertained him.

- 150 But when bidden to rest by his host, then smiled he,
replying:

"Good is the wind; and my ship, as thou seest, is far
from untrusty;

Truly, a hundred miles seaward I hope to sail in the evening.

Thanks no less for thy bidding; 'tis well meant. Would I might leave thee
Some small reminder of me! But my wealth lies deep in the ocean;



ELLIDA.*

Yet, on its strand perchance thou will find a gift in the 155 morning."

Viking next day sought the shore, when lo! like an eagle of ocean

Swiftly pursuing its prey, moved a dragon-ship into the harbor.

*This engraving of Ellida, copied from Stevens' translation, Stockholm, 1839, is the embodiment of the saga descriptions and drawings of the celebrated Bayeux tapestry. The beautiful conception of a dragon ship on page 162 is taken from the Orkneyinga Saga, of Joseph Anderson, Edinburgh, 1873.



ĀGIR AND RANA AND THEIR NINE DAUGHTERS.

No man appeared thereon, not even the form of a helms-man;

Still chose the rudder its tortuous way mid rocks seen
and unseen,

As by a spirit quickened; and lo! when the strand it 160
was nearing,

Quick were the sails self-reefed; and, touched by no
hand of a mortal,

Sank the spontaneous anchor, and drove its tooth in the
sea-depths!

Mute stood Viking, and gazed; then chanted the mur-muring billows:

"Agir,* the rescued, his debt ne'er forgetting, to thee
sends the dragon."†

Kingly to see was the gift, and the oak-planks, bowing 165
and massive,

Not as in others were joined, but seemed to have grown
fast together.

Dragon-like over the wave it hovered, its lofty head poi-s-ing

Proudly above the stem, and its throat was coruscant
with red gold.

Mottled its belly with blue and gold, while back at the
rudder

Curved in a spiral its ponderous tail, with silver-scales 170
covered;

Black were its wings, and bordered with red; when all
were expanded,

*Or Aegir, the god of the Sea—the Neptune of the North—husband of Rana. Agir feasts all the gods at the autumnal equinox. But he lacks a caldron large enough to brew ale for all. So Thor, with Tyr, goes to Jötunheim, and bears off the great mile-deep brew-kettle of the giant Hymir, slays with his mallet Hymir and the giants who pursue him, and brings the kettle to Agir, who now uses it at all his banquets. The Giants' country, Jötunheim, lies among the mountains to the east of the Fjord of Sogne.

†Dragon (drake) was the usual name given to the ancient Northern war-ships, as they generally had the dragon's head; they were often gorgeously painted and gilded.

"La figure d'un dragon ou d'un autre animal fantastique, qu'on representait sur la proue, les avait fait nommer 'drakar,' dragons; la peinture et la dorure etaient employees a les decorer."—DEPPING.



A PASS IN THE JÖTUNHEIM.

Then vied the ship with the whistling tempest, and con-
quered the eagle!

Shouldst thou behold it laden with warriors armed, thou
wouldst fancy,

Floating, a palace regal, or fortress riding the ocean!

Widely renowned was the ship, and of ships was the 175
first in the Northland.

These received Frithiof, and more, as heir of Thor-
sten, his father.

Scarce in the North was an heir to be found with herit-
age broader,

Barring a king's son only,—since kingly might is the
greatest.

Though not of monarch a son, yet kingly indeed was
his nature,

Kindly and noble, and mild; and daily his fame was 180
extended.

Champions twelve had Frithiof, gray-haired, and princes
in exploits,

Comrades of Thorsten, his father, steel-clad, with scars
on their foreheads.

Last on the champions' bench, a youth of the same
years as Frithiof

Sat like a rose among withered leaves; and Björn was
the youth called,—*

Glad as a child, but staid as a man, and wise as an 185
old man.

Björn had grown up with Frithiof; together their blood
they had mingled,†

*This foster-brother of Frithiof was inseparably connected with the latter's life as friend, companion-in-arms, sympathizer, and adviser. Their only battles with each other were fought over the chess-board, where each was a master.

†Each drank the other's blood from a wound cut in the arm for this very purpose,—a ceremony sanctifying the oath of inviolate friendship which Frithiof and Björn had taken. This was a frequent custom in the North. Bele and Thorsten also exemplified it.



BRAGE AND HEIMDAL RECEIVING HEROES IN VALHALLA.

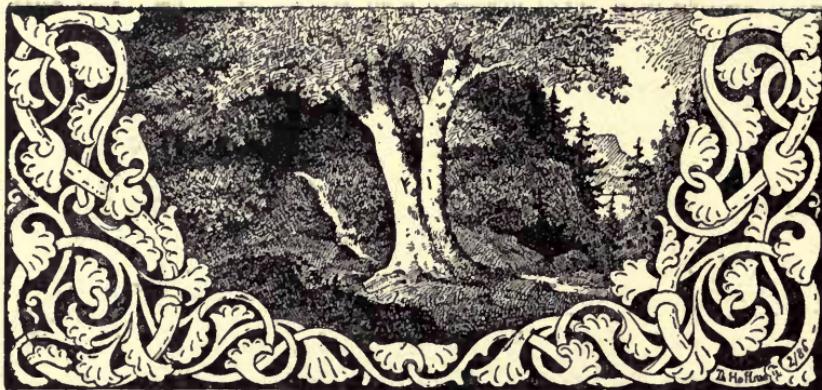
True foster-brothers in Northern manner, and loyally
swearing
Faith both in joy and in need; at his death one the
other avenging.
There, in the midst of warriors and guests who had
come to the grave-feast,
Frithiof, a sorrowful host, his eyes overflowing with 190
tear-drops,
Drank to his father's memory, after the custom ances-
tral,
Listened to minstrels singing in thundering drapa* his
glory;
Then to his father's seat, now his, approached he, and
sat down
Oden and Frey between,—the station of Thor up in
Valhall.†

* A drapa, or triumphal song to a departed hero, was usually sung at the "grave feast" which the succeeding heir held to his father's memory.

This death-song, or panegyric, was usually much less dirge-like than laudatory and triumphant, since death was a triumph, and Valhalla one protracted season of festivities.

† As was also Thor's place in the ancient temple of Upsala (founded by Frey, A. D. 220), where the statues of these three gods were worshiped, and near which their three mounds stand to-day. See cut "The Mounds of the Kings," Canto XXIV.





Canto Fourth.

Frithiof's life is lonely, not only because of his father's death, but also because of the absence of Ingeborg. And this heart-desolation is enhanced since the visit to Framnäs of the lovely Ingeborg with her brothers Helge and Halfdan. There Frithiof had feasted them "more magnificently than they had been accustomed to," as told in the ancient Saga; Ingeborg had expressed her admiration of Frithiof's wonderful arm-ring, and they had "talked long together," and wandered through the fields. Even then the brothers began to suspect the love of the devoted pair. Envy took its birth, rapidly waxing stronger. This visit became the grave of peace between them.

The carrier-dove sent by Frithiof to his love returns not. Anxiety, restlessness, loneliness, despair, seize upon him.

Björn's attempted stimuli fail to incite him to interest in commonplace things. Loosing Ellida's sails, he seeks the brothers across the fjord on King Bele's mound.

His suit for Ingeborg's hand is disdainfully repulsed. In wrath he cleaves King Helge's shield with his sword, Angurvadel, and sails back over the blue wave to Framnäs.

The certainty of ill is far less annoying than the uncertainty of good. No anguish is so great as that of suspense. Death arrived is better than Death coming, for there is nothing more to fear. The fiend has played his ace. And so, when heroic manhood is publicly scorned and outraged by jealous regal inferiority, some comprehended relation is at least established; and we can readily understand the ancient Chronicle's paradoxical declaration that "when Frithiof returned home his gladness of mind returned unto him."

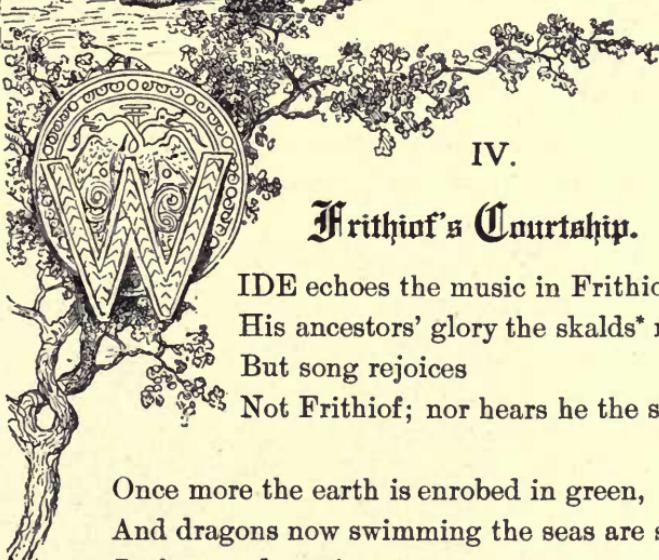




IV.

Frithiof's Courtship.

IDE echoes the music in Frithiof's hall; 1
His ancestors' glory the skalds* recall;
But song rejoices
Not Frithiof; nor hears he the singers' voices.



Once more the earth is enrobed in green, 2
And dragons now swimming the seas are seen.
In forests dreaming,
The hero-son heeds but the moon's pale beaming.

*The skalds (or bards), enlivened the feasts of warriors with songs or recitals of the deeds of heroes. These compositions or poems (sagas) were rendered with accompaniment of the harp, and contained much history and tradition. Iceland, once a part of Scandinavia, is the home of the skald.

"A regular succession of this order of men was perpetuated, and a list of two hundred and thirty in number, of those who were most distinguished in the three Northern kingdoms, from the reign of Ragnar Lodbrok to Valdemar II, is still preserved in the Icelandic language; among whom were several crowned heads."—WHEATON.

- 3 Yet lately so favored was he, and so glad,
For merry king Halfdan as guest he bade,
(And Helge cheerless),
Who with them brought Ingeborg, sister peerless.
- 4 He sat by her side, and he pressed her hand,
And oft felt the pressure returned so bland,
And gazed enraptured
On features so rare that his heart had captured.
- 5 Together they spoke of the joyous days
When dews yet mirrored life's morning rays,—
Of childhood hours,
The great soul's garden of memory-flowers.
- 6 She greeted him gladly, from vale and park,
Where names* had grown in the birchen bark,—
Where oak-trees flourished
On mounds which the ashes of heroes nourished.
- 7 "It is not so sweet in the king's court old,
For Halfdan is childish, and Helge cold.
My royal brothers
Hear only the praises and prayers of others.
- 8 "And none have I,"—here she blushed a rose—
"On whom a sorrow I may repose;
The regal palace,
How stifling it seems, to old Hilding's valleys!

*Perhaps his own and Ingeborg's, which he himself had carved.

"But Frithiof, in his forest search,
An "I" and "F" carves on the birch;
Each rune grows to the other near it
As to its mate a loving spirit."—CANTO I.

This beautiful silvery-white tree, indigenous to so vast a portion of the North, especially in mountainous regions, often forms large forests by itself, and attains the height of sixty to seventy feet.



- 9 "The beautiful doves that we tamed and fed,
By falcons terrified, now are fled;
A pair forsaken
Remains; one of these shall by thee be taken!"
- 10 "For back to the palace will fly thy dove,—
Will long, like another, to meet her love;
Bind neat her pinion
A letter secure from the eye's dominion!"



- 11 So sat they whispering all the day,
And whispered they yet in the evening gray,
Like winds nocturnal
That murmur each other in lindens vernal.
- 12 But now she is gone, and his joyous mood
Has vanished with her; the youthful blood
His cheek is dyeing;
He burns in silence, forever sighing.

*Site of the royal palace,—home of Ingeborg, Helge and Halfdan,—and identical with the ancient Syrstrand.

His sorrowful plaint by the dove he sent, 13
That glad to her queen with the message went;
But ah! Regaining
Her home, came not back,—by her mate remaining.



Björn's heart was by Frithiof's demeanor stung; 14
He said: "What afflicteth our eagle young?
Can it betoken
A transfix'd breast or a pinion broken?

"What wouldst thou, friend? Have we not, indeed, 15
Both yellow bacon and dark-brown mead,
And minstrels* singing,
Who ceaseless songs to our ears are bringing?

"Moreover the pacers now stamp their stalls; 16
For prey, for prey, the wild falcon calls.
But Frithiof only
In cloud-realms hunteth, consumed and lonely.

"Ellida lies troubled upon the main, 17
And restlessly tugs at her cable chain.[†]
O ship, be resting!
For Frithiof is peaceful, no foe molesting.

*"These songs (of the skalds) were propagated from one reciter to another; and there was no public solemnity in which they were not sung or chanted. . . . Harald Hárfagra placed the skalds at his feasts above all the other officers of his court.

The princes never set out on any considerable expedition without some of them in their train."—MALLET.

[†]Human attributes are constantly assigned to Ellida in the Saga.

- 18 "The natural death,—it is death indeed!
Like Oden, will I by mine own spear bleed;*
That cannot cheat us,
And blue-white Hela will welcome greet us."
- 19 Then quickly set Frithiof his dragon free,
And swelled the sail on the seething sea..
Straight o'er the water
He sought the two brothers of Bele's daughter.
- 20 That day they were seated on Bele's grave;†
They heard the people, and judgment gave;
Them Frithiof greeted
In accents by hills and by dales repeated:
- 21 "Ye kings, by fair Ingeborg were I blest!
Of you her hand I to-day request;
And this alliance
With Bele's own will was in full compliance.
- 22 "He placed us together neath Hilding's care,
Like two young trees that the same crown wear,
Whose tops combining
With band all golden was Freya twining.
- 23 "My father was neither an earl nor king,
Yet his name will live while the skalds shall sing;
And tombs high-mounded
The rune-carved fame of my race have sounded.

*"Oden retired into Sweden, where, perceiving his end to draw near, he gave himself nine wounds in the form of a circle with the point of a lance, and many other cuts in his skin with his sword. As he was dying, he declared he was going back to Asgård to take his seat among the gods, where he would receive with great honors all who should die bravely with their swords in their hands."—ANDERSON.

†The mounds or cairns of kings or heroes were the usual Assembly-places of the Norsemen, since the elevated position of the judge at the summit made him visible to all. Thus Gustavus Vasa addressed the Dalcarlians from the top of Frey's mound at old Upsala.

“ ‘Twere easy a kingdom and lands to gain,24
But fain in my homeland would I remain.
Here, from the foeman
I shield both the king’s hall and cot of yeoman.

“We now are standing on Bele’s tomb;25
He hears each word from his hidden room;
My cause he pleadeth
Entombed; ponder well while he intercedeth!”

Then Helge uprose, and began with scorn:26
“Our sister is not for the peasant-born;
For Valhall’s daughter
Kings only may vie, nor should swain have sought her!

“Boast on that the North holds thee greatest with swords;27
Win men by thy valor; win women by words!
But blood of Oden*
I yield not as prize to presumption sudden.

“My kingdom’s protection thou needst not plan;28
I safeguard it well; wouldest thou be my man,[†]
A meek position
Among my servants suits thy condition!”

“Well, scarcely thy man!” was the keen reply,29
“A man for myself, like my sire, am I!
Fly forth! Forsake thou
Thy sheath, Angurvadel, to vengeance wake thou!”

*King Bele claimed Oden as his ancestor,—to which claim of Helge both Hilding, in Canto XII, and Frithiof, in Canto XIV, sarcastically allude as ill comporting with Helge’s ungodly deeds.

[†]The term is most insulting. Frithiof himself, though not claiming regal birth, yet had twelve “meu,” or champions, dwelling at his court, attending him on all important occasions, and subject to his minutest commands. They were his inherited yet willing servants.



FRITHIOF CLEAVES HELGE'S SHIELD.

In sunlight flashes the blade steel-blue,
Whose runes now burn with a blood-red hue:
“Thou, weapon loyal,
At least art descended from peerage royal.

30

“And stood I not o'er the peaceful grave,
No power, O king, could thy dark life save!
Yet I will teach thee
To venture not where my sword may reach thee!”

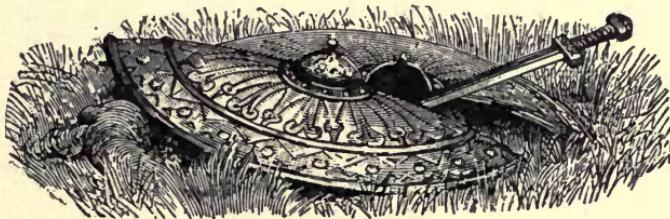
31

He said, and severed at one stroke now
The king’s gold-shield that bedecked a bough.
Its halves asunder
Fell over the tomb, and resounded under!

32

“Well wrought, my sword! Lie thou still, and dream
Of loftier deeds; hide till then the gleam
Of rune-flames burning!—
Now o’er the dark blue be we home returning.”

33





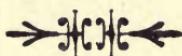
Canto Fifth.

From a scene that now promises storms and turbulency, the poet suddenly transports us to fields of undisturbed repose.

King Ring, the aged monarch of a wealthy neighboring province of Norway, to the west of Christiania fjord, was a lover of peace, devoted to the welfare and happiness of his people, seeking war never for its own sake, yet a brave warrior in the time of strife, and a man of admirable character. He had for some years mourned the loss of Alfhild, his queen. He had been a friend of King Bele. His courtiers had extolled the worth, beauty and intellectuality of Ingeborg, and taught King Ring to regard her as a suitable prospective consort for his throne. "For," he said, "though she is still young, if she should choose to be a kind mother to my orphan children, I will vow to love and honor her as I did the departed Queen."

With costly gifts his messengers bear his suit to King Helge's court. Helge consults the tokens. The suit is repulsed. Even Halldan ridicules the "grey-beard." The infuriated messengers recite the refusal and insult to King Ring, who at once indignantly proceeds to chastise such impertinence, and compel the concession which he has been denied.

Against the onslaught of King Ring's mighty army, as well as the probability of Frithiof's intrusion, Ingeborg is placed with her maids in the temple of Balder, which is secure against hostile invasion; and thus she sits in loneliness on the dais, embroidering in silk and gold, while her tears descend as copiously as the dews of summer nights.





V.

King Ring.

KING RING pushed his gold-stool back from the board, 1
When each defender
And skald uprose to his royal word,
By Northmen heard,
As learned as Mimer,* as Balder tender.

His land^t seems a grove for the gods' repose ; 2

Its greenswards never
Are marred by the march of invading foes ;
Its verdure grows
Protected, and roses are blooming ever.

*The wisest of all men,—the Solomon of the Norseman's mythology.
The fountain of wit and wisdom, kept by Mimer, is situated under one of the three roots of the great sacred ash-tree, Yggdrasil, the tree of life.
†King Ring ruled over Ringarike, on the west side of the Fjord of Christiania. The ancient orthography "Hring" is rationally abandoned by Bishop Tegner.

3 Here justice unswerving sits throned alone,
 With mild controlling;
And Peace each year pays the debt her own,
 While golden strown
Lie sunlit, ripening grain-fields rolling.

4 With swarthy breasts, and with snowy wings,
 Come ships of treasure
From lands a hundred, and each bark brings
 A myriad things
So valued that riches alone can measure.



5 Here Peace and Freedom united dwell,
 As one rejoicing ;
Each loveth his country's father* well,
 While free words swell
In open Council, frank judgment voicing.

*King Ring. "In vain might our poet have referred to his legendary archives for so illustrious an example of paternal rule and enlightened polity."—STRONG.

For thirty winters his reign had sought
The North's fruition ;
None home returned to a joyless cot ;—
But evening brought
Ring's name to Oden in each petition.

And the king moved his gold-stool from the board, 7
When all in gladness
Arose to attend to the words outpoured
Of North-famed lord ;
For deeply he sighed, as he spoke with sadness :

“In Folkvang castle* now sits my queen, 8
Above the azure ;
But her grave by the brooklet is clad in green,
While round the scene
Sweet flowers exhale their ethereal treasure.

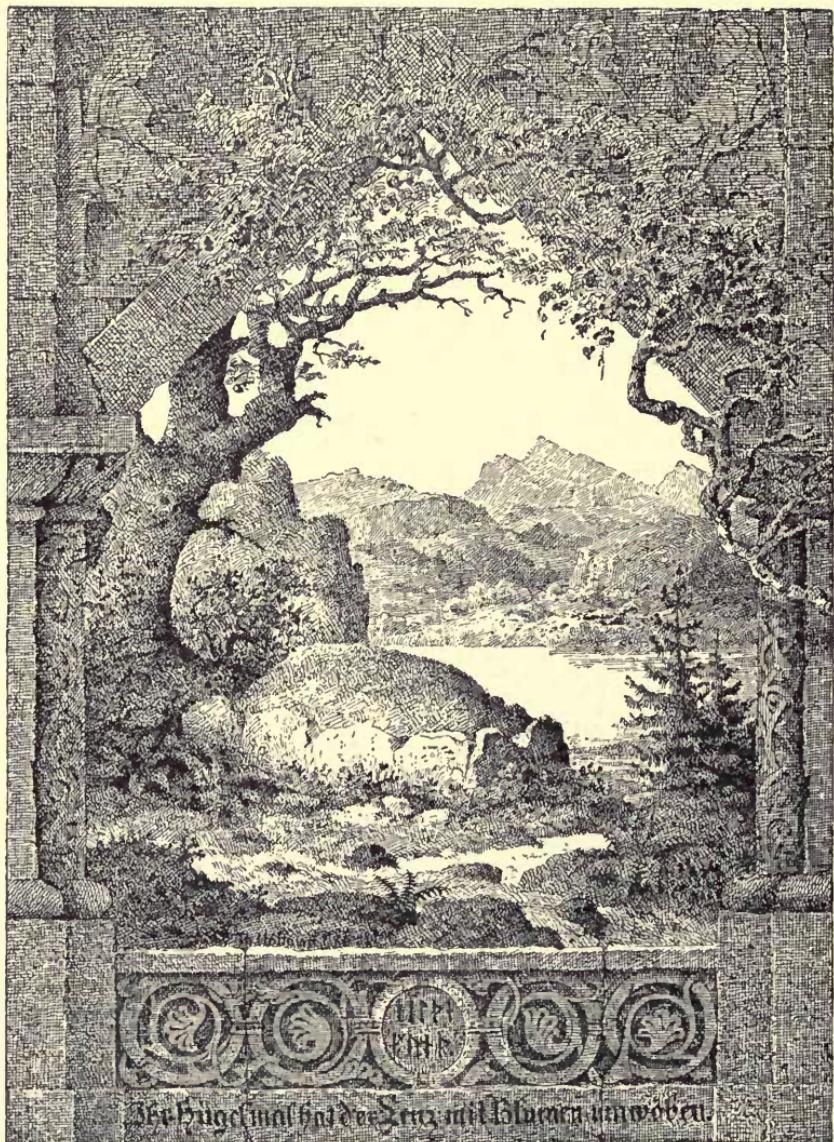
“Grace of my throne, queen so good, so fair,—
Breathes not another ;
With the gods she Valhalla’s rewards doth share;
But now the prayer
Of my nation and children is for a mother.

“King Bele, who oftentimes sought my hall 10
With summer breezes,
Hath left a daughter,—my choice of all,—
As lily small,
With cheeks where the crimsoning morn-tint pleases.

*The dwelling of Freya, and the Paradise of good and beautiful women after death.

“Folkvang ‘tis hight
Where Freya doth rule
O'er seats in the hall;
Of heroes who fall
Half takes she each day,
One half Oden hath.”

—THE YOUNGER EDDA.



QUEEN ALFHILD'S GRAVE.

"She is young ; and a maiden young, I know,
Would fain pluck flowers ;
My flowering is o'er, and the winters strow
E'en now their snow
About my forehead in flaky showers.

11

"But could she to a white-haired man sincere
Affection render,
Receiving his motherless children dear,
As mother near,
Then Autumn to Springtime his throne would tender.

12

"Take gold from the vaults, and take jewels rare
From oaken presses ;
And follow, ye skalds, with the harp's soft air,
To woo the fair,
For courtship and pleasure the song-god* blesses."

13

Then out sped the youths in a noiseful throng,
With gold and prayers,
And the minstrels followed in escort long,
With hero-song,
The king's word bearing to Bele's heirs.

14

For days they feasted, they drank for three;†
On the fourth morning,
What Helge's response to their suit would be,
They came to see,—
For homeward to-day must they be returning.

15

*Brage. Although compulsory cession of sisters, daughters or wives to conquering invaders was equivalent to voluntary cession, and legally subject to the victor's dictation, King Ring, always pacifically disposed, preferred the latter mode of acquisition.

As the author of *Saga Time* has observed of the women of this period, their preferences were rarely consulted; and perhaps the seemingly unnecessary offering of jewels, songs and prayers, as auxiliaries to his suit, whose voluntary acceptance was thus made possible, must be urged in extenuation of Ring's subsequently inexorable demand.

†Etiquette demanded such delay. "The old Northern custom prevented either host or guest from speaking of the occasion for the latter's visit, till he had freely partaken the rights of hospitality."—STEVENS.

16 King Helge then offered both hawk and steed
 In green-clad forest;
Inquired both of vala* and priest indeed
 The norn-decreed
Response for his sister, of maids the rarest.

17 But priest and vala consent withheld,
 As did each token;
King Helge, whose fear at the signs now swelled,
 Ring's suit repelled,—
For ne'er may gods' precepts by men by broken.

18 But merry King Halfdan he laughed and said:
 “ The feast is over!
King Gray-beard himself should have ridden ahead;
 Glad I'd have led
To saddle the honorable old-man lover!”

19 Indignant, the messengers moved away,
 And told the story
Of Helge's slight to their monarch gray,—
 Who then did say:
“ King Gray-beard swift will avenge his glory!”

20 Then smote he his war-shield that hung on a bough
 Of linden quaking;
And forth every dragon was swimming now,
 With blood-red prow,
And helmet-plumes in the wind were shaking.

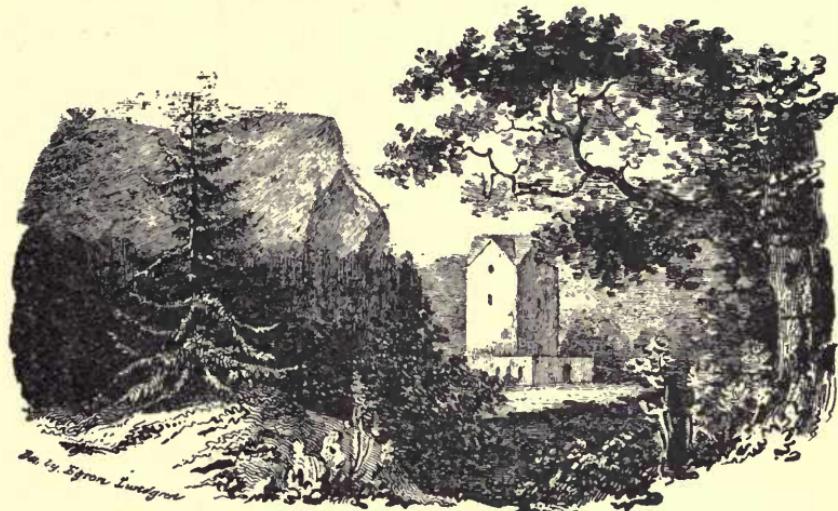
*Sybil or prophetess. These Northern priestesses were considered holy, and their dicta were sought and revered as those of the Southern oracles.
The Völuspa, first chant of the Elder Edda, and put in the mouth of the Vala, is the first recorded word of the divining woman of the North. The ancient Germans and Italians had similar prophetesses. Horace applies the term *Folia* to the latter."—

STEVENS.

†Striking the war-shield as a summons, is also alluded to by Ossian: "The King took his deathful spear, and struck the deeply sounding shield,—his shield that hung high in night, the dismal sign of war."—TEMORA, B. VII.

They quickly to Helge the tidings bear,
Who answers, cheerless:
"King Ring is mighty, and fierce his war!
Neath Balder's care,
My sister shall rest in his temple, fearless."

21



BALDER'S TEMPLE.

There sitteth the loving one, filled with woe,
In halls all stilly;
With silk and with gold does she constant sew,
While tears o'erflow
Her bosom, like dews that surcharge the lily.

22





Canto Sixth.

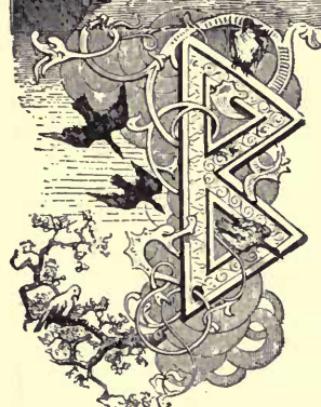
It is humiliating to be obliged to beg a favor of one we have scorned. But Helge is alarmed at the menace of the mighty army of angered King Ring, and sorely needs Frithiof and his champions—the most potent warriors of the nation; hence he commissions old Hilding, Frithiof's foster-father, to intercede for the assistance which he himself dares not ask.

Hilding finds Frithiof with Björn over the chess-board, and so oblivious to all surroundings as almost to disregard even the aged ambassador's presence. His replies to Hilding are the ambiguous fragmentary utterances applied to his game with Björn, framed so ingeniously as to have a double meaning.

The awakening indignation of the old foster-father at this apathetic reception would almost yield a presumption that he was unfamiliar with the powers of chess, since in this age a visitor would perhaps be achieving something to elicit an ambiguous or even conscious vocal response from a chess-player in active operation!

However, Frithiof finally arises, takes old Hilding's hand in his own, and earnestly informs him that no help can come to the kings from him they have disdained; and Hilding canot censure him; but prays Oden may direct all things for the best, and takes his departure.





VI

Frithiof Plays Chess.

JÖRN and Frithiof, mutely seated, 1
O'er a chess-board rare competed,*
Brilliant squares defined each other,
Gold and silver fair to see.†

Then came Hilding: "Sit, I pray thee; 2
On the high-seat here delay thee!
Drain thy horn, kind foster-father,
Till our contest ended be."

*The history of chess reaches so far into the past that its origin is disputed. It is certain that it was played in Hindooostan 5000 years ago, and traces of its Asiatic origin are manifest in its nomenclature. Particularly in the Sanscrit are found some terms still connected with chess. In the eighth century the Arabs introduced it into Spain and other countries of Western Europe.

It was played in England prior to the Norman conquest. During all these centuries the game appears to have sustained no essential modification; and no other game approaches it in possibilities of skill, prevision and combination.

It is often referred to in the Sagas. The old Norsemen were strong players.

†Chess-boards of great value often adorned the temples of the gods. Some have been found in the ancient cairns of Russia.

The chess-playing automaton exhibited as curious and wonderful pieces of mechanism, and usually supposed to be modern inventions, were mentioned in the Eigel saga of ancient Iceland.

3 Hilding spoke: "I bring thee greeting
From King Bele's sons entreating;
Needs the land a brave defender,
Lies in thee our nation's hope."

4 Frithiof said: "A hostile stranger,
Björn, now puts the king in danger.*
Save him by a pawn's surrender,—
Pawns† were made for giving up."

5 "Frithiof, vex the kings no longer!
Soon the eaglets will grow stronger;
Though King Ring could them o'erpower,
Yet their strength to thine is great."

6 "Björn, my castle‡ thou assailest,
But in thy design thou failest;
Scarcely canst thou take the tower,§
Its defense is consummate!"

7 "Ingeborg in Balder's keeping
Wears away the days in weeping;
Cannot she to battle stir thee,"—
Mourning maid with eyes of blue?"

8 "Vainly thou my queen|| pursuest,
That I e'er have loved the truest;
Piece¶ of all the game most worthy,
Her I save, whate'er ensue."

*These words are applied to the game; but they also apply to Ring as the "stranger," and to Helge as the "king."

†The Swedish word "bonde" means a peasant, and also a pawn,—the smallest piece on the chess-board. Frithiof sarcastically applies the term to himself.

‡The piece next to the queen in power.

§The castle; among chess-players, the term "rook" is usually employed.

||The most powerful piece on the board. Frithiof here applies the term also to Ingeborg.

¶The Swedish substantive also means a child, referring to Ingeborg.

Frithiof Plays Chess.

Shaw's Translation.

Music by B. CRUSELL. Stockholm

Voice.

Björn and Frithiol. mute ly

Piano.

seat-ed, O'er their chess-board rare com-pe-ted; Brill-i-ant squares de-fined each

oth-er, Gold and sil-ver, fair to see Then came Hil-ding; "Sit, I

pray thee! On the high seat here de-lay thee: Drain the horn, kind fos-ter-

fa-ther, Till our con-test end-ed be. Drain the horn, kind fos-ter-

father, Till our con-test end-ed be

9

Frithiof, is no answer given?
Is thy foster-father driven
Homeward, without word or token,
Ere thy child's play ended be?

10

Quickly then rose Frithiof, laying
Hilding's hand in his, and saying:
"Father, I my word have spoken,
Thou hast heard my soul's decree.

11

"Ride to Bele's sons, and teach them
From the scorned no help will reach them;
Me to them no duties fetter,
Ne'er will I their servant play."

12

"Well, in thine own course abide thee;
For thy wrath I cannot chide thee;
Oden guide us for the better!"
Hilding said, and took his way.





NAERDAL FJORD, SOGNE



Canto Seventh.

Hilding, in stanza 7 of the last canto, revealed to Frithiof that Ingeborg had been placed in Balder's temple for safety against the onslaught of King Ring. Eight of her maidens attend her in her new asylum. The temple lies across the Fjord from Framnäs. Frithiof determines to visit the object of his adoration. Soliloquizing, and restless as the waves over which Ellida is to bear him, he awaits the shadow of kindly Night's overspreading pinions, writing the name of Ingeborg in the sand with his sword, and watching the tediously descending golden shield finally sink beneath the Western wave. Then in the grateful darkness, accompanied (as on all important occasions) by Björn and others of his twelve champions, to guard his movements and render him service if needed, he sets sail for the white god's temple. There Frithiof and Ingeborg, kneeling before the image of the god, offer upon the shrine the wealth of their love, believing that no altar-incense can be more acceptable to the deity than such heaven-born offering. Here the most fervent, rapturous and extravagant youthful affection is set forth in imagery as pure as the scintillations of Northern stars, as varied as the iridescence of the Northern aurora, as sweet as the evening fragrance of Southern breezes. These delightful nocturnal visits seem to have been more than once repeated, and the ancient Saga declares that "he betook himself thither each day also;" and it was this "profanation of the temple" that raised Helge's wrath, when he learned of it, to the highest pitch of intensity; for he had not believed Frithiof to be rash enough to do such sacrilege as to meet Ingeborg in the sacred temple of Balder.





VII.

*F*riðhof's Happiness.

KING BELE'S sons may seek defenders, 1
From dale to dale for arms may rove;
My sword to them no service renders,
My field, my world, is Balder's grove.
No wrath of kings nor earthly sadness
Will win from me one backward glance;
But there I drink the gods' own gladness,
When Ingeborg our cup enchanteth.

2 As long as evening sun-rays, straying,
With purple hues the blossoms vest,
Like crimson-tinted gauze o'erlaying
The flower-world of my lady's breast,
So long upon the strand I wander,
And with eternal longing stirred,
I sigh her dear name as I ponder,
In sand I write it with my sword.



DAY.

3 How weary drag the tedious hours!
Why, Delling's son,* dost thou delay?
Hast not beheld both mount and bowers,
The sea and islands, ere to-day?
In Western hall dwells there no maiden
Who has awaited thee for long,—
Who to thy breast would fly, love-laden,
Whose voice speaks love in every song?

*Nott (Night) was the daughter of the evil giant Nörvi, who dwelt in Jötunheim. Her last husband was Delling (Dawn), of the race of asas (gods). Their son was Dagr (Day), who was light and fair as his father. Oden gave Dagr a horse of shining mane (Skinfaxe), which "fills both air and earth with the shining of his mane."

"And Delling's son
Drove forth his steed
With stones so precious
Rich surrounded;
The streaming mane
Illumed all Manhem (the earth),
And Dvalin's sport (the sun)
Pulled steed and car."

SAEMUND'S EDDA.

4

At last, thy toilsome journey over,
Thou sinkest from thy lofty height;
And evening paints her rose-red cover,
A curtain for the gods' delight.
Earth's rills breathe love to one another,
Of love heaven's wind is whispering down;
O welcome, Night, thou goddess-mother,
With pearls upon thy bridal gown!

5

How still the stars glide o'er the azure,
As tiptoes youth to maiden true!
Fly o'er the fjord in swiftest measure,
Ellida; roll, ye billows blue!
For Balder's grove is lying yonder,
And in its shade his temple old,
Where love's own goddess lone doth ponder;—
Unto the gods our course we hold.*

6

How joyous I the strand am treading!†
O earth, I fain would kiss thy cheek,
ye And you, O flowerets dainty, threading *red a*
My path with white and ruddy streak.
Thou light-diffusing moon, that gleamest *th*
O'er land and grove and temple, all,
How fair thou sittest, *as thou dreamest,* *th* *here and*
Like Saga‡ in a bridal hall!

* "At Sogn, in Norway, a sanctuary consecrated to Balder was surrounded by an extensive enclosure, and consisted of buildings constructed at great cost. There was one temple for the gods, and another for the goddesses of Valhall,—the latter, especially, extremely high."—FINN MAGNUSON.

† Balder's strand lay across the fjord from Framnäs, the latter being on the south shore, at its sharp turn to the South-east.

‡ The personified saga or narration—the goddess of story,—the Clio of the North. Her stately mansion Sökvbäk was continually laved by the cold ocean waves. Apollo sought the Southern muse at Helicon's fountain. So Oden seeks Saga here.

"Sökvbäk hight the fourth dwelling;
Over it flow thy cool billows;
Glad drink there Oden and Saga
Every day from golden cups."
NORSE MYTHOLOGY.



*Freyja
the Queen
of the Giants*

FREYA.

From Old Norse Stories.
Copyright 1900, by
Sarah Powers Bradish.

*An arrow made drawing
dragon head*

Ye murmuring brooklets, who hath taught you 7

To tell to flowers my feelings blest?

Who, Northern nightingales, hath brought you

The dirges stolen from my breast?

With sunset's red now paint the fairies*

My Ingeborg's form on canvas blue;

But Freja jealous wrath e'er carries,

And quickly blows the cloud from view.^t

But let it fade,—her image royal; 8

She, fair as hope, herself is there,

And now, as childhood's memory loyal,

She comes my love's reward to bear.

Ah, best beloved, I would be pressing

To mine the heart that beats so dear!

My soul's desire, my life's rich blessing,

Come to these arms, and rest thee here!

Thy form is like the lily slender, 9

Yet rounded as the ripened rose.

Thy soul, as God's will pure and tender,

Yet warm as Freya's, constant glows![†]

*The elves (alfvar) inhabited Alfhem, the palace of Frey, situated high in the third heaven, above the power of the flames of Ragnarök, the Doomsday of the gods.

†The Northern deities, like those of Greece and Rome, were dominated by exaggerated human emotions. Juno once sent a plague to devastate the land of Aeacus, because it had been named from one of her husband's female favorites. The jealousy of Hera is proverbial. Apollo flogged Marsyas alive for challenging him to a musical contest. Juno and Minerva, incensed at the decision of Paris against their beauty, were the bitterest enemies of Venus, their successful competitor. The latter enlisted Mars, as Minerva did Neptune, in the cause, respectively, of Troy and Greece, in the ten-year war. Venus wrought terrible vengeance upon Psyche for the latter's beauty. Jealous of the preference of Hyacinthus for Apollo, Zephyrus blew the quoit out of its course, and caused it to kill Hyacinthus. Circe, through wrath over her rival Scylla's love for Glaucus, poisoned the water where Scylla bathed, and thereby converted her into a rock. Juno, in jealous anger at Jove's praise of Callisto, changed her into a bear. Minerva transformed Arachne into a spider, through wrath at being vanquished by her in a weaving contest. She also converted a beautiful-haired maiden into the frightful serpent-haired Medusa. Jealous of the honors the Thebans gave to Latona, Niobe complained, and Latona caused all the sons of Niobe to perish by the arrow. Cassiopeia once compared herself with the sea-nymphs, who at once sent a sea-monster to ravage her coasts. It was slain by Perseus.

Thamyris challenged to a contest of skill the muses, who having won, put out the eyes of the competing bard.

†^t And Freya next came nigh, with golden tears;
The loveliest goddess she in Heaven, by all

Most honored after Frigga, Oden's wife."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.



Kiss me! And may the kiss now
given

Thy soul as mine prevade and
bless;

The circling earth and bending
heaven

Both disappear in thy caress.

Be not afraid of lurking dangers,—

Björn guards the temple with
his sword;

And heroes,* to our cause no
strangers,

Would shield against the
world outpoured!

For thee I too would share the
tourney,

In strife supporting thee as
now;—

And glad to Valhall take my
journey,

If my Valkyrie[†] could be thou!

Of Balder's anger dost thou
murmur?

Not wrathful he, the pious god;
He would but fix our faith the
firmer,—

Our vows to him are understood;
His brow the sunlight bathes
in splendor,

And truth eternal fills his breast;
Was not his love for Nanna
tender

As mine for thee, as pure and
blest?

*Frithiof's twelve faithful champions, everywhere attending him.

†The Valkyries (Valkyrior) are martial maidens armed with shields, helmets and spears, and mounted upon swift steeds. The flashing of their armor causes the Aurora Borealis. Their mission is to visit every battle-field, select those heroes whom the fates (norns) have marked for death, conduct them to Valhalla, and serve them with mead and ale from the skulls of their enemies. The Valkyries were the nymphs of Valhalla, and were twelve in number. See Canto III, note.

The Valkyries were the shield-maids who filled the mead-horns at the banquets of Valhalla's heroes, as the houris of the Mohammedan Paradise. This is Frithiof's thought here.



THE VALKYRIES.

There stands his image,* —he is near it,—
 How kind he guards us from above!
 I bring to him, in offering-spirit,
 A heart devout and filled with love.
 Bend we the knee before him lowly!
 No gift to him more fair can be
 Than twin-born hearts' devotion holy,
 That glows, like his, in constancy.[†]

Less for the earth my love has flourished
 Than heaven,—do not its strength disdain!
 In heaven was my affection nourished,
 And for its home now longs again.
 Could I behold that region glorious,
 Could I but die as now with thee,
 And to the gods depart victorious
 In thy embrace,—'twere ecstacy!

When other heroes were advancing
 Through silver portals to the strife,[‡]
 I, lingering in thy smile entrancing,
 Should see but thee, my love, my life.
 When Valhall's maids, with eyes that twinkle,
 Set forth the mead whose foam is gold,
 With thine alone my glass should tinkle,—
 To thee my whispered love be told.

*The statue of Balder was carved out of pine, and placed on a pedestal above the altar. Frithiof is fated later to destroy this sacred image of the god.

†Balder, the second son of Oden, was worshiped not only by the Scandinavians, but by the Germanic nations. He typifies the light of the sun, renders all things bright and joyous, and creates whatever is good, peaceful and beneficent. He is of such Apollo-like beauty that a brilliant light streams constantly from his person.

Balder is the personification of the principle of good.

‡The heroes of Valhalla were called Einheriar. "Every day when they have taken their garments upon them, they array themselves for battle, march out of the great court-yard of Valhalla, and so fight manfully, felling each other to the earth. Such is their sport. But when it draweth toward the time they shall break their fast, then ride they home to Valhalla, and sit down to drink, reconciled."—STURLESON'S EDDA.

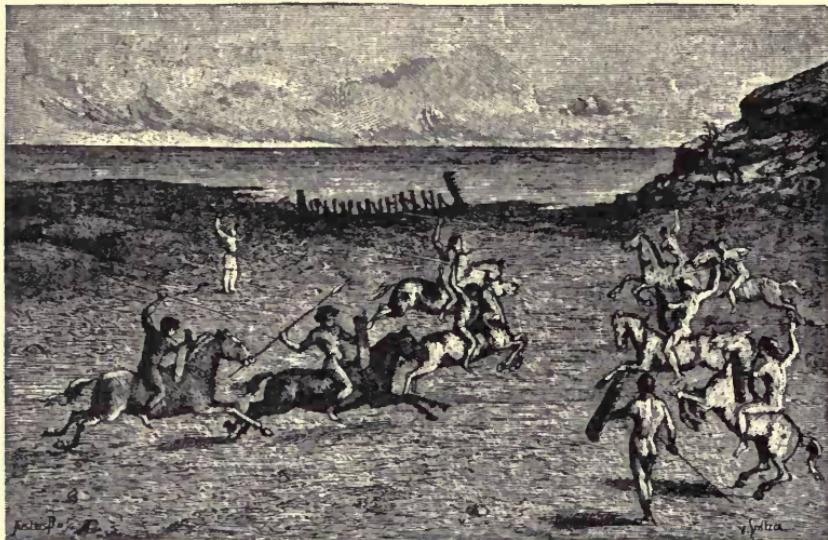
The Einheriar were the guests of Oden. He entertains them with banquets now. Later he will need all their assistance, when the gods at Ragnarök must defend themselves against all the united powers of darkness.

A leafy bower should then be builded

15

Upon some height by dark-blue bay,
Where in the shade of grove fruit-gilded,

The hours of rest should glide away.
When Valhall's sun anew ascended—
(How clear, how glorious is his eye!)—
Our course should to the gods be bended,
With longing for our home on high.



THE EINHERIAR.

A crown of stars should be enhancing

16

The golden beauty of thy brow;
In Vingolf-hall* should I be dancing
With my pale lily, blushing now;
When to love's peaceful dwelling fleetly
I drew thee from the dancing throng,
The silver-bearded Brage† sweetly
At eve would chant our bridal song.

*The beautiful abode of the Asynjor—the goddesses; the mansion of Friendship in Asgård,—usually regarded as the common home of all the goddesses.

†“The tones of his golden harp, and the sweet music of his voice chanting the exploits of gods and of heroes, proved that his genius, like his immortality (for he, too, partook of the apples of Iduna, his spouse), was always young.”—STEVENS.

Brithiof's Happiness.

Shaw's Translation.

Mari's slightly altered (by G.S.) from
B CRUSELL Stockholm.

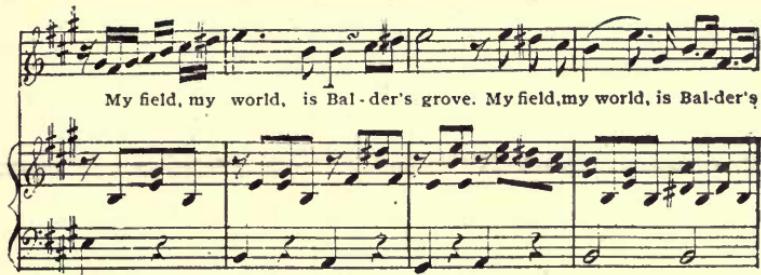
Voice.

Piano.

dolce

King Be-le's sons may seek de-fend - ers; From dale to dale for

- arms may rove. My sword to them no ser - vice ren - ders,



grove. No wrath of kings nor earth-ly sad-ness Will win from me one

back-ward glance But there I drink the gods' own glad-ness When Ing-e-

borg our cup en chants.

- 17 Sweet in the grove the night-bird twitters!
 The song is from Valhalla's strand;
 Soft o'er the bay the moonlight glitters,
 Effulgent from the spirit-land.
 Both song and moonlight are unfolding
 A world of love, from sorrow free;
 That world I would I were beholding
 With thee, my Ingeborg, with thee!
- 18 O weep thou not! For life yet streameth
 Within my veins,—weep thou no more!
 The dreams a youthful lover dreameth
 Forever to the azure soar.
 But when in thy embrace enraptured,
 One glance thou dost bestow on me,
 Thou hast the visionary captured,—
 He leaves the bliss of gods for thee!
- 19 "Hark! 'Tis the lark!" No! Thou but hearest
 A dove that coos his love-song blest;
 The lark still slumbers by his dearest,
 Within the cozy hillside nest.
 How joyous they, that none can sever,—
 That day and night alike may share!
 Their life is free as pinions ever
 That skyward bear the happy pair."
- 20 "See! Daylight comes!"* No! 'Tis the glimmer
 Of some far watch-fire in the east.
 Kind night yet hides the morning's shimmer,
 The hour for converse hath not ceased.

*As Sogn lies within five degrees of the latitude where the sun is visible during all the night when the nights are at the longest, we must not regard Frithiof's visit as an unduly protracted one. Even in Scotland the summer span of darkness comprises less than four hours, and it scarcely grows late before it is early.



THE LOVERS AT BALDER'S SHRINE.—Kepler.

O'ersleep thyself, day's planet golden,
And still of rest imbibe thy fill!
Frithiof would see thee sleep-enfolden
Till Ragnarök,* were such thy will!"

- 21 Alas! The hope is but delusion;
 The morning winds already speak,
And eastern roses in profusion
 Bud fresh as Ingeborg's fair cheek.
A flock of winged songsters twitters—
 A thoughtless throng—in brightening sky;
All life awakes, the wavelet glitters,
 And lovers with the shadows fly.
- 22 In all his glory he advances!
 O golden sun, forgive my prayer!
A god, I feel, dwells in thy glances,—
 How splendid gleams he, yet how fair!
O blest who treads his path so glorious,
 So mighty, as thou treadest now;
Who proud and glad his life victorious
 In light empanoplies as thou!

*"The twilight of the gods," the world's destruction and the regeneration of gods and men, the last great battle between the Good and the Evil. Till Ragnarök = till Doomsday.

"The evil seed which the tempter had sown, grew and flourished; even the gods were no longer free from guilt; neither truth nor faith was to be found in heaven or on earth, and love had lost its power; the bounds of law were broken, and the destruction of the world approached."—ASGARD AND THE GODS.

The descriptions of this awful day are sublime as portrayed in the Eddas. Thus the Swedish poet:

"Blackness shrouds the orb of day;
Earth is gulfed in boiling waves;
Nor a lode-star's lingering ray
Nature's last convulsion braves.
Up the World-tree's mystic height (*Vggdrasil*)
Fast the reeking vapor flies:
Rival clouds of lurid light
Sport with heaven, and fire the skies!"

—GEIGER.

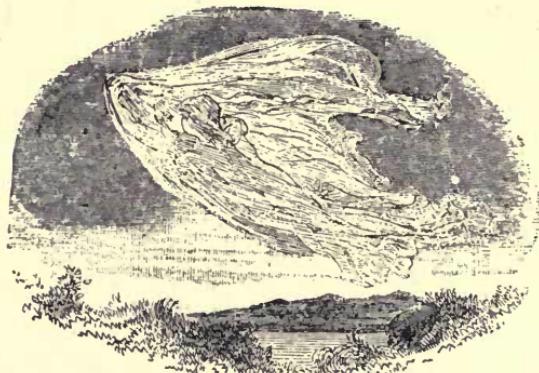
After the earth's disintegration, a new and green-clad earth shall rise out of the sea, and become the home of gods and of the human race renewed and purified. Canto XXIV, an almost complete compendium of Norse Mythology, contains, with the notes appended, a graphic account of the scenes of Ragnarök.

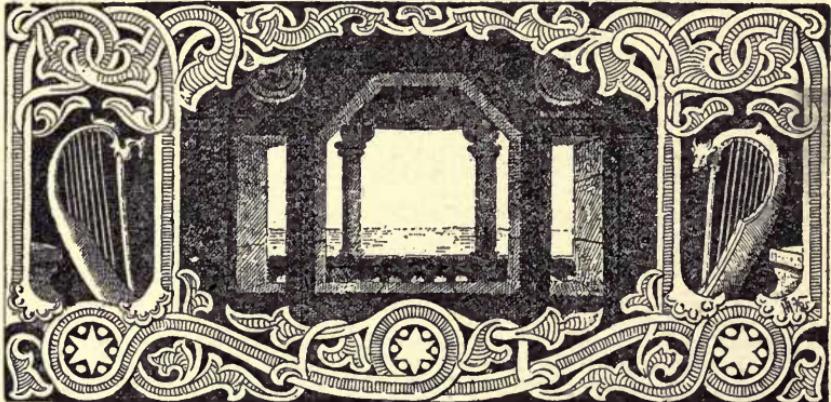
Before thine eye a maiden tender
I place—the fairest of the North;
Take to thy care, O god of splendor,
Thine image on this green-clad earth.
Her soul is pure as is thy luster,
Her eye as thine own heaven is blue;
The same gold paints her ringlets' cluster
As gives thy crown its radiant hue.

Farewell, my love! Another meeting,
A longer night, we yet shall know;
One kiss upon thy brow repeating,
And one I on thy lips bestow!
Sleep now, nor from thy dreams awaken
Of love, till midday breaks the spell;
And count the hours as I, forsaken,
With longing deep. Farewell, farewell!

23

24





Canto Eighth.

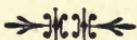
Nearly all night had Ingeborg watched and waited wearily, anxiously, alone, for the coming of Frithiof. In response to her tearful supplications he had consented to be reconciled with Helge—even to assist him against King Ring—provided Helge would yield him Ingeborg; and she knew Frithiof had gone to ask her of Helge publicly, before all the Ting; and with patience-exhausting anxiety and ill-endured foreboding she awaited his coming, and the decree of the norns.

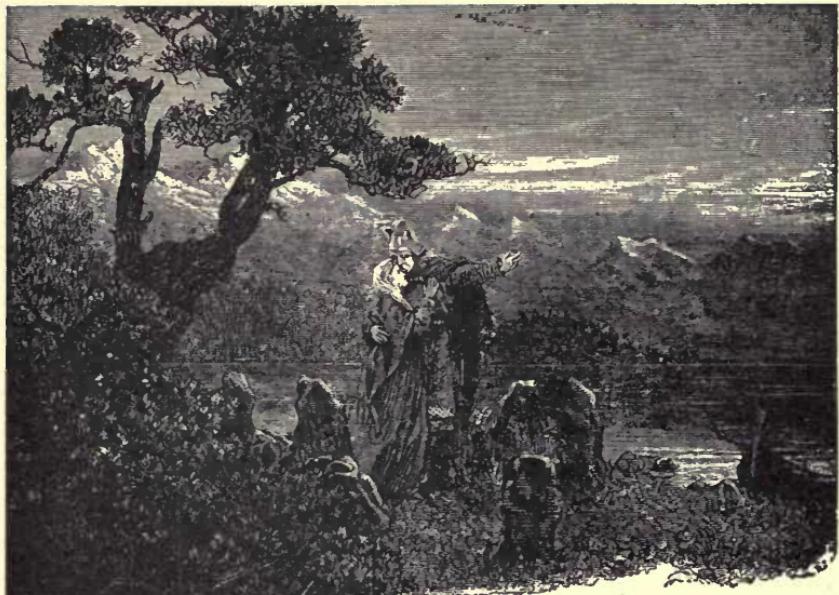
The people all favored this alliance, and had chosen Bele's mound as the most fitting place for the Council to meet and hear Helge's decision, as well as to develop plans for the instant war with Ring.

At last Frithiof returns to Ingeborg, indignantly describes the scene at the Ting, tells how Helge has not only repulsed his suit, but decreed he shall sail to the Orkneys and forcibly collect tribute of Earl Angantyr, or be banished forever from his native land. All this because he has profaned the sanctuary of Balder. In an outburst of frenzied bitterness against the "crown'd hypocrite," he importunes his love to fly with him from this land of tyranny to a Paradisaical home among the Grecian isles. She refuses in grief and hopelessness. Frithiof sees his precipitancy, reiterates his vows, proposes to discharge the penalty laid upon him, return vindicated, and then claim his bride before all.

He places upon her arm the ruby-set arm-ring, on whose calendar she may count his months of absence, and departs hopeful and defiant of the norns.

Like the parting of the crest-waving Hector and the white-armed Andromache in the sixth Iliad, the separation of Frithiof and Ingeborg is an episode that is, and always will be, modern, since it depicts the universal in human emotion, which remains unaltered throughout all time, and in every land.





VIII.

The Farewell.

INGEBORG.

AY dawns once more, and Frithiof
cometh not,

Although the council* yesterday was called
On Bele's mound; the place was chosen well;
For there his daughter's fate should be decreed.
At what a cost to me of many prayers, 5
Of many tears, by Freya numbered o'er,
Was thawed the ice of hate round Frithiof's
heart—

Was gained the promise from the proud one's lips
To give the reconciling hand again!†

*The assembly of all who were able to bear arms, conducted in the open air, like the court of Areopagus at Athens, and the first senate of Rome. This judicial or legislative assembly of Scandinavia was called the Thing, or Ting.

†To Helge, who had insultingly offered Frithiof a place among his servants, but now vainly sought his assistance against King Ring.

10 Ah! Feelingless is man! For honor's sake
(Thus nameth he his pride)—he reckons not
Of weighty import that he heedless bruise
To great or small degree one loving heart.
The fragile woman, leaning on his breast,
15 Is like a moss-growth clinging to a crag
With faded colors, while it scarcely holds
Itself unseen upon the frigid rock,
And finds its nurture in the tears of night.
So yesterday my fate determined was,
20 And over it the evening sun hath set;
Yet Frithiof cometh not! The paling stars
Now one by one go out and disappear,
And with each fading star a hope is slain,
And from my heart is falling to its grave.
25 Ah, wherefore should I hope? Valhalla's gods,
They love me not,—I have offended them.
The lofty Balder, neath whose care I dwell,*
With me is wroth, for that a human love
Is yet unholy in the sight of gods;
30 And earthly joy may hazard not itself
Beneath the arches[†] where the mighty powers
In sanctity have set their dwelling-place.
And yet, where lies my fault, and why contemns
The pious deity a maiden's love?
35 Is it not pure as Urda's[‡] sparkling wave,
And innocent as Gefjon's[§] morning dreams?

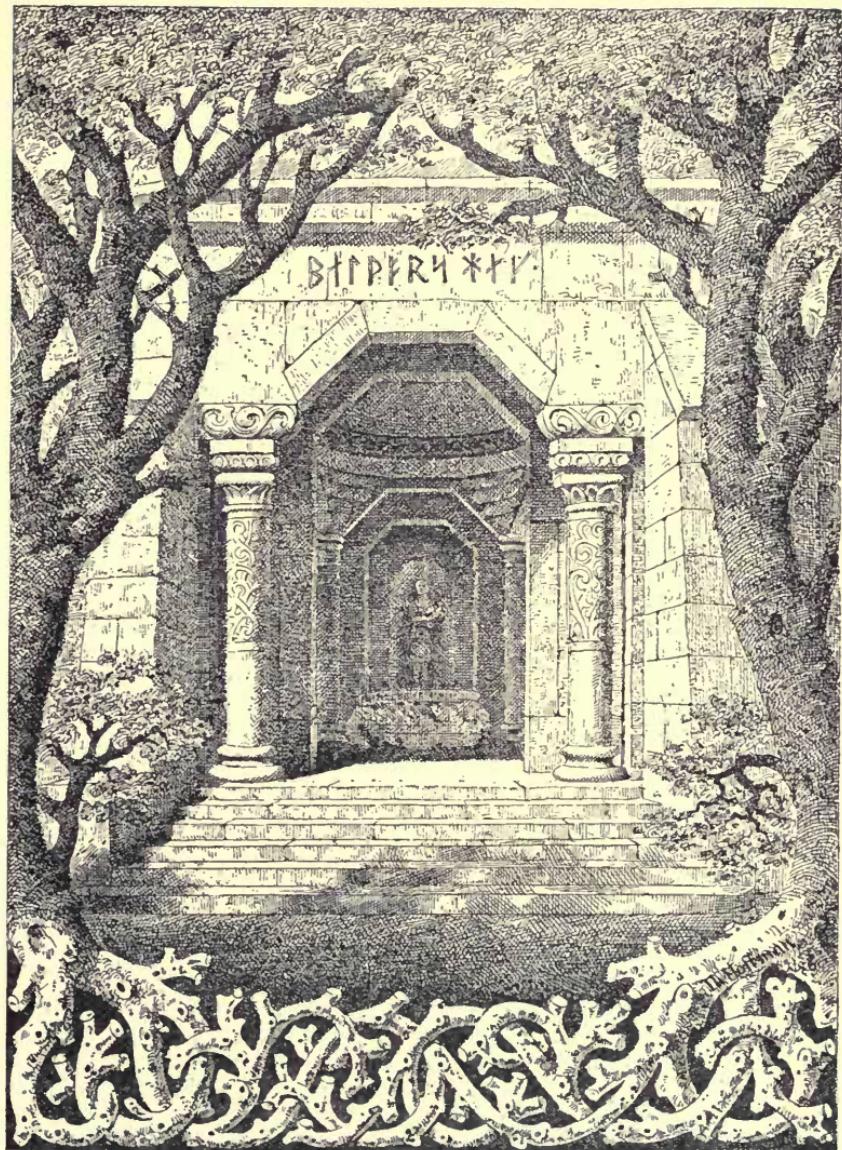
* She is still in Balder's temple.

† Of the temple.

‡ The norn of the Past. Verdandi is the norn of the Present; Skulda, of the Future. They mould the destinies of men. Their doom is irrevocable. To these goddesses of fate, sitting at the foot of the tree Yggdrasil, the gods themselves must bow, since their lives are time-limited and norn-decreed.

§ The goddess of maidens, and the first asa-goddess. She is present at Ágir's feast, and knows men's fate equally well with Oden.

King Gyife, of Sweden, it is related, once gave to a wandering woman, as compensation for her having entertained him with a song, as much land from his domains as she could plow with four oxen in a day and a night. She was Gefjon, of the race of asas. She transformed her four sons into oxen, plowed the furrows deep, tearing up the land which the oxen and plow drew out into the sea in a wonderful manner, until the Danish island of Seeland was thus formed. The depression where the land had been, became a sea (Logrinu), whose outlines correspond to those of Seeland.



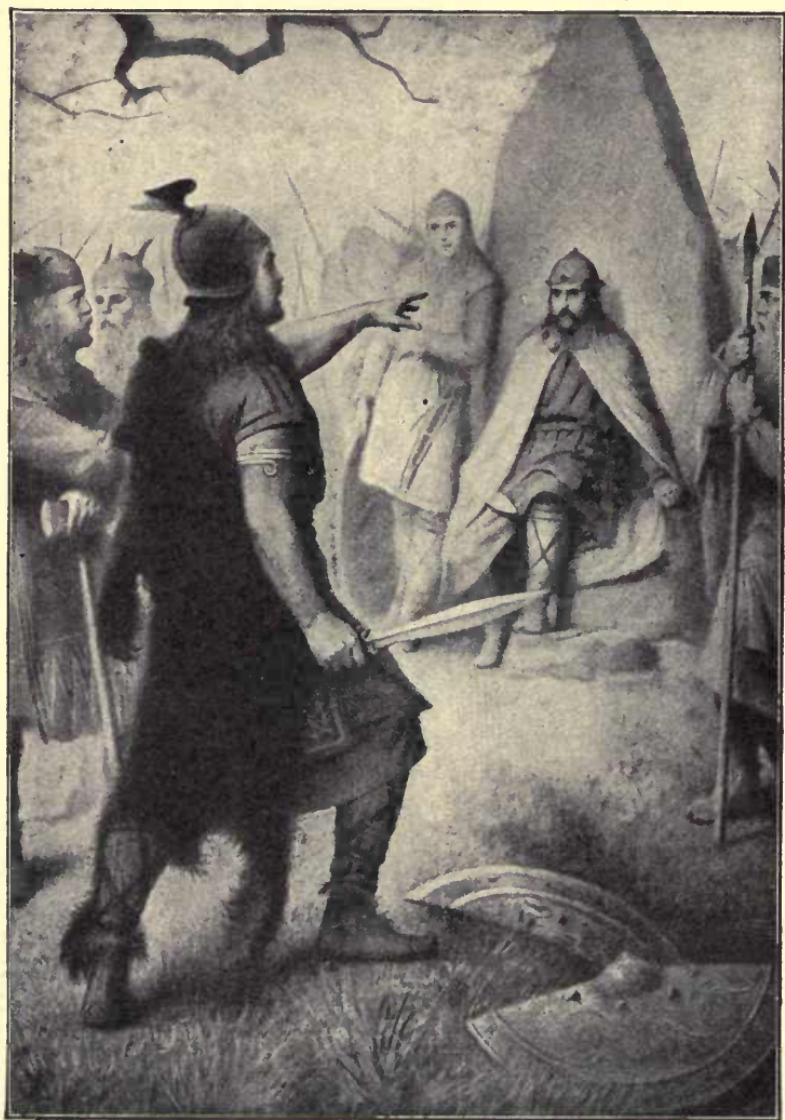
THE TEMPLE'S PORTAL.

The sun supernal turneth not away
From two devoted hearts his shining eye;
And Day's dark widow, star-bespangled Night,
40 Amidst her woe still gladly hears their vows.
That which is worthy neath the vault of heaven,
How grows it sinful neath the temple-vault?
Frithiof I love; ah, long,—as long ago
As memory can reach,—him have I loved;
45 The feeling is the twin-born of my soul;
I know not its beginning, nor can paint
In fancy, e'en, the time when it was not.
As round its kernel sets the early fruit,
As grows its orb of gold in summer's sun,
50 So likewise have I grown, and ripening clung
About this kernel, till my being seems
As but the outer shell that holds my love.
Forgive me, Balder! With a constant heart
Thy halls I entered, and with constancy
55 Will I from them depart, and take with me
This love across the arch of Bifrost's* bridge,
And place it there before Valhalla's gods.
There shall it stand, an asa-child as they,
And in the shields behold its mirrored self,
60 And fly on loosened dove-wings through the blue
And boundless skies unto Allfather's† arms,
Wherfrom it came,—Oh! why in morning's gray,
Dost gather frowningly thy radiant brow?
In my veins as in thine the same blood flows;—
65 Of ancient Oden. Kinsman,‡ what wouldst thou?

* "The trembling bridge." It is also called asbru, "asa bridge," and guarded day and night by Heimdal, lest the giants, the enemies of the gods, should cross it into Asgard, and storm their sacred abode. It is the only route from earth to heaven, the link uniting men to gods,—a beautiful, iridescent, hope-inspiring arch, spanning Hela's dark gulf of tears and sighs." To us a covenant-token, it was to the Norsemen a peace-symbol and a hope-anchor.

† One of the 200 appellations of Oden.

‡ Balder, son of their common ancestor Oden.



I cannot offer thee my heart's best love,
Nor would I; it is worthy of thy heaven.
But I can offer my life's joy, indeed,
Can cast it from me as a queen lays off
70 Her mantle, yet remains, though unadorned,
The self-same queen. But my resolve is fixed!
Valhalla high shall never blush for me,
Its kindred; I will journey to my fate,
As moves toward his the hero.—Frithiof comes!
75 How wild, how pale! The die of fate is cast!
My angered norn* accompanies his step.
Be strong, my soul!—I welcome thee at last!
Our fate is settled, and upon thy brow
Stands graved the sentence.

FRITHIOF.

Stand not likewise there
80 The blood-red runes that clearly speak of shame,
Disdain and exile?

INGEBORG.

Frithiof, calm thyself!
Whate'er has happened, tell! the worst long since
Have I foreseen, and am prepared for all.

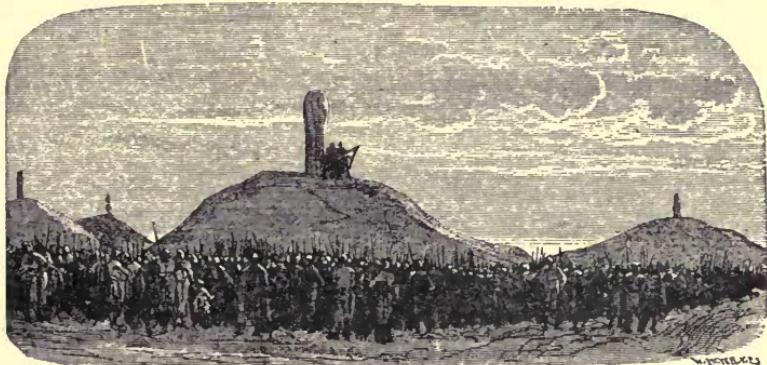
FRITHIOF.

Upon the barrow I the council met;†
85 And round the mound's green sides, with shield to shield,
And sword in hand, were ranged the Northland's men,
In circles, each within the other curved,
Unto the summit. On the judgment-stone
Thy brother Helge sat, a thunder-cloud,—
90 A pale-faced headsman with a darkening glance;
And by his side, a full-grown, comely child,

*The term is applied to personified fates in general; every person was presumed to have his norns.

†The Ting met upon the sepulchral mound of King Bele, as being the most consecrated of all spots.

Sat thoughtless Halfdan, playing with his sword.
Then stepped I forth and spoke: "Dread Warfare stands
And strikes his shield within our nation's bounds;
Thy land, King Helge, is by dangers pressed! 95
Give me thy sister, and I loan to thee
Mine arm in battle,—it can serve thee well.
Between us let all grudges be forgot!
Toward Ingeborg's brother I would hold no hate.
Be just, O King, and by one measure save 100
Thy crown of gold and thy dear sister's heart;
I give my hand. By Asa-Thor,* to thee
It ne'er again shall offered be for peace!"—



A murmur moved the Ting. A thousand swords
Approval sounded on a thousand shields.† 105
The weapon-clang resounded to the sky
Which joyous drank free men's applause for right.
"To him give Ingeborg, the lily slim,
The fairest ever grown within our dales;
He is the mightiest sword in all our land!

*The god Thor, Asa being a prefix. "Three valubles hath he: Mjölnir, the hammer, which frost-trolls and mountain-giants know; for the heads of many of their fathers and kinsmen hath he broken therewith; the second precious thing he hath is a right excellent Mæging-jard, or belt, and when he girdeth himself therewith, his asa-might is doubled to the half; but a third thing hath he which is exceedingly precious—his Jarn-glofar, or iron gloves; these he cannot miss, for to grasp the hammer-shaft withal."

STRONG.

†Their customary method of applauding, as also in ancient Scotland.

To him give Ingeborg!"—My foster-sire,
The aged Hilding, of the silver-beard,
Stood forth and uttered words of wisdom full,—
Brief, pithy words, like strokes of clanging blades;—

- 115 And very Halfdan from his regal seat
Arose with interceding words and glance.
All was in vain; each prayer sincere was lost,
Like sunshine squandered on a frigid rock,
Luring no vegetation from its heart.

- 120 And Helge's countenance remained unmoved,
A pale-faced "No" to every human prayer.
He spoke disdainful: "To a peasant's son
I might give Ingeborg; but who profanes
The temple, is unfit for Valhall's child!

- 125 Has thou not, Frithiof, broken Balder's peace?
Hast thou not seen my sister in his fane,
When, for your meeting, day itself had hid?
Speak yea or nay!" Resounded then a cry
From all the rings of men: "Say nay, say nay!

- 130 We trust thee on thy word, we sue for thee!
Thou, Thorsten's son, of equal worth with kings,
Say nay, say nay;—and Ingeborg is thine!"—
"My whole life's joy is hanging on one word,"
Said I, "but fear not that, O Helge, king.

- 135 I would not lie myself to Valhall's joy,
Nor e'en to earth's. Thy sister I have seen,
Have spoken with her in the temple's night,
But have thereby not broken Balder's peace."—*

- More speech was granted not. Abhorrent cries
140 Flew through the council. They who nearest stood
Drew back from me as from a pestilence;
When looked I round me, superstition dumb

* It was considered sacrilege for a man and woman to exchange a word in the sacred temple of Balder, or for a layman to enter at the hour of night.

Had paralyzed each tongue, and paled each cheek
So lately flushed with all-exultant hope.

Then triumphed Helge. With a voice as dark

145

And awful as the ghastly Vala's tones

In Vegtam's* song, when she for Oden sang

The asas' ruin and Hel's victory,—

So dismally he said: "Exile or death

I might decree, by our forefathers' laws,

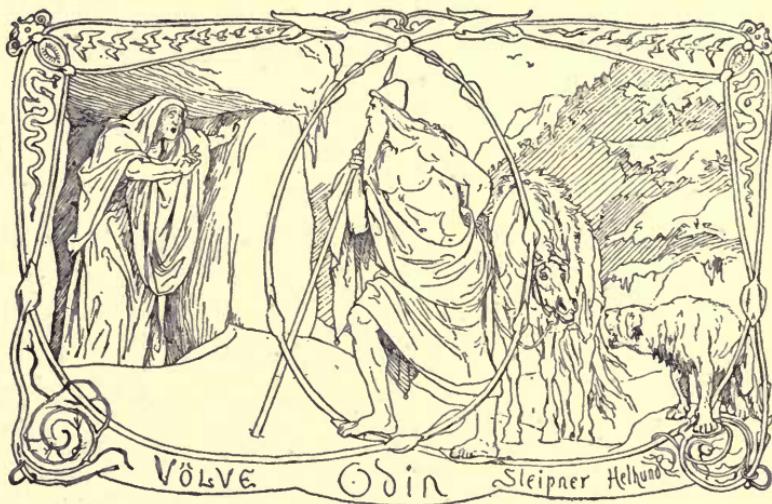
150

For thy misdeed; but I will lenient be,

As Balder is, whose house thou hast profaned.

The Western sea enfolds a wreath of isles,†

Whereof Jarl‡ Angantyr is governor.



So long as Bele lived, the Jarl to us

155

Each year paid tribute; since then he has failed.

*A name taken by Oden when he consulted the sybil, as set forth in Vegtam's Qvida, the eleventh lay of the older Icelandic Edda. Under the name Vegtam (wayfarer), Oden seeks the departed Vala in Hel, to inquire of Balder's fate, who had become dispirited through ominous dreams. The priestess is wroth at Oden's incantation and magic songs that have disturbed her sleep and drawn her from her snow-covered grave. Unwillingly she answers his inquiries, and predicts the death of Balder at the hand of his blind brother Höder. Discovering the identity of Oden, she angrily commands him to ride home and boast of his achievement. For never before has mortal or god presumed to disturb her repose, nor shall again before the day of the gods' destruction.

†The Orkneys, nearly 400 miles distant, in a S. W. direction. At this season of the year, this would be a long and perilous voyage.

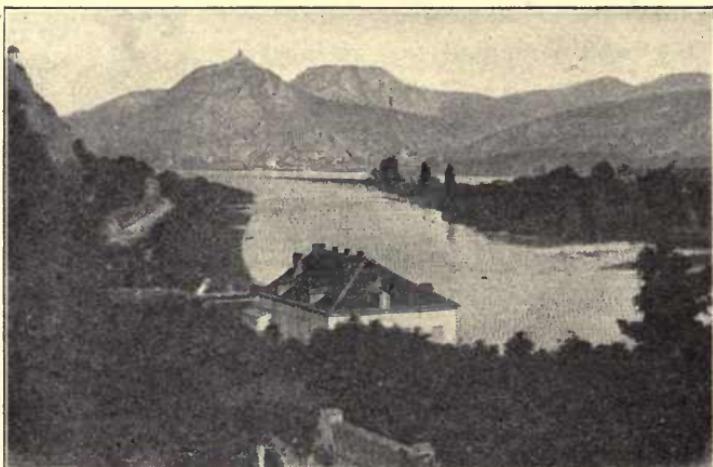
‡Earl.

Sail o'er the wave and bring this tribute home!*

This penalty I set for thine offense.

"Tis said," (he sneered in words of mean contempt),

"That Angantyr close-handed is, and pores



THE DRACHENFELS.

Like dragon Fafner^t o'er his gold; but who
Could match our modern Sigurd Fafnersbane?[‡]

And now a far more manly exploit seek
Than fascinating maids in Balder's grove!

Till summer's coming we shall wait for thee,
With all thy glory and the tribute-gold;
And fail'st thou, Frithiof, thou art each man's scorn,
And for thy life an outlaw in our land!"—

With this decree the council was dissolved.

*On Angantyr's first meeting with Bele and Thorsten, they came to pitched combat, and after a severe duel (both champions standing on one hide) they swore foster-brothership with each other, and were inseparable in their after-rovings. "The three conquered the Orkneys, over which Angantyr was given dominion, and for which he paid annual tribute."—SAGA OF THORSTEN.

^tEldest son of Hreidmar, a king of the dwarfs, to whom Oden, Loke and Hoenir gave the Nibelungen treasure of gold as indemnity for having slain his son Otter, brother of Fafner. The latter slew Hreidmar, bore away the gold, and assumed a dragon's form.

[‡]Sigurd slew Fafner, by awaiting, in a pit which he had dug, the passing over of the dragon, whose heart he pierced with the sword. Fafnersbaue=Fafner's slayer. "Our new Sigurd Fafnersbane," contemptuously for Frithiof. Sigurd is called Siegfried in the German mythology, forming the subject of Wagner's opera. The cave of the dragon still exists in the side of one of the seven neighboring mountains called "the seven sisters" near Königswinter on the east side of the Rhine. This mountain is called the Drachenfels (dragon's rock), of which is given a view from a picture there obtained by the translator.

And thy decision?

170

FRITHIOF.

Is there left a choice?

Is not mine honor bound by his decree?

I will unbind it, e'en though Angantyr
Conceal his paltry gold in Nastrand's* flood.

This day depart I.

INGEBORG.

And abandon me?

FRITHIOF.

Nay, leave thee never; thou attendest me.

INGEBORG.

Impossible!

175



NASTRAND, THE NORSEMAN'S HELL.

FRITHIOF.

Hear me, ere thou reply!

Thy subtle brother seems to have forgot

* The strand of corpses,—the abode of darkness and anguish in the nether world,—a horrible cavern beneath the infernal root of Yggdrasil. Its walls and ceiling are of intertwined serpents, whose heads turn into the cave, and out of whose mouths the poisonous venom ceaselessly flows. Through this slimy poison wade the wicked, whose terrible agony is portrayed by blood-dyed faces, flame-wrapped clothes, torn-out and hanging hearts, dragon-pierced bodies, stone-riveted hands. Barbarous and diabolical enough, this heathen conception of hell, but certainly not more so than that of the eternal fire.

- That Angantyr was both my father's friend
And Bele's also; he perchance may grant
With freedom what I ask; but should he not,
180 A strong persuader and a keen have I,
That at my left side hangs in loyalty.
To Helge will I send the dear-loved gold,
And thereby ransom from the offering-knife
Of that crowned hypocrite both you and me.
185 But we ourselves, fair Ingeborg, shall lift
Ellida's canvas over unknown seas;
And she will rock us to some friendly strand
That offers welcome to an exiled love.
What is to me the North? Or what, a race
190 That pallid grows at every priest's behest,—
And of its fairest rose would vilely rob
The inmost sanctuary of my heart?
By Freya, it shall nothing them avail!
The wretched slave is fettered to the turf
195 Where he first saw the light;—but I am free,—
Free as the mountain wind. A little dust
Seized from my father's and from Bele's grave,
Will find a place on ship-board; that is all
We e'er shall need of this our fosterland.
200 My loved one, there doth flame another sun
Than that which paleth o'er these cliffs of snow;
And there doth glow a fairer sky than this,
Whence mild-eyed stars, with glances more divine,
Look down serene in balmy summer nights
205 On laurel groves and lovers wandering there.
My father, Thorsten, Viking's son, afar
Encompassed land and wave, and oft described
By firelight in the long, long winter nights,
The Grecian sea and all the isles therein,



SIGURD SLAYING THE DRAGON.

From Old Norse Stories.
Copyright 1900, by
Sarah Powers Bradish

- 210 And green-clad forests in the crystal waves.*
A mighty race there dwelt in days of yore,
And sacred gods adorned the marble fanes.
Now stand they all deserted; verdure grows
In paths abandoned, and a flower oft springs
215 From runes[†] that speak the wisdom of the past;
And slender columns there are growing green,
Entwined by graceful tendrils of the South.
And all the year the fertile earth brings forth
Great unsown harvests for the needs of men;
220 There golden apples redder mid the leaves,
And ruddy grapes are loading every vine,
And swell as thine own lips luxurious.
There, Ingeborg, there build we in the sea
A little North, more beautiful than this;
225 And with our love all faithful we will fill
The lofty temple-vaults, and so delight
With human gladness the forgotten gods.
And when the sailor with his canvas lax,—
For storms ne'er flourish there—drifts by our isle
230 Neath twilight's painted sky, and joyous turns
His glance from rose-hued waters to the strand,—
Upon the temple's threshold he shall see
The second Freya—in the Grecian tongue
Called Aphrodite[‡]—and shall marvel then
235 To see her gold locks waving in the breeze,
Her eyes more lustrous than the Southern heaven;
And afterward, around her springeth up
A little progeny of temple-elves,
With cheeks where thou wouldest think the South had set
240 In Northern snow-drifts all his richest flowers.

* The Norsemen's expeditions frequently extended to Southern Europe, to the African coasts, and even to Asia; and were conducted with no compass whatever.

† Inscriptions carved on decaying temple walls and pillars.

‡ Identical with the Roman Venus was the Greek Aphrodite,—the goddess of love.

Ah, Ingeborg! How fair, how near, abides
All earthly joy to two devoted hearts!
If they the mood to seize it but possess,
It follows gladly, and builds up for them
A Vingolf* here already neath the clouds.
Come, haste thee! Every word we utter now
A moment stealeth from our happiness.
All is prepared; Ellida eager spreads
Her dusky eagle-pinions now for flight,
And morning winds inspiring show the way
Forever from this superstitious strand.
Why lingerest thou?

245

250

INGEBORG.

I cannot follow thee.[†]

FRITHIOF.

Not follow me?

INGEBORG.

Ah, Frithiof, blest art thou!

Thou followest none, but goest first thyself,
Like as the stem upon thy dragon-ship;
Thy will stands at the helm, and steers thy course
With sweryless hand across the angry seas.
How otherwise, alas! it is with me!
My fate in other hands than mine doth rest;
They ne'er release their prey, although it bleed.
To sacrifice all joy, lament and pine
In loneliness, is Bele's daughter's lot.

255

260

FRITHIOF.

Art thou not free whene'er thou wilt? Thy sire
The tomb enfolds.

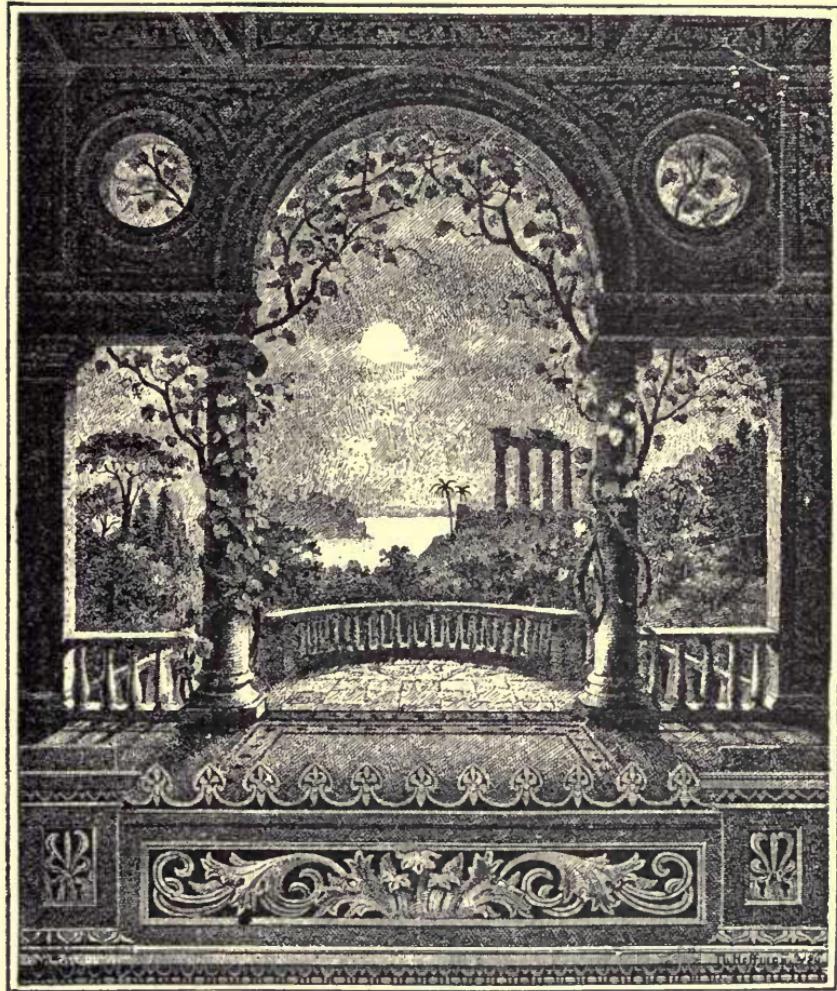
INGEBORG.

Ah, Helge is my sire,

*Vingolf, the "floor of friends," one of the mansions of Asgård, built by the asas, to which the Einheriar and all other good souls have access after the earthly life.

[†]The Swedish verb följa means also to accompany.

- 265 And holds my father's place; on his consent
Depends my hand; and Bele's daughter steals
Her rapture not, how near soe'er it lies.
Ah, what were woman, should she free herself
From every band wherewith Allfather binds
270 Her fragile being to the powerful?
She images the water-lily pale,
Rising and falling with the wave anon;
The sailor's keel across it onward sweeps,
Perceiving not that it has cut the stalk.
275 This is the lily's fate; but just as long
As in the sand its root remains secure,
The plant still has its worth, and borrows hue
Of its pale sisterhood of stars above,—
Itself a star upon the azure deep.
280 But be it broken loose, it drifts away
A withered leaf upon the desert wave.
Last night—the night indeed was terrible—
I waited long for thee; thou camest not,
And night's own children, grave and earnest thoughts,
285 With sable locks, went rushing ceaseless by
My wakeful eye that burned with unshed tears
Balder himself, the bloodless god, sent down
Upon me glances full of menacing.—
Last night I pondered long upon my fate,
290 And my resolve is fixed: I will remain
A duteous victim for my brother's shrine.
Yet it was well that thee I did not hear
Singing thy imaged islands mid the clouds
Where twilights ever lend their softened glow
295 To that lone blossom-world of peace and love.
Who knows how weak one is? My childhood's dreams,
That long were silent, now arise once more,



A GRECIAN TEMPLE.

And whisper in mine ear with voices sweet
And well remembered as a sister's tones,
300 And tender as a lover's murmured vows.
I hear you not, ah, no! I hear you not,
Enchanting voices once so dear to me!
What would a Northland child in Southern climes?
Too pallid were I for the roses there,
305 My mind too hueless for that summer glow;
I should be withered by that burning sun,
And, full of longing, turn anon mine eye
To this North star that never straying stands
A heavenly sentry o'er our fathers' graves.*
310 Nor shall my noble Frithiof now forsake
The dear land he was born to guard and save;
Nor shall he cast away his name and fame
For aught so trifling as a maiden's love.
A life wherein the sun, from year to year,
315 Spins each successive day like that before
(A fair but endless sameness), fitted seems
For woman only; but to souls of men,
To thine of all, life's calm were wearisome.
Thou thrivest best when tempests ride around
320 On foaming pacers o'er the raging deep,—
When on thy reeling plank, for life or death,
Thou fightest perils for thine honor's sake.
The beauteous solitude which thou dost paint
Would be a grave for exploits yet unborn;
325 And with thy rusting shield would also rust
Thy once unfettered mind. It shall not be!
I will not steal away my Frithiof's name
From songs of poets; neither will I quench

*As the North, star is within about one degree of the pole of the heavens, it of course appears motionless from whatever point it is viewed.

My hero's glory in its morning dawn.
Be wise, my Frithiof; to the lofty norns
Now let us yield, and from our shipwrecked lives
Let us at least our honor still preserve!
Our happiness no longer can be saved,
And we must part.

330

FRITHIOF.

And wherefore must we part?
For that a sleepless night untunes thy mind?

335

INGEBORG.

For that mine honor must be saved, and thine.

FRITHIOF.

A woman's honor rests upon man's love.

INGEBORG.

Not long he loves whom he no more respects.

FRITHIOF.

Respect is not by whims capricious won.

INGEBORG.

A worthy whim must be the sense of right.

340

FRITHIOF.

Our love warred not with duty yesterday.

INGEBORG.

Nor yet to-day, but all the more our flight.

FRITHIOF.

Necessity demands the latter,—come!

INGEBORG.

Whate'er is noble, is necessity.

FRITHIOF.

High rides the sun, the time is hastening by.

345

INGEBORG.

Ah! Woe is me, it is forever by!

FRITHIOF.

Consider well;—is this thy last decree?

INGEBORG.

I have considered well; it is my last.

FRITHIOF.

Well then, King Helge's sister, fare thee well!

INGEBORG.

- 350 O, Frithiof, Frithiof! Is it thus we part?
Hast thou not any friendly glance to give
Thy childhood's sweetheart, and no hand to reach
To the unhappy one thou once didst love?
Believest thou I stand on roses here,
355 And turn away with smiles my soul's delight,
And painless cast from my devoted breast
A hope that hand in hand grew with my life?
Ah! wert not thou my heart's bright morning dream?
Each joy e'er known to me was Frithiof called,
360 And all in life that great or worthy seemed
Took on thy countenance before mine eye.
O, darken not that image in my mind;
Nor coldly meet the weak one yielding up
All that was dearest in the round of earth,
365 All that will dearest be in Valhall's realm!
That sacrifice, O Frithiof, is enough,
And surely one consoling word deserves.
I know thou lovest me, have known it well
E'er since existence first began to dawn;
370 And surely will my memory follow thee
Through many a year wherever thou mayst roam.
But clang of warriors' arms doth grief benumb,—
Upon the wild waves it is blown away,
Nor dares to sit upon the champions' bench
375 Beside the drinking-horn of victory.
Yet now and then, when in the calm of night
Thy memory returns to vanished days,

Amidst them will an image pale appear;
Thou know'st it well; it bears thee greeting fond
From regions well beloved; it is the form

380

Of the pale maid in Balder's sacred grove.

Thou must not banish it away, although
Its look be sorrowful; but whisper thou
A friendly word into its ear; night-winds

On ever faithful wings will bear it me,—

385

One consolation,—I have none beside!

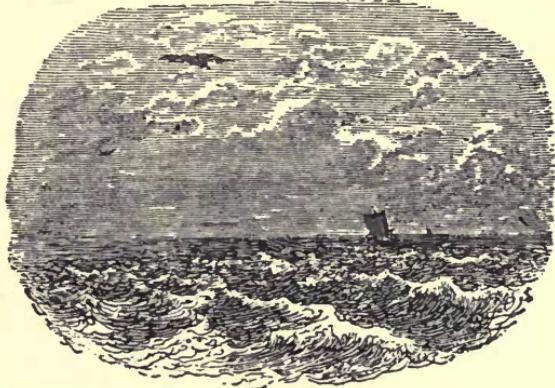
For me is naught that mitigates my woe;
Its voice in all things round me may be heard.

The lofty temple-vaults speak but of thee;

The god's* own face, which should be menacing,
Assumes thy features in the moon's pale light.

390

If o'er the sea I look, there plowed thy keel



Its foamy way toward loved one on the shore;
If toward the grove I gaze, stands many a trunk
With runes* of Ingeborg carved in the bark.

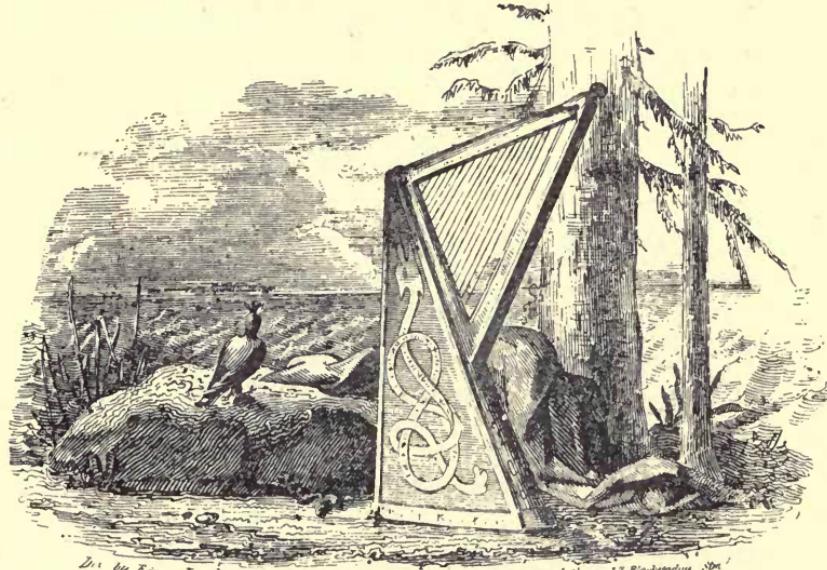
395

Now grows the bark, my name is worn away,—
And that, the saga says, foretokens death.
I ask the day where last he looked on thee,—

*A pine-carved statue of Balder stood outside the temple.

†Initials.

I ask the night,—but both are silent still;
 The sea itself, that bears thee, makes reply
 Alone with mournful sigh upon the strand.
 With evening's crimson will I send to thee
 A greeting when it darkens o'er thy waves;
 And heaven's long ships, the clouds, shall take on board
 405 A lamentation from the heart forlorn.
 So shall I sit within my maiden-bower,
 Dark-clad and widowed of my life's delight,
 And broken lilies sew upon the cloth,
 Until the spring-time weaves its tapestry
 410 Replete with fairer lilies o'er my grave.

*Dr. by Ryman. Illustration.**Lith. by T. Blackwood & Son.**For Mrs. F. W. Wetherell.*

INGEBORG'S HARP.

But when I take my harp in hand to sing
 In somber tones of my unending grief,
 Will burst the font of tears that now—

FRITHIOF.

Thou conquerest, Bele's daughter, grieve no more!
 Forgive mine answer! It was but my woe

That for a moment took the form of wrath;
This form it cannot long prevail to bear.
Thou art my norn propitious, Ingeborg;
A noble mind best teaches what is best.

The wisdom of necessity can have 420
No better, truer advocate than thou,—
Thou, fairest vala, with the rosy lips!
Yea, I will yield me to necessity,
From thee will part, but never from my hope;

I bear it with me o'er the Western wave, 425
I bear it with me to the gates of death.
The earliest spring shall find me here again;
King Helge shall behold me yet once more.
I shall have kept my vow, done his demand,

Likewise atoned the offense upon me laid. 430
Then will I ask, nay, then demand thy hand,
In open council, mid the gleaming arms,
Not of king Helge, but the Northland's state;—
That is thy guardian, O royal child!

I have a word for him who yields thee not. 435
Till then, farewell; be true, forget not me,
And take, in memory of our childhood's love,
My arm-ring here, a beauteous Vaulund work,*
With heaven's wonders all engraved in gold;

(The best of wonders is a constant heart);— 440
How fitting gleams it on thy snow-white arm,
A glow-worm twined around the lily's stem!
Farewell, my bride, beloved one, farewell!
A few short months a mighty change will yield.

(He departs.)

INGEBORG.

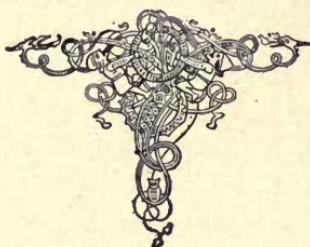
How glad, how daring, how inspired with hope!

445

*See pp. 70 and 71. Vaulund's works outnumbered those of any other artisan. Among them was the sword of Sigurd Fafuersbane that dealt swift death to the dragon.

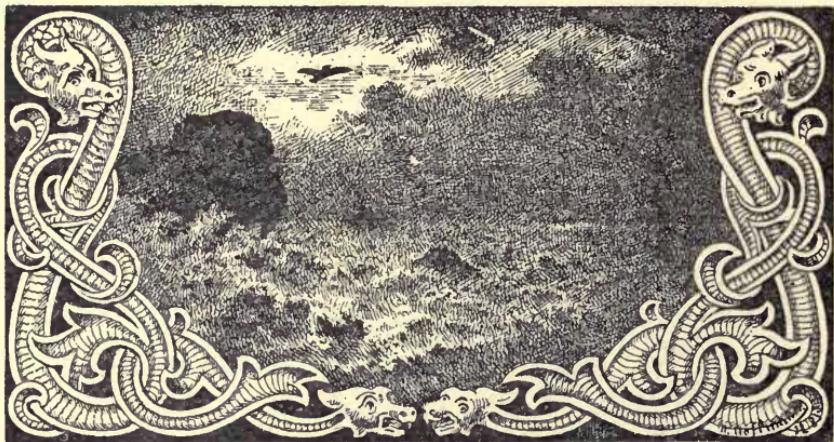
- Against the breast of norn he sets the point
Of his good sword, commanding: "Thou shalt yield!"
Oh, my poor Frithiof, never yields the norn,
Nor turns she, but at Angurvadel laughs.*
- 450 How little knowest thou my brother dark!
Thy frank, heroic spirit fathoms not
The hidden depths of his, nor apprehends
The hate that burns within his envious heart.
His sister's hand he ne'er to thee will give;
- 455 Nay, rather would he yield his crown and life,
And sacrifice me on old Oden's shrine,
Or give me to old Ring whom now he fights!
Where'er I look, no hope for me is found;
Yet am I glad hope dwells within thy breast.
- 460 I'll hold my sorrow in my secret heart,
But may the good gods ever thee attend!
Here on thine arm-ring may be counted up
Each separate month of long protracted woe:
In two, four, six,—then thou mayst come again,
- 465 But nevermore wilt find thine Ingeborg.

* "No one lives till eve against the norns' decree."—THE LAY OF HAMDER.





VIEW IN NAPROFJORDEN, SOGNE



Canto Ninth.

Ingeborg watches the vanishing sail of Ellida, bearing Frithiof far over the tempestuous Autumn waves, until it disappears in the evening West, and the stars look forth on high. No ray of light falls upon her soul.

Her lover is gone; and from a heart worn with long-suppressed anguish, she pours out this lamentation of hopelessness, and tells to Frithiof's pet hawk, which has perched upon her shoulder, the message to be whispered to the wanderer on his return, after she herself can see him no more. And the hawk (Canto x) executes her command.

Not more desolate is the night song of Colma, upon the hill of storms, when she finds on the heath the forms of her brother and of her lover, Salgar, who have slain each other. "I sit in my grief; I wait for morning in my tears! Rear 'the tomb, ye friends of the dead. Close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream; why should I stay behind? Here shall I rest with my friends by the stream of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill; when the loud winds arise; my ghost shall stand in the blast, and mourn the death of my friends." It is Ossian who has spoken.

The sorrowing surges sounding upon the strand make fitting harmony for Ingeborg's despair. Both come in fitful dashes, in longer and shorter undulations, as pictured by the great poet in the dash of the unusual meter. In the pause necessitated by the rhythm at the end of each short line, there is the repose of despair.





IX.

Ingeborg's Lamentation.

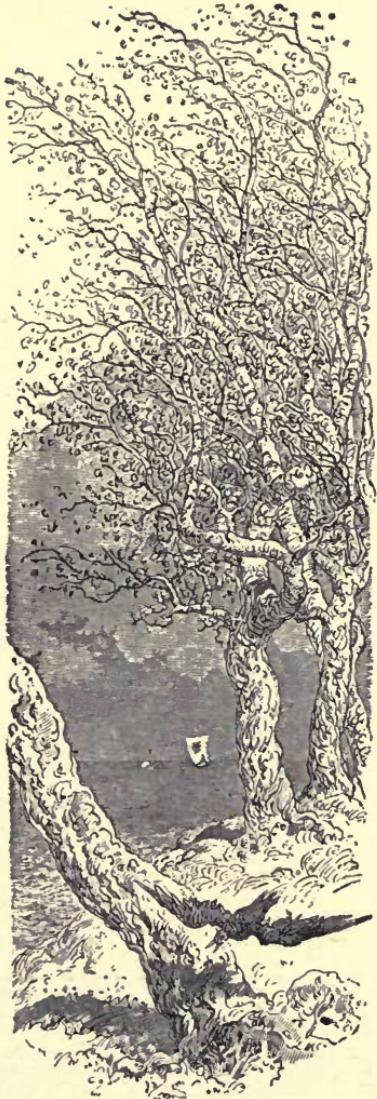
Autumn is here !

Wild heaves the bosom of ocean so drear !

Ah ! better far were my pillow

Out on yon pillow !





Long did I gaze
After his sail in the
eventide's rays;
Ah! Blest the bark by
whose motion
He rides the ocean!

Billows, ye blue, 3
Swell not so high! Would ye
swifter he flew?
Stars, o'er the sailor gleam
brightly,
Guiding him nightly.

At Springtime's call 4
He will return; but in dale
or in hall
Ne'er may his loving one
meet him,
Eager to greet him.

Pallid and cold, 5
Lies she of love in the
sepulcher's mould;
Or, doomed by brothers
to languish,
Droops she in anguish.

Hawk, Frithiof's own,* 6
Thou shalt be mine; I will love thee so lone;
I, winged hunter, will feed thee
For him who freed thee.

* Three faithful friends of Frithiof also dwelt at Framnäs,—his white hawk, his white steed and his shaggy hound.

Here, on his hand,*
 Thee will I weave in the tapestry's strand,—
 Pinions of silver will furnish,
 Golden claws burnish.



FREYA AND THE DWARFS.

Freya, one time,
 With a hawk's wings toured each country and clime,
 Seeking, neath all heaven's cover,
 Öder,[†] her lover.

^{*}"The ancient English illuminators have uniformly distinguished the portrait of King Stephen by giving him a hawk upon his hand, to signify, I presume, by that symbol, that he was nobly though not royally born."—STRUTT.

[†]Freya wears always the gorgeous necklace Brisingamen, wrought by four of the most skillful dwarfs in their subterranean work-shop, and containing the most rare and costly jewels of the earth, dazzling to the eye, and glittering as the sun.

For this wonderful jewel the dwarfs required and received only the favor of the goddess; but stirred by jealousy, Oder (or Oedur), Freya's husband, left her and went to far-off lands.

She wept continually tear-drops of pure gold, so that gold was called "Freya's tears." All the trees moaned and the flowers wept with her. The long winter passed in loneliness and grief. When spring came, she assumed the falcon's wings, flew over many lands, and finally found her lover in the clime where bloom the cypress and myrtle.

Her tears and her long journey seemed to re-inspire his love. He returned with her to their Northern home, where the birds sang choruses of welcome. With all her devotion Freya endeavored to hold the heart of Oder; but when the summer was over, he departed again to distant lands, never to return.

"Oder, the spouse of Freya, is merely another name for Oden, in his character of the sun. This most beautiful allegory expresses the yearning and sorrow of Nature over the departed Sun:—the very color of her tears supplying an allusion to the golden ray."

—GEIGER.

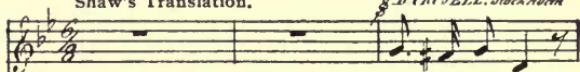
Ingeborg's Lamentation.

Mus. slightly altered by G.S. from

Shaw's Translation.

G.B. CRISTELL, Stockholm

Voice.



Au - tumn is here!

Piano.



Wild heaves the bo - som of o cean so drear! Ah! Sweet-er far were my



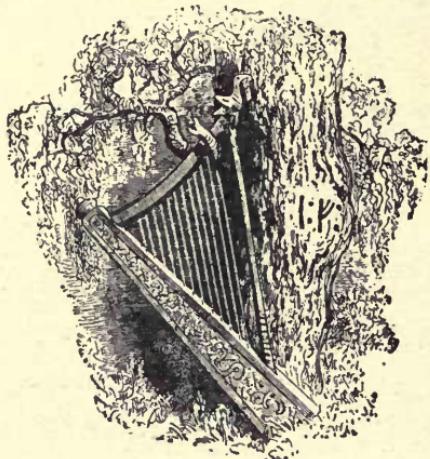
pil - low Out on yon bil - low!



9 Ah! Couldst thou lend
Thy wings, with them could no mortal ascend;
Death alone power shall be bringing
For ceaseless winging.

10 Hunter-bird brave,
Sit on my shoulder and look o'er the waye!
Ah! Faint we, gazing and yearning,
Ere his returning.

11 When I am dead,
And he returns, speak the words I have said;
Greet, at each coming to-morrow,
Frithiof in sorrow!





INGEBORG BY THE SEA.



Canto Tenth.

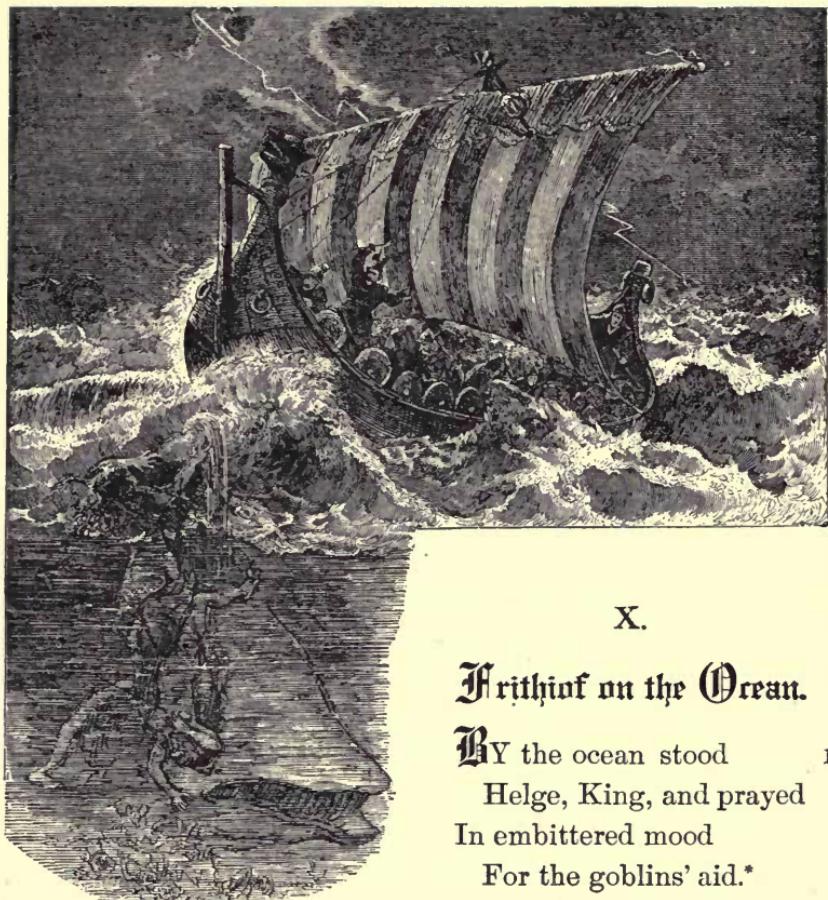
Although Helge had no thought of Frithiof's being able to exact the tribute-money from Angantyr, he still had no intention to allow this long voyage ever to be completed. Hence he death-designedly invokes the aid of two sorceresses, as thus narrated in the ancient Saga: "After this, they (Helge and Halfdan) sent for two witches, Heide and Hamglamu, and gave them presents that they should send such a horrible tempest against Frithiof and his followers, that they should all perish in the sea. The hags accordingly practiced all their witchcraft, and went up to a high place with many imprecations and incantations. When witches should spae mysteries or imprecate curses on their enemies, a lofty Sitting-place was constructed, of which they took possession with many magical ceremonies."

A tempest of unparalleled fury, falling upon the ship, threatens instant destruction. Frithiof, perceiving death is on board, even breaks in pieces a golden bracelet and distributes among his champions, that none may go down empty-handed to the else unpropitiated sea-goddess Rana.

But the almost human Ellida, responsive to her master's command, rearing drives the lances of her prow into the heart of the demon-whale, and Frithiof's javelins pierce the horrible goblins whose forms the Protean witches had assumed for the perturbation both of air and of ocean; and instantly the spell is dissolved, the sun reappears; and though exhausted and undone, the sailors finally reach the haven of Angantyr's dominions.

The roll of the awful undulations, the fitful breaking of waves over the lurching vessel, and the "downfall of the sky" as Virgil might term it, the poet has here portrayed by the varied meter, with the skill and felicity of the bard of Mantua.





X.

Frithiof on the Ocean.

BY the ocean stood 1
Helge, King, and prayed
In embittered mood
For the goblins' aid.*

*The belief in sorcery was then very general. Brynhild thus speaks to Sigurd:

"Would the chief in arms excel,
Runes of conquest read thou well,
Graven on thy gauntlet's hide,
On the hilt that girds thy side.
On thy war-spear's bristled oak,
Twice the mighty Tyr invoke."

Sir Thomas Brown, at a trial for witchcraft in 1664, testified against two poor women. Sir Matthew Hale condemned supposed criminals to be burned at the stake for this cause. Mackay states that in the seventeenth century 40,000 persons were burned in England alone for this imaginary crime. Thorodd, in the Eyrbyggja Saga of ancient Iceland, through jealousy employed a sorceress to stir up a mighty tempest to destroy Biorn on his way to visit Thurida.

"By changing forms with her, a sorceress occupied for three days the place of Signy, the wife of Siggeir, king of Gothland.—VOLSUNGA SAGA.

"Oden was the inventor of the runes, and was skilled in their employment for the working of magic. The runic characters were distinguished in various kinds: as noxious, or bitter runes, employed to bring evils upon enemies; the favorable averted misfortunes; the victorious procured conquest to those who used them; the medicinal were inscribed on the leaves of trees for healing; others served to disperse melancholy thoughts; to prevent shipwreck; were antidotes against poison, * * * * All these various kinds differed only in the ceremonies observed in writing them, in the materials on which they were written, in the place where they were exposed, in the manner in which the lines were drawn, whether in the form of a circle, serpent or triangle, etc."—NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES.

In 1692, nineteen persons were hanged for witchcraft in Salem, Mass.

2 Heaven its head in darkness pillows,—
 Thunders shake the hollow dome!
 O'er the ocean boil the billows,
 And its face is veiled with foam!
 Lightnings through the skies are streaming
 With their red lines, o'er and o'er;
 All the sea-birds wildly screaming,
 Swiftly fleeing, seek the shore.

3 “Fierce the weather, brothers!*
 Pinions of the tempest
 Flutter in the distance,
 But we grow not pale.
 Silent in the forest,
 Think of me with longing,—
 Beauteous with thy tear-drops,
 Beauteous Ingeborg.”

4 On Ellida's stem
 Two imps warfare made;
 One was wind-cold Ham,—†
 One was snow-white Hejd †

5 Loosed, the wings of tempest lowering
 Strive the vessel to immerge
 In the deep,—or overpowering,
 Toward the home of gods to urge.
 All the powers of ill are gliding
 O'er the foamy billows' crest,
 From unfathomed graves up-riding
 Neath the shoreless ocean's breast.

*Frithiof keeps singing cheery strains, to sustain the courage of his men.

†The names of the goblins, whose assistance Helge had invoked against Frithiof. The word “Ham” signifies form, figure,—and the witches and trolls possessed the Protean power in a high degree. The name “Hejd” is often applied to enchantresses in general.

6

“Fairer was the voyage
In the moonlight’s shimmer
O’er the mirrored waters
Unto Balder’s grove.
Warmer than the tempest
Ingeborg’s affection;
Whiter than the sea-spray
Heaved her bosom fair.”

7

Now Solundar’s isle*
Through the wave grows clear;
Calmer seas there smile,—
To its haven steer!

8

But the viking, seaward rocking,
Better trusts his faithful oak;
At the rudder stands he, mocking
All the threatening tempest’s shock.
Firmer he the canvas fastens,
Sharper now he cuts the sea; .
Swiftly hastens, westward hastens,
Where the winds bear ceaselessly.

9

“Let me yet a season
Strive against the tempest;
Storm and Northern sailor
Thrive upon the wave.
Ingeborg would color,
If her ocean-eagle
With slack wings should flutter
Landward at a blast.”

*One of a group of small islands opposite the mouth of Sogne Fjord, of which the two extreme ones are Ytre Sulen and Indre Sulen (Outer and Inner Sulen), and which have mountains of about 1800 feet in height. These islands break the force of the ocean storms, and with the mainland enclose the little sea of Sogn. See map of Norway.

10

Now the waves have grown,
 Troughs are deepening still;
 Winds in cordage moan,
 Creaks the lurching keel.

11

Yet however wild may wrestle
 Driving or retarding waves
 O'er Ellida, god-built vessel,
 She their threatening onset braves.
 As a meteor that nightly
 Sweepeth, bounds she on in bliss,—
 Like a mountain-buck that lightly
 Leapeth crag and deep abyss.



Paint by J. G. Meijer.

BALDER'S STRAND.

Ellida by J. H. Kochleder.

12

“Better was it kissing
 Bride in Balder's temple,
 Than this salt-foam tasting
 As anon it drives!

Better was it clasping
Waist of royal daughter,
Than to stand here clutching
Fast this rudder-bar!"

Mist, by cold congealed,
Snows from icy sky;
Striking deck and shield,
Showers of hail-stones fly.

O'er the vessel's spars and timber
Broods impenetrable night;
It is dark as is the chamber
Where the dead is laid from sight.
Waves appeaseless, demon-lifted,
Threaten death to seamen brave;
Gray-white, as with ashes sifted,
Yawns one vast, unbounded grave!

"Rana* lays blue pillows
For us in the ocean;
But thy sweeter lulling
Waits me, Ingeborg.
Boatmen good are plying
Oars of strong Ellida;
Keel that gods have builded
Bears us yet awhile."

O'er the starboard side
Now a billow leaps;—
In a glance, the tide
Clear the ship's deck sweeps.

*The ocean is "Ran's palace;" a ship, "Ran's horse." She has a net in which she catches all who perish on the sea.

17

From the arm it was adorning
Frithiof draws a golden ring,
Bright as sun in dews of morning,—
Gift to him from Bele, King;—
Breaks the ring in many pieces
(By the dwarfs' art was it wrought),
Gives each man a piece, nor ceases
To the last, no man forgot.



ÄGIR AND RANA.

18

"Gold is good possession
On a wooing journey;
Go not empty-handed
Down to sea-blue Ran.*
Turns she cold from kisses,
Flies from all embraces;
But we win the sea-bride
With our burning gold."

* "It was not well to come empty-handed to the halls of Ran and Ägir."—ANDERSON.
In their halls gold was substituted for fire.

Menacing anew, 19

Falls the tempest hard,
Bursts the canvas through,
Snaps in twain the yard.

Coursing on with mighty motion, 20

Billows whelm the half-drowned ship;
Baling lessens not the ocean
That the strenuous sailors dip.
Frithiof can ignore no longer
That he beareth death on board.
Yet than billows' voices stronger
Soundeth his commanding word:

"Bjorn, attend the rudder,— 21

Grasp it with a bear's paw!*"
Such commotion never
Sends Valhalla down!
Witchcraft rules our voyage;
Craven Helge doubtless
Conjured it o'er ocean;—
Swift I'll mount, and see!"

Marten-like he flew† 22

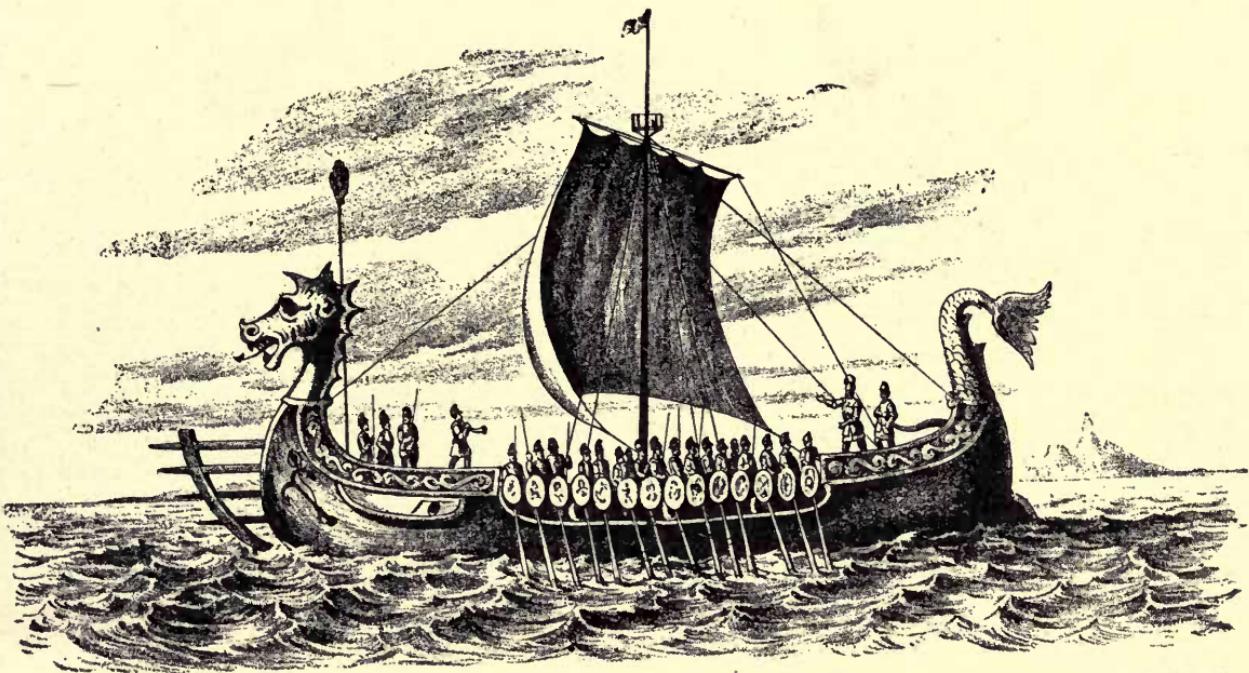
Up the sail-less mast,—
Far above the crew
Gazed o'er waters vast.

Look! Before Ellida, gliding 23

Like a floating isle, a whale,—
And two odious goblins riding
On his back in furious gale:—

*A pun. Björn is the Swedish for "bear."

† Buffon says the pine-marten usurps the nests of the wood-pecker, squirrel and buzzard.



Hansen & Son, Elgin, Ill.

DRAGON SHIP OF THE VIKING PERIOD.

Hejd a snowy hide betrayeth,
Like a Northern bear in form;—
Ham his waving wings displayeth,
Like an eagle in a storm.

"Now, Ellida, hear me!
Show if in thy steel-bound
Rounded oaken bosom
Burns the hero-fire!
To my mandate harken:
If of gods the daughter,
Rise! With keel of copper
Pierce the spell-charmed whale!"

24

And Ellida hears
Frithiof's will expressed;—
With a bound she steers
Toward the monster's breast.*

25

Quick a crimson current driveth
From a death-wound, skyward thrown;
And the transfix'd fiend now diveth
To the sea-depths with a groan.
Now two spears the hero centers,—
At each goblin aims a dart;
One the Ice-bear's[†] bosom enters,
One, the black Storm-eagle's[‡] heart.

26

"Well achieved, Ellida!
Not so soon emerges
Dragon-ship of Helge
From the bloody mire!"

27

*Bear in mind that Ellida was gifted with the unshiplike power of understanding and executing every order given by her master.

Heid. Ham.

Hejd and Ham no longer
Dominate the ocean;
Bitter is the biting
Of the dark-blue steel."

28

Now the storm has flown,
Sea and sky are clear;
And the swell alone
Laves the island near.

29

Quick the sun unveiled now treadeth
Like a monarch in his hall;
And his light and gladness spreadeth
Over sea, hill, valley, all.
Now his Western rays declining
Have both crag and forest crowned,—
And the sailors by his shining
See the shores of Efje Sound.*

30

"Ingeborg, pale maiden,
Prayers hath sent to Valhall;
On the golden altar
She hath bent the knee.
Tears in eyes of azure,
Sighs in breast of swan's-down,
Moved the hearts of asas;—
Let us give them thanks!"

31

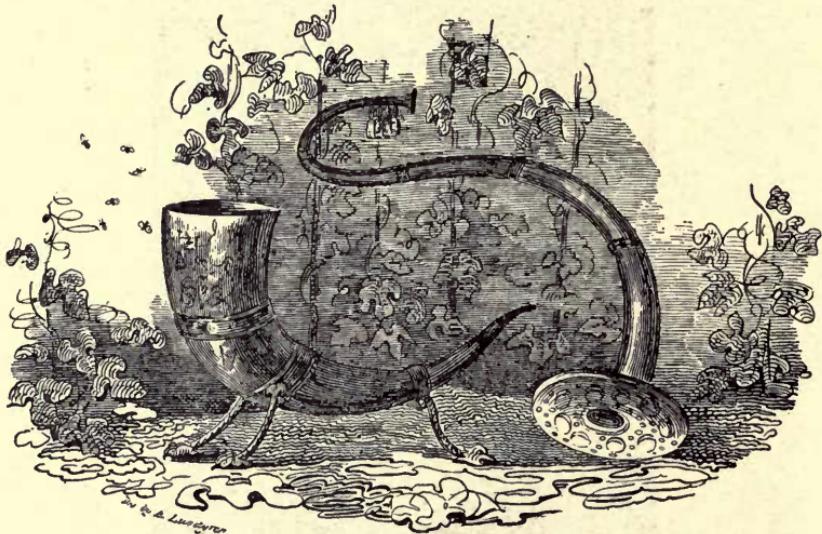
But Ellida's prow,
Injured by the whale,
Is reposing now,
Worn by furious gale.

*At the Orkney Islands. These islands long belonged to Scandinavia. "They were a favorite resort with sea-rovers, who found there a secure rendezvous during the innavigable season."—STRONG.



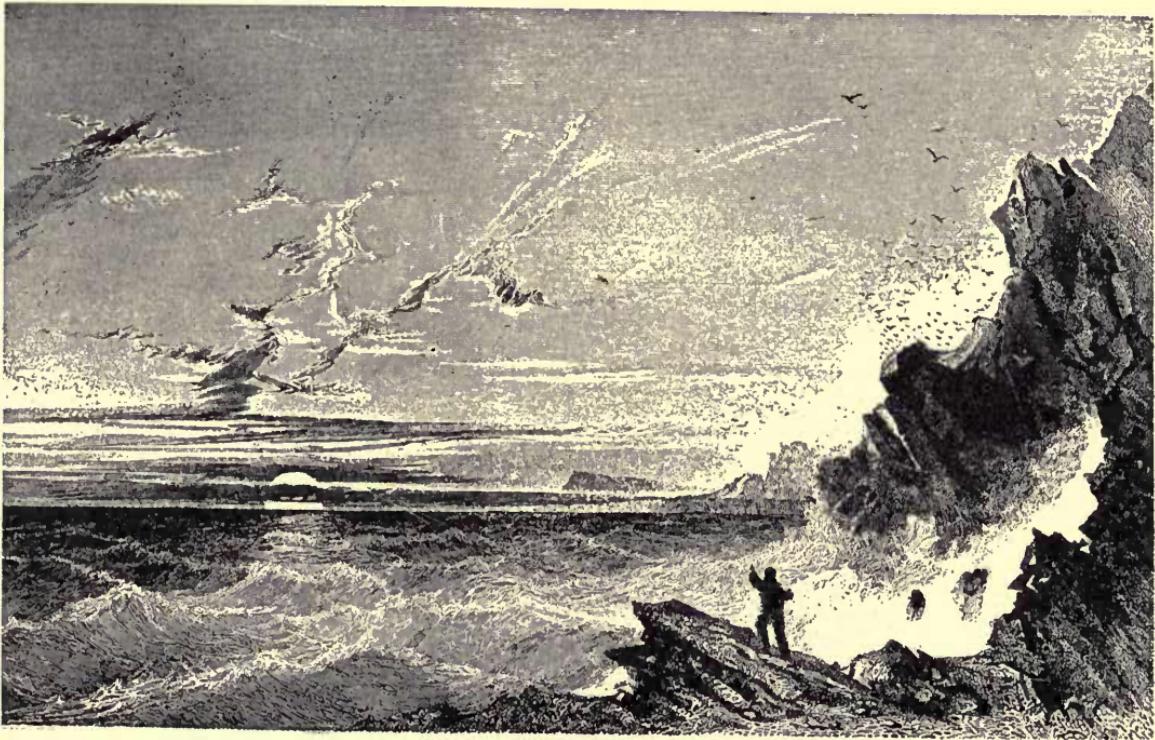
THE SHORE OF EFJE SOUND.

Yet more worn, from storm and water,
 Frithiof's men the shore have gained;
 And they move with steps that totter,
 Scarcely by their swords sustained.
 Björn on mighty shoulders beareth
 Four of them from boat to land;
 Frithiof eight to carry dareth,—
 Sets them round a glowing brand.



SCANDINAVIAN MEAD-HORN AND LUR (TRUMPET).

“Blush ye not, O pale ones!
 Waves are mighty vikings;
 Hard it is to battle
 With the ocean’s maids.
 Lo! There comes the mead-horn,
 Borne on footsteps golden;
 Frozen limbs it warmeth,—
 Skoal to Ingeborg!”



THE ORKNEYS.



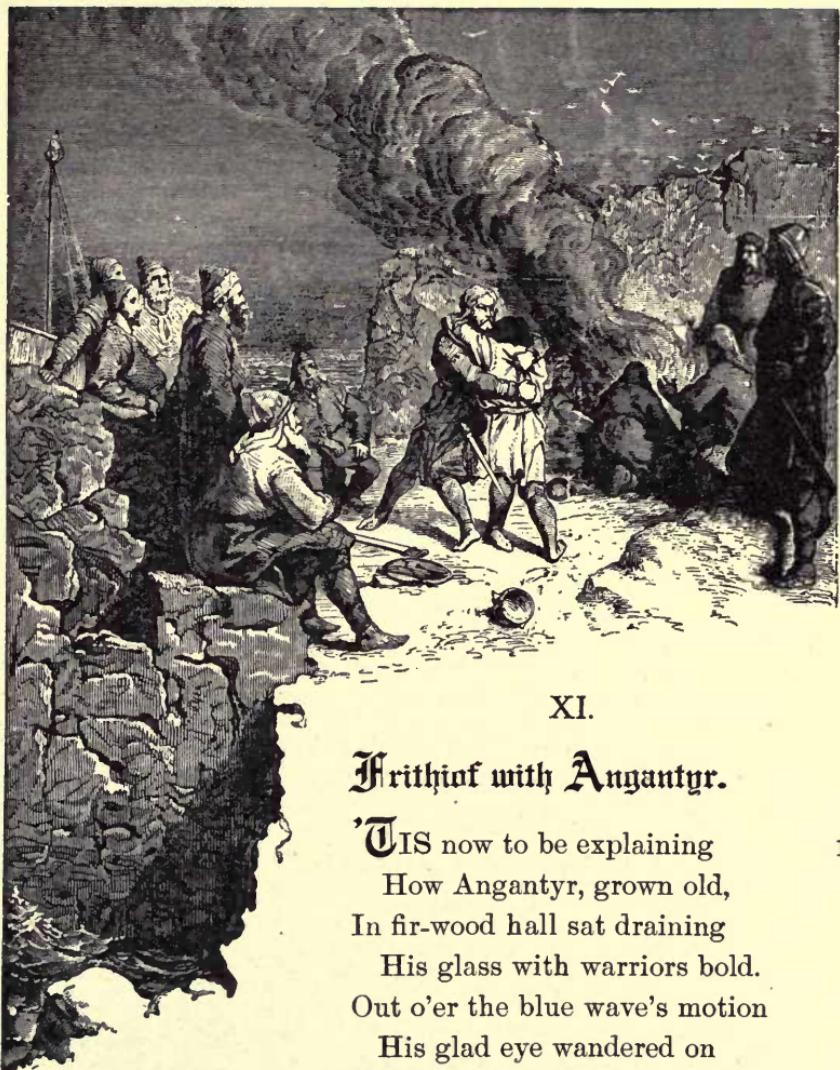
Canto Eleventh.

But Atle (viking and berserk), brutally challenges Frithiof's further advance toward Angantyr's court, and there ensues a battle "known through all the Northland," in which the valiant Frithiof is both victorious and merciful. The foe is spared.

Friendly they pass to the hall, where Earl Angantyr, friend of Frithiof's father, gives the son a sincere and royal welcome, with banquet and the strains of Morven bard and Northern skald. Then says Angantyr: "I have never paid tribute; but for the help which Thorsten and Bele rendered me when I needed it, it was my custom to send them annually a gift from my treasury. Thou, Frithiof, the son, art entitled to a like gift." So what might have been an enforced demand became a voluntary gift; for Angantyr gave him a purse filled with gold, and extended the luxurious hospitality of his court to Frithiof and his champions, bidding them winter with him as guests.

Frithiof was eager to return. He must fly back to Norway, justified, in time to vanquish King Ring, and claim his faithful bride! But Ellida must be repaired, so fierce had been the tempests; great icebergs from the Arctic also made his return perilous, yea, impossible. His acceptance of the Jarl's invitation thus was necessitated. Frithiof's heart was far away. Dark forebodings hung over him. Yet he endeavored to pass this enforced visit in what mental quietude was possible, suppressing the anguish of restlessness that refused to be banished; and all the long winter Frithiof and his comrades remained guests of the friendly Angantyr.





XI.

Frithiof with Angantyr.

'TIS now to be explaining
How Angantyr, grown old,
In fir-wood hall sat draining
His glass with warriors bold.
Out o'er the blue wave's motion
His glad eye wandered on
Where dipped the sun in ocean,
As dips a golden swan!

1

His watch old Halvar keepeth,
A faithful sentinel;
He ne'er from duty sleepeth,
But guards his mead as well.

2

A custom never broken
Was his: his mead he quaffed,
And, ere a word was spoken,
Dipped up another draught.

3 Tossing his mead horn yellow
 Far in the hall, he said:
“A ship rides o'er the billow,
 Its voyage is not glad!
Behold I men death-wearied,
 They anchor on the strand;
Two giants now have carried
 The pale forms to the land!”

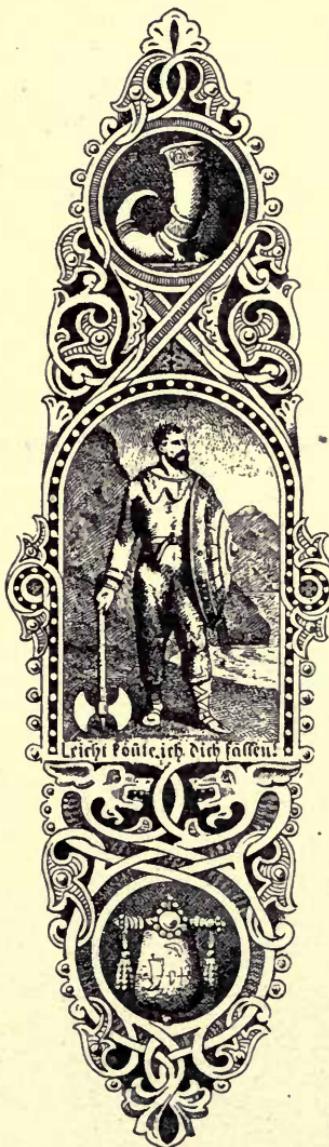
4 Then o'er the water's mirror
 Jarl* Angantyr looked forth:
“Ellida ne'er showed clearer,
 With Frithiof of the North.
The step and brow of father
 In Thorsten's son I see;
For glanceth not another
 In Northern lands as he.”

5 From drinking-board, all ruddy
 Sprang Atle, Viking-son,
Black-bearded berserk,[†] bloody
 And grim to look upon.

*Earl. For Angantyr's history, see note, Canto viii, p. 130.

[†]An unarmored champion, who went to battle with loud war-cries, "said to have been possessed of preternatural strength and extreme ferocity." The berserk (or berserker) was the embodiment of martial frenzy, frequently losing all sense of danger. This frenzy was sometimes assumed, and sometimes, perhaps more frequently, manifested itself as genuine madness. Then in fury uncontrolled he would attack indiscriminately friend or foe, objects animate or inanimate; and even chains, as Saxo Grammaticus states, could scarcely restrain him.

In the *Ynglinga Saga*, we read: "His (Oden's) men rushed forward without mail, and were mad as dogs or wolves, and bit upon their shields, and were as strong as bears or bulls. Men they slew, and neither fire nor iron laid hold upon them."



“Not long shall it be hidden,”
He shrieked, “if it be true
That Frithiof swords can deaden,
And ne’er for peace will sue!”

With Atle, who advances, 6

His warriors twelve spring fierce;
Swinging their swords and lances,
The air they proving pierce;
They storm the strand, united,
Where lies the dragon worn;
But Frithiof, ne’er affrighted,
Sits on the sand in scorn.

“Though easy I could fell thee,” 7

Was Atle’s boastful cry,
“The choice is thine, I tell thee,
To battle or to fly!
But if for peace thou pleadest,
Then I, though warrior hard,
Will, as the friend thou needest,
Conduct thee to my lord.”

“Though wearied by my journey,” 8

Doth Frithiof wrathful say,
“We still with swords will tourney,
Ere I for peace shall pray.”
The flashing steel now showeth
Of sun-brown champion young;—
Each fiery rune now gloweth
On Angurvadel’s tongue!†

*“It should be recollect that if runic spells were called in to blunt the edge of the sword, sorcery had been previously employed to impart to the blade an unearthly temper.”—STRONG.

†As always when employed in combat.

9

Alternate thrusts are given,—
 Death-strokes like hail-stones blend!
 The shields of both are riven,
 And to the ground descend.
 Each champion faultless fighteth,
 Beyond the ring ne'er sent;
 But Angurvadel biteth,
 And Atle's sword is rent.

10

"Of fame I scorn such measure
 As slays a swordless man;
 But if it be thy pleasure,
 Prove we another plan."
 Like autumn waves contended
 The wrestling foes unarmed,
 By mail-coats well defended,
 To close-hand combat warmed.

11

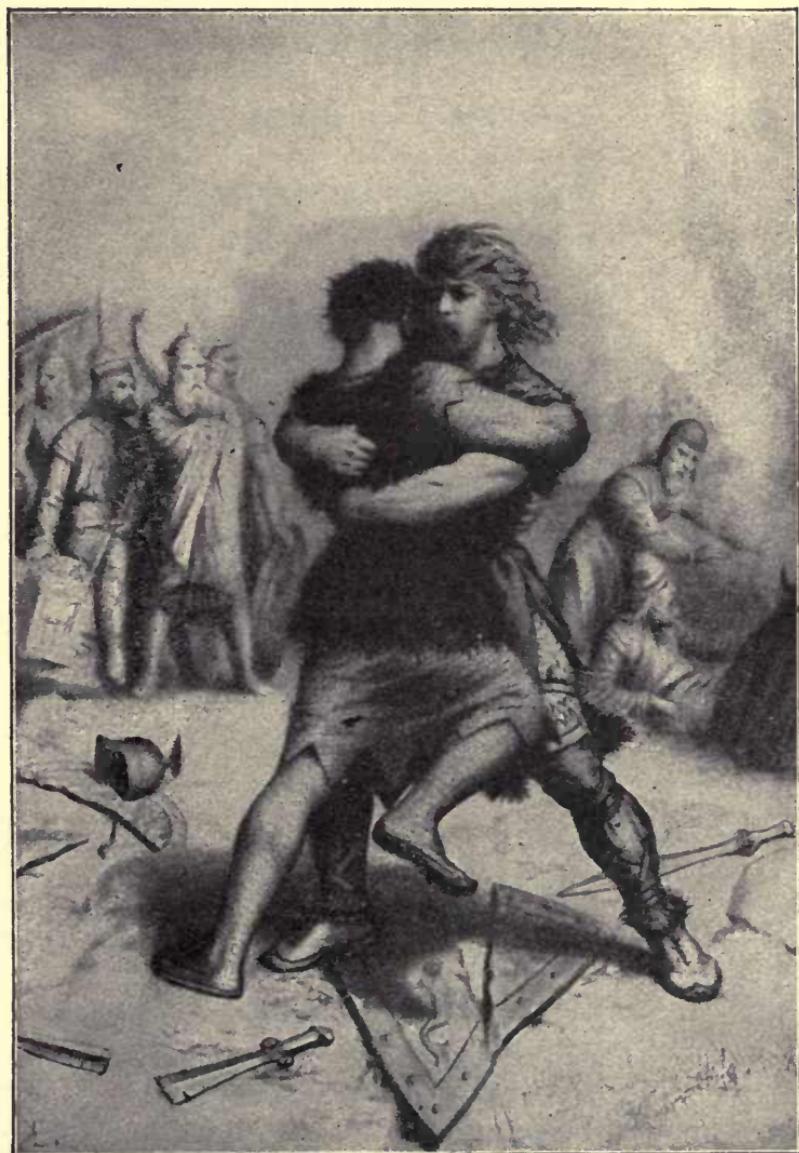
Like bears upon their mountain
 Of snow, they strive with might;
 Like eagles o'er the fountain
 Of wrathful seas, they fight.
 Such mighty onset shaking
 Should move the root-fast rock;
 And e'en the iron-oak quaking
 Would sway at lesser shock.

12

Sweat from their brows now rushes,
 Their cold chests rise and fall;
 And stones and mounds and bushes
 Bear marks of combat all.*

* "Subsequently the name berserk (or berserker) seems to have been applied to famous champions retained as body-guard to the sovereign."

In process of civilization, the word, once a title of honor, became, as it is employed by Frithiof, a term of reproach."—STRONG.



The champions all, steel-coated,
Watch trembling, on the strand,
This wrestling contest noted
Through all the Northern land.

13

To Frithiof it was granted
To bring his foe to earth;
With knee on breast then planted,
He poured his anger forth:
“Had I my sword beside me,
Black-bearded berserk-swain,*
Its keen blade should divide thee,
And out thy life-blood drain!”

14

“Let nothing then deter thee!”
Doth haughty Atle say,
“Go bring thy sword so worthy,—
No power thy hand shall stay!
Each one must, as his brother,
One day Valhalla see;
My day is now,—another
May be allowed to thee.”

15

Frithiof not long debated,
Prepared to end the play;
His sword he elevated,—
But Atle quiet lay.
The hero’s heart was bending,—
His fury could not stand;
He turned the blade impending,
And grasped the brave man’s hand!

* “The Berserks were the natural excrescence-growth of a period when force and fight, blood and brutality, were the melancholy reverse of the medal of pirate plunderings.”—STRONG.

Halvar, with animation,
Swung high his staff of white,
And cried: "No peace-potation
Can to its cheer invite!
Long since, each silver platter
Has smoked upon the board;
Cold meat is sorry matter,
And thirst must be deplored."

Each champion friendly turneth
Within the royal door,
Where Frithiof much discerneth
Unseen by him before;
No rough-planed planks together
Here clothe the walls else bare;
But costly gilded leather,
With fruits and flowers rare.

No central fire projected
Its gleam aroúnd the hall;
But at the wall erected
Stood marble fire-place tall.
No smoke was there permitted,
No soot was sifted o'er;
Glass-panes the windows fitted,
A lock was on the door.

And candle-sticks of silver
Their arms are stretching bright.
But no wood-torches quiver,*
The warriors' feast to light.

16

17

18

19

* "Formerly young boys attended with pine torches, to light up the banquets of the great."—STEVENS.

See note, p. 46. The old halls had a high-seat, or high-chair, like a throne, at the middle of the Southern wall. Exactly opposite this, on the North wall, was another similar seat, next lower in dignity.



FRITHIOF IN COMBAT.

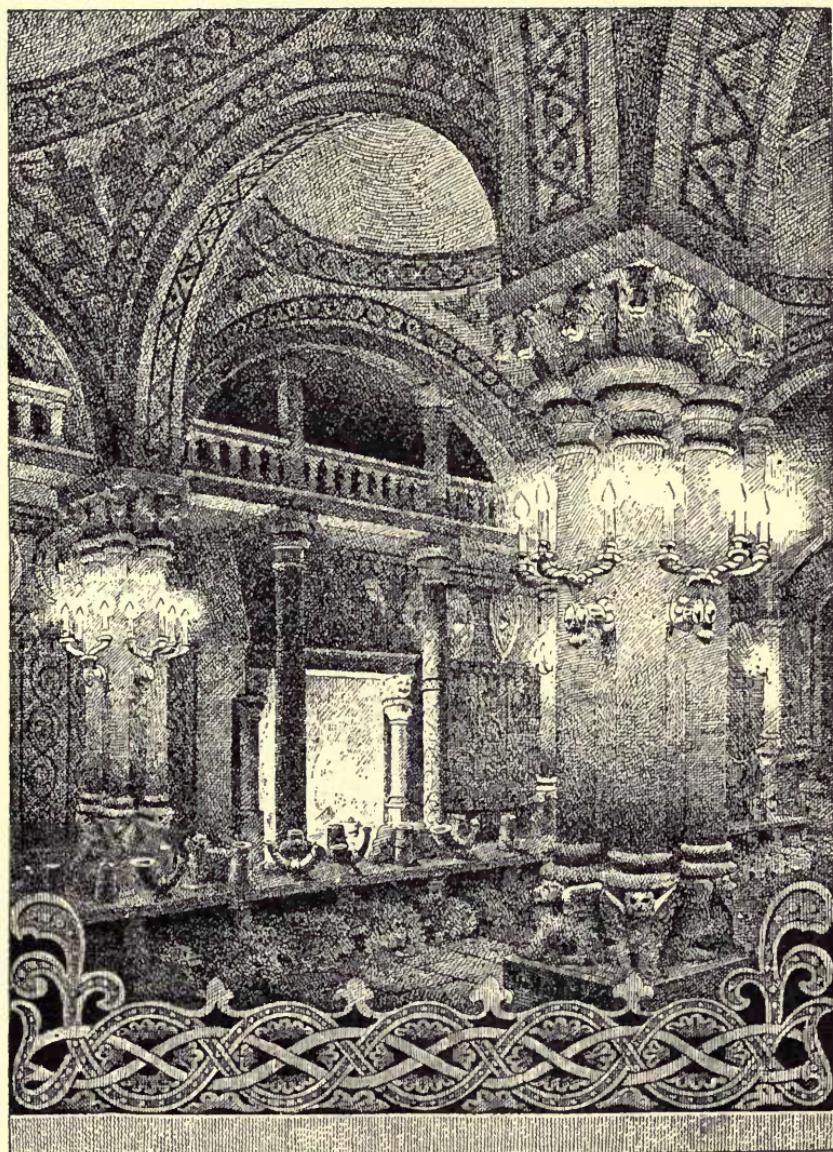
Now to the board they're bringing
A larded stag well browned,
With gold-hoof poised for springing,
And horn-grove leaf-becrowned.

Each champion's chair is tended 20
By maiden lily-white
With glance like ray descended
Of star through storm-clouds' night.
The auburn locks are flowing,—
Blue eyes reveal their powers;
And dainty lips are glowing
Like painted runic flowers.

Jarl Angantyr was seated 21
Upon his silver chair;
His helm the sun repeated,
Of gold his mail-coat rare.
With star-dust oversifted
His mantle gleamed a gem;
Whose purple border shifted
To spotless ermine hem.

Three steps the jarl had taken,— 22
Then spoke he, kind and free,
His guest's hand having shaken:
“Come hither,—sit by me!
I've emptied horns full many
With Thorsten, Viking's son;
His son, far-famed as any,
Shall sit beside my throne.”

*The two high-seat pillars were usually carved with images of the deities. Thors-ten's hall had those of Oden and Frey. See p. 77.



THE HALL OF ANGANTYR.

He fills a cup that darkles
With rich Sicilian wine;
Like quickened flame it sparkles,
And foams as ocean's brine.
"Welcome," the jarl has spoken,
"Son of my faithful friend;
To pledge thy sire this token,
Our eager voices blend!"

23

A skald from Morven's* mountains
Then wakes the harp-tone strong,
While springs from Gaelic fountains
The tide of hero-song.
But now, in Norse-tongue story
Another voice doth rise,
Proclaiming Thorsten's glory,
And wins the minstrel's prize.

24

The jarl would fain be learning
Of Northern kinsmen dear;
And Frithiof e'er was earning
A name for wisdom clear.
For never gave he token
That thoughts unjust were his,—
His words, like Saga's, spoken
With sacred memories.

25

And when he has related
His triumph in the gale
O'er Helge's goblins hated,
And vanquished giant whale,—

26

*A name anciently given the Highlands of Scotland. Even if the Gaelic bard had been as well or better understood than the Norse one, the guestship, labors, and heroism of Frithiof, son of Angantyr's friend, would have insured the win of the latter skald.

The champions move with pleasure,
The jarl his joy displays;
While all in echoed measure
Acclaim the hero's praise.*

27

But when he next had spoken
Of Ingeborg the fair,
Whose spirit, torn and broken,
Was noble in despair,—
Then many a maiden sighing
Felt burning tear-drops stand;
And for her sole replying
Pressed faithful lover's hand.

28

At last his unique mission
The youthful guest made known;—
The jarl gave kind audition,
Then spoke in quiet tone:
“My land has freedom boasted,—
Tribute we ne'er have paid;†
King Bele's health we've toasted,
But ne'er his laws obeyed.

29

“His sons to me are strangers;
If tribute they demand,
Let them face heroes' dangers
And battle, sword in hand!
Our strength may then be reckoned;
Yet, I thy sire held dear,—”
His daughter then he beckoned,
Who by his throne sat near.

* “The Saga of Hialmter and Oelver contains a very spirited description of a contest with a magic whale, which terminates in its defeat and subsidence.”—STRONG.

† The slight discrepancy between Angantyr's statement and the ancient Saga, seems to hinge on the definition of “tribute.”

Arose that floweret tender
From off her gold-backed chair;
She seemed of waist so slender,
Of form so full and fair.
And on her soft cheek dimpled
Sat Astrild,* roguish, shy,
As sits on rose-cup rimpled
The breeze-borne butterfly.

30

Seeking her virgin-bower,
She quick a purse doth seize
Rich wrought in green, where lower
Wild beasts neath woodland trees;
And silver moonlight glimmers
O'er sea of sails afar;
The clasp with rubies shimmers,
The tassels golden are.

31

She gives the beauteous treasure
Unto her father old;
He fills it with full measure
Of foreign-minted gold.
"This welcome gift receiving,
Use it as prompts thy will;†
Stay now, our faith believing,
And winter with us still.

32

*The Northern god of Love, corresponding to the Roman Cupid (Amor) and to the Greek Eros;—the son of Venus (Aphrodite), whose messenger he was, as Mercury (Hermes) was both the son and messenger of Jupiter.

The god of Love was a winged, chubby child, with bow, quiver and arrows, sometimes with a torch, frequently with bandaged eyes. His shafts could pierce the gods above or the fish below,—and his smile was not always free from malignancy.

[†] Angantyr regarded as purely voluntary his annual contribution to the treasury of Bele's kingdom, ceasing at the latter's death.

The jarl said, 'A trap hath King Helge laid for you, and such kings are but ill esteemed who are ready for nothing but to cause men to perish by witchcraft.' I know that is thy errand hither, Frithiof, that thou art sent after the tribute.

"And answer shalt thou have to this: no tribute shall King Helge have of me; but thou shalt get as much treasure as thou wilt, and tribute mayest thou call it an thou wilt, or some other name mayest thou give it. Frithiof said that he would take the money."—
SAGA OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.

"Valor is e'er prevailing,
 But wintry gales are here,
 And Hejd and Ham are sailing
 With life renewed, I fear.
 Ellida not forever
 So light may skim the main,
 And whales abandon never
 Their wave, though one be slain."

So round the guest-hall olden
 Went jesting till the day;
 And draughts from goblets golden
 Drove care, not sense, away.
 A skoal of fullest measure
 Was drank the jarl at last;
 And with some cheer and pleasure
 The winter Frithiof passed.



Friðhoſ with Ángantýr.

Shaw's Translation.

*Air an old Icelandic unpublished
Christmas Carol.*

Voice.

Shaw's Translation.

Shaw's Translation.

Piano.

Allegretto.

Allegretto.

'Tis now to be ex - plain-ing How

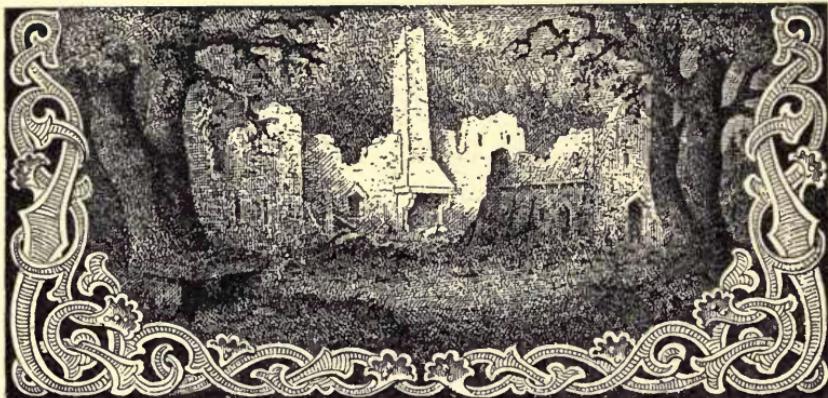
Ang - an - tyr, grown old, In fir - wood hall sat drain - ing His

glass with war-riors bold. Out o'er the blue waves' motion His glad eye wan-dere

on, Where dipped the sun in o - cean, As dips a gold-en

Chor.

Swan, Where dipped the sun in o - cean, As dips a gold-en swan



Canto Twelfth.

Spring has come, and Frithiof with his champions sails back to his native shores.

His joyous mind is replete with hope. His faithful heart is beating with love. His trusting soul is eager to commune again with its kindred spirit; but the castle of his father lies in ruins, burned by the dastardly Helge. All speaks of desolation. From the wasted court come his faithful hound, his steed and his pet hawk, to greet him. Their love is unaffected by absence, influence, prejudice, jealousy, policy or the love of others.

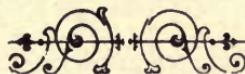
Old Hilding tells him the mournful story of Ingeborg—how King Ring overcame the land, and offered peace terms on the sole and unalterable condition that she be given him in marriage.

This condition she repudiated, true to her absent love. Then the nobles of the kingdom employed their united efforts to persuade her to yield, in order that the nation might be spared, and her brothers retain their throne.

After a desperate struggle she "consented to become a martyr for her country's sake," and King Ring claimed his bride.

For this astounding, almost incredible and paralyzing revelation, Frithiof is ill prepared. At one blow every hope is thwarted, every sense of right, honor or heroism outraged, every possibility of joy annihilated, and death remains alone in the midst of life.

The hero is consumed with implacable wrath. He rushes to Balder's temple, where the Midsummer feast is being celebrated, and sacrifices are being offered up, in order there to render his judgment also. He has a word to say to Helge, the King!





XII.

Frithiof's Return.

ILD Spring is breathing in skies of blue,
And earth with verdure is clad anew;
Now Frithiof thanks to his host has spoken,
And o'er the billow a path has broken;
His black swan, ploughing her sun-lit way,
In silver furrow speeds onward gay;
And Western winds, with the Spring's voice ringing,
Like nightingales in the sails are singing;

And Ägir's daughters,* with sky-blue veils,
10 Play round the helm in the sportive gales.
Ah! Sweet it is, when the prow thou turnest
Toward far-off homeland for which thou yearnest,
Where from thy hearth-stone the white smoke curled,
15 And memory guardeth its childhood's world,
Where fountain-spray o'er the play-ground dashes—
But in green mounds are thy fathers' ashes;
And filled with longing, a maiden true
Stands on her crag and surveys the blue.

Six days he sails; ere the next is over,
20 A dark-blue line does his eye discover,
That clearly bounds the horizon low,—
And rocks and isles into being grow.
It is his land o'er the billows towering,—
He marks its forests in verdure flowering,
25 He hears the torrents that know no rest,
Beholds the cliff with its marble breast;
The strait and headland he gladly haileth,
And past the grove of the White God† saileth,
Where oft last summer, on evenings fair,
30 He sat with Ingeborg, maiden rare.
“Why comes she not? Can she no more measure
The time I rock on the plains of azure?
Has she departed from Balder's walls,
To sit grief-worn in her palace halls,
35 To strike the harp, or the gold be weaving?”
Then swift, the turret of temple leaving,
His white hawk soars, and alights once more
On Frithiof's shoulder, as oft before.
There flaps he ceaseless each snow-white pinion,—

* The waves,—the Nereids of the North.

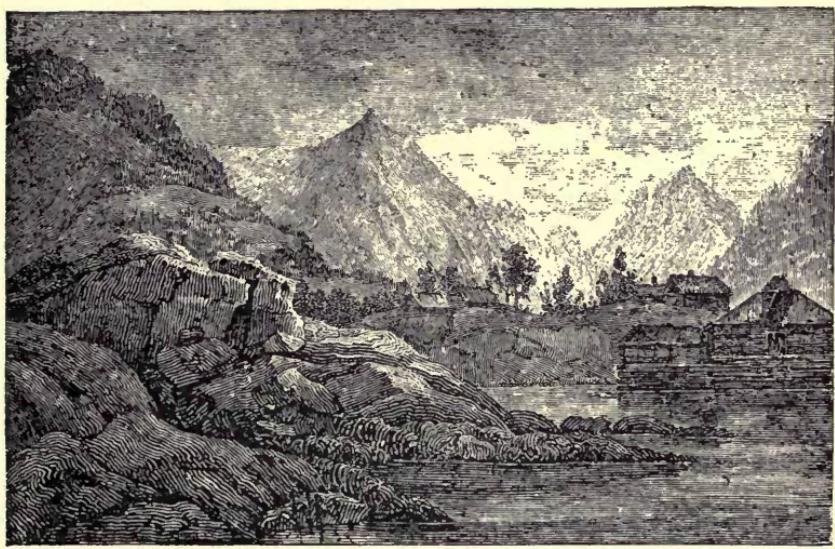
† Balder.

And naught away lures the faithful minion;
He scratches on, with his fire-gold claws,
No peace he grants, makes no rest or pause;
To Frithiof's ear is his beak turned ever,
As if some message he would deliver,—
Perchance from Ingeborg, darling bride,—
But secrets dark in his strange tongue hide.

40

Ellida swiftly the headland passes,
Bounds glad as hind o'er the meadow-grasses;

45



Painted by J. Palmer.

BALDER'S HOLM (BAL HOLMEN).
North View.

Engraved by J. T. Blackmore.

For well-known waters she enters now,
With Frithiof joyous upon the prow.
His eye he rubs, and his hand he places
Above his brow, as the strand he faces;
But though surveying it o'er and o'er,
His Framnäs findeth he nevermore!
Its chimney stands from the ground, an arrow,
Like warriors' bones in their lonely barrow;

50

55

Where court-halls stood is a fire-cleared strand,
And ashes whirl o'er the wasted land.

Now Frithiof swift to the shore advances,
60 And views the ravage with wrathful glances,—
His father's dwelling, ancestral seat,—
When shaggy Bran comes with bounding feet,
To give him greeting; both true and daring,
The bear-hunt fierce he had oft been sharing.

65 His joy revealing, the faithful hound
Frisks round his master with many a bound.
Now gallops up from the vale, unbidden,
The steed that Frithiof so oft had ridden,—
Whose milk-white form doth a gold mane deck,—

70 With deer-like legs, and with swan-like neck;
He whinnies glad, and with arched neck lingers,
And bread will have from his master's fingers;*
But Frithiof, poorer than they could be,
Has naught to give to his faithful three.—

75 Deprived of house and of home, dejected,
O'er woodlands waste he his gaze directed;—
When aged Hilding to him repaired,
His foster-father, the silver-haired:
“At what I see I can scarcely wonder;

80 When flies the eagle, his nest they plunder.
Brave deed for national peace, I trow!
Well keepeth Helge his kingly vow
To worship gods, while all men are hated,
And on his march† has the fire-torch waited!

85 More wrath than sorrow it brings to me,—

* “This line refers to a custom universal in the North, of treating and encouraging the horses by giving them occasionally pieces of a coarser sort of the hard rye-bread (a kind of Scotch cakes) used almost everywhere in Germany and Scandinavia.”—STRONG.

† Swedish “Eriksgata,” the tour of a newly elected king to receive honors and confirmation from his subjects throughout his entire realm.



But tell me—Ingeborg—where is she?"
"The word I bring," spoke old Hilding sadly,
"I fear will move not thy spirit gladly;
Thou hadst but sailed, when King Ring marched down,. .

90 Five shields displaying against our one;
In Disar* valley we met their slaughter,
And red with blood grew its foaming water.
King Halfdan, jesting, laughed on and on,
And brave, the fame of a hero won.

95 With mine own shield I the youth protected,
So glad beheld I his worth reflected.
But not for long raged the conflict sore;—
King Helge bolted, and all was o'er.
But as this son of the gods was flying,[†]

100 He fired thy house[‡]—'tis in ashes lying!
Before the brothers were set two things:
To give their sister to be King Ring's
(For former slight to make atonement),^{||}
Or lose their kingdom in swift dethronement!

105 Now speed peace-messengers far and wide,
And old King Ring carries home his bride!"

"O woman! woman!" cried Frithiof, flaming,
"First thought that Loke[§] was e'er proclaiming!
A lie it was, which the sire of lies[¶]
110 Despatched to earth in a woman's guise!—

*Disar=the gods. Disar valley, some neighboring vale containing a temple of the gods.

[†]It will be remembered that King Bele claimed descent from Oden.

[‡]Also the entire village of Framnäs, according to the Saga of Frithiof the Bold.

^{||}See Canto V.

[§]The father of lies—the evil one, descended from the giants.

[¶]Loke, the evil god of the Norse Mythology. Once the foster-brother of Oden, and held in high esteem by the gods, he later becomes the enemy of all that is good. He beguiles Iduna out of Asgård (Paradise), and causes Balder to receive his death-wound. Three children has Loke: the great Midgård serpent, personifying the deluge; Hela, the goddess of death; and Fenris, the monster wolf that in Ragnarök destroys Oden and swallows the sun, but is killed by Vidar, the god of silence. Of this horrible progeny, typifying pain, sin and death, the Jötunheim, giantess Angurboda, whom Loke had secretly married, was the mother.



LOKE.

- A blue-eyed lie, that with tears deceiving,
Its charm and cheat is around us weaving!—
A lie high-bosomed, with cheeks of youth,
With spring-ice virtue, and wind-like truth!
- 115 Both guile and vanity rule her glances,
While on her rose-lips deception dances!—
And yet, how dear to my heart was she,—
How dear she was, nor doth cease to be!
In days of earliest recollection
- 120 I called her wife, in my child-affection.
There was no exploit whereon I dreamed,
But she the merited trophy seemed.
Like stems that have from the same root thriven,
Should Thor smite one with the bolt of heaven,
- 125 The other droops; but if one grow green,
The other's branches are verdant seen,—
Of joy and pain we have thus partaken;—
Nor can I picture myself forsaken.
But I'm alone! O, thou lofty Var,*
- 130 Who, pen in hand, tour'st the world afar,
Recording vows upon pages golden,
Forsake thy fool's play, thy pen withholden!
Deluding falsehoods thy leaves enfold,—
A filthy blot on the faithful gold.
- 135 Of Balder's Nanna† I know the story—
But human faith is all transitory;
There dwells no truth in the mortal breast,
Since Ingeborg's voice is a lie confessed,—
Oh, voice, like breeze o'er a flower-field straying,

* The goddess of marriage, recording marriage vows. "The ninth asynja (asa-goddess) is Var. She listeneth to those oaths and promises which between men and women are exchanged; such engagements are therefore hight 'Var's words.' She it is also who punisheth such as break the same. Clever and wise is Var, and asketh much, so that nothing can be concealed from her. A proverb it is, that a female is Var (aware, acute), when that she is wise about anything."—GYLFAG., Ch. xxix.

† See Canto I, p. 34.

Like Brage's heavenly harp-strings playing!
No more the harp will mine ear abide,—

140



BRAGE.

I will not think on my faithless bride.
Where storms are rolling I swift will follow,
And, world-wide ocean, thou blood shalt swallow!
Where'er a blade sows the seeds of death,
On mount, in dale, will be felt my breath.
If monarch crowned I should meet, and dare him,
I then shall know if my sword should spare him!
But if I meet, in the battle's roll,
A trusting youth with enamored soul,—
Poor fool, who honor and truth believeth,—
I him will slaughter ere she deceiveth,
And kindly spare him the treachery,
Outrage and shame that have come to me!”—

145

150

“How boileth over the blood that's youthful!”
Said Hilding old, “'Tis an adage truthful,
Youth's heat needs cooling by snows of age;
Toward noble maiden thy wrath assuage.
Unjust thou chidest my foster-daughter,—
Bewail the doom which the norns allot her,

155

160

All changeless here; from the thundering heaven
 All dooms to children of men are given.
 None heard the sorrowing maiden's weeping,—
 Like storied Vidar[†] her silence keeping;



VIDAR SLAYING THE FENRIS WOLF.

- 165 She suffered mute as in Southern grove
 Of mate bereft mourns the turtle dove.
 To me the sad one her heart discovered,
 Where always infinite anguish hovered.
 As water-fowl with a wounded breast
 170 Dives to the bottom, and finds its rest,
 And, lest day's light be the wound disclosing,
 Lies on the sea-bed, its life-blood losing,—

* "Good and well sprung nornor give good fortunes; and when men fall into troubles, it is bad nornor who are the cause thereof."—GYLFAG., Ch. xx.

The Norseman's religion was highly fatalistic. Frithiof constantly exclaims against the evil norns, as does Hilding in this line.

[†]Son of Oden, and the god of silence. "A shoe thick-welted hath he. The strongest of all he is, next after Thor, and of him have the gods much help in all dangerous troubles."—GYLFAG., Ch. xxix.

"The Wolf (Fenris) gorges Oden, who thus getteth his bane (death); but immediately thereafter rushes Vidar forward, and steppeth with one foot on his lower jaw. On that foot hath he the shoe for which the leather has been from of old collected of all those bits which are cut off shoes for the toes or heels thereof. He, therefore, who will come to the help of the asas, always shall take care to cast aside these cuttings. With his other hand Vidar layeth hold of the wolf's upper jaw and riveth his throat asunder; and this is the death of the wolf."—DO., Ch. LI.

Ah! thus her sorrow in night sank down,
And what she suffered I knew alone.

“I’m but an offering,” she oft lamented, 175

“For Bele’s kingdom! The snow-flower scented
Enwreathes the sacrificed peace-maid’s hair,
And wintergreen decks the victim fair.

Ah! Could I perish, and end my anguish!

But angry Balder demands I languish. 180

A lingering death is for me at last,
Where throbs the heart, and the pulse beats fast.

But tell to no one the martyr’s sorrow,
I would, though tortured, no pity borrow.

King Bele’s daughter will bear her woe,— 185
But thou to Frithiof her heart shalt show!”

The marriage day doth at last awaken,—

Ah! From my rune-staff I would ’twere taken! *

When white-robed maidens and armed men go
To Balder’s fane in procession slow. 190

A gloomy bard the cortege is guiding;

A pale bride sits on a black steed riding;

Pallid is she as a ghost doth seem

On storm-cloud perched, when the lightnings gleam.

I lift from saddle my lily slender, 195

And neath the arch of the fane attend her

Unto the altar. In grave tones now

She tells to Lofna[†] her solemn vow,—

Breathes many a prayer, to the White God turning,

And all, excepting the bride, are mourning. 200

When Helge saw on her arm thy ring,

* Rune-staff, a staff carved with runes, etc., after the manner of the arm-ring, p. 69, and serving the purpose of a calendar. These were in general use until the 17th century, when their place was usurped by the annual almanac.

[†] Or Lofn, the presiding deity of matrimony. She is mild and good, and is permitted by Oden or Freya to join lovers together, despite all hindrances.



BALDER THE GOOD.

From Old Norse Stories.
Copyright 1900, by
Sarah Powers Bradish.

He snatched it off as a hated thing;—
On Balder's image 'twas quick suspended!—
And then, forbearance of mine was ended.
My faithful sword drew I swiftly forth,
And Helge, king, was of little worth!
But whispered Ingeborg then: "Forbear thee!
In truth, a brother this ring could spare me,
Yet much one bears ere the soul be free;
Let Oden judge between him and me!"

205

210

"Let Oden judge!" Frithiof dark did mutter,
"But I my judgment would also utter!
Is it not now the Mid-summer Feast?*
Within the fane stands the great crowned priest†
Who sold his sister and burned my dwelling;—
Ah! Now my judgment would I be telling!"

215

* Held in honor of Balder, in his temple, on Mid-summer's eve, when the sun, Balder's symbol, attained its extreme Northern position. Bale-fires or bonfires were every where built on this anniversary.

† Contemptuously for Helge.





Canto Thirteenth.

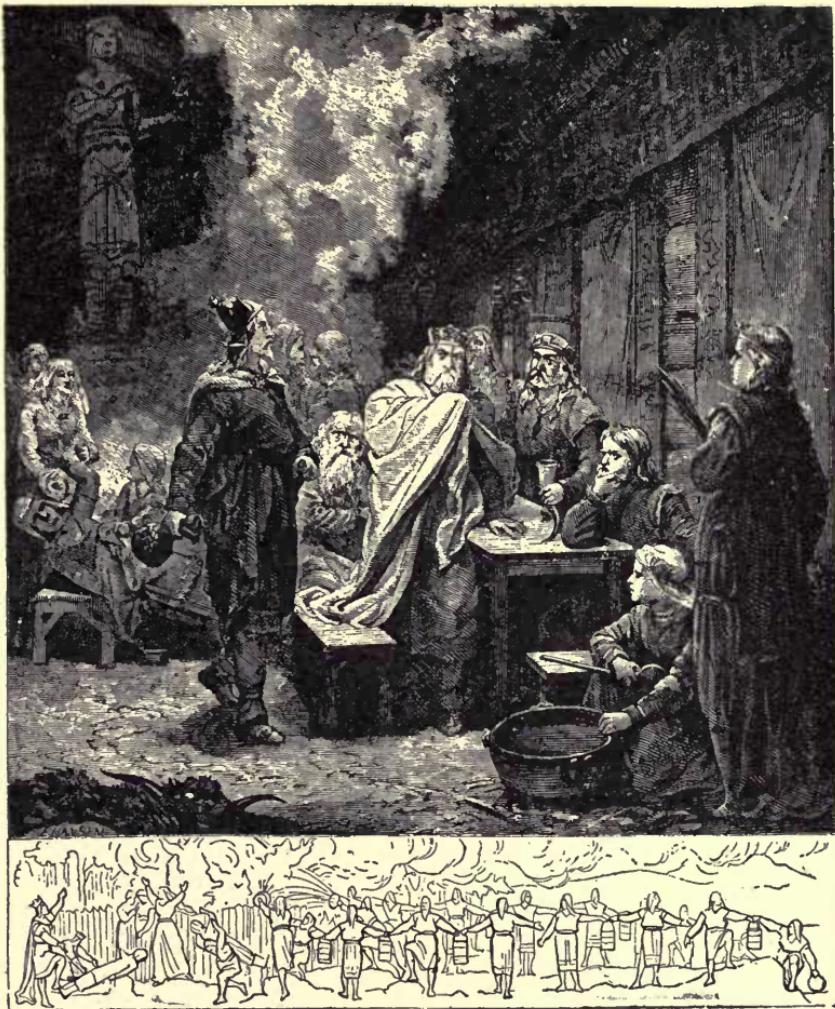
The priests are assembled in the temple of Balder to sacrifice to the god. Helge, the bigoted, is participating in these rites, when the clash of the arms of Frithiof's champions resounds without, and the tones of Frithiof's voice commanding Björn to guard the door, come to their ears. Entering, and approaching the king, he casts the weighty purse of gold, presented him by Angantyr, full into the face of Helge, saying! "Here is the redemption of mine honor!"

Helge falls senseless." The ancient Saga makes this Frithiof's full intention, and states that two of Helge's teeth were driven out, and that Halfdan alone prevented his brother's falling on the altar-fire. Then Frithiof approaches the image of Balder, from whose arm he endeavors to loosen the arm-ring placed there by Helge, and seemingly grown fast to the arm.

So much strength is required to detach it that the image is loosened from its pedestal and falls crashing onto the altar-pile. Being of pine, dry and pitchy, it is quickly enveloped in crackling flames whose lambent tongues ignite walls, tapestries, ceiling. The temple is a flaming mass. Tumultuous resound the cries! Water is brought by the multitude, but in vain. Balder's grove ignites from the burning fane! Fire-surges sweep its sacred bowers. Soon the temple lies in ashes.

All is lost now—Thorsten, Ingeborg, Framnäs, the temple, the favor of the god, friendship of men, native land, gladness, and hope. All are gone. Frithiof sits down,—and weeps.





XIII.

Balder's Pyre.

MIDNIGHT'S sun o'er the mountain height
 Blood-red now was suspended;
 Day gleamed not, and it was not night,—
 Both into one were blended.

* At latitude only five degrees farther north than Sogne, the mid-summer sun remains above the horizon during the 24 hours of the day; so we must "crave a few degrees of poetic latitude," as Strong suggests, "or considerable allowance for refraction augmented in cold climates by condensation of the atmosphere."

- 2 Balder's fire,* type of sunlight clear,
 Burned on his hearth-stone hallowed;
Yet did its light soon disappear,—
 Höder's† control then followed.
- 3 Priests round the temple-wall appeared,—
 Stood, and the fire-brands shifted;
Pale old men of the silver beard,—
 Flint knives‡ their hard hands lifted.
- 4 Circling the altar, Helge King,
 Aideth, with crown the rarest:—
Hark! At the hour of midnight, ring
 Arms|| in the sacred forest!

* "Balder's Pyre" applies (1) to the burning of his body, with that of Nanna, his wife, on his ship Ringhorn, which was pushed from shore by the powerful Jötunheim giantess Hyrrokin, when gods and goddesses, giants and men, all came to mourn his loss; (2) to this Midsummer Festival, when sacrifices were offered to Balder, and emblematic bale-fires everywhere kindled; (3) to this destruction of his temple and grove, when his carved image was burned as upon a funeral pile.

† The blind brother of Balder, and god of darkness. He was the "blind fate" that slew Balder. Saxo makes Balder and Höder rivals for the hand of Nanna. Balder having been troubled with ominous dreams, fears for his own fate. "Then taketh Frigga, his mother, oath of all existences, living and lifeless, that they would not harm her son; but the tender mistletoe she neglects, and this becomes his bane. As the gods are aiming at him as a mark, to show that he is now invulnerable, the ever evil Loki placeth the young plant in the hands of the blind Höder, directs his aim, and—Balder falleth!—And this is the greatest misfortune that has ever befallen gods and men!"—STURLESON'S EDDA.

The gods, speechless with horror, gazed at each other; later gave way to loud lamentations. Then they bore the body of Balder to the funeral pile, on board his ship, Ringhorn, largest of all ships; and it was during this ceremony that his wife Nanna's heart was broken with grief, and her body placed on the same pile and burned with that of Balder.

His horse, fully caparisoned, was likewise consumed by the same flame. Balder was the god of light; Loki, of darkness. The former typifies the "heavenly light of the soul," innocence, Christ-like purity. He is thus slain by Loki, the evil one, the foul destroyer,—whose work is even yet incomplete.

Frigga offers her favor to him who should ride to the lower world and offer to Hela a ransom for Balder. Hermod undertakes this difficult journey. Nine days and nights he rides through darkness. Then his steed leaps over the gates of Hel.

Hela agrees to permit the god's return, if all earthly things will weep for him. Then the gods sent messengers over all the world; and all things wept. But on their return, they found a giantess whose name was Thock. They bade her also weep. She replied:

"Thock will weep
With dry tears
For Balder's death;
Nor of dead nor of living
Force I the son;
Let Hela keep what she hath."—STURLESON'S EDDA.

So Balder's return to earth will occur not until Ragnarök, the destruction of the world.

Now Thock was none other than Loki in disguise, who thus crowns his nefarious deeds with this hellish triumph. But the price he must later pay for this victory is one of extreme and unutterable agony.

‡ In ancient times, flint was fashioned into cutting instruments."—JAMESON.

|| Of Frithiof and his champions.



BALDER.



HÖDER AND LOKE.



Björn, stand fast by the
temple door!
Freedom for all now
ceases!
Out or in, who would venture
more,
Cleave thou his skull in
pieces!"

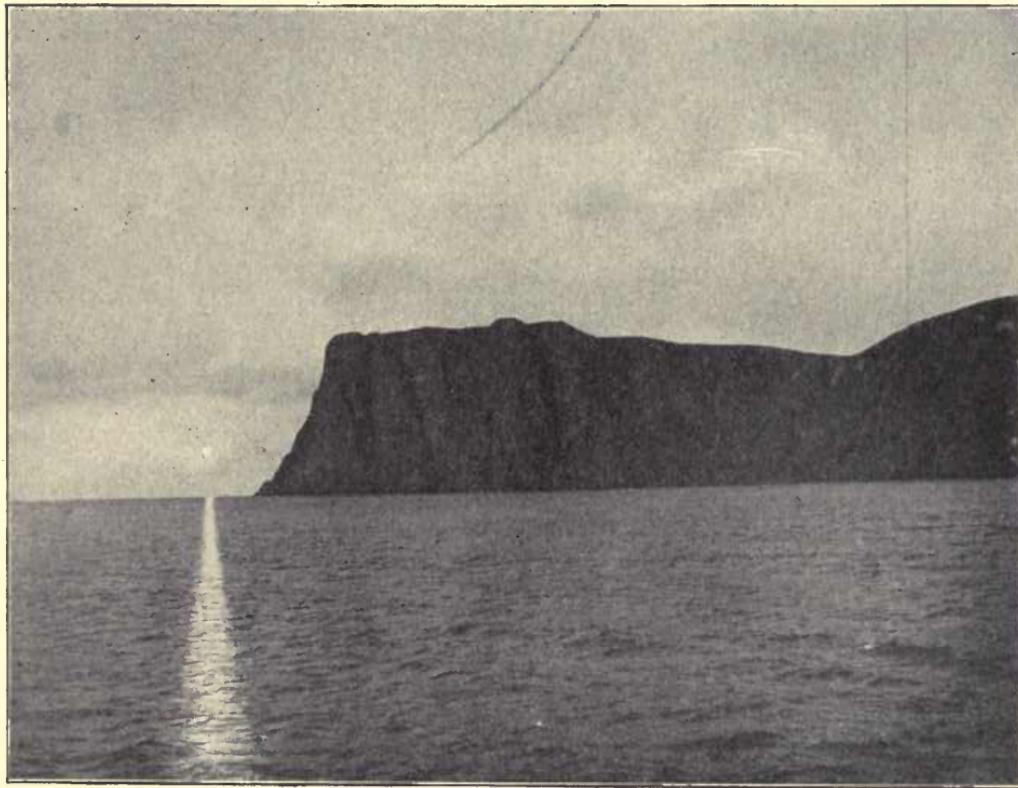
Pallid the king grew! Ah,
too well
Knew he what voice had
spoken;
Frithiof stood forth in his
anger fell,
Like Autumn storm-cloud
broken.

"Take the tribute to thee
now brought
Over the western billow!
Life-and-death battle by
us two fought
Then by the altar shall
follow!"

8 "Shield behind me, and bosom bare,
Fair shall the combat be reckoned;
Thou, as king, shalt the first blow dare,—*
I—take warning—the second!

*According to the laws of holm-gång (duel), the challenged party had the right to strike the first blow; when his opponent was wounded so that his blood stained the ground, his seconds might interfere and end the combat. He that was first wounded must pay the customary fine.

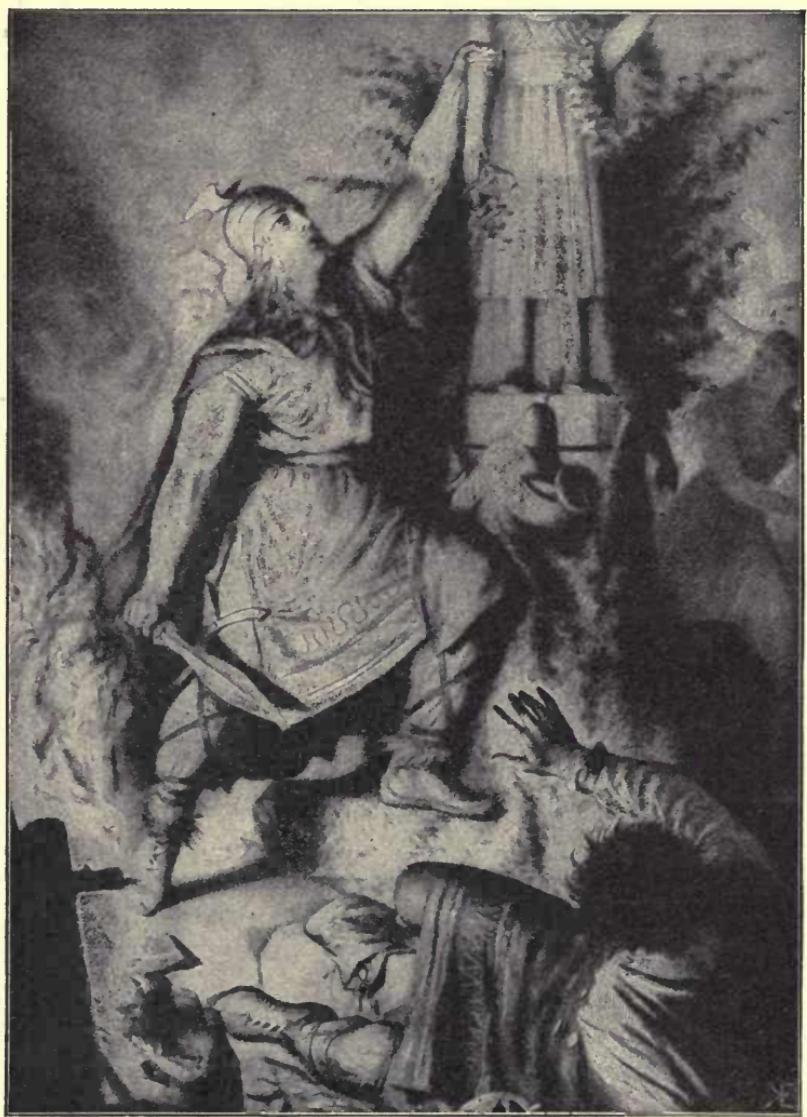
"The first cut is the right of him who is called out."—SAGA KETIL'S HAENGNS.



THE MIDNIGHT SUN.
(North Cape.)

- 9 Ah, glance not toward the temple door!
 Captive the fox is holden!
Think of Framnäs,—of Ingeborg more,—
 Sister with tresses golden!"
- 10 This in heroic tone he said,
 Purse from his cincture taking;—
Hurling its mass with a recklessness dread,
 Straight at the king's brow quaking!
- 11 Out from his mouth the warm blood gushed,
 Darkness his eye was veiling;
There by the altar, to silence hushed,
 Kinsman of gods lay paling.
- 12 "What! Canst thou bear not thine own dear gold,
 Coward of all thy nation?
Angurvadel would scorn to hold
 Blame for such vile oblation.
- 13 "Silence, priests, with your offering-knives!
 Silence, ye moonshine princes!
Lest ye barter your wretched lives,—
 Thirst my blade now evinces.
- 14 "Ah! White Balder, thine anger check,—
 Glare on me not so sullen!
But the ring that thine arm doth deck,
 Pardon me, has been stolen.*
- 15 "Not for thee was its band, I know,
 Ever by Vaulund graven;

* See Canto xii, lines 200 to 204. The Saga of FRITHIOF makes King Ring cause the arm-ring to be removed and given to Helge's wife, to be later returned to Frithiof.



Seized it was from a maid in woe;—
Down with the spoil of craven!"

- 16 Fierce he pulled; but the arm and ring
Seemed as in one united;
Loosened, the god with a wrathful spring
Down on the shrine-fire alighted.*
- 17 Hark! It crackles,—the gold teeth bite!
Rafter with ceiling quivers.
Björn at the portal stands death-white,—
Frithiof burns, that he[†] shivers.
- 18 "Open the door! Let the people go!
Exit no longer cover!
Burns the temple! Throw water, throw
All the ocean thereover!"
- 19 Down from the temple unto the strand
Chains of hands now are woven;
Sweep the billows from hand to hand
Into the hissing oven.
- 20 Frithiof sits, like the god of rain,
High o'er the beams and water,
Mandates giving about the fane,
Calm mid the fiery slaughter.
- 21 Vain! The fire holds the ruling hand,
Smoke-clouds the fane have belted;
Gold falls down on the red-hot sand,
Silver plates quickly are melted.

* The two queens were then anointing two other pitch-pine idols, which in the commotion, also fell into the flames.

† Björn.



THE BURNING TEMPLE.

- 22 All was lost! From the half-burned hall,
 Flying, a red cock hastened;*
 Perched and crew on the roof-ridge tall,
 Flapping his wings unfastened.
- 23 North winds play from the morning sky,—
 Flames to the heavens are towering;
 Balder's grove now is summer-dry,—
 Hungry the fire, and devouring.



SURT WITH HIS FLAMING SWORD.

- 24 Raging, its flames the boughs ignite,
 Ne'er from their ravage turning;
 Ah! What a wild, what a terrible light!
 Mighty is Balder's burning!

*Or at least it was so declared by some. Perhaps this may be figurative."

The cock is not only the harbinger of day, but also of Ragnarök, the world's demolition, which is symbolized by Balder's pyre, and which is to be heralded by the crowing of the gold-combed cock in Asgård, the red one on the earth, and the lurid one in the world infernal, all crowing "in ominous concert," and which is immediately followed by the sundering of the chains of Fenris, the liberation of Loke, the quaking of the earth, the groaning of Yggdrasil, the advancing of the Midgård serpent and the sons of Muspel led by Surtur, the all-kindling. Even to the present day it is a frequent expression in describing a fire just broken out, that "the red cock is crowing over the roof of the house." Perhaps it here also suggests the long farewell Frithiof is now bidding to peace.

- 25 Hark! It crackles in riven tree-roots,
 See their crowns incandescent!
Who is the mortal that disputes
 Muspel's wild sons* rubescent!
- 26 Surges a fire-sea in Balder's grove,
 Shoreless its billows tremble;
Sunlight comes, but the fjord and cove
 Caverns of hell resemble!
- 27 Soon in ashes the temple lay;
 Wasted, those hallowed bowers;
Frithiof sorrowful turned away,—
 Wept in the morning hours.

*Muspel's sons = the flames. South of the fathomless abyss of Ginnunga-gap was Muspel, the world of fire—uninhabitable except to those indigenous to it—whose borders were guarded by Surtur (or Surt), the flame giant.

His brandished sword, outshining the sun itself, emitted constant showers of glowing sparks. With these the gods studded the firmament, where they remain as stars; but out of the most brilliant ones they made the sun and moon, and suspended them in heaven.

At the last day Surtur's flames will consume the universe.



Balder's Pyre,

Shaw's Translation.

Air by G.S.

Voice.

Piano.

The musical score consists of five systems of music. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a treble clef, common time, and a key signature of one sharp. The second system begins with a bass clef, common time, and a key signature of one sharp. The third system begins with a treble clef, common time, and a key signature of one sharp. The fourth system begins with a bass clef, common time, and a key signature of one sharp. The fifth system begins with a treble clef, common time, and a key signature of one sharp. The vocal part starts with a sustained note followed by eighth-note chords. The piano part features eighth-note chords in the right hand and sixteenth-note patterns in the left hand. The vocal part continues with eighth-note chords, and the piano part maintains its harmonic support. The vocal part ends with a melodic line: "Mid-night's sun o'er the mount-ain height". The piano part concludes with a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

Blood-red was sus-pend-ed; Mid-night's sun o'er the mount-ain height

This musical score consists of three staves. The top staff contains a melody line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff shows harmonic changes with various chords. The bottom staff provides bass support. The lyrics "Blood-red was sus-pend-ed; Mid-night's sun o'er the mount-ain height" are written below the top staff.

Blood-red was sus-pend-ed. It was not day, it

This musical score consists of three staves. The top staff contains a melody line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff shows harmonic changes with various chords. The bottom staff provides bass support. The lyrics "Blood-red was sus-pend-ed. It was not day, it" are written below the top staff.

was not night,— Both in-to one were blend-ed. It was not day, it

This musical score consists of three staves. The top staff contains a melody line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff shows harmonic changes with various chords. The bottom staff provides bass support. The lyrics "was not night,— Both in-to one were blend-ed. It was not day, it" are written below the top staff.

was not night; Both in-to one were blend ed.

This musical score consists of three staves. The top staff contains a melody line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The middle staff shows harmonic changes with various chords. The bottom staff provides bass support. The lyrics "was not night; Both in-to one were blend ed." are written below the top staff.



Canto Fourteenth.

Frithiof, by his violent wrenching of the arm-ring from the arm of Balder's image, has undesignedly caused the destruction of the temple. Helge seizes upon this, and the exasperating indignity to which Frithiof has subjected him, in casting the purse of gold in his face, as sufficient reason why his enemy should be slain, with all his companions. He gives orders therefore to follow him with speed.

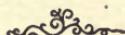
This departure is the climax of such a train of blighting and appalling calamities, that Frithiof, galled with ineffable bitterness toward the norns for allowing such ills to beset him, and almost defiant of the doom to which they may yet devote him, sits on deck and sarcastically addresses the smoke still rising from the ashes of the temple-pyre. Then, with a mournful thought of his father's hallowed mound, never to be visited again by him, he turns Ellida's prow once more to the foam-white, illimitable ocean. His only haven is its desolate, tempestuous plain.

But Helge, with ten dragon-ships, sails forth to destroy Frithiof, trusting to the infernal powers whose aid he has besought. Björn, having anticipated this measure, scuttles the keels of Helge's ships while Frithiof is at the temple. They sink. Helge alone escapes, and swims to safety. His wrath is so terrific that, with intent to shoot an arrow at Frithiof, he bends his bow with sufficient force to snap off both its ends.

Here, then, is another opportunity for the hero to slay the tyrant; but again, too lofty a degree of regard for his own lance, which is too good to drink a craven's blood, stays the hand of Frithiof, and spares the life of the contemptible monarch.

Then to his vanishing fatherland, its lakes and mountains, its groves and linden-shaded graves, the exile murmurs in peaceful strains a long farewell.

The short-lined, close-rhymed iambic meter of this canto, egregiously difficult to paraphrase, was practically unknown in Swedish previous to Tegner.





XIV.

Frithiof Goes into Exile.

ON deck by light
Of Summer night
Sat Frithiof grieving;
Like billows heaving,
Rolled wrath and woe 5
In ebb and flow;—
Still glowed by flashes
The temple's ashes.

"Thou temple-smoke,
Fly up! Invoke 10
Valhall requiting;—
On me inviting

15

The white god's ire
For deed so dire!
Fly up and chatter
Till heaven shall clatter;*
His fane proclaim
Laid low by flame;
His statue holy
Now fallen lowly,
Like common wood
For fire the food;
His grove protected
By arms respected
Since swords were worn,
By fire now shorn,—
Robbed of the glory
Of rotting hoary!
All this, and more,
That none ignore,
Neglect not telling
In Balder's dwelling,
Thou prattler-cloud,
The mist-god's† shroud!

30

Sing high the splendor
Of monarch tender,‡
Who me hath banned
From native land
And his dominions!
Well, with free pinions,

35

* The short phrases and half-detached utterances of this canto picture breathlessness, crepitancy, agitation,—which demand the directness of unqualified expression. Hopelessness, recklessness, contempt for men and gods, and the impulse to impute malignancy of motive even to the Valhalla-seeking smoke-cloud (as if Balder's wrath were not already sufficiently aroused against Frithiof), are all, at this limit of human endurance, most bitterly and sarcastically portrayed.

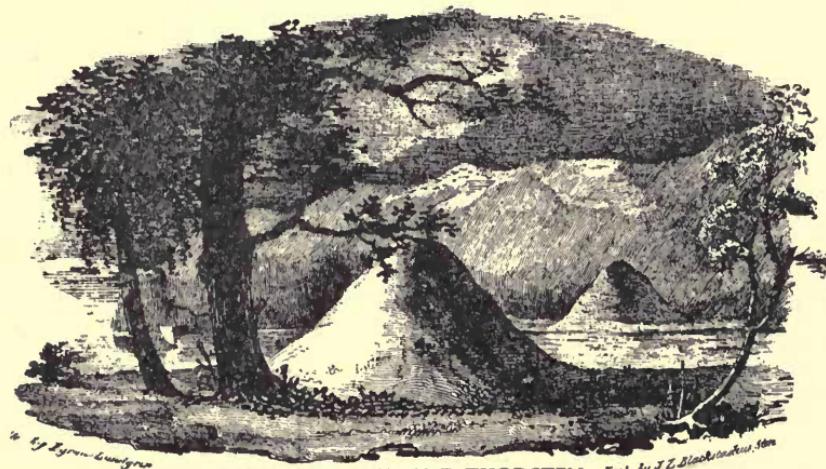
†Balder. ‡Helge.

Seek we the blue
Where billows woo.
Thou hast no resting,
Ellida, breasting
The tide once more 45
To earth's far shore.
O'er briny ocean
Must be thy motion,
My dragon good;
A drop of blood 50
Can harm thee never,
Though roving ever.
When tempests roam,
Thou art my home,
Since Balder's brother 55
Hath burned mine other;
Thou art my North,
My foster-earth;
From homeland yonder
I now must wander; 60
Thou art my bride
In pitch-black dyed;
My white bride royal
No more is loyal.

Thou ocean free, 65
Unknown to thee
Is king tyrannic
With freaks volcanic.
Thy king is he,
Of men so free,
Who never quaketh, 70
However shaketh

In mad unrest
Thy foam-white breast.
75 Thy blue plains measure
The hero's pleasure,—
Receive his prow
As sod the plow;
Blood dyes the meadow
80 In dragon's shadow,
And steel blades clear
Are seed-corn here.
Thy fields all hoary
Bear crops of glory,
85 And wealth of gold;
My bark uphold,
O billow; never
From thee I sever!
My father's mound
90 In peace is bound,
Mid waters flowing
And verdure growing;—
Mine blue shall be
In foam-white sea,
95 Forever swimming
Mid storms bedimming,
Shall lull to rest
Beneath thy breast.
To me wert given
100 For life a haven;
Unconquered wave,
Be thou my grave!"

He said in madness,
Then turned in sadness



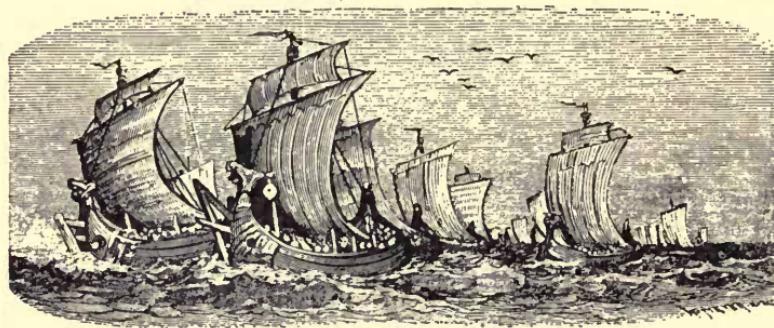
By Byron Bewley
THE MOUNDS OF BELE AND THORSTEN. *Engraved by J. C. Blackmore, from*

105

His faithful prore
From well-known shore,
And slow was curving
Mid rocks preserving
Their guard to-day
O'er shallow bay.

110

But vengeance waketh:
King Helge taketh
Ten dragons fleet,
His foe to meet.



115

All cry elated:
“The king is fated!
His one stroke o'er,
Then nevermore
Will power be given
That son of heaven
Beneath the moon;
To Oden soon
The god-blood yearning
Will be returning!”

120

”Tis scarce foretold,
When neath the hold

125

Of Helge's vessels
Unseen power nestles,
And downward slow
His fleet draws low
To Ran's death-pillow!
But through the billow
Swims Helge now
From deluged prow.

130

Then Björn laughs loudly,
Exulting proudly:
"O, asa-blood,
The wile was good!
I did the boring,
No eye exploring,
On yester-night—
A concept bright!*" 140
May sea-cold Rana
In wonted manner
The foeman claim.
The king (what shame!)
Should them have tended,—
With them descended."

135

140

145

In furious mood
King Helge stood,
The shore scarce gaining.
His bow while straining,[†]
Steel-wrought and round,
'Gainst rocky ground,

150

* The stratagem of boring the keels of the enemy's vessels so that they slowly filled and sank, was successfully employed by Prince Herraud in rescuing his bride, the sister of Godmund, from Siggeir.

† "Helge became so enraged that he raved as though he were mad. Then bended he his bow, and laid an arrow on the string, intending to shoot it at Frithiof. But this he did with so much force that both the necks of the bow were rent asunder." —SAGA OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.

Frithiof Goes into Exile.

Shaw's Translation.

Music by B. CRISTELI, Stockholm

Voice.

Piano.

Brow of cre-a-tion. O

re - gal North! I have no sta - tion On thy fair earth! No

home-land oth- er My pride can swell; Now, he - ro-moth-er, Fare-

well, fare-well, fare-well, fare-well!

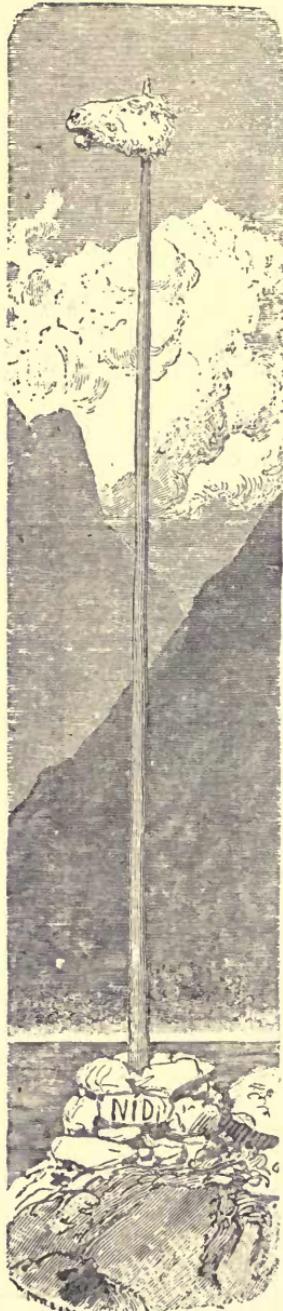
ritard

cresc.

princ.

diss.

pp



He ne'er attended
How hard he bended,
Till with a clang
It sundered sprang.

155

But Frithiof weigheth
His lance, and sayeth:
“Death’s eagle bold
Restrained I hold.
Could he be flying,
Then soon were lying

160

A coward low,
By righteous blow !
Of danger think not,—
My lance would drink not
A dastard's blood !

165

It is too good
For filthy glory;
It may in story
Deck runic stone,
But ne'er be shown
On shaft of craven,*
With thy name graven.

170

Thy project brave
Sank neath the wave;
On shore thou'st striven,
Nor better thriven.—

175

*A pillar of shame, or niding-post, was a memorial shaft on which was carved the name of one guilty of disgraceful or cowardly conduct.

The term "nidus" signifies extreme wickedness and infamy. "Denotat nidus modernis Danis virum sordide parcum atque tenacem."—Thus Bartholin.

Niding was the most insulting of all epithets; but its virulence was enhanced to the extreme by erecting a niding-post or niding-stake.

"A pole with a horse's head was considered a niding-post of peculiar efficacy."—NORTHERN ANTIQUITIES.

Rust snapped thy bow,
Not thou, I know;
To deeds more splendid
Mine arm is bended;
Of thine how wide
Thou mayst decide!"

He quick selected
An oar exected
From fir-tree hale
In Gudbrand's dale,*



GUDBRAND'S DALE.

Then grasped its fellow,
And o'er the billow
With strong pulls bent;—
Each oar was rent,
Like brittle arrow
Or sword-blade narrow.

The sun climbs bright
O'er mountain height;
The breeze is blowing
From land, and wooing

*A fertile vale of Norway, in Aggerhuus, to the east of the Sogne Fjord.

Each wave to dance
In morning's glance;
Ellida leapeth
O'er waves, and sweepeth
In joy ahead;—
But Frithiof said:

205

"Brow of creation,
O regal North!
I have no station
On thy fair earth!
No homeland other
My pride can swell;
Now, hero-mother,
Farewell, farewell!

210

"Farewell, supernal
Valhalla-throne,
Night's eye diurnal,—
Thou midnight sun!
Sky all unclouded,
Where spirits dwell,
Star-fields so crowded,
Farewell, farewell!

215

220

"Farewell, the glory
Ye mountains bore!
Ye rune-stones hoary
Of mighty Thor!
Blue seas and highlands
I knew so well,—
Ye rocks and islands,
Farewell, farewell!

225

230

235

"Farewell, mounds holy,
 By billows blue,
 Where lindens lowly
 Their flower-dust strew;
 As right revealeth,
 Will Saga tell
 What earth concealeth;
 Farewell, farewell!

240

245

"Farewell, O forest,
 Where erst I played;
 Green garb thou worest,
 And brooklets strayed.
 Friends of my childhood,
 Ye meant me well;
 Sweet is your wild-wood,—
 Farewell, farewell!

250

"My love is slighted,
 Burned is my home;
 Mine honor blighted,
 Exiled I roam!
 To sea earth's sadness
 I hopeless tell,
 And bid life's gladness
 Farewell, farewell!"





SAGA.



Canto Fifteenth.

The Vikings were Norse pirates, who foraged along the coasts of Britain, Normandy, and even the countries lying about the Mediterranean, during the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries.

The summer cruises of the Northern freebooters were the universal custom,—a part of the scheme of Scandinavian hero-life. Even sovereigns and princes of the later Scandinavia, like those of the early Pelasgi, abandoned their halls for the perils and prizes of such predatory exploits.

Piracy being therefore considered an honorable vocation, since might was right, seems to be the only course prescribed to the hero, who has now parted from native land and peace. From the acme of unutterable affliction which the unpropitious norns and angered gods have allowed to overtake him, he desperately welcomes the Lethean chant of the limitless ocean, which is to be his haven in life and his grave in death.

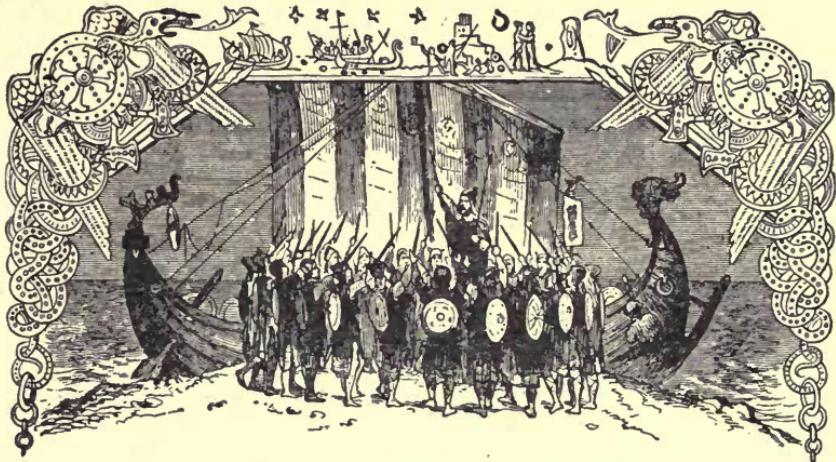
He traverses many waters, pursues many conquests, and the ancient Saga states he wintered again with the hospitable Angantyr.

Fame attends him everywhere. But he finds no peace. The eye of the offended Balder seems glaring at him daily and nightly.

When he comes to the Grecian isles, which he had three years before pictured as the beautiful home Ingeborg should share with him, but which he had never beheld except through the eyes of Thorsten, his father,—he clearly perceives how all things sink to nothing when compared with her who should have been his bride.

A nameless longing seizes him, to see the Northland once again. He must behold its mountains, visit the grave of his father,—gaze once more—only once more—upon Ingeborg's dear face,—then he is ready to return to ocean and find his foam-covered grave.

In the swift leaping anapests of this canto we can imagine we see Ellida bounding swiftly, dauntlessly, over the foaming billows, pausing only upon the summits of the swells, that surge forever, and are measured by the entire poetic line, while the ordinary waves are indicated by the individual poetic feet.



XV.

The Viking Code.

Now he glided around o'er the desolate seas, 1
like a plundering falcon he flew;
To his comrades the Viking gave mandates and laws;
wilt thou hear now the law-code he drew?*

"Pitch no tent on the ship, sleep thou not in a house, 2
neath its roof only foemen abound;
Sword in hand let the Viking repose on his shield,[†]
and his tent be the azure around.

* Contempt for danger forming the criterion of honor, the sea-rover's profession became in the highest sense honorable, and afforded unlimited opportunities for success and fame.

Kings would fit out fleets for the ambitious princes, who vowed not to return from these expeditions until laden with plunder and glory.

Many Norwegian chieftains, robbed of their possessions by the all-conquering Harald Hárfagra, removed to the Orkneys, the Faroe and Shetland islands, and thence infested all the Scandinavian coasts, and no safety existed on the sea.

Under Ragnar Lodbrook it is said the Danish pirates outnumbered the land population.

Many of these sea-robbers passed their entire lives on board their ships, boasting of never having slept in a house or having drank mead at their fireside.

"Proinde is merito rex martimus appellabatur, qui sub fuliginoso tigno somnum nunquam capiebat, nec ante focum ex cornu potare solitus est.—YNGL. SAG.

† "The Scandinavians generally had shields of a long oval form, just the height of the bearer, in order to protect him from arrows, darts and stones. They, besides, made use of them to carry the dead to the grave; to terrify the enemy by clashing their arms against them; to form upon occasion a kind of shelter or tent when they were obliged to encamp in the open field, or when the weather was bad. Nor was the shield less useful in naval encounters; for if the fear of falling into their enemies' hands obliged one of their warriors to cast himself into the sea, he could easily escape by swimming upon his buckler of wood or leather."—M. MALLETT, I, 240.

- 3 “Short the haft of the hammer of thundering Thor,*
 a mere ell-length the sword-blade of Frey;†
 ‘Tis enough; hast thou valor, step nearer thy foe,
 and thy blade will be mighty to slay.
- 5 “When the tempest is wild, hoist the sail up the mast!
 It is gay on the turbulent deep!
 Let it rage! Let it rage! Only cowards strike sail;
 furl it not, rather sink to thy sleep!



FREYA.

- 5 “Maids are better on land, bring not one on the ship;
 were she Freya, she yet would ensnare;
 For the dimple she wears on her cheek is a lie, and
 a net is her wind-streaming hair.

* Thor's hammer, after having executed its destructive work upon the object attacked, had the power of voluntarily returning to the hand of its owner.
 The sting of an insect curtailed the work of the dwarf before he had completed the handle of the hammer, thus leaving it short.

† Frey's sword, like Thor's hammer and Frithiof's Ellida, possessed power of its own,—that of dealing wholesale death to the enemy, at its owner's command.

"Wine is Allfather's drink, and its pleasure is thine, 6
if thou only dost reason revere;

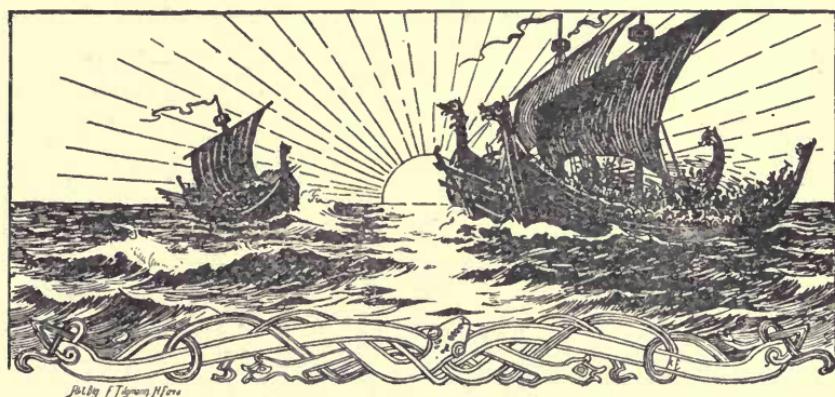
He who reels to the earth can arise,—but to Ran,
to the sleep-giver, totters he here.

"If a trader sail forth, thou mayst safe-guard his ship, 7
but the weak will give toll to the bold!

Thou art king of thy wave, he a slave to his wealth,
and thy steel is as good as his gold.

"On the deck spoils are portioned by dice and by lot, 8
how they fall must thou never complain!

But the sea-king* himself casteth none of the dice,
he the glory alone would retain.



"When a viking is met, there is boarding and strife 9
neath the shield doth the battle wax hot;
If thou yieldest a step, thou art banished from us,—
'tis the law, now determine thy lot!

* "Sea-king, a chief, generally of royal blood, who had no kingdom to inherit at home, and therefore sought one on the water. Higher in title than the vikings, they were also commonly at the head of much more powerful fleets. Every sea-king was a viking, but the reverse was only occasionally the case."—STEVENS.

"Not only the children of kings, but every man of importance, equipped ships and roamed the seas to acquire property by force. At the age of twelve, the sons of the great were in action under mutiny rulers."—HIST. ANG. SAX.

The Viking Cade.

Shaw's Translation. Music by B. CRUZELL, Stockholm.

Voice.

Piano.

Maestoso.

Now he glid-ed a-round o'er the

des-o-late seas, like a plun-der-ing fal-con he

flew: To his com-rades the Vi- king gave man-dates and laws; Wilt thou

hear now the law-code he drew?

- 10 “If thou conquer, enough! He who, reft of his sword,
 sues for peace, is a foeman no more;
Prayer is Valhalla’s child, hear the paling one’s voice;
 he were vile who the prayer would ignore.
- 11 “Wounds are laurels to Vikings, adorning each man
 on whose forehead or breast they may stand.
Let them bleed, bind them not till the end of the day,
 if thou seekest to be of our band!”*
- 12 So he fashioned his code, and on shores far removed
 grew his name more illustrious still;†
Not his equal he found on the blue-tinted sea,
 and his champions fought with a will.
- 13 Yet he sat by the helm, and his sorrowful eye
 did the depths of the billows explore;
“Thou art deep; in thy bosom peace hideth, perchance,
 but above thee it dwelleth no more.
- 14 “If the white god‡ is wroth, let him draw forth his sword;
 I will fall if such fate be my doom;
But he sits in the sky, cloudy thoughts sending down,
 ever veiling my spirit in gloom.”
- 15 Yet when combat comes near, is his hero-heart roused,
 fierce as eagle refreshed by repose;
And his brow is unclouded, his voice high resounds,—
 like the Lightener§ meets he his foes.

*“As in early Greece, piracy was originally in Scandinavia an honorable and glorious path for booty and exploits.”—STEVENS.

†“Wherever he went, waxed Frithiof exceedingly in riches and fame. Wicked and cruel men and grimful Vikings he slew, but the peasants and merchants let he go free. Again, therefore, was he called Frithiof the Bold. Right many men, stout-hearted and true, had he under him, and in all kinds of precious goods abounded he exceedingly.”—SAGA OF FRITHIOF THE BOLD.

‡ Balder.

§ Thor, who is also, and more frequently, denominated “the Thunderer.”

So from conquest to conquest he voyaged in turn, 16
all secure o'er the foam-whitened grave;
And he saw in the Southland both islands and rocks,
till he came to the far Grecian wave.*

When the groves he discerned that stood out of the waves, 17
and the temples that echoed their flow,
What he thought, Freya knows, and the poet knows well,
and ah! lovers, ye know it,—ye know!



GREECE.

“Here our home should have been, here the island, the 18
grove, and the temple my father portrayed;
It was here, it was here, that my loved one I bade,
but all cold in the Northland she staid.

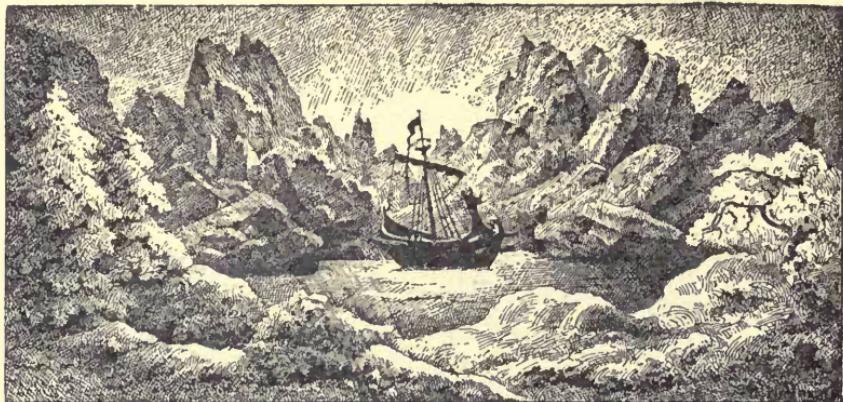
* The beauty of Greece has always been a favorite theme with poets. Thus Byron:
“Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;
Sweet are thy groves and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields.
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The free-born wanderer of thy mountain air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli’s marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.”

- 19 “Dwells not peace in these valleys so sacred and fair,
 hold these columns not memories long?
Like a whisper of love is the fountain’s soft purl,
 and the birds chant a sweet bridal song.
- 20 “Where is Ingeborg now? Am I long since forgot,
 for a monarch time-withered and old?
Ah! I cannot forget; I my life would resign
 if her form I again could behold.
- 21 “Three long years have gone by since my land I have seen,
 where each soul to proud exploits aspires;
Do the glorious mountains yet reach to the skies?
 Is it green in the vales of my sires?
- 22 “On the grave where my father is sleeping, I set
 once a linden-tree,—liveth it now?
And who tendeth the frail one? Give moisture, O earth,
 and thy dews, watchful heaven, give thou!
- 23 “But why longer delay on these waters remote,
 slaying men, or exacting their toll?
I have glory enough, and the glittering gold,
 paltry gold, is despised by my soul.
- 24 “Hangs a flag on the mast, and it points to the North,
 where repose mine own cherished earth;*
I will follow the track of the heavenly winds,
 and once more will set sail for the North!”

* The love of native land has always been pre-eminently strong in the heart of the Scandinavian, especially when he sojourns under foreign skies.
Thus St. Pierre: “Pour aimer sa patrie, il faut la quitter.”



NAERDAL VALLEY, SOGNE.



Canto Sixteenth.

In accordance with his decision, Frithiof has sailed back to the Northland once more.

Ellida lies ice-bound on the strand of Norway.

Frithiof is weary of the restless, wave-tossed ocean, and though opposed by Björn, determines to visit King Ring, and bid Ingeborg one more farewell—forever.

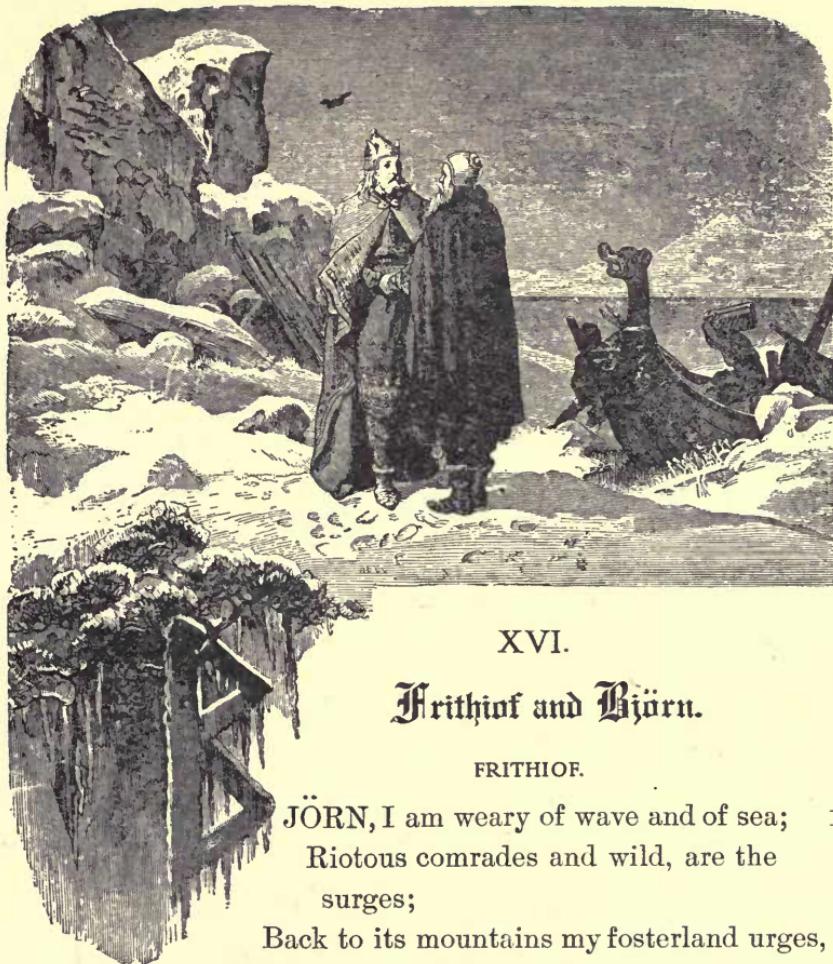
Like truth, love crushed to earth will rise again. It will awaken at sight of temples where once it hoped to dwell; at the bridal-songs of silvery-voiced birds recalling the days of other years; at the low murmuring of fountains reiterating long-silent strains; or at the sudden perception of some unusual odor—some blossom-dust of unearthly sweetness—some ravishing fragrance wafted from a Southern rose-bower or tropical grove—recalling an infinitely tender, earth-obscured, but never-perishing memory.

Over the soul of Frithiof sweeps this wakened memory, like the entrancing harmony of a harp-tone borne over the water on the soft breeze of a summer evening. And then all other thoughts become as nothing to him. Love dominates all. Not all his champions could dissuade him from his rash decision and perious design.

Björn beseeches him not to go, except to slay the enemy, and then not alone. But fearing nothing, he sets out with his staff, unattended, over the snow-covered fields and hills.

Frithiof has changed. His defiance of the norns has abated. His viking life seems wrong to him. His subdued nature can less easily endure the wrath of the offended Balder. Revenge now sleeps. Hatred is dead. The tempest of his outraged spirit has spent its fury. With what interest we follow this subdued but un-crushed man in his journey over the pathless snow to-day!





XVI.

Frithiof and Björn.

FRITHIOF.

JÖRN, I am weary of wave and of sea; 1

Riotous comrades and wild, are the
surges;

Back to its mountains my fosterland urges,
Becks with a wondrous allurement to me.

Happy is he by his land unforsaken,
Banished by none from his ancestors' graves!

Long, ah! too long is the voyage I've taken,
Outlawed, and tossed on these turbulent waves.

BJÖRN.

Good is the ocean, now cease thy complaining; 2

Freedom and joy ever dwell on its breast;

Naught do they know of effeminate rest,—

Ceaseless rejoice they o'er waves to be reigning.

When I am old, to the green-growing earth
I, like the grass, will be clinging tenacious;
Now, on the ship, war and wine are my mirth,
Now smileth sorrow-free pleasure so gracious.

FRITHIOF.

- 3 Now does the ice press our ship to the land,—
 Hard round its keel the dead waters now slumber.
 Not all the long winter months would I number
Here amid rocks on a desolate strand.
 North would I turn, as the Yule season presses,*
Both of King Ring and my lost bride a guest,—
 Once more would gaze on her golden-hued tresses,
Listen once more to her accents so blest.

BJÖRN.

- 4 Good! I approve; Viking vengeance is rapture.
 Let the old king feel the brunt of its might;
 Fire we his court at the mid hour of night,†
Singe his gray locks, and the fair one then capture!
 Or, if we find not unworthy the king,
Chance thou wouldst fight him for causes not meager,
 Out on the ice-plain an isle-duel bring,—‡
Whate'er thou wilt, I am ready and eager.

*Jul signifies the season of Christmas, and seems to derive its etymology from "holi," a wheel.

†In Old Runic Fasti, a wheel was used to denote the Festival of Christmas, and it was so called because of the return of the sun's annual course after the winter solstice."—BEDE.

‡"By night or by day, the fire-brand indeed supplied an ordinary and most formidable weapon for the assailance of wooden walls."—STRONG.

‡"Challenges to single combat on some island or rock on the coast (that there might neither be deceit, assistance, nor escape) were the common amende of offended Scandinavian honor. The whole system of the old Northern States rested upon Individualism carried to an enormous excess. Its necessary consequence, 'might is right,' club-law, followed; and at last the liberties of the people fell.

Great battles were sometimes fought 'on the ice,' as the mountainous regions offered few plains fitted for that purpose."—STEVENS.

"An island-trip (*holmgång*) for the purpose of deadly combat was so ordinary a proceeding with the Scandinavian freebooters, that the expression became synonymous with 'duel,' and is so used in the *Sögur*."—STRONG.



ELLIDA ICE-BOUND.

FRITHIOF.

- 5 Speak not of fire, and of war think no more!
 Peace to King Ring will from me find expression;
 Neither the king nor his queen wrought transgression;
 Vengeance of gods was my recompense sore.*
 Little of hope in mine earth-life remaineth,
I would once more greet the one I hold dear,—
 One last farewell! And when Spring anew reigneth,
Sooner perchance, I again will be here.

BJÖRN.

- 6 Frithiof, no pardon is due to thy madness,—
 Sighing and mourning a false one's deceit!
 Earth is, alas! with fair women replete;
One may be gone, yet a thousand give gladness.
 If thou desire, where the Southern sun glows
I'll go and ship thee a cargo of others
 Tame as young lambs, and as red as the rose,—
Then draw we lots, or divide them as brothers.

FRITHIOF.

- 7 Björn, thou art candid and happy as Frey;
 Valiant in war, thou with counsel o'erflowest;
 Oden and Thor thou assuredly knowest,
Yet dost from Freya divine turn away,
 Not all the powers of the gods may we number,—
Have thou a care, lest her ire thee o'ertake!
 Sooner or later, the sparks that now slumber
Both in gods' bosoms and men's will awake.

BJÖRN.

- 8 Go not alone, lest thy way be disputed.

* For his unintentional destroying of Balder's image and the temple.

FRITHIOF.

Lone go I not, since my sword waits on me.

BJÖRN.

Hagbart,* recall'st thou, was hanged to a tree!

FRITHIOF.

He who is captured, to hanging is suited.

BJÖRN.

But shouldst thou fall, to avenge thee I'll dwell,—
Carve on thy slayer the blood-eagle glowing.[†]

FRITHIOF.

That will be needless, O Björn! The cock's crowing—
Longer than I will he hear not. Farewell!

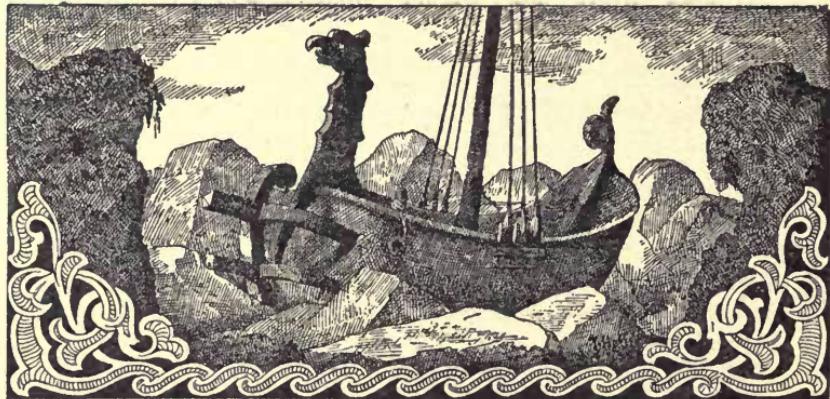
* A Norwegian priuce, whose interesting story will be found in Canto XVII, foot-note.

† When an enemy was to be put to death in an unusually atrocious manner, the picture of an eagle was carved on his back, the ribs being thus severed from the back-bone, and the lungs drawn out through the opening. This inhuman vengeance was wrought only upon "detested enemies" or "the most wretched villains."

"Signum noctuae (v. aquilae) incisum tergo hosti superati, et ita post dissectas utrinque costas omnes a tergo pulmones per hanc aperturam extrahebantur, cruento et barbaro olim Normannorum et Francorum more."—RASK.

Thus Ivan, grandson of King Ring, put to death Kiug Ella, of Northumberland. See p. 300, note.





Canto Seventeenth.

Disguised as an old man in a bear-skin mantle, Frithiof enters the hall of King Ring at the Yule-tide feast. The courtiers deride him, but he seizes one of the number, and with one hand spins him around in such a manner as to frighten thoroughly his on-looking companions.

The King commands the stranger to approach and let fall his disguise. He recognizes the youthful hero, but divulges not his recognition,—appearing to believe him a ship-wrecked mariner.

Nor did it require the arm-ring or Angurvadel, both of which Frithiof bore, to reveal his identity to Ingeborg, the Queen, who trembled and blushed and paled when she passed him the mead-horn as directed by the King. The guest knew she recognized him, and still loved him.

Frithiof's bold and chivalric manner seemed to secure him the King's hospitable invitation to be a guest during the winter, which was accepted.

And a skald took up the harp and sang a song of Northern love and the glories of Valhalla's heroes, and a jolly Yule carousal ensued, such as occurs but once per year,—until sleep spread his welcome wings over all.

The old Saga of Frithiof the Bold thus states of the hero: "Of great consideration was he, and highly was he esteemed by all; for generous he was in gifts, and kind-hearted and cheerful towards every man. Little and seldom spoke the Queen to him, but by the King he was regarded ever with a glad and smiling countenance."





XVII.

Friðfinn Comes to King Ring.

KING RING upon his high-seat drank mead 1
at Christmas tide;
His queen so white and rose-red was seated at
his side.

Not unlike Spring and Autumn they looked, as
one would see;
She was the blooming Spring-time, the Autumn
chill was he.

An aged stranger entered within the royal hall, 2
From head to foot invested in rough and shaggy pall;
A staff his hand held feebly, and bended he had grown,
Yet high above all others the old man's form was shown.

- 3 Upon a bench he sat him, the nearest to the door,—
'Tis yet the poor man's station, as in the days of yore;
The courtiers laughed reviling, with interchanging stare,
And pointed at the stranger in shaggy hide of bear.
- 4 Then flashed with speed of lightning the stranger's twin
eyes bright,—
He seized with one hand quickly a youth before their sight
Then up and down he twirled him, yet cautious ne'er to
harm,
While dumb stood all the others—as we would—in
alarm!
- 5 "What means all this commotion? Who breaks the court's
repose?
Come up to me, thou old man, thyself to me disclose!
What is thy name? What wouldest thou? Whence comest
thou, make known!"
To nook-screened guest the monarch thus spoke in angry
tone.
- 6 "O king, much thou enquirest, but I will answer thee:
My name to thee I give not, belongs it but to me;
My fosterland was Sorrow, my heritage was Need;
from the Wolf came hither, whose bed I've shared indeed
- 7 "In youthful days so joyous I rode the dragon's back;
The strongest wings he lifted, and safe pursued his track;
But now he lies disabled and frozen near the land,
And I myself, now aged, burn salt upon the strand.*

* "Perhaps the appellation (salt-seether, or salt-burner) alluded to the old practice mentioned by Pliny, of pouring the salt-water—*muria*—over burning embers, which produced a black salt."—*SVEA RIK. HIST.*

At any rate, the occupation of precipitating salt from the sea-water seemed to pertain to the poorest class of people.

"I came to see thy wisdom, illustrious everywhere, 8
But I was met with jeering, and jeers I will not bear;
One fool by belt I lifted, and spun him round and round,
But trust, since he unharmed is, thy pardon will be found."

"Not illy," said the monarch, "dost thou select each word; 9
The aged should be honored; come sit thou at my board!
Let fall thy cloak transforming, that all may see thee clear;
Disguise destroyeth gladness; I would have gladness here."

Straight from the guest's head falleth the shaggy hood, 10
in truth;
Where stood an old man hoary, now stands a graceful
youth;
And from his lofty forehead, o'er shoulders broad, unfold
And float the shining ringlets, like rippling waves of gold.

He stood before them glorious, in velvet mantle blue 11
And hand-broad belt of silver, with forest beasts in view;
To each the skillful artist a form embossed had given,
And round the hero's girdle each beast by each was driven.

The arm-ring's golden circle his massive arm sustained; 12
His battle sword hung by him, like lightning well
restrained;
With hero-glance serenly he scanned the guest-hall o'er,
And stood as fair as Balder, and tall as Asa-Thor.

Amazed, the queen's cheeks pallid a sudden color show, 13
As Northern lights of crimson paint fields of spotless snow;
As two white water-lilies, when storm the heaven cleaves,
Stand rocking on the wave-crests,—her trembling bosom
heaves.



TRITHOF AT THE COURT OF KING RING.—Kepler.

A trumpet stirred the guest-hall! Silence each voice 14
came o'er;

This was the hour for vowing, and in was brought Frey's
boar;*

His huge mouth held an apple, a wreath his shoulders
graced,

And on a silver platter his bended knees were placed.

And now King Ring arising, with silvery flowing hair, 15
Doth straightway touch the boar's head, and thus his vow
declare:[†]

"I swear to conquer Frithiof, though great he be in war!
So help me Frey and Oden, and likewise mighty Thor!"

Forthwith the lofty stranger arose with haughty glance, 16
And flash of hero's anger illumed his countenance;
He smote the board with sword-stroke that through the
mead-hall rang,

And from their oaken benches the watchful warriors
sprang!

"And now, Sir King, attend thou, and hear my solemn 17
vow:

Young Frithiof is my kinsman, the youth full well I know;
I swear to safe-guard Frithiof against the world allied!
So help my norn propitious, and my good sword beside!"

* The custom of serving the whole boar, swan or peacock, stuffed, as well as of vowing, with the hand laid upon the head or back of the victim, were in strictly prescribed form.

† "On Christmas eve it was customary to lead out a boar, which was consecrated to Frey, and which was called the atonement boar. On this the persons present laid their hands and made solemn vows."—NORSE MYTHOLOGY.

The boar's head used to be the first course at Christmas, with a carol, usually beginning thus:

"Caput Apri deferro
Reddens laudes Domino.
The Bore's Heade in hande bring I,
With garlandes gay and rosemary,
I pray you all syngे merrily,
Qui estis in convivio."



To which the king said smiling: "Right haughty is thy 18
word,

But in the halls of Northland, the king's guest shall be
heard.

The horn, O queen, replenish for him with wine the best!
And here I trust the stranger will winter as our guest."

The queen then lifts the beaker before her placed,—a 19
horn

Treasured and of great value, from head of urus* torn;
On feet of shining silver, with many a golden ring,
It stands, while antique emblems and runes around it cling.

With downcast eyes to Frithiof she gives the horn well 20
filled,

But tremulous her hand is, and wine is on it spilled;
As evening's purple colors upon the lily lie,
The crimson wine-drops, glowing, her snowy fingers dye.

The guest received with gladness the gift of noble queen; 22
No two men could have drained it, that in this age
are seen;

But to the queen's own honor, the hero, at one draught,†
With ease and no delaying, the ruby liquid quaffed.

*A huge wood-ox, or bison, once inhabiting the forests of central Europe. Cæsar (De Bello Gallico) spoke of it as nearly equal to the elephant in size, and of great strength, swiftness and fierceness, and with large, sharp, spreading horns.

Some naturalists consider it the wild original of the domestic ox.

The urus-horn was a trophy of honor among the German youth.

Drinking-horns were made also of ox-horn, ivory or wood, usually highly polished. Feet of gold or silver were often provided, that the horn need not be drained at one potation.

†The capacity to drain a mead-horn at a single imbibition was regarded as an achievement to be loftily lauded, and a most illustrious hero-attribute.

The tossing off of the contents of a fifteen-inch-around cornucopæ at a single draught, by Ulphus before the altar at York, affords a strong presumption that capacity and elasticity may be simultaneously the cause and result of each other.

"Now I fancied that I could discover the meaning of old Anacreon in some of his Bacchanalian expreſſions, from the manner in which these Grecian topers drank, many of whom filled two and others even three goblets with wine; then taking up one with the right hand, they applied it to their lips, pouring the contents of the other two into it with the left, and never moving the cup from the mouth till the whole of the liquor was dispatched; these triplets were received by the rest of the company with unbounded applause.—TRAVELS IN GREECE AND ALBANA.



HAGBART AND SIGNE.

Then seated at the table, a skald his harp drew forth,* 22
And sang a tender saga—a love-tale of the North—
Of Hagbart[†] and fair Signe,[†] and at the deep tones blest,
The hardest heart was melted within its steel-clad breast.

He sang of courts of Valhall, of heroes' well-earned peace, 23
Of daring fathers' exploits on battle-fields and seas;
Each hand its sword was grasping, the fiery glance was cast,
And round the noisy feast-hall the drinking-horn went fast.

And now flow rich potations within the regal house, 24
In downright Yule-time revel the champions all carouse;
Till free from care or sorrow at length they seek repose;
But by his beauteous consort King Ring's tired eyelids close.

* "At the court of Harald Hårfager, the skalds sat on the high-seat close to the monarch, and were held in greater estimation than any of his nobles."—GEJER.

[†]Hagbart, a prince of Norway, son of a king of Trondheim, in a viking cruise met and battled with Alf and Alger, sons of the Danish king, Sigar.

After a fierce struggle, an alliance was concluded, and Hagbart returned with the two brothers to the Danish court, as their guest.

There a strong affection at once sprang up between the hero and the princess Signe, sister of Alf and Alger, and vows of betrothal were exchanged. But the two brothers enraged at this unexpected turn, brought combat against Hagbart, who in saving himself slew them both, and then effected his escape.

His love for Signe, however, soon brought him back, disguised as a shield-maid; and despite the suspicion his large hands and hard-worn feet excited among the attendants, he was admitted to her presence, and found her heart unchanged. Again she pledged eternal fidelity, vowing she would not survive him, should he be overtaken by death in the Danish halls.

But Hagbart was betrayed by the maidens, his identity as the murderer of the princes established by the warriors, who burst into Signe's apartments and made him prisoner, and he was doomed by the Ting to be executed.

As he is about to ascend the ladder, he asks that his mantle be hung on the tree-made scaffold, as a signal to Signe of his approaching death. It is granted.

His love looks from the window of her maidens' room, sees the awful scene, and pursuant to her vow fires the apartment with her torch, and kills herself. As she and her disloyal maids thus meet their fiery death, Hagbart triumphantly exclaims:

" Swing me quickly into the air. In Valhall shall we be reunited, and future times shall remember our love and our death!"

The story of Hagbart and Signe is but one of a multitude of subjects worthy the pen of the tragic opera librettist and composer, and abounding in the fruitful fields of Northern romance.



Frithiof Comes to King Ring,

Shaw's Translation.

*(Sung in imitation of
the Ballad-style) by G.S.*

Voice.

All? Moderato.

Piano.

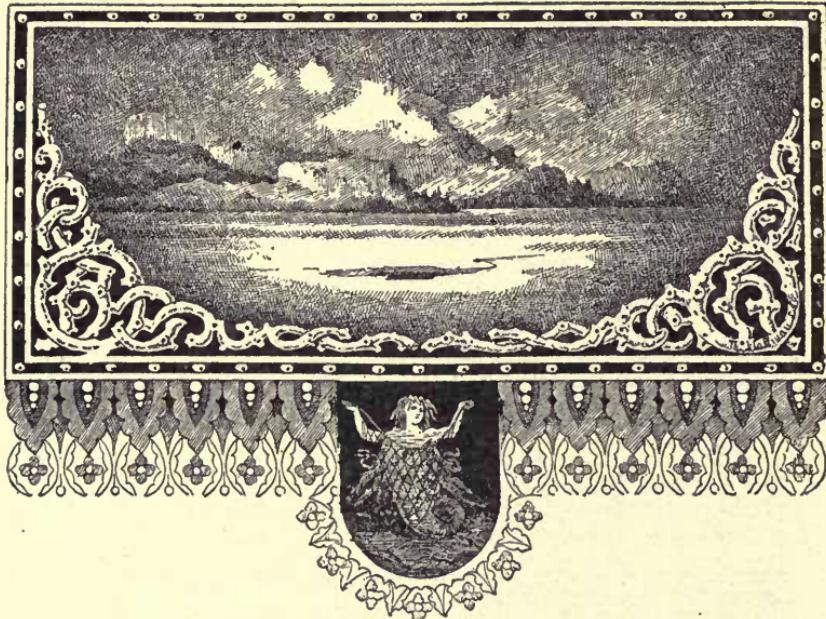
The musical score consists of four staves of music. The top staff is for the Voice, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. The lyrics begin with "King Ring up - on his". The second staff is for the Piano, showing a harmonic progression with various chords. The third staff continues the vocal line with "high - seat drank mead at Christ - mas tide; His". The fourth staff continues with "queen so white and rose - red was seat - ed at his". The fifth staff begins with "side, Not un - like Spring and Au - tumn they". The piano part continues throughout all staves, providing harmonic support.

looked, as one would see; She was the bloom - ing

Spring - time, the Au - tumn chill was he. She

was the bloom - ing Spring - time, the Au - tumn chill was
he,

he,



Canto Eighteenth.

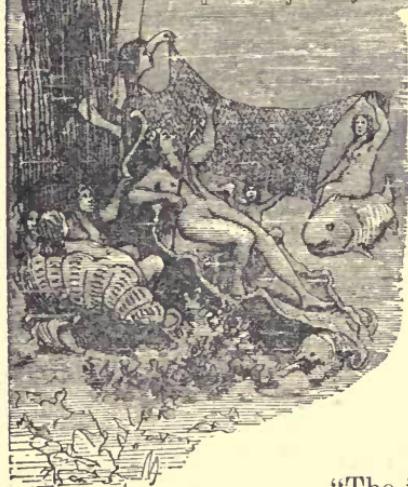
King Sigurd Ring learns to love Frithiof, whose heroic and noble characteristics shine forth during the season of his entertainment at the royal court; he is constantly denominated "the stranger," by both King and Queen.

The King finds in him a faithful friend and companion. Frithiof seems content to see Ingeborg, without conversing with her.

But one day, when the King and Queen drive across the fjord in their sledge, Frithiof, who, with other courtiers, accompanies them on his skates, watchful and ready at the moment of danger, succeeds in pulling their steed from a chink of the suddenly broken ice into which both horse and sledge are descending (while the insidious Rana has eagerly spread her net below; in manner accustomed, for her anticipated prey), and thus saves the lives of his host and hostess.

"In the mind of a Northman," as Strong has so aptly expressed it, "his sledge is inseparably connected with pleasing associations of festive and friendly intercourse. With the gliding laminae that arm his foot are bound up many cherished recollections of the enterprising hunter; perchance of the veteran skielöber fighting over again his battles, when the snow-skates of his stripling are braced on. The subject of this canto, therefore, far from descending beneath the dignity of the Muse, has all the grandeur of nationality; and it were as rational for an artist depicting the clime, to omit the representation of its most characteristic feature, as for a poet, delineating its manly sons, to ignore their traveling costume."

It is on the deck of his ship, seated in his ice-canoe, or mounted upon his skid, that the Northman displays his generic peculiarities."



XVIII.

The Ice-Ride.

KING RING to a banquet ¹
would drive with his queen;
Like a mirror the ice o'er the
fjord is seen.

"Choose not the ice-journey," ²
the stranger said;
"The ice will break,—deep its frigid
bed."

Said Ring: "The king is not easily drowned; ³
Who fears, let him circle the bay around."

A glance foreboding the stranger cast,
And quickly his skates to his feet made fast. ⁴

5 The spirited sledge-trotter springs ahead,*
Breathes flame from his nostrils, he is so glad.

6 "Strike out," cried the monarch, "my courser good,
And prove if thou camest of Sleipner's* blood!"

* "The horse, though a more efficient animal than the reindeer, and employed in Norway as our poet describes, is evidently far less in unison with a sledge than the horned coursier of the moss fell. The mountain Lap, his wild steed and rude car, seem to be natural confederates."—STRONG.

The inseparability of the sledge and the reindeer will perhaps afford sufficient apology for the lyric gem of Franzen here presented, of which I have endeavored to give a literal paraphrase:

THE LAPLANDER'S SONG.

Fly, my reindeer fleet,
Over hill and plain!
In my love's domain
Welcome shalt thou meet;
Plenteous moss below
Holds the drifted snow.

Ah! So short the day,
And the way so long!
Speed thee with my song!
Let us haste away!
Here no rest is found,
Only wolves abound.

Mark you eagle's flight;
Blest be wings indeed!
See you cloudlet speed!
Were I on its height,—
Might I thee descry,
With thy smiling eye;—

Thee whose image mild
Straight this heart o'ercame;
So with reindeer tame
Harness we the wild!
Swift as torrents roll,
Moves to thee my soul.

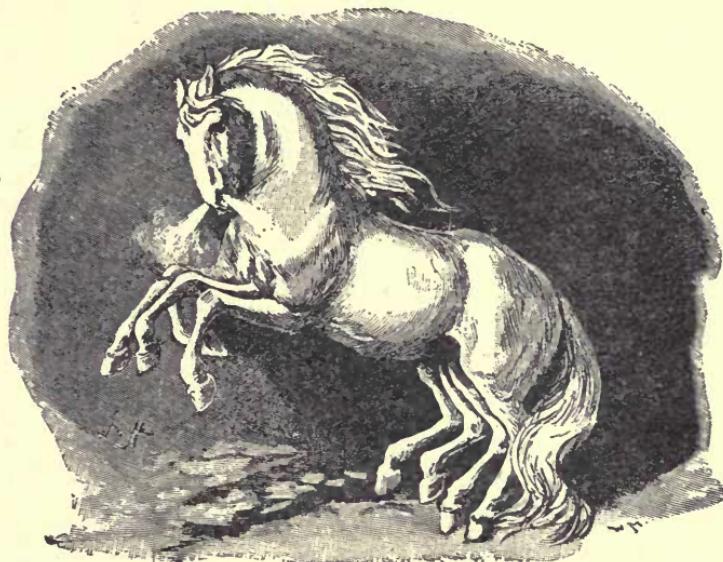
All the night and day
Since mine eyes met thine,
Myriad thoughts are mine;
Myriad are they;
Yet but one alone,—
That thou be mine own.

Though from me thou hide
By the valley's stone,
Or with reindeer flown
In the pineland bide,
Vain retreat were thine,—
Vain were stone and pine.

Fly, my reindeer kind,
On long journey bent!
By my sweetheart's tent
Welcome shalt thou find;
Stores of moss repose
Neath the veiling snows.

They flew as the tempest flies over the wave; 7
The king no heed to the queen's prayers gave.

The steel-shod stranger stands never still,8
But skates before and around them at will.



SLEIPNER.*

He carves ice-runes as he swiftly glides,9
And Ingeborg fair o'er her own name rides.

So travel they swift on their glassy way,10
While neath them would treacherous Ran betray.

* The eight-footed gray horse of Oden, in swiftness exceeding the wind. Sleipner signifies slipper, slider.

"The ash, Yggdrasil,
Is best of trees;
Skidbladnir of ships;
Oden of asas;
Sleipner of horses;
Bifröst of bridges;
Brage of skalds;
Habrok of hawks,
And Garmer of hounds."—GRIMNER'S SONG.

Sleipner typifies the winds that blow from the eight directions.

† "In Skåne and Bleking, Sweden, it was customary to leave a sheaf of grain in the field for Oden's horse, to keep him from treading down their grain."—ANDERSON.



X.

Her silver roof she asunder rends,—
And into the crevice the sledge descends!

11

Then Ingeborg's cheeks take the hue of death,—
But the stranger is there on the whirlwind's breath.

12

He plants his skate in the ice with speed,
And grasps the mane of the trembling steed.

13

Then easily swings he, at one swift bound,
Both courser and sledge to the ice-plain sound.

14

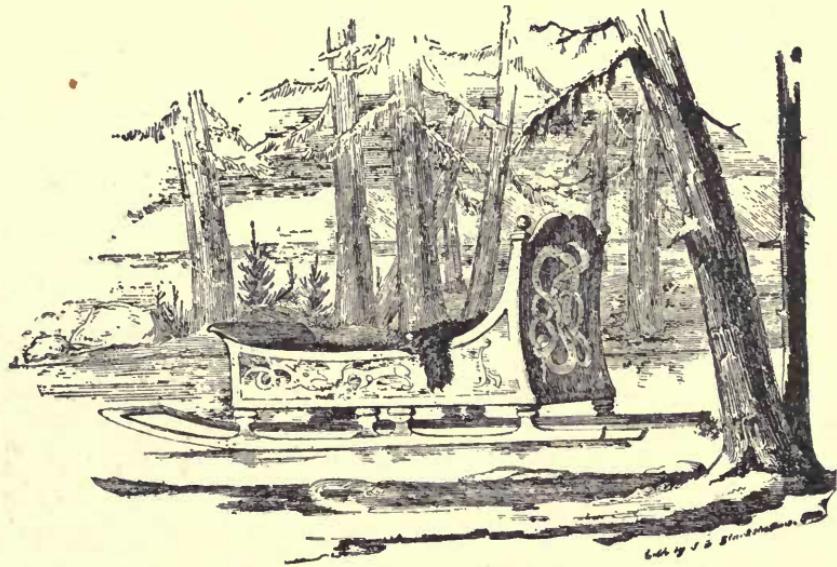
"That stroke," cried Ring, "will I prize, my son;
Not Frithiof the Strong could have better done!"

15

So they turned again to the hall of the king,
Where tarried the guest till return of spring.

16





KING RING'S SLEDGE.

The Ice Ride.

Shaw's Translation.

Nurs = Anonymous
Sordish original.

Wojciech

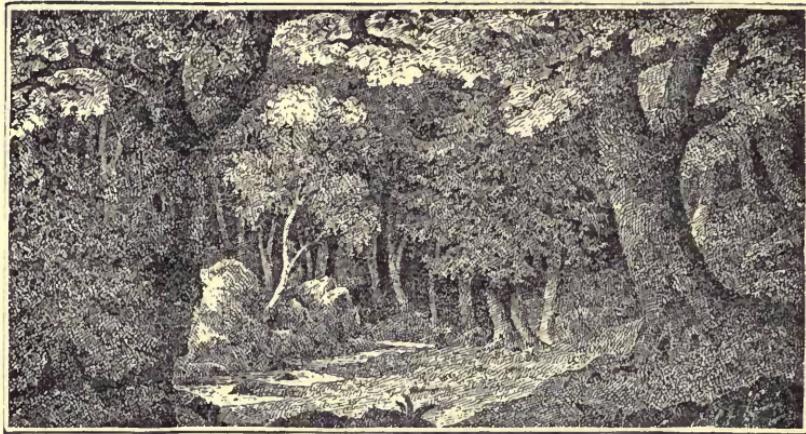
King Ring to a ban-quet would

Wianp.

drive with his queen; Like a mir - ror the ice o'er the fjord is

seen. La- la-

la! Like a mir - ror the ice o'er the fjord is seen.



Canto Nineteenth.

That Frithiof's nobility, heroism and fidelity have already been recognized and revered in the loftiest degree by King Ring, is evinced by the extreme test to which the host now feels personally secure in subjecting these qualities of his guest. He simulates sleep, with his head upon the youthful hero's knee, and this at a time when they are alone and unseen, having delayed behind the other members of the hunting party.

Loke's embodiment, a coal-black bird, from a bough voices his murderous chant. But hark! A snow-white bird sings his peace-bearing strain, and prevails. Afar hurlis Frithiof his sword. The coal-black bird flies down to Nastrand; the snow-white bird soars up to Valhalla. Its sweet song falls like a benediction on his ear.

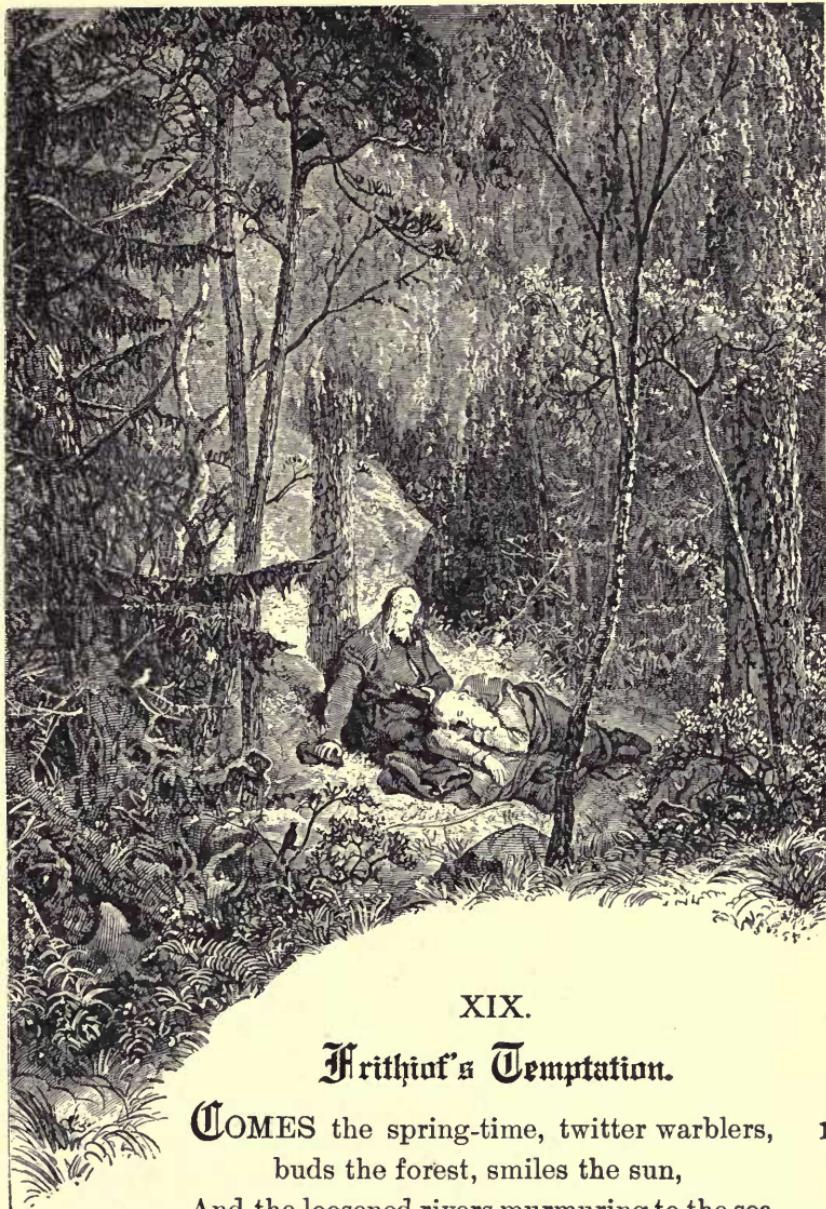
Unlike the Lydian Tantalus, Frithiof has had the power to still the wind that ceaselessly blew the overhanging fruit from his reach; like the mighty Fenris, he has submitted, in conscious Samsonian manner, to voluntary enchainment, and thus has attained the greatest of all victories.

"From cities stormed or battles won,
No glory can accrue;
By this, the hero best is known,—
He can himself subdue."

King Ring arouses himself. He has seen and understood the great temptation and the greater triumph. Then he shows his admiration of Frithiof's integrity by offering him sonship and a home until his own death shall also restore to him his lost Ingeborg.

"I thank thee, O King, but already have I tarried too long. Once more desired I to behold my bride, and depart. Fool that I was! My heart-flames burst forth more wildly than before. I am an exile. No peace remains for me. I must be tossed by wind and wave, and bear the wrath of the offended god who will not forgive.

"Bear me, my good Ellida, afar on my billows once more,—far as the stars shall guide, far as the thunder's voice is heard. Glad shall I fall, and rise purified to the pardon on earth denied."



XIX.

Friðlef's Temptation.

COMES the spring-time, twitter warblers, 1
 buds the forest, smiles the sun,
And the loosened rivers murmuring to the sea
 are dancing on;

Glowing like the cheeks of Freya, from their buds the
 roses glance,

And in human hearts awaken hope and love to radiance.

- 2 For the chase the old king longeth, and the queen must
with him go,
All the court is now assembling, and in varied garb
aglow;
Bows are twanging, quivers rattling, stallions restless
paw the ground,
And the hungry hooded-falcons shriek upon their prey
to bound.*



A FALCON HUNT.
(From the Bayeux tapestry.)

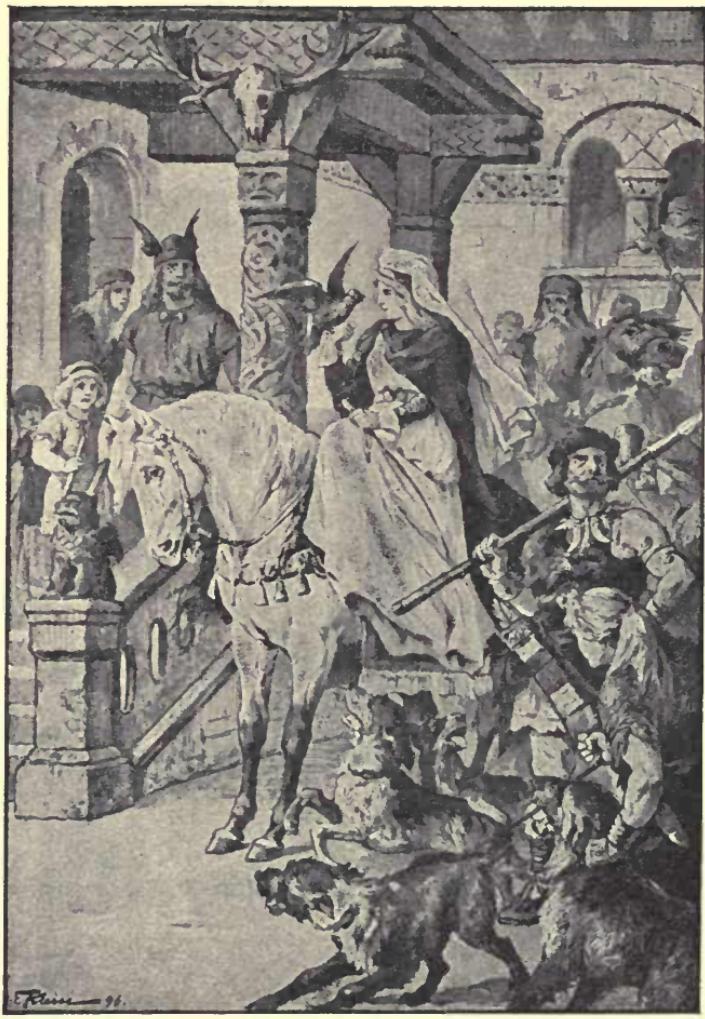
- 3 See! The hunting queen is coming! Wretched Frithiof,
veil thy sight!
Like a star in sky of spring-time sits she on her pacer
white,—
Half a Freya, half a Rota,[†] far more beauteous than the
two,
While above her hat of purple wave aloft the feathers
blue.

* The Northmen were devoted to the chase, deriving therefrom supplies for food and clothing, and employing hawks and hounds, the training of which Tacitus mentions as an early art of the North.

Queen Elizabeth was extremely fond of the chase.

“A special hunt.”—I translate from Fabricius—“was the falcon hunt, which was in early times already known in the North; and foreign kings, as the English King John, bought falcons in Denmark. This bird of prey was trained to hunt other birds in flight. The falcon-hunter must ride on a horse, to be able to travel with the rapid chase over sticks and stones. On his left hand carried he the hawk. When he saw some prey, with a throw he suddenly loosed the bird, which rose in the air, and with the speed of lightning dropped down upon its victim. Its sure sight, sharp claws and sharp, bent beak usually gave it the victory over its prey. Not only in Denmark and Norway was this sort of hunt common, but also in Iceland. Several Northern kings are embroidered in the tapestry, with a hawk upon the hand or at the side.”—HIST. OF DENMARK.

† One of the Valkyries, spoken of in the Edda (Gylfag.) as an equestrian, leading the heroes on to combat.



THE HUNTING PARTY.

- 4 Dwell not on those eyes supernal, look not on those
locks of gold!
Of that lithesome waist be wary, to those ample charms
be cold!
Gaze not on the rose and lily ever changing on her
cheek,—
Be thou deaf to those dear accents that like vernal
breezes speak!
- 5 Now the hunting band is ready. Hear the horn's
resounding call
Over hill and dale, while upward soars the hawk to
Oden's hall.
And the forest-tenants fleeing seek their homes in
many a cave,
While pursuing come valkyries who their spears before
them wave.*
- 6 Old King Ring cannot long follow where the wandering
huntsmen fly,
And alone with him rides Frithiof, with grave heart and
silently;
Dark and cheerless meditations in his tortured breast
have grown,
And where'er his eye is turning, still he hears their
mournful tone.
- 7 "Why did I forsake the ocean, to mine own destruction
blind?
On the wave no grief can flourish, driven afar by
heavenly wind.

*This pastime also prevailed in much of Europe. Fingal had a thousand hunters. Alfred the Great was described as a "most expert and active hunter" before he was twelve years of age. Walter, Bp. of Rochester, made hunting his sole employment at the age of eighty, to the sad neglect of his office.

Broods the Viking? Perils gather, and invite him to
the dance;

Then his somber musings vanish, dazzled by the
weapons' glance.

"But alas! Here all is altered; longings strange, and all 8
untold,

Wave their wings around my forehead, and my soul in
dreams enfold;

Balder's grove is ever with me, and the oath is youthful
now

She there swore,—she did not break it,—'twas the grim
gods broke the vow!



Print by J. Johnson

SOGNE FJÄLLEN.
(From Balder's Strand.)

Lock by J Z Blackadder, Scm

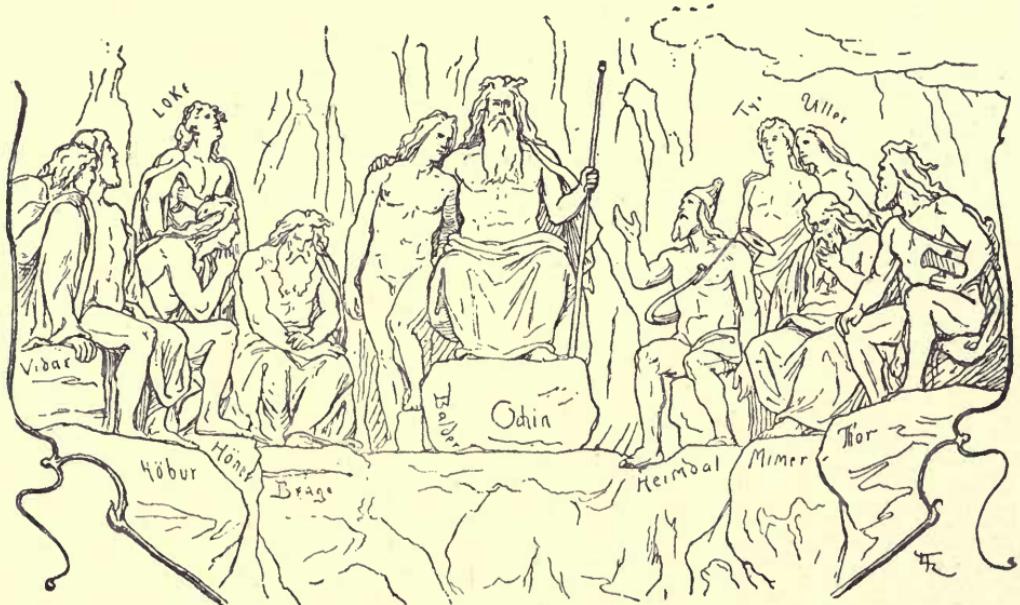
"For, despising all that's human, angered by all pleasures 9
blest,

Of my rose-bud they have robbed me, planting it in
Winter's breast.

What would Winter with my floweret? Comprehends
he not its price,
But his freezing breath is shrouding bud and leaf and
stem in ice."

- 10 Thus repined he. They had entered then a solitary
dale,
Dark and narrowed, 'twixt the mountains (birch and
alders there prevail),
When the king dismounted, saying, "Cool and sweet
the woodlands smile!
I am weary,—let us tarry! I would slumber here
awhile."
- 11 "Here, O king, thou must not slumber, for the ground
is hard and cold;
Sleep will come not;—up! I'll bear thee to thy palace,
monarch old."
"Sleep, like other gods, approaches when no signs are
manifest;
Will my guest not," said the old man, "grant his host
an hour of rest?"
- 12 Then the guest removed his mantle, made upon the
ground a bed,
And on Frithiof's knee the sovereign quickly laid his
trusting head,
Slept as calm as sleeps the hero after battle's wild
alarm
On 'his shield,—as calm as slumbers babe upon its
mother's arm.

* Here is an opportunity, and an inviting one, to avenge the destruction of his life, to remove the barrier betwixt himself and his love, to attain his only desideratum. The hero tramples it beneath his feet.



THE ASAS.

- 13 As he slumbers, hark! A coal-black bird is singing
from a bough:
“Haste thee, Frithiof, slay the gray-beard, end the bat-
tle with him now!
Take his queen; to thee, her bride-groom, once the
trysting kiss she gave;
Here no mortal eye can see thee,—deep the silence of
the grave!”—
- 14 Frithiof listens; hush! A snow-white bird is singing
from a tree:
“Though no mortal eye behold thee, Oden’s eyes un-
failing see;
Craven, wouldst thou murder slumber? Wouldst an
old man helpless slay?
Though thou win, a hero’s glory must be won another
way.”*
- 15 Thus the two birds sang; but Frithiof quickly seized
his sword of war,
Hurling it in terror from him to the dusky grove
afar.
Flew the coal-black bird to Nastrand,† —but upon twin
pinions light
Soared the other like a harp-tone tuneful toward the
sunshine bright.
- 16 Soon the aged king awakens: “Much did that brief rest
accord!
In the shade one sleeps so sweetly, shielded by a hero’s
sword.

* “Gifted birds, or rather spirits in their shape, are a ‘divine machinery,’ frequently introduced in the ballads and sagas of the North.”—STEVENS.

“Many also in the North, as in idolatrous Israel, asserted that they could under-
stand the cries of birds, so that they became a language studied with great zeal both by
kings and peasants.”—LOGAN.



Yet, where is thy sword, O stranger? Lightning's
brother —where is he?

Who hath parted you, that never each from each should
parted be?"

17 Frithiof said: "It matters nothing; swords enough are
in the North;

Sharp the tongue of sword, O monarch; ne'er for concord
speaks it forth.

In its steel dwell evil spirits from the dusky Nifel-
hem,*

Sleep is not from them protected, locks of silver madden
them!"

18 "Sleep has not, O youth, enwrapped me; I thy faith
have verified;

For a prudent one ne'er trusteth man or battle-blade
untried.

Thou art Frithiof; and I knew thee when thou in my
hall hadst stepped;

Old King Ring discerned the secret which his wise
guest would have kept.

19 "Why didst thou, disguised and nameless, seek my
dwelling and my grace?

Why, if not his bride to wheedle from the aged king's
embrace?

In the guest-hall, Frithiof, Honor never nameless doth
advance;

Like the sun, her shield is shining, and sincere her
countenance.

* The nebulous world, the world of cold and darkness, in whose midst is the fountain Hvergelmir, whence flow twelve ice-cold streams, and where dwells the dragon Nidhögg. To this nethermost of the nine worlds rode Oden on Sleipner, to inquire after the fate of Balder. See page 129.

"Sagas told of one called Frithiof, feared alike by gods 20
and men,

Who with equal valor pressing, cleft a shield or burned
a fane;

Soon with war-shields—I suspected—would he move
against this land;

And he came;—but in torn vestments with a beggar's
staff in hand.



"Wherefore stand with eyes now downcast? Once I too 21
was young, in truth;

From its morn is life a struggle, but its fiercest* time is
youth;

Youth must needs be pressed in battle, till its frenzied
mood be tamed;

I have proved thee and forgiven, and in pity have not
blamed.

"Thou canst see I am grown aged, soon must sleep 22
within my shrine;

Therefore, youth, receive my kingdom! Take my queen;
she, too, is thine;

Be my son, till then abiding in my palace as before!

Let a swordless champion guard me, let old feuds sleep
evermore."

*Lit. "berserk." The berserk's paroxysm, at first feigned, later became genuine.

"It was their custom (the sons of Angrim) if at any time with their men alone they found the berserk-course overtaking them, to disembark and vent their fury on rocks and trees; for they had been so unfortunate as to kill their own men when this fit came upon them."—HERVARAR SAGA.

- 23 Frithiof answers sadly: "Never as a thief came I to thee;
Had I sought thy queen to capture, who were strong to
frustrate me?
But a nameless longing filled me, ah! once more, my
bride to view;
Madman was I! For I kindled all the smouldering
flames anew.
- 24 "In thy halls too long delaying, I no more will be thy
guest;
All the wrath of gods embittered on my conscious head
doth rest.
Balder, of the locks all golden, he who holds each mor-
tal dear,
Me of all my race despises, I alone renounced appear.
- 25 "Yea, I burned his sacred temple; fane-profaner me
they call;
At my name shriek little children, joy departeth from
the hall.
Banished from his angered country must the lost son
dwell apart;
I am outlawed in my homeland, I am outlawed in my
heart.
- 26 "Not upon the earth green-growing will I seek for
peace long past,
Burns the ground beneath my footstep, trees o'er me
no shadows cast;
Ingeborg from me is taken, she received the aged
Ring;
O'er my life the sun has darkened, only night-shades
round me cling.

"Therefore, outward to my billows! Let us fly, my 27
dragon good!

Bathe once more thy pitch-black bosom joyous in the
saline flood;
Wave thy pinions in the storm-clouds, cut the sea that
hissing raves,

Fly as far as leads the star-light, far as waft the van-
quished waves!

"Let me hear the tempest's thunder, let me hear the 28
lightning's voice!

When it rumbles round about me, then shall Frithiof's
heart rejoice.

Clanging shields and hailing arrows! Where the waves
to battle call,

I, in purity and gladness, to the gods appeased will
fall!"





T. H. 2 50

Canto Twentieth.

The sun of spring has risen. His beams bathe the King's hall.
Frithiof comes to say his last farewell:

"Ellida longs to fly from the strand. I leave my land and my
love forever. Once more, Ingeborg, I give thee this arm-ring; part
from it never. Come not, O King, with thy queen to the shore, lest
the waves bear my body to her feet."

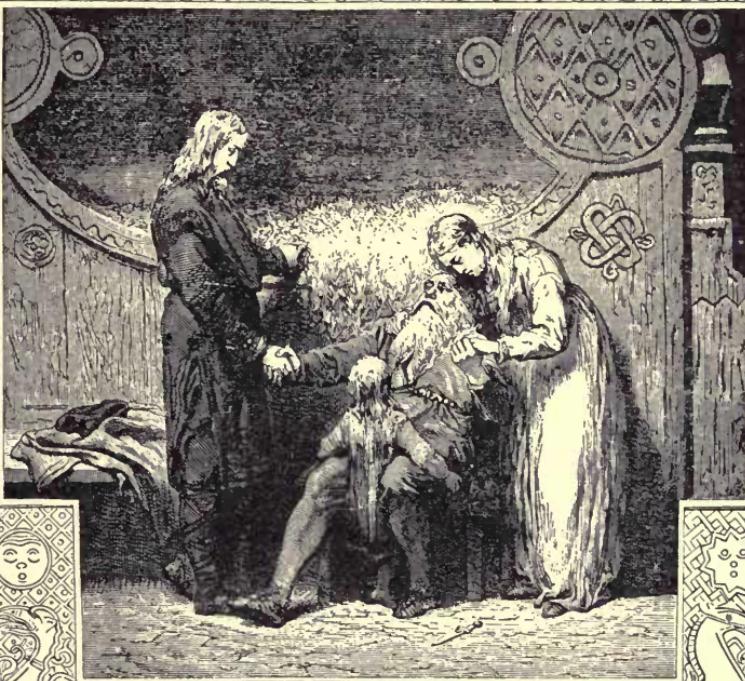
Said Ring: "Repine thou not. Valhalla calls me. Take my
queen; preserve my kingdom for my growing son. Peace have I
sought, but I fear not the sword. Now am I carving death-runes
to Oden. Not for Northern kings is bloodless death!"

Deeply the glittering steel cuts its crimson paths in his arms
and chest. Greets he Valhalla's gods, presses the hands of queen,
son and guest, and his royal spirit speeds with a sigh to Allfather's
breast.

The King has defeated death before its arrival, and Frithiof be-
fore his departure. He has given up all he had—even life itself—
to restore to each other the lovers whom he had severed.

Does this undo the awful wrong and injustice of having made
Ingeborg an unwilling bride? Had he been happy in the possession
of an involuntary queen? Does the demanding of Ingeborg's hand,
when her heart and soul were Frithiof's, comport with the other
qualities of so noble a man as King Ring is pictured? Each must
frame his own answer. (See Canto V, stanza 12.)





XX.

King Ring's Death.

SHEENFAX,* that shaketh
Gold-manè, at spring's call
Draws from the wave brighter sun than
before.
Morn's beam that breaketh,
Plays in the king's hall
Doubly more fair;—sounds a knock at the
door!

1

*Or Skinfax, the steed of the shining mane, driven across the heavens by Day in his successive journeys. See page 106. Fax = mane.

Nott (Night), mother of Day, was likewise given by Oden a steed, Hrimfax (Rime-manè), that bedewed the earth with the foam from his bit.

Filled with emotion,
 Frithiof appeareth;
 Pale sits the monarch; fair Ingeborg's breast
 Heaves like the ocean;
 Farewell she heareth
 Murmured in tremulous tones of the guest:

"Sea-washed lies yonder
 Winged wave-ranger,—
 Longeth the sea-horse* to fly from the shore.
 Far must I wander
 Now as a stranger,
 Leaving my land and my love evermore.



DRAGON SHIP.
 (From the Bayeux tapestry.)

"Once more—forever—
 This ring† I leave thee;
 Memories sacred have hallowed its worth.
 Part with it never!
 All I forgive thee;
 Thou wilt behold me no more on the earth.

* Ellida. The term was very commonly applied to a dragon ship.

† Placed on her arm by Frithiof at their parting, before his journey to the Orkneys.

“Northern smoke rolling
Upward in motion
Ne’er shall I see again. Man is a slave;
Norns are controlling;
On the waste ocean
There is my fatherland, there is my grave.

5



THE NORMS.

“Ne’er must thou wander,
Ring,—least when hover
Pale-gleaming stars, with thy queen to the strand!
Lest the sands yonder
Grimly discover
Frithiof the Viking’s bones washed to the land!”

6

Then Ring responded:
“Hard is it, hearing
Hero lament as a maiden would sigh.
Death’s chant has sounded,
Swift mine ear nearing;
What more remains? He who liveth must die.

7

From norns' dictation
 Naught can deliver;
 Cold to remonstrance it yieldeth to none.
 My queen, my nation,
 Take from the giver;
 Guard thou my crown till the growth of my son!*

"Guests have I given
 Kingly devotion,
 Striving that golden peace e'er should be known.
 Yet have I riven
 Shields on the ocean,
 Shields on the land, nor have pallid e'er grown.

"Now am I writing
 Runes at Death's portal;
 Natural exit ill fits Northern king!
 Feebly are biting
 Wounds that are mortal;
 Death is not keener than life in its sting."†

Now he carves gory
 Letters to Oden—‡
 Death-runes so deep on his arm and his breast;
 Gleaming in glory,
 Blood-currents redder
 Quickly the silver-white hairs on his chest!

*Ragnar Lodbrok, son of King Ring and his first wife, Alfhild, and hero of one of the Norse sagas.

†King Ring had no intention of permitting Frithiof to anticipate him in departing.

‡To carve one's self to Oden, or to apply geirsodd (spear-point) to one's breast and arms, was a substitute for battle-death, and was the customary exit from earth-life of the Northern heroes. Battle-wounds or suicide robbed death of its victory.

A hero exit must be a gory one, thus bearing semblance to martial death; and for this final exploit the chief clad himself in his richest armor.

The straw-dead—those who died in bed or of old age—went down to the realm of Hela and oblivion, the home of the Einheriar in Valhall being denied him. See page 112.



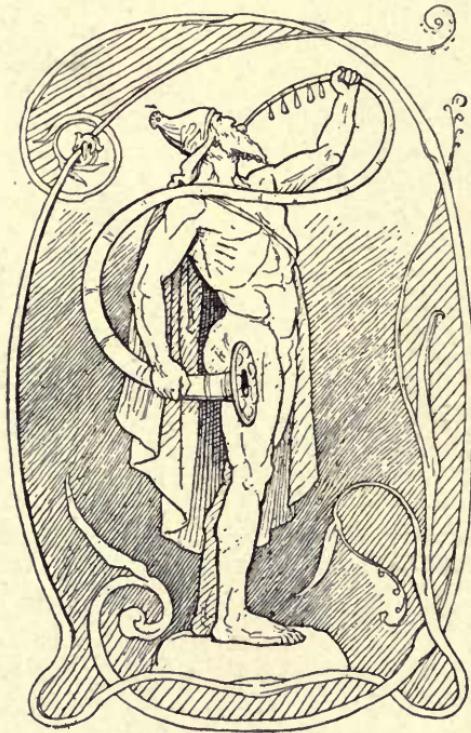
Mäßig erblachte Ring der Gerechte.

W. H.

DEATH-RUNES SO DEEP.

"Bring me wine mellow!
 Skoal* to thee ever,
 Skoal to thine honor, thou glorious North!
 Harvests ripe-yellow;
 Minds idle never,
 Exploits of peace—these I loved on the earth.

"Vainly mid slaughter
 Waged by kings wildly,
 Lone sought I peace but she fled from my sight;
 Now the Tomb's daughter,
 Smiling so mildly,
 At the gods' knees is awaiting my flight.



HEIMDAL.

*Literally, a bowl; the expression most frequently used in proposing a health, or drinking a toast.

King Ring's Death.

Shaw's Translation.

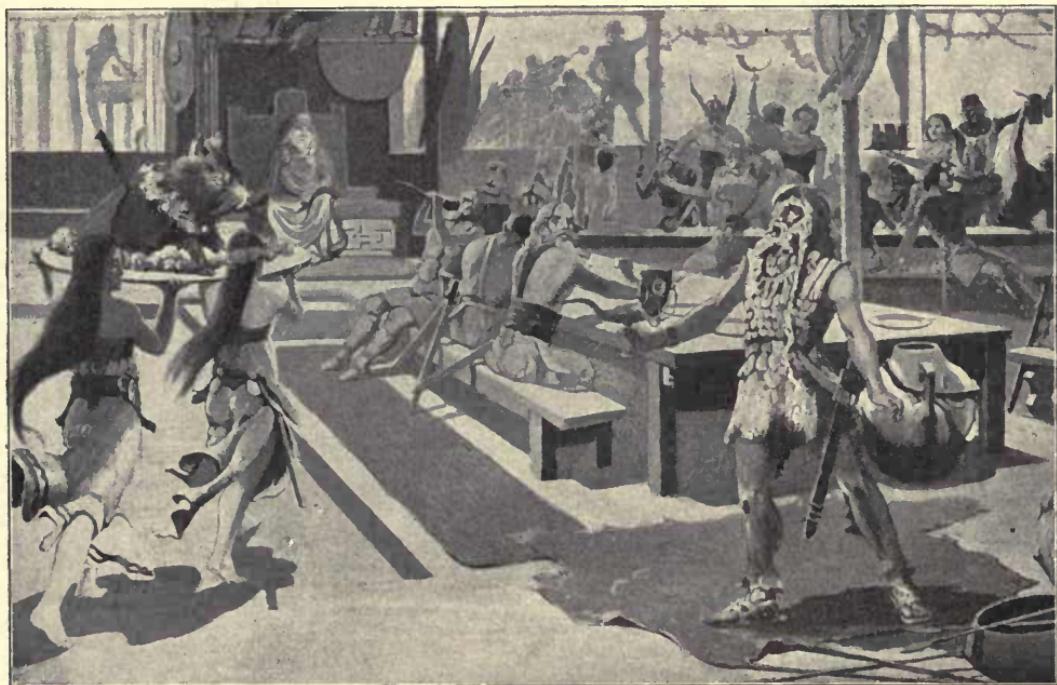
Music by P. CRISTELI. Stockholm.

Voice.

Piano.

Sheen-fax, that shak - eth Gold mane at Spring's call Draws from the
wave bright - er sun than be - fore Morn's beam that
break - eth. Plays in the king's hall Doubly more fair;—sounds a
knock at the door.





A FEAST IN VALHALLA.

"Hail, sons of heaven,

14

Asas supernal!

Earth fades away; Gjallarhorn* to your feast

Bidding has given;

Glory eternal

Crowns as a gold-helm the hastening guest!"

When he had spoken,

15

Pressed he the clinging

Hands of his queen, son, and friend, o'er and o'er.

Closed eyes gave token

His soul was winging

Flight with a sigh to Allfather once more.[†]

* The trumpet of Heimdal, the celestial warden, the St. Peter of the Norse mythology. It is heard through all the worlds. It announces the final Ragnarök. Heimdal dwells in Himinbjörg, at the end of the rainbow, being placed on the celestial borders to prevent the giants from forcing their way over the bridge. He is so acute in sense that he can hear the growing of the grass, and of the wool on sheep. He can see one hundred miles equally clearly in light or darkness. He requires no sleep. "He slumbers not, neither is he weary". He is also omniscient. Like Balder, he is also called "the white god."

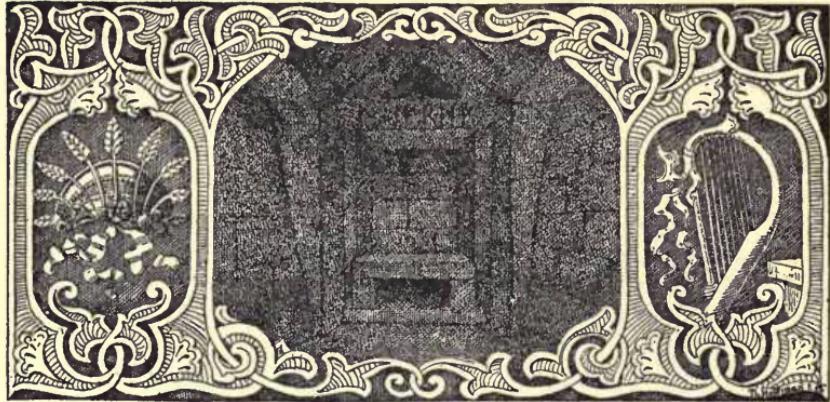
In one hand he holds a sword (Höfud), in the other his trumpet. On the last day he slays Loke.

† The death of a Northern hero is thus portrayed in the Swan Song, translated into English by Herbert:

"Cease, my strain! I hear a voice
From realms where martial souls rejoice.
I hear the maids of slaughter call,
Who bid me hence to Oden's hall.
High-seated in their blest abodes,
I soon shall quaff the drink of gods.
The hours of life have glided by;
I fall, but smiling I shall die,"

—DEATH SONG OF RAGNAR LODBROK.





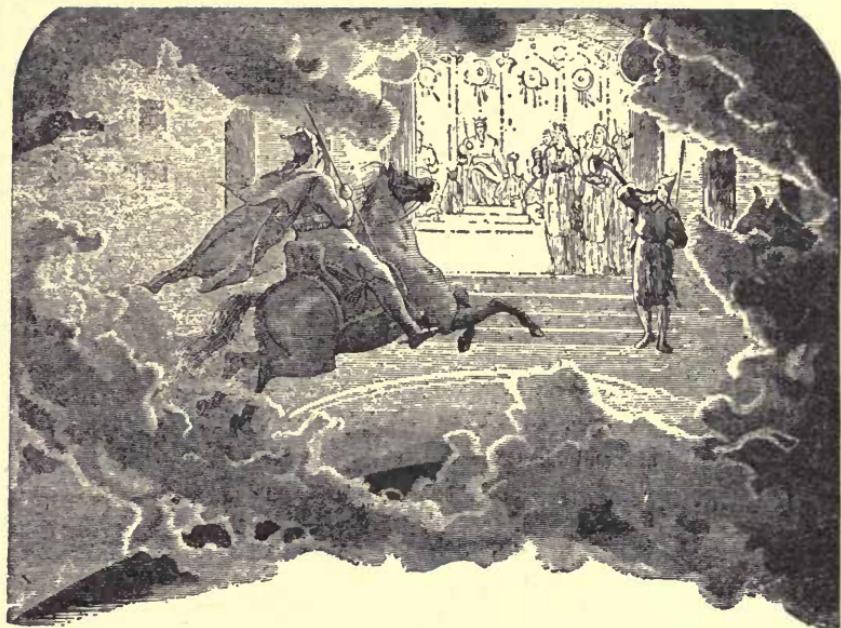
Canto Twenty-First.

King Ring, together with his sword, his steed, and other possessions, is immured in the sepulcher, and the customary earth-mound raised over him.

The steed bears him over Bifröst to Valhalla, where Oden signals that the wine cups be brought out, in honor of the guest; Frey encircles him with a chaplet of corn-ears, and Frigga, the wife of Oden, binds blue blossoms about his brow; and Brage, the god of Poetry, chants, with accompaniment of the harp which now sounds more soft and beautiful than before, the virtues of the new-arrived and greatly beloved monarch.

The preservation, in the translation, of the original alliterative form of this canto (the three words of alliteration occurring on accented syllables), greatly enhances the difficulties of translating. In each couplet, three of the four accented syllables must begin with the same letter, the remaining accented syllable must begin with a different letter. This consonant-reduplication Tegner has made especially effective. This is the form of stanza usually employed by the Northern skalds in their songs, universally used in the poems of the Elder Edda, and is distinctly characteristic of Icelandic versification, even down to modern times.





XXI.

King's Drapa.*

Sits in his mound-grave
Mighty-born monarch;
Sword by his side lies,
Shield on his arm.[†]
Neighs his steed near him,
Noblest of chargers,
Stamping with gold-hoof,
Ground of the grave.[‡]

* Lit., a dirge or funeral song, apotheosizing a hero's death. Cf. p. 77.

† Oden left the mandate: "Alla dauda menn skyldi brenna" (all dead bodies should be burned). This custom continued in Scandinavia until Frey was buried at Upsala. The crematory period was called the Pile Age (*Bruna-auld*), after which succeeded the sepulture period, called the Hill Age (*Haugh-auld*).

‡ It was a prevalent custom in ancient Europe to bury the dead under hills or mounds of earth. "Apud maiores potentes aut sub moutibus aut in montibus sepeliuntur."

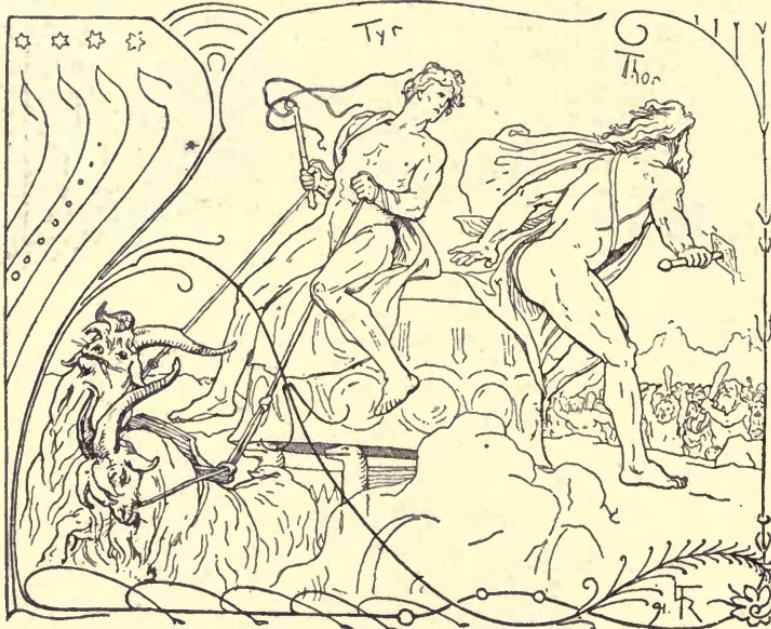
The distinguished dead were honored with high mounds or barrows. A vault or mortuary chamber was thus mounded, and the body within was sometimes laid on a flat stone, buried in sand, or placed in a sitting posture, as seems to have been the case here. The barrows usually had two or more vaults, and east or south passages on the same level.

With the dead hero it was quite customary to bury his living horse, to bear him over Bifrost to Valhalla.

The Saga Egils states that Asmund interred with Aran both his hawk and his hound.

"The cairns are almost always heaped up on heights along the shore. . . . The old

Rides now the royal
Ring over Bifröst;
Swayed by its burden,
Bends the long bridge.
Valhall's vast portals
Part for his passing;
Asa-hands holy
Hang now in his.



THOR'S BATTLE WITH THE GIANTS.

Thor afar wanders,
Waging dread warfare;
Oden has beckoned,—
Beakers are brought;

heathen of the Northland must have believed that their dead heroes still lived on the heights, and so placed their cairns where they should still hear the sound of the sea, and look out over its great blue expanse—the wide field of their activity, danger and triumph.”—SWEDEN AND THE SWEDES.

* Thor is called the Crusher, the Defender, the Weapon of the World, the Conqueror of the Serpent, the Enemy of Giants, the Friend of Man. His wagon is pulled by two goats. Thunder and lightning herald his coming. He is the tireless enemy of the giants, at whose devoted heads he hurls his death-bearing mallet.

Frey with a corn-wreath*
Covers the king's crown,
Frigga† binds beauteous
Blossoms of blue.

Brage, the gray god,
Graspeth the gold strings;
Soundeth a softer
Strain than erewhile.
Vanadis,‡ leaning,
Lingers to listen;
Burning, her bosom
Beats as she hears:

"Ceaseless the sword-stroke
Sounds on the helmet;
Redden the boisterous
Billows with blood;
Arm-strength, the glorious
Gift of the good gods,
Battling as berserk,¶
Biteth the shield!

"Hence we the hero
Held in devotion,
Who with his shield e'er
Sheltered the state;

* In England, as late as in the reign of Henry VIII, it is said brides wore garlands of corn-ears.

† The wife of Oden was also called Frea or Fricca, and was largely worshiped in Germany. She was called Holda by the Franks, Bertha by the Bavarians, and Isis by Tacitus. She occupies with Oden the castle Hildskialf in the clouds, and her rock is Orion's belt. While she foresees the fate of men, she reveals the future to none. Frigga personifies the all-producing earth.

‡ A surname of Freya.

¶ The berserk, during his paroxysmal fit, howled like a wolf, ran amuck at all he met, and "bit his shield."

Foremost and fairest
Figure of tried strength
Soars like a sacrifice
Smoke to the sky.



VALFADER AND SAGA.

7

"Valfader* voiceth
Verdicts of wisdom,
Seated by Saga,
Söqvabäk's† maid.
Thus clear the royal
Ring's words resounded,
Melting like Mimer's§
Murmuring strains.

* Valfader = Oden; literally, father of the slain.

† The brook of absorption, on whose shore is the mansion of Saga, with whom Oden communes and drinks mead from golden goblets.

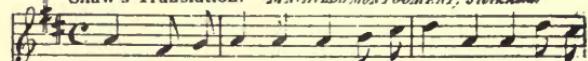
§ In the war between Asas and Vanes, the latter having received Mimer as a hostage, decapitated him, and sent his head to Oden. It became oracular, and was thence Oden's counselor and adviser.

Virgil's head was likewise said to prophesy.

Ring's Drapa.

Shaw's Translation. *(Music of this score re-orchestrated by the Composer)*
MATILDE MONTGOMERY, Stockholm

Voice.



Sits in his mound-grave Might-y born mon-arch; Sword by his

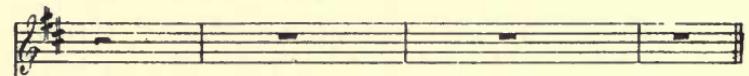
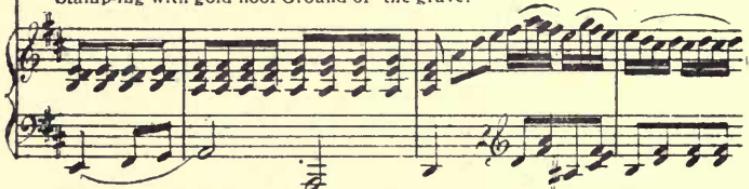
Piano.



side lies, Shield on his arm. Neighs his steed near him, No-blest of charg-ers,



Stamp-ing with gold hoof Ground of the grave.



"Friendly Forsete*
 Filiates wranglers;
 Justice he wields by
 Urd's† welling wave.
 Thus ruled the kindly
 King o'er his kingdom,
 Calming all rancor,
 Righting the wrong.

"Niggardly never,
 Nobly bestowed he
 Beds of the dragons,‡
 Daylight of dwarfs.§
 Bountiful gave he
 Gifts from his great heart,
 Tenderly softened
 Suffering's sting.

*Son of Balder and Nanna, and the god of justice. His castle is Glitner. All disputants who bring their cases before him are promptly reconciled.

"Glitner is the tenth mansiou
 It is on gold sustained,
 And also with silver decked.
 There Forsete dwells
 Throughout all time,
 And every strife allays."—THE LAY OF GRIMNER.

The sanctity of the assembly and purity of justice is expressed by the golden columns and the silver roof of Glitner."—ANDERSON.

"At Heligoland his (Forsete's) temple and priests were held in high reverence."—STEVENS.

"The dawn, which forms, as it were, golden pillars supporting the silvery dome of the sky, may be compared to Glitner; and eveniug, which disposes all the sorrows of the raging day, to Forsete, restoring unity and contentment."—HACHMEISTER.

†"The fount of time, under that root of the ash, Ygdrasil—the Paradisaical tree of knowledge—which extends to the *Æsir*. Beside this fount, accordingly, they collect daily, to hold their tribunal; that a draught of the water of experience may be constantly within their reach. Near this well, too, stands the beautiful palace of the Nornir, Fates;—Urda, Verdandi, Skulda—Past, Present, Future. The water is so sacred, that everything immersed therein becomes white as the lining membrane of an egg-shell. From two swans, tenants of this flood, sprang the earthly race of these snow-white aquatics. Perchance these immortal birds chant the death-song of those doomed by the Fates, as their mortal congeners are reported to hymn their own."—STRONG.

#Fafner, having assumed the dragon's form, slept upon the Niebelungen treasure which he took after slaying Hreidmar, his father. Thus gold is called "the dragon's bed."

§A subterranean race of dwarfs was believed to exist, whose light came from the veins of gold beneath the earth. Hence gold is also called "the daylight of dwarfs."

The old Scandinavian skalds had many synonyms for gold; as, Ágir's fire, Freya's tears, the flame of the wrist, the fire of the stream, etc.



FORSETE, GOD OF JUSTICE.

Welcome, O worthy
 Wise heir of Valhall!
 Long will thy loved name
 Live in the North.
 Greeting thee, Brage*
 Bears thee the beaker,
 Peace-pledge of Norna
 Known through the North."

* It is Brage who relates the ancient traditions of the Younger Edda. He and Heimdal welcome the heroes to Valhalla.

"He draws the flood of poesy, which streams from his lips, out of the fount of Mimer; for to him and Oden alone has it been permitted to taste of that well of knowledge. A multitude of mysterious runes are, moreover, engraven upon his tongue, imparting to every effusion, whether prosaic or poetical, irresistible fascination."—STRONG.





VALKYRIES CONDUCTING FALLEN HEROES TO VALHALLA.



Canto Twenty-Second.

The people are summoned to elect King Ring's successor. Equipped with brightly polished swords, shields and helmets, they assemble at the Ting-stone, in open council.

The fifteen-year old son of Ring stands with Frithiof, but is declared to be too young to be elected monarch, although by right of primogeniture he inherits the kingdom, according to the universal law of sovereignty among the Celtic nations.

But Frithiof elevates him on his shield, proclaiming him King, and swearing in the name of Forsete, Balder's son, the god of justice, to guard his reign and realm with arms.

Then he is received as King, under the guardianship of Frithiof, until the child-monarch shall have matured.

The people in enthusiasm would then give Ingeborg to the unselfish hero who could resist the offer of the kingdom in the face of so palpable a cause for acceptance as the childhood of the legitimate heir; but the norns must determine his fate, with whom he even now has an appointment to consider his cause. They must execute the will of Balder, who, having taken away his bride, can alone restore her.

Frithiof here calls them the "shield-maids," as also the Valkyries are sometimes called, because of their martial equipage; of whom Depping writes: "La langue du Nord a encore un terme particulier pour les jeunes femmes assez hardies de courir les hasards de la mer, et de se couvrir d'armures pesantes. Les Sagas les appellent Sköldmoe; et elles crient des traits nombreux de leur heroisme."

To meet these maidens of fate, Frithiof must journey again to Sogne,—to Framnäs,—to his father's mound. Then will be revealed to him the right—which he of all things now desires.

Kissing the new king's brow, Frithiof vanishes over the heath.



XXII.

The King's Election.

"**T**O TING! To ting!" Across the land
The bid-stick goes.*

"King Ring is dead; the hour's at hand
A king to choose!"

The yeoman from the wall removes 2
His sword steel-blue;

Its edge his finger careful proves,—
Its bite is true.

His sons behold its purple sheen 3
With deep delight;
The sword is raised each two between—
One is too slight.

* A one-foot runic staff sent from house to house, summoning the Ting.

4

The daughter polishes the helm
To luster rare,
While blushes sweet her visage whelm,
Reflected there.

5

At last he takes his circling shield,—
A sun in blood.*
All hail, free champion ensteeled,
Thou peasant good!

6

The nation's honor in thy heart
Doth e'er rejoice.
In war our country's wall thou art,
In peace its voice.

7

So they are summoned by the sound
Of shields and swords,
To open court; heaven's vault around
Their roof affords.

8

Then Frithiof mounts the Assembly stone,
And by him there
The royal child, a little one,
With golden hair.

9

From all the throng a murmur came:
“Too small, by far,
The royal son our laws to frame,
Or lead to war!—”

* Shields were often painted in brilliant colors and with exquisite taste. “Scuta tantum lectissimis coloribus distingunt.”—TACITUS.

“In the compositions of the Bards we often find allusions made to painted targets. Sometimes they are called red, at other times spotted, varied or checkered.”—LOGAN.

“The Swedes never came to a sacrifice, Ting, or other assembly, unarmed. This custom, through the Goths and other Northern tribes, spread over the whole of Europe.”—DALIN.

But Frithiof on his shield lifts up 10

The child of Ring:*

“Here, Northmen, lies your nation’s hope,

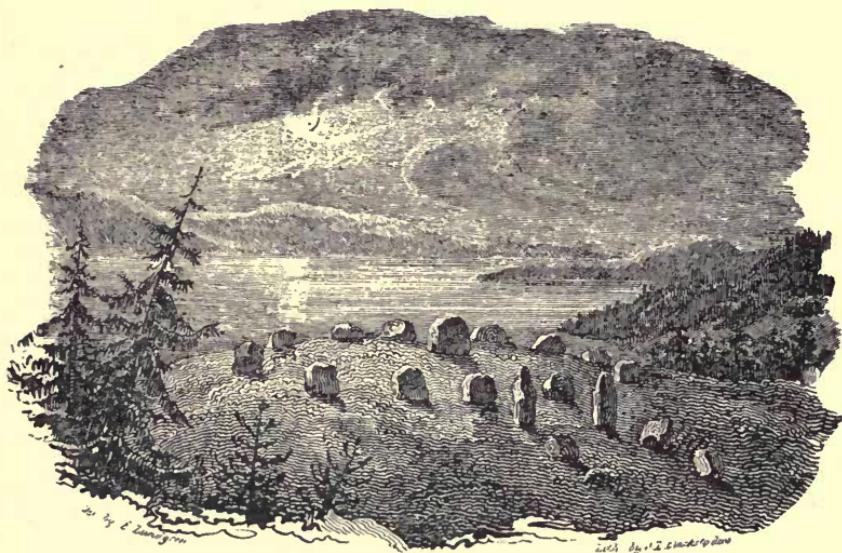
Look on your king!

“Behold of ancient Oden’s race 11

The image free,

That doth the shield as lightly grace

As fish the sea.



SCANDINAVIAN TING-PLACE.†

“I swear his kingdom to uphold 12

With sword and spear,

And place the father’s crown of gold

On son so dear.

* A token of honor, respect or reverence.

“When Baldwin, Count of Flanders, was invested (1204) by the Crusaders with the Eastern purple, the barons and knights, agreeably to Byzantine custom, elevated the Emperor on a buckler, and bore him to the church of St. Sophia.”—MILLS’S CRUSADES.

† Ting (or thing) was originally applied to a conference, or convocation, and later to its site: the latter usually had a large stone at its summit.

13

"Forsete, son of Balder great,
My vow doth know;
And if the oath I violate,
Shall strike me low!"

14

The child* sat on the lifted shield,
Like king on throne,—
Or eaglet in a cliff revealed,
That eyes the sun.

15

At last, too long for childish blood
The stay he found,—
And to the ground he sprang, and stood,—
A kingly bound!

16

Then high the cry rose from the Ting:
"The North in truth
Electeth thee!—Be like King Ring,
O shield-borne youth!"

17

"Till grown, by Frithiof's word abide,
Thou childish heir.
Receive, Jarl† Frithiof, for thy bride
His mother‡ fair."

*Ragnar Lodbrok began to reign at 15. His third wife, Krake, whom he found as a beautiful, but poorly clad girl in a hut, but whose superior intelligence he admired, proved later to be of far less humble parentage than he had supposed.

Her real name was Aslaug, and she was the daughter of Sigurd Fafnersbane (the celebrated slayer of the dragon, the Siegfried of the German myth) and his wife Brunhilda, the valkyrie. To secure her safety from his enemies, her grandfather, Heimir, concealed her in his harp, thus guarding her until he was murdered by peasants in search of the golden treasure, instead of which they found the child.

Ragnar executed numberless successful Viking expeditions.

His last was against King Ella of Northumberland. The gods sent the valkyries to warn him. It was of no avail. After a full day's hard fighting, Ragnar was captured and thrown into the den of snakes, to his death.

While there, he is said to have penned the famous Swan Song, the final stanza of which is given on page 283, note, and which has been paraphrased into many tongues.

Later, Ivan, son of Ragnar and Aslaug, made King Ella prisoner; and avenged the awful death of his father, by having the King stretched out upon a stone altar, and the blood-eagle carved upon him.

This mode of applying death is described on page 241, q. v.

† Earl.

‡His step-mother. His mother was Alfhild, King Ring's first wife.

"To-day," thus Frithiof dark replied,
"Your king proclaim,
But not a marriage; and my bride
Leave me to name.

18

"To Balder's temple I proceed,
Where congregate
My norns to meet me; there, indeed,
E'en now they wait.

19

"Their true and ultimate decree
I go to prove.
The shield-maids build beneath Time's tree,
And oft above.

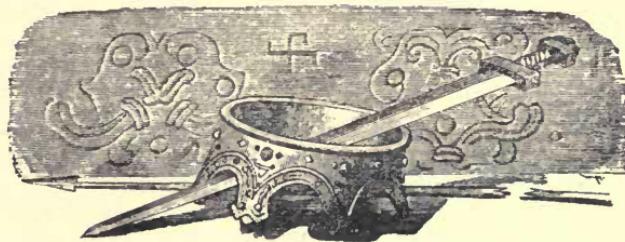
20

"The light-haired Balder's ire, still shown,
For me burns sore;
He took my heart's bride,—he alone
Can her restore."

21

Straight greeted he the new-made king,
And kissed his brow,
And o'er the heath was vanishing,
In silence now.

22





Canto Twenty-Third.

It had grown toward the evening. The sinking sun's soft beams fell peacefully over the earth, lulling to rest the desire for vengeance against the two brothers who had darkened his life, and reducing to contrition the irascible spirit that had led to the destruction of Balder's temple.

Frithiof stands amid the haunts of his childhood,—hears the same birds in the forest, smells the same fragrance of flowers, reads the same runes of Ingeborg and himself upon the birches; but the temple is no more.

Frithiof has abandoned a kingship—perchance even Ingeborg—obedient to a loftier impulse than that which is engendered of earth. He has journeyed back to Sogne to lay his all upon the altar of his God.

In humility he stands at the tomb of Thorsten, his father. He has come to ask for light and knowledge,—to learn how he may atone for the temple's loss, and regain the favor of Balder.

Even men forgive. Balder, who is the most merciful of all the gods,—would he be deaf to human prayer?

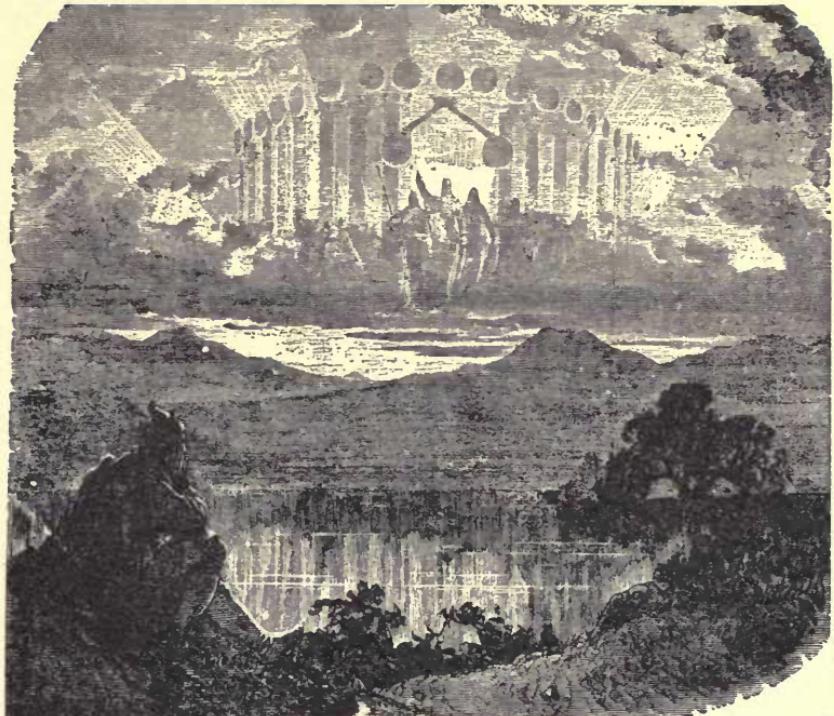
Long waits Frithiof, but no voice speaks from his father's grave, none murmurs in the billows, none whispers in the evening breezes.

The sun has set. Behold, a vision! A beautiful mirage rises over the Western waves, approaching to the site of the temple, whose form it assumes, with all its walls, pillars and lofty dome. And Urda points to the blackened ruin, and Skulda to the vision of the temple restored!

Instantly comes to Frithiof's soul the glorious light. Now he clearly discerns the will of the norns, and clearly reads the answer of his father. He must rebuild the temple. He will hasten to place upon its site a far greater and fairer fane than before, atoning thus for former guilt, and attaining the pardon of the propitiated god.

And he sweetly sleeps upon his father's mound.





XXIII.

Friðfinn at His Father's Grave.

HOW fair the sunlight smiles, how 1
grateful leapeth
From bough to bough each beam in
splendor here!

Allfather's glance, in dews which
evening weepeth,

As in his world-wide sea, gleams pure and clear!
In crimson hues the mountain-tops he steepeth;—
'Tis blood on Balder's hearth that doth appear!
Soon slumbers all the land on night's dark pillow,
Soon sinks the golden shield beneath the billow.

2 “Yet would I wander first mid these dear places,—
 My childhood friends that I have loved the best.
The same sweet evening flower the meadow graces,
 The self-same forest birds wake carols blest.
The self-same wave to shore its fellow chases;—
 Oh, that I ne'er had rocked upon its breast!
Of fame and glory falsely speaks the ocean,
 Bears us from home-dales far, with ceaseless motion.



THE FJORD OF SOGNE.

3 “I know thee, flood, where erst the mighty swimmer
 Was lightly borne upon thy billows clear.
I know thee well, O vale, where in the shimmer
 Of heaven we pledged a faith that springs not here.
Ye birches,* too, upon whose bark ne'er dimmer
 Have grown the many runes I carved sincere;
O'er your white trunks the rounded crowns yet hover;
 All things, save me, alas! no change discover.

* The white, smooth bark of this most common and most beautiful of Northern trees, adapted it exceptionally both to the reception and retention of runic characters carved upon it.

See page 36, stanza 27.

“Is all unchanged? Stand Framnäs’ halls paternal, 4

And Balder’s fane still on the hallowed strand?

Ah! Fair the valleys in life’s season vernal,

But through them passed the sword and fiery brand;
Both wrath of gods and men’s revenge infernal

Speak to the wanderer o'er the fire-charred land.

Devoted pilgrim, come not here to ponder,

For untamed beasts in Balder’s grove now wander.

“There haunteth every life beneath the heaven

5

The demon Nidhögg* from the world of night;

He hates the asa-mark that stands engraven

On hero’s brow and sword that flashes bright.

Each ireful deed, enacted by a craven,

Stands forth his tribute to infernal might.

And when he prospers by a fane’s cremation,

He claps his coal-black hands in exultation.

“Is there no pardon then, Valhalla father?

6

O blue-eyed Balder, takest penance none?

E'en men take ransom for a fallen brother,†

And gods absolve men at the altar-stone.

’Tis said thy grace is equaled by none other;

Command! Whate'er thy word, it shall be done.

No will was mine to burn the temple hoary;

O cleanse from stain my shield that shone in glory.

* The dragon of the nether world (Nifelheim), that gnaws the root of Yggdrasil, and mutilates the bodies of the dead.

“The tree Yggdrasil
Bears a soror burden
Than men imagine;
Above, the stags bite it,
On its sides age rots it,
Nidhögg gnaws below.”—THE ELDER EDDA.

Nidhögg symbolizes the infernal power, Satan, as Yggdrasil does the tree of life:

“Corses piled beneath
Gorging Nidhögg lay;
There the wolf of death
Rent his pallid prey.”—VOLUSPA.

† The ancient provincial laws had a code of penalties for bodily injury or murder, whereby one could absolve himself from the blood-revenge of his victim's relatives.

- 7 “Thy burden take away; I faint thereunder;
 Draw from my soul that awful shadow’s veil;
May not a life’s sincere contrition sunder
 The bar to pardon, if but once we fail?
I tremble not, e’en at the god of thunder,
 I meet unmoved the eyes of blue-white Hel.
O pious god, with glance as moonlight tender,
 I fear alone the vengeance thou canst render.
- 8 “Here lies my father. Is he sleep-enshrouded?
 Ah! He has journeyed whence return is none.
He dwells neath azure tent of sky unclouded,
 And joyous drains the horn mid war-shield’s tone.
Thou asa-guest, look down from star-fields crowded;
 Thy son doth call thee, Thorsten Viking’s son!
On neither runes nor spells have I depended,
 O teach me to appease the god offended!
- 9 “And has the grave no tongue? Entombed did waken
 Great Angantyr,* when for his sword implored.
Though great, let Tirfing’s† worth be ne’er mistaken
 To equal that I ask; ne’er for a sword
Prayed I. The combat gave it. But forsaken
 May I through thee to pardon be restored.
O guide my darkened glance and step benighted;
 A noble mind by Balder’s wrath is blighted.

* One of the most famous holmgångs of Northern story was that between Angantyr, an island chief, and Hjalmar, a Swedish leader, his successful rival for the hand of Ingebjör, daughter of the King of Upsala.

The fight was so long and furious that it was said the smoke ascended from their nostrils as from a fiery furnace. Both heroes fell.

Meantime Oddr, foster-brother of Hjalmar, having slain successively Angantyr’s eleven champions, entombed the twelve with Angantyr’s magic sword Tirfing, which he had asked might be buried with him, should he fall; then bore to Upsala the body of Hjalmar, whose affianced died broken-hearted and was buried in the tomb with her lover.

† The dwarfs also manufactured the mythical sword, Tirfing, which could cut through iron and stone, and which they gave to Angantyr. This sword, like Frey’s, fought of its own accord, and could not be sheathed, after it was once drawn, until it had tasted blood. Angantyr was so proud of this weapon that he had it buried with him; but his daughter Hervor visited his tomb at midnight, recited mystic spells, and forced him to rise from his grave and give her the precious blade. She wielded it bravely, and it eventually became the property of another of the Northern heroes.”—*MYTHS OF NORTHERN LANDS.*



THORSTEN VIKINGSSON'S GRAVE.

10 “Thou’rt silent, father! Hear the sounding billow;
 Sweet is its tone;—speak in its voice so free!
The storm is flying; make its wing thy pillow,
 And as it passes, whisper thou to me!
The west is set in rings of glowing yellow,
 Let one of them thy spirit’s herald be!
No sign, no token for thy son forsaken;
How poor, alas! are those by death o’ertaken!” *

11 The sun is quenched; the evening winds in measure
 Sing lullabies to earth-sons from the sky.
The after-glow, with all its golden treasure,
 On rosy wheels drives round the brim on high.
In valleys blue, and o’er the hills of azure,
 A fair Valhalla-vision draweth nigh.
Now comes, from out the Western wave ascended,
A rustling shape, by golden flame attended.

12 By us ’tis called mirage, this heavenly wonder;
 In Valhall, sweeter sounds its name, I ween;
And soft o’er Balder’s grove it hovers yonder,
 A crown of gold upon a ground of green.
’The glorious image gleams, above and under,
 With splendor ne’er before by mortal seen;
Till to the temple’s site its pathway making,
It sinks to earth, the temple’s figure taking.†

* Frithiof is not yet ready to yield himself to the supreme joy he doubtless feels awaits him in the love of Ingeborg. He has so long objurgated the norus, against whom his unhappy life has constantly evoked bitter maledictions, that he must first seek to remove this stain from his conscious soul; and whither should he go to seek assistance, knowledge, hope?

Whither was a vague expectation of illumination more likely to lead him than to that spot most of all revered by him—alone revered by him?

Must the wise counsel and learned instruction of Thorsten be forever barred by the tomb? Is his father less fitted to enlighten, now that he dwells in the realm of light? Ah! Frithiof must follow this impulse to the final and only barrier that lies between them—the portal of the grave.

Moreover, a hero’s soul was believed to inhabit his tomb.

† The fantastically painted Western sky, like the masses of cumulated summer clouds, might, aided by a little imagination, easily assume tangible and definite forms in Frithiof’s now impersipable mind, thus clearly creating the concept of a gorgeous and wonderful temple.



Anton Bergs 1891

THE ESSEFJORD.
(Sogne.)

13 Its lofty wall a Breidablick * reflected,
 And from the cliff in silvered luster shone.
 Of deep-blue steel each pillar was perfected,
 Of one rich gem was carved the altar-stone.
 Its dome, as borne by spirit-hands, projected
 A winter-heaven all clear and star-bestrown.
 There Valhall's gods, in sky-blue robes invested,
 Sat high, and crowns of gold upon them rested.

14 And lo! Upon their rune-carved shields inclining,
 The lofty norns within the portal stood,—
 Three rosebuds in a single urn inshrining,—
 A solemn yet a charming sisterhood.
 Mute Urda to the burnt fane points repining,
 And eager Skulda to the fane renewed.[†]
 And scarce could Frithiof's mind itself recover,
 In joy and wonder, ere the scene was over.

15 "Maidens of Time, well is your thought projected;
 This is thy sign, my hero-father good![‡]
 Another temple straight shall be erected,
 To grace the cliff where erst the old one stood!
 Ah! Blest when peaceful deed has been elected
 As true atonement of youth's foward mood!
 The wretch may hope again, though hope were riven,
 And by the gracious white god be forgiven.

* The castle of Balder in the heavens. "There is also a place, called Breidablick, than the which no spot is more fair."—THE YOUNGER EDDA.

The walls are of gold, the roof of silver; and here nothing impure may enter.

† The norn of the Past points out Frithiof's sin; the norn of the Future its necessary atonement.

"The principle of religion, long torpid through the chill of adversity," suggests Strong, "has been visited by a ray of returning weal, and is regaining its vivacity. Piety, bearing her fair offspring Hope, is leading back the estranged one to his God. Atonement may be devised, offered, accepted; and then Ingeborg, then Frithiof, shall smile once more."

‡ "They which go by the mounds (of Bele and Thorsten) to this day hear oftentimes strange murmurings like far-off voices. Some say it is nothing but the wash of the sea upon the beach, or the winds blowing through the crisp brown grasses on the cliffs; others lift a finger and say: "Listen! King Bele and his faithful thane are whispering in their sleep."—TALES OF TEUTONIC LANDS.

Frithiof at his Father's Grave,

Shaw's Translation.

Arr. by G.S.

Voice.

Mesto. How fair the sun-light smiles, how grate-ful
All-fath-er's glance,in dews which eve-ning

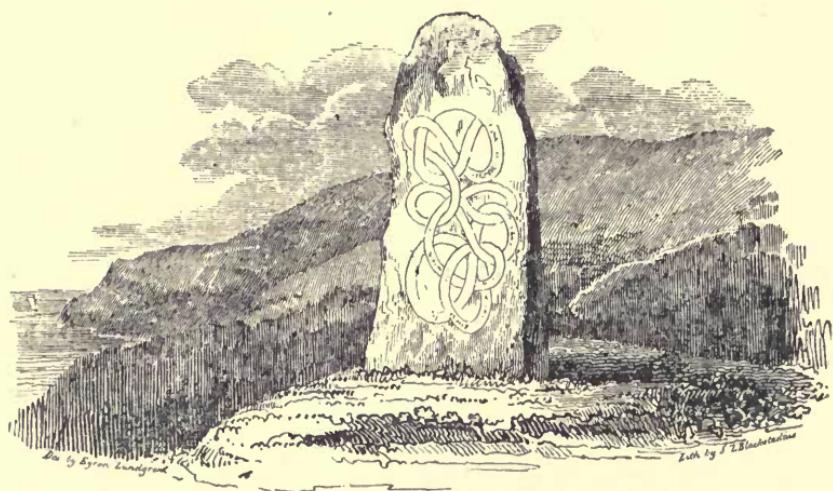
Piano.

leap- eth From bough to bough each beam in splen-dor here!
weep- eth, As in his world-wide sea,gleams pure and clear! In
erim- son hues the mount-ain tops he steep-eth; 'Tis blood on Bal-der's
hearth that doth ap-pear! Soon slum-bers all the land on Night's dark pil-low, Soon
> sinks the gold-en shield be-neath the bil-low.

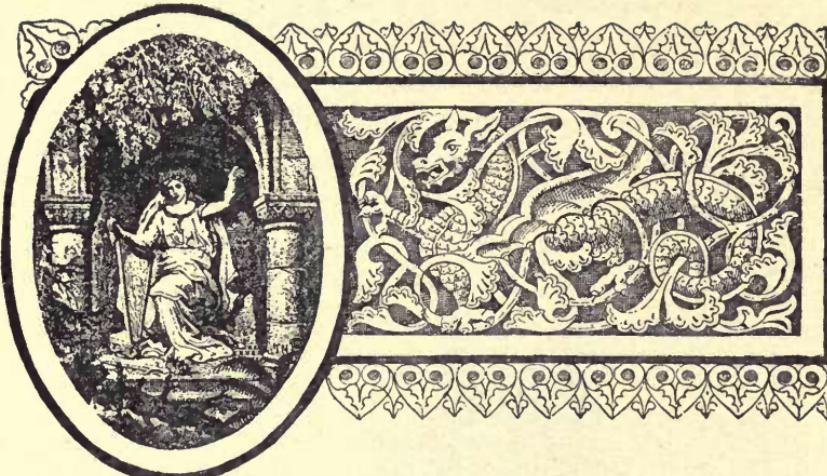
"Welcome, ye stars, that your far way have wended, 16
Now glad again your silent march I see.

Welcome, ye Northern lights, in heaven blended,
That once a burning temple seemed to me!
Grow green, O grave! And from the wave ascended,
Sound once again, O wondrous melody!
Here on my shield will I o'erwearied slumber,
And dream of sins atoned that gods ne'er number."





SCANDINAVIAN RUNE-STONE.
(With Runo-inscribed Serpent.)



Canto Twenty-Fourth.

The majesty and solemn stateliness of the Iambic Hexameter adapt it to the expression of lofty thought,—and especially of the almost supra-mortals beauty and sublimity of this final canto—the favorite one of its author.

Planned by architects from the South, and employing a thousand men in its construction, the new temple of Balder, built by Frithiof, is now completed, wonderful in art, massiveness, and architectural beauty. The day of its consecration is here. Priests, harpers, chorus and the multitude throng its hall.

Frithiof feels a serene gladness and spiritual ecstasy unfelt for long, as the twelve temple-virgins enter, and around the newly consecrated altar dance and sing a strain that sets him at peace with all the world, and he knows that he is at last reconciled to the offended god.

The high-priest describes to Frithiof the nature of true atonement, and interweaves the letter of the mythology, ethics and religion of the North with the spirit of Christianity pervading and illumining all. We imbibe the inspiration and benediction of the hallowed scene.

The high-priest tells Frithiof of Helge's death, and bids him now be reconciled with Halfdan, that all may know he has not, in rebuilding this beautiful temple, mocked the god of peace.

Halfdan enters. Frithiof removes both sword and shield, and unarmed approaches his erstwhile enemy; and long unwonted hands grasp each other in a clasp firm as the mountain's base.

The sweet sound of music is heard. Through the door of the aisle enters the lovely and radiant Ingeborg, bridal-decked and rose-wreathed, and seeks her brother's side. But Halfdan places her upon Frithiof's breast; and the two long separated hearts are re-united before the altar of the conciliated god.





XXIV.

The Reconciliation.

COMPLETED now was Balder's temple. Round its court
Stood not, as once, a fence of wood, but now was reared,
Enclosing Balder's grove, a pale of hammered steel,
Whose bars bore heads of gold; like steel-clad warriors armed

- 5 With halberds and with golden helmets, rose it now,
Guarding the new built sanctuary of the god.
Of giant-stones the temple wall was built entire,
Combined in bold and massive style,—a giant-work
To stand eternally, as stands Upsala's shrine,*
- 10 Placed where the North her Valhall saw in earthly form.
In pride it held the mountain cliff precipitous,
Its high brow mirrored in the ocean's crystal wave;
And, like a gorgeous blossom-girdle circling round,
Stretched Balder's vale with all its woodland murmurings,
- 15 With all its bird-songs,—home of pure tranquillity.
High rose its copper-moulded portal; and within,
Two column-series, posed on ponderous shoulder-plates,
Sustained the vaulted canopy that hovered fair
Above the temple, like a concave shield of gold.
- 20 Facing the portal Balder's altar towered, all carved
Of single block of Northern marble, twined around
By massive serpent, and inscribed with runic signs,—†
Deep-pondered words of Vala‡ and of Havamal. ¶
But in the wall above was built a spacious niche,
- 25 With stars of gold upon a dark-blue ground; and there
Was set a silver image of the god, as calm
As sits the silver moon within the azure heaven.

* "At the ancient Upsala—Yngre Frey,—the grandson of Oden, founded about the year 220 a temple, which was widely celebrated. I will not, like some historiographers, apply here all that Plato has written respecting the capital of his Atlantis; yet certain it is, that the fabric was very magnificent, according to the notions of that age; of stone, cruciform, extending sixty ells in length and in breadth, with a ring wall or fence around it, nine hundred ells in circumference. This temple is said to have been resplendent with gold, both internally and externally, and especially gorgeous from a golden chain or cornice, which completely circuited it under the extremity of its roof. At the door of the Fane, according to the same authorities, stood a tree of unknown species, and retaining its leaf throughout the year."—DALIN, i. 185.

† See Scandinavian rune-stone, page 313, and King Ring's sledge, page 260, both of which contain the twisted rune-inscribed serpent, which was the form given to a large number of the ancient inscriptions,—the anguiform knot symbolizing indissoluble friendship or love.

As the runes read from the head to the tail of the serpent, the decipherer must first locate the head before attempting to unravel the inscription.

‡ Sibyl; here applied to the one that chants the Völuspa, oldest poetic monument of the North, the first song of the Elder Edda.

¶ The High Song of Oden, the second chant of the Elder Edda, containing the code of Odinic ethics and morality, and much proverbial wisdom yet quoted.



THE MOUNDS OF THE KINGS.
(At Ancient Upsala.)

- Thus seemed the temple. Now by twos marched lightly in
 Twelve temple-virgins all enrobed in silvery gauze,
 30 With roses blooming on their cheeks, and roses, too,
 Within their sinless hearts. Before the imaged god
 They danced around the altar newly consecrate,—
 As spring-time breezes softly play o'er fountain-streams,
 Or forest fairies lightly dance on verdant swards,
 35 When on them freshly lies the morning's glistening dew.
 And as they danced, they sang a soft and solemn song
 Of Balder, of the holy one, how he was loved
 Of every creature, how he fell by fell by Höder's dart,*



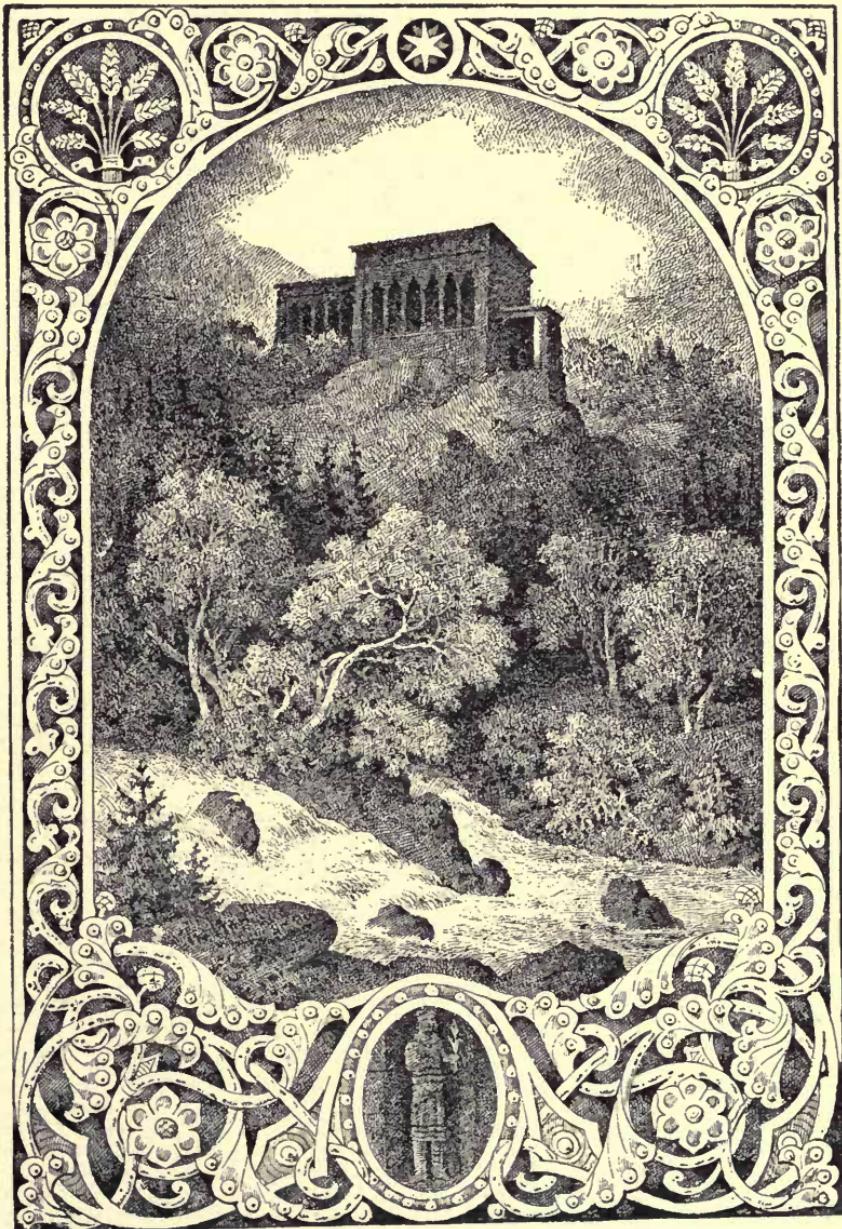
THE DEATH OF BALDER.

And earth and sea and heaven mourned. The song seemed not

* See note, Canto XIII., page 200.

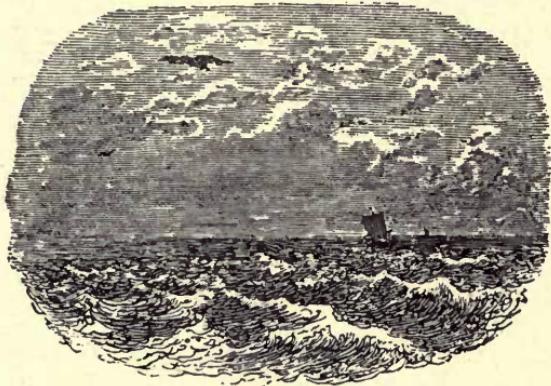
"When Balder fell, the Aesir (asas) became, as it were, speechless and paralyzed. When they attempted to speak, tears burst forth; and most of all, Oden felt the extent of his misfortune. Nanna, dying through grief, was laid upon the pile beside her husband.

Thither, likewise, was brought his horse caparisoned; there Oden deposited his ring; and Thor consecrated the pile with his hammer. Many were the mournful spectators, even giants attending his obsequies."—MUNTER.



THE NEW TEMPLE.

- 40 Like one that took its utterance from a human voice,
 But like a chant from Breidablick,* the god's own hall,
 Or like a lonely maiden's thought of him she loves,
 When strikes the quail his deepest tone in night's repose,
 And falls the moonlight on the birches of the North.
- 45 Entranced stood Frithiof, leaning on his sword, and gazed
 Upon the dance, while memories of his childhood thronged
 Before his eye,—a joyous folk and free from guile.
 With heaven-blue eyes, and heads haloed with locks of gold,
 They waved a kindly greeting to their young life's friend.
- 50 Then like a bloody shadow sank his viking-life,



- With all its battle-exploits, its adventures wild,
 Down into night; and Frithiof felt himself to stand
 The flower-wreathed bautastone† upon their ocean-graves.
 And ever with the swelling song his soul was borne
- 55 Afar from earth's deep vales to Valaskjalf‡ on high.
 Soon melted human vengeance, every human hate,
 As melts the sleeted armor from the mountain's breast,
 When smiles the spring-time sun. A sea of peace serene,
 Of silent rapture, then swept o'er his hero-soul;

* See page 310, note.

† Tombstone, or cenotaph.

‡ A stately mansion belonging to Oden and Vale, his son, built by the gods and roofed with pure silver, and containing the throne Hlidskjalf.

He seemed to feel the heart of nature tuneful beat 60
Against his own,—as if he were impelled to press
The universe in his fraternal arm, and peace
Confirm with each created being in God's sight.

Within the temple then stepped Balder's most-high priest,
Not young nor fair as was the god himself, but great 65
In form, with heavenly mildness on his noble face.
While to his girdle-stead streamed down his silver beard.
An unaccustomed awe filled Frithiof's haughty soul;
The eagle-wings upon his helmet lowly drooped
Before the aged man. But words of peace he spoke: 70
"Son Frithiof, welcome here!—I have awaited thee!
For eagerly the strong man circles earth and sea,
Like berserker, who pallid bites into his shield,
But wearied, homeward turns his thoughtful steps at last.
The mighty Thor full oft repaired to Jötunheim,* 75
But yet, despite his belt divine and gloves of steel,
Remains Utgarda-Loke seated on his throne;
For evil yieldeth not to power, itself a power;
And mere child's play is piety with power unlinked;
'Tis like a ray of sunshine cast on Ägir's breast,—† 80
An image faint, rising and sinking with the wave,
Devoid of faith, foundationless, without support.
But power unjoined with piety consumes itself,
As rusts a buried sword. It is life's crapulence.

* To apply chastisement to the giants for the frigid, bud-destroying blasts they continually sent out, or, as one myth runs, to be avenged upon Utgarda-Loke, the giants' king, for his having destroyed a temple dedicated to Oden,—thus arousing the wrath of all Asgård, Thor harnessed his two goats and drove with all speed to Jötunheim. On his journey he met Skrymer—Utgard-Loke in disguise—with whom he fruitlessly battled.

Despite numerous trials of physical strength, such as failing to drain a horn (which was the ocean), failing to lift the giant's cat (which was the Midgård snake circling the world), unsuccessfully wrestling with Elli (who was old age),—these and other delusions being wrought upon him by the giant's king through magic, Thor had to return to Trudvang, his castle, without having exterminated the giants. See also p. 73, and cut, p. 286. Utgard, or Utgårda, was the capital of Jötunheim. Its ruler must not be confused with Asa-Loke, though each personifies evil, the latter varnished, the former unvarnished.

† Ägir (the sea), like his brothers Kari (the air) and Loki (fire), is supposed to have belonged to an older dynasty of the gods, for he ranked neither with the Aesir, the Vanas, the giants, dwarfs, nor elves, but was considered omnipotent within his realm."—*MYTHS OF NORTHERN LANDS*.

- 85 Around the drinking horn oblivion's heron moves,
But conscious waking paints the drinker's cheek with shame.
All strength is of the earth, which Ymer's^{*} body is;
Its rushing rivers are the flowing veins thereof,
And out of myriad metals are its sinews formed.
- 90 Yet stands it barren as a desert, void of fruit,
Until shines down the sun, the piety of heaven.
Then wakes the grass, and flowerets weave their purple web,
The tree uplifts its crown, and moulds its fruit of gold,
And beast and man are nursed at the maternal breast.
- 95 And thus it is with Asker's[†] children. In the scale
Of every human life Allfather lays two weights,
Which, when in equilibrium, the beam hold straight;—
Their names are earthly Power, and heavenly Piety.

"Mighty is Thor, O youth, when round his giant waist
100 He firmly girds his belt, his Magingjard,[‡] and strikes.
And wise is Oden, when in Urda's silvery fount
He gazes down, and birds swift-pinioned bear to him,
The Asa-father, tidings from the earth's far bounds.
Yet both grew pallid, and the luster of their crowns
105 Was half extinguished, when the pious Balder fell;[¶]

* The father of the giants, from whose body the earth was formed, from whose blood the seas, from whose bones the mountains, from whose hair the trees, from whose skull the heavens, from whose brain the clouds.

He was formed out of ice and fire in the misty, bottomless abyss, *Ginunga-gap*.

Ymer was the product of the frozen mists of Nifelheim, the ice-world, and the heated blasts of Muspelheim, the fire-world.

Oden, with his brothers Vile and Ve, slew Ymer, in the ocean of whose blood the entire race of frost-giants was devoured, except one who with his family escaped in a boat, and from whom a new race descended.

The sky was called "the skull of Ymer."

† The first man, the Adam of the North,—husband of Embla, the first woman, the Northern Eve.

Asker = ash; Embla = elm,—this first pair being made of trees.

Oden gave them life, Hoener gave them reason, and Loder (Loke) gave them blood. From these descends the human race.

‡ Which doubled his strength whenever assumed.

¶ "Balder represents the bright and clear summer, when twilight and daybreak kiss each other and go hand in hand in these Northern latitudes. His death by Höder is the victory of darkness over light, the darkness of winter over the light of summer. . . . He symbolizes in the profoundest sense, the heavenly light of the soul and of the mind, purity, innocence, piety. Every time light is slain by darkness, it is the beautiful and good that is stricken down; but it is never stricken except to return and shine with increased splendor."—NORSE MYTHOLOGY.

Because he was the bane of Valhall's wreath of gods.
Then withered on time's tree its crown's magnificence;
The dragon Nidhogg gnawed its root; then were let loose
The powers of ancient night; the Midgård^{*} serpent beat
The sky with poison-swollen tail, and Fenris[†] howled, 110



FREY SLAIN BY SURTUR.

And glistened Surtur's^{*} sword of fire from Muspelheim.

*Called also Midgårdssorm (the serpent of Midgård) and Jörmundgard. Midgård is the earth, and is completely encircled in its aqueous home by this serpent, which has been called the oldest physical deity of the sea, and regarded as personifying the tumultuous ocean. When Thor and Tyr visited Hymer to obtain the great brew kettle, Thor went fishing with Hymer, fished up the great serpent, and would have slain him but for Hymer's cutting the line.

Odin had cast him into the sea, were he must remain until Ragnarök. Then "writhes he in giant rage," and with him Thor engages in final furious combat, fatal to both.

Cf. Isaiah, xxxvii, 1.

†"A giant wolf, which—as the Edda relates—was kept almost from birth amongst the Æsir, until, alarmed by its monstrous growth, and several ominous prophecies of its future destructiveness, they resolved to secure by a chain. Secure in conscious might, it permitted them to try successively various fetters, which it broke with ease; but at length ingenious Dwarfs fabricated a cord of six materials, which thus became rarities or nonentities: the sound of a cat's tread, the beard of a female, the roots of a mountain, the nerves of a bear, the saliva of a bird, and the breath of a fish. This ligature appeared so slight, that the creature suspected artifice; and would not suffer it to be wound around its limbs, before its keeper, Tyr, had placed his hand in its mouth, as a guaranty that no treachery was designed. Their enemy was thus enchain'd, but Tyr's arm paid the forfeit; and at the appointed day of the mundane catastrophe, Fenris shall burst his fetters, and devour Oden. This wolf, according to Mallet, is a symbol of Time."—STRONG.

See illustration, page 194.

‡At Ragnarök, Surtur, flame-clad ruler of Muspelheim, rides first, followed by the sons of Muspel in bright array, and his sword outshines the sun itself. Bifrost is broken in pieces when their mounted warriors ride over it. Surtur envelops the earth in flames. Yggdrasil ignites. The flames rise up to heaven. Frey and Surtur meet in deadly combat. Terrific strokes are exchanged. But Frey, the god of sunshine and prosperity, had given up his sword to Skirner, that the beautiful Gerda, daughter of the frost-giant Gymer, might be won (Canto I, page 34, note), and though the unarmed god battled valiantly, he was stricken down to death by the god of fire.

- And since then, wheresoe'er thou turn thine eye, is strife,
 With war-shields through creation. In Valhalla crows
 The gold-combed cock; and then the blood-red cock proclaims
- 115 War on the earth and under it.* Before was peace,
 Not only in the halls of gods, but on the earth;
 Calm dwelt in human hearts as in the breasts of gods;
 For all that comes to pass below, has taken place
 Above, in vaster measure; for humanity
- 120 Is but a type of Valhall,—but the light of heaven
 Reflected e'er in Saga's rune-engraven shield.
 Each soul enshrines its Balder. Dost recall the time
 When in thy heart peace yet reposed, and life was glad,
 And full of heavenly quiet as a song-bird's dream,
- 125 When summer evening's breeze is swaying to and fro
 Each drowsy floweret in its bed of waving green?
 Ah, then was Balder dwelling in thy guileless self,
 O Asa-son, thou wandering ray of Valhall's light!
 In childhood's heart the god yet lives, and Hela yields
- 130 Her prey once more, as often as a child is born.
 But side by side with Balder, in each human soul,
 Grows up his brother Höder, blind,—the son of Night.

*Heralding the "twilight of the gods," as it is also named in the Hindoo mythology.

"The gold-combed cock
 The gods in Valhall loudly crows to arms;
 The blood-red cock as shrilly answers all
 On earth and down beneath it."—VIKING TALES OF THE NORTH.

After the three-fold Fimbul winter, unbroken by intervening summer—season of brand, battle-ax and fratricide—comes the final catastrophe here described in the graphic diction of the Swedish historian:

"The fiery Cock of the Trojds, the gold-bright of the Æsir, the rust-red in the subterraneous halls of Hela, crow in ominous concert. The fettered Wolf howls, every chain is broken, the Giants gambol, Loke is free. Earth quakes, the Dwarfs sigh at the doors of their rocky caverns, Yggdrasil groans and trembles. The sea boils over its bounds, for the serpent of Midgård advances in gigantic frenzy, and heaves himself on shore. Then Heimdal standing forth, blows a blast upon the Giallar-horn, which resounds through all worlds, and summons the deities to war. Oden in vain communes with the head of Miimer. The eagle screams, and rends the frequent corpse; the billows roar; and Nagelfarf—the ship fabricated from nails of dead men—is launched, and rides on, steered by the giant Hrymer. But Heaven is rent, and Muspel's sons move in squadron through the gulf, headed by the sable Surtur, the All-kindling, himself mailed in flame, and brandishing a sword that outshines the solar beam. Beneath their tread, Bifrost, the tremulous bridge, is crushed. Loke repairs with the sons of Hela, Hrymer with the giant race, to mingle in the general affray. All the Einheriar—Valhall's heroes—march in mighty train. Oden leads them on, the sire of gods and men; and on Virgid's boundless plain commences the final conflict. The Wolf engorges Oden, but Vidar, the silent and strong, avenges his parent. Heimdal and Loke sink in mutual death. Frey falls before Surtur. The Midgård-serpent is slain by Thor, but the poisoned victor scarcely survives his foe. Surtur at length triumphs, and hurls flame over the universe."



RAGNARÖK.

All evil, like the bear's young, is born blind; its cloak
The darkness is, but all the good is clothed in light.

- 135 Loke,* the zealous tempter, waits and watches e'er
To guide the blind assassin's hand,—directs the dart
Straight to Valhalla's love, the youthful Balder's breast.
Then wakens Hatred, Violence springs on her prey,
The hungry sword's wolf prowls o'er mount and vale afar,
140 And dragons swim ferocious o'er the bloody waves.
For, like a feeble shadow, Piety doth sit,
A dead one midst the dead, beside the pale-faced Hel,†
And in its ashes Balder's sacred temple lies.
So is the lofty asas' life a prototype
145 Of human life below; for both are but the thoughts
Of one Allfather, silent and unchangeable.
What was, what will be, Vala's song alone doth know.
That song is both Time's cradle-song and elegy;
Creation's story sounds the self-same monotone,
150 And man may hear therein the saga of his life.
Dost thou perceive aright, or not? 'Tis Vala asks.‡

* Loke, "the prince of lies," had wrought the climax of his crimes in bringing about the death of Balder, and the gods had banished him from Asgård forever. But Agir, to appease their sadness, invites them to a feast in his coral caves. In the midst of the banquet Loke again appears, and vilifies all the gods, and slays Agir's servant. He is driven away, returns, renews his taunts, and flees before the hammer of Thor. The gods pursue him and capture him in the form of a salmon, which fish has ever since possessed a slim tail on account of Thor's grasp upon it.

Loke was dragged into a cavern, bound to the rocks, a venomous serpent placed above him, whose poison continually dropped on his upturned face.

But Sigyn, his ever faithful wife, sits at his side, catches the falling drops in a cup, never leaving him except to empty the vessel; at these intervals the falling venom causes him to writhe in agony, and his efforts to free himself cause the phenomena of earthquakes.

Thus he remains until Ragnarök.

Cf. the Southern myth of Prometheus who stole the fire from the sun's chariot, and was chained by Jupiter to Mt. Caucasus for 30,000 years, while a vulture eternally feeds on his eternally renewed liver.

As queen of Nifelheim she received the souls of the vile and cowardly, those who had died in their beds, and also the souls of women. The Northern hell was cold, the Southern hot. Oden threw Hela down to the lower world to reign, as he cast Jörmungard into the ocean, and the Fenris wolf to the earth, all three the offspring of Loke and Angurboda. A blood-stained dog, Garin, constantly watched beside Hel-gate, appeasable only by the offering of a Hel-cake.

Among the identities between Scandinavian and Roman myths, notice might be directed to Cerberus, the three-headed dog guarding the realm of Proserpina, which the Sybil, in leading Aeneas down through the passage under Mt. Avernus to visit his father Anchises, opiated with a cake of honey and soporific drugs, ravenously devoured and instantly effective.

At Ragnarök, Hela's dog and Tyr give each other mortal wounds.

‡ "Know ye now more, or not?" was the vala's frequently reiterated question in the Völuspá.



PUNISHMENT OF LOKE.

"Thou wouldst atonement make. Know'st what atonement is?
Then gaze, O youth, into mine eye, nor pallid grow!
An expiator walks the earth, and is called Death;

- 155 All time is but the offspring of eternity,
All earthly life a spark from great Allfather's throne;
Atonement is but a return there purified.
The holy asas fall themselves; and Ragnarök
Their day of expiation is,—a bloody day
- 160 On Vigrid's* hundred miles of plain; there will they fall
But yet not unavenged; for there the evil find
Eternal death, while rise again the fallen good
From funeral pyre of earth, refined, to higher life.
Though fall the starry-crown indeed from heaven's fane,
- 165 All pale and withered,—though the earth sink in the sea,—
Yet fairer will she rise new-born, and lift in joy
Once more her flower-crowned head from out the turbid waves,
And youthful stars with light divine traverse the sky,
Silently wandering round the new-created world.[†]
- 170 But on the green-clad hills will Balder then hold sway
O'er new-born asas and a human race made pure;
And runic tablets made of gold, but long since lost
In time's gray morning, will be found beneath the grass

* The broad field of the last battle between gods and the powers of evil.

"Vigrid is the plain
Where battling meet
Surtur and gods so mild;
Days' journey a hundred full
It stretches every way;

"Tis marked their field of fight."—VAFTHRUDNER'S SONG.

[†] How long after Ragnarök the night of Time will impend, is not predicated. Of the gods, Balder and Höder, now reconciled, will reappear in the new earth, as also Vidar Vale, Hoener, and Modi and Magni, the two sons of Thor; but not Oden nor Thor, whose developing work was finished long ago.

One human pair, Lifthrasir and Lif, survive the destruction, and their race peoples the regenerated and peaceful world. During the great disaster the pair had been concealed in Hodmimer's forest, and their food had been the dew of the dawn.

"We shall see emerge
From the bright ocean at our feet an earth
More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits
Self-springing, and a seed of man preserved,
Who then shall live in peace, as now in war."—BALDER DEAD (Arnold).

"All evil
Dies there an endless death, while goodness rises
From that great world-fire, purified at last,
To a life far higher, better than the past."

—VIKING TALES OF THE NORTH.

Of Ida's plain,* by sons of Valhall reconciled.

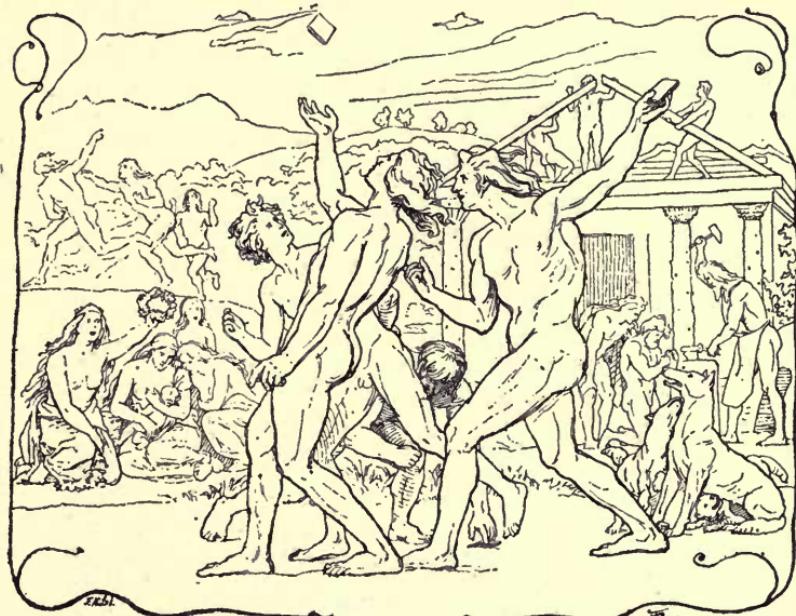
So is the death of righteous ones their test by fire;

175

'Tis but atonement, and a birth to better life,

Which, clarified, flies back to that from which it came,

And guileless plays as child upon its father's knee.



THE PLAIN OF IDA.

Alas! the best all lies beyond the mound of death,—

Beyond the green-clad gate of Gimle;† base is all,

180

*The center of Asgård, where stood the gods' hall, Gladshiem, and the goddess' hall, Vingolf. There they built a smithy, with anvils, tongs, hammers and other instruments for cutting stone, carving wood and metals. All its furniture was of gold. Here the gods pitched their golden disks, and on the same play-ground used the invulnerable Balder as a target, where he was finally slain.

Here will the gods who are destined to live again, re-assemble after Ragnarök.

"We shall tread once more the well-known plain
Of Ida, and amoung the grass shall find
The golden disk with which we played of yore;
And that will bring to mind the former life
And pastime of the gods, the wise discourse
Of Oden, the delights of other days."—BALDER DEAD (Arnold).

†As Hel exists only till Ragnarök, and Nastrand ever after, so Valhalla ends at Ragnarök, and Gimle—the eternal home of the heroic and the good—supersedes it. This highest heavenly abode lies above the power of fire.

"In Gimle the lofty
There shall the hosts
Of the virtuous dwell,
And through ages
Taste of deep gladness."—HOWITT.

And tarnished everything that lives beneath the stars.
Yet some atonement even dwells in mortal life;
This humbler sphere is prelude to the higher one.
It is like light arpeggio on the minstrel's harp,

185



190

THE SKALD.

When his artistic hand awakes
the slumbering tone,
Attunes each string, and softly
proves with careful ear,
Till with a potent touch he
sweeps the quivering gold,
Enticing long-forgotten mem-
ories from their grave,
Revealing great Valhalla's
light to eyes entranced.
For earth is but the shadow
of the heaven above,
And life the outer court of
Balder's fane on high.

- The multitude makes offering to the gods; the steed
Of gold and purple equipage is sacrificed.*
This is a symbol, and of meaning deep;—for blood
195 Is the red morning-light of each atonement day;
But symbols are not very things, and not atone;
What thou hast sinned none else may expiate for thee.
The dead are reconciled upon Allfather's breast;
The living expiation feel in their own hearts.
200 I know one sacrifice more dear to all the gods
Than smoke of burning victims; and this offering
Is of thy heart's unfettered hate, thine own revenge.
If thou canst deaden not their edge, if thou canst not

*In Scandinavia the horse was used for food and for sacrifice.
"Horses were frequently sacrificed, in the old North, among other animals. They were especially offered to Oden, as the god of War; and to Thor, in token of the Horses which drew the chariot of the Sun. Cyrus the Great also offered Horses to that luminary. At the great atonement sacrifice at Lederun, the capital of Sæland, 99 horses, and the same number of men, dogs, cocks and hawks were offered at once."—STEVENS.



THE NORNS.

Forgive, O youth, what wouldest thou then in Balder's house?

- 205 What purport bears the temple thou hast builded here?
With stones is Balder not appeased; atonement dwells
Down here, as there above, only where dwelleth peace.
First with thy foe be reconciled, and with thyself;—
Then art thou also with the gold-haired god at peace.
- 210 They speak of Balder in the South,—the virgin's son,
Sent thither by Allfather to interpret runes
Upon the norns' dark shield, all unrevealed before.
Peace was his battle-cry, and Love his glittering sword,
And Purity sat dove-like on his silver helm.
- 215 Devout he lived and taught; he died, and he forgave;
And under far-off palms his grave in sunlight lies.
'Tis said his doctrine doth extend from vale to vale,
Melting the hardened heart, uniting hand to hand,
And building concord's kingdom on the ransomed earth.
- 220 I do not know the teaching well, but in mine hours
Of better thought have vaguely pictured what it means;
Each human heart, like mine, has imaged it betimes.
A time will come, I know, when it will lightly spread
Its snow-white dove-wings o'er the mountains of the North.
- 225 But not for us will be a North when that day comes;
The oaks will rustle o'er our long forgotten graves.
Ah, happier races, ye who in that day shall drink
The sparkling bowl of that new light, I bid you hail!
Ah, well for you, if it can clarify each sky
- 230 That erewhile spread its mist across the sun of life.

Jesus Christ, the story of whose birth, divinity, miracles and mercy had already reached the North—which had been prepared to receive him by the almost divine conception of its own Balder,—the Scandinavian Christ.

It is in accordance with this lofty ideal of divinity that the pagan high-priest formulates this beautiful tribute to Christianity.

* "As the Norsemen who settled in Iceland, and through whom the most complete exposition of the Odinic faith has come down to us in the Eddas and Sagas, were not definitely converted until the eleventh century,—although they had come in contact with Christians during their viking raids nearly six centuries before,—it is very probable that the Northern skalds gleaned some idea of the Christian doctrines, and that this knowledge influenced them to a certain extent, and colored their descriptions of the end of the world and the regeneration of the earth."—*MYTHS OF NORTHERN LANDS*.



CHRIST WITH MARY AND MARTHA.

But hold us not in scorn, who in sincerity
Have sought with steadfast eye to see the gleam divine;
Allfather is one God, though many Him proclaim.

- "Thou hatest Bele's sons. But wherefore hatest thou?
- 235 Because to thee, a peasant's son, they would not give
Their sister, who is born of Sæming's* noble race—
Great Oden's royal son. Extends its ancestry
To Valhall's very throne;—therein lies pride of birth.
But birth is merely fortune, answerest thou,—not worth.
- 240 Ah, not of his own merit, youth, is man e'er proud,
But of his fortune only; for whate'er is best
Is but the gift of gods. Art thou thyself not proud
Of thy heroic exploits and thy passing strength?
Gavest thyself that mighty strength? Did Asa-Thor
- 245 Not weave the sinews of thine arm like boughs of oak?
And is it not the soul divine that beats in joy
Within the castle of thy high-arched breast? Is not
The lightning of thy flashing eye the god's own glance?
The lofty norns beside thy very cradle sang
- 250 Thy kingly life-song; but thy worth, on this account,
Surpasseth not the king's son's for his royal birth.
Judge not another's pride, lest thine itself be judged!
Now is King Helge fallen!"

Frithiof here exclaimed:

"King Helge fallen? When and where?"

"Thou know'st full well

- 255 That while thyself this temple reared, he led a march.
Among the Finland mountains. On a lonely cliff
To Jumala[†] devoted, stood an ancient fane,

*One of the sons of Oden, who became the head of a family of Norwegian kings, the three branches of which maintained long sovereignty.

†The Finnish name of the Supreme Deity. In Permia (Russia) was a temple to Jumala, in whose ruins was found a crown with twelve gems, a golden necklace, weighing three hundred marks, a gold bowl of enormous capacity, and a curtain of inestimable value, screening the image of the god. See Dalin, I, 184.

Abandoned long ago; its portal now was barred;
But just above the door yet stood a monster-like
Old image of the god, inclining to its fall.

260

But none there was who dare approach, for it was said
Among the Finns, from age to age, that he indeed
Who first approached the fane should Jumala behold.
This came to Helge's ears; and in blind wrath he strode
Up the deserted steps against the hated god,

265

And would destroy the temple. When the door he reached
He found it fast, and in its lock the rusted key.

Straight grasped he both the door-posts; for an instant then
He shook the mouldering pillars, when, with fearful crash,
Tumbled the weighty image, crushing in its fall

270

The son of Valhall! Thus he Jumala beheld!

Last night a messenger to us the tidings bore.

Alone sits Halfdan now upon King Bele's throne;
Give him thy hand, and leave revenge unto the gods!

Balder, and I his priest, this sacrifice demand,

275

As symbol that thou mockest not the peaceful god.
Refuse thou this, then is this temple built in vain,
And vain are all my words."

Now entered Halfdan in,
Over the copper threshold, and with doubting glance,

Standing apart from him he feared, he spoke no word.

280

Then Frithiof loosed the mail-coat-hater from his loins,
And placed his golden shield against the altar's side,
And quickly to his enemy stepped forth unarmed.

"In this sad conflict," Frithiof spoke in friendly voice,
"He noblest is, who first his hand extends for peace."

285

Then blushed King Halfdan, and removed his glove of steel,
And hands long separated now were joined again*

* In the Saga of Thorsten, after Frithiof has married Ingeborg and is holding sway over Ringarike, Helge and Halfdan bring war to him; Helge receives his death wound at the hand of Frithiof, to whom Halfdan at once yields up his realm, and pays annual tribute until Frithiof takes the name of king over Sogne-fylke, and gives to the sons of King Ring the sovereignty over Ringarike.



THE MARRIAGE OF FRITHIOF AND INGEBORG.

In hearty clasp as firm as is the mountain's base.
And then the old high-priest revoked the curse which bound
The temple-violator and the outlawed man. 290

When this was done, then quickly entered Ingeborg,
In bridal robes and ermine-mantle, with her maids,—
As when the moon by stars is followed in the heaven.
With tear-drops glistening in her beauteous eyes, she fell
Upon her brother's neck; but Halfdan, deeply moved, 295
Placed his dear sister then on Frithiof's faithful breast;
And at the altar of the god she gave her hand
To him, her childhood's faithful friend, her heart's best love.





THE FJORD OF SOGNE.
(Laerdalsoren)



Explanatory Letter
of
Frithiof's Saga.
By
Esaias Tegnér.

Dated Östrabo, April 22, 1839.

(TRANSLATED.)

At the time when *Frithiof* was composed, it was commonly enough believed among the Literati of Sweden—and I need only to mention Leopold as an example—that what was called Gothic Poetry was, notwithstanding the talent it was admitted had been employed on it, altogether and organically unsuccessful. This Poesy, it was asserted, rested for fundamental support on a wildness of manners and opinions and an only partial development of the relations of society, impossible to reconcile with the poetry of present times. The latter was, properly enough, regarded as the Daughter of Modern Civilization, and in her countenance it was that the age recognized, though beautified and idealized, the features of itself. And, indeed, it is quite true that all Poetry must reflect the progress and temperament of its time; but still we find those general human passions and circumstances, which must remain unchanged in every period, and may be regarded as the foundation of poetry. Even before this, though with various success, Ling had treated several Northern subjects,—for the most part in a dramatic form. It has been observed that his great poetic talent lay more in the lyric than the drama, and that he paints exterior

Nature far better than the ever-changing soul. That the Northern Saga can successfully assume the dramatic form is, however, abundantly proved by the Tragedies of *Œhlenschläger*. It is with pleasure I acknowledge that his "Helge" first gave me the idea of Frithiof.

It was never my meaning, however, in this poem,—though such seems to have been the opinion of many—simply to versify the Saga. The most transient comparison ought to have shown not only that the whole denouement is different in the Poem and the Saga, but also that several of its parts, such as Cantos II, III, V, XV, XXI, XXIII and XXIV, have either little, if any, or at least a very distant ground in the legend. Indeed it is not in this one, but in other Icelandic Sagas that we ought to seek the sources of the incidents I have chosen. My object was, to represent a poetical image of the old Northern Hero-Age. It was not Frithiof, as an individual, whom I would paint; it was the epoch of which he was chosen as the representative. It is true that I preserved, in this respect, the hull and outline of the tradition,—but, at the same time, I thought myself entitled to add or to take away, just as was most convenient for my plan. This, as I supposed, was a part of that poetic liberty, without which it is impossible to produce any independent treatment of any poetical subject whatsoever.

In the Saga we find much that is high-minded and heroic, and which, equally demanding the homage of every period, both could and should be preserved. But, at the same time, we meet occasional instances of the raw, the savage, the barbarous, which required to be either altogether taken away, or to be considerably softened down. To a certain extent, therefore, it was necessary to modernize; but just the difficulty here was to find the fitting lagom. On the one hand, the poem ought not too glaringly to offend our milder opinions and more refined habits; but on the other, it was important not to sacrifice the national, the lively, the vigorous and the natural. There could, and should, blow through the song that cold winter-air, that fresh North-wind, which characterizes so much both the climate and the temperament of the North. But neither should the storm howl till the very quicksilver froze, and all the more tender emotions of the heart were extinguished.

It is properly in the bearing of Frithiof's character that I have sought the resolution of this problem. The noble, the high-minded, the bold, which is the great feature of all heroism, ought not, of course, to be missing there; and materials sufficient abounded both in this and many other Sagas. But together with this more general heroism, I have endeavored to

invest the character of Frithiof with something individually Northern—that fresh-living, insolent, daring rashness which belongs, or at least formerly belonged, to the national temperament. Ingeborg says of Frithiof:

“How glad, how daring, how inspired with hope!
Against the breast of norn he sets the point
Of his good sword, commanding: ‘Thou shalt yield!’”*

These lines contain the key to Frithiof’s character, and, in point of fact, to the whole poem. Even the mild, peace-loving, friend-rich old King Ring is not destitute of this great national quality, at least in the manner of his death; and it is for this reason that I let him “Carve himself with geirs-odd,”—undoubtedly a barbarous custom, but still characteristic of the time and the popular manners.

Another peculiarity common to the people of the North, is a certain disposition for melancholy and heaviness of spirit common to all deeper characters. Like some elegiac key-note, its sound pervades all our old national melodies, and generally whatever is expressive in our annals,—for it is found in the depths of the nation’s heart. I have somewhere or other said of Bellman, the most national of our poets:

“And mark the touch of gloom his brow o’ershading—
A Northern minstrel look, a grief in rosy-red!”†

This melancholy, so far from opposing the fresh liveliness and cheerful vigor common to the nation, only gives them yet more strength and elasticity. There is a certain kind of life-enjoying gladness (and of this public opinion has accused the French,) which finally reposes on frivolity;—that of the North is built on seriousness. And therefore I have also endeavored to develop in Frithiof somewhat of this meditative gloom. His repentant regret at the unwilling Temple-fire,—his scrupulous fear of Balder, who

“—sits in the sky, cloudy thoughts sending down,
ever veiling my spirit in gloom,”‡

and his longing for the final reconciliation and for calm within him, are proofs not only of a religious craving, but also and still more of a natural tendency to sorrowfulness common to every serious mind, at least in the North of Europe.

I have been reproached (though, I cannot help thinking, without good reason) with having given the love between Frithiof and Ingeborg,—for instance in “The Parting”—too modern

* “Hur glad, hur trotsig, hur förhoppningsfull!
Han sätter spetsen af sitt goda svärd
På nornans bröst, och säger: ‘Du skall vika!’”

—FRITHIOF’S SAGA, CANTO VIII.

† “Och märk det vemodsdraget öfver pannan,
ett Nordiskt Sångardrag, eu sorg i rosenrödt!”

‡ “sitter i skyn, skickar tankarna ned,
som förmörla mitt sinne alltjemt.”

—CANTO XV.

and sentimental a cast. As regards this, I ought to remark that reverence for the sex was from the earliest times, long before the introduction of Christianity, a national feature of the German peoples. On this account it was that the light, inconstant and simply sensual view of love,—which prevailed among the most cultivated nations of antiquity,—was a thing quite foreign to the habits of the North. Song and Saga overflow with the most touching legends of romantic love and faith in the North, long before the spirit of chivalry had made woman the idol of man in the South. The circumstances assumed between Ingeborg and Frithiof seem to me, therefore, to rest upon sufficient historical ground,—if not personally,—in the manners and opinions of the age. That delicacy of sentiment with which Ingeborg refused to accompany her lover, and rather sacrificed her inclination than withdrew herself from the authority of her brother and guardian—seems to me to find its reason in the nature of each nobler female, which is the same in every period and in every land.

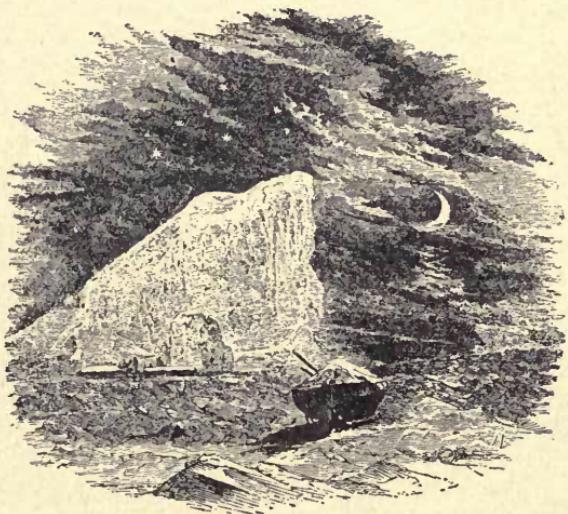
The subjective thus contained in the events and characters, demanded, or at least permitted, a departure from the usual epic uniformity in their treatment. The most suitable method seemed to me, to resolve the epic form into free lyric romances. I had the example of Oehlenschläger, in his *Helge*, before me; and have since found that it had been followed by others. It carries with it the advantage of enabling one to change the meter in accordance with the contents of every separate song. Thus, for instance, I doubt whether “Ingeborg’s Lament” (Canto IX) could be given with advantage in any language in hexameters of ten-syllabled iambics, whether rhymed or not. I am well aware that many regard this as opposed to the epic unity, which is, however, so nearly allied to monotony. But I regard this unity as more than sufficiently compensated by the freer room and fresher changes gained by its abandonment. Just this liberty, however, to be properly employed, requires so much the more thought, understanding and taste; for with every separate piece one must endeavor to find the exactly suitable form, a thing not always ready for one’s hand in the language. It is for this reason that I have attempted (with greater or less success) to imitate several meters, especially from the poets of antiquity. Thus the pentameter iambic, hypercatalectic in the third foot, (Canto II); the six-footed iambic (C. XIV); the Aristophanic Anæpests (C. XV); the trochaic tetrameter (C. XVI); and the tragic senarius (C. XXIV),—were little, if at all, heard of in Swedish previous to my attempts.

As regards the language in itself,—the antique subject in-

vited one sometimes to use an archaism, especially where such an expression, without being obscure, seemed to carry with it any particular emphasis. Still this care is at all events lost abroad, and sometimes even at home. It demands, nevertheless, very much prudence—for the great stream of words in a modern poem must, naturally, flow from the language of the day, although an obsolescent word or two may occasionally be employed.

E. S. TEGNER.

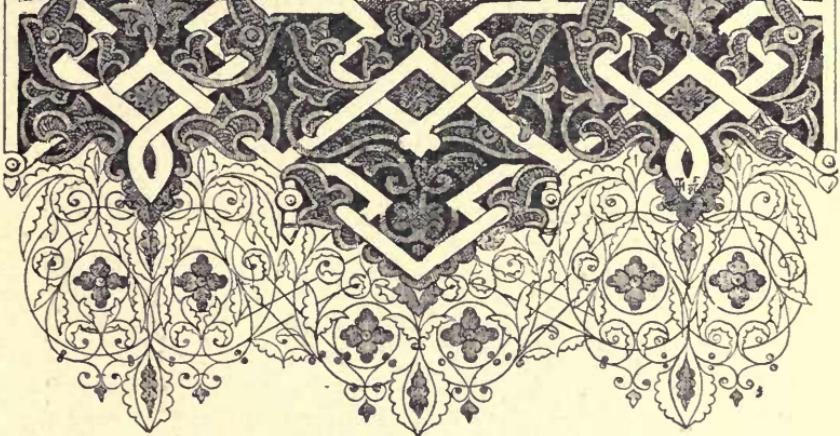
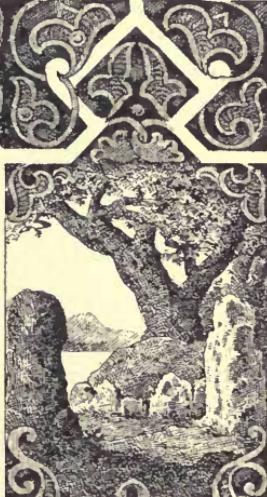
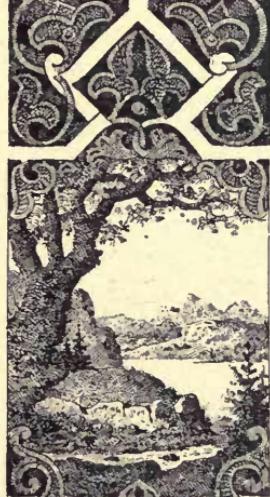




THE MID-DAY MOON.

ERIT* * *
* * *.

Index
of the
Foot-Notes,
Illustrations
and
Songs.





Stigner.



Index of the Foot-Notes.

In the pronunciation of Swedish words, including proper names, there are three vowels requiring special attention, as follows: Å is pronounced nearly like e, as in "met," inclining to long a; Á like o long; and Ö like e in "her," precisely similar to the German ö. I is like e long. Y is like the French u, or German ü—a very much broadened long e. Au is like ou. J is sounded as y, th as t, q as k, h is mute before j and v, l is mute before j, and g=y before ä, e, i, and y. V and w have the same sound.

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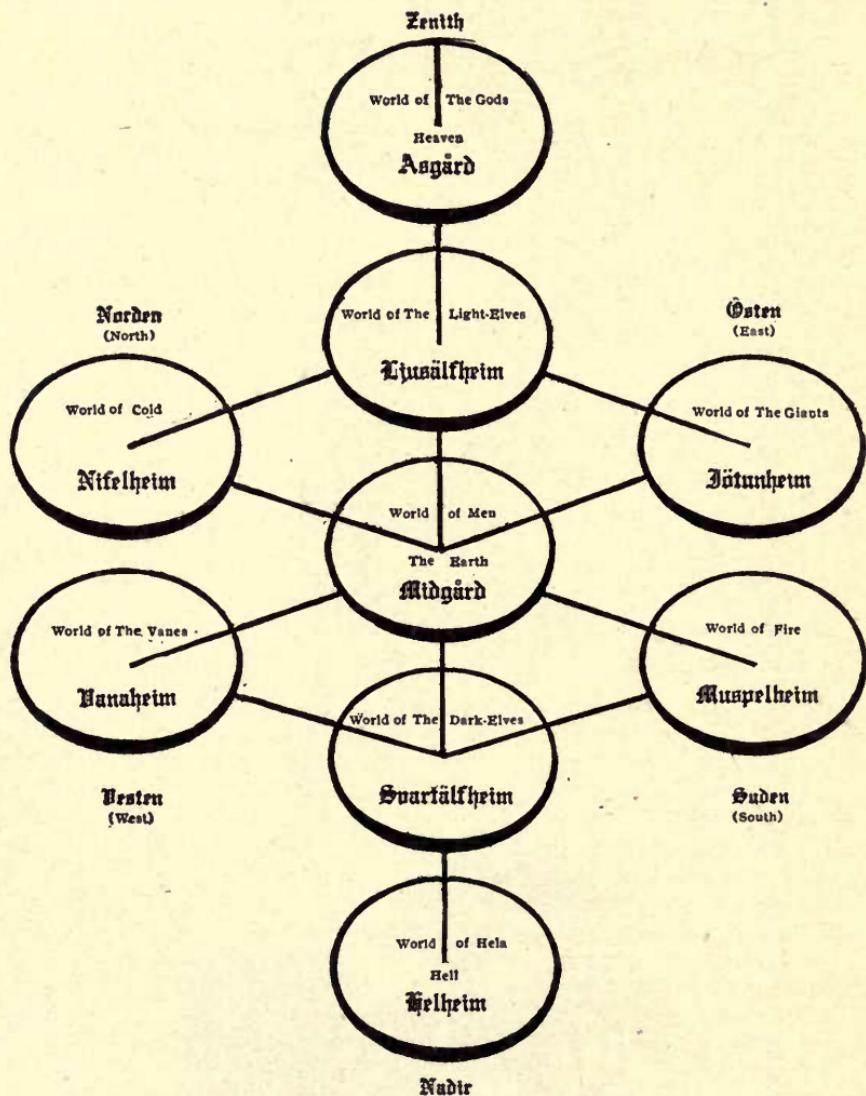
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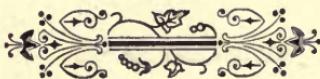


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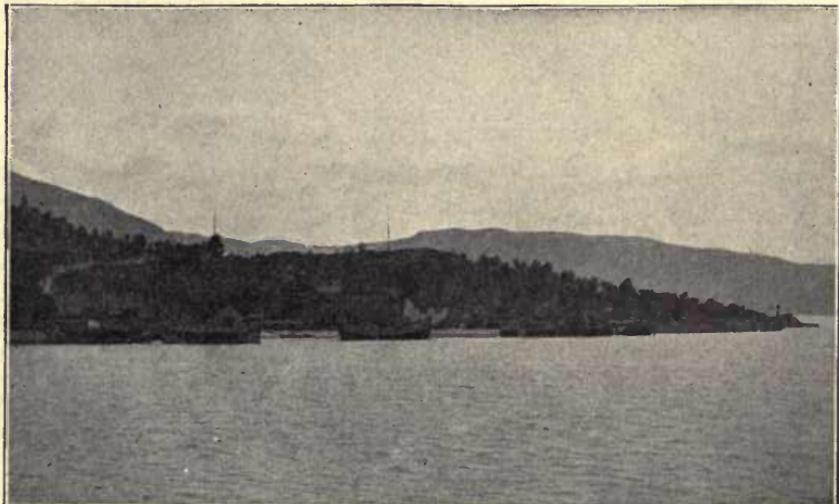
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FRAMNÄS.
(From a modern photograph.)

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