

**The Heimskringla; or, chronicle of the kings of Norway / Translated from the Icelandic of Snorri Sturleson, with a preliminary dissertation, by S. Laing.**

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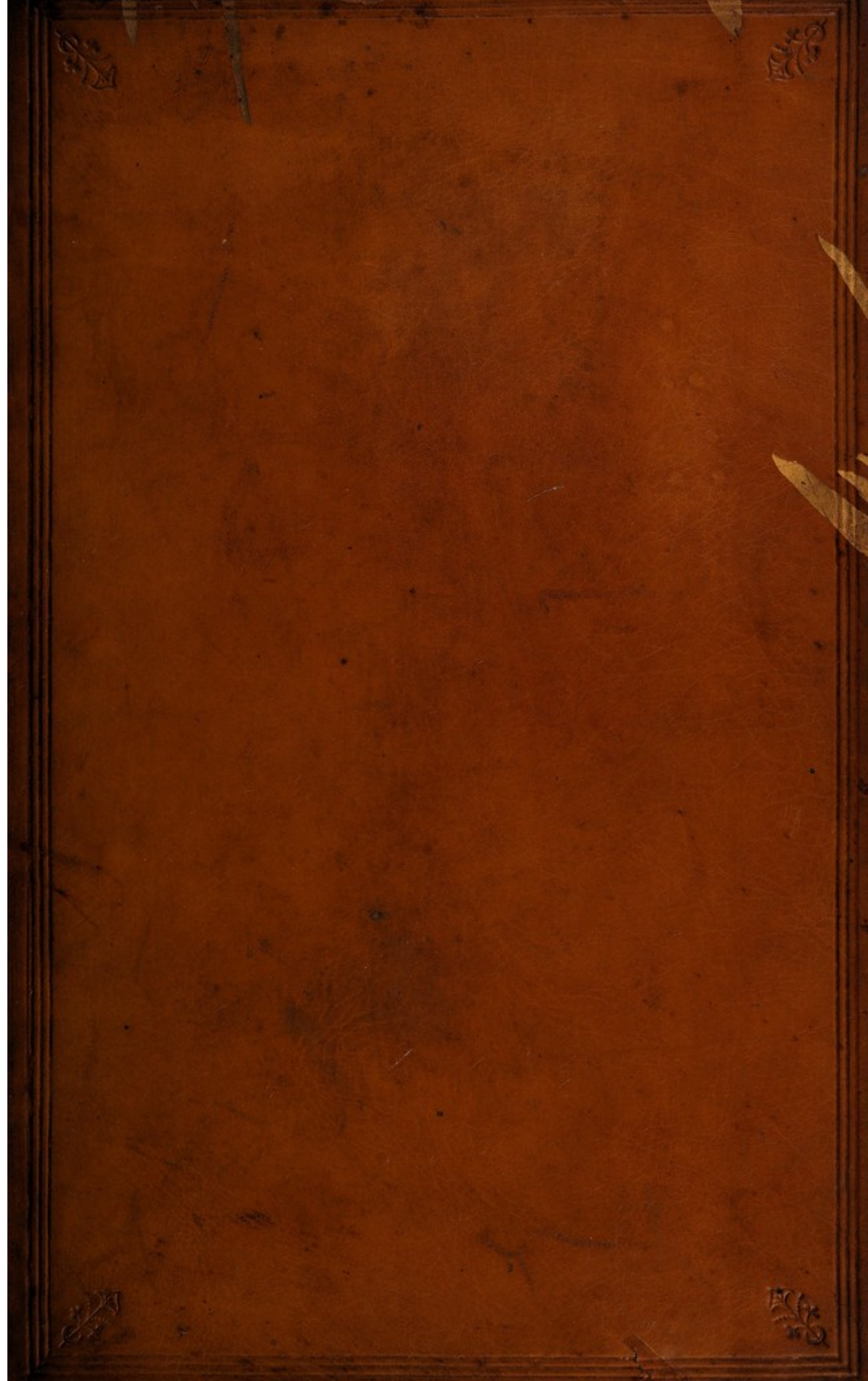
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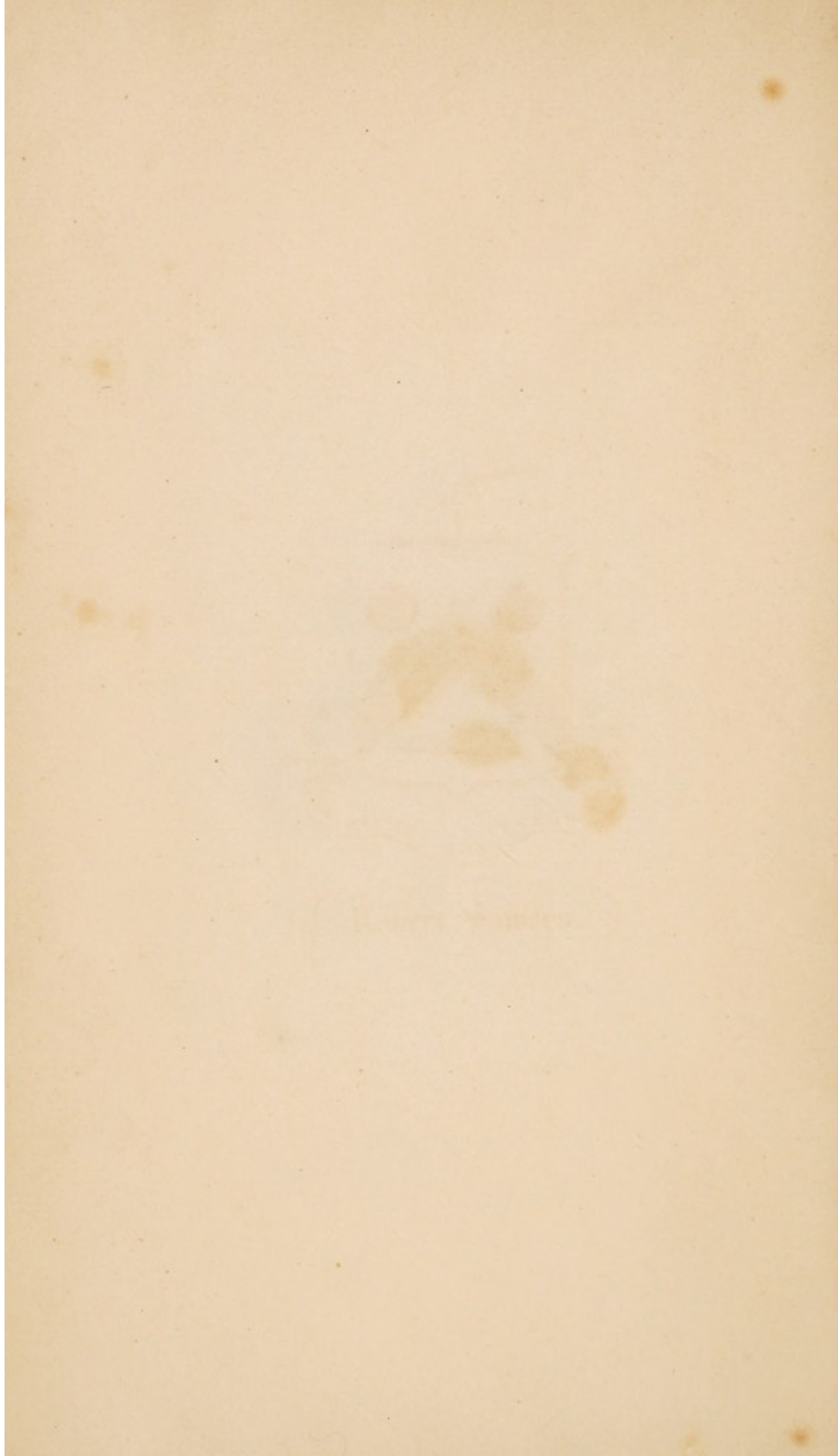


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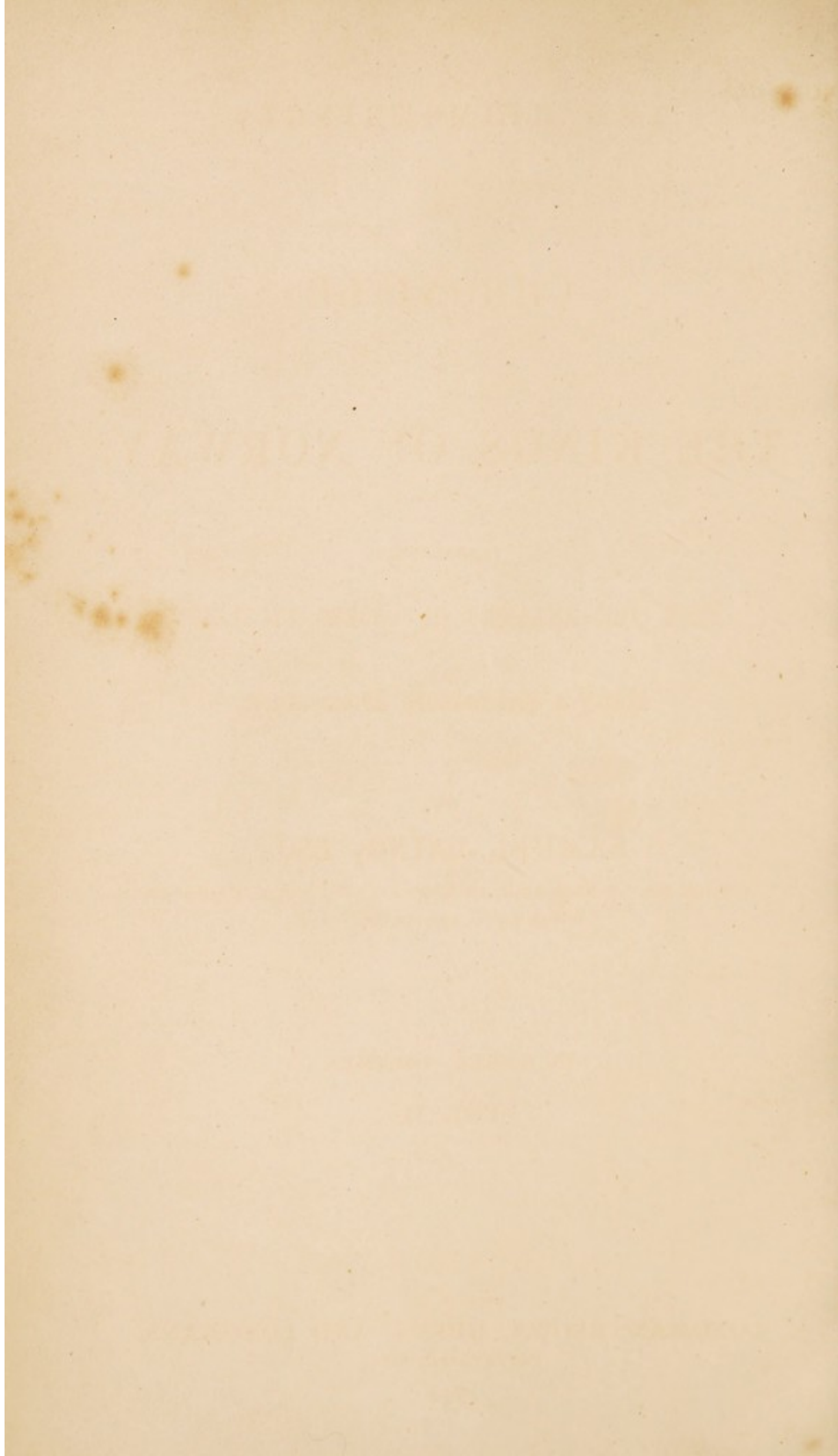
SNORRE











THE HEIMSKRINGLA;  
OR,  
CHRONICLE  
OF  
THE KINGS OF NORWAY.

TRANSLATED  
FROM THE ICELANDIC OF SNORRO STURLESON,

With a Preliminary Dissertation,

BY  
SAMUEL LAING, ESQ.  
AUTHOR OF "A RESIDENCE IN NORWAY," "A TOUR IN SWEDEN,"  
"NOTES OF A TRAVELLER," ETC.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE SECOND VOLUME.

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THE  
HEIMSKRINGLA;  
OR,  
CHRONICLE OF THE KINGS OF NORWAY.

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VII.

SAGA OF KING OLAF HARALDSSON THE SAINT.\* SAGA VII.

OLAF, Harald Grænske's son, was brought up by his stepfather Sigurd Syr and his mother Aasta. Rane the Far-travelled lived in the house of Aasta, and fostered this Olaf Haraldsson. Olaf came early to manhood, was handsome in countenance, middle-sized in growth, and was even when very young of good understanding and ready speech. Sigurd his stepfather was a careful householder, who kept his people closely to their work, and often went about himself to inspect his corn-rigs and meadow-land, the cattle, and also the smith-work, or whatsoever his people had on hand to do.

CHAPTER  
I.  
Of Saint  
Olaf's  
bringing  
up.

It happened one day this King Sigurd wanted to ride from home, but there was nobody about the house; so he told his step-son Olaf to saddle his horse. Olaf went to the goats' pen, took out the he-

CHAPTER  
II.  
Of Olaf  
and King  
Sigurd Syr.

\* King Olaf the Saint reigned from about the year 1015 to 1030. The death of King Olaf Tryggvesson was in the year 1000; and Earl Eric held the government for the Danish and Swedish kings about fifteen years.



## SAGA VII.

goat that was the largest, led him forth, and put the king's saddle on him, and then went in and told King Sigurd he had saddled his riding horse. Now when King Sigurd came out and saw what Olaf had done, he said, "It is easy to see that thou wilt little regard my orders; and thy mother will think it right that I order thee to do nothing that is against thy own inclination. I see well enough that we are of different dispositions, and that thou art far more proud than I am." Olaf answered little, but went his way laughing.

CHAPTER  
III.  
Of King  
Olaf's ac-  
complish-  
ments.

When Olaf Haraldsson grew up he was not tall, but middle-sized in height, although very thick, and of good strength. He had light brown hair, and a broad face which was white and red. He had particularly fine eyes which were beautiful and piercing, so that one was afraid to look him in the face when he was angry. Olaf was very expert in all bodily exercises, understood well to handle his bow, and was distinguishsd particularly in throwing his spear by hand: he was a great swimmer, and very handy, and very exact and knowing in all kinds of smith-work, whether he himself or others made the thing. He was distinct and acute in conversation, and was soon perfect in understanding and strength. He was beloved by his friends and acquaintances, eager in his amusements, and one who always liked to be the first, as it was suitable he should be from his birth and dignity. He was called Olaf the Thick.

CHAPTER  
IV.  
Beginning  
of King  
Olaf's war  
expedi-  
tions.

Olaf Haraldsson was twelve years old when he, for the first time, went on board a ship of war. His mother Aasta got Rane, who was called the foster-father of kings, to command a ship of war and take Olaf under his charge; for Rane had often been on war expeditions. When Olaf in this way got a ship and men, the crew gave him the title of king; for it was the custom that those commanders of troops who were of kingly descent, on going out upon a



vikings cruise, received the title of king immediately, SAGA VII.  
 although they had no land or kingdom. Rane sat at the helm; and some say that Olaf himself was but a common rower, although he was king of the men-at-arms. They steered east along the land, and came first to Denmark. So says Ottar Swarte, in his lay which he made about King Olaf:—

“ Young was the king when from his home  
 He first began in ships to roam,  
 His ocean-steed to ride  
 To Denmark o’er the tide.  
 Well exercised art thou in truth—  
 In manhood’s earnest work, brave youth!  
 Out from the distant north  
 Mighty hast thou come forth.”

Towards autumn he sailed eastward to the Swedish dominions, and there harried and burnt all the country round; for he thought he had good cause of hostility against the Swedes, as they killed his father Harald. Ottar Swarte says distinctly that he came from the east, out by way of Denmark:—

“ Thy ship from shore to shore,  
 With many a well-plied oar,  
 Across the Baltic foam is dancing,—  
 Shields, and spears, and helms glancing!  
 Hoist high the swelling sail  
 To catch the freshening gale!  
 There’s food for the raven-flight  
 Where thy sail-winged ship shall light:  
 Thy landing-tread  
 The people dread;  
 And the wolf howls for a feast  
 On the shore-side in the east.”

The same autumn Olaf had his first battle at Sotholm, which lies in the Swedish skerry circle.\* He fought there with some vikings, whose leader was CHAPTER  
V.  
Olaf’s first  
battle.

\* The coast of Sweden and Norway is surrounded by a belt of rocks and islets, within which there is a smooth-water passage generally along the coast. This circle or belt is called the Skiergard—the skerry-guard,—being a protection of rocks or skerries against the force of the ocean.



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Soto. Olaf had much fewer men, but his ships were larger, and he laid his ships between some blind rocks, which made it difficult for the vikings to get alongside; and Olaf's men threw grappling irons into the ships which came nearest, drew them up to their own vessels, and cleared them of men. The vikings took to flight after losing many men. Sigvat the scald tells of this fight in the lay in which he reckons up King Olaf's battles:—

“ They launch his ship where waves are foaming—  
 To the sea shore  
 Bore mast and oar,  
 And sent him o'er the seas a-roaming.  
 Where did the sea-king first draw blood?  
 In the battle shock  
 At Soto's rock:  
 The wolves howl over their fresh food.”

CHAPTER  
 VI.  
 Foray in  
 Sweden.

King Olaf steered thereafter eastwards to Sweden, and into the Lög (the Mælare lake), and ravaged the land on both sides. He sailed all the way up to Sigtun, and laid his ships close to the old Sigtun. The Swedes say the stone-heaps are still to be seen which Olaf had laid under the ends of the gangways from the shore to the ships. When autumn was advanced, Olaf Haraldsson heard that Olaf the Swedish king was assembling an army, and also that he had laid iron chains across Stokkesund (the channel between the Mælare lake and the sea), and had laid troops there; for the Swedish king thought that Olaf Haraldsson would be kept in there till frost came, and he thought little of Olaf's force, knowing he had but few people. Now when King Olaf Haraldsson came to Stokkesund he could not get through, as there was a castle west of the sound, and men-at-arms lay on the south; and he heard that the Swedish king was come there with a great army and many ships. He therefore dug a canal across the flat land Agnafet out to the sea.



Over all Swithiod\* all the running waters fall into the Malære lake; but the only outlet of it to the sea is so small that many rivers are wider, and when much rain or snow falls the water rushes in a great cataract out by Stokkesund, and the lake rises high and floods the land. It fell heavy rain just at this time; and as the canal was dug out to the sea, the water and stream rushed into it. Then Olaf had all the rudders unshipped, and hoisted all sail aloft. It was blowing a strong breeze astern, and they steered with their oars, and the ships came in a rush over all the shallows, and got into the sea without any damage. Now went the Swedes to their king, Olaf, and told him that Olaf the Thick had slipped out to sea; on which the king was enraged against those who should have watched that Olaf did not get away. This passage has since been called King's Sound; but large vessels cannot pass through it, unless the waters are very high. Some relate that the Swedes were aware that Olaf had cut across the tongue of land, and that the water was falling out that way; and they flocked to it with the intention to hinder Olaf from getting away, but the water undermined the banks on each side so that they fell in with the people, and many were drowned: but the Swedes contradict this as a false report, and deny the loss of people. The king sailed to Gotland in harvest, and prepared to plunder; but the Gotlanders assembled, and sent men to the king, offering him a scatt. The king found this would suit him, and he received the scatt, and remained there all winter. So says Ottar Swarte:—

“Thou seaman-prince! thy men are paid:  
The scatt on Gotlanders is laid;

---

\* Swithiod, the country about Upsal, was Sweden Proper, and distinct from Gotland and other earldoms subject to Sweden. Scania belonged to Denmark.



## SAGA VII.

Young man or old  
 To our seamen bold  
 Must pay, to save his head :  
 The Yngling princes fled,  
 Eysyssel people bled :  
 Who can't defend the wealth they have  
 Must die, or share with the rover brave."

CHAPTER  
 VII.  
 The second  
 battle.

It is related here that King Olaf, when spring set in, sailed east to Eysyssel, and landed and plundered: the Eysyssel men came down to the strand and gave him battle. King Olaf gained the victory, pursued those who fled, and laid waste the land with fire and sword. It is told that when King Olaf first came to Eysyssel they offered him scatt, and when the scatt was to be brought down to the strand the king came to meet it with an armed force, and that was not what the bonders there expected; for they had brought no scatt, but only their weapons with which they fought against the king, as before related. So says Sigvat the scald:—

"With much deceit and bustle  
 To the heath of Eysyssel  
 The bonders brought the king,  
 To get scatt at their weapon-thing.  
 But Olaf was too wise  
 To be taken by surprise:  
 Their legs scarce bore them off  
 O'er the common fast enough."

CHAPTER  
 VIII.  
 The third  
 battle.

After this they sailed to Finland and plundered there, and went up the country. All the people fled to the forest, and they had emptied their houses of all household goods. The king went far up the country, and through some woods, and came to some dwellings in a valley called Herdal,—where, however, they made but small booty, and saw no people; and as it was getting late in the day, the king turned back to his ships. Now when they came into the woods again people rushed upon them from all quarters, and made a severe attack. The king told his men to cover themselves with their shields, but before they got



out of the woods he lost many people, and many were wounded; but at last, late in the evening, he got to the ships. The Finlanders conjured up in the night, by their witchcraft, a dreadful storm and bad weather on the sea; but the king ordered the anchors to be weighed and sail hoisted, and beat off all night to the outside of the land. The king's luck prevailed more than the Finlanders' witchcraft; for he had the luck to beat round the Balagard's-side\* in the night, and so got out to sea. So says Sigvat:—

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“The third fight was at Herdal, where  
The men of Finland met in war  
The hero of the royal race,  
With ringing sword-blades face to face.  
Off Balagarda's shore the waves  
Ran hollow; but the sea-king saves  
His hard-pressed ship, and gains the lee  
Of the east coast through the wild sea.”

King Olaf sailed from thence to Denmark, where he met Thorkel the Tall, brother of Earl Sigvald, and went into partnership with him; for he was just ready to set out on a cruise. They sailed southwards to the Jutland coast, to a place called Sudurvik †, where they overcame many viking ships. The vikings, who usually have many people to command, give themselves the title of kings, although they have no lands to rule over. King Olaf went into battle with them, and it was severe; but King Olaf gained the victory, and a great booty. So says Sigvat:—

CHAPTER  
IX.  
The fourth  
battle in  
Sudurvik.

“Hark! hark! The war-shout  
Through Sudurvik rings,  
And the vikings brings out  
To fight the two kings.

\* Balagard's-side is supposed to have been the coast between Abo and Helsingfors; and Herdal some valley in that neighbourhood.

† Sudurvik is no doubt Syndervik in the isle Holmland, in Ringkio-bing fiord in North Jutland.



## SAGA VII.

Great honour, I'm told,  
 Won these vikings so bold:  
 But their bold fight was vain,  
 For the two brave kings gain."

CHAPTER  
 X.  
 The fifth  
 battle in  
 Friesland.

King Olaf sailed from thence south to Friesland, and lay under the strand of Kinlimma\* in dreadful weather. The king landed with his men; but the people of the country rode down to the strand against them, and he fought them. So says Sigvat:—

"Under Kinlimma's cliff,  
 This battle is the fifth.  
 The brave sea-rovers stand  
 All on the glittering sand;  
 And down the horsemen ride  
 To the edge of the rippling tide:  
 But Olaf taught the peasant band  
 To know the weight of a viking's hand."

CHAPTER  
 XI.  
 The death  
 of King  
 Swend  
 Tweskæg.

The king sailed from thence westward to England. It was then the case that the Danish king, Swend Forked Beard, was at that time in England with a Danish army, and had been fixed there for some time, and had seized upon King Ethelred's kingdom. The Danes had spread themselves so widely over England, that it was come so far that King Ethelred had departed from the country, and had gone south to Valland.† The same autumn that King Olaf came to England, it happened that King Swend died suddenly in the night in his bed‡; and it is said by Englishmen that Edmund the Saint killed him, in the same way that the holy Mercurius had killed the apostate Julian. When Ethelred, the king of the English, heard this in Flanders, he returned directly to England; and no sooner was he come back,

\* Kinlimma-side is a part of the coast of Old Friesland, now North Holland, supposed to have been the original seat of the Cimbri. The name appears to be preserved in Kinnimer-land, partly reckoned in North Holland and partly in South Holland.

† Valland. See note, Chapter XXIV. of Harald Haarfager's Saga.

‡ King Swein died, according to the Saxon Chronicle, at Candlemas, 1014.



than he sent an invitation to all the men who would enter into his pay, to join him in recovering the country. Then many people flocked to him; and among others, came King Olaf with a great troop of Northmen to his aid. They steered first to London, and sailed into the Thames with their fleet; but the Danes had a castle within. On the other side of the river is a great trading place, which is called Sudrviki.\* There the Danes had raised a great work, dug large ditches, and within had built a bulwark of stone, timber, and turf, where they had stationed a strong army. King Ethelred ordered a great assault; but the Danes defended themselves bravely, and King Ethelred could make nothing of it. Between the castle † and Southwark there was a bridge, so broad that two waggons could pass each other upon it. On the bridge were raised barricades, both towers and wooden parapets, in the direction of the river ‡, which were nearly breast high; and under the bridge were piles driven into the bottom of the river. Now when the attack was made the troops stood on the bridge every where, and defended themselves. King Ethelred was very anxious to get possession of the bridge, and he called together all the chiefs to consult how they should get the bridge broken down. Then said King Olaf he would attempt to lay his fleet alongside of it, if the other ships would do the same. It was then determined in this council that they should lay their war forces under the bridge; and each made himself ready with ships and men.

King Olaf ordered great platforms of floating wood to be tied together with hazel bands, and for this he took down old houses; and with these, as a roof, he covered over his ships so widely, that it reached over

CHAPTER  
XII.  
The sixth  
battle.

\* Sudrviki — Southwark.

† On the site, probably, of the Tower of London.

‡ That is, across the bridge.



SAGA VII.

the ships' sides. Under this screen he set pillars so high and stout, that there both was room for swinging their swords, and the roofs were strong enough to withstand the stones cast down upon them. Now when the fleet and men were ready, they rowed up along the river; but when they came near the bridge, there were cast down upon them so many stones and missile weapons, such as arrows and spears, that neither helmet nor shield could hold out against it; and the ships themselves were so greatly damaged, that many retreated out of it. But King Olaf, and the Northmen's fleet with him, rowed quite up under the bridge, laid their cables around the piles which supported it, and then rowed off with all the ships as hard as they could down the stream. The piles were thus shaken in the bottom, and were loosened under the bridge. Now as the armed troops stood thick of men upon the bridge, and there were likewise many heaps of stones and other weapons upon it, and the piles under it being loosened and broken, the bridge gave way; and a great part of the men upon it fell into the river, and all the others fled, some into the castle, some into Southwark. Thereafter Southwark was stormed and taken. Now when the people in the castle saw that the river Thames was mastered, and that they could not hinder the passage of ships up into the country, they became afraid, surrendered the tower, and took Ethelred to be their king. So says Ottar Swarte: —

“ London Bridge is broken down, —  
 Gold is won, and bright renown.  
 Shields resounding,  
 War-horns sounding,  
 Hildur shouting in the din!  
 Arrows singing,  
 Mail-coats ringing —  
 Odin makes our Olaf win!”

And he also composed these: —



“ King Ethelred has found a friend :  
 Brave Olaf will his throne defend —  
     In bloody fight  
     Maintain his right,  
     Win back his land  
     With blood-red hand,  
 And Edmund's son upon his throne replace—  
 Edmund, the star of every royal race!”

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Sigvat also relates as follows :—

“ At London Bridge stout Olaf gave  
 Odin's law to his war-men brave—  
     ‘ To win or die!’  
     And their foemen fly.  
 Some by the dyke-side refuge gain—  
 Some in their tents on Southwark plain !  
     This sixth attack  
     Brought victory back.”

King Olaf passed all the winter with King Ethelred, and had a great battle at Hringmara Heath\* in Ulfkel's land, the domain which Ulfkel Snelling at that time held; and here again the king was victorious. So Says Sigvald the scald :—

CHAPTER  
 XIII.  
 The  
 seventh  
 battle.

“ To Ulfkel's land came Olaf bold,  
 A seventh sword-thing he would hold.  
 The race of Ella filled the plain —  
 Few of them slept at home again !  
     Hringmara heath  
     Was a bed of death :  
     Haarfager's heir  
     Dealt slaughter there.”

And Ottar sings of this battle thus :—

“ From Hringmar field  
     The chime of war,  
 Sword striking shield,  
     Rings from afar.  
 The living fly ;  
     The dead piled high  
 The moor enrich :  
 Red runs the ditch.”

---

\* This is an unknown place, Hringmaraheidi ; but must be in East Angeln, as it is called Ulfkel Snelling's land, and he appears to have been chief of the part of England called East Angeln occupied by the Danes. Ashdown in Kent, and Assington in Essex, have each been taken by antiquaries for this battle-field.



## SAGA VII.

The country far around was then brought in subjection to King Ethelred; but the Thingmen\* and the Danes held many castles, besides a great part of the country.

CHAPTER  
XIV.  
Eighth and  
ninth bat-  
tles of Olaf.

King Olaf was commander of all the forces when they went against Canterbury; and they fought there until they took the town, killing many people and burning the castle. So says Ottar Swarte:—

“ All in the grey of morn  
Broad Canterbury’s forced.  
Black smoke from house-roofs borne  
Hides fire that does its worst;  
And many a man laid low  
By the battle-axe’s blow,  
Waked by the Norsemen’s cries,  
Scarce had time to rub his eyes.”

Sigvald reckons this King Olaf’s eighth battle:—

“ Of this eighth battle I can tell  
How it was fought, and what befell.  
The castle tower  
With all his power  
He could not take,  
Nor would forsake.  
The Perthmen† fought,  
Nor quarter sought;  
By death or flight  
They left the fight.  
Olaf could not this earl stout  
From Canterbury quite drive out.”

At this time King Olaf was entrusted with the whole land defence of England, and he sailed round

\* Thing-men were hired men-at-arms; called Thing-men probably from being men above the class of thralls or unfree men, and entitled to appear at Things, as being udal-born to land at home. They appear to have hired themselves out as hird-men; that is, court-men, or the body-guard of the kings. The Varingers at the court of Constantinople were of this description. The victories of King Swein and of Canute the Great have been ascribed to the superiority of these men, who formed bodies of standing troops, over levies of peasantry.

† Perthshire men, as hired men-at-arms, are alluded to here by Sigvald; and allusions to hired men from other countries fighting with King Nokve at the battle of Hafursfiord, against Harald Haarfager, is made by the scald Hornklofe.



the land with his ships of war. He laid his ships at land at Nyamode\*, where the troops of the Thingmen were, and gave them battle and gained the victory. So says Sigvald the scald:—

SAGA VII.

“ The youthful king stained red the hair  
Of Angeln men, and dyed his spear  
At Newport in their hearts’ dark blood;  
And where the Danes the thickest stood —  
Where the shrill storm round Olaf’s head  
Of spear and arrow thickest fled,  
There thickest lay the Thingmen dead!  
Nine battles now of Olaf bold,  
Battle by battle, I have told.”

King Olaf then scoured all over the country, taking scatt of the people, and plundering where it was refused. So says Ottar:—

“ The English race could not resist thee,  
With money thou madest them assist thee  
Unsparingly thou madest them pay  
A scatt to thee in every way:  
Money, if money could be got —  
Goods, cattle, household gear, if not.  
Thy gathered spoil, borne to the strand,  
Was the best wealth of English land.”

Olaf remained here for three years.

The third year King Ethelred died, and his sons Edmund and Edward took the government. Then Olaf sailed southwards out to sea, and had a battle at Ringsfiord †, and took a castle situated upon a hill where vikings resorted, and burnt the castle. So says Sigvald the scald:—

CHAPTER  
XV.  
The tenth  
battle.

“ Of the tenth battle now I tell,  
Where it was fought, and what befell.

\* Nyamode is supposed to be Newport in the Isle of Wight; more likely New Romney, the river-mouth of the Rother in Kent.

† Ringsfiördr, Grislopolla, Fetlafördr, Selliopolla, Gunvaldsborg, are localities in Valland, — that is, on the west coast of France, between the Seine and the Garonne, — but which antiquaries do not pretend to fix. The “castle on the heights occupied by vikings” may be Mont St. Michel, and the Karlsar of Chapter XVII. may be the Garonne; but these are mere conjectures of antiquaries on the context.



SAGA VII.  
—

Up on the hill in Ringfiord fair  
 A robber nest hung in the air:  
 The people followed our brave chief,  
 And razed the tower of the viking thief.  
 Such rock and tower, such roosting place,  
 Was ne'er since held by the roving race."

CHAPTER  
XVI.  
Eleventh,  
twelfth, and  
thirteenth  
battles.

Then King Olaf proceeded westwards to Grislopol\*,  
 and fought there with vikings at Williamsby; and  
 there also King Olaf gained the victory. So says Sig-  
 vat:—

"The eleventh battle now I tell,  
 Where it was fought, and what befell.  
 At Grislopol our young fir's name  
 O'ertopped the forest trees in fame:  
 Brave Olaf's name—nought else was heard  
 But Olaf's name, and arm, and sword.  
 Of three great earls, I have heard say,  
 His sword crushed helm and head that day."

Next he fought westward on Fetlafiord, as Sigvat  
 tells:—

"The twelfth fight was at Fetlafiord,  
 Where Olaf's honour-seeking sword  
 Gave the wild wolf's devouring teeth  
 A feast of warriors doomed to death."

From thence King Olaf sailed southwards to Saliopol, where he had a battle. He took there a castle called Gunvaldsburg, which was very large and old. He also made prisoner the earl who ruled over the castle, and who was called Geirfidar. After a conference with the men of the castle, he laid a scatt upon the town and earl, as ransom, of twelve thousand gold shillings; which was also paid by those on whom it was imposed. So says Sigvat:—

"The thirteenth battle now I tell,  
 Where it was fought, and what befell.  
 In Saliopol was fought the fray,  
 And many did not survive the day.  
 The king went early to the shore,  
 To Gunvaldsburg's old castle-tower;  
 And a rich earl was taken there,  
 Whose name, I hear, was Geirfidar."



Thereafter King Olaf steered with his fleet westward to Karlsa\*, and tarried there and had a fight. And while King Olaf was lying in Karlsa river waiting a wind, and intending to sail up to Nörvasund†, and then on to the land of Jerusalem, he dreamt a remarkable dream — that there came to him a great and important man, but of a terrible appearance withal, who spoke to him, and told him to give up his purpose of proceeding to that land. “Return back to thy udal, for thou shalt be king over Norway for ever.” He interpreted this dream to mean that he should be king over the country, and his posterity after him, for a long time.

SAGA VII.  
CHAPTER  
XVII.  
Fourteenth  
battle, and  
King  
Olaf's  
dream.

After this appearance to him he turned about, and came to Poitou‡, where he plundered and burnt a merchant town called Varrande. Of this Ottar speaks:—

CHAPTER  
XVIII.  
Fifteenth  
battle.

“Our young king, blythe and gay,  
Is foremost in the fray:  
Poitou he plunders, Tuskland§ burns,—  
He fights and wins where'er he turns.”

And also Sigvald says:—

“The Norseman's king is on his cruise,  
His blue steel staining,  
Rich booty gaining,  
And all men trembling at the news.  
The Norseman's king is up the Loire:  
Rich Parthenay  
In ashes lay;  
Far inland reached the Norseman's spear.”

King Olaf had been two summers and one winter in the west in Valland on this cruise; and thirteen years had now passed since the fall of King Olaf Tryggvesson. During this time earls had ruled over

CHAPTER  
XIX.  
Of the  
Earls of  
Rouen.

\* Karlsa, or Karlsriow, is not known; supposed to be the Garonne.

† Nörvasund is the Straits of Gibraltar.

‡ Peitoland is Poitou. Varrande is supposed to be the town Partheny.

§ Tuskaland is the land of Tours on the Loire.



## SAGA VII.

Norway; first Hakon's sons Eric and Swend, and afterwards Eric's sons Hakon and Swend. Hakon was a sister's son of King Canute, the son of Swend. During this time there were two earls in Valland\*, William and Robert; their father was Richard earl of Rouen. They ruled over Normandy.† Their sister was Queen Emma, whom the English king Ethelred had married; and their sons were Edmund, Edward the Good, Edwy, and Edgar. Richard the earl of Rouen was a son of Richard the son of William Long Spear who was the son of Gange Rolfe, the earl who first conquered Normandy; and he again was a son of Rognvald the Mighty, earl of Möre, as before related. From Gange Rolf are descended the earls of Rouen, who have long reckoned themselves of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and hold them in such respect that they always were the greatest friends of the Northmen; and every Northman found a friendly country in Normandy, if he required it. To Normandy King Olaf came in autumn, and remained all winter in the river Seine‡ in good peace and quiet.

CHAPTER  
XX.  
Of Einar  
Tambar-  
skelver.

After Olaf Tryggvesson's fall, Earl Eric gave peace to Einar Tambar-skelver, the son of Eindred Styrkarsson; and Einar went north with the earl to Norway. It is said that Einar was the strongest man and the best archer that ever was in Norway. His shooting was sharp beyond all others; for with a blunt arrow he shot through a raw, soft ox-hide,

\* Valland, as before noticed, means the whole west coast of France.

† Normandy was that part of Valland formerly called Neustria; which, about the year 912, was ceded by Charles the Simple to Rolf Ganger, who gave it the name of Normandy, from its being occupied by the Northmen. The chief town was Ruda or Rudaburg, now Rouen; from which the earls of Normandy were called Ruda-jarlar—the Rouen earls, not earls of Normandy. The title appears to have been personal, at least among the Northmen, not attached to land possessing peculiar rights or burdens as an earldom.

‡ Signa is evidently the river Seine.



hanging over a beam. He was better than any man at running in snow-shoes, was a great man at all exercises, was of high family, and rich. The earls Eric and Swend married their sister Bergliot to Einar. Their son was named Eindred. The earls gave Einar great fiefs in Orkedal, so that he was one of the most powerful and able men in Drontheim country, and was also a great friend of the earls, and a great support and aid to them.

When Olaf Tryggvesson ruled over Norway, he gave his brother-in-law Erling half of the land scatt, and royal revenues between the Naze and Sogn. His other sister he married to the Earl Rongvald Ulfsson, who long ruled over West Gotland. Rognvald's father, Ulf, was a brother of Sigrid the Haughty, the mother of Olaf the Swedish king. Earl Eric was ill pleased that Erling Skialgsson had so large a dominion, and he took to himself all the king's estates, which King Olaf had given to Erling. But Erling levied, as before, all the land scatt in Rogaland; and thus the inhabitants had often to pay him the land scatt, otherwise he laid waste their land. The earl made little of the business, for no bailiff of his could live there, and the earl could only come there in guest-quarters, when he had a great many people with him. So says Sigvat:—

“ Olaf the king  
Thought the bonder Erling  
A man who would grace  
His own royal race.  
One sister the king  
Gave the bonder Erling;  
And one to an earl,  
And she saved him in peril.”

Earl Eric did not venture to fight with Erling, because he had very powerful and very many friends, and was himself rich and popular, and kept always as many retainers about him as if he held a king's



## SAGA VII.

court. Erling was often out in summer on plundering expeditions, and procured for himself means of living; for he continued his usual way of high and splendid living, although now he had fewer and less convenient fiefs than in the time of his brother-in-law King Olaf Tryggvesson. Erling was one of the handsomest, largest, and strongest men; a better warrior than any other; and in all exercises he was like King Olaf himself. He was, besides, a man of understanding, zealous in every thing he undertook, and a deadly man at arms. Sigvat talks thus of him:—

“No earl or baron, young or old,  
Match with this bonder brave can hold.  
Mild was brave Erling, all men say,  
When not engaged in bloody fray;  
His courage he kept hid until  
The fight began, then foremost still  
Erling was seen in war's wild game,  
And famous still is Erling's name.”

It was a common saying among the people, that Erling had been the most valiant who ever held lands under a king in Norway. Erling's and Astrid's children were these — Aslak, Skialg, Sigurd, Lodin, Thorer, and Ragnhild, who was married to Thorberg Arneson. Erling had always with him 90 free-born men or more; and both winter and summer it was the custom in his house to drink at the mid-day meal according to a measure\*, but at the night meal there was no measure in drinking. When the earl was in the neighbourhood he had 300 men or more. He never went to sea with less than a fully-manned ship of 20 benches of rowers. Erling had also a ship of 32 benches of rowers, which was besides very large for that size, and which he used in viking cruises, or on an

\* There were silver studs in a row from the rim to the bottom of the drinking horn or cup; and as it went round each drank till the stud appeared above the liquor. This was drinking by measure.



expedition ; and in it there were 200 men at the very least. SAGA VII.

Erling had always at home on his farm 30 slaves, besides other serving-people. He gave his slaves a certain day's work ; but after it he gave them leisure, and leave that each should work in the twilight and at night for himself, and as he pleased. He gave them arable land to sow corn in, and let them apply their crops to their own use. He laid upon each a certain quantity of labour to work themselves free by doing it ; and there were many who bought their freedom in this way in one year, or in the second year, and all who had any luck could make themselves free within three years. With this money he bought other slaves ; and to some of his freed people he showed how to work in the herring fishery ; to others he showed some useful handicraft ; and some cleared his outfields, and set up houses. He helped all to prosperity.

CHAPTER  
XXII.  
Of the  
Hersø  
Erling  
Skialgsson.

When Earl Eric had ruled over Norway for twelve years, there came a message to him from his brother-in-law King Canute, the Danish king, that he should go with him on an expedition westward to England ; for Eric was very celebrated for his campaigns, as he had gained the victory in the two hardest engagements which had ever been fought in the north countries. The one was that in which the earls Hakon and Eric fought with the Jomsburg vikings ; the other that in which Earl Eric fought with King Olaf Trygvesson. Thord Kolbeinsson speaks of this : —

CHAPTER  
XXIII.  
Of Earl  
Eric.

“ A song of praise  
Again I raise.  
To the earl bold  
The word is told,  
That Knut the Brave  
His aid would crave :  
The earl, I knew,  
To friend stands true.”



## SAGA VII.

The earl would not sleep upon the message of the king, but sailed immediately out of the country, leaving behind his son Earl Hakon to take care of Norway; and, as he was but seventeen years of age, Einar Tambarskelver was to be at his hand to rule the country for him.

Eric met King Canute in England, and was with him when he took the castle of London. Earl Eric had a battle also to the westward of the castle of London, and killed Ulfkel Snelling. So says Thord Kolbeinsson:—

“ West of London town we passed,  
And our ocean-steeds made fast,  
And a bloody fight begin,  
England’s lands to lose or win.  
Blue sword and shining spear  
Laid Ulfkel’s dead corpse there.  
Our Thingmen hear the war-shower sounding  
Of grey arrows from their shields rebounding.”

Earl Eric was a winter in England, and had many battles there. The following autumn he intended to make a pilgrimage to Rome, but he died in England of a bloody flux.\*

CHAPTER  
XXIV.  
The murder of  
Edmund.

King Canute came to England the summer that King Ethelred died, and had many battles with Ethelred’s sons, in which the victory was sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. Then King Canute took Queen Emma in marriage; and their children were Harald, Hardacanute, and Gunhild. King Canute then made an agreement with King

\* King Ethelred died 1014; Edmund Ironside, according to the Saxon Chronicle, in 1016, at the feast of Saint Andrew. Canute married Emma, the widow of Ethelred, in 1017. The murder of Edmund by Henry Strion is not mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle; but in a manuscript in the Cotton Library, quoted by Turner, it is said, “Nocte siquidem sequentis diei festivitatis Sancti Andreae Lundoniæ perimitur insidiis Edrici Strioni.” This manuscript is stated to be written within fifty years of the event. It gives a strong corroboration of the accuracy, as to events, of the saga accounts. Edmund was not the son of Emma, but of a former marriage of King Ethelred. Emma was married in 1002 to Ethelred.



Edmund, that each of them should have a half of England. In the same month Henry Strion murdered King Edmund. King Canute then drove all Ethelred's sons out of England. So says Sigvat:—

SAGA VII.

“ Now all the sons of Ethelred  
Were either fallen, or had fled :  
Some slain by Canute, — some, they say,  
To save their lives had run away.”

King Ethelred's sons came to Rouen in Valland from England, to their mother's brother, the same summer that King Olaf Haraldsson came from the west from his viking cruise, and they were all during the winter in Normandy together. They made an agreement with each other that King Olaf should have Northumberland, if they could succeed in taking England from the Danes. Therefore, about harvest, Olaf sent his foster-father Rane to England to collect men-at-arms; and Ethelred's sons sent tokens to their friends and relations with him. King Olaf, besides, gave him much money with him to attract people to them. Rane was all winter in England, and got promises from many powerful men of fidelity, as the people of the country would rather have native kings over them; but the Danish power had become so great in England, that all the people were brought under their dominion.

CHAPTER  
XXV.  
Of Olaf  
and Ethel-  
red's sons.

In spring King Olaf and King Ethelred's sons set out together to the west, and came to a place in England called Jungofurda\*, where they landed with their army, and moved forward against the castle. Many men were there who had promised them their aid. They took the castle; and killed many people. Now when King Canute's men heard of this they assembled an army, and were soon in such force that Ethelred's sons could not stand against it; and they saw no other way left but to return to Rouen. Then

CHAPTER  
XXVI.  
Battle of  
King Olaf.

\* Jungofurda must be some place on the south coast of England.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
XXVII.  
King  
Olaf's ex-  
pedition to  
Norway.

King Olaf separated from them, and would not go back to Valland, but sailed northwards along England, all the way to Northumberland, where he put into a haven at a place called Furovald\*; and in a battle there with the townspeople and merchants he gained the victory, and a great booty.

King Olaf left his long-ships† there behind, but made ready two ships of burden; and had with him 220 men in them, well armed and chosen people. He sailed out to sea northwards in harvest, but encountered a tremendous storm, and they were in danger of being lost; but as they had a chosen crew, and the king's luck with them, all went on well. So says Ottar:—

“Olaf, great stem of kings, is brave —  
Bold in the fight, bold on the wave.  
No thought of fear  
Thy heart comes near.  
Undaunted, midst the roaring flood,  
Firm at his post each shipman stood;  
And thy two ships stout  
The gale stood out.”

And farther he says:—

“Thou able chief! with thy fearless crew  
Thou meetest, with skill and courage true,  
The wild sea's wrath  
On thy ocean path.  
Though waves mast-high were breaking round,  
Thou findest the middle of Norway's ground,  
With helm in hand  
On Sælö's strand.”

---

\* Furovald must be some place on the coast of Northumberland — that is, north of the Humber. But it is to be observed that the ships of that age, even the largest, were worked with oars, and coasted close to the shore, and at night lay at, or even on, the beach; so that harbours with anchorage were of less importance than flat shores to haul up their vessels on, and the localities cannot be determined by our harbours.

† There is a distinction evidently here between the class of vessels called long-ships and the large sea-going vessels. The long-ship has been, like the Crane and the Long Serpent, a vessel intended for rowing up rivers and along the coast, but not for sea voyages, and in autumn not thought suitable for crossing the North Sea.



It is related here that King Olaf came from sea to the very middle of Norway; and the isle is called Sælö where they landed, and is outside of Stad. King Olaf said he thought it must be a lucky day for them, since they had landed at Sælö\* in Norway; and observed it was a good omen that it so happened. As they were going up in the isle, the king slipped with one foot in a place where there was clay, but supported himself with the other foot. Then said he, "The king falls." "Nay," replies Rane, "thou didst not fall, king, but set fast foot in the soil." The king laughed thereat, and said, "It may be so if God will." They went down again thereafter to their ships, and sailed to Ulfasund, where they heard that Earl Hakon was south in Sogn, and was expected north as soon as wind allowed with a single ship.

King Olaf steered his ships within the ordinary ships' course when he came abreast of Fialar district, and ran into Sandunga sound. There he laid his two vessels one on each side of the sound, with a thick cable between them. At the same moment Hakon, Earl Eric's son, came rowing into the sound with a manned ship; and as they thought these were but two merchant vessels that were lying in the sound, they rowed between them. Then Olaf and his men draw the cable up right under Hakon's ship's keel, and wind it up with the capstan.† As soon as the vessel's course was stopped her stern was lifted up, and her bow plunged down; so that the water came in at her fore-end and over both sides,

CHAPTER  
XXVIII.  
Earl Hakon taken prisoner in Sandungasund by Olaf.

\* Sæl means lucky. Sælö is the lucky isle: hence the King's pun.

† Vindasom—windlass, capstan, winch—was a machine consequently in common use in their vessels. From the size of the ships, and the lowering and raising their masts, the practical use of the pulley and of the lever, as applied to sea business, has been understood probably by the Northmen.



SAGA VII. and she upset. King Olaf's people took Earl Hakon and all his men whom they could get hold of out of the water, and made them prisoners; but some they killed with stones and other weapons, and some were drowned. So says Ottar:—

“The black ravens wade  
In the blood from thy blade.  
Young Hakon so gay,  
With his ship, is thy prey:  
His ship, with its gear,  
Thou hast ta'en; and art here,  
Thy forefathers' land  
From the earl to demand.”

Earl Hakon was led up to the king's ship. He was the handsomest man that could be seen. He had long hair, as fine as silk, bound about his head with a gold ornament.

When he sat down in the fore-hold, the king said to him, “It is not false what is said of your family, that ye are handsome people to look at; but now your luck has deserted you.”

Hakon the earl replied, “It has always been the case that success is changeable; and there is no luck in the matter. It has gone with your family as with mine, to have by turns the better lot. I am little beyond childhood in years; and at any rate we could not have defended ourselves, as we did not expect any attack on the way. It may turn out better with us another time.”

Then said King Olaf, “Dost thou not apprehend that thou art in that condition that, hereafter, there can be neither victory nor defeat for thee?”

The earl replies, “That is what thou only canst determine, king, according to thy pleasure.”

Olaf says, “What wilt thou give me, earl, if for this time I let thee go, whole and unhurt?”

The earl asks what he would take.

“Nothing,” says the king, “except that thou shalt



leave the country, give up thy kingdom, and take an oath that thou shalt never go into battle against me.” SAGA VII.

The earl answered, that he would do so. And now Earl Hakon took the oath that he would never fight against Olaf, or seek to defend Norway against him, or attack him; and King Olaf thereupon gave him and all his men life and peace. The earl got back the ship which had brought him there, and he and his men rowed their way. Thus says Sigvat of him:—

“ In old Sandunga sound  
The king Earl Hakon found,  
Who little thought that there  
A foeman was so near.  
The best and fairest youth  
Earl Hakon was in truth,  
That speaks the Danish tongue,  
And of the race of great Hakon.”

After this the earl made ready as fast as possible to leave the country and sail over to England. He met King Canute, his mother's brother, there, and told him all that had taken place between him and King Olaf. King Canute received him remarkably well, placed him in his court in his own house, and gave him great power in his kingdom. Earl Hakon dwelt a long time with King Canute. During the time Swend and Hakon ruled over Norway, a reconciliation with Erling Skialgsson was effected, and secured by Aslak, Erling's son, marrying Gunhild, Earl Swend's daughter; and the father and son, Erling and Aslak, retained all the fiefs which King Olaf Tryggvesson had given to Erling. Thus Erling became a firm friend of the earl's, and their mutual friendship was confirmed by oath.

King Olaf went now eastward along the land, holding Things with the bonders all over the country. Many went willingly with him; but some, who were Earl Swend's friends or relations, spoke against him.

CHAPTER  
XXIX.  
Earl Hakon's departure from Norway.

CHAPTER  
XXX.  
Aasta's preparations to receive her son Olaf.



SAGA VII.

Therefore King Olaf sailed in all haste eastward to Viken; went in there with his ships; set them on the land; and proceeded up the country, in order to meet his stepfather, Sigurd Syr. When he came to Westfold he was received in a friendly way by many who had been his father's friends or acquaintances; and also there and in Folden were many of his family. In autumn he proceeded up the country to his stepfather King Sigurd's, and came there one day very early. As Olaf was coming near to the house, some of the servants ran beforehand to the house, and into the room. Olaf's mother, Aasta, was sitting in the room, and around her some of her girls. When the servants told her of King Olaf's approach, and that he might soon be expected, Aasta stood up directly, and ordered the men and girls to put every thing in the best order. She ordered four girls to bring out all that belonged to the decoration of the room, and put it in order with hangings and benches. Two fellows brought straw for the floor, two brought forward four-cornered tables and the drinking jugs, two bore out victuals and placed the meat on the table, two she sent away from the house to procure in the greatest haste all that was needed, and two carried in the ale; and all the other serving men and girls went outside of the house. Messengers went to seek King Sigurd wherever he might be, and brought to him his dress-clothes, and his horse with gilt saddle, and his bridle which was gilt and set with precious stones. Four men she sent off to the four quarters of the country to invite all the great people to a feast, which she prepared as a rejoicing for her son's return. All who were before in the house she made to dress themselves with the best they had, and lent clothes to those who had none suitable.

CHAPTER  
XXXI.King  
Sigurd's  
dress.

King Sigurd Syr was standing in his corn-field when the messengers came to him and brought him



the news, and also told him all that Aasta was doing at home in the house. He had many people on his farm. Some were then shearing corn, some bound it together, some drove it to the building, some unloaded it and put it in stack or barn; but the king, and two men with him, went sometimes into the field, sometimes to the place where the corn was put into the barn. His dress, it is told, was this:—he had a blue kirtle and blue hose; shoes which were laced about the legs; a grey cloak, and a grey wide-brimmed hat; a veil\* before his face; a staff in his hand with a gilt-silver head on it, and a silver ring around it. Of Sigurd's living and disposition it is related that he was a very gain-making man, who attended carefully to his cattle and husbandry, and managed his house-keeping himself. He was nowise given to pomp, and was rather taciturn. But he was a man of the best understanding in Norway, and also excessively wealthy in moveable property. Peaceful he was, and nowise haughty. His wife Aasta was generous and high-minded. Their children were, Guttorm, the eldest; then Gunhild; the next Halfdan, Ingrid, and Harald. The messengers said to Sigurd, "Aasta told us to bring thee word, how much it lay at her heart that thou shouldst on this occasion comport thyself in the fashion of great men, and show a disposition more akin to Harald Haarfager's race than to thy mother's father's, Rane Thin-nose, or Earl Nereid the Old, although they too were very wise men." The king replies, "The news ye bring me is weighty, and ye bring it forward in great heat. Already before now Aasta has been taken up much with people who were not so near to her; and I see she is still of the same disposition. She takes this up with great

\* Often used by men in summer to protect the face from the stings of moschetoës.



## SAGA VII.

warmth ; but can she lead her son out of the business with the same splendour she is leading him into it? If it is to proceed so, methinks they who mix themselves up in it regard little property or life. For this man, King Olaf, goes against a great superiority of power ; and the wrath of the Danish and Swedish kings lies at the foot of his determination, if he ventures to go against them."

CHAPTER  
XXXII.  
Of the  
feast.

When the king had said this he sat down, and made them take off his shoes, and put corduvan\* boots on, to which he bound his gold spurs. Then he put off his cloak and coat, and dressed himself in his finest clothes, with a scarlet cloak over all ; girded on his sword, set a gilded helmet upon his head, and mounted his horse. He sent his labouring people out to the neighbourhood, and gathered to him thirty well-clothed men, and rode home with them. As they rode up to the house, and were near the room, they saw on the other side of the house the banners of Olaf coming waving ; and there was he himself, with about 100 men all well equipt. People were gathered over all upon the house-tops. King Sigurd immediately saluted his stepson from horseback in a friendly way, and invited him and his men to come in and drink a cup with him. Aasta, on the contrary, went up and kissed her son, and invited him to stay with her ; and land, and people, and all the good she could do for him, stood at his service. King Olaf thanked her kindly for her invitation. Then she took him by the hand, and led him into the room to the high seat. King Sigurd got men to take charge of their clothes, and give their horses corn ; and then he himself went to his high seat, and the feast was made with the greatest splendour.

\* Corduvan was tanned leather. The untanned skin probably had been the ordinary wear of the king.



King Olaf had not been long here before he one day called his step-father King Sigurd, his mother Aasta, and his foster-father Rane, to a conference and consultation. Olaf began thus: "It has so happened," said he, "as is well known to you, that I have returned to this country after a very long sojourn in foreign parts, during all which time I and my men have had nothing for our support but what we captured in war, for which we have often hazarded both life and soul; for many an innocent man have we deprived of his property, and some of their lives: and foreigners are now sitting in the possessions which my father, his father, and their forefathers, for a long series of generations owned, and to which I have udal right. They have not been content with this, but have taken to themselves also the properties of all our relations who are descended from Harald Haarfager. To some they have left little, to others nothing at all. Now I will disclose to you what I have long concealed in my own mind, that I intend to take the heritage of my forefathers; but I will not wait upon the Danish or Swedish king to supplicate the least thing from them, although they for the time call that their property which was Harald Haarfager's heritage. To say the truth, I intend rather to seek my patrimony with battle-axe and sword, and that with the help of all my friends and relations, and of those who in this business will take my side. And in this matter I will so lay hand to the work that one of two things shall happen, — either I shall lay all this kingdom under my rule which they got into their hands by the slaughter of my kinsman Olaf Tryggvesson, or I shall fall here upon my inheritance in the land of my fathers. Now I expect of thee, Sigurd, my stepfather, as well as other men here in the country who have udal right of succession to the kingdom, according to the law

SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
XXXIII.  
Conversa-  
tion of  
King Olaf  
and King  
Sigurd.



SAGA VII. made by King Harald Haarfager, that nothing shall be of such importance to you as to prevent you from throwing off the disgrace from our family of being slow at supporting the man who comes forward to raise up again our race. But whether ye show any manhood in this affair or not, I know the inclination of the people well, — that all want to be free from the slavery of foreign masters, and will give aid and strength to the attempt. I have not proposed this matter to any before thee, because I know thou art a man of understanding, and can best judge how this my purpose shall be brought forward in the beginning, and whether we shall, in all quietness, talk about it to a few persons, or instantly declare it to the people at large. I have already showed my teeth by taking prisoner the Earl Hakon, who has now left the country, and given me, under oath, the part of the kingdom which he had before ; and I think it will be easier to have Earl Swend alone to deal with, than if both were defending the country against us.”

King Sigurd answers, “ It is no small affair, King Olaf, thou hast in thy mind ; and thy purpose comes more, methinks, from hasty pride than from prudence. But it may be there is a wide difference between my humble ways and the high thoughts thou hast ; for whilst yet in thy childhood thou wast full always of ambition and desire of command, and now thou art experienced in battles, and hast formed thyself upon the manner of foreign chiefs. I know therefore well, that as thou hast taken this into thy head, it is useless to dissuade thee from it ; and also it is not to be denied that it goes to the heart of all who have courage in them, that the whole Haarfager race and kingdom should go to the ground. But I will not bind myself by any promise, before I know the views and intentions of other Upland kings ; but thou hast done well in letting me know thy purpose, be-



fore declaring it publicly to the people. I will promise thee, however, my interest with the kings, and other chiefs, and country people; and also, King Olaf, all my property stands to thy aid, and to strengthen thee. But we will only produce the matter to the community so soon as we see some progress, and expect some strength to this undertaking; for thou canst easily perceive that it is a daring measure to enter into strife with Olaf the Swedish king, and Canute, who is king both of Denmark and England; and thou requirest great support under thee, if it is to succeed. It is not unlikely, in my opinion, that thou wilt get good support from the people, as the commonalty always loves what is new; and it went so before, when Olaf Tryggvesson came here to the country, that all rejoiced at it, although he did not long enjoy the kingdom.”

When the consultation had proceeded so far, Aasta took up the word. “For my part, my son, I am rejoiced at thy arrival, but much more at thy advancing thy honour. I will spare nothing for that purpose that stands in my power, although it be but little help that can be expected from me. But if a choice could be made, I would rather that thou shouldst be the supreme king of Norway, even if thou shouldst not sit longer in thy kingdom than Olaf Tryggvesson did, than that thou shouldst not be a greater king than Sigurd Syr is, and die the death of old age.” With this the conference closed. King Olaf remained here a while with all his men. King Sigurd entertained them, day about, the one day with fish and milk, the other day with flesh-meat and ale.\*

At that time there were many kings in the Up-lands who had districts to rule over, and the most of them were descended from Harald Haarfager. In

SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
XXXIV.  
Of the  
kings in

\* This is a common way of living in Norway to this day among the peasants and middle class.



SAGA VII.  
the Upland  
districts of  
Norway.

Hedemark two brothers ruled—Ræreck and Ring; in Gudbrandsdal, Gudrod: and there was also a king in Raumarike; and one had Hadeland and Thoten; and in Valdres also there was a king. With these district-kings Sigurd had a meeting up in Hadeland, and Olaf Haraldsson also met with them. To these district-kings whom Sigurd had assembled he set forth his stepson Olaf's purpose, and asked their aid, both of men and in counsel and consent; and represented to them how necessary it was to cast off the yoke which the Danes and Swedes had laid upon them. He said that there was now a man before them who could head such an enterprise; and he recounted the many brave actions which Olaf had achieved upon his war-expeditions.

Then King Ræreck says, "True it is that Harald Haarfager's kingdom has gone to decay, none of his race being supreme king over Norway. But the people here in the country have experienced many things. When King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, was king, all were content; but when Gunhild's sons ruled over the country, all were so weary of their tyranny and injustice that they would rather have foreign men as kings, and be themselves more their own rulers\*; for the foreign kings were usually abroad, and cared little about the customs of the people if the scatt they laid on the country was paid. When enmity arose between the Danish king Harald and Earl Hakon, the Jomsburg vikings made an expedition against Norway; then the whole people arose, and threw the hostilities from themselves; and thereafter the people encouraged Earl Hakon to keep the country, and defend it with sword and spear

\* This was very much the social condition of the people of Norway during the 400 years they were annexed to Denmark previous to 1814. They enjoyed no political liberty, but had all their old civil liberty and customs.



against the Danish king. But when he had set himself fast in the kingdom with the help of the people, he became so hard and overbearing towards the country-folks, that they would no longer suffer him. The Drontheim people killed him, and raised to the kingly power Olaf Tryggvesson, who was of the udal succession to the kingdom, and in all respects well fitted to be a chief. The whole country's desire was to make him supreme king, and raise again the kingdom which Harald Haarfager had made for himself. But when King Olaf thought himself quite firmly seated in his kingdom, no man could rule his own concerns for him. With us small kings he was so unreasonable, as to take to himself not only all the scatt and duties which Harald Haarfager had levied from us, but a great deal more. The people at last had so little freedom under him, that it was not allowed to every man to believe in what God he pleased. Now since he has been taken away we have kept friendly with the Danish king; have received great help from him when we have had any occasion for it; and have been allowed to rule ourselves, and live in peace and quiet in the inland country, and without any overburden. I am therefore content that things be as they are, for I do not see what better rights I am to enjoy by one of my relations ruling over the country; and if I am to be no better off, I will take no part in the affair."

Then said King Ring, his brother, "I will also declare my opinion that it is better for me, if I hold the same power and property as now, that my relative is king over Norway, rather than a foreign chief, so that our family may again raise its head in the land. It is, besides, my opinion about this man Olaf, that his fate and luck must determine whether he is to obtain the kingdom or not; and if he succeed in making himself supreme king, then he will be the best off



SAGA VII. — who has best deserved his friendship. At present he has in no respect greater power than any of us; nay, indeed, he has less; as we have lands and kingdoms to rule over, and he has nothing, and we are equally entitled by the udal right to the kingdom as he is himself. Now, if we will be his men, give him our aid, allow him to take the highest dignity in the country, and stand by him with our strength, how should he not reward us well, and hold it in remembrance to our great advantage, if he be the honourable man I believe him to be, and all say he is? Therefore let us join the adventure, say I, and bind ourselves in friendship with him."

Then the others, one after the other, stood up and spoke; and the conclusion was, that the most of them determined to enter into a league with King Olaf. He promised them his perfect friendship, and that he would hold by and improve the country's laws and rights, if he became supreme king of Norway. This league was confirmed by oath.

CHAPTER  
XXXV.  
Olaf gets  
the title of  
king from  
the Thing.

Thereafter the kings summoned a Thing\*, and there King Olaf set forth this determination to all the people, and his demand on the kingly power. He desires that the bonders should receive him as king; and promises, on the other hand, to allow them to retain their ancient laws, and to defend the land from foreign masters and chiefs. On this point he spoke well, and long; and he got great praise for his speech. Then the kings rose and spoke, the one after the other, and supported his cause, and this message to the people. At last it came to this, that King Olaf was proclaimed king over the whole country, and the kingdom adjudged to him according to law in the Uplands.

\* The reference to a Thing appears to have been indispensable, notwithstanding the concurrence of the small kings.



King Olaf began immediately his progress through the country, appointing feasts before him wherever there were royal farms. First he travelled round in Hadeland, and then he proceeded north to Gudbrandsdal. And now it went as King Sigurd Syr had foretold, that people streamed to him from all quarters; and he did not appear to have need for half of them, for he had nearly 300 men. But the entertainments bespoken did not half serve; for it had been the custom that kings went about in guest-quarters in the Uplands with 60 or 70 men only, and never with more than 100 men. The king therefore hastened over the country, only stopping one night at the same place. When he came north to Dovrefield, he arranged his journey so that he came over the Fielde and down upon the north side of it, and then came to Opdal, where he remained all night. Afterwards he proceeded through Opdal forest, and came out at Medaldal, where he proclaimed a Thing, and summoned the bonders to meet him at it. The king made a speech to the Thing, and asked the bonders to accept him as king; and promised, on his part, the laws and rights which King Olaf Trygvesson had offered them. The bonders had no strength to make opposition to the king; so the result was that they received him as king, and confirmed it by oath: but they sent word to Orkedal and Skogn of all that they knew concerning Olaf's proceedings.

Einar Tambarskelver had a farm and house in Skogn; and now when he got news of Olaf's proceedings, he immediately split up a war-arrow, and sent it out as a token to the four quarters—north, south, east, west,—to call together all free and unfree men in full equipment of war: therewith the message, that they were to defend the land against King Olaf. The

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CHAPTER  
XXXVI.  
King Olaf  
travels in  
the Up-  
lands.

CHAPTER  
XXXVII.  
A levy  
against  
Olaf in the  
Drontheim  
land.



SAGA VII. message-stick went to Orkedal, and thence to Gula-  
dal, where the whole war-force was to assemble.

CHAPTER  
XXXVIII.  
King Olaf's  
progress in  
Drontheim.

King Olaf proceeded with his men down into Orkedal, and advanced in peace and with all gentleness; but when he came to Griotar he met the assembled bonders, amounting to more than 700 men. Then the king arrayed his army, for he thought the bonders were to give battle. When the bonders saw this, they also began to put their men in order; but it went on very slowly, for they had not agreed beforehand who among them should be commander. Now when King Olaf saw there was confusion among the bonders, he sent to them Thorer Gudsbrandson; and when he came he told them King Olaf did not want to fight them, but named twelve of the ablest men in their flock of people, who were desired to come to King Olaf. The bonders agreed to this; and the twelve men went over a rising ground which is there, and came to the place where the king's army stood in array. The king said to them, "Ye bonders have done well to give me an opportunity to speak with you, for now I will explain to you my errand here to the Drontheim country. First I must tell you, what ye already must have heard, that Earl Hakon and I met in summer; and the issue of our meeting was, that he gave me the whole kingdom he possessed in the Drontheim country, which, as ye know, consists of Orkedal, Guledal, Strind district, and Strind. As a proof of this, I have here with me the very men who were present, and saw the earl's and my own hands given upon it, and heard the word and oath, and witnessed the agreement the earl made with me. Now I offer you peace and law, the same as King Olaf Tryggvesson offered before me." The king spoke well, and long; and ended by proposing to the bonders two conditions — either to go into his service and be subject to him, or to fight him. There-



upon the twelve bonders went back to their people, and told the issue of their errand, and considered with the people what they should resolve upon. Although they discussed the matter backwards and forwards for a while, they preferred at last to submit to the king; and it was confirmed by the oath of the bonders. The king now proceeded on his journey, and the bonders made feasts for him. The king then proceeded to the sea-coast, and got ships; and among others he got a long-ship of twenty benches of rowers from Gunnar of Gelmin; another ship of twenty benches he got from Lodin of Viggia; and three ships of twenty benches from the farm of Aungrar in the Ness, which farm Earl Hakon had possessed, but a steward managed it for him, by name Bard White. The king had besides four or five boats; and with these vessels he went in all haste into the fiord of Drontheim.

Earl Swend was at that time far up in the Drontheim fiord at Steenkiar\*, which at that time was a merchant town, and was there preparing for the Yule festival. When Einar Tambarskelver heard that the Orkedal people had submitted to King Olaf, he sent men to Earl Swend to bring him the tidings. They went first to Nidaros, and took a rowing-boat which belonged to Einar, with which they went out into the fiord, and came one day late in the evening to Steenkiar, where they brought to the earl the news about all King Olaf's proceedings. The earl owned a long-ship, which was lying afloat and rigged just outside the town; and immediately, in the evening, he ordered all his moveable goods, his people's clothes, and also meat and drink, as much as the vessel could carry, to be put on board, rowed immediately out in the

CHAPTER  
XXXIX.  
Of Earl  
Swend's  
proceed-  
ings.

\* Steenkiar is still a village at the bottom of the Drontheim fiord, at the mouth of the large river running into it from the great lake the Snaasen Vand. No remains of the old town are to be seen.



## SAGA VII.

night-time, and came with daybreak to Skarnsund.\* There he saw King Olaf rowing in with his fleet into the fiord. The earl turned towards the land within Masarvig†, where there was a thick wood, and lay so near the rocks that the leaves and branches hung over the vessel. They cut down some large trees which they laid over the quarter on the sea-side, so that the ship could not be seen for leaves, especially as it was scarcely clear daylight when the king came rowing past them. The weather was calm, and the king rowed in among the islands; and when the king's fleet was out of sight the earl rowed out of the fiord, and on to Frosta, where his kingdom lay, and there he landed.

CHAPTER  
XL.  
Earl  
Swend's  
and Einar's  
consult-  
ations.

Earl Swend sent men out to Guladal to his brother-in-law, Einar Tambarskelver; and when Einar came the earl told him how it had been with him and King Olaf, and that now he would assemble men to go out against King Olaf, and fight him.

Einar answers, "We should go to work cautiously, and find out what King Olaf intends doing; and not let him hear any thing concerning us but that we are quiet. It may happen that if he hears nothing about our assembling people, he may sit quietly where he is in Steenkiar all the Yule; for there is plenty prepared for him for the Yule feast: but if he hears we are assembling men, he will set right out of the fiord with his vessels, and we shall not get hold of him." Einar's advice was taken; and the earl went to Stordal, into guest-quarters among the bonders.

When King Olaf came to Steenkiar he collected all the meat prepared for the Yule feast, and made it be put on board, procured some transport vessels,

\* This is the sound between Inderöen and the west side of the land at the head of Drontheim fiord, dividing the Drontheim gulph into two parts, that above this sound being called Britstad fiord.

† Now Mosvig.



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took meat and drink with him, and got ready to sail as fast as possible, and went out all the way to Nidaros. Here King Olaf Tryggvesson had laid the foundation of a merchant town, and had built a king's house; but before that Nidaros\* was only a single house, as before related. When Earl Eric came to the country, he applied all his attention to his house of Lade†, where his father had had his main residence, and he neglected the houses which Olaf had erected at the Nid; so that some were fallen down, and those which stood were scarcely habitable. King Olaf went now with his ships up the Nid, made all the houses to be put in order directly that were still standing, and built anew those that had fallen down, and employed in this work a great many people. Then he had all the meat and drink brought on shore to the houses, and prepared to hold Yule there: so Earl Swend and Einar had to fall upon some other plan.

CHAPTER  
XLI.  
Of Sigvat  
the scald.

There was an Iceland man called Thord Sigvaldascald, who had been long with Earl Sigvald, and afterwards with the earl's brother, Thorkel the Tall; but after the earl's death Thord had become a merchant. He met King Olaf on his viking cruise in the west, and entered into his service, and followed him afterwards. He was with the king when the incidents above related took place. Thord had a son called Sigvat fostered in the house of Thorkel at Apavatn, in Iceland. When he was nearly a grown man he went out of the country with some merchants; and the ship came in autumn to the Drontheim country, and the crew lodged in the Hered district. The same winter King Olaf came to Drontheim, as just now related by us. Now when Sigvat

\* The present city of Drontheim, of about 18,000 inhabitants. Nidaros is the mouth of the Nid, — the river mouth at which it is situated.

† Lade is a farm near Drontheim, on the opposite side of the bay.



SAGA VII. heard that his father Thord was with the king, he went to him, and staid awhile with him. Sigvat was a good scald at an early age. He made a lay in honour of King Olaf, and asked the king to listen to it. The king said he did not want poems composed about him, and said he did not understand the scald's craft. Then Sigvat sang:—

“ Rider of dark-blue ocean's steeds !  
 Allow one scald to sing thy deeds ;  
 And listen to the song of one  
 Who can sing well, if any can.  
 For should the king despise all others,  
 And show no favour to my brothers,  
 Yet I may all men's favour claim,  
 Who sing still of our great king's fame.”

King Olaf gave Sigvat as a reward for his verse\* a gold ring that weighed half a mark, and Sigvat was made one of King Olaf's court-men. Then Sigvat sang:—

“ I willingly receive this sword —  
 By land or sea, on shore, on board,  
 I trust that I shall ever be  
 Worthy the sword received from thee.  
 A faithful follower thou hast bound —  
 A generous master I have found ;  
 Master and servant both have made  
 Just what best suits them by this trade.”

Earl Swend had, according to custom, taken one half of the harbour-dues from the Iceland ship-traders about autumn; for the earls Eric and Hakon had always taken one half of these and all other revenues in the Drontheim country. Now when King Olaf came there, he sent his men to demand that half of the tax from the Iceland traders; and they went up to the king's house, and asked Sigvat to help them. He went to the king, and sang:—

\* The reward of a scald was called Bragar-laun—the pay of Braga; who, according to the Edda, was one of the Asa gods, and presided over poetry. Our English word *brag* seems derived from this origin, the meaning corresponding to the character of Braga.



“ My prayer, I trust, will not be vain —  
 No gold by it have I to gain;  
 All that the king himself here wins  
 Is not red gold, but a few skins.\*  
 It is not right that these poor men  
 Their harbour-dues should pay again.  
 That they paid once I know is true;  
 Remit, great king, what scarce is due.”

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Earl Swend and Einar Tambarskelver gathered a large armed force, with which they came by the upper road into Gaulardal, and so down to Nidaros, with nearly 2000 men. King Olaf's men were out upon the Gaular ridge, and had a guard on horseback. They became aware that a force was coming down the Gaulardal, and they brought word of it to the king about midnight. The king got up immediately, ordered the people to be wakened, and they went on board of the ships, bearing all their clothes and arms on board, and all that they could take with them, and then rowed out of the river. Then came the earl's men to the town at the same moment, took all the Christmas provision, and set fire to the houses. King Olaf went out of the fiord down to Orkedal, and there landed the men from their ships. From Orkedal they went up to the Fielde, and over the Fielde eastwards into Gudbrandsdal. In the lines composed about Klæng Brusason, it is said that Earl Eric burned the town of Nidaros: —

CHAPTER  
 XLII.  
 Of Earl  
 Swend.

“ The king's half-finished hall,  
 Rafters, roof, and all,  
 Is burned down by the river's side;  
 The flame spreads o'er the city wide.”

King Olaf went southwards through Gudbrandsdal, and thence out to Hedemark. In the depth of winter he went about in guest-quarters; but when spring returned he collected men, and went to Viken. He had with him many people from Hede-

CHAPTER  
 XLIII.  
 Of King  
 Olaf.

\* The harbour or anchorage dues were paid in skins, or other products of Iceland.



SAGA VII. mark, whom the kings had given him; and also many powerful people from among the bonders joined him, among whom Ketil Kalf from Ringness. He had also people from Raumarike. His stepfather, Sigurd Syr, gave him the help also of a great body of men. They went down from thence to the coast, and made ready to put to sea from Viken. The fleet, which was manned with many fine fellows, went out then to Tunsberg.

CHAPTER  
XLIV.  
Of Earl  
Swend's  
forces.

After Yule, Earl Swend gathers all the men of the Drontheim country, proclaims a levy for an expedition, and fits out ships. At that time there were in the Drontheim country a great number of lendermen; and many of them were so powerful and well-born, that they were descended from earls, or even from the royal race, which in a short course of generations reckoned to Harald Haarfager, and they were also very rich. These lendermen\* were of great help to the kings or earls who ruled the land; for it was as if the lenderman had the bonder-people of each district in his power. Earl Swend being a good friend of the lendermen, it was easy for him to collect people. His brother-in-law, Einar Tambarskelver, was on his side, and with him many other lendermen; and among them many, both lendermen and bonders, who the winter before had taken the oath of fidelity to King Olaf. When they were ready for sea they went directly out of the fiord, steering south along the land, and drawing men from every district. When they came farther south, abreast of Rogaland,

\* The lendermen appear to have been sheriffs for collecting the scatt and other revenues of the kings, and to have held the function in feu, paying for it to the king a proportion of the income of the district. The fines due to the king for misdemeanors, murders, &c. must have come through them into the royal coffers; for we find the appointment of new lendermen for every district the first act of every king on acquiring a part of the country. It is literally men having a *lend*; and the name includes those who held in *lehn* (or loan) the land, land-tax, or other revenues from the king, for a certain fixed payment.



came Erling Skialgsson to meet them, with many people and many lendersmen with him. Now they steered eastward with their whole fleet to Viken, and Earl Swend ran in there towards the end of Easter. The earl steered his fleet to Grenmore, and ran into Nessie.

SAGA VII.

King Olaf steered his fleet out from Viken, until the two fleets were not far from each other, and they got news of each other the Saturday before Palm Sunday. King Olaf himself had a ship called the Carl's Head\*, on the bow of which a king's head was carved out, and he himself had carved it. This head was used long after in Norway on ships which kings steered themselves.

CHAPTER XLV.

King Olaf's forces.

As soon as day dawned on Sunday morning, King Olaf got up, put on his clothes, went to the land, and ordered to sound the signal for the whole army to come on shore. Then he made a speech to the troops, and told the whole assembly that he had heard there was but a short distance between them and Earl Swend. "Now," said he, "we shall make ready; for it can be but a short time until we meet. Let the people arm, and every man be at the post that has been appointed him, so that all may be ready when I order the signal to sound for casting off from the land.† Then let us row off at once; and so that none go on before the rest of the ships, and none lag be-

CHAPTER XLVI.

King Olaf's speech.

\* The head probably of Charlemagne, whose name was held in great veneration. King Olaf's son Magnus was called after Charlemagne.

† Signals by call of trumpet, or war-horn, or lure, appear to have been well understood by all. We read of the trumpet-call to arm, to attack, to advance, to retreat, to land; and also to a Court Thing, a House Thing, a General Thing. The instrument now in use in Norway among the peasants for calling across valleys or rivers, or to their comrades or servants, in situations, so common in mountain-districts, in which the distance through the air is small, yet the labour of going between great, is the bark of the birch tree rolled off, and the pieces bound together so as to form a tube of six or eight feet in length. But the Northmen appear to have had instruments of metal, and regular trumpeters.



## SAGA VII.

hind, when I row out of the harbour: for we cannot tell if we shall find the earl where he was lying, or if he has come out to meet us. When we do meet, and the battle begins, let people be alert to bring all our ships in close order, and ready to bind them together. Let us spare ourselves in the beginning, and take care of our weapons, that we do not cast them into the sea, or shoot them away in the air to no purpose. But when the fight becomes hot, and the ships are bound together, then let each man show what is in him of manly spirit."

CHAPTER  
XLVII.  
Of the  
battle at  
Nessie.

King Olaf had in his ship 100 men armed in coats of ring-mail, and in foreign helmets. The most of his men had white shields, on which the holy cross was gilt; but some had painted it in blue or red. He had also had the cross painted in front on all the helmets, in a pale colour. He had a white banner, on which was a serpent figured. He ordered a mass to be read before him, went on board ship, and ordered his people to refresh themselves with meat and drink. He then ordered the war-horns to sound to battle, to leave the harbour, and row off to seek the earl. Now when they came to the harbour where the earl had lain, the earl's men were armed, and beginning to row out of the harbour; but when they saw the king's fleet coming they began to bind the ships together, to set up their banners, and to make ready for the fight. When King Olaf saw this he hastened the rowing, laid his ship alongside the earl's, and the battle began. So says Sigvat the scald:—

" Boldly the king did then pursue  
Earl Swend, nor let him out of view.  
The blood ran down the reindeer's flank\*  
Of each sea-king—his vessel's plank.  
Nor did the earl's stout warriors spare  
In battle-brunt the sword and spear.

---

\* The ships are called the reindeer of the sea-kings by the scalds.



Earl Swend his ships of war pushed on,  
And lashed their stout stems one to one."

It is said that King Olaf brought his ships into battle while Swend was still lying in the harbour. Sigvat the scald was himself in the fight; and in summer, just after the battle, he composed a lay, which is called the Nessic Song, in which he tells particularly the circumstances:—

"In the fierce fight 'tis known how near  
The scorner of the ice-cold spear  
Laid the Charles' head\* the earl on board,  
All eastward of the Agder fiord."

Then was the conflict exceedingly sharp, and it was long before it could be seen how it was to go in the end. Many fell on both sides, and many were the wounded. So says Sigvat:—

"No urging did the earl require,  
Midst spear and sword—the battle's fire;  
No urging did the brave king need  
The ravens in this shield-storm to feed.  
Of limb-lopping enough was there,  
And ghastly wounds of sword and spear.  
Never, I think, was rougher play  
Than both the armies had that day."

The earl had most men, but the king had a chosen crew in his ship, who had followed him in all his wars; and besides they were so excellently equipt, as before related, that each man had a coat of ring-mail†, so that he could not be wounded. So says Sigvat:—

"Our lads, broad-shouldered, tall, and hale,  
Drew on their cold shirts of ring-mail.  
Soon sword on sword was shrilly ringing,  
And in the air the spears were singing."

---

\* The king's ship had a head of Charlemagne.

† Ring-mail was a kind of network of metal rings sewed upon a leathern or woollen shirt, like a frock or blouse; or it consisted also of rings of metal linked together. It did not impede the movement of the limbs so much as plate-armour, and seems to have been less costly or less esteemed by the great, than plate-armour.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
XLVIII.  
Earl  
Swend's  
flight.

Under our helms we hid our hair,  
For thick flew arrows through the air.  
Right glad was I our gallant crew,  
Steel-clad from head to foot, to view."

When the men began to fall on board the earl's ships, and many appeared wounded, so that the sides of the vessels were but thinly beset with men, the crew of King Olaf prepared to board. Their banner was brought up to the ship that was nearest the earl's, and the king himself followed the banner. So says Sigvat:—

" 'On with the king!' his banner's waving:  
'On with the king!' the spears he's braving!  
'On, steel-clad men! and storm the deck,  
Slippery with blood and strewed with wreck.  
A different work ye have to share,  
His banner in war-storm to bear,  
From your fair girl's, who round the hall  
Brings the full mead-bowl to us all.'"

Now was the severest fighting. Many of Swend's men fell, and some sprang overboard. So says Sigvat:—

"Into the ship our brave lads spring,—  
On shield and helm their red blades ring;  
The air resounds with stroke on stroke,—  
The shields are cleft, the helms are broke.  
The wounded bonder o'er the side  
Falls shrieking in the blood-stained tide—  
The deck is cleared with wild uproar—  
The dead crew float about the shore "

And also these lines:—

"The shields we brought from home were white,  
Now they are red-stained in the fight:  
This work was fit for those who wore  
Ringed coats of mail their breasts before.  
Where the foe blunted the best sword  
I saw our young king climb on board.  
He stormed the first; we followed him—  
The war-birds now in blood may swim."

Now defeat began to come down upon the earl's men. The king's men pressed upon the earl's ship, and entered it; but when the earl saw how it was going,



he called out to his forecastle-men to cut the cables and cast the ship loose, which they did. Then the king's men threw grapplings over the timber heads of the ship, and so held her fast to their own; but the earl ordered the timber heads to be cut away, which was done. So says Sigvat: —

“The earl, his noble ship to save,  
To cut the posts loud order gave.  
The ship escaped: our greedy eyes  
Had looked on her as a clear prize.  
The earl escaped; but ere he fled  
We feasted Odin's fowls with dead; —  
With many a goodly corpse that floated  
Round our ship's stern his birds were bloated.”

Einar Tambarskelver had laid his ship right alongside the earl's. They threw an anchor over the bows of the earl's ship, and thus towed her away, and they slipped out of the fiord together. Thereafter the whole of the earl's fleet took to flight, and rowed out of the fiord. The scald Berse Torfeson was on the forecastle of the earl's ship; and as it was gliding past the king's fleet, King Olaf called out to him — for he knew Berse, who was distinguished as a remarkably handsome man, always well equipt in clothes and arms — “Farewell, Berse!” He replied, “Farewell, king!” So says Berse himself, in a poem he composed when he fell into King Olaf's power, and was laid in prison and in fetters on board a ship: —

“Olaf the Brave  
A ‘farewell’ gave,  
(No time was there to parley long,)  
To me who knows the art of song.  
The scald was fain  
‘Farewell’ again  
In the same terms back to send —  
The rule in arms to foe or friend.  
Earl Swend's distress  
I well can guess,  
When flight he was compelled to take:  
His fortunes I will ne'er forsake.



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Though I lie here  
 In chains a year,  
 In thy great vessel all forlorn,  
 To crouch to thee I still will scorn:  
 I still will say,  
 No milder sway  
 Than from thy foe this land e'er knew:  
 To him, my early friend, I'm true."

CHAPTER  
 XLIX.  
 Earl  
 Swend  
 leaves the  
 country.

Now some of the earl's men fled up the country, some surrendered at discretion; but Swend and his followers rowed out of the fiord, and the chiefs laid their vessels together to talk with each other, for the earl wanted counsel from his lenders. Erling Skialgsson advised that they should sail north, collect people, and fight King Olaf again; but as they had lost many people, the most were of opinion that the earl should leave the country, and repair to his brother-in-law the Swedish king, and strengthen himself there with men. Einar Tambarskelver approved also of that advice, as they had no power to hold battle against Olaf. So they discharged their fleet. The earl sailed across Folden\*, and with him Einar Tambarskelver. Erling Skialgsson again, and likewise many other lenders who would not abandon their udal possessions, went north to their homes; and Erling had many people that summer about him.

CHAPTER  
 L.  
 King  
 Olaf's and  
 Sigurd's  
 consultation.

When King Olaf and his men saw that the earl had gathered his ships together, Sigurd Syr was in haste for pursuing the earl, and letting steel decide their cause. But King Olaf replies, that he would first see what the earl intended doing,—whether he would keep his force together or discharge his fleet. Sigurd Syr said, "It is for thee, king, to command; but," he adds, "I fear from thy disposition and wilfulness that thou wilt some day be betrayed by trusting to those great people, for they are accustomed of old to bid defiance to their sovereigns." There was no attack

\* Christiania fiord is called Folden, or Folden fiord.



made, for it was soon seen that the earl's fleet was dispersing. Then King Olaf ransacked the slain, and remained there some days to divide the booty. At that time Sigvat made these verses:—

SAGA VII.

“The tale I tell is true:  
 To their homes returned but few  
 Of Swend's men, who came to meet  
 King Olaf's gallant fleet.  
 From the North these warmen came  
 To try the bloody game,—  
 On the waves their corpses borne  
 Show the game that Sunday morn.  
 The Drontheim girls so fair  
 Their jeers, I think, will spare,  
 For the king's force was but small  
 That emptied Drontheim's hall.  
 But if they will have their jeer,  
 They may ask their sweethearts dear,  
 Why they have returned shorn  
 Who went to shear that Sunday morn.”

And also these:—

“Now will the king's power rise,  
 For the Upland men still prize  
 The king who o'er the sea  
 Steers to bloody victory.  
 Earl Swend! thou now wilt know  
 That our lads can make blood flow—  
 That the Hedemarkers hale  
 Can do more than tap good ale.”

King Olaf gave his stepfather King Sigurd Syr, and the other chiefs who had assisted him, handsome presents at parting. He gave Ketil of Ringaness a yacht of fifteen benches of rowers, which Ketil brought up the Glommen river and into the Myosen lake.

King Olaf sent spies out to trace the earl's doings; and when he found that the earl had left the country he sailed out west, and to Viken, where many people came to him. At the Thing there he was taken as king, and so he proceeded all the way to the Naze; and when he heard that Erling Skialgsson had gathered a large force, he did not tarry in North Agder, but sailed with a steady fair wind to Drontheim

CHAPTER  
 LI.  
 Of King  
 Olaf.



SAGA VII.  
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country ; for there it appeared to him was the greatest strength of the land, if he could subdue it for himself while the earl was abroad. When Olaf came to Drontheim there was no opposition, and he was elected there to be king. In harvest he took his seat in the town of Nidaros, and collected the needful winter provision. He built a king's house, and raised Clement's church on the spot on which it now stands. He parcelled out building ground, which he gave to bonders, merchants, or others who he thought would build. There he sat down, with many men-at-arms around him ; for he put no great confidence in the Drontheim people, if the earl should return to the country. The people of the interior of the Drontheim country showed this clearly, for he got no land-scatt from them.

CHAPTER  
LII.  
Plan of  
Earl Swend  
and the  
Swedish  
king.

Earl Swend went first to Sweden, to his brother-in-law Olaf the Swedish king, told him all that had happened between him and Olaf the Thick, and asked his advice about what he should now undertake. The king said that the earl should stay with him if he liked, and get such a portion of his kingdom to rule over as should seem to him sufficient ; " or otherwise," says he, " I will give thee help of forces to conquer the country again from Olaf." The earl chose the latter ; for all those among his men who had great possessions in Norway, which was the case with many who were with him, were anxious to get back ; and in the council they held about this, it was resolved that in winter they should take the land-way over Helsingialand and Jemteland, and so down into the Drontheim land ; for the earl reckoned most upon the faithful help and strength of the Drontheim people of the interior as soon as he should appear there. In the mean time, however, it was determined to take a cruise in summer in the Baltic to gather property.



Earl Swend went westward with his forces to Russia, and passed the summer in marauding there; but on the approach of autumn returned with his ships to Sweden. There he fell into a sickness, which proved fatal. After the earl's death some of the people who had followed him remained in Sweden; others went to Helsingialand, thence to Jemteland, and so from the east over the dividing ridge of the country to the Drontheim district, where they told all that had happened upon their journey: and thus the truth of Earl Swend's death was known.

SAGA VII.  
CHAPTER  
LIII.  
Earl  
Swend's  
death.

Einar Tambarskelver, and the people who had followed him, went in winter to the Swedish king, and were received in a friendly manner. There were also among them many who had followed the earl. The Swedish king took it much amiss that Olaf the Thick had set himself down in his scatt-lands, and driven the earl out of them, and therefore he threatened the king with his heaviest vengeance when opportunity offered. He said that Olaf ought not to have had the presumption to take the dominions which the earl had held of him; and all the Swedish king's men agreed with him. But the Drontheim people, when they heard for certain that the earl was dead, and could not be expected back to Norway, turned all to obedience to King Olaf. Many came from the interior of the Drontheim country, and became King Olaf's men; others sent word and tokens that they would serve him. Then, in autumn, he went into the interior of Drontheim, and held Things with the bonders, and was received as king in each district. He returned to Nidaros, and brought there all the king's scatt and revenue, and had his winter seat provided there.

CHAPTER  
LIV.  
Of the  
Drontheim  
people.

King Olaf built a king's house in Nidaros, and in it was a large room for his court, with doors at both ends. The king's high seat was in the middle of the

CHAPTER  
LV.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
household.



SAGA VII.

room; and within sat his court-bishop, Grimkel, and next him his other priests; without them sat his councillors; and in the other high seat opposite to the king sat his marshal, Biorn, and next to him his pursuivants.\* When people of importance came to him, they also had a seat of honour. The ale was drunk by the fire-light. He divided the service among his men after the fashion of other kings. He had in his house sixty court-men and thirty pursuivants; and to them he gave pay and certain regulations. He had also thirty house-servants to do the needful work about the house, and procure what was required. He had besides many slaves. At the house were many outbuildings, in which the court-men slept. There was also a large room, in which the king held his court-meetings.

CHAPTER  
LVI.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
habits

It was King Olaf's custom to rise betimes in the morning, put on his clothes, wash his hands, and then go to the church and hear the matins and morning mass. Thereafter he went to the Thing-meeting, to bring people to agreement with each other, or to talk of one or the other matter that appeared to him necessary. He invited to him great and small who were known to be men of understanding. He often made them recite to him the laws which Hakon Athelstan's foster-son had made for Drontheim; and after considering them with those men of understanding, he ordered laws adding to or taking from those established before. But Christian privileges he settled according to the advice of Bishop Grimkel and other learned priests; and bent his whole mind to uprooting heathenism, and old customs which he thought contrary to Christianity. And he succeeded so far that

\* Giæstr appear to have been inferior in rank to the court-men, thing-men, or men-at-arms of the king's guard; and to have been employed in civil affairs, as gathering penalties, inflicting punishments, and collecting provisions.



the bonders accepted of the laws which the king proposed. So says Sigvat:— SAGA VII.

“ The king, who at the helm guides  
His warlike ship through clashing tides,  
Now gives one law for all the land —  
A heavenly law, which long will stand.”

King Olaf was a good and very gentle man, of little speech, and open-handed although greedy of money. Sigvat the scald, as before related, was in King Olaf's house, and several Iceland men. The king asked particularly how Christianity was observed in Iceland, and it appeared to him to be very far from what it ought to be; for as to observing Christian practices, it was told the king that it was permitted there to eat horse-flesh, to expose infants as heathens do, besides many other things contrary to Christianity. They also told the king about many principal men who were then in Iceland. Skopte Thoraddsson was then the lagman of the country. He inquired also of those who were best acquainted with it about the state of people in other distant countries; and his inquiries turned principally on how Christianity was observed in the Orkney, Shetland, and Faroe Islands: and, as far as he could learn, it was far from being as he could have wished. Such conversation was usually carried on by him; or else he spoke about the laws and rights of the country.

The same winter came messengers from the Swedish king, Olaf the Swede, out of Sweden; and their leaders were two brothers, Thorgaut Skarde, and Asgaut the bailiff; and they had twenty-four men with them. When they came from the eastward, over the ridge of the country down into Værdal, they summoned a Thing of the bonders, talked to them, and demanded of them scatt and duties upon account of the king of Sweden. But the bonders, after consulting with each other, determined only to pay the

CHAPTER  
LVII.  
Of the  
Swedish  
King  
Olaf's mes-  
sengers,  
and his  
bailiff  
Asgaut's  
death.



## SAGA VII.

scatt which the Swedish king required in so far as King Olaf required none upon his account, but refused to pay scatt to both. The messengers proceeded farther down the valley; but received at every Thing they held the same answer, and no money. They went forward to Skogn, held a Thing there, and demanded scatt; but it went there as before. Then they came to Stordal, and summoned a Thing, but the bonders would not come to it. Now the messengers saw that their business was a failure; and Thorgaut proposed that they should turn about, and go eastward again. "I do not think," says Asgaut, "that we have performed the king's errand unless we go to King Olaf the Thick, since the bonders refer the matter to him." He was their commander; so they proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and took lodging there. The day after they presented themselves to the king, just as he was seated at table; saluted him; and said they came with a message of the Swedish king. The king told them to come to him next day. Next day the king, having heard mass, went to his Thing-house, ordered the messengers of the Swedish king to be called, and told them to produce their message. Then Thorgaut spoke, and told first what his errand was, and next how the Drontheim people of the interior had replied to it; and asked the king's decision on the business, that they might know what result their errand there was to have. The king answers, "While the earls ruled over the country, it was not to be wondered at if the country people thought themselves bound to obey them, as they were at least of the royal race of the kingdom. But it would have been more just if those earls had given assistance and service to the kings who had a right to the country, rather than to foreign kings, or to stir up opposition to their lawful kings, depriving them of their land and kingdom.



With regard to Olaf the Swede, who calls himself entitled to the kingdom of Norway, I, who in fact am so entitled, can see no ground for his claim; but well remember the skaith and damage we have suffered from him and his relations."

Then says Asgaut, "It is not wonderful that thou art called Olaf the Thick, seeing thou answerest so haughtily to such a prince's message, and canst not see clearly how heavy the king's wrath will be for thee to support, as many have experienced who had greater strength than thou appearest to have. But if thou wishest to keep hold of thy kingdom, it will be best for thee to come to the king, and be his man; and we shall beg him to give thee this kingdom in fief under him."

The king replies with all gentleness, "I will give thee an advice, Asgaut, in return. Go back to the east again to thy king, and tell him that early in spring I will make myself ready, and will proceed eastward to the ancient frontier that divided formerly the kingdom of the kings of Norway from Sweden. There he may come if he likes, that we may conclude a peace with each other; and each of us will retain the kingdom to which he is born."

Now the messengers turned back to their lodging, and prepared for their departure, and the king went to table. The messengers came back soon after to the king's house; but the door-keepers saw it, and reported it to the king, who told them not to let the messengers in. "I will not speak with them," said he. Then the messengers went off, and Thorgaut said he would now return home with his men; but Asgaut insisted still that he would go forward with the king's errand: so they separated. Thorgaut proceeded accordingly through Strind; but Asgaut went into Gaulardal and Orkedal, and intended proceeding southwards to Möre, to deliver his king's message.



## SAGA VII.

When King Olaf came to the knowledge of this he sent out his pursuivants after them, who found them at the Ness in Stein, bound their hands behind their backs, and led them down to the point called Gaularras, where they raised a gallows, and hanged them so that they could be seen by those who travelled the usual sea-way out of the fiord. Thorgaut heard this news before he had travelled far on his way home through the Drontheim country; and he hastened on his journey until he came to the Swedish king, and told him how it had gone with them. The king was highly enraged when he heard the account of it; and he had no lack of high words. Sigvat tells of it thus:—

“ Twelve Swedish men, I’ve heard it said,  
 Were here in Norway prisoners made;  
 Olaf would mercy show to none,  
 But had them hanged up every one.  
 ’Tis not the first time I have known  
 Those who the Swedish monarch own  
 On Sigur’s horse ride in the sky,  
 Their souls in hell, their heads hung high.”

CHAPTER  
 LVIII.  
 King Olaf  
 and Erling  
 Skialgsson  
 reconciled.

The spring thereafter King Olaf Haraldsson calls out an army from the Drontheim land, and makes ready to proceed eastward. Some of the Iceland traders were then ready to sail from Norway. With them King Olaf sent word and token to Hialte Skeggeson, and summoned him to come to him; and at the same time sent a verbal message to Skopte the lagman, and other men who principally took part in the lawgiving of Iceland, to take out of the law whatever appeared contrary to Christianity. He sent besides a message of friendship to the people in general. The king then proceeded southwards himself along the coast, stopping at every district, and holding Things with the bonders; and in each Thing he ordered the Christian law to be read, together with the message of salvation thereunto belonging, and with which many ill customs and much heathenism were



swept away at once among the common people: for the earls had kept well the old laws and rights of the country; but with respect to keeping Christianity, they had allowed every man to do as he liked. It was thus come so far that the people were baptized in the most places on the sea coast, but the most of them were ignorant of Christian law. In the upper ends of the valleys, and in the habitations among the Fielde, the greater part of the people were heathen; for when the common man is left to himself, the faith he has been taught in his childhood is that which has the strongest hold over his inclination. But the king threatened the most violent proceedings against great or small, who, after the king's message, would not adopt Christianity. In the mean time Olaf was proclaimed king in every Law Thing in the country, and no man spoke against him. While he lay in Kormt-sound messengers went between him and Erling Skialgsson, who endeavoured to make peace between them; and the meeting was appointed in Whitings Isle. When they met they spoke with each other about agreement together; but Erling found something else than he expected in the conversation: for when he insisted on having all the fiefs which Olaf Tryggvesson, and afterwards the earls Swend and Hakon had given him, and on that condition would be his man and dutiful friend, the king answered, "It appears to me, Erling, that it would be no bad bargain for thee to get as great fiefs from me for thy aid and friendship as thou hadst from Earl Eric, a man who had done thee the greatest injury by the bloodshed of thy men; but even if I let thee remain the greatest lenderman in Norway, I will bestow my fiefs according to my own will, and not act as if ye lendermen had udal right to my ancestors' heritage, and I was obliged to buy your services with manifold rewards." Erling had no disposition to sue for even the smallest thing;



## SAGA VII.

and he saw that the king was not easily dealt with. He saw also that he had only two conditions before him: the one was to make no agreement with the king, and stand by the consequences; the other, to leave it entirely to the king's pleasure. Although it was much against his inclination, he chose the latter, and merely said to the king, "The service will be the most useful to thee which I give with a free will." And thus their conference ended. Erling's relations and friends came to him afterwards, and advised him to give way, and proceed with more prudence and less pride. "Thou wilt still," they said, "be the most important and most respected lender-man in Norway, both on account of thy own and thy relations' abilities and great wealth." Erling found that this was prudent advice, and that they who gave it did so with a good intention, and he followed it accordingly. Erling went into the king's service on such conditions as the king himself should determine and please. Thereafter they separated in some shape reconciled, and Olaf went his way eastward along the coast.

CHAPTER  
LIX.  
Eilif of  
Gotland's  
murder.

As soon as it was reported that Olaf had come to Viken, the Danes who had offices under the Danish king set off for Denmark, without waiting for King Olaf. But King Olaf sailed in along Viken, holding Things with the bonders. All the people of the country submitted to him, and thereafter he took all the king's taxes, and remained the summer in Viken. He then sailed east from Tunsberg across the fiord, and all the way east to Swinesund. There the Swedish king's dominions begin, and he had set officers over this country; namely, Eilif Gautske over the north part, and Hroa Skialge over the east part, all the way to the Gotha river. Hroa had family friends on both sides of the river, and also great farms on Hising Island, and was besides a mighty and very



rich man. Eilif was also of great family, and very wealthy. Now when King Olaf came to Ranrige he summoned the people to a Thing, and all who dwelt on the sea-coast, or in the out-islands, came to him. Now when the Thing was seated the king's marshal, Biorn, held a speech to them, in which he told the bonders to receive Olaf as their king, in the same way as had been done in all other parts of Norway. Then stood up a bold bonder, by name Bryniulf Ulfalde, and said, "We bonders know where the division-boundaries between the Norway and Danish and Swedish kings' lands have stood by rights in old times; namely, that the Gotha river divided their lands between the Venner lake and the sea; but towards the north the forests until Eida forest, and from thence the ridge of the country all north to Finmark. We know, also, that by turns they have made inroads upon each other's territories, and that the Swedes have long had power all the way to Swinesund. But, sooth to say, I know that it is the inclination of many rather to serve the king of Norway, but they dare not; for the Swedish king's dominions surround us, both eastward, southward, and also up the country; and besides, it may be expected that the king of Norway must soon go to the north, where the strength of his kingdom lies, and then we have no power to withstand the Gotlanders. Now it is for the king to give us good counsel, for we have great desire to be his men." After the Thing, in the evening, Bryniulf was in the king's tent, and the day after likewise, and they had much private conversation together. Then the king proceeded eastwards along Viken. Now when Eilif heard of his arrival, he sent out spies to discover what he was about; but he himself, with thirty men, kept himself high up in the habitations among the hills, where he had gathered together bonders. Many



SAGA VII.

of the bonders came to King Olaf, but some sent friendly messages to him. People went between King Olaf and Eilif, and they entreated each separately to hold a Thing-meeting between themselves, and make peace in one way or another. They told Eilif that they might expect violent treatment from King Olaf if they opposed his orders; but promised Eilif he should not want men. It was determined that they should come down from the high country, and hold a Thing with the bonders and the king. King Olaf thereupon sent the chief of his pursuivants, Thorer Lange, with six men, to Bryniulf. They were equipt with their coats of mail under their cloaks, and their hats over their helmets. The following day the bonders came in crowds down with Eilif; and in his suite was Bryniulf, and with him Thorer. The king laid his ships close to a rocky knoll that stuck out into the sea, and upon it the king went with his people, and sat down. Below was a flat field, on which the bonders' force was; but Eilif's men were drawn up, forming a shield-fence before him. Biorn the marshal spoke long and cleverly upon the king's account, and when he sat down Eilif arose to speak; but at the same moment Thorer Lange rose, drew his sword, and struck Eilif on the neck, so that his head flew off. Then the whole bonder-force started up; but the Gotland men set off in full flight, and Thorer with his people killed several of them. Now when the crowd was settled again, and the noise over, the king stood up, and told the bonders to seat themselves. They did so, and then much was spoken. The end of it was that they submitted to the king, and promised fidelity to him; and he, on the other hand, promised not to desert them, but to remain at hand until the discord between him and the Swedish Olaf was settled in one way or other. King Olaf



then brought the whole northern district under his power, and went in summer eastward as far as the Gotha river, and got all the king's scatt among the islands. But when summer was drawing towards an end he returned north to Viken, and sailed up the Glommen to a waterfall called Sarpon. On the north side of the fall, a point of land juts out into the river. There the king ordered a rampart to be built right across the ness, of stone, turf, and wood, and a ditch to be dug in front of it; so that it was a large earthen fort or burgh, which he made a merchant town of. He had a king's house put up, and ordered the building of Mary church. He also laid out plans for other houses, and got people to build on them. In harvest he let every thing be gathered there that was useful for his winter residence, and sat there with a great many people, and the rest he quartered in the neighbouring districts. The king prohibited all exports from Viken to Gotland of herrings and salt, which the Gotland people could ill do without. This year the king held a great Yule feast, to which he invited many great bonders.

There was a man called Eyvind Urarhorn, who was a great man, of high birth, who had his descent from Easter Agder country. Every summer he went out on a viking cruise, sometimes to the West sea, sometimes to the Baltic, sometimes south to Flanders, and had a well-armed cutter (snække) of twenty benches of rowers. He had been also at Nesie, and given his aid to the king; and when they separated the king promised him his favour, and Eyvind again promised to come to the king's aid whenever he was required. This winter Eyvind was at the Yule feast of the king, and received goodly gifts from him. Bryniulf Ulfalde was also with the king, and he received a Yule present from the king of a gold-mounted sword, and also a farm called Vettaland, which is a

SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
LX.  
Here begins the  
history of  
Eyvind  
Urarhorn.



SAGA VII. very large head-farm of the district. Bryniulf composed a song about these gifts, of which the refrain was —

“The song-famed hero to my hand  
Gave a good sword, and Vettaland.”

The king afterwards gave him the title of Lenderman, and Bryniulf was ever after the king's greatest friend.

CHAPTER  
LXI.  
Thrand  
White's  
murder.

This winter Thrand White from Drontheim went east to Jemteland, to take up scatt upon account of King Olaf. But when he had collected the scatt he was surprised by men of the Swedish king, who killed him and his men, twelve in all, and brought the scatt to the Swedish king. King Olaf was very ill pleased when he heard this news.

CHAPTER  
LXII.  
Christian-  
ity pro-  
claimed in  
Viken.

King Olaf made Christian law to be proclaimed in Viken, in the same way as in the North country. It succeeded well, because the people of Viken were better acquainted with the Christian customs than the people in the north; for, both winter and summer, there were many merchants in Viken, both Danish and Saxon. The people of Viken, also, had much trading intercourse with England, and Saxony, and Flanders, and Denmark; and some had been on viking expeditions, and had had their winter abode in Christian lands.

CHAPTER  
LXIII.  
Hroa's fall.

About spring time King Olaf sent a message that Eyvind Urarhorn should come to him; and they spake together in private for a long time. Thereafter Eyvind made himself ready for a viking cruise. He sailed south towards Viken, and brought up at the Eker Isles without Hising Isle. There he heard that Hroa Skialge had gone northwards towards the island Ordost, and had there made a levy of men and goods on account of the Swedish king, and was expected from the north. Eyvind rowed in by Hauge sound, and Hroa came rowing from the north, and



they met in the sound and fought. Hroa fell there, with nearly thirty men; and Eyvind took all the goods Hroa had with him. Eyvind then proceeded to the Baltic, and was all summer on a viking cruise.

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There was a man called Gudleif Gerske\*, who came originally from Agder. He was a great merchant, who went far and wide by sea, was very rich, and drove a trade with various countries. He often went east to Garderidge (Russia), and therefore was called Gudleif Gerske (the Russian). This spring Gudleif fitted out his ship, and intended to go east in summer to Russia. King Olaf sent a message to him that he wanted to speak to him; and when Gudleif came to the king he told him he would go in partnership with him, and told him to purchase some costly articles which were difficult to be had in this country. Gudleif said that it should be according to the king's desire. The king ordered as much money to be delivered to Gudleif as he thought sufficient, and then Gudleif set out for the Baltic. They lay in a sound in Gotland; and there it happened, as it often does, that people cannot keep their own secrets, and the people of the country came to know that in this ship was Olaf the Thick's partner. Gudleif went in summer eastwards to Novogorod, where he bought fine and costly clothes, which he intended for the king as a state dress; and also precious furs, and remarkably splendid table utensils. In autumn, as Gudleif was returning from the east, he met a contrary wind, and lay for a long time at the island Oland. There came Thorgaut Skarde, who in autumn had heard of Gudleif's course, in a long-ship against him, and gave him battle. They fought long, and Gudleif and his people defended themselves for a long time; but the numbers against them were great, and Gudleif and

CHAPTER  
LXIV.  
Fall of  
Gudleif  
and of  
Thorgaut  
Skarde.

\* Gerske — viz. from Garderidge — the Russian.



## SAGA VII.

many of his ship's crew fell, and a great many of them were wounded. Thorgaut took all their goods, and King Olaf's, and he and his comrades divided the booty among them equally; but he said the Swedish king ought to have the precious articles of King Olaf, as these, he said, should be considered as part of the scatt due to him from Norway. Thereafter Thorgaut proceeded east to Sweden. These tidings were soon known; and as Eyvind Urarhorn came soon after to Oland, he heard the news, and sailed east after Thorgaut and his troop, and overtook them among the Swedish isles on the coast, and gave battle. There Thorgaut and the most of his men were killed, and the rest sprang overboard. Eyvind took all the goods, and all the costly articles of King Olaf which they had captured from Gudleif, and went with these back to Norway in autumn, and delivered to King Olaf his precious wares. The king thanked him in the most friendly way for his proceeding, and promised him anew his favour and friendship. At this time Olaf had been three years king over Norway.

CHAPTER  
LXV.  
Meeting of  
King Olaf  
and Earl  
Rognvald.

The same summer King Olaf ordered a levy, and went out eastwards to the Gotha river, where he lay great part of the summer. Messages were passing between King Olaf, Earl Rognvald, and the earl's wife, Ingeborg, the daughter of Tryggve. She was very zealous about giving King Olaf of Norway every kind of help, and made it a matter of her deepest interest. For this there were two causes. She had a great friendship for King Olaf; and also she could never forget that the Swedish king had been one at the death of her brother, Olaf Tryggvesson; and also that he, on that account only, had any pretence to rule over Norway. The earl, by her persuasion, turned much towards friendship with King Olaf; and it proceeded so far that the earl and the king appointed a meeting, and met at the Gotha river. They talked



together of many things, but especially of the Norwegian and Swedish kings' relations with each other; both agreeing, as was the truth also, that it was the greatest loss, both to the people of Viken and of Gotland, that there was no peace for trade between the two countries; and at last both agreed upon a peace, and still-stand of arms between them until next summer: and they parted with mutual gifts and friendly speeches.

The king thereupon returned north to Viken, and had all the royal revenues up to the Gotha river; and all the people of the country there had submitted to him. King Olaf the Swede had so great a hatred of Olaf Haraldsson, that no man dared to call him by his right name in the king's hearing. They called him the thick man; and never named him without some hard by-name.

The bonders in Viken spoke with each other about there being nothing for it but that the kings should make peace and a league with each other, and insisted upon it that they were badly used by the kings going to war; but nobody was so bold as to bring these murmurs before the king. At last they begged Biorn the marshal to bring this matter before the the king, and entreat him to send messengers to the Swedish king to offer peace on his side. Biorn was disinclined to do this, and put it off from himself with excuses; but on the entreaties of many of his friends, he promised at last to speak of it to the king; but declared, at the same time, that he knew it would be taken very ill by the king to propose that he should give way in any thing to the Swedish king. The same summer Hialte Skeggeson came over to Norway from Iceland, according to the message sent him by King Olaf, and went directly to the king. He was well received by the king, who told him to lodge in his house, and gave him a seat beside Biorn

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CHAPTER  
LXVI.  
King Olaf  
the Swede;  
his dislike  
to King  
Olaf Ha-  
raldsson.

CHAPTER  
LXVII.  
Beginning  
of the ac-  
count of  
their recon-  
ciliation.



SAGA VII. the marshal, and Hialte became his comrade at table. There was good fellowship immediately between them.

Once, when King Olaf had assembled the people and bonders to consult upon the good of the country, Biorn the marshal said, "What think you, king, of the strife that is between the Swedish king and you? Many people have fallen on both sides, without its being at all more determined than before what each of you shall have of the kingdom. You have now been sitting in Viken one winter and two summers, and the whole country to the north is lying behind your back unseen; and the men who have property or udal rights in the north are weary of sitting here. Now it is the wish of the lendersmen, of your other people, and of the bonders, that this should come to an end. There is now a truce, agreement, and peace with the earl, and the West Gotland people who are nearest to us; and it appears to the people it would be best that you sent messengers to the Swedish king to offer a reconciliation on your side; and, without doubt, many who are about the Swedish king will support the proposal, for it is a common gain for those who dwell in both countries, both here and there." This speech of Biorn's received great applause.

Then the king said, "It is fair, Biorn, that the advice thou hast given should be carried out by thyself. Thou shalt undertake this embassy thyself, and enjoy the good of it, if thou hast advised well; and if it involve any man in danger, thou hast involved thyself in it. Moreover, it belongs to thy office to declare to the multitude what I wish to have told." Then the king stood up, went to the church, and had high mass sung before him; and thereafter went to table.

The following day Hialte said to Biorn, "Why art



thou so melancholy, man? Art thou sick, or art thou angry at any one?" Biorn tells Hialte his conversation with the king, and says it is a very dangerous errand. SAGA VII.

Hialte says, "It is their lot who follow kings that they enjoy high honours, and are more respected than other men, but stand often in danger of their lives: and they must understand how to bear both parts of their lot. The king's luck is great; and much honour will be gained by this business, if it succeed."

Biorn answered, "Since thou makest so light of this business in thy speech, wilt thou go with me? The king has promised that I shall have companions with me on the journey."

"Certainly," says Hialte; "I will follow thee, if thou wilt: for never again shall I fall in with such a comrade if we part."

A few days afterwards, when the king was at a Thing-meeting, Biorn came with eleven others. He says to the king that they were now ready to proceed on their mission, and that their horses stood saddled at the door. "And now," says he, "I would know with what errand I am to go, or what orders thou givest us." CHAPTER  
LXVIII.  
The journey of  
Biorn the marshal.

The king replies, "Ye shall carry these my words to the Swedish king—that I will establish peace between our countries up to the frontier which Olaf Tryggvesson had before me; and each shall bind himself faithfully not to trespass over it. But with regard to the loss of people, no man must mention it if peace there is to be; for the Swedish king cannot with money pay for the men the Swedes have deprived us of." Thereupon the king rose, and went out with Biorn and his followers; and he took a gold-mounted sword and a gold ring, and said, in handing over the sword to Biorn, "This I give thee: it was given to me in summer by Earl Rognvald. To him ye shall go; and



## SAGA VII.

bring him word from me to advance your errand with his counsel and strength. This thy errand I will think well fulfilled if thou hearest the Swedish king's own words, be they yea or nay: and this gold ring thou shalt give Earl Rognvald. These are tokens\* he must know well."

Hialte went up to the king, saluted him, and said, "We need much, king, that thy luck attend us;" and wished that they might meet again in good health.

The king asked where Hialte was going.

"With Biorn," said he.

The king said, "It will assist much to the good success of the journey that thou goest too, for thy good fortune has often been proved; and be assured that I shall wish that all my luck, if that be of any weight, may attend thee and thy company."

Biorn and his followers rode their way, and came to Earl Rognvald's court. Biorn was a celebrated and generally known man,—known by sight and speech to all who had ever seen King Olaf; for, at every Thing, Biorn stood up and told the king's message. Ingeborg, the earl's wife, went up to Hialte and kissed him. She knew him, for she was living with her brother Olaf Tryggvesson when Hialte was there: and she knew how to reckon up the relationship between King Olaf and Vilborg, the wife of

\* Before writing was a common accomplishment in courts, the only way of accrediting a special messenger between kings and great men was by giving the messenger a token; that is, some article well known by the person receiving the message to be the property of and valued by the person sending it. The exchange of tokens of friendship, and of presents of rings and jewels, was not merely an expression of the sentiments of friendship, but the means of confidential communications in business—the credentials of the persons, sent with them as being messengers to be confided in, and having a real message to convey. Others, as well as the translator, may remember when, in remote parishes of the north of Scotland, it was no unusual circumstance to give a beggar the key of the giral to carry to the house, as a token to the housewife that he was to get half a stone of meal by order of the gude-man.



Hialte; for Eric Biodaskalla father of Astrid, King Olaf Tryggvesson's mother, and Bodvar father of Olafa, mother of Gissur White the father of Vilborg, were brother's sons of the lenderman Viking-Kare of Vors.

They enjoyed here good entertainment. One day Biorn entered into conversation with the earl and Ingeborg, in which he set forth his errand, and produced to the earl his tokens.

The earl replies, "What hast thou done, Biorn, that the king wishes thy death? For, so far from thy errand having any success, I do not think a man can be found who could speak these words to the Swedish king without incurring wrath and punishment. King Olaf, king of Sweden, is too proud for any man to speak to him on any thing he is angry at."

Then Biorn says, "Nothing has happened to me that King Olaf is offended at; but many of his disposition act, both for themselves and others, in a way that only men who are daring can succeed in. But as yet all his plans have had good success, and I think this will turn out well too; so I assure you, earl, that I will really travel to the Swedish king, and not turn back before I have brought to his ears every word that King Olaf told me to say to him, unless death prevent me, or that I am in bonds, and cannot perform my errand; and this I must do, whether you give any aid or no aid to me in fulfilling the king's wishes."

Then said Ingeborg, "I will soon declare my opinion. I think, earl, thou must turn all thy attention to supporting King Olaf the king of Norway's desire that this message be laid before the Swedish king, in whatever way he may answer it. Although the Swedish king's anger should be incurred, and our power and property be at stake, yet will I rather run the risk, than that it should be said the message of



## SAGA VII.

King Olaf was neglected from fear of the Swedish king. Thou hast that birth, strength of relations, and other means, that here in the Swedish land it is free to thee to tell thy mind, if it be right and worthy of being heard, whether it be listened to by few or many, great or little people, or by the king himself."

The earl replies, "It is known to every one how thou urgest me: it may be, according to thy counsel, that I should promise the king's men to follow them, so that they may get their errand laid before the Swedish king, whether he take it ill or take it well. But I will have my own counsel followed, and will not run hastily into Biorn's or any other man's measures, in such a highly important matter. It is my will that ye all remain here with me, so long as I think it necessary for the purpose of rightly forwarding this mission." Now as the earl had thus given them to understand that he would support them in the business, Biorn thanked him most kindly, and with the assurance that his advice should rule them altogether. Thereafter Biorn and his fellow-travellers remained very long in the earl's house.

CHAPTER  
LXIX.  
Of the conversation of  
Biorn and  
Ingeborg,  
Tryggve's  
daughter.

Ingeborg was particularly kind to them; and Biorn often spoke with her about the matter, and was ill at ease that their journey was so long delayed. Hialte and the others often spoke together also about the matter; and Hialte said, "I will go to the king if ye like; for I am not a man of Norway, and the Swedes can have nothing to say to me. I have heard that there are Iceland men in the king's house who are my acquaintances, and are well treated; namely, the scalds Gissur Black and Ottar Black. From them I shall get out what I can about the Swedish king; and if the business will really be so difficult as it now appears, or if there be any other way of promoting it, I can easily devise some errand that may appear suitable for me."



This counsel appeared to Biorn and Ingeborg to be the wisest, and they resolved upon it among themselves. Ingeborg put Hialte in a position to travel; gave him two Gotland men with him, and ordered them to follow him, and assist him with their service, and also to go wherever he might have occasion to send them. Besides, Ingeborg gave him twenty marks of weighed silver money for travelling expenses, and sent word and token by him to the Swedish king Olaf's daughter, Ingigerd, that she should give all her assistance to Hialte's business, whenever he should find himself under the necessity of craving her help. Hialte set off as soon as he was ready. When he came to King Olaf he soon found the scalds Gissur and Ottar, and they were very glad at his coming. Without delay they went to the king, and told him that a man was come who was their countryman, and one of the most considerable in their native land, and requested the king to receive him well. The king told them to take Hialte and his fellow-travellers into their company and quarters. Now when Hialte had resided there a short time, and got acquainted with people, he was much respected by every body. The scalds were often in the king's house, for they were well-spoken men; and often in the daytime they sat in front of the king's high seat, and Hialte, to whom they paid the highest respect in all things, by their side. He became thus known to the king, who willingly entered into conversation with him, and heard from him news about Iceland.

It happened that before Biorn set out from home he asked Sigvat the scald, who at that time was with King Olaf, to accompany him on his journey. It was a journey for which people had no great inclination. There was, however, great friendship between Biorn and Sigvat. Then Sigvat sang: —

CHAPTER  
LXX.  
Of Sigvat  
the scald.



SAGA VII.  

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“ With the king’s marshals all have I,  
 In days gone by,  
 Lived joyously,—  
 With all who on the king attend,  
 And knee before him humbly bend.  
 Biorn, thou oft hast ta’en my part—  
 Pleaded with art,  
 And touched the heart.  
 Biorn! brave stainer of the sword,  
 Thou art my friend—I trust thy word.”

While they were riding up to Gotland Sigvat made these verses :—

“ Down the Fiord sweep wind and rain,  
 Our stout ship’s sails and tackle strain ;  
 Wet to the skin,  
 We’re sound within,  
 And gaily o’er the waves are dancing,  
 Our sea-steed o’er the waves high prancing!  
 Through Lister sea  
 Flying all free ;  
 Off from the wind with swelling sail,  
 We merrily scud before the gale,  
 And reach the sound  
 Where we were bound.  
 And now our ship, so gay and grand,  
 Glides past the green and lovely land,  
 And at the isle  
 Moors for a while.  
 Our horse-hoofs now leave hasty print ;  
 We ride—of ease there’s scanty stint—  
 In heat and haste  
 O’er Gotland’s waste:  
 Though in a hurry to be married,  
 The king can’t say that we have tarried.”

One evening late they were riding through Gotland, and Sigvat made these verses :—

“ The weary horse will at nightfall  
 Gallop right well to reach his stall ;  
 When night meets day, with hasty hoof  
 He plies the road to reach a roof.  
 Far from the Danes, we now may ride  
 Safely by stream or mountain side ;  
 But, in this twilight, in some ditch  
 The horse and rider both may pitch.”



They rode through the merchant town of Skara\*, SAGA VII.  
and down the street to the earl's house. He sang:—

“The shy sweet girls, from window high,  
In wonder peep at the sparks that fly  
From our horses' heels, as down the street  
Of the earl's town we ride so fleet.  
Spur on!—that every pretty lass  
May hear our horse-hoofs as we pass  
Clatter upon the stones so hard,  
And echo round the paved court-yard.”

One day Hialte, and the scalds with him, went before the king, and he began thus:—“It has so happened, king, as is known to you, that I have come here after a long and difficult journey; but when I had once crossed the ocean and heard of your greatness, it appeared to me unwise to go back without having seen you in your splendour and glory. Now it is a law between Iceland and Norway, that Iceland men pay landing dues when they come into Norway, but while I was coming across the sea I took myself all the landing dues from my ship's people; but knowing that you have the greatest right to all the power in Norway, I hastened hither to deliver to you the landing dues.” With this he showed the silver to the king, and laid ten marks of silver in Gissur Black's lap.

CHAPTER  
LXXI.  
Of Hialte  
Skeggeson  
while he  
was in  
Sweden.

The king replies, “Few have brought us any such dues from Norway for some time; and now, Hialte, I will return you my warmest thanks for having given yourself so much trouble to bring us the landing dues, rather than pay them to our enemies. But I will that thou shouldst take this money from me as a gift, and with it my friendship.”

Hialte thanked the king with many words, and from that day set himself in great favour with the

\* At Sköram is the present town Skara, in Skaning barony, formerly the chief town and the oldest in West Gotland, and the seat of the earls in former times.



SAGA VII. king, and often spoke with him; for the king thought, what was true, that he was a man of much understanding and eloquence. Now Hialte told Gissur and Ottar that he was sent with tokens to the king's daughter Ingigerd, to obtain her protection and friendship; and he begged of them to procure him some opportunity to speak with her. They answered, that this was an easy thing to do; and went one day to her house, where she sat at the drinking table with many men. She received the scalds in a friendly manner, for they were known to her. Hialte brought her a salutation from the earl's wife, Ingeborg; and said she had sent him here to obtain friendly help and succour from her, and in proof whereof produced his tokens. The king's daughter received him also kindly, and said he should be welcome to her friendship. They sat there till late in the day drinking. The king's daughter made Hialte tell her much news, and invited him to come often and converse with her. He did so: came there often, and spoke with the king's daughter; and at last entrusted her with the purpose of Biorn's and his comrades' journey, and asked her how she thought the Swedish king would receive the proposal that there should be a reconciliation between the kings. The king's daughter replied, that, in her opinion, it would be a useless attempt to propose to the king any reconciliation with Olaf the Thick; for the king was so enraged against him, that he would not suffer his name to be mentioned before him. It happened one day that Hialte was sitting with the king and talking to him, and the king was very merry and drunk. Then Hialte said, "Manifold splendour and grandeur have I seen here; and I have now witnessed with my eyes what I have often heard of, that no monarch in the north is so magnificent: but it is very vexatious that we who come so far to visit it have a road so



long and troublesome, both on account of the great ocean, but more especially because it is not safe to travel through Norway for those who are coming here in a friendly disposition. But why is there no one to bring proposals for a peace between you and King Olaf the Thick? I heard much in Norway, and in West Gotland, of the general desire that this peace should have taken place; and it has been told me for truth, as the Norway king's words, that he earnestly desires to be reconciled to you; and the reason I know is, that he feels how much less his power is than yours. It is even said that he intends to pay his court to your daughter Ingigerd; and that would lead to a useful peace, for I have heard from people of credit that he is a remarkably distinguished man."

The king answers, "Thou must not speak thus, Hialte; but for this time I will not take it amiss of thee, as thou dost not know what people have to avoid here. That fat fellow shall not be called king in my court, and there is by no means the stuff in him that people talk of: and thou must see thyself that such a connection is not suitable; for I am the tenth king in Upsal who, relation after relation, has been sole monarch over the Swedish, and many other great lands, and all have been the superior kings over other kings in the northern countries. But Norway is little inhabited, and the inhabitants are scattered. There have only been small kings there; and although Harald Haarfager was the greatest king in that country, and strove against the small kings, and subdued them, yet he knew so well his position that he did not covet the Swedish dominions, and therefore the Swedish kings let him sit in peace, especially as there was relationship between them. Thereafter, while Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was in Norway he sat in peace, until he began to maraud in Gotland and Denmark; on which a war-force came upon him, and



SAGA VII. took from him both life and land. Gunhild's sons also were cut off when they became disobedient to the Danish kings; and Harald Gormson joined Norway to his own dominions, and made it subject to scatt to him. And we reckon Harald Gormson to be of less power and consideration than the Upsal kings, for our relation Styrbiorn subdued him, and Harald became his man; and yet Eric the Victorious, my father, rose over Styrbiorn's head when it came to a trial between them. When Olaf Tryggvesson came to Norway and proclaimed himself king, we would not permit it, but we went with King Swend, and cut him off; and thus we have appropriated Norway, as thou hast now heard, and with no less right than if I had gained it in battle, and by conquering the kings who ruled it before. Now thou canst well suppose, as a man of sense, that I will not let slip the kingdom of Norway for this thick fellow. It is wonderful he does not remember how narrowly he made his escape, when we had penned him in in the Mælare lake. Although he slipped away with life from thence, he ought, methinks, to have something else in his mind than to hold out against us Swedes. Now, Hialte, thou must never again open thy mouth in my presence on such a subject."

Hialte saw sufficiently that there was no hope of the king's listening to any proposal of a peace, and desisted from speaking of it, and turned the conversation to something else. When Hialte, afterwards, came into discourse with the king's daughter Ingi-gerd, he tells her his conversation with the king. She told him she expected such an answer from the king. Hialte begged of her to say a good word to the king about the matter, but she thought the king would listen as little to what she said: "But speak about it I will, if thou requirest it." Hialte assured her he would be thankful for the attempt.



One day the king's daughter Ingigerd had a conversation with her father Olaf; and as she found her father was in a particularly good humour, she said, "What is now thy intention with regard to the strife with Olaf the Thick? There are many who complain about it, having lost their property by it; others have lost their relations by the Northmen, and all their peace and quiet; so that none of your men see any harm that can be done to Norway. It would be a bad counsel if thou sought the dominion over Norway; for it is a poor country, difficult to come at, and the people dangerous: for the men there will rather have any other for their king than thee. If I might advise, thou wouldst let go all thoughts about Norway, and not desire Olaf's heritage; and rather turn thyself to the kingdoms in the East country, which thy forefathers the former Swedish kings had, and which our relation Styrbiorn lately subdued, and let the thick Olaf possess the heritage of his forefathers, and make peace with him."

The king replies in a rage, "It is thy counsel, Ingigerd, that I should let slip the kingdom of Norway, and give thee in marriage to this thick Olaf." — No," says he, "something else shall first take place. Rather than that, I shall, at the Upsal Thing in winter, issue a proclamation to all Swedes, that the whole people shall assemble for an expedition, and go to their ships before the ice is off the waters; and I will proceed to Norway, and lay waste the land with fire and sword, and burn every thing, to punish them for their want of fidelity."

The king was so mad with rage that nobody ventured to say a word, and she went away. Hialte, who was watching for her, immediately went to her, and asked how her errand to the king had turned out. She answered, it turned out as she had expected; that none could venture to put in a word with the



SAGA VII.

king; but, on the contrary, he had used threats; and she begged Hialte never to speak of the matter again before the king. As Hialte and Ingigerd spoke together often, Olaf the Thick was often the subject, and he told her about him and his manners; and Hialte praised the king of Norway what he could, but said no more than was the truth, and she could well perceive it. Once, in a conversation, Hialte said to her, "May I be permitted, daughter of the king, to tell thee what lies in my mind?"

"Speak freely," says she; "but so that I alone can hear it."

"Then," said Hialte, "what would be thy answer, if the Norway king Olaf sent messengers to thee with the errand to propose marriage to thee?"

She blushed, and answered slowly but gently, "I have not made up my mind to answer to that; but if Olaf be in all respects so perfect as thou tellest me, I could wish for no other husband; unless, indeed, thou hast gilded him over with thy praise more than sufficiently."

Hialte replied, that he had in no respect spoken better of the king than was true. They often spoke together on the same subject. Ingigerd begged Hialte to be cautious not to mention it to any other person, for the king would be enraged against him if it came to his knowledge. Hialte only spoke of it to the scalds Gissur and Ottar, who thought it was the most happy plan, if it could but be carried into effect. Ottar, who was a man of great power of conversation, and much beloved in the court, soon brought up the subject before the king's daughter, and recounted to her, as Hialte had done, all King Olaf's excellent qualities. Often spoke Hialte and the others about him; and now that Hialte knew the result of his mission, he sent those Gotland men away who had accompanied him, and let them re-



turn to the earl with letters\* which the king's daughter Ingigerd sent to the earl and Ingeborg. Hjalte also let them give a hint to the earl about the conversation he had had with Ingigerd, and her answer thereto; and the messengers came with it to the earl a little before Yule.

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When King Olaf had despatched Biorn and his followers to Gotland, he sent other people also to the Uplands, with the errand that they should have guest-quarters prepared for him, as he intended that winter to live as guest in the Uplands; for it had been the custom of former kings to make a progress in guest-quarters every third year in the Uplands. In autumn he began his progress from Sarpsborg, and went first to Vingulmark. He ordered his progress so that he came first to lodge in the neighbourhood of the forest habitations, and summoned to him all the men of the habitations who dwelt at the greatest distance from the head-habitations of the district; and he inquired particularly how it stood with their Christianity, and, where improvement was needful, he taught them the right customs. If any there were who would not renounce heathen ways, he took the matter so zealously that he drove some out of the country, mutilated others of hands or feet, or stung their eyes out; hung up some, cut down some with the sword; but let none go unpunished who would not serve God. He went thus through the whole district, sparing neither great nor small. He gave them teachers, and placed these as thickly in the country as he saw needful. In this manner he went about in that district, and had 300 deadly men-at-arms with him; and then proceeded to Raumarige. He soon perceived that Christianity was thriving less

CHAPTER  
LXXII.  
Olaf's journey to the  
Uplands.

\* This seems the first notice we have in the sagas of written letters being sent instead of tokens and verbal messages.



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CHAPTER  
LXXIII.  
The treach-  
ery of the  
Upland  
kings.

the farther he proceeded into the interior of the country. He went forward every where in the same way, converting all the people to the right faith, and severely punishing all who would not listen to his word.

Now when the king who at that time ruled in Raumarige heard of this, he thought it was a very bad affair; for every day came men to him, both great and small, who told him what was doing. Therefore this king resolved to go up to Hedemark, and consult King Rærek, who was the most eminent for understanding of the kings who at that time were in the country. Now when these kings spoke with each other, they agreed to send a message to Gudrod, the valley-king north in the Gudbrandsdal, and likewise to the king who was in Hadeland, and bid them to come to Hedemark, to meet Rærek and the other kings there. They did not spare their travelling; for five kings met in Hedemark, at a place called Ringsager. Ring, King Rærek's brother, was the fifth of these kings. The kings had first a private conference together, in which he who came from Raumarige first took up the word, and told of King Olaf's proceedings, and of the disturbance he was causing both by killing and mutilating people. Some he drove out of the country, some he deprived of their offices or property if they spoke any thing against him; and, besides, he was travelling over the country with a great army, not with the number of people fixed by law for a royal progress in guest-quarters. He added, that he had fled hither upon account of this disturbance, and many powerful people with him had fled from their udal properties in Raumarige. "But although as yet the evil is nearest to us, it will be but a short time before ye will also be exposed to it; therefore it is best that we all consider together what resolution we shall take." When he had ended his



speech, Rærek was desired to speak; and he said, "Now is the day come that I foretold when we had our meeting at Hadeland, and ye were all so eager to raise Olaf over our heads; namely, that as soon as he was the supreme master of the country we would find it hard to hold him by the horns. We have but two things now to do: the one is to go all of us to him, and let him do with us as he likes, which I think is the best thing we can do; or the other is, to rise against him before he has gone farther through the country. Although he has 300 or 400 men, that is not too great a force for us to meet, if we are only all in movement together: but, in general, there is less success and advantage to be gained when several of equal strength are joined together, than when one alone stands at the head of his own force; therefore it is my advice, that we do not venture to try our luck against Olaf Haraldsson."

Thereafter each of the kings spoke according to his own mind, some dissuading from going out against King Olaf, others urging it; and no determination was come to, as each had his own reasons to produce.

Then Gudrod, the valley-king, took up the word, and spoke:—"It appears wonderful to me, that ye make such a long roundabout in coming to a resolution; and probably ye are frightened for him. We are here five kings, and none of less high birth than Olaf. We gave him the strength to fight with Earl Swend, and with our forces he has brought the country under his power. But if he grudges each of us the little kingdom he had before, and threatens us with tortures, or gives us ill words, then, say I for myself, that I will withdraw myself from the king's slavery; and I do not call him a man among you who is afraid to cut him off, if he come into our hands here up in Hedemark. And this I can tell you, that we shall never bear our heads in safety while Olaf is



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in life." After this encouragement they all agreed to his determination.

Then said Rærek, "With regard to this determination, it appears to me necessary to make our agreement so strong that no one shall fail in his promise to the other. Therefore, if ye determine upon attacking Olaf at a fixed time, when he comes here to Hedemark, I will not trust much to you if some are north in the valleys, others up in Hedemark; but if our resolution is to come to any thing, we must remain here assembled together day and night."

This the kings agreed to, and kept themselves there all assembled, ordering a feast to be provided for them there at Ringsager, and drank there a cup to success; sending out spies to Raumarige, and when one set came in sending out others, so that day and night they had intelligence of Olaf's proceedings, and of the numbers of his men. King Olaf went about in Raumarige in guest-quarters, and altogether in the way before related; but as the provision of the guest-quarter was not always sufficient, upon account of his numerous followers, he laid it upon the bonders to give additional contributions wherever he found it necessary to stay. In some places he staid longer, in others shorter than was fixed; and his journey down to the lake Myosen was shorter than had been fixed on. The kings, after taking their resolution, sent out message-tokens, and summoned all the lendermen and powerful bonders from all the districts thereabout; and when they had assembled the kings had a private meeting with them, and made their determination known, setting a day for gathering together and carrying it into effect; and it was settled among them that each of the kings should have 300 men. Then they sent away the lendermen to gather the people, and meet all at the appointed place. The most approved of



the measure ; but it happened here, as it usually does, that every one has some friend even among his enemies. SAGA VII.

Ketil of Ringaness was at this meeting. Now when he came home in the evening he took his supper, put on his clothes, and went down with his house-servants to the lake ; took a light vessel which he had, the same that King Olaf had made him a present of, and launched it on the water. They found in the boat-house every thing ready to their hands ; betook themselves to their oars, and rowed out into the lake.\* Ketil had forty well-armed men with him, and came early in the morning to the end of the lake. He set off immediately with twenty men, leaving the other twenty to look after the ship. King Olaf was at that time at Eid, in the upper end of Raumarige. Thither Ketil arrived just as the king was coming from matins. The king received Ketil kindly. He said he must speak with the king in all haste ; and they had a private conference together. There Ketil tells the king the resolution which the kings had taken, and their agreement, which he had come to the certain knowledge of. When the king learnt this he called his people together, and sent some out to collect riding horses in the country ; others he sent down to the lake to take all the rowing-vessels they could lay hold of, and keep them for his use. Thereafter he went to the church, had mass sung before him, and then sat down to table. After his meal he got ready, and hastened down to the lake, where the vessels were coming to meet him. He himself went on board the light vessel, and as many men with him as it could stow, and all the rest of his followers took such boats as they could get hold of ; and when it was getting late in the evening

CHAPTER  
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The mutilating of  
the Upland  
kings.

\* The Myösen is a lake of 60 or 70 miles in length.



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they set out from the land, in still and calm weather. He rowed up the water with 400 men, and came with them to Ringsager before day dawned; and the watchmen were not aware of the army before they were come into the very court. Ketil knew well in what houses the kings slept, and the king had all these houses surrounded and guarded, so that nobody could get out; and so they stood till day light. The kings had not people enough to make resistance, but were all taken prisoners, and led before the king. Rærek was an able but obstinate man, whose fidelity the king could not trust to if he made peace with him; therefore he ordered both his eyes to be punched out, and took him in that condition about with him. He ordered Gudrod's tongue to be cut out; but Ring and two others he banished from Norway, under oath never to return. Of the lendersmen and bonders who had actually taken part in the traitorous design, some he drove out of the country, some he mutilated, and with others he made peace. Ottar Black tells of this:—

“ The giver of rings of gold,  
 The army leader bold,  
     In vengeance springs  
     On the Hedemark kings.  
 Olaf, the bold and great,  
 Repays their foul deceit—  
     In full repays  
     Their treacherous ways.  
 He drives with steel-clad hand  
 The small kings from the land,—  
     Greater by far  
     In deed of war.  
 The king who dwelt most north  
 Tongueless must wander forth:  
     All fly away  
     In great dismay.  
 King Olaf now rules o'er  
 What five kings ruled before—  
     To Eida's bound  
     Extends his ground.



No king in days of yore  
 E'er won so much before:  
 That this is so  
 All Norsemen know."

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King Olaf took possession of the land these five kings had possessed, and took hostages from the lenders and bonders in it. He took money instead of guest-quarters from the country north of the valley district, and from Hedemark; and then returned to Raumarige, and so west to Hadeland. This winter his stepfather Sigurd Syr died; and King Olaf went to Ringarike, where his mother Aasta made a great feast for him. Olaf alone bore the title of king now in Norway.

It is told that when King Olaf was on his visit to his mother Aasta, she brought out her children, and showed them to him. The king took his brother Guttorm on the one knee, and his brother Halfdan on the other. The king looked at Guttorm, made a wry face, and pretended to be angry at them; at which the boys were afraid. Then Aasta brought her youngest son, called Harald, who was three years old, to him. The king made a wry face at him also; but he looked the king in the face without regarding it. The king took the boy by the hair, and plucked it; but the boy seized the king's whiskers, and gave them a tug. "Then," said the king, "thou wilt be revengeful, my friend, some day." The following day the king was walking with his mother about the farm, and they came to a play-ground, where Aasta's sons, Guttorm and Halfdan, were amusing themselves. They were building great houses and barns in their play, and were supposing them full of cattle and sheep; and close beside them, in a clay pool, Harald was busy with chips of wood, sailing them in his sport along the edge. The king asked him what these were; and he answered, these were his ships of

CHAPTER  
 LXXV.  
 Of King  
 Olaf's half-  
 brothers.



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war. The king laughed, and said, "The time may come, friend, when thou wilt command ships."

Then the king called to him Halfdan and Guttorm; and first he asked Guttorm, "What wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Corn land," replied he.

"And how great wouldst thou like thy corn land to be?"

"I would have the whole ness that goes out into the lake sown with corn every summer." On that ness there are ten farms.

The king replies, "There would be a great deal of corn there." And, turning to Halfdan, he asked, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"Cows," he replied.

"How many wouldst thou like to have?"

"When they went to the lake to be watered I would have so many, that they stood as tight round the lake as they could stand."

"That would be a great housekeeping," said the king; "and therein ye take after your father."

Then the king says to Harald, "And what wouldst thou like best to have?"

"House-servants."

"And how many wouldst thou have?"

"O! so many I would like to have as would eat up my brother Halfdan's cows at a single meal."

The king laughed, and said to Aasta, "Here, mother, thou art bringing up a king." And more is not related of them on this occasion.

CHAPTER  
LXXVI.  
Of the di-  
vision of  
the country,  
and of the  
laws in  
Sweden.

In Sweden it was the old custom, as long as heathenism prevailed, that the chief sacrifice took place in Goe month\* at Upsal. Then sacrifice was offered for peace, and victory to the king; and thither came people from all parts of Sweden. All the Things of the Swedes, also, were held there, and markets, and

\* Goe month included part of February and of March.



meetings for buying, which continued for a week: and after Christianity was introduced into Sweden, the Things and fairs were held there as before. After Christianity had taken root in Sweden, and the kings would no longer dwell in Upsal, the market-time was moved to Candlemas, and it has since continued so, and it lasts only three days. There is then the Swedish Thing also, and people from all quarters come there. Sweden is divided into many parts. One part is West Gotland, Vermeland, and the Marks, with what belongs to them; and this part of the kingdom is so large, that the bishop who is set over it has 1100 churches under him. The other part is East Gotland, where there is also a bishop's seat, to which the islands of Gotland and Oland belong; and forming all together a still greater bishopric. In Sweden itself (Swithiod) there is a part of the country called Sudermanland, where there is also a bishopric. Then comes Westmanland, or Fiathryndaland, which is also a bishopric. The third portion of Sweden proper, or Swithiod, is called Tiundaland; the fourth Aattundaland; the fifth Sioland, and what belongs to it lies eastward along the coast. Tiundaland is the best and most inhabited part of Swithiod, or Sweden proper, under which the other kingdoms stand. There Upsal is situated, the seat of the king and archbishop; and from it Upsala-Audur, or the domain of the Swedish kings, takes its name. Each of these divisions of the country has its Lag-thing, and its own laws in many parts. Over each is a lagman, who rules principally in affairs of the bonders; for that becomes law which he, by his speech, determines them to make law: and if king, earl, or bishop goes through the country, and holds a Thing with the bonders, the lagmen reply on account of the bonders, and they all follow their lagmen; so that even the most powerful men scarcely dare to come to

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their Al-thing without regarding the bonders' and lagmen's law. And in all matters in which the laws differ from each other, Upsal-law is the directing law; and the other lagmen are under the lagman who dwells in Tiundaland.

CHAPTER  
LXXVII.  
Of the  
Lagman  
Thorgnyr.

In Tiundaland there was a lagman who was called Thorgnyr, whose father was called Thorgnyr Thorgnyrson. His forefathers had for a long course of years, and during many kings' times, been lagmen of Tiundaland. At this time Thorgnyr was old, and had a great court about him. He was considered one of the wisest men in Sweden, and was Earl Rognvald's relation and foster-father.

CHAPTER  
LXXVIII.  
Meeting of  
Earl Rogn-  
vald and  
the king's  
daughter  
Ingigerd.

Now we must go back in our story to the time when the men whom the king's daughter Ingigerd and Hialte had sent from the east came to Earl Rognvald. They relate their errand to the earl and his wife Ingeborg, and tell how the king's daughter had oft spoken to the Swedish king about a peace between him and King Olaf the Thick, and that she was a great friend of King Olaf; but that the Swedish king flew into a passion every time she named Olaf, so that she had no hopes of any peace. The earl told Biorn the news he had received from the east; but Biorn gave the same reply, that he would not turn back until he had met the Swedish king, and said the earl had promised to go with him. Now the winter was passing fast, and immediately after Yule the earl made himself ready to travel with sixty men, among whom were the marshal Biorn and his companions. The earl proceeded eastward all the way to Swithiod; but when he came a little way into the country he sent his men before him to Upsal, with a message to Ingigerd the king's daughter to come out to meet him at Ullarager, where she had a large farm. When the king's daughter got the earl's message she made herself ready immediately to travel with a large attend-



ance, and Hialte accompanied her. But before he took his departure he went to King Olaf, and said, "Continue always to be the most fortunate of monarchs! Such splendour as I have seen about thee I have in truth never witnessed elsewhere, and where-soever I come it shall not be concealed. Now, king, may I entreat thy favour and friendship in time to come?"

The king replies, "Why art thou in so great a haste, and where art thou going?"

Hialte replies, "I am to ride out to Ullarager with Ingigerd thy daughter."

The king says, "Farewell then: a man thou art of understanding and politeness, and well suited to live with people of rank."

Thereupon Hialte withdrew.

The king's daughter Ingigerd rode to her farm in Ullarager, and ordered a great feast to be prepared for the earl. When the earl arrived he was welcomed with gladness, and he remained there several days. The earl and the king's daughter talked much, and of many things, but most about the Swedish and Norwegian kings; and she told the earl that in her opinion there was no hope of peace between them.

Then said the earl, "How wouldst thou like it, my cousin, if Olaf king of Norway were to pay his addresses to thee? It appears to us that it would contribute most towards a settled peace if there was relationship established between the kings; but I would not support such a matter if it were against thy inclination."

She replies, "My father disposes of my hand; but among all my other relations thou art he whose advice I would rather follow in weighty affairs. Dost thou think it would be advisable?" The earl recommended it to her strongly, and reckoned up many excellent achievements of King Olaf's. He told her, in particu-



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CHAPTER  
LXXIX.  
Of Earl  
Rognvald  
and the  
Lagman  
Thorgnyr.

lar, about what had lately been done; that King Olaf in an hour's time one morning had taken five kings prisoners, deprived them all of their governments, and laid their kingdoms and properties under his own power. Much they talked about the business, and in all their conversations they perfectly agreed with each other. When the earl was ready he took leave, and proceeded on his way, taking Hialte with him.

Earl Rognvald came towards evening one day to the house of Lagman Thorgnyr. It was a great and stately mansion, and many people stood outside who received the earl kindly, and took care of the horses and baggage. The earl went into the room, where there was a number of people. In the high seat sat an old man; and never had Biorn or his companions seen a man so stout. His beard was so long that it lay upon his knee, and was spread over his whole breast; and the man moreover was gay and lively. The earl went forward and saluted him. Thorgnyr received him joyfully and kindly, and bade him go to the seat he was accustomed to take. The earl seated himself on the other side, opposite to Thorgnyr. They remained there some days before the earl disclosed his errand, and then he asked Thorgnyr to go with him into the conversing room. Biorn and his followers went there with the earl. Then the earl began, and told how Olaf king of Norway had sent these men hither to conclude a peaceful agreement. He showed at great length what injury it was of to the West Gotland people, that there was hostility between their country and Norway. He further related that Olaf the king of Norway had sent ambassadors, who were here present, and to whom he had promised he would attend them to the Swedish king; but he added, "The Swedish king takes the matter so grievously, that he has uttered menaces against those who entertain it. Now so it is, my foster-



father, that I do not trust to myself in this matter; but am come on a visit to thee to get good counsel and help from thee in the matter.” SAGA VII.

Now when the earl had done speaking Thorgnyr sat silent for a while, and then took up the word. “Ye have curious dispositions who are so ambitious of honour and renown, and yet have no prudence or counsel in you when you get into any mischief. Why did you not consider, before you gave your promise to this adventure, that you had no power to stand against King Olaf? In my opinion it is not a less honourable condition to be in the number of bonders, and have one’s words free, and be able to say what one will, even if the king be present. But I must go to the Upsal Thing, and give thee such help that without fear thou canst speak before the king what thou findest good.”

The earl thanked him for the promise, remained with Thorgnyr, and rode with him to the Upsal Thing. There was a great assemblage of people at the Thing, and King Olaf was there with his court.

The first day the Thing sat, King Olaf was seated on a stool, and his court stood in a circle around him. Right opposite to him sat Earl Rognvald and Thorgnyr in the Thing upon one stool, and before them the earl’s court and Thorgnyr’s house-people. Behind their stool stood the bonder community, all in a circle around them. Some stood upon hillocks and heights, in order to hear the better. Now when the king’s messages, which are usually handled in the Things, were produced and settled, the marshal Biorn rose beside the earl’s stool, and said aloud, “King Olaf sends me here with the message that he will offer to the Swedish king peace, and the frontiers that in old times were fixed between Norway and Sweden.” He spoke so loud that the Swedish king could distinctly hear him; but at first, when he heard King Olaf’s

CHAPTER  
LXXX.  
Of the  
Upsal  
Thing.



SAGA VII. name spoken, he thought the speaker had some message or business of his own to execute; but when he heard of peace, and the frontiers between Norway and Sweden, he saw from what root it came, and sprang up, and called out that the man should be silent, for that such speeches were useless. Thereupon Biorn sat down; and when the noise had ceased Earl Rognvald stood up and made a speech.

He spoke of Olaf the Thick's message, and proposal of peace to Olaf the Swedish king; and that all the West Gotland people sent their entreaty to Olaf that he would make peace with the king of Norway. He recounted all the evils the West Gotlanders were suffering under; that they must go without all the things from Norway which were necessary in their households; and, on the other hand, were exposed to attack and hostility whenever the king of Norway gathered an army and made an inroad on them. The earl added, that Olaf the Norway king had sent men hither with the intent to obtain Ingigerd the king's daughter in marriage.

When the earl had done speaking Olaf the Swedish king stood up and replied, and was altogether against listening to any proposals of peace, and made many and heavy reproaches against the earl for his impudence in entering into a peaceful truce with the thick fellow, and making up a peaceful friendship with him, and which in truth he considered treason against himself. He added, that it would be well deserved if Earl Rognvald were driven out of the kingdom. The earl had, in his opinion, the influence of his wife Ingeborg to thank for what might happen; and it was the most imprudent fancy he could have fallen upon to take up with such a wife. The king spoke long and bitterly, turning his speech always against Olaf the Thick. When he sat down not a sound was to be heard at first.



Then Thorgnyr stood up; and when he arose all the bonders stood up who had before been sitting, and rushed together from all parts to listen to what Lagman Thorgnyr would say. At first there was a great din of people and weapons; but when the noise was settled into silent listening, Thorgnyr made his speech. "The disposition of Swedish kings is different now from what it has been formerly. My grandfather Thorgnyr could well remember the Upsal king Eric Eymundsson, and used to say of him that when he was in his best years he went out every summer on expeditions to different countries, and conquered for himself Finland, Leifland, Courland, Esthonia, and the eastern countries all around; and at the present day the earth-bulwarks, ramparts, and other great works which he made are to be seen. And, moreover, he was not so proud that he would not listen to people who had any thing to say to him. My father, again, was a long time with King Biorn, and was well acquainted with his ways and manners. In Biorn's lifetime his kingdom stood in great power, and no kind of want was felt, and he was gay and sociable with his friends. I also remember King Eric the Victorious, and was with him on many a war-expedition. He enlarged the Swedish dominion, and defended it manfully; and it was also easy and agreeable to communicate our opinions to him. But the king we have now got allows no man to presume to talk with him, unless it be what he desires to hear. On this alone he applies all his power, while he allows his scatt-lands in other countries to go from him through laziness and weakness. He wants to have the Norway kingdom laid under him, which no Swedish king before him ever desired, and therewith brings war and distress on many a man. Now it is our will, we bonders, that thou King Olaf make peace with the Norway king, Olaf the Thick, and marry

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CHAPTER  
LXXXI.  
Thorgnyr's  
speech.



SAGA VII. thy daughter Ingigerd to him. Wilt thou, however, reconquer the kingdoms in the east countries which thy relations and forefathers had there, we will all for that purpose follow thee to the war. But if thou wilt not do as we desire, we will now attack thee, and put thee to death; for we will no longer suffer law and peace to be disturbed. So our forefathers went to work when they drowned five kings in a morass at the Mule-thing, and they were filled with the same insupportable pride thou hast shown towards us. Now tell us, in all haste, what resolution thou wilt take." Then the whole public approved, with clash of arms and shouts, the lagman's speech.

The king stands up and says he will let things go according to the desire of the bonders. "All Swedish kings," he said, "have done so, and have allowed the bonders to rule in all according to their will." The murmur among the bonders then came to an end; and the chiefs, the king, the earl, and Thorgnyr talked together, and concluded a truce and reconciliation, on the part of the Swedish king, according to the terms which the king of Norway had proposed by his ambassadors; and it was resolved at the Thing that Ingigerd, the king's daughter, should be married to Olaf Haraldsson. The king left it to the earl to make the contract feast, and gave him full powers to conclude this marriage affair; and after this was settled at the Thing, they separated. When the earl returned homewards, he and the king's daughter Ingigerd had a meeting, at which they talked between themselves over this matter. She sent Olaf a long cloak of fine linen richly embroidered with gold, and with silk points.\* The earl returned to Gotland, and Biorn with him; and after staying with him a short

\* Silki-ræmor appear to have been silk tassels or ties on the cloak of fine linen (pelli), which was embroidered with gold.



time, Biorn and his company returned to Norway. When he came to King Olaf he told him the result of his errand, and the king returned him many thanks for his conduct, and said Biorn had had great success in bringing his errand to so favourable a conclusion against such animosity. SAGA VII.

On the approach of spring King Olaf went down to the coast, had his ships rigged out, summoned troops to him, and proceeded in spring out from Viken to the Naze, and so north to Hordaland. He then sent messages to all the lendemen, selected the most considerable men in each district, and made the most splendid preparations to meet his bride. The wedding feast was to be in autumn, at the Gotha river, on the frontiers of the two countries. King Olaf had with him the blind king Rærek. When his wound was healed, the king gave him two men to serve him, let him sit in the high seat by his side, and kept him in meat and clothes in no respect worse than he had kept himself before. Rærek was taciturn, and answered short and cross when any one spoke to him. It was his custom to make his foot-boy, when he went out in the daytime, lead him away from people, and then to beat the lad until he ran away. He would then complain to King Olaf that the lad would not serve him. The King changed his servants, but it was as before; no servant would hold it out with King Rærek. Then the king appointed a man called Swend to wait upon and serve King Rærek. He was Rærek's relation, and had formerly been in his service. Rærek continued with his habits of moroseness, and of solitary walks; but when he and Swend were alone together, he was merry and talkative. He used to bring up many things which had happened in former days when he was king. He alluded, too, to the man who had, in his former days, torn him from his kingdom and happiness, and made him live on alms.

CHAPTER  
LXXXII.  
Of King  
Rærek's  
treachery.



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“It is hardest of all,” says he, “that thou and my other relations, who ought to be men of bravery, art so degenerated that thou wilt not avenge the shame and disgrace brought upon our race.” Such discourse he often brought out. Swend said, they had too great a power to deal with, while they themselves had but little means. Rærek said, “Why should we live longer as mutilated men with disgrace? I, a blind man, may conquer them as well as they conquered me when I was asleep. Come then, let us kill this thick Olaf. He is not afraid for himself at present. I will lay the plan, and would not spare my hands if I could use them, but that I cannot by reason of my blindness; therefore thou must use the weapons against him, and as soon as Olaf is killed I can see well enough that his power must come into the hands of his enemies, and it may well be that I shall be king, and thou shalt be my earl.” So much persuasion he used that Swend at last agreed to join in the deed. The plan was so laid that when the king was ready to go to vespers, Swend stood on the threshold with a drawn dagger under his cloak. Now when the king came out of the room, it so happened that he walked quicker than Swend expected; and when he looked the king in the face he grew pale, and then white as a corpse, and his hand sunk down. The king observed his terror, and said, “What is this, Swend? Wilt thou betray me?” Swend threw down his cloak and dagger, and fell at the king’s feet, saying, “All is in God’s hands and thine, king!” The king ordered his men to seize Swend, and he was put in irons. The king ordered Rærek’s seat to be moved to another bench. He gave Swend his life, and he left the country. The king appointed a different lodging for Rærek to sleep in from that in which he slept himself, and in which many of his court-people slept. He set two of his court-men, who had been



long with him, and whose fidelity he had proof of, to attend Rærek day and night; but it is not said whether they were people of high birth or not. King Rærek's mood was very different at different times. Sometimes he would sit silent for days together, so that no man could get a word out of him; and sometimes he was so merry and gay, that people found a joke in every word he said. Sometimes his words were very bitter. He was sometimes in a mood that he would drink them all under the benches, and made all his neighbours drunk; but in general he drank but little. King Olaf gave him plenty of pocket-money. When he went to his lodgings he would often, before going to bed, have some stoups of mead brought in, which he gave to all the men in the house to drink, so that he was much liked.

There was a man from the Uplands called Finn the Little, and some said of him that he was of Finnish\* race. He was a remarkably little man, but so swift of foot that no horse could overtake him. He was a particularly well exercised runner with snow shoes, and shooter with the bow. He had long been in the service of King Rærek, and often employed in errands of trust. He knew the roads in all the Upland hills, and was well known to all the great people. Now when King Rærek was set under guards on the journey Finn would often slip in among the men of the guard, and followed, in general, with the lads and serving-men; but as often as he could he waited upon Rærek, and entered into conversation with him. The king, however, only spoke a word or two with him at a time, to prevent suspicion. In spring, when they came a little way beyond Viken, Finn disappeared from the army for some days, but came back, and staid with them a while. This happened often, without any one

CHAPTER  
LXXXIII.  
Of Little  
Finn.

\* The Laplanders are called Finns in Norway and Sweden.



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CHAPTER  
LXXXIV.  
Of the  
murder of  
some of  
King Olaf's  
court-  
men.

observing it particularly; for there were many such hangers-on with the army.

King Olaf came to Tunsberg before Easter, and remained there late in spring. Many merchant vessels came to the town, both from Saxon-land and Denmark, and from Viken, and from the north parts of the country. There was a great assemblage of people; and as the times were good, there was many a drinking meeting. It happened one evening that King Rærek came rather late to his lodging; and as he had drunk a great deal, he was remarkably merry. Little Finn came to him with a stoup of mead with herbs in it, and very strong. The king made every one in the house drunk, until they fell asleep each in his berth. Finn had gone away, and a light was burning in the lodging. Rærek waked the men who usually followed him, and told them he wanted to go out into the yard. They had a lantern with them, for outside it was pitch dark. Out in the yard there was a large privy standing upon pillars, and a stair to go up to it. While Rærek and his guards were in the yard they heard a man say, "Cut down that devil;" and presently a crash, as if somebody fell. Rærek said, "These fellows must be dead drunk to be fighting with each other so: run and separate them." They rushed out; but when they came out upon the steps both of them were killed: the man who went out the last was the first killed. There were twelve of Rærek's men there, and among them Sigurd Hit, who had been his banner-man, and also little Finn. They drew the dead bodies up between the houses, took the king with them, ran out to a boat they had in readiness, and rowed away. Sigvat the scald slept in King Olaf's lodgings. He got up in the night, and his footboy with him, and went to the privy. But as they were returning, on going down the stairs Sigvat's foot slipped, and he fell on his knee; and when he put out his hands he felt the



stairs wet. "I think," said he, laughing, "the king must have given many of us tottering legs to-night." When they came into the house in which light was burning the footboy said, "Have you hurt yourself that you are all over so bloody?" He replied, "I am not wounded, but something must have happened here." Thereupon he wakened Thord Folason, who was standard-bearer, and his bedfellow. They went out with a light, and soon found the blood. They traced it, and found the corpses, and knew them. They saw also a great stump of a tree in which clearly a gash had been cut, which, as was afterwards known, had been done as a stratagem to entice those out who had been killed. Sigvat and Thord spoke together, and agreed it was highly necessary to let the king know of this without delay. They immediately sent a lad to the lodging where Rærek had been. All the men in it were asleep; but the king was gone. He wakened the men who were in the house, and told them what had happened. The men arose, and ran out to the yard where the bodies were; but, however needful it appeared to be that the king should know it, nobody dared to waken him.

Then said Sigvat to Thord, "What wilt thou rather do, comrade, — waken the king, or tell him the tidings?"

Thord replies, "I do not dare to waken him, and I would rather tell him the news."

Then said Sigvat, "There is much of the night still to pass, and before morning Rærek may get himself concealed in such a way that it may be difficult to find him; but as yet he cannot be very far off, for the bodies are still warm. We must never let the disgrace rest upon us of concealing this treason from the king. Go thou, Thord, up to the lodging, and wait for me there."

Sigvat then went to the church, and told the bell-



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ringer to toll for the souls of the king's court-men, naming the men who were killed. The bell-ringer did as he was told. The king awoke at the ringing, sat up in his bed, and asked if it was already the hour of matins.

Thord replies, "It is worse than that, for there has occurred a very important affair. Rærek is fled, and two of the court-men are killed."

The king asked how this had taken place, and Thord told him all he knew. The king got up immediately, ordered to sound the call for a meeting of the court, and when the people were assembled he named men to go out to every quarter from the town, by sea and land, to search for Rærek. Thorer Lange took a boat, and set off with thirty men; and when day dawned they saw two small boats before them in the channel, and when they saw each other both parties rowed as hard as they could. King Rærek was there with thirty men. When they came quite close to each other Rærek and his men turned towards the land, and all sprang on shore except the king, who sat on the aft seat. He bade them farewell, and wished they might meet each other again in better luck. At the same moment Thorer with his company rowed to the land. Finn the Little shot off an arrow, which hit Thorer in the middle of the body, and was his death; and Sigurd, with his men, ran up into the forest. Thorer's men took his body, and transported it, together with Rærek, to Tunsberg. King Olaf undertook himself thereafter to look after King Rærek, made him be carefully guarded, and took good care of his treason, for which reason he had a watch over him night and day. King Rærek thereafter was very gay, and nobody could observe but that he was in every way well satisfied.

It happened on Ascension-day that King Olaf went to high mass, and the bishop went in procession



around the church, and conducted the king; and when they came back to the church the bishop led the king to his seat on the north side of the choir. There Rærek sat next to the king, and concealed his countenance in his upper cloak. When Olaf had seated himself Rærek laid his hand on the king's shoulder, and felt it."

"Thou hast fine clothes on, cousin, to-day," says he.

King Olaf replies, "It is a festival to-day, in remembrance that Jesus Christ ascended to heaven from earth."

King Rærek says, "I understand nothing about it, so as to hold in my mind what ye tell me about Christ. Much of what ye tell me appears to me incredible, although many wonderful things may have come to pass in old times."

When the mass was finished Olaf stood up, held his hands up over his head, and bowed down before the altar, so that his cloak hung down behind his shoulders. Then King Rærek started up hastily and sharply, and struck at the king with a long knife of the kind called *ryting*; but the blow was received in the upper cloak at the shoulder, because the king was bending himself forwards. The clothes were much cut, but the king was not wounded. When the king perceived the attack he sprang upon the floor; and Rærek struck at him again with the knife, but did not reach him, and said, "Art thou flying, Olaf, from me, a blind man?" The king ordered his men to seize him, and lead him out of the church, which was done. After this attempt many hastened to King Olaf, and advised that King Rærek should be killed. "It is," said they, "tempting your luck in the highest degree, king, to keep him with you, and protect him, whatever mischief he may undertake; for night and day he thinks upon taking your life. And if you send



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him away, we know no one who can watch him so that he will not in all probability escape; and if once he gets loose he will assemble a great multitude, and do much evil."

The king replies, "Ye say truly that many a one has suffered death for less offence than Rærek's; but willingly I would not darken the victory I gained over the Upland kings, when in one morning hour I took five kings prisoners, and got all their kingdoms: but yet, as they were my relations, I should not be their murderer but upon need. As yet I can scarcely see whether Rærek puts me in the necessity of killing him or not."

It was to feel if King Olaf had armour on or not, that Rærek had laid his hand on the king's shoulder.

CHAPTER  
LXXXVI.  
King  
Rærek's  
journey to  
Iceland.

There was an Iceland man, by name Thorarin Nefiolfsson, who had his relations in the north of the country. He was not of high birth, but particularly prudent, eloquent, and agreeable in conversation with people of distinction. He was also a far-travelled man, who had been long in foreign parts. Thorarin was a remarkably ugly man, principally because he had very ungainly limbs. He had great ugly hands, and his feet were still uglier. Thorarin was in Tunsberg when this event happened which has just been related, and he was known to King Olaf by their having had conversations together. Thorarin was just then done with rigging out a merchant vessel which he owned, and with which he intended to go to Iceland in summer. King Olaf had Thorarin with him as a guest for some days, and conversed much with him; and Thorarin even slept in the king's lodgings. One morning early the king awoke while the others were still sleeping. The sun had newly risen in the sky, and there was much light within. The king saw that Thorarin had stretched out one of his feet from under the bed-clothes, and he looked at



the foot a while. In the mean time the others in the lodging awoke; and the king said to Thorarin, "I have been awake for a while, and have seen a sight which was worth seeing; and that is a man's foot so ugly that I do not think an uglier can be found in this merchant town." Thereupon he told the others to look at it, and see if it was not so; and all agreed with the king. When Thorarin observed what they were talking about, he said, "There are few things for which you cannot find a match, and that may be the case here."

The king says, "I would rather say that such another ugly foot cannot be found in the town, and I would lay any wager upon it."

Then said Thorarin, "I am willing to bet that I shall find an uglier foot still in the town."

The king — "Then he who wins shall have the right to get any demand from the other he chooses to make."

"Be it so," said Thorarin. Thereupon he stretches out his other foot from under the bed-clothes, and it was in no way handsomer than the other, and moreover wanted the little toe. "There," said Thorarin, "see now, king, my other foot, which is so much uglier; and, besides, has no little toe. Now I have won."

The king replies, "That other foot was so much uglier than this one by having five ugly toes upon it, and this has only four; and now I have won the choice of asking something from thee."

"The sovereign's decision must be right," says Thorarin; "but what does the king require of me?"

"To take Rærek," said the king, "to Greenland, and deliver him to Leif Ericsson."

Thorarin replies, "I have never been at Greenland."

The king — "Thou, who art a far-travelled man,



SAGA VII. wilt now have an opportunity of seeing Greenland, if thou hast never been there before."

At first Thorarin did not say much about it; but as the king insisted on his wish he did not entirely decline, but said, "I will let you hear, king, what my desire would have been had I gained the wager. It would have been to be received into your body of court-men; and if you will grant me that, I will be the more zealous now in fulfilling your pleasure." The king gave his consent, and Thorarin was made one of the court-men. Then Thorarin rigged out his vessel, and when he was ready he took on board King Rærek. When Thorarin took leave of King Olaf, he said, "Should it now turn out, king, as is not improbable, and often happens, that we cannot effect the voyage to Greenland, but must run for Iceland or other countries, how shall I get rid of this king in a way that will be satisfactory to you?"

The king — "If thou comest to Iceland, deliver him into the hands of Gudmund Eyolfsson, or of Skopte the lagman, or of some other chief who will receive my tokens and message of friendship. But if thou comest to other countries nearer to this, do so with him that thou canst know with certainty that King Rærek never again shall appear in Norway; but do so only when thou seest no other way of doing whatsoever."

When Thorarin was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed outside of all the rocks and islands, and when he was to the north of the Naze set right out into the ocean. He did not immediately get a good wind, but he avoided coming near the land. He sailed until he made land which he knew, in the south part of Iceland, and sailed west around the land out into the Greenland ocean. There he encountered heavy storms, and drove long about upon the ocean; but when summer was coming to an end he landed



again in Iceland in Breida fiord. Thorgils Arason was the first man of any consequence who came to him. Thorarin brings him the king's salutation, message, and tokens, with which was the desire about King Rærek's reception. Thorgils received these in a friendly way, and invited King Rærek to his house, where he staid all winter. But he did not like being there, and begged that Thorgils would let him go to Gudmund; saying he had heard some time or other that there, in Gudmund's house, was the most sumptuous way of living in Iceland, and that it was intended he should be in Gudmund's hands. Thorgils let him have his desire, and conducted him with some men to Gudmund at Modrovold. Gudmund received Rærek kindly on account of the king's message, and he staid there the next winter. He did not like being there either; and then Gudmund gave him a habitation upon a small farm called Kalfskind, where there were but few neighbours. There Rærek passed the third winter, and said that since he had laid down his kingdom he thought himself most comfortably situated here; for here he was most respected by all. The summer after Rærek fell sick, and died; and it is said he is the only king whose bones rest in Iceland. Thorarin Nefiolfsson was afterwards for a long time upon voyages; but sometimes he was with King Olaf.

The summer that Thorarin went with Rærek to Iceland, Hialte Skeggeson went also to Iceland, and King Olaf gave him many friendly gifts with him when they parted. The same summer Eyvind Urarhorn went on an expedition to the West sea, and came in autumn to Ireland, to the Irish king Konofoger. In autumn Einar earl of Orkney and this Irish king met in Ulfreks-fiord\*, and there was a great battle, in

CHAPTER  
LXXXVII.  
Battle in  
Ulfreks-  
fiord.

\* Ulfreks-fiord must, according to the Orkneyinga Saga, be in Ireland, and is supposed by antiquaries to be either Dundalk bay or Strangford bay.



SAGA VII. which Konofoger gained the victory, having many more people. The earl fled with a single ship, and came back about autumn to Orkney, after losing most of his men and all the booty they had made. The earl was much displeased with his expedition, and threw the blame upon the Northmen, who had been in the battle on the side of the Irish king, for making him lose the victory.

CHAPTER  
LXXXVIII.  
King Olaf  
prepares  
for his  
bridal  
journey.

Now we begin again our story where we let it slip—at King Olaf's travelling to his bridal, to receive his betrothed Ingigerd the king's daughter. The king had a great body of men with him, and so chosen a body that all the great people he could lay hold of followed him; and every man of consequence had a chosen band of men with him distinguished by birth or other qualifications. The whole were well appointed, and equipt in ships, weapons, and clothes. They steered the fleet eastwards to Konghelle; but when they arrived there they heard nothing of the Swedish king, and none of his men had come there. King Olaf remained a long time in summer at Konghelle, and endeavoured carefully to make out what people said of the Swedish king's movements, or what were his designs; but no person could tell him any thing for certain about it. Then he sent men up to Gotland to Earl Rognvald, to ask him if he knew how it came to pass that the Swedish king did not come to the meeting agreed on. The earl replies, that he did not know. "But as soon," said he, "as I hear, I shall send some of my men to King Olaf, to let him know if there be any other cause for the delay than the multitude of affairs; as it often happens that the Swedish king's movements are delayed by this more than he could have expected."

CHAPTER  
LXXXIX.  
Of the  
Swedish

This Swedish king, Olaf Ericsson, had first a concubine who was called Edle, a daughter of an earl of Vendland, who had been captured in war, and there-



fore was called the king's slave-girl. Their children were Eymund, Astrid, and Holmfrid. He had, besides, a son by his queen, who was born the day before St. Jacob's-day. When the boy was to be christened the bishop called him Jacob, which the Swedes did not like, as there never had been a Swedish king called Jacob. All King Olaf's children were handsome in appearance, and clever from childhood. The queen was proud, and did not behave well towards her stepchildren; therefore the king sent his son Eymund to Vendland, to be fostered by his mother's relations, where he for a long time neglected his Christianity. The king's daughter, Astrid, was brought up in West Gotland, in the house of a worthy man called Egil. She was a very lovely girl: her words came well into her conversation; she was merry, but modest, and very generous. When she was grown up she was often in her father's house, and every man thought well of her. King Olaf was haughty and harsh in his speech. He took very ill the uproar and clamour the country people had raised against him at the Upsal Thing, as they had threatened him with violence, for which he laid the chief blame on Earl Rognvald. He made no preparation for the bridal, according to the agreement to marry his daughter Ingigerd to Olaf the king of Norway, and to meet him on the borders for that purpose. As the summer advanced many of his men were anxious to know what the king's intentions were; whether to keep to the agreement with King Olaf, or break his word, and with it the peace of the country. But no one was so bold as to ask the king, although they complained of it to Ingigerd, and besought her to find out what the king intended. She replied, "I have no inclination to speak to the king again about the matters between him and King Olaf; for he answered me ill enough once before when I

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king's  
children.



**SAGA VII.** brought forward Olaf's name." In the mean time Ingigerd, the king's daughter, took it to heart, became melancholy and sorrowful, and yet very curious to know what the king intended. She had much suspicion that he would not keep his word and promise to King Olaf; for he appeared quite enraged whenever Olaf the Thick's name was in any way mentioned.

**CHAPTER  
XC.**  
Of the  
Swedish  
King Olaf's  
hunting.

One morning early the king rode out with his dogs and falcons, and his men around him. When they let slip the falcons the king's falcon killed two black-cocks in one flight, and three in another. The dogs ran and brought the birds when they had fallen to the ground. The king ran after them, took the game from them himself, was delighted with his sport, and said, "It will be long before the most of you have such success." They agreed in this; adding, that in their opinion no king had such luck in hunting as he had. Then the king rode home with his followers in high spirits. Ingigerd, the king's daughter, was just going out of her lodging when the king came riding into the yard, and she turned round and saluted him. He saluted her in return, laughing; produced the birds, and told her the success of his chase.

"Dost thou know of any king," said he, "who made so great a capture in so short a time?"

"It is indeed," replied she, "a good morning's hunting, to have got five black-cocks; but it was a still better when, in one morning, the king of Norway, Olaf, took five kings, and subdued all their kingdoms."

When the king heard this he sprang from his horse, turned to Ingigerd, and said, "Thou shalt know, Ingigerd, that however great thy love may be for this man, thou shalt never get him, nor he get thee. I will marry thee to some chief with whom I can be in friendship; but never can I be a friend of the man who



has robbed me of my kingdom, and done me great mischief by marauding and killing through the land." With that their conversation broke off, and each went away.

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Ingigerd, the king's daughter, had now full certainty of king Olaf's intention, and immediately sent men to West Gotland to Earl Rognvald, and let him know how it stood with the Swedish king, and that the agreement made with the king of Norway was broken ; and advising the earl and people of West Gotland to be upon their guard, as no peace from the people of Norway was to be expected. When the earl got this news he sent a message through all his kingdom, and told the people to be cautious, and prepared in case of war or pillage from the side of Norway. He also sent men to King Olaf the Thick, and let him know the message he had received, and likewise that he wished for himself to hold peace and friendship with King Olaf ; and therefore he begged him not to pillage in his kingdom. When this message came to King Olaf it made him both angry and sorry ; and for some days nobody got a word from him. He then held a House-Thing with his men, and in it Biorn arose, and first took the word. He began his speech by telling that he had proceeded eastward last winter to establish a peace, and he told how kindly Earl Rognvald had received him ; and, on the other hand, how crossly and heavily the Swedish king had accepted the proposal. " And the agreement," said he, " which was made, was made more by means of the strength of the people, the power of Thorgnyr, and the aid of the earl, than by the king's good will. Now, on these grounds, we know for certain that it is the king who has caused the breach of the agreement ; therefore we ought by no means to make the earl suffer, for it is proved that he is King Olaf's firm friend." The king wished now to hear from the chiefs and other leaders

CHAPTER  
XCI.  
Of Olaf  
the Norway  
king's  
counsels.



SAGA VII. — of troops what course he should adopt. "Whether shall we go against Gotland, and maraud there with such men as we have got; or is there any other course that appears to you more advisable?" He spoke both long and well.

Thereafter many powerful men spoke, and all were at last agreed in dissuading from hostilities. They argued thus: "Although we are a numerous body of men who are assembled here, yet they are all only people of weight and power; but, for a war expedition, young men who are in quest of property and consideration are more suitable. It is also the custom of people of weight and power, when they go into battle or strife, to have many people with them whom they can send out before them for their defence; for the men do not fight worse who have little property, but even better than those who are brought up in the midst of wealth." After these considerations the king resolved to dismiss this army from any expedition, and to give every man leave to return home; but proclaimed, at the same time, that next summer the people over the whole country would be called out in a general levy, to march immediately against the Swedish king, and punish him for his want of faith. All thought well of this plan. Then the king returned northwards to Viken, and took his abode at Sarpsburg in autumn, and ordered all things necessary for winter provision to be collected there; and he remained there all winter with a great retinue.

CHAPTER  
XCII.  
Sigvat the  
scald's  
journey  
eastwards.

People talked variously about Earl Rognvald; some said he was King Olaf's sincere friend; others did not think this likely, and thought it stood in his power to warn the Swedish king to keep his word, and the agreement concluded on between him and King Olaf. Sigvat the poet often expressed himself in conversation as Earl Rognvald's great friend, and often spoke of him to King Olaf; and he offered to the king to travel



to Earl Rognvald's, and spy after the Swedish king's doings, and to attempt, if possible, to get the settlement of the agreement. The king thought well of this plan; for he oft, and with pleasure, spoke to his confidential friends about Ingigerd, the king's daughter. Early in winter Sigvat the scald, with two companions, left Sarpsburg, and proceeded eastwards over the moors to Gotland. Before Sigvat and King Olaf parted he composed these verses:—

“Sit happy in thy hall, O king!  
Till I come back, and good news bring:  
The scald will bid thee now farewell,  
Till he brings news well worth to tell.  
He wishes to the helmed hero  
Health, and long life, and a full flow  
Of honour, riches, and success —  
And, parting, ends his song with this.  
The farewell word is spoken now —  
The word that to the heart lies nearest.  
And yet, O king! before I go,  
One word on what I hold the dearest.  
I fain would say ‘O! may God save  
To thee, the bravest of the brave,  
The land which is thy right by birth!’ —  
This is my dearest wish on earth.”

Then they proceeded eastwards towards Eida, and had difficulty in crossing the river in a little cobble; but they escaped, though with danger: and Sigvat sang—

“On shore the crazy boat I drew,  
Wet to the skin, and frightened too;  
For truly there was danger then:  
The mocking hill-elves laughed again,  
To see us in this cobble sailing,  
And all our sea-skill unavailing.  
But better did it end, you see,  
Than any of us could foresee.”

Then they went through the Eida forest, and Sigvat sang—

“A hundred miles through Eida wood,  
And devil an alehouse, bad or good, —  
A hundred miles, and tree and sky  
Were all that met the weary eye.



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—

With many a grumble, many a groan,  
A hundred miles we trudged right on;  
And every king's man of us bore  
On each foot-sole a bleeding sore."

They came then through Gotland, and in the evening reached a farm-house called Hof. The door was bolted so that they could not come in; and the servants told them it was a fast-day, and they could not get admittance. Sigvat sang —

"Now up to Hof in haste I hie,  
And round the house and yard I pry.  
Doors are fast locked—but yet within,  
Methinks, I hear some stir and din.  
I peep, with nose close to the ground,  
Below the door, but small cheer found.  
My trouble with few words was paid—  
'Tis holy time,' the house-folks said.  
Heathens! to shove me thus away!  
I' the foul fiend's claws may you all lay."

Then they came to another farm, where the good wife was standing at the door, and told them not to come in, for they were busy with a sacrifice to the Asa-gods. Sigvat sang of it thus:—

" 'My poor lad, enter not, I pray!  
Thus to me did the old wife say;  
'For all of us are heathens here,  
And I for Odin's wrath do fear.'  
The ugly witch drove me away,  
Like scared wolf sneaking from his prey,  
When she told me that there within  
Was sacrifice to foul Odin."

Another evening they came to three bonders', all of them of the name of Olver, who drove them away. Sigvat sang—

"Three of one name,  
To their great shame,  
The traveller late  
Drove from their gate!  
Travellers may come  
From our viking-home,  
Unbidden guests  
At these Olvers' feasts."



They went on farther that evening, and came to a fourth bonder, who was considered the most hospitable man in the country; but he drove them away also. Then Sigvat sang —

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“ Then on I went to seek night’s rest  
 From one who was said to be the best,  
 The kindest host in the land around,  
 And there I hoped to have quarters found.  
 But, faith, ’twas little use to try;  
 For not so much as raise an eye  
 Would this huge wielder of the spade:  
 If he’s the best, it must be said  
 Bad is the best, and the scald’s praise  
 Cannot be given to churls like these.  
 I almost wished that Aasta’s son  
 In the Eyda forest had been one,  
 When we, his men, were even put  
 Lodging to crave in a heathen’s hut.  
 I knew not where the earl to find:  
 Four times driven off by men unkind,  
 I wandered now the whole night o’er,  
 Driven like a dog from door to door.”

Now when they came to Earl Rognvald’s the earl said they must have had a severe journey. Then Sigvat sang —

“ The message-bearers of the king  
 From Norway came his words to bring;  
 And truly for their master they  
 Hard work have done before to-day.  
 We did not loiter on the road,  
 But on we pushed for thy abode:  
 Thy folk, in sooth, were not so kind  
 That we cared much to lag behind.  
 But Eida forest safe we found,  
 From robbers free to the eastern bound:  
 This praise to thee, great earl, is due —  
 The scald says only what is true.”

Earl Rognvald gave Sigvat a gold arm-ring, and a woman said “he had not made the journey with his black eyes for nothing.” Sigvat sang —

“ My coal-black eyes  
 Dost thou despise?  
 They have lighted me  
 Across the sea  
 To gain this golden prize:



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—

They have lighted me,  
Thy eyes to see,  
O'er Iceland's main,  
O'er hill and plain:  
Where Nanna's lad would fear to be  
They have lighted me."

When Sigvat came home to King Olaf he went into the hall, and, looking around on the walls, he sang—

"When our men their arms are taking  
The raven's wings with greed are shaking;  
When they come back to drink in hall  
Brave spoil they bring to deck the wall—  
Shields, helms, and panzers\*, all in row,  
Stripped in the field from lifeless foe.  
In truth no royal hall comes near  
Thy splendid hall in precious gear."

Afterwards Sigvat told of his journey, and sang these verses:—

"The king's court-guards desire to hear  
About our journey and our cheer.  
Our ships in autumn reach the sound,  
But long the way to Swedish ground.  
With joyless weather, wind and rain,  
And pinching cold, and feet in pain—  
With sleep, fatigue, and want oppressed,  
No songs had we—we scarce had rest."

And when he came into conversation with the king he sang—

"When first I met the earl I told  
How our king loved a friend so bold;  
How in his heart he loved a man  
With hand to do, and head to plan.  
Thou generous king! with zeal and care  
I sought to advance thy great affair;  
For messengers from Russian land  
Had come to ask Ingigerd's hand.  
The earl, thy friend, bids thee, who art  
So mild and generous of heart,  
His servants all who here may come  
To cherish in thy royal home;

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\* Pantzer—a complete suit of plate-armour—is a word we want in the English, but is used in the cognate German and Northern languages.



And thine who may come to the east  
In Rognvald's hall shall find a feast —  
In Rognvald's house shall find a home —  
At Rognvald's court be still welcome.  
When first I came the people's mind  
Incensed by Eric's son I find;  
And he refused thy wish to meet,  
Alleging treachery and deceit.  
But I explained how it was here,  
For earl and king, advantage clear  
With thee to hold the strictest peace,  
And make all force and foray cease.  
The earl is wise, and understands  
The need of peace for both the lands;  
And he entreats thee not to break  
The present peace for vengeance' sake!"

It was early in winter that Sigvat the scald, with two companions, left Sarpsburg, and proceeded eastward over the moors to Gotland; but they often met with poor reception on their journey. One evening he came to three peasants, who drove them all out of their houses; and Sigvat the scald composed his song "The Travellers to the East" on this expedition. At last Sigvat arrives at Earl Rognvald's, and was long entertained kindly and well in his house. The earl heard by letters sent by Ingigerd, the king's daughter, that ambassadors from King Jarisleif were come from Russia to King Olaf of Sweden to ask his daughter Ingigerd in marriage, and that King Olaf had given them hopes he would agree to it. About the same time King Olaf's daughter Astrid came to Earl Rognvald's court, and a great feast was made for her. Sigvat soon became acquainted by conversation with the king's daughter, and she knew him by name and family; for Ottar the scald, Sigvat's sister's son, had long had intimate acquaintance with King Olaf the Swedish king. Among other things talked of, Earl Rognvald asked Sigvat if the king of Norway would not marry the king's daughter Astrid. "If he will do that," said he, "I think we need not ask the Swedish king for his consent." Astrid, the



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king's daughter, said exactly the same. Soon after Sigvat returns home, and comes to King Olaf at Sarpsburg a little before Yule. He immediately tells King Olaf the news he had heard; and at first the king was much cast down when he heard of King Jarisleif's suit, and he said he expected nothing but evil from King Olaf; but wished he might be able to return it in such a way as Olaf should remember. A while afterwards the king asks Sigvat about various news from Gotland. Sigvat spoke a great deal about Astrid, the king's daughter; how beautiful she was, how agreeable in her conversation; and that all declared she was in no respect behind her sister Ingi-gerd. The king listened with pleasure to this. Then Sigvat told him the conversation he and Astrid had had between themselves, and the king was delighted at the idea. "The Swedish king," said he, "will scarcely think that I will dare to marry a daughter of his without his consent." But this speech of his was not known generally. King Olaf and Sigvat the scald often spoke about it. The king inquired particularly of Sigvat what he knew about Earl Rognvald, and "if he be truly our friend," said the king. Sigvat said that the earl was King Olaf's best friend, and sang these verses:—

"The mighty Olaf should not cease  
With him to hold good terms and peace;  
For this good earl unwearied shows  
He is thy friend where all are foes.  
Of all who dwell by the East Sea  
So friendly no man is as he:  
At all their Things he takes thy part,  
And is thy firm friend, hand and heart."

CHAPTER  
XCIII.  
Earl Rogn-  
vald and  
Astrid's  
journey to  
Norway.

After Yule, Thord Skotakoll, a sister's son of Sigvat, attended by one of Sigvat's footboys, who had been with Sigvat the autumn before at Gotland, went quite secretly from the court, and proceeded to Gotland. When they came to Earl Rognvald's court,



they produced the tokens which Olaf himself had sent to the earl, that he might place confidence in Thord. Without delay the earl made himself ready for a journey, as did Astrid, the king's daughter; and the earl took with him 100 men, who were chosen both from among his court-men and the sons of great bonders, and who were carefully equipt in all things, clothes, weapons, and horses. Then they rode northwards to Sarpsburg, and came there at Candlemas.

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King Olaf had put all things in order in the best style. There were all sorts of liquors of the best that could be got, and all other preparations of the same quality. Many people of consequence were summoned in from their residences. When the earl arrived with his retinue the king received him particularly well; and the earl was shown to a large, good, and remarkably well-furnished house for his lodging; and serving-men and others were appointed to wait on him; and nothing was wanting, in any respect, that could grace a feast. Now when the entertainment had lasted some days, the king, the earl, and Astrid had a conference together; and the result of it was, that Earl Rognvald contracted Astrid, daughter of the Swedish king Olaf, to Olaf king of Norway, with the same dowry which had before been settled that her sister Ingigerd should have from home. King Olaf, on his part, should give Astrid the same bride-gift that had been intended for her sister Ingigerd. Thereupon an eke was made to the feast, and King Olaf and Queen Astrid's wedding was drunk in great festivity. Earl Rognvald then returned to Gotland, and the king gave the earl many great and good gifts at parting; and they parted the dearest of friends, which they continued to be while they lived.

CHAPTER  
XCIV.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
marriage.

The spring thereafter came ambassadors from King Jarisleif in Novogorod to Sweden, to treat more particularly about the promise given by King Olaf the

CHAPTER  
XCV.  
The agree-  
ment with  
the king of



## SAGA VII.

Norway  
broken by  
Olaf of  
Sweden.

preceding summer to marry his daughter Ingigerd to King Jarisleif. King Olaf talked about the business with Ingigerd, and told her it was his pleasure that she should marry King Jarisleif. She replied, "If I marry King Jarisleif, I must have as my bride-gift the town and earldom of Ladoga." The Russian ambassadors agreed to this, on the part of their sovereign. Then said Ingigerd, "If I go east to Russia, I must choose the man in Sweden whom I think most suitable to accompany me; and I must stipulate that he shall not have any less title, or in any respect less dignity, privilege, and consideration there, than he has here." This the king and the ambassadors agreed to, and gave their hands upon it in confirmation of the condition.

"And who," asked the king, "is the man thou wilt take with thee as thy attendant?"

"That man," she replied, "is my relation Earl Rognvald."

The king replies, "I have resolved to reward Earl Rognvald in a different manner for his treason against his master in going to Norway with my daughter, and giving her as a concubine to that fellow, who he knew was my greatest enemy. I shall hang him up this summer."

Then Ingigerd begged her father to be true to the promise he had made her, and had confirmed by giving his hand upon it. By her entreaties it was at last agreed that the king should promise to let Earl Rognvald go in peace from Sweden, but that he should never again appear in the king's presence, or come back to Sweden while Olaf reigned. Ingigerd then sent messengers to the earl to bring him these tidings, and to appoint a place of meeting. The earl immediately prepared for his journey; rode up to East Gotland; procured there a vessel, and, with his retinue, joined Ingigerd, and they proceeded together eastward



to Russia. There Ingigerd was married to King Jarisleif; and their children were Valdemar, Visivald, and Halte the Bold. Queen Ingigerd gave Earl Rognvald the town of Ladoga, and earldom belonging to it. Earl Rognvald was there a long time, and was a celebrated man. His sons and Ingeborg's were Earl Ulf and Earl Eyllif.

SAGA VII.  
—

There was a man called Emund of Skara, who was lagman of West Gotland, and was a man of great understanding and eloquence, and of high birth, great connection, and very wealthy; but was considered deceitful, and not to be trusted. He was the most powerful man in West Gotland after the earl was gone. The same spring that Earl Rognvald left Gotland the Gotland people held a Thing among themselves, and often expressed their anxiety to each other about what the Swedish king might do. They heard he was incensed because they had rather held in friendship with the king of Norway than striven against him; and he was also enraged against those who had attended his daughter Astrid to Norway. Some proposed to seek help and support from the king of Norway, and to offer him their services; others dissuaded from this measure, as West Gotland had no strength to oppose to the Swedes. "And the king of Norway," said they, "is far from us, the chief strength of his country very distant; and therefore let us first send men to the Swedish king to attempt to come to some reconciliation with him. If that fail, we can still turn to the king of Norway." Then the bonders asked Emund to undertake this mission, to which he agreed; and he proceeded with thirty men to East Gotland, where there were many of his relations and friends, who received him hospitably. He conversed there with the most prudent men about this difficult business; and they were all unanimous on one point,—that the king's treatment of them

CHAPTER  
XCVI.  
History of  
the lagman  
Emund.



SAGA VII. was against law and reason. From thence Emund went into Sweden\*, and conversed with many men of consequence, who all expressed themselves in the same way. Emund continued his journey thus, until one day, towards evening, he arrived at Upsal, where he and his retinue took a good lodging, and staid there all night. The next day Emund waited upon the king, who was just then sitting in the Thing surrounded by many people. Emund went before him, bent his knee, and saluted him. The king looked at him, saluted him, and asked him what news he brought.

Emund replies, "There is little news among us Gotlanders; but it appears to us a piece of remarkable news that the proud, stupid Atle, in Vermeland, whom we look upon as a great sportsman, went up to the forest in winter with his snow-shoes and his bow. After he had got as many furs in the Fielde as filled his hand-sledge\* so full that he could scarcely drag it, he returned home from the woods. But on the way he saw a squirrel in the trees, and shot at it, but did not hit; at which he was so angry, that he left the sledge to run after the squirrel: but still the squirrel sprang where the wood was thickest, sometimes among the roots of the trees, sometimes in the branches, sometimes among the arms that stretch from tree to tree. When Atle shot at it the arrows flew too high or too low, and the squirrel never jumped so that Atle could get a fair aim at him. He was so eager upon this chase that he ran the whole day after the squirrel, and yet could not get hold of it. It was now getting dark; so he threw himself down upon the snow, as he was wont, and lay there all night in a heavy snow-storm. Next day

\* Swithiod was only a part of what is now called Sweden.

† A small sledge which people travelling on snow-skates drag after them with their provisions or clothes.



Atle got up to look after his sledge, but never did he find it again; and so he returned home. And this is the only news, king, I have to tell." SAGA VII.

The king says, "This is news of but little importance, if it be all thou hast to tell."

Emund replies, "Lately something happened which may well be called news. Gaute Tafason went with five war-ships out of the Gotha river, and when he was lying at Eker Island there came five large Danish merchant-ships there. Gaute and his men immediately took four of the great vessels, and made a great booty without the loss of a man; but the fifth vessel slipped out to sea, and sailed away. Gaute gave chase with one ship, and at first came nearer to them; but as the wind increased, the Danes got away. Then Gaute wanted to turn back; but a storm came on so that he lost his ship at Lesö, with all the goods, and the greater part of his crew. In the mean time his people were waiting for him at Eker; but the Danes came over in fifteen merchant-ships, killed them all, and took all the booty they had made. So but little luck had they with their greed of plunder."

The king replied, "That is great news, and worth being told; but what now is thy errand here?"

Emund replies, "I travel, sire, to obtain your judgment in a difficult case, in which our law and the Upsal law do not agree."

The king asks, "What is thy appeal case?"

Emund replies, "There were two noble-born men of equal birth, but unequal in property and disposition. They quarrelled about some land, and did each other much damage; but most was done to him who was the more powerful of the two. This quarrel, however, was settled, and judged of at a General Thing; and the judgment was, that the most powerful should pay a compensation. But at the first payment, instead of paying a goose, he paid a gosling;



SAGA VII. for an old swine he paid a sucking pig; and for a mark of stamped gold only a half mark, and for the other half mark nothing but clay and dirt; and moreover threatened, in the most violent way, the people whom he forced to receive such goods in payment. Now, sire, what is your judgment?"

The king replies, "He shall pay the full equivalent whom the judgment ordered to do so, and that faithfully; and further, three-fold to his king: and if payment be not made within a year and a day, he shall be cut off from all his property, his goods confiscated, and half go to the king's house, and half to the other party."

Emund took witnesses to this judgment\* among the most considerable of the men who were present, according to the laws which were held in the Upsal Thing. He then saluted the king, and went his way; and other men brought their cases before the king, and he sat late in the day upon the cases of the people. Now when the king came to table, he asked where Lagman Emund was. It was answered, he was home at his lodgings. "Then," said the king, "go after him, and tell him to be my guest to-day." Thereafter the dishes were borne in; then came the musicians with harps, fiddles, and musical instruments; and lastly, the cup-bearers. The king was particularly merry, and had many great people at table with him, so that he thought little of Emund. The king drank the whole day, and slept all the night after; but in the morning the king awoke, and recollected what Emund had said the day before: and when he had put on his clothes, he let his wise men be summoned to him; for he had always twelve of the wisest men who sat in judgment with him, and

\* Is the ceremony of taking witness by a token, or some solemn act, as of delivery of a piece of money (still used in Scotland), of feudal or of udal origin?



treated the more difficult cases; and that was no easy business, for the king was ill pleased if the judgment was not according to justice, and yet it was of no use to contradict him. In this meeting the king ordered Lagman Emund to be called before them. The messenger returned, and said, "Sire, Lagman Emund rode away yesterday, as soon as he had dined." "Then," said the king, "tell me, ye good chiefs, what may have been the meaning of that law case which Emund laid before us yesterday?"

They replied, "You must have considered it yourself, if you think there was any other meaning under it than what he said."

The king replied, "By the two noble-born men whom he spoke of, who were at variance, and of whom one was more powerful than the other, and who did each other damage, he must have meant us and Olaf the Thick."

They answered, "It is, sire, as you say."

The king—"Our case was judged at the Upsal Thing. But what was his meaning when he said that bad payment was made; namely, a gosling for a goose, a pig for a swine, and clay and dirt for half of the money instead of gold?"

Arnvid the Blind replied, "Sire, red gold and clay are things very unlike; but the difference is still greater between king and slave. You promised Olaf the Thick your daughter Ingigerd, who, in all branches of her descent, is born of kings, and of the Upland Swedish race of kings, which is the most noble in the North; for it is traced up to the gods themselves. But now Olaf has got Astrid; and although she is a king's child, her mother was but a slave-woman, and besides of Vendish race. Great difference, indeed, must there be between these kings, when the one takes thankfully such a match; and now it is evident, as might be expected, that no North-



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man is to be placed by the side of the Upsal kings. Let us all give thanks that it has so turned out; for the gods have long protected their descendants, although many now neglect this faith."

There were three brothers:—Arnvid the Blind, who had a great understanding, but was so weak-sighted that he was scarcely fit for war; the second was Thorvid the Stammerer, who could not utter two words together at one time, but was remarkably bold and courageous; the third was Freyvid the Deaf, who was hard of hearing. All these brothers were rich and powerful men, of noble birth, great wisdom, and all very dear to the king.

Then said King Olaf, "What means that which Emund said about Atle the Proud?"

None made any reply, but the one looked at the other.

"Speak freely," said the king.

Then said Thorvid the Stammerer, "Atle, covetous, greedy, insatiable, insufferable, proud."

Then said the king, "To whom are these words of reproach and mockery applied?"

Freyvid the Deaf replied, "We will speak more clearly if we have your permission."

The king—"Speak freely, Freyvid, what you will."

Freyvid took up the word, and spoke. "My brother Thorvid, who is considered to be the wisest of us brothers, holds the words 'covetous, greedy, insatiable, proud,' to be one and the same thing; for it applies to him who is weary of peace, longs for small things without attaining them, while he lets great and useful things pass away as they came. I am deaf; yet so loud have many spoken out, that I can perceive that all men, both great and small, take it ill that you have not kept your promise to the king of Norway; and, worse than that, that you broke the decision of the community as it was delivered at Upsal Thing. You need not fear either the king of Norway, or the king



of Denmark, or any other, so long as the Swedish army will follow you; but if the people of the country unanimously turn against you, we, your friends, see no counsel that can be of advantage to you."

The king asks, "Who is the chief who dares to betray the country and me?"

Freyvid replies, "All Swedes desire to have the ancient laws, and their full rights. Look but here, sire, how many chiefs are sitting in council with you. I think, in truth, we are but six whom you call your councillors: all the others, so far as I know, have ridden forth through the districts to hold Things with the people; and we will not conceal it from you, that the message-token has gone forth to assemble a Retribution-thing.\* All of us brothers have been invited to take part in the decisions of this council, but none of us will bear the name of traitor to the sovereign; for that our father never was."

Then the king said, "What counsel shall we take in this dangerous affair that is on our hands? Good chiefs, give me counsel, that I may keep my kingdom, and the heritage of my forefathers; for I cannot enter into strife against the whole Swedish force."

Arnvid the Blind replies, "Sire, it is my advice that you ride down to Aaros† with such men as will follow you; take your ship there, and go out into the Mælare lake; summon all people to meet you; proceed no longer with haughtiness, but promise every man the law and rights of old established in the country; keep back in this way the message-token, for it cannot as yet, in so short a time, have travelled far through the land. Send, then, those of your men in whom you have the most confidence to those who

\* Refse Thing—a Thing for punishment by penalty or death for crimes and misdemeanors.

† Aaros—the river-mouth; probably Westeraas, on the Mælare lake.



SAGA VII. have this business on hand, and try if this uproar can be appeased."

The king says that he will adopt this advice. "I will," says he, "that ye brothers undertake this business; for I trust to you the most among my men."

Thorvid the Stammerer said, "I remain behind. Let Jacob your son go with them, for that is necessary."

Then said Freyvid, "Let us do as Thorvid says: he will not leave you, and I and Arnvid must travel."

This counsel was followed. Olaf went to his ships, and set out into the Mælare lake, and many people came to him. The brothers Arnvid and Freyvid rode out to Ullaraker, and had with them the king's son Jacob; but they kept it a secret that he was there. The brothers observed that there was a great concourse and war-gathering, for the bonders held the Thing night and day. When Arnvid and Freyvid met their relations and friends, they said they would join with the people; and many agreed to leave the management of the business in the hands of the brothers. But all, as one man, declared they would no longer have King Olaf over them, and no longer suffer his unlawful proceedings, and overweening pride which would not listen to any man's remonstrances, even when the great chiefs spoke the truth to him. When Freyvid observed the heat of the people, he saw in what a bad situation the king's cause was. He summoned the chiefs of the land to a meeting with him, and addressed them thus:—"It appears to me, that if we are to depose Olaf Ericsson from his kingdom, we Swedes of the Uplands should be the leading men in it; for so it has always been, that the counsel which the Upland chiefs have resolved upon among themselves has always been followed by the men of the rest of the country. Our forefathers did not need to take advice from the West Gotlanders about the government of the Swedes. Now



we will not be so degenerate as to need Emund to give us counsel; but let us, friends and relations, unite ourselves for the purpose of coming to a determination." All agreed to this, and thought it was well said. Thereafter the people joined this union which the Upland chiefs made among themselves, and Freyvid and Arnvid were chiefs of the whole assemblage. When Emund heard this he suspected how the matter would end, and went to both the brothers to have a conversation with them. Then Freyvid asked Emund, "Who, in your opinion, should we take for king, in case Olaf Ericsson's days are at an end?"

Emund—"He whom we think best suited to it, whether he be of the race of chiefs or not."

Freyvid answers, "We Uplanders will not, in our time, have the kingdom go out of the old race of our ancestors, which has given us kings for a long course of generations, so long as we have so good a choice as now. King Olaf has two sons; one of whom we will choose for king, although there is a great difference between them. The one is noble-born, and of Swedish race on both sides; the other is a slave-woman's son, and of Vendish race on the mother's side."

This decision was received with loud applause, and all would have Jacob for king.

Then said Emund, "Ye Upland Swedes have the power this time to determine the matter; but I will tell you what will happen:—some of those who now will listen to nothing but that the kingdom remain in the old race, will live to see the day when they will wish the kingdom in another race, as being of more advantage."

Thereupon the brothers Freyvid and Arnvid led the king's son Jacob into the Thing, and saluted him with the title of king; and the Swedes gave him the name of Onund, which he afterwards retained as long as he lived. He was then ten or twelve years old.



## SAGA VII.

Thereafter King Onund took a court, and chose chiefs to be around him; and they had as many attendants in their suite as were thought necessary, so that he gave the whole assemblage of bonders leave to return home. After that ambassadors went between the two kings; and at last they had a meeting, and came to an agreement. Olaf was to remain king over the country as long as he lived; but should hold peace and be reconciled with King Olaf of Norway, and also with all who had taken part in this business. Onund should also be king, and have a part of the land, such as the father and son should agree upon; but should be bound to support the bonders in case King Olaf did any thing which the bonders would not suffer.

CHAPTER  
XCVII.  
Meeting  
of recon-  
ciliation  
between  
the kings,  
and their  
game at  
dice.

Thereafter ambassadors were sent to Norway to King Olaf, with the errand that he should come with his retinue to a meeting at Konghelle with the Swedish kings, and that the Swedish kings would there confirm their reconciliation. When King Olaf heard this message, he was willing, now as formerly, to enter into the agreement, and proceeded to the appointed place. There the Swedish kings also came; and the relations, when they met, bound themselves mutually to peace and agreement. Olaf the Swedish king was then remarkably mild in manner, and agreeable to talk with. Thorstein Frode relates of this meeting, that there was a farm in Hissing which had sometimes belonged to Norway, and sometimes to Gotland. The kings came to the agreement between themselves that they would cast lots by the dice to determine who should have this property, and that he who threw the highest should have the farm. The Swedish king threw two sixes, and said King Olaf need scarcely throw. He replied, while shaking the dice in his hand, "Although there be two sixes on the dice, it would be easy, sire, for God Almighty to let them



turn up in my favour." Then he threw, and had sixes also. Now the Swedish king threw again, and had again two sixes. Olaf king of Norway then threw, and had six upon one dice, and the other split in two, so as to make seven eyes in all upon it; and the farm was adjudged to the king of Norway. We have heard nothing else of any interest that took place at this meeting; and the kings separated the dearest of friends with each other.

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After the events now related Olaf returned with his people to Viken. He went first to Tunsberg, and remained there a short time, and then proceeded to the north of the country. In harvest time he sailed north to Drontheim, and had winter provision laid in there, and remained there all winter. Olaf Haraldsson was now sole and supreme king of Norway, and the whole of that sovereignty, as Harald Haarfager had possessed it, and had the advantage over that monarch of being the only king in the land. By a peaceful agreement he had also recovered that part of the country which Olaf the Swedish king had before occupied; and that part of the country which the Danish king had got he retook by force, and ruled over it as elsewhere in the country. The Danish king Canute ruled at that time both over Denmark and England; but he himself was in England for the most part, and set chiefs over the country in Denmark, without at that time making any claim upon Norway.

CHAPTER  
XCVIII.  
Of Olaf  
King of  
Norway,  
after the  
meeting.

It is related that in the days of Harald Haarfager the king of Norway the islands of Orkney, which before had been only a resort for vikings, were settled. The first earl in the Orkney Islands was called Sigurd, who was a son of Eystein Glumra, and brother of Rognvald earl of Möre. After Sigurd his son Gutorm was earl for one year. After him Torf Einar, a son of Rognvald, took the earldom, and was long

CHAPTER  
XCIX.  
History of  
the earls of  
Orkney.



SAGA VII.

earl, and was a man of great power. Halfdan Haaleg, a son of Harald Haarfager, assaulted Torf Einar, and drove him from the Orkney Islands; but Einar came back and killed Halfdan in the island Ronaldsha. Thereafter King Harald came with an army to the Orkney Islands. Einar fled to Scotland, and King Harald made the people of the Orkney Islands give up their udal properties, and hold them under oath from him. Thereafter the king and earl were reconciled, so that the earl became the king's man, and took the country as a fief from him; but that it should pay no scatt or feu duty, as it was at that time much plundered by vikings. The earl paid the king sixty marks of gold; and then King Harald went to plunder in Scotland, as related in the "Glim Drapa." After Torf Einar, his sons Arnkel, Erlend, and Thorfinn Hausaklyfur\* ruled over these lands. In their days came Eric Bloodyaxe from Norway, and subdued these earls. Arnkel and Erlend fell in a war expedition; but Thorfinn ruled the country long, and became an old man. His sons were Arnfinn, Haavard, Lödver, Liot, and Skule. Their mother was Grelaud, a daughter of Earl Dungad of Caithness. Her mother was Groa, a daughter of Thorstein Raude. In the latter days of Earl Thorfinn came Eric Bloodyaxe's sons, who had fled from Earl Hakon out of Norway, and committed great excesses in Orkney. Earl Thorfinn died on a bed of sickness, and his sons after him ruled over the country, and there are many stories concerning them. Lödver lived the longest of them, and ruled alone over this country. His son was Sigurd the Thick, who took the earldom after him, and became a powerful man and a great warrior. In his days came Olaf Tryggvesson from his viking expedition in the Western ocean, with his troops,

\* Hausakliufr — the splitter of skulls.



landed in Orkney, and took Earl Sigurd prisoner in South Ronaldsha, where he lay with one ship. King Olaf allowed the earl to ransom his life by letting himself be baptized, adopting the true faith, becoming his man, and introducing Christianity into all the Orkney Islands. As a hostage, King Olaf took his son, who was called Hund, or the Whelp. Then Olaf went to Norway, and became king; and Hund was several years with King Olaf in Norway, and died there. After his death Earl Sigurd showed no obedience or fealty to King Olaf. He married a daughter of the Scottish king Malcolm, and their son was called Thorfinn. Earl Sigurd had besides older sons; namely, Sumarlid, Bruse, and Einar Rangmud.\* Four or five years after Olaf Tryggvesson's fall Earl Sigurd went to Ireland, leaving his eldest sons to rule the country, and sending Thorfinn to his mother's father the Scottish king. On this expedition Earl Sigurd fell in Brian's battle.† When the news was received in Orkney the brothers Sumarlid, Bruse, and Einar were chosen earls, and the country was divided into three parts among them. Thorfinn Sigurdsson was five years old when Earl Sigurd fell. When the Scottish king heard of the earl's death he gave his relation Thorfinn Caithness and Sutherland, with the title of earl, and appointed good men to rule the land for him. Earl Thorfinn was ripe in all ways as soon as he was grown up: he was stout and strong, but ugly; and as soon as he was a grown man it was easy to see that he was a severe and cruel, but a very clever man. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

\* Rangmudr — wry-mouth.

† Brian's battle is supposed to have taken place on the 23d April, 1014, at Clontarf, near Dublin; and is known in Irish history as the battle of Clontarf, and was one of the bloodiest of the age. It was fought between a viking called Sigtryg and Brian king of Munster who gained the victory, but lost his life.



## SAGA VII.

“ Under the rim of heaven no other,  
 So young in years as Einar’s brother,  
 In battle had a braver hand,  
 Or stouter, to defend the land.”

CHAPTER  
 C.  
 Of the  
 Earls Einar  
 and Bruse.

The brothers Einar and Bruse were very unlike in disposition. Bruse was a soft-minded, peaceable man,—sociable, eloquent, and of good understanding. Einar was obstinate, taciturn, and dull; but ambitious, greedy of money, and withal a great warrior. Sumarlid, the eldest of the brothers, was in disposition like Bruse, and lived not long, but died in his bed. After his death Thorfinn claimed his share of the Orkney Islands. Einar replied, that Thorfinn had the dominions which their father Sigurd had possessed, namely, Caithness and Sutherland, which he insisted were much larger than a third part of Orkney; therefore he would not consent to Thorfinn’s having any share. Bruse, on the other hand, was willing, he said, to divide with him. “ I do not desire,” he said, “ more than the third part of the land, and which of right belongs to me.” Then Einar took possession of two parts of the country, by which he became a powerful man, surrounded by many followers. He was often in summer out on marauding expeditions, and called out great numbers of the people to join him; but it went always unpleasantly with the division of the booty made on his viking cruises. Then the bonders grew weary of all these burdens; but Earl Einar held fast by them with severity, calling in all services laid upon the people, and allowing no opposition from any man; for he was excessively proud and overbearing. And now there came dearth and scarcity in his lands, in consequence of the services and money outlay exacted from the bonders; while in the part of the country belonging to Bruse there were peace and plenty, and therefore he was the best beloved by the bonders.



There was a rich and powerful man who was called Aamund, who dwelt in Hrossay\* at Sandwik, in Laupandanes. His son, called Thorkel, was one of the ablest men in the islands. Aamund was a man of the best understanding, and most respected in Orkney. One spring Earl Einar proclaimed a levy for an expedition, as usual. The bonders murmured greatly against it, and applied to Aamund, with the entreaty that he would intercede with the earl for them. He replied, that the earl was not a man who would listen to other people, and insisted that it was of no use to make any entreaty to the earl about it. "As things now stand, there is a good understanding between me and the earl; but, in my opinion, there would be much danger of our quarrelling, on account of our different dispositions and views on both sides; therefore I will have nothing to do with it." They then applied to Thorkel, who was also very loath to interfere; but promised at last to do so, in consequence of the great entreaty of the people. Aamund thought he had given his promise too hastily. Now when the earl held a Thing, Thorkel spoke on account of the people, and entreated the earl to spare the people from such heavy burdens, recounting their necessitous condition. The earl replies favourably, saying that he would take Thorkel's advice. "I had intended to go out from the country with six ships, but now I will only take three with me; but thou must not come again, Thorkel, with any such request." The bonders thanked Thorkel for his assistance, and the earl set out on a viking cruise, and came back in autumn. The spring after the earl made the same levy as usual, and held

SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CI.  
Of Thor-  
kel Aa-  
mundsson.

\* Krossay, or Hrossay, is Pomona, or the Mainland (Meginland) — the principal island of the Orkneys; and Hlaupandanes is apparently the western part of the island, in which the farm of Sandwick and parish of the same name are situated. Sandwick was undoubtedly the residence of Aamund, and is now known by the same name — Sandwick.



## SAGA VII.

a Thing with the bonders. Then Thorkel again made a speech, in which he entreated the earl to spare the people. The earl now was angry, and said the lot of the bonders should be made worse in consequence of his intercession; and worked himself up into such a rage, that he vowed they should not both come next spring to the Thing in a whole skin. Then the Thing was closed. When Aamund heard what the earl and Thorkel had said at the Thing, he told Thorkel to leave the country, and he went over to Caithness to Earl Thorfinn. Thorkel was afterwards a long time there, and brought up the earl in his youth, and was on that account called Thorkel the Fosterer; and he became a very celebrated man.

CHAPTER  
CII.  
The agree-  
ment of  
the earls.

There were many powerful men who fled from their udal properties in Orkney on account of Earl Einar's violence, and the most fled over to Caithness to Earl Thorfinn; but some fled from the Orkney Islands to Norway, and some to other countries. When Earl Thorfinn was grown up he sent a message to his brother Einar, and demanded the part of the dominion which he thought belonged to him in Orkney; namely, a third of the islands. Einar was nowise inclined to diminish his possessions. When Thorfinn found this he collected a war-force in Caithness, and proceeded to the islands. As soon as Earl Einar heard of this he collected people, and resolved to defend his country. Earl Bruse also collected men, and went out to meet them, and bring about some agreement between them. An agreement was at last concluded, that Thorfinn should have a third part of the islands as of right belonging to him, but that Bruse and Einar should lay their two parts together, and Einar alone should rule over them; but, if the one died before the other, the longest liver should inherit the whole. This agreement seemed reasonable, as Bruse had a son called Rognvald, but Einar had no son. Earl Thor-



finn set men to rule over his land in Orkney, but he himself was generally in Caithness. Earl Einar was generally on viking expeditions to Ireland, Scotland, and Bretland. SAGA VII.

One summer that Earl Einar marauded in Ireland, he fought in Ulfreks-fiord\* with the Irish king Konofoger, as has been related before, and suffered there a great defeat. The summer after this Eyvind Urarhorn was coming from the west from Ireland, intending to go to Norway; but the weather was boisterous, and the current against him, so he ran into Osmundwall†, and lay there wind-bound for some time. When Earl Einar heard of this, he hastened thither with many people, took Eyvind prisoner, and ordered him to be put to death; but spared the lives of most of his people. In autumn they proceeded to Norway to King Olaf, and told him Eyvind was killed. The king said little about it, but one could see that he considered it a great and vexatious loss; for he did not usually say much if any thing turned out contrary to his wishes. Earl Thorfinn sent Thorkel Fosterer to the islands to gather in his scatt. Now as Einar gave Thorkel the greatest blame for the dispute in which Thorfinn had made claim to the islands, Thorkel came suddenly back to Caithness from Orkney, and told Earl Thorfinn that he had learnt that Earl Einar would have murdered him if his friends and relations had not given him notice to escape. "Now," says he, "it is come so far between the earl and me, that either something decisive between us must take place if we meet, or I must remove to such a distance that his power will not reach me." The earl encouraged Thorkel much to go east to Norway to King Olaf. "Thou wilt be highly

CHAPTER  
CIII.  
Eyvind  
Urarhorn's  
murder.

\* Dundalk bay.

† Asmundarvagr is Osmundwall, in the island of Wallis; called Vagaland in the Orkneyinga Saga.



## SAGA VII.

respected," says he, "wherever thou comest among honourable men; and I know so well thy disposition and the earl's, that it will not be long before ye come to extremities." Thereupon Thorkel made himself ready, and proceeded in autumn to Norway, and then to King Olaf, with whom he staid the whole winter, and was in high favour. The king often entered into conversation with him, and he thought, what was true, that Thorkel was a high-minded man of good understanding. In his conversations with Thorkel, the king found a great difference in his description of the two earls; for Thorkel was a great friend of Earl Thorfinn, but had much to say against Einar. Early in spring the king sent a ship west over the sea to Earl Thorfinn, with the invitation to come east and visit him in Norway. The earl did not decline the invitation, for it was accompanied by assurances of friendship.

CHAPTER  
CIV.

Earl  
Einar's  
murder.

Earl Thorfinn went east to Norway, and came to King Olaf, from whom he received a kind reception, and staid till late in the summer. When he was preparing to return westwards again, King Olaf made him a present of a large and fully-rigged long-ship. Thorkel the Fosterer joined company with the earl, who gave him the ship which he brought with him from the West. The king and the earl took leave of each other tenderly. In autumn Earl Thorfinn came to Orkney, and when Earl Einar heard of it he went on board his ships with a numerous band of men. Earl Bruse came up to his two brothers, and endeavoured to mediate between them, and a peace was concluded and confirmed by oath. Thorkel Fosterer was to be in peace and friendship with Earl Einar; and it was agreed that each of them should give a feast to the other, and that the earl should first be Thorkel's guest at Sandwick. When the earl came to the feast he was entertained in the best manner; but the earl was not cheerful. There was a great



room, in which there were doors at each end. The day the earl should depart Thorkel was to accompany him to the other feast; and Thorkel sent men before, who should examine the road they had to travel that day. The spies came back, and said to Thorkel they had discovered three ambushes. "And we think," said they, "there is deceit on foot." When Thorkel heard this he lengthened out his preparations for the journey, and gathered people about him. The earl told him to get ready, as it was time to be on horseback. Thorkel answered, that he had many things to put in order first, and went out and in frequently. There was a fire upon the floor. At last he went in at one door, followed by an Iceland man from Eastfiord, called Halvard, who locked the door after him. Thorkel went in between the fire and the place where the earl was sitting. The earl asked, "Art thou ready at last, Thorkel?"

Thorkel answers, "Now I am ready;" and struck the earl upon the head so that he fell upon the floor.

Then said the Icelfander, "I never saw people so foolish as not to drag the earl out of the fire;" and took a stick, which he set under the earl's neck, and put him upright on the bench. Thorkel and his two comrades then went in all haste out of the other door opposite to that by which they went in, and Thorkel's men were standing without fully armed. The earl's men now went in, and took hold of the earl. He was already dead, so nobody thought of avenging him: and also the whole was done so quickly; for nobody expected such a deed from Thorkel, and all supposed that there really was, as before related, a friendship fixed between the earl and Thorkel. The most who were within were unarmed, and they were partly Thorkel's good friends; and to this may be added, that fate had decreed a longer life to Thorkel. When Thorkel came out, he had not fewer men with



## SAGA VII.

him that the earl's troop. Thorkel went to his ship, and the earl's men went their way. The same day Thorkel sailed out eastwards into the sea. This happened after winter; but he came safely to Norway, went as fast as he could to Olaf, and was well received by him. The king expressed his satisfaction at this deed, and Thorkel was with him all winter.

CHAPTER  
CV.  
Agreement  
between  
King Olaf  
and Earl  
Bruse.

After Earl Einar's fall Bruse took the part of the country which he had possessed; for it was known to many men on what conditions Einar and Bruse had entered into a partnership. Although Thorfinn thought it would be more just that each of them had half of the islands, Bruse retained the two thirds of the country that winter. In spring, however, Thorfinn produced his claim, and demanded the half of the country; but Bruse would not consent. They held Things and meetings about the business; and although their friends endeavoured to settle it, Thorfinn would not be content with less than the half of the islands, and insisted that Bruse, with his disposition, would have enough even with a third part. Bruse replies, "When I took my heritage after my father I was well satisfied with a third part of the country, and there was nobody to dispute it with me; and now I have succeeded to another third in heritage after my brother, according to a lawful agreement between us; and although I am not powerful enough to maintain a feud against thee, my brother, I will seek some other way, rather than willingly renounce my property." With this their meeting ended. But Bruse saw that he had no strength to contend against Thorfinn, because Thorfinn had both a greater dominion, and also could have aid from his mother's brother, the Scottish king. He resolved, therefore, to go out of the country; and he went eastward to King Olaf, and had with him his son Rongvald, then ten years old. When the earl came to the king he was well received.



The earl now declared his errand, and told the king the circumstances of the whole dispute between him and his brother, and asked help to defend his kingdom of Orkney; promising, in return, the fullest friendship towards King Olaf. In his answer, the king began with showing how Harald Haarfager had appropriated to himself all udal rights in Orkney, and that the earls, since that time, have constantly held the country as a fief, not as their udal property. "As a sufficient proof of which," said he, "when Eric Bloodyaxe and his sons were in Orkney the earls were subject to them; and also when my relation Olaf Tryggvesson came there thy father, Earl Sigurd, became his man. Now I have taken heritage after King Olaf, and I will give thee the condition to become my man, and then I will give thee the islands as a fief; and we shall try if I cannot give thee aid that will be more to the purpose than Thorfinn can get from the Scottish king. If thou wilt not accept of these terms, then will I win back my udal property there in the West, as our forefathers and relations of old possessed it."

The earl carefully considered this speech, laid it before his friends, and demanded their advice if he should agree to it, and enter into such terms with King Olaf and become his vassal. "But I do not see what my lot will be at my departure if I say no; for the king has clearly enough declared his claim upon Orkney; and from his great power, and our being in his hands, it is easy for him to make our destiny what he pleases."

Although the earl saw that there was much to be considered for and against it, he chose the condition to deliver himself and his dominion into the king's power. Thereupon the king took the earl's power, and the government over all the earl's lands, and the earl became his vassal under oath of fealty.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CVI.

The earls'  
agreement  
to the  
king's  
terms.

Thorfinn the earl heard that his brother Bruse had gone east to King Olaf to seek support from him; but as Thorfinn had been on a visit to King Olaf before, and had concluded a friendship with him, he thought his case would stand well with the king, and that many would support it; but he believed that many more would do so if he went there himself. Earl Thorfinn resolved, therefore, to go east himself without delay; and he thought there would be so little difference between the time of his arrival and Bruse's, that Bruse's errand could not be accomplished before he came to King Olaf. But it went otherwise than Earl Thorfinn had expected; for when he came to the king the agreement between the king and Bruse was already concluded and settled, and Earl Thorfinn did not know a word about Bruse's having surrendered his udal domains until he came to King Olaf. As soon as Earl Thorfinn and King Olaf met, the king made the same demand upon the kingdom of Orkney that he had done to Earl Bruse, and required that Thorfinn should voluntarily deliver over to the king that part of the country which he had possessed hitherto. The earl answered in a friendly and respectful way, that the king's friendship lay near to his heart: "And if you think, sire, that my help against other chiefs can be of use, you have already every claim to it; but I cannot be your vassal for service, as I am an earl of the Scottish king, and owe fealty to him."

As the king found that the earl, by his answer, declined fulfilling the demand he had made, he said, "Earl, if thou wilt not become my vassal, there is another condition; namely, that I will place over the Orkney Islands the man I please, and require thy oath that thou wilt make no claim upon these lands, but allow whoever I place over them to sit in peace. If thou wilt not accept of either of these conditions,



he who is to rule over these lands may expect hostility from thee, and thou must not think it strange if like meet like in this business.” SAGA VII.

The earl begged of the king some time to consider the matter. The king did so, and gave the earl time to take the counsel of his friends on the choosing one or other of these conditions. Then the earl requested a delay until next summer, that he might go over the sea to the West, for his proper counsellors were all at home, and he himself was but a child in respect of age; but the king required that he should now make his election of one or other of the conditions. Thorkel Fosterer was then with the king, and he privately sent a person to Earl Thorfinn, and told him, whatever his intentions might be, not to think of leaving Olaf without being reconciled with him, as he stood entirely in Olaf's power. From such hints the earl saw there was no other way than to let the king have his own will. It was no doubt a hard condition to have no hope of ever regaining his paternal heritage, and moreover to bind himself by oath to allow those to enjoy in peace his domain who had no hereditary right to it; but seeing it was uncertain how he could get away, he resolved to submit to the king and become his vassal, as Bruse had done. The king observed that Thorfinn was more high-minded, and less disposed to suffer subjection than Bruse, and therefore he trusted less to Thorfinn than to Bruse; and he considered also that Thorfinn would trust to the aid of the Scottish king, if he broke the agreement. The king also had discernment enough to perceive that Bruse, although slow to enter into an agreement, would promise nothing but what he intended to keep; but as to Thorfinn, when he had once made up his mind he went readily into every proposal, and made no attempt to obtain any alteration of the king's first conditions: therefore the king had



SAGA VII. his suspicions that the earl would infringe the agreement.

CHAPTER  
CVII.  
Earl Thor-  
finn's de-  
parture,  
and recon-  
ciliation  
with  
Thorkel.

When the king had carefully considered the whole matter by himself, he ordered the signal to sound for a General Thing, to which he called in the earls. Then said the king, "I will now make known to the public our agreement with the Orkney earls. They have now acknowledged my right of property to Orkney and Shetland, and have both become my vassals, all which they have confirmed by oath; and now I will invest them with these lands as a fief: namely, Bruse with one third part, and Thorfinn with one third, as they formerly enjoyed them; but the other third, which Einar Rangmud had, I adjudge as fallen to my domain, because he killed Eyvind Urarhorn, my court-man, partner, and dear friend; and that part of the land I will manage as I think proper. I have also, my earls, to tell you, it is my pleasure that ye enter into an agreement with Thorkel Aamundsson for the murder of your brother Einar; for I will take that business, if ye agree thereto, within my own jurisdiction." The earls agreed to this, as to every thing else that the king proposed. Thorkel came forward, and surrendered to the king's judgment of the case, and the Thing concluded. King Olaf awarded as great a penalty for Earl Einar's murder as for three lendemen; but as Einar himself was the cause of the act, one third of the mulct fell to the ground. Thereafter Earl Thorfinn asked the king's leave to depart, and as soon as he obtained it made ready for sea with all speed. It happened one day, when all was ready for the voyage, the earl sat in his ship drinking; and Thorkel Aamundsson came unexpectedly to him, laid his head upon the earl's knee, and bade him do with him what he pleased. The earl asked why he did so. "We are, you know,



reconciled men, according to the king's decision; so stand up, Thorkel." SAGA VII.

Thorkel replied, "The agreement which the king made as between me and Bruse stands good; but what regards the agreement with thee thou alone must determine. Although the king made conditions for my property and safe residence in Orkney, yet I know so well thy disposition that there is no going to the islands for me, unless I go there in peace with thee, Earl Thorfinn; and therefore I am willing to promise never to return to Orkney, whatever the king may desire."

The earl remained silent; and first, after a long pause, he said, "If thou wilt rather, Thorkel, that I shall judge between us than trust to the king's judgment, then let the beginning of our reconciliation be, that you go with me to the Orkney Islands, live with me, and never leave me but with my will, and be bound to defend my land, and execute all that I want done, as long as we both are in life."

Thorkel replies, "This shall be entirely at thy pleasure, earl, as well as every thing else in my power." Then Thorkel went on, and solemnly ratified this agreement. The earl said he would talk afterwards about the mulct of money, but took Thorkel's oath upon the conditions. Thorkel immediately made ready to accompany the earl on his voyage. The earl set off as soon as all was ready, and never again were King Olaf and Thorfinn together.

Earl Bruse remained behind, and took his time to get ready. Before his departure the king sent for him, and said, "It appears to me, earl, that in thee I have a man on the west side of the sea on whose fidelity I can depend; therefore I intend to give thee the two parts of the country which thou formerly hadst to rule over; for I will not that thou shouldst be a less powerful man after entering into my service

CHAPTER  
CVIII.  
Earl  
Bruse's  
departure.



## SAGA VII.

than before: but I will secure thy fidelity by keeping thy son Rognvald with me. I see well enough that with two parts of the country and my help, thou wilt be able to defend what is thy own against thy brother Thorfinn." Bruse was thankful for getting two thirds instead of one third of the country, and soon after he set out, and came about autumn to Orkney; but Rognvald, Bruse's son, remained behind in the East with King Olaf. Rognvald was one of the handsomest men that could be seen, — his hair long, and yellow as silk; and he soon grew up, stout and tall, and he was a very able superb man, both of great understanding and polite manners. He was long with King Olaf. Ottar Swarte speaks of these affairs in the poem he composed about King Olaf: —

"From Shetland, far off in the cold North sea,  
Come chiefs who desire to be subject to thee:  
No king so well known for his will, and his might,  
To defend his own people from scaith or unright.  
These isles of the West midst the ocean's wild roar,  
Scarcely heard the voice of their sovereign before:  
Our bravest of sovereigns before could scarce bring  
These islesmen so proud to acknowledge their king."

CHAPTER  
CIX.  
Of the  
Earls  
Thorfinn  
and Bruse.

The brothers Thorfinn and Bruse came west to Orkney; and Bruse took the two parts of the country under his rule, and Thorfinn the third part. Thorfinn was usually in Caithness and elsewhere in Scotland; but placed men of his own over the islands. It was left to Bruse alone to defend the islands, which at that time were severely scourged by vikings; for the Northmen and Danes went much on viking cruises in the West sea, and frequently touched at Orkney on the way to or from the West, and plundered, and took provisions and cattle from the coast. Bruse often complained of his brother Thorfinn, that he made no equipment of war for the defence of Orkney and Shetland, yet levied his share of the scatt and duties. Then Thorfinn offered to him to exchange, and that Bruse should



have one third and Thorfinn two thirds of the land, but should undertake the defence of the land for the whole. Although this exchange did not take place immediately, it is related in the saga of the earls that it was agreed upon at last; and that Thorfinn had two parts, and Bruse only one, when Canute the Great subdued Norway, and King Olaf fled the country. Earl Thorfinn Sigurdsson has been the ablest earl of these islands, and has had the greatest dominion of all the Orkney earls; for he had under him Orkney, Shetland, and the Hebudes, besides very great possessions in Scotland and Ireland. Arnor, the earl's scald, tells of his possessions:—

“ From Thurso-skerry to Dublin,  
All people hold with good Thorfinn —  
All people love his sway,  
And the generous chief obey.”

Thorfinn was a very great warrior. He came to the earldom at five years of age, ruled more than sixty years, and died in his bed about the last days of Harald Sigurdsson.\* But Bruse died in the days of Canute the Great, a short time after the fall of Saint Olaf.†

Having now gone through this second story, we shall return to that which we left, — at King Olaf Haraldsson having concluded peace with King Olaf the Swedish king, and having the same summer gone north to Drontheim. He had then been king in Norway five years. In harvest time he prepared to take his winter residence at Nidaros, and he remained all winter there. Thorkel the Fosterer, Aamund's son, as before related, was all that winter with him. King Olaf inquired very carefully how it stood with Christianity throughout the land, and learnt that it was not observed at all to the north of Halogaland, and was

CHAPTER  
CX.  
Of Harek  
of Thiottö.

\* About 1069.

† After 1033.



## SAGA VII.

far from being observed as it should be in Numedal, and the interior of Drontheim. There was a man by name Harek, a son of Eyvind Skaldaspiller, who dwelt in an island called Thiottö in Halogaland. Eyvind had not been a rich man, but was of high family and high mind. In Thiottö, at first, there dwelt many small bonders; but Harek began with buying a farm not very large, and lived on it, and in a few years he had got all the bonders that were there before out of the way; so that he had the whole island, and built a large head-mansion. He soon became very rich; for he was a very prudent man, and very successful. He had long been greatly respected by the chiefs; and being related to the kings of Norway, had been raised by them to high dignities. Harek's father's mother, Gunhild, was a daughter of Earl Halfdan, and of Ingeborg, Harald Haarfager's daughter. At the time the circumstance happened which we are going to relate he was somewhat advanced in years. Harek was the most respected man in Halogaland, and for a long time had the Lapland trade, and did the king's business in Lapland\*; sometimes alone, sometimes with others joined to him. He had not himself been to wait on King Olaf, but messages had passed between them, and all was on the most friendly footing. This winter that Olaf was in Nidaros, messengers passed between the king and Harek of Thiottö. Then the king made it known that he intended going north to Halogaland, and as far north as the land's end; but the people of Halogaland expected no good from this expedition.

CHAPTER  
CXI.  
Of the  
people of  
Haloga-  
land.

Olaf rigged out five ships in spring, and had with him about 300 men. When he was ready for sea he set out northwards along the land; and when he came

\* Receiving the scatt paid in skins or furs by the Finns,—that is, the Laplanders,—has in all ages been a profitable office bestowed by the king.



to Numedal district he summoned the bonders to a Thing, and at every Thing was accepted as king. He also made the laws to be read there as elsewhere, by which the people are commanded to observe Christianity; and he threatened every man with loss of life, and limbs, and property, who would not subject himself to Christian law. He inflicted severe punishments on many men, great as well as small, and left no district until the people had consented to adopt the holy faith. The most of the men of power and of the great bonders made feasts for the king, and so he proceeded all the way north to Halogaland. Harek of Thiottö also made a feast for the king, at which there was a great multitude of guests, and the feast was very splendid. Harek was made lenderman, and got the same privileges he had enjoyed under the the former chiefs of the country.

SAGA VII.

There was a man called Grankel, or Granketil, who was a rich bonder, and at this time rather advanced in age. In his youth he had been on viking cruises, and had been a powerful fighter; for he possessed great readiness in all sorts of bodily exercises. His son Aasmund was equal to his father in all these, and in some, indeed, he excelled him. There were many who said that with respect to comeliness, strength, and bodily expertness, he might be considered the third remarkably distinguished for these that Norway had ever produced. The first was Hakon Athelstan's foster-son; the second, Olaf Trygvesson. Grankel invited King Olaf to a feast, which was very magnificent; and at parting Grankel presented the king with many honourable gifts and tokens of friendship. The king invited Aasmund, with many persuasions, to follow him; and as Aasmund could not decline the honours offered him, he got ready to travel with the king, became his man, and stood in high favour with him. The king re-

CHAPTER  
CXII.  
Of Aas-  
mund  
Graukels-  
son.



## SAGA VII.

mained in Halogaland the greater part of the summer, went to all the Things, and baptized all the people. Thorer Hund dwelt at that time in the island Biarkö. He was the most powerful man in the North, and also became one of Olaf's lendersmen. Many sons of great bonders resolved also to follow King Olaf from Halogaland. Towards the end of summer King Olaf left the North, and sailed back to Drontheim, and landed at Nidaros\*, where he passed the winter. It was then that Thorkel the Fosterer came from the West from Orkney, after killing Einar Rangmud, as before related. This autumn corn was dear in Drontheim, after a long course of good seasons, and the farther north the dearer was the corn; but there was corn enough in the East country, and in the Uplands, and it was of great help to the people of Drontheim that many had old corn remaining beside them.

CHAPTER  
CXIII.  
Of the  
sacrifices  
of the  
Drontheim  
people.

In autumn the news was brought to King Olaf that the bonders had had a great feast on the first winter-day's eve, at which there was a numerous attendance and much drinking; and it was told the king that all the remembrance-cups to the Assers, or old gods, were blessed according to the old heathen forms; and it was added, that cattle and horses had been slain, and the altars sprinkled with their blood, and the sacrifices accompanied with the prayer that was made to obtain good seasons. It was also reported, that all men saw clearly that the gods were offended at the Halogaland people turning Christian. Now when the king heard this news he sent men into the Drontheim country, and ordered several bonders, whose names he gave, to appear before him. There was a man called Olver of Egge, so called after his farm on which he lived. He was

\* The town of Drontheim.



powerful, of great family, and the head-man of those who on account of the bonders appeared before the king. Now, when they came to the king, he told them these accusations; to which Olver, on behalf of the bonders, replied, that they had had no other feasts that harvest than their usual entertainments, and social meetings, and friendly drinking parties. "But as to what may have been told you of the words which may have fallen from us Drontheim people in our drinking parties, men of understanding would take good care not to use such language; but I cannot hinder drunken or foolish people's talk." Olver was a man of clever speech, and bold in what he said, and defended the bonders against such accusations. In the end, the king said the people of the interior of Drontheim must themselves give the best testimony to their being in the right faith. The bonders got leave to return home, and set off as soon as they were ready.

Afterwards, when winter was advanced, it was told the king that the people of the interior of Drontheim had assembled in great number at Mære, and that there was a great sacrifice in the middle of winter, at which they sacrificed offerings for peace and a good season. Now when the king knew this on good authority to be true, he sent men and messages into the interior, and summoned the bonders whom he thought of most understanding into the town. The bonders held a council among themselves about this message; and all those who had been upon the same occasion in the beginning of winter were now very unwilling to make the journey. Olver, however, at the desire of all the bonders, allowed himself to be persuaded. When he came to the town he went immediately before the king, and they talked together. The king made the same accusations against the bonders, that they had held a mid-winter sacrifice.

CHAPTER  
CXIV.  
Of the sacrifices by the people of the interior of the Drontheim district.



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Olver replies, that this accusation against the bonders was false. "We had," said he, "Yule feasts and drinking feasts wide around in the districts; and the bonders do not prepare their feasts so sparingly, sire, that there is not much left over, which people consume long afterwards. At Mære there is a great farm, with a large house on it, and a great neighbourhood all around it, and it is the great delight of the people to drink many together in company." The king said little in reply, but looked angry, as he thought he knew the truth of the matter better than it was now represented. He ordered the bonders to return home. "I shall some time or other," says he, "come to the truth of what you are now concealing, and in such a way that ye shall not be able to contradict it. But, however that may be, do not try such things again." The bonders returned home, and told the result of their journey, and that the king was altogether enraged.

CHAPTER  
CXV.  
Murder of  
Olver of  
Egge.

At Easter the king held a feast, to which he had invited many of the townspeople as well as bonders. After Easter he ordered his ships to be launched into the water, oars and tackle to be put on board, decks to be laid in the ships, and tilts\* and rigging to be set up, and to be laid ready for sea at the piers. Immediately after Easter he sent men into Værdal. There was a man called Thorald, who was the king's bailiff, and who managed the king's farm there at at Haug; and to him the king sent a message to come to him as quickly as possible. Thorald did not decline the journey, but went immediately to the town with the messenger. The king called him in, and in a private conversation asked him what truth there was in what had been told him of the principles and

\* The ships appear to have been decked fore and aft only; and in the middle, where the rowers sat, to have had tilts or tents set up at night to sleep under.



living of the people of the interior of Drontheim, and if it really was so that they practised sacrifices to heathen gods. "I will," says the king, "that thou declare to me the things as they are, and as thou knowest to be true; for it is thy duty to tell me the truth, being my man."

Thorald replies, "Sire, I will first tell you that I have brought here to the town my two children, my wife, and all my loose property that I could take with me, and if thou desirest to know the truth it shall be told according to thy command; but if I declare it, thou must take care of me and mine."

The king replies, "Say only what is true on what I ask thee, and I will take care that no evil befall thee."

Then said Thorald, "If I must say the truth, king, as it is, I must declare that in the interior of the Drontheim land almost all the people are heathen in faith, although some of them are baptized. It is their custom to offer sacrifice in autumn for a good winter, a second at mid-winter, and a third in summer. In this the people of Eynar, Sparboe, Værdal, and Skogn partake. There are twelve men who preside over these sacrifice-feasts; and in spring it is Olver who has to get the feast in order, and he is now busy transporting to Mære every thing needful for it." Now when the king had got to the truth with a certainty, he ordered the signal to be sounded for his men to assemble, and for the men-at-arms to go on board ship. He appointed men to steer the ships, and leaders for the people, and ordered how the people should be divided among the vessels. All was got ready in haste, and with five ships and 300 men he steered up the fiord. The wind was favourable, the ships sailed briskly before it, and nobody could have thought that the king would be so soon there.



## SAGA VII.

The king came in the night time to Mære\*, and immediately surrounded the house with a ring of armed men. Olver was taken, and the king ordered him to be put to death, and many other men besides. Then the king took all the provision for the feast, and had it brought to his ships; and also all the goods, both furniture, clothes, and valuables, which the people had brought there, and divided the booty among his men. The king also let all the bonders he thought had the greatest part in the business be plundered by his men-at-arms. Some were taken prisoners and laid in irons, some ran away, and many were robbed of their goods. Thereafter the bonders were summoned to a Thing; but because he had taken many powerful men prisoners, and held them in his power, their friends and relations resolved to promise obedience to the king, so that there was no insurrection against the king on this occasion. He thus brought the whole people back to the right faith, gave them teachers, and built and consecrated churches. The king let Olver lie without fine paid for his bloodshed, and all that he possessed was adjudged to the king; and of the men he judged the most guilty, some he ordered to be executed, some he maimed, some he drove out of the country, and took fines from others. The king then returned to Nidaros.

CHAPTER  
CXVI.  
Of the  
sons of  
Arne.

There was a man called Arne Thomodsson, who was married to Thora, Thorstein Galge's daughter. Their children were Kalf, Finn, Thorberg, Aamund, Kolbiorn, Arnbiorn, and Arne. Their daughter, who was called Rognhild, was married to Harek of Thiottö. Arne was a lenderman, powerful, and of ability, and a great friend of King Olaf. At that time his sons Kalf and Finn were with the king, and in great

\* Mære is now a large mound in Inderøen, near the head of the Drontheim fiord, in the district called Sparbø.



favour. The wife whom Olver of Egge\* had left was young and handsome, of great family, and rich, so that he who got her might be considered to have made an excellent marriage; and her land was in the gift of the king. She and Olver had two sons, who were still in infancy. Kalf Arneson begged of the king that he would give him to wife the widow of Olver; and out of friendship the king agreed to it, and with her he got all the property Olver had possessed. The king at the same time made him his lenderman, and gave him an office in the interior of the Drontheim country. Kalf became a great chief, and was a man of very great understanding.

SAGA VII.

When King Olaf had been seven years in Norway the earls Thorfinn and Bruse came to him, as before related, in the summer, from Orkney, and he became master of their land. The same summer Olaf went to North and South Möre, and in autumn to Raumsdal. He left his ships there, and came to the Uplands, and to Lessö. Here he laid hold of all the best men, and forced them, both at Lessö and Dovre, either to receive Christianity or suffer death, if they were not so lucky as to escape. After they received Christianity, the king took their sons in his hands as hostages for their fidelity. The king staid several nights at a farm in Lessö called Bover, where he placed priests. Then he proceeded over Orkedal and Liardal, and came down from the Uplands at a place called Stafabreka. There a river runs along the valley, called the Otta, and a beautiful hamlet, by name Loar, lies on both sides of the river, and the king could see far down over the whole neighbourhood. "A pity it is," said the king, "so beautiful a hamlet should be burnt." And he proceeded down the valley with his people,

CHAPTER  
CXVII.  
King  
Olaf's  
journey to  
the Up-  
lands.

\* Egge, the estate of Olver, whose murder is related in the preceding chapter, is the farm of Egge, near Stenkiær, at the head of the Drontheim fiord.



## SAGA VII.

and was all night on a farm called Næs. The king took his lodging in a loft, where he slept himself; and it stands to the present day\*, without any thing in it having been altered since. The king was five days there, and summoned by message-token the people to a Thing, both for the districts of Vaage, Loar, and Hedal; and gave out the message along with the token, that they must either receive Christianity and give their sons as hostages, or see their habitations burnt. They came before the king, and submitted to his pleasure; but some fled south down the valley.

CHAPTER  
CXVIII.  
The story  
of Dale  
Gudbrand.

There was a man called Dale Gudbrand, who was like a king in the valley (Gudbrandsdal), but was only hersir† in title. Sigvat the scald compared him for wealth and landed property to Erling Skialgsson. Sigvat sang thus concerning Erling:—

“ I know but one who can compare  
With Erling for broad lands and gear—  
Gudbrand is he, whose wide domains  
Are most like where some small king reigns.  
These two great bonders, I would say,  
Equal each other every way.  
He lies who says that he can find  
One by the other left behind.”

Gudbrand had a son, who is here spoken of. Now when Gudbrand received the tidings that King Olaf was come to Loar, and obliged people to accept Christianity, he sent out a message-token, and summoned all the men in the valley to meet him at a farm called Hundthorp.‡ All came, so that the

\* The house on this farm of Næs in which King Olaf lodged is said to have been standing within these few years, although only of wood.

† Hersir (quere, if Sir may not be derived from this word?) appears to have been merely a title of respect, like Sir with us, applied to persons of property or consideration; not like Lenderman, Earl, or Baron, a title conferred by the kings, with function belonging to it.

‡ Hundthorp is a farm on the side of the river Laugen in Gudbrandsdal, with several mounds about it. It is a station-house for travellers.



number could not be told; for there is a lake in the neighbourhood called Laugen, so that people could come to the place both by land and by water. There Gudbrand held a Thing with them, and said, "A man is come to Loar who is called Olaf, and will force upon us another faith than what we had before, and will break in pieces all our gods. He says that he has a much greater and more powerful god; and it is wonderful that the earth does not burst asunder under him, or that our god lets him go about unpunished when he dares to talk such things. I know this for certain that if we carry Thor, who has always stood by us, out of our temple that is standing upon this farm, Olaf's god will melt away, and he and his men be made nothing so soon as Thor looks upon them." Then the bonders all shouted as one person that Olaf should never get away with life if he came to them; and they thought he would never dare to come farther south through the valley. They chose out 700 men to go northwards to Breeden, to watch his movements. The leader of this band was Gudbrand's son, eighteen years of age, and with him were many other men of importance. When they came to a farm called Hof they heard of the king; and they remained three nights there. People streamed to them from all parts, from Lessö, Loar, and Vaage, who did not wish to receive Christianity. The king and Bishop Sigurd fixed teachers in Loar and in Vaage. From thence they went round Urgovost, and came down into the valley at Usvold, where they staid all night, and heard the news that a great force of men were assembled against them. The bonders who were in Breeden heard also of the king's arrival, and prepared for battle. As soon as the king arose in the morning he put on his armour, and went southwards over Suwold, and did not halt until he came to Breeden, where he saw a great army ready for battle.



## SAGA VII.

Then the king drew up his troops, rode himself at the head of them, and began a speech to the bonders, in which he invited them to adopt Christianity. They replied, "We shall give thee something else to do to-day than to be mocking us;" and raised a general shout, striking also upon their shields with their weapons. Then the king's men ran forward and threw their spears; but the bonders turned round instantly and fled, so that only few men remained behind. Gudbrand's son was taken prisoner; but the king gave him his life, and took him with him. The king was four days here. Then the king said to Gudbrand's son, "Go home now to thy father, and tell him I expect to be with him soon."

He went accordingly, and told his father the news, that they had fallen in with the king, and fought with him; but that their whole army, in the very beginning, took flight. "I was taken prisoner," said he, "but the king gave me my life and liberty, and told me to say to thee that he will soon be here. And now we have not 200 men of the force we raised against him; therefore I advise thee, father, not to give battle to that man."

Says Gudbrand, "It is easy to see that all courage has left thee, and it was an unlucky hour ye went out to the field. Thy proceeding will live long in the remembrance of people, and I see that thy fastening thy faith on the folly that man is going about with has brought upon thee and thy men so great a disgrace."

But the night after, Gudbrand dreamt that there came to him a man surrounded by light, who brought great terror with him, and said to him, "Thy son made no glorious expedition against King Olaf; but still less honour wilt thou gather for thyself by holding a battle with him. Thou with all thy people wilt fall; wolves will drag thee, and all thine, away; ravens



will tear thee in stripes." At this dreadful vision he was much afraid, and tells it to Thord Istromaga\*, who was chief over the valley. He replies, "The very same vision came to me." In the morning they ordered the signal to sound for a Thing, and said that it appeared to them advisable to hold a Thing with the man who had come from the north with this new teaching, to know if there was any truth in it. Gudbrand then said to his son, "Go thou, and twelve men with thee, to the king who gave thee thy life." He went straightway, and found the king at a farm called Lidstad, and laid before him their errand; namely, that the bonders would hold a Thing with him, and make a truce between them and him. The king was content; and they bound themselves by faith and law mutually to hold the peace so long as the Thing lasted. After this was settled the men returned to Gudbrand and Thord, and told them there was made a firm agreement for a truce. The king, after the battle with the son of Gudbrand, had proceeded to Lidstad, and remained there for five days: afterwards he went out to meet the bonders, and hold a Thing with them. On that day there fell a heavy rain. When the Thing was seated, the king stood up and said that the people in Lessö, Loar, and Vaage had received Christianity, broken down their houses of sacrifice, and believed now in the true God who had made heaven and earth and knows all things.

Thereupon the king sat down, and Gudbrand replies, "We know nothing of him whom thou speakest about. Dost thou call him God, whom neither thou nor any one else can see? But we have a god who can be seen every day, although he is not out to-day, because the weather is wet, and he will appear to thee terrible and very grand; and I expect that fear will mix with

\* Big-belly.



SAGA VII. your very blood when he comes into the Thing. But since thou sayest thy God is so great, let him make it so that to-morrow we have a cloudy day but without rain, and then let us meet again."

The king accordingly returned home to his lodging, taking Gudbrand's son as a hostage; but he gave them a man as hostage in exchange. In the evening the king asked Gudbrand's son what like their god was. He replied, that he bore the likeness of Thor; had a hammer in his hand; was of great size, but hollow within; and had a high stand, upon which he stood when he was out. "Neither gold nor silver are wanting about him, and every day he receives four cakes of bread, besides meat." They then went to bed, but the king watched all night in prayer. When day dawned the king went to mass, then to table, and from thence to the Thing. The weather was such as Gudbrand desired. Now the bishop stood up in his choir-robes, with bishop's coif upon his head, and bishop's staff in his hands. He spoke to the bonders of the true faith, told the many wonderful acts of God, and concluded his speech well.

Thord Istromaga replies, "Many things we are told of by this horned man with the staff in his hand crooked at the top like a ram's horn; but since ye say, comrades, that your god is so powerful, and can do so many wonders, tell him to make it clear sunshine to-morrow forenoon, and then we shall meet here again, and do one of two things,—either agree with you about this business, or fight you." And they separated for the day.

CHAPTER  
CXIX.  
Dale Gud-  
brand is  
baptized.

There was a man with King Olaf called Kolbein Sterki (the Strong), who came from a family in the Fiorde district. Usually he was so equipt that he was girt with a sword, and besides carried a great

\* Alluding to the bishop's coif.



stake, otherwise called a club, in his hands. The king told Kolbein to stand nearest to him in the morning; and gave orders to his people to go down in the night to where the ships of the bonders lay and bore holes in them, and to set loose their horses on the farms where they were: all which was done. Now the king was in prayer all the night, beseeching God of his goodness and mercy to release him from evil. When mass was ended, and morning was grey, the king went to the Thing. When he came there some bonders had already arrived, and they saw a great crowd coming along, and bearing among them a huge man's image glancing with gold and silver. When the bonders who were at the Thing saw it they started up, and bowed themselves down before the ugly idol. Thereupon it was set down upon the Thing-field; and on the one side of it sat the bonders, and on the other the king and his people.

Then Dale Gudbrand stood up, and said, "Where now, king, is thy god? I think he will now carry his head lower; and neither thou, nor the man with the horn whom ye call bishop, and sits there beside thee, are so bold to-day as on the former days; for now our god, who rules over all, is come, and looks on you with an angry eye: and now I see well enough that ye are terrified, and scarcely dare to raise your eyes. Throw away now all your opposition, and believe in the god who has all your fate in his hands."

The king now whispers to Kolbein Sterki, without the bonders perceiving it, "If it come so in the course of my speech that the bonders look another way than towards their idol, strike him as hard as thou canst with thy club."

The king then stood up and spoke. "Much hast thou talked to us this morning, and greatly hast thou wondered that thou canst not see our God; but we expect that he will soon come to us. Thou wouldst



SAGA VII. frighten us with thy god, who is both blind and deaf, and can neither save himself nor others, and cannot even move about without being carried; but now I expect it will be but a short time before he meets his fate: for turn your eyes towards the east, — behold our God advancing in great light.”

The sun was rising, and all turned to look. At that moment Kolbein gave their god a stroke, so that the idol burst asunder; and there ran out of it mice as big almost as cats, and reptiles, and adders. The bonders were so terrified that some fled to their ships; but when they sprang out upon them they filled with water, and could not get away. Others ran to their horses, but could not find them. The king then ordered the bonders to be called together, saying he wanted to speak with them; on which the bonders came back, and the Thing was again seated.

The king rose up and said, “I do not understand what your noise and running mean. Ye see yourselves what your god can do,—the idol ye adorned with gold and silver, and brought meat and provisions to. Ye see now that the protecting powers who used it were the mice and adders, reptiles and paddocks; and they do ill who trust to such, and will not abandon this folly. Take now your gold and ornaments that are lying strewed about on the grass, and give them to your wives and daughters; but never hang them hereafter upon stock or stone. Here are now two conditions between us to choose upon,—either accept Christianity, or fight this very day; and the victory be to them to whom the God we worship gives it.”

Then Dale Gudbrand stood up and said, “We have sustained great damage upon our god; but since he will not help us, we will believe in the God thou believest in.”

Then all received Christianity. The bishop baptized Gudbrand and his son. King Olaf and Bishop Sigurd



left behind them teachers, and they who met as enemies parted as friends; and Gudbrand built a church in the valley.

SAGA VII.

King Olaf proceeded from thence to Hedemark, and baptized there; but as he had formerly carried away their kings as prisoners, he did not venture himself, after such a deed, to go far into the country with few people at that time, but a small part of Hedemark was baptized; but the king did not desist from his expedition before he had introduced Christianity over all Hedemark, consecrated churches, and placed teachers. He then went to Hadeland and Thoten, improving the customs of the people, and persisting until all the country was baptized. He then went to Ringarike, where also all people went over to Christianity. The people of Raumarige then heard that Olaf intended coming to them, and they gathered a great force. They said among themselves that the journey Olaf had made among them the last time was not to be forgotten, and he should never proceed so again. The king, notwithstanding, prepared for the journey. Now when the king went up into Raumarige with his forces, the multitude of bonders came against him at a river called Nittia; and the bonders had a strong army, and began the battle as soon as they met; but they soon fell short, and took to flight. They were forced by this battle into a better disposition, and immediately received Christianity; and the king scoured the whole district, and did not leave it until all the people were made Christians. He then went east to Solöer, and baptized that neighbourhood. The scald Ottar Black came to him there, and begged to be received among his men. Olaf the Swedish king had died the winter before, and Onund, the son of Olaf, was now the sole king over all Sweden. King Olaf returned, when the winter was far advanced, to Raumarige. There he assembled a numerous

CHAPTER  
CXX.  
Hedemark  
baptized.



## SAGA VII.

Thing, at a place where the Eidsvold Things have since been held. He made a law, that the Upland people should resort to this Thing, and that Eidsvold laws should be good through all the districts of the Uplands, and wide around in other quarters, which also has taken place. As spring was advancing, he rigged his ships, and went by sea to Tunsberg. He remained there during the spring, and the time the town was most frequented, and goods from other countries were brought to the town for sale. There had been a good year in Viken, and tolerable as far north as Stad; but it was a very dear time all to the north.

CHAPTER  
CXXI.  
Reconcilia-  
tion of the  
king and  
Einar Tam-  
barskelver.

In spring King Olaf sent a message west to Agder, and north all the way to Hordaland and Rogaland, prohibiting the exporting or selling of corn, malt, or meal; adding, that he, as usual, would come there with his people in guest-quarters. The message went round all the districts; but the king remained in Viken all summer, and went east to the boundary of the country. Einar Tambarskelver had been with the Swedish king Olaf since the death of his relation Earl Swend, and had, as the king's man, received great fiefs from him. Now that the king was dead, Einar had a great desire to come into friendly agreement with Olaf; and the same spring messages passed between them about it. While the king was lying in the Gotha river, Einar Tambarskelver came there with some men; and after treating about an agreement, it was settled that Einar should go north to Drontheim, and there take possession of all the lands and property which Bergliot had received in dower. Thereupon Einar took his way north; but the king remained behind in Viken, and remained long in Sarpsburg in autumn, and during the first part of winter.

CHAPTER  
CXXII.  
Reconcilia-  
tion of the

Erling Skialgsson held his dominion so, that all north from Sogn Lake, and east to the Naze, the



SAGA VII.

king and  
Erling  
Skialgsson.

bonders stood under him ; and although he had much smaller royal fiefs than formerly, still so great a dread of him prevailed that nobody dared to do any thing against his will, so that the king thought his power too great. There was a man called Aslak Fitiaskalle, who was powerful, and of high birth. Erling's father Skialg, and Aslak's father Askel, were brother's sons. Aslak was a great friend of King Olaf, and the king settled him in South Hordaland, where he gave him a great fief, and great income, and ordered him in no respect to give way to Erling. But this came to nothing when the king was not in the neighbourhood ; for then Erling would reign as he used to do, and was not more humble because Aslak would thrust himself forward as his equal. At last the strife went so far that Aslak could not keep his place, but hastened to King Olaf, and told him the circumstances between him and Erling. The king told Aslak to remain with him until he should meet Erling ; and sent a message to Erling that he should come to him in spring at Tunsberg. When they all arrived there they held a meeting, at which the king said to him, " It is told me concerning thy government, Erling, that no man from Sogn Lake to the Naze can enjoy his freedom for thee ; although there are many men there who consider themselves born to udal rights, and have their privileges like others born as they are. Now, here is your relation Aslak, who appears to have suffered great inconvenience from your conduct ; and I do not know whether he himself is in fault, or whether he suffers because I have placed him to defend what is mine ; and although I name him, there are many others who have brought the same complaint before us, both among those who are placed in office in our districts, and among the bailiffs who have our farms to manage, and are obliged to entertain me and my people."



## SAGA VII.

Erling replies to this, "I will answer at once. I deny altogether that I have ever injured Aslak, or any one else, for being in your service; but this I will not deny, that it is now, as it has long been, that each of us relations will willingly be greater than the other: and, moreover, I freely acknowledge that I am ready to bow my neck to thee, King Olaf; but it is more difficult for me to stoop before one who is of slave descent in all his generation, although he is now your bailiff, or before others who are but equal to him in descent, although you bestow honours on them."

Now the friends of both interfered, and entreated that they would be reconciled; saying, that the king never could have such powerful aid as from Erling, "if he was your friend entirely." On the other hand, they represent to Erling that he should give up to the king; for if he was in friendship with the king, it would be easy to do with all the others what he pleased. The meeting accordingly ended so that Erling should retain the fiefs he formerly had, and every complaint the king had against Erling should be dropped; but Skialg, Erling's son, should come to the king, and remain in his power. Then Aslak returned to his dominions, and the two were in some sort reconciled. Erling returned home also to his domains, and followed his own way of ruling them.

CHAPTER  
CXXIII.  
Here be-  
gins the  
story of  
Asbiorn  
Selsbane.

There was a man called Sigurd Thorisson, a brother of Thorer Hund of Biarkö Island. Sigurd was married to Sigrid Skialg's daughter, a sister of Erling. Their son, called Asbiorn, became as he grew up a very able man. Sigurd dwelt at Aumd, in Thrandarness, and was a very rich and respected man. He had not gone into the king's service; and Thorer in so far had attained higher dignity than his brother, that he was the king's lenderman. But at home, on his farm, Sigurd stood in no respect behind



his brother in splendour and magnificence. As long as heathenism prevailed, Sigurd usually had three sacrifices every year: one on winter-night's eve, one on mid-winter's eve, and the third in summer. Although he had adopted Christianity, he continued the same custom with his feasts: he had, namely, a great friendly entertainment at harvest time; a Yule feast in winter, to which he invited many; the third feast he had about Easter, to which also he invited many guests. He continued this fashion as long as he lived. Sigurd died on a bed of sickness when Asbiorn was eighteen years old. He was the only heir of his father, and he followed his father's custom of holding three festivals every year. Soon after Asbiorn came to his heritage the course of seasons began to grow worse, and the corn harvests of the people to fail; but Asbiorn held his usual feasts, and helped himself by having old corn, and an old provision laid up of all that was useful. But when one year had passed and another came, and the crops were no better than the year before, Sigrid wished that some if not all of the feasts should be given up. That Asbiorn would not consent to, but went round in harvest among his friends, buying corn where he could get it, and some he received in presents. He thus kept his feasts this winter also; but the spring after people got but little seed into the ground, for they had to buy the seed-corn. Then Sigrid spoke of diminishing the number of their house-servants. That Asbiorn would not consent to, but held by the old fashion of the house in all things. In summer it appeared again that there would be a bad year for corn; and to this came the report from the south that King Olaf prohibited all export of corn, malt, or meal, from the southern to the northern parts of the country. Then Asbiorn perceived that it would be difficult to procure what was necessary for a house-



SAGA VII.

keeping, and resolved to put into the water a vessel for carrying goods which he had, and which was large enough to go to sea with. The ship was good, all that belonged to her was of the best, and in the sails were stripes of cloth of various colours. Asbiorn made himself ready for a voyage, and put to sea with twenty men. They sailed from the north in summer; and nothing is told of their voyage until one day, about the time the days begin to shorten, they came to Kormtsund, and landed at Augvaldness. Up in the island Kormt there is a large farm not far from the sea, and a large house upon it called Augvaldness, which was a king's house, with an excellent farm, which Thorer Sel, who was the king's bailiff, had under his management. Thorer was a man of low birth, but had swung himself up in the world as an active man; and he was polite in speech, showy in clothes, and fond of distinction, and not apt to give way to others, in which he was supported by the favour of the king. He was besides quick in speech, straightforward, and free in conversation. Asbiorn, with his company, brought up there for the night; and in the morning, when it was light, Thorer went down to the vessel with some men, and inquired who commanded the splendid ship. Asbiorn named his own and his father's name. Thorer asks where the voyage was intended for, and what was the errand.

Asbiorn replies, that he wanted to buy corn and malt; saying, as was true, that it was a very dear time north in the country. "But we are told that here the seasons are good; and wilt thou, farmer, sell us corn? I see that here are great corn stacks, and it would be very convenient if we had not to travel farther."

Thorer replies, "I will give thee the information that thou needst not go farther to buy corn, or travel about here in Rogaland; for I can tell thee that thou must turn about, and not travel farther, for the king



forbids carrying corn out of this to the north of the country. Sail back again, Halogalanders, for that will be thy safest course." SAGA VII.

Asbiorn replies, "If it be so, bonder, as thou sayest, that we can get no corn here to buy, I will, notwithstanding, go forward upon my errand, and visit my family in Sole, and see my relation Erling's habitation."

Thorer: "How near is thy relationship to Erling?"

Asbiorn: "My mother is his sister."

Thorer: "It may be that I have spoken heedlessly, if so be that thou art sister's son of Erling."

Thereupon Asbiorn and his crew struck their tents, and turned the ship to sea. Thorer called after them, "A good voyage, and come here again on your way back." Asbiorn promised to do so, sailed away, and came in the evening to Jederen. Asbiorn went on shore with ten men; the other ten men watched the ship. When Asbiorn came to the house he was very well received, and Erling was very glad to see him, placed him beside himself, and asked him all the news in the north of the country. Asbiorn concealed nothing of his business from him; and Erling said it happened unfortunately that the king had just forbid the sale of corn. "And I know no man here," says he, "who has courage to break the king's order, and I find it difficult to keep well with the king, so many are trying to break our friendship."

Asbiorn replies, "It is late before we learn the truth. In my childhood I was taught that my mother was free-born throughout her whole descent, and that Erling of Sole was her boldest relation; and now I hear thee say that thou hast not the freedom, for the king's slaves here in Jederen, to do with thy own corn what thou pleasest."

Erling looked at him, smiled through his teeth, and said, "Ye Halogalanders know less of the king's power than we do here; but a bold man thou mayst



SAGA VII. be at home in thy conversation. Let us now drink, my friend, and we shall see to-morrow what can be done in thy business."

They did so, and were very merry all the evening. The following day Erling and Asbiorn talked over the matter again; and Erling said, "I have found out a way for you to purchase corn, Asbiorn. It is the same thing to you whoever is the seller." He answered that he did not care of whom he bought the corn, if he got a good right to his purchase. Erling said, "It appears to me probable that my slaves have quite as much corn as you require to buy; and they are not subject to law, or land regulation, like other men." Asbiorn agreed to the proposal. The slaves were now spoken to about the purchase, and they brought forward corn and malt, which they sold to Asbiorn, so that he loaded his vessel with what he wanted. When he was ready for sea Erling followed him on the road, made him presents of friendship, and they took a kind farewell of each other. Asbiorn got a good breeze, landed in the evening at Kormtsund, near to Augvaldsness, and remained there for the night. Thorer Sel had heard of Asbiorn's voyage, and also that his vessel was deeply laden. Thorer summoned people to him in the night, so that before daylight he had sixty men; and with these he went against Asbiorn as soon as it was light, and went out to the ship just as Asbiorn and his men were putting on their clothes. Asbiorn saluted Thorer, and Thorer asked what kind of goods Asbiorn had in the vessel.

He replied, "Corn and malt."

Thorer said, "Then Erling is doing as he usually does, and despising the king's orders, and is unwearied in opposing him in all things, insomuch that it is wonderful the king suffers it."

Thorer went on scolding in this way, and when he



was silent Asbiorn said that Erling's slaves had owned the corn. SAGA VII.

Thorer replied hastily, that he did not regard Erling's tricks. "And now, Asbiorn, there is no help for it: ye must either go on shore, or we will throw you overboard; for we will not be troubled with you while we are discharging the cargo."

Asbiorn saw that he had not men enough to resist Thorer; therefore he and his people landed, and Thorer took the whole cargo out of the vessel. When the vessel was discharged Thorer went through the ship, and observed, "Ye Halogalanders have good sails: take the old sail of our vessel and give it them; it is good enough for those who are sailing in a light vessel." Thus the sails were exchanged. When this was done Asbiorn and his comrades sailed away north along the coast, and did not stop until they reached home early in winter. This expedition was talked of far and wide, and Asbiorn had no trouble that winter in making feasts at home. Thorer Hund invited Asbiorn and his mother, and also all whom they pleased to take along with them, to a Yule feast; but Asbiorn sat at home, and would not travel, and it was to be seen that Thorer thought Asbiorn despised his invitation, since he would not come. Thorer scoffed much at Asbiorn's voyage. "Now," said he, "it is evident that Asbiorn makes a great difference in his respect towards his relations; for in summer he took the greatest trouble to visit his relation Erling in Jederen, and now will not take the trouble to come to me in the next house. I don't know if he thinks there may be a Thorer Sel in his way upon every holm." Such words, and the like sarcasms, Asbiorn heard of; and very ill satisfied he was with his voyage, which had thus made him a laughing-stock to the country, and he remained at home all winter, and went to no feasts.



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CHAPTER  
CXXIV.  
Murder of  
Asbiorn.

Asbiorn had a long-ship standing in the noust\* (dry dock), and it was a snekke (cutter) of twenty benches; and after Candlemas he had the vessel put in the water, brought out all his furniture, and rigged her out. He then summoned to him his friends and people, so that he had nearly ninety men all well armed. When he was ready for sea, and got a wind, he sailed south along the coast; but as the wind did not suit, they advanced but slowly. When they came farther south they steered outside the rocks, without the usual ships' channel, keeping to sea as much as it was possible to do so. Nothing is related of his voyage before the fifth day of Easter, when, about evening, they came on the outside of Kormt Island. This island is so shaped that it is very long, but not broad at its widest part; and without it lies the usual ships' channel. It is thickly inhabited; but where the island is exposed to the ocean great tracts of it are uncultivated. Asbiorn and his men landed at a place in the island that was uninhabited. After they had set up their ship-tents Asbiorn said, "Now ye must remain here and wait for me. I will go on land in the isle, and spy what news there may be which we know nothing of." Asbiorn had on mean clothes, a broad-brimmed hat, a fork in his hand, but had girt on his sword under his clothes. He went up to the land, and in through the island; and when he came upon a hillock, from which he could see the house on Augvaldness, and on as far as Kormt Sound, he saw people in all quarters flocking together by land and by sea, and all going up to the house of Augvaldness. This seemed to him extraordinary; and therefore he went up quietly to a house close by, in which servants

\* Nöst. The word Noust is in common use still in the Orkney Isles for a dock for a small boat excavated in the shore-bank. Antiquarians will have the Homeric word Naosterion, of the same meaning, to be of a common origin with Nöst.



were cooking meat. From their conversation he discovered immediately that the king Olaf had come there to a feast, and that he had just sat down to table. Asbiorn turned then to the feasting-room, and when he came into the ante-room one was going in and another coming out; but nobody took notice of him. The hall-door was open, and he saw that Thorer Sel stood before the table of the high seat. It was getting late in the evening, and Asbiorn heard people ask Thorer what had taken place between him and Asbiorn; and Thorer had a long story about it, in which he evidently departed from the truth. Among other things he heard a man say, "How did Asbiorn behave when you discharged his vessel?" Thorer replied, "When we were taking out the cargo he bore it tolerably, but not well; and when we took the sail from him he wept." When Asbiorn heard this he suddenly drew his sword, rushed into the hall, and cut at Thorer. The stroke took him in the neck, so that the head fell upon the table before the king, and the body at his feet, and the table-cloth was soiled with blood from top to bottom. The king ordered him to be seized and taken out. This was done. They laid hands on Asbiorn, and took him from the hall. The table-furniture and table-cloths were removed, and also Thorer's corpse, and all the blood wiped up. The king was enraged to the highest; but remained quiet in speech, as he always was when in anger.

Skialg Erlingsson stood up, went before the king, and said, "Now may it go, as it often does, that every case will admit of alleviation. I will pay thee the mulct for the bloodshed on account of this man, so that he may retain life and limbs. All the rest determine and do, king, according to thy pleasure."

The king replies, "Is it not a matter of death, Skialg, that a man break the Easter peace; and in the

CHAPTER  
CXXV.  
Of Skialg,  
the son of  
Erling  
Skialgsson.



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next place that he kills a man in the king's lodging; and in the third that he makes my feet his execution-block, although that may appear a small matter to thee and thy father?"

Skialg replies, "It is ill done, king, in as far as it displeases thee; but the deed is, otherwise, done excellently well. But if the deed appear to thee so important, and be so contrary to thy will, yet may I expect something for my services from thee; and certainly there are many who will say that thou didst well."

The king replies, "Although thou hast made me greatly indebted to thee, Skialg, for thy services, yet I will not for thy sake break the law, or cast away my own dignity."

Then Skialg turned round, and went out of the hall. Twelve men who had come with Skialg all followed him, and many others went out with him. Skialg said to Thorarin Nefiolfsson, "If thou wilt have me for a friend, take care that this man be not killed before Sunday." Thereupon Skialg and his men set off, took a rowing boat which he had, and rowed south as fast as they could, and came to Jederen with the first glimpse of morning. They went up instantly to the house, and to the loft in which Erling slept. Skialg rushed so hard against the door that it burst asunder at the nails. Erling and the others who were within started up. He was in one spring upon his legs, grasped his shield and sword, and rushed to the door, demanding who was there. Skialg names himself, and begs him to open the door. Erling replies, "It was most likely to be thee who hast behaved so foolishly; or is there any one who is pursuing thee?" Thereupon the door was unlocked. Then said Skialg, "Although it appears to thee that I am so hasty, I suppose our relation Asbiorn will not think my proceedings too quick; for he sits in chains



there in the north at Augvaldsness, and it would be but manly to hasten back and stand by him." The father and son then had a conversation together, and Skialg related the whole circumstances of Thorer Sel's murder.

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King Olaf took his seat again when every thing in the hall was put in order, and was enraged beyond measure. He asked how it was with the murderer. He was answered, that he was sitting out upon the door-step under guard.

CHAPTER  
CXXVI.  
Of Tho-  
rarin  
Nefiolfsson.

The king says, "Why is he not put to death?"

Thorarin Nefiolfsson replies, "Sire, would you not call it murder to kill a man in the night-time?"

The king answers, "Put him in irons then, and kill him in the morning."

Then Asbiorn was laid in chains, and locked up in a house for the night. The day after the king heard the morning mass, and then went to the Thing, where he sat till high mass. As he was going to mass he said to Thorarin, "Is not the sun high enough now in the heavens that your friend Asbiorn may be hanged?"

Thorarin bowed before the king, and said, "Sire, it was said by Bishop Sigurd on Friday last, that the King who has all things in his power had to endure great temptation of spirit; and blessed is he who rather imitates him, than those who condemned the man to death, or those who caused his slaughter. It is not long till to-morrow, and that is a working day."

The king looked at him, and said, "Thou must take care then that he is not put to death to-day; but take him under thy charge, and know for certain that thy own life shall answer for it if he escape in any way."

Then the king went away. Thorarin went also to where Asbiorn lay in irons, took off his chains, and brought him to a small room, where he had meat and drink set before him, and told him what the king



SAGA VII. had determined in case Asbiorn ran away. Asbiorn replies, that Thorarin need not be afraid of him. Thorarin sat a long while with him during the day, and slept there all night. On Saturday the king arose and went to the early mass, and from thence he went to the Thing, where a great many bonders were assembled, who had many complaints to be determined. The king sat there long in the day, and it was late before the people went to high mass. Thereafter the king went to table. When he had got meat he sat drinking for a while, so that the tables were not removed. Thorarin went out to the priest who had the church under his care, and gave him two marks of silver to ring in the Sabbath as soon as the king's table was taken away. When the king had drunk as much as he wished the tables were removed. Then said the king, that it was now the time for the slaves to go to the murderer and put him to death. In the same moment the bell rang in the Sabbath.

Then Thorarin went before the king, and said, "The Sabbath-peace this man must have, although he has done evil."

The king said, "Do thou take care, Thorarin, that he do not escape."

The king then went to the church, and attended the vesper service, and Thorarin sat the whole day with Asbiorn. On Sunday the bishop visited Asbiorn, confessed him, and gave him orders to hear high mass. Thorarin then went to the king, and asked him to appoint men to guard the murderer. "I will now," he said, "be free of this charge." The king thanked him for his care, and ordered men to watch over Asbiorn who was again laid in chains. When the people went to high mass Asbiorn was led to the church, and he stood outside of the church with his guard; but the king and all the people stood in the church at mass.



Now we must again take up our story where we left it, — that Erling and his son Skialg held a council on this affair, and according to the resolution of Erling, and of Skialg and his other sons, it was determined to assemble a force and send out message-tokens. A great multitude of people accordingly came together. They got ready with all speed, rigged their ships, and when they reckoned upon their force they found they had nearly 1500 men. With this war-force they set off, and came on Sunday to Augvaldsnees on Kormt Island. They went straight up to the house with all the men, and arrived just as the Scripture lesson was read. They went directly to the church, took Asbiorn, and broke off his chains. At the tumult and clash of arms all who were outside of the church ran into it; but they who were in the church looked all towards them, except the king, who stood still, without looking around him. Erling and his sons drew up their men on each side of the path which led from the church to the hall, and Erling with his sons stood next to the hall. When high mass was finished the king went immediately out of the church, and first went through the open space between the ranks drawn up, and then his retinue, man by man; and as he came to the door Erling placed himself before the door, bowed to the king, and saluted him. The king saluted him in return, and prayed God to help him. Erling took up the word first, and said, "My relation Asbiorn, it is reported to me, has been guilty of misdemeanor, king; and it is a great one, if he has done any thing that incurs your displeasure. Now I am come to entreat for him peace, and such penalties as you yourself may determine; but that thereby he redeem life and limb, and his remaining here in his native land."

The king replies, "It appears to me, Erling, that thou thinkest the case of Asbiorn is now in thy own power, and I do not therefore know why thou speakest

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CHAPTER  
CXXVII.  
Erling's  
reconciliation  
with  
King Olaf.



SAGA VII. — now as if thou wouldst offer terms for him. I think thou hast drawn together these forces because thou art determined to settle what is between us."

Erling replies, "Thou only, king, shalt determine, and determine so that we shall be reconciled."

The king: "Thinkest thou, Erling, to make me afraid? and art thou come here in such force with that expectation? No, that shall not be; and if that be thy thought, I must in no way turn and fly."

Erling replies, "Thou hast no occasion to remind me how often I have come to meet thee with fewer men than thou hadst. But now I shall not conceal what lies in my mind, namely, that it is my will that we now enter into a reconciliation; for otherwise I expect we shall never meet again." Erling was then as red as blood in the face.

Now Bishop Sigurd came forward to the king and said, "Sire, I entreat you on God Almighty's account to be reconciled with Erling according to his offer, — that the man shall retain life and limb, but that thou shalt determine according to thy pleasure all the other conditions."

The king replies, "You will determine."

Then said the bishop, "Erling, do thou give security for Asbiorn, such as the king thinks sufficient, and then leave the conditions to the mercy of the king, and leave all in his power."

Erling gave a surety to the king on his part, which he accepted.

Thereupon Asbiorn received his life and safety, and delivered himself into the king's power, and kissed his hand.

Erling then withdrew with his forces, without exchanging salutation with the king; and the king went into the hall, followed by Asbiorn. The king thereafter made known the terms of reconciliation to be these:—"In the first place, Asbiorn, thou must submit



to the law of the land, which commands that the man who kills a servant of the king must undertake his service, if the king will. Now I will that thou shalt undertake the office of bailiff which Thorer Sel had, and manage my estate here in Augvaldsness." Asbiorn replies, that it should be according to the king's will; "but I must first go home to my farm, and put things in order there." The king was satisfied with this, and proceeded to another guest-quarter. Asbiorn made himself ready with his comrades, who all kept themselves concealed in a quiet creek during the time Asbiorn was away from them. They had had their spies out to learn how it went with him, and would not depart without having some certain news of him.

Asbiorn then set out on his voyage, and about spring got home to his farm. After this exploit he was always called Asbiorn Selsbane.\* Asbiorn had not been long at home before he and his relation Thorer met and conversed together, and Thorer asked Asbiorn particularly all about his journey, and about all the circumstances which had happened in the course of it. Asbiorn told every thing as it had taken place.

CHAPTER  
CXXVIII.  
Of Thorer  
Hund and  
Asbiorn  
Selsbane.

Then said Thorer, "Thou thinkest that thou hast well rubbed out the disgrace of having been plundered in last harvest."

"I think so," replies Asbiorn; "and what is thy opinion, cousin?"

"That I will soon tell thee," said Thorer. "Thy first expedition to the south of the country was indeed very disgraceful, and that disgrace has been redeemed; but this expedition is both a disgrace to thee and to thy family, if it end in thy becoming the king's slave, and being put on a footing with that worst of men, Thorer Sel. Show that thou art manly

\* The bane or destroyer of Thorer Sel.



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enough to sit here on thy own property, and we thy relations shall so support thee that thou wilt never more come into such trouble."

Asbiorn found this advice much to his mind; and before they parted it was firmly determined that Asbiorn should remain on his farm, and not go back to the king or enter into his service. And he did so, and sat quietly at home on his farm.

CHAPTER  
CXXIX.  
King Olaf  
baptizes  
Vors and  
Valders  
districts.

After King Olaf and Erling Skialgsson had this meeting at Angvaldsnæs, new differences arose between them, and increased so much that they ended in perfect enmity. In spring the king proceeded to guest-quarters in Hordaland, and went up also to Vors, because he heard there was but little of the true faith among the people there. He held a Thing with the bonders at a place called Vang, and a number of bonders came to it fully armed. The king ordered them to adopt Christianity; but they challenged him to battle, and it proceeded so far that the men were drawn up on both sides. But when it came to the point such a fear entered into the blood of the bonders that none would advance or command, and they chose the part which was most to their advantage; namely, to obey the king and receive Christianity: and before the king left them they were all baptized. One day it happened that the king was riding on his way a singing of psalms, and when he came right opposite some hills he halted and said, "Man after man shall relate these my words, that I think it not advisable for any king of Norway to travel hereafter between these hills." And it is a saying among the people that the most kings since that time have avoided it. The king proceeded to Osterfiord, and came to his ships, with which he went north to Sogn, and had his living in guest-quarters there in summer: when autumn approached he turned in towards the Fiord district, and went from thence to



Valders, where the people were still heathen. The king hastened up to the lake in Valders, came unexpectedly on the bonders, seized their vessels, and went on board of them with all his men. He then sent out message-tokens, and appointed a Thing so near the lake that he could use the vessels if he found he required them. The bonders resorted to the Thing in a great and well-armed host; and when he commanded them to accept Christianity the bonders shouted against him, told him to be silent, and made a great uproar and clashing of weapons. But when the king saw that they would not listen to what he would teach them, and also that they had too great a force to contend with, he turned his discourse, and asked if there were people at the Thing who had disputes with each other which they wished him to settle. It was soon found by the conversation of the bonders that they had many quarrels among themselves, although they had all joined in speaking against Christianity. When the bonders began to set forth their own cases, each endeavoured to get some upon his side to support him; and this lasted the whole day long until evening, when the Thing was concluded. When the bonders had heard that the king had travelled to Valders, and was come into their neighbourhood, they had sent out message-tokens summoning the free and the unfree to meet in arms, and with this force they had advanced against the king; so that the neighbourhood all around was left without people. When the Thing was concluded the bonders still remained assembled; and when the king observed this he went on board his ships, rowed in the night right across the water, landed in the country there, and began to plunder and burn. The day after the king's men rowed from one point of land to another, and over all the king ordered the habitations to be set on fire. Now when the bonders who were assembled saw what



SAGA VII. the king was doing, namely, plundering and burning, and saw the smoke and flame of their houses, they dispersed, and each hastened to his own home to see if he could find those he had left. As soon as there came a dispersion among the crowd, the one slipped away after the other, until the whole multitude was dissolved. Then the king rowed across the lake again, burning also on that side of the country. Now came the bonders to him begging for mercy, and offering to submit to him. He gave every man who came to him peace if he desired it, and restored to him his goods; and nobody refused to adopt Christianity. The king then had the people christened, and took hostages from the bonders. He ordered churches to be built and consecrated, and placed teachers in them. He remained a long time here in autumn, and had his ships drawn across the neck of land between the two lakes.\* The king did not go far from the sides of the lakes into the country, for he did not much trust the bonders. When the king thought that frost might be expected, he went farther up the country, and came to Thoten. Arnor, the earl's scald, tells how King Olaf burnt in the Uplands, in the poem he composed concerning the king's brother King Harald:—

“ Against the Upland people wroth,  
 Olaf, to most so mild, went forth :  
 The houses burning,  
 All people mourning;  
 Who could not fly  
 Hung on gallows high.  
 It was, I think, in Olaf's race  
 The Upland people to oppress.”

Afterwards King Olaf went north through the valleys to Dovrefield, and did not halt until he reached the Drontheim district and arrived at Nidaros, where

\* The Eid, or neck of land between two lakes, is here the neck between the Myosen and the Sledre lakes.



he had ordered winter provision to be collected, and remained all winter. This was the tenth year of his reign.

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The summer before Einar Tambarskelver left the country, and went westward to England. There he met his relative Earl Hakon, and staid some time with him. He then visited King Canute, from whom he received great presents. Einar then went south all the way to Rome, and came back the following summer, and returned to his house and land. King Olaf and Einar did not meet this time.

CHAPTER  
CXXX.  
Of Einar  
Tambar-  
skelver.

There was a girl whose name was Alfild, and who was usually called the king's slave-woman, although she was of good descent. She was a remarkably handsome girl, and lived in King Olaf's court. It was reported this spring that Alfild was with child, and the king's confidential friends knew that he was father of the child. It happened one night that Alfild was taken ill, and only few people were at hand; namely, some women, priests, Sigvat the scald, and a few others. Alfild was so ill that she was nearly dead; and when she was delivered of a man-child, it was some time before they could discover whether the child was in life. But when the infant drew breath, although very weak, the priest told Sigvat to hasten to the king, and tell him of the event.

CHAPTER  
CXXXI.  
The birth  
of King  
Magnus.

He replies, "I dare not on any account waken the king; for he has forbid that any man should break his sleep until he awakens of himself."

The priest replies, "It is of necessity that this child be immediately baptized, for it appears to me there is but little life in it."

Sigvat said, "I would rather venture to take upon me to let thee baptize the child, than to awaken the king; and I will take it upon myself if any thing be amiss, and will give the child a name."

They did so; and the child was baptized, and got



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the name of Magnus. The next morning, when the king awoke and had dressed himself, the circumstance was told him. He ordered Sigvat to be called, and said, "How camest thou to be so bold as to have my child baptized before I knew any thing about it?"

Sigvat replies, "Because I would rather give two men to God than one to the devil."

The king—"What meanest thou?"

Sigvat—"The child was near death, and must have been the devil's if it had died as a heathen, and now it is God's. And I knew besides that if thou shouldst be so angry on this account that it affected my life, I would be God's also."

The king asked, "But why didst thou call him Magnus, which is not a name of our race?"

Sigvat—"I called him after King Carl Magnus, who, I knew, had been the best man in the world."\*

\* The pagan Northmen, according to the learned Finn Magnusen, the first antiquary of our times, in his "Runamo," page 103., held, in common with the Druids and Brahmins, the doctrine of transmigration, or rather reincarnation of souls. They believed that by giving a child the name of a distinguished man, especially of his own forefathers, the soul of the name-father was transfused into the child. Saint Olaf was named by his foster-father Rane after his ancestor King Olaf Geirstad-Alf, who was popular in his time; and the people believed that this Olaf Geirstad-Alf was born again in Saint Olaf. Saint Olaf himself was pleased with his son being named after Charlemagne. This pagan belief accounts for the giving a name at baptism being to this day reckoned in the Northern Christian churches an essential part in baptism, although in reality it is no part of that sacrament at all, but merely a pagan usage, attached, and very conveniently and properly, to the adoption by baptism into the Christian faith. This pagan belief also, on which Finn Magnusen is too deeply versed in the Northern mythology to be under any mistake, removes the difficulty in the ordinary view given us of the Odin religion, and of its Valhalla. We find that heroes, or men slain in battle, or distinguished by warlike deeds during a long life, were alone admitted into their Valhalla; and what, according to their belief, became of ordinary souls, of the souls of the many and of the females, does not appear. They had no part in Valhalla. But this pagan belief in a reincarnation, if Finn Magnusen be correct, removes this difficulty in understanding the Odin paganism, and makes the system intelligible as something embracing all, and not merely the few heroes who die in battle.



Then said the king, "Thou art a very lucky man, Sigvat; but it is not wonderful that luck should accompany understanding. It is only wonderful how it sometimes happens that luck attends ignorant men, and that foolish counsel turns out lucky." The king was overjoyed at the circumstance. The boy grew up, and gave good promise as he advanced in age.

SAGA VII.

The same spring, the king gave into the hands of Aasmund Grankelsson the half of the sheriffdom of the district of Halogaland, which Harek of Thiottö had formerly held, partly in fief, partly for defraying the king's entertainment in guest-quarters. Aasmund had a ship manned with nearly thirty well-armed men. When Aasmund came north he met Harek, and told him what the king had determined with regard to the district, and produced to him the tokens of the king's full powers. Harek said, "The king had the right to give the sheriffdom to whom he pleased; but the former sovereigns had not been in use to diminish our rights who are entitled by birth to hold powers from the king, and to give them into the hands of peasants who never before held such offices." But although it was evident that it was against Harek's inclination, he allowed Aasmund to take the sheriffdom according to the king's order. Then Aasmund proceeded home to his father, staid there a short time, and then went north to Halogaland to his sheriffdom; and he came north to Largö Island, where there dwelt two brothers called Gunstein and Carl, both very rich and respectable men. Gunstein, the eldest of the brothers, was a good husbandman. Carl was a handsome man in appearance, and splendid in his dress; and both were, in many respects, expert in all feats. Aasmund was well received by them, remained with them a while, and collected such revenues of his sheriffdom as he could get. Carl spoke with Aasmund of his wish to go south with him and take service in the court of

CHAPTER  
CXXXII.  
The murder of  
Asbiorn  
Selsbane.



## SAGA VII.

King Olaf, to which Aasmund encouraged him much, promising his influence with the king for obtaining for Carl such a situation as he desired; and Carl accordingly accompanied Aasmund. Aasmund heard that Asbiorn, who had killed Thorer Sel, had gone to the market-meeting of Vaage with a large ship of burden manned with nearly twenty men, and that he was now expected from the south. Aasmund and his retinue proceeded on their way southwards along the coast with a contrary wind, but there was little of it. They saw some of the fleet for Vaage sailing towards them; and they privately inquired of them about Asbiorn, and were told he was upon the way coming from the south. Aasmund and Carl were bedfellows, and excellent friends. One day, as Aasmund and his people were rowing through a sound, a ship of burden came sailing towards them. The ship was easily known, having high bulwarks, was painted with white and red colours, and coloured cloth was woven in the sail. Carl said to Aasmund, "Thou hast often said thou wast curious to see Asbiorn who killed Thorer Sel; and if I know one ship from another, that is his which is coming sailing along."

Aasmund replies, "Be so good, comrade, and tell me which is he when thou seest him."

When the ships came alongside of each other, "That is Asbiorn," said Carl; "the man sitting at the helm in a blue cloak."

Aasmund replies, "I shall make his blue cloak red;" threw a spear at Asbiorn, and hit him in the middle of the body, so that it flew through and through him, and stuck fast in the upper part of the stern-post, and Asbiorn fell down dead from the helm. Then each vessel sailed on its course, and Asbiorn's body was carried north to Thrandarnæs. Then Sigrid sent a message to Biarkö Isle to Thorer Hund, who came to her while they were, in the usual way, dressing the corpse of



Asbiorn. When he returned Sigrid gave presents to all her friends, and followed Thorer to his ship; but before they parted she said, "It has so fallen out, Thorer, that my son has suffered by thy friendly counsel, but he did not retain life to reward thee for it; but although I have not his ability, yet will I show my good will. Here is a gift I give thee, which I expect thou wilt use. Here is the spear which went through Asbiorn my son, and there is still blood upon it, to remind thee that it fits the wound thou hast seen on the corpse of thy brother's son Asbiorn. It would be a manly deed, if thou shouldst throw this spear from thy hand so that it stood in Olaf's breast; and this I can tell thee, that thou wilt be named coward in every man's mouth, if thou dost not avenge Asbiorn." Thereupon she turned about, and went her way.

Thorer was so enraged at her words that he could not speak. He neither thought of casting the spear from him, nor took notice of the gangway; so that he would have fallen into the sea, if his men had not laid hold of him as he was going on board his ship. It was a feathered spear; not large, but the handle was gold-mounted. Now Thorer rowed away with his people, and went home to Biarkö Isle. Aasmund and his companions also proceeded on their way until they came south to Drontheim, where they waited on King Olaf; and Aasmund related to the king all that had happened on the voyage. Carl became one of the king's court-men, and the friendship continued between him and Aasmund. They did not keep secret the words that had passed between Aasmund and Carl before Asbiorn was killed; for they even told them to the king. But then it happened, according to the proverb, that every one has a friend in the midst of his enemies. There were some present who



SAGA VII. took notice of the words, and they reached Thorer Hund's ears.

CHAPTER  
CXXXIII.  
Of King  
Olaf.

When spring was advanced King Olaf rigged out his ships, and sailed southwards in summer along the land. He held Things with the bonders on the way, settled the law business of the people, put to rights the faith of the country, and collected the king's taxes wherever he came. In autumn he proceeded south to the frontier of the country; and King Olaf had now made the people Christians in all the great districts, and every where, by laws, had introduced order into the country. He had also, as before related, brought the Orkney Islands under his power, and by messages had made many friends in Iceland, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. King Olaf had sent timber for building a church to Iceland, of which a church was built upon the Thing-field where the General Thing is held, and had sent a bell for it, which is still there. This was after the Iceland people had altered their laws, and introduced Christianity, according to the word King Olaf had sent them. After that time, many considerable persons came from Iceland, and entered into King Olaf's service; as Thorkel Eyolfsson, and Thorleif Bollason, Thord Kolbeinsson, Thord Bakarson, Thorgeir Haavardson, Thormod Kalbrunar the scald. King Olaf had sent many friendly presents to chief people in Iceland; and they in return sent him such things as they had which they thought most acceptable. Under this show of friendship which the king gave Iceland were concealed many things which afterwards appeared.

CHAPTER  
CXXXIV.  
King  
Olaf's  
message to  
Iceland,  
and the  
counsels  
of the Ice-  
landers.

King Olaf this summer sent Thorarin Nefiolfsson to Iceland on his errands; and Thorarin went out of Drontheim fiord along with the king, and followed him south to Möre. From thence Thorarin went out to sea, and got such a favourable breeze that after four days' sail he landed at the Westmann Isles, in



Iceland. He proceeded immediately to the Al-thing, and came just as the people were upon the Law hillock, to which he repaired. When the cases of the people before the Thing had been determined according to law, Thorarin Nefiolfsson took up the word as follows:—"We parted four days ago from King Olaf Haraldsson, who sends God Almighty's and his own salutation to all the chiefs and principal men of the land; as also to all the people in general, men and women, young and old, rich and poor. He also lets you know that he will be your sovereign if ye will become his subjects, so that he and you will be friends, assisting each other in all that is good."

The people replied in a friendly way, that they would gladly be the king's friends, if he would be a friend of the people of their country.

Then Thorarin again took up the word:—"This follows, in addition to the king's message, that he will in friendship desire of the people of the north district that they give him the island, or out-rock, which lies at the mouth of Ofiord, and is called Grimsö Island, for which he will give you from his country whatever good the people of the district may desire. He sends this message particularly to Gudmund of Modrovold to support this matter, because he understands that Gudmund has most influence in that quarter."

Gudmund replies, "My inclination is greatly for King Olaf's friendship, and that I consider much more useful than the out-rock he desires. But the king has not heard rightly if he think I have more power in this matter than any other, for the island is a common. We, however, who have the most use of the isle, will hold a meeting among ourselves about it."

Then the people went to their tent-houses; and the Northland people had a meeting among themselves, and talked over the business, and every one spoke



SAGA VII.

according to his judgment. Gudmund supported the matter, and many others formed their opinions by his. Then some asked why his brother Einar did not speak on the subject. "We think he has the clearest insight into most things."

Einar answers, "I have said so little about the matter because nobody has asked me about it; but if I may give my opinion, our countrymen might just as well make themselves at once liable to land-scatt to King Olaf, and submit to all his exactions as he has them among his people in Norway; and this heavy burden we will lay not only upon ourselves, but on our sons, and their sons, and all our race, and on all the community dwelling and living in this land, which never after will be free from this slavery. Now although this king is a good man, as I well believe him to be, yet it must be hereafter, when kings succeed each other, that some will be good, and some bad. Therefore if the people of this country will preserve the freedom they have enjoyed since the land was first inhabited, it is not advisable to give the king the smallest spot to fasten himself upon the country by, and not to give him any kind of scatt or service that can have the appearance of a duty. On the other hand, I think it very proper that the people send the king such friendly presents of hawks or horses, tents or sails, or such things which are suitable gifts; and these are well applied if they are repaid with friendship. But as to Grimsö Isle, I have to say, that although nothing is drawn from it that can serve for food, yet it could support a great war-force cruising from thence in long-ships; and then, I doubt, there would be distress enough at every poor peasant's door."

When Einar had thus explained the proper connection of the matter, the whole community were of one mind that such a thing should not be permitted;



and Thorarin saw sufficiently well what the result of his errand was to be. SAGA VII.

The day following, Thorarin went again to the Law-hill, and brought forward his errand in the following words:—"King Olaf sends his message to his friends here in the country, among whom he reckons Gudmund Eyolfsson, Snorro Gode, Thorkel Eyolfsson, Skopte the lagman, and Thorstein Hallsson, and desires them by me to come to him on a friendly visit; and adds, that ye must not excuse yourselves, if you regard his friendship as worth any thing." In their answer they thanked the king for his message; and added, that they would afterwards give a reply to it by Thorarin when they had more closely considered the matter with their friends. The chiefs now weighed the matter among themselves, and each gave his own opinion about the journey. Snorro and Skopte dissuaded from such a dangerous proceeding with the people of Norway; namely, that all the men who had the most to say in the country should at once leave Iceland. They added, that from this message, and from what Einar had said, they had the suspicion that the king intended to use force and strong measures against the Icelanders if he ruled in the country. Gudmund and Thorkel Eyolfsson insisted much that they should follow King Olaf's invitation, and called it a journey of honour. But when they had considered the matter on all sides, it was at last resolved that they should not travel themselves, but that each of them should send in his place a man whom they thought best suited for it. After this determination the Thing was closed, and there was no journey that summer. Thorarin made two voyages that summer, and about harvest was back again at King Olaf's, and reported the result of his mission, and that some of the chiefs, or their sons, would come from Iceland according to his message.

CHAPTER  
CXXXV.  
The answer  
of the Ice-  
landers.



SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CXXXVI.  
Of the  
people of  
the Faroe  
Islands.

The same summer there came from the Faroe Islands to Norway, on the king's invitation, Gille the lagman, Leif Ossursson, Thoralf of Dimon, and many other bonders' sons. Thord of Gata made himself ready for the voyage; but just as he was setting out he got a stroke of palsy, and could not come, so he remained behind. Now when the people from the Faroe Isles arrived at King Olaf's, he called them to him to a conference, and explained the purpose of the journey he had made them take; namely, that he would have scatt from the Faroe Islands, and also that the people there should be subject to the laws which the king should give them. In that meeting it appeared from the king's words that he would make the Faroe people who had come answerable, and would bind them by oath to conclude this union. He also offered to the men whom he thought the ablest to take them into his service, and bestow honour and friendship on them. These Faroe men understood the king's words so, that they must dread the turn the matter might take if they did not submit to all that the king desired. Although they held several meetings about the business before it ended, the king's desire at last prevailed. Leif Gille and Thoralf went into the king's service, and became his court-men; and they, with all their travelling companions, swore the oath to King Olaf, that the law and land privilege which he set them should be observed in the Faroe Islands, and also the scatt be levied that he laid upon them. Thereafter the Faroe people prepared for their return home, and at their departure the king gave those who had entered into his service presents in testimony of his friendship, and they went their way. Now the king ordered a ship to be rigged, manned it, and sent men to the Faroe Islands to receive the scatt from the inhabitants which they should pay him. It was late before they were ready; but they set off at



last: and of their journey all that is to be told is, that they did not come back, and no scatt either, the following summer; for nobody had come to the Faroe Isles, and no man had demanded scatt there.

SAGA VII.

King Olaf proceeded about harvest time to Viken, and sent a message before him to the Uplands that they should prepare guest-quarters for him, as he intended to be there in winter. Afterwards he made ready for his journey, and went to the Uplands, and remained the winter there; going about in guest-quarters, and putting things to rights where he saw it needful, advancing also the cause of Christianity wheresoever it was requisite. It happened while King Olaf was in Hedemark that Ketil Kalf of Ringenæs courted Gunhild, a daughter of Sigurd Syr and of King Olaf's mother Asta. Gunhild was a sister of King Olaf, and therefore it belonged to the king to give consent and determination to the business. He took it in a friendly way; for he knew Ketil, that he was of high birth, wealthy, and of good understanding, and a great chief; and also he had long been a great friend of King Olaf, as before related. All these circumstances induced the king to approve of the match, and so it was that Ketil got Gunhild. King Olaf was present at the wedding. From thence the king went north to Gudbrandsdal, where he was entertained in guest-quarters. There dwelt a man, by name Thord Guttormsson, on a farm called Steig\*; and he was the most powerful man in the north end of the valley. When Thord and the king met, Thord made proposals for Isrid, the daughter of Gudbrand, and the sister of King Olaf's mother, as it belonged to the king to give consent. After the matter was considered, it was determined that the marriage should proceed, and

CHAPTER  
CXXXVII.  
Of the marriage of  
Ketil and  
of Thord  
to the king's  
sisters.

\* Steig is a farm two miles south-east of Froen's church in Gudbrandsdal.



## SAGA VII.

Thord got Isrid. Afterwards Thord was the king's faithful friend, and also many of Thord's relations and friends, who followed his footsteps. From thence King Olaf returned south through Thoten and Hadeland, from thence to Ringerige, and so to Viken. In spring he went to Tunsberg, and staid there while there was the market-meeting, and a great resort of people. He then had his vessels rigged out, and had many people about him.

CHAPTER  
CXXXVIII.  
Of the Ice-  
landers.

The same summer came Stein, a son of the lagman Skopte, from Iceland, in compliance with King Olaf's message; and with him Thorod, a son of Snorro the godar, and Gellir, a son of Thorkel Eyolfsson, and Egil, a son of Sidu Hall, brother of Thorstein Hall. Gudmund Eyolfsson had died the winter before. These Iceland men repaired to King Olaf as soon as they had opportunity; and when they met the king they were well received, and all were in his house. The same summer King Olaf heard that the ship was missing which he had sent the summer before to the Faroe Islands after the scatt, and nobody knew what had become of it. The king fitted out another ship, manned it, and sent it to the Faroe Islands for the scatt. They got under weigh, and proceeded to sea; but as little was ever heard of this vessel as of the former one, and many conjectures were made about what had become of them.

CHAPTER  
CXXXIX.  
Here be-  
gins the  
story of  
Canute the  
Great.

During this time Canute the Great, called by some Canute the Old, was king of England and Denmark. Canute the Great was a son of Swend Haraldsson Forked-beard, whose forefathers, for a long course of generations, had ruled over Denmark. Harald Gormsson, Canute's grandfather, had conquered Norway after the fall of Harald Greyskin, Gunhild's son, had taken scatt from it, and had placed Earl Hakon the Great to defend the country. The Danish king, Swend Haraldsson, ruled also over Norway, and



placed his son-in-law Earl Eric, the son of Earl Hakon, to defend the country. The brothers Eric and Swend, Earl Hakon's sons, ruled the land until Earl Eric went west to England, on the invitation of his brother-in-law Canute the Great, when he left behind his son Earl Hakon, sister's son of Canute the Great, to govern Norway. But when Olaf the Thick came first to Norway, as before related, he took prisoner Earl Hakon, the son of Eric, and deposed him from the kingdom. Then Hakon proceeded to his mother's brother, Canute the Great, and had been with him constantly until the time to which here in our saga we have now come. Canute the Great had conquered England by blows and weapons, and had a long struggle before the people of the land were subdued. But when he had set himself perfectly firm in the government of the country, he remembered that he also had right to a kingdom which he had not brought under his authority; and that was Norway. He thought he had hereditary right to all Norway; and his sister's son Hakon, who had held a part of it, appeared to him to have lost it with disgrace. The reason why Canute and Hakon had remained quiet with respect to their claims upon Norway was, that when King Olaf Haraldsson landed in Norway the people and commonalty ran together in crowds, and would hear of nothing but that Olaf should be king over all the country, although some afterwards, who thought that the people upon account of his power had no self-government left to them, went out of the country. Many powerful men, or rich bonders' sons, had therefore gone to Canute the Great, and pretended various errands; and every one who came to Canute and desired his friendship was loaded with presents. With Canute, too, could be seen greater splendour and pomp than elsewhere, both with regard to the multitude of people who were daily in attendance, and also to the



SAGA VII.

other magnificent things about the houses he owned and dwelt in himself. Canute the Great drew scatt and revenue from the people who were the richest of all in northern lands; and in the same proportion as he had greater revenues than other kings, he also made greater presents than other kings. In his whole kingdom peace was so well established, that no man dared break it. The people of the country kept the peace towards each other, and had their old country law: and for this he was greatly celebrated in all countries. And many of those who came from Norway represented their hardships to Earl Hakon, and some even to King Canute himself; and that the Norway people were ready to turn back to the government of King Canute, or Earl Hakon, and receive deliverance from them. This conversation suited well the earl's inclination, and he carried it to the king, and begged of him to try if King Olaf would not surrender the kingdom, or at least come to an agreement to divide it; and many supported the earl's views.

CHAPTER  
CXL.  
Canute's  
message to  
King Olaf.

Canute the Great sent men from the West, from England, to Norway, and equipped them magnificently for the journey. They were bearers of the English king Canute's letter and seal. They came about spring to the king of Norway, Olaf Haraldsson, in Tunsberg. Now when it was told the king that ambassadors had arrived from Canute the Great he was ill at ease, and said that Canute had not sent messengers hither with any messages that could be of advantage to him or his people; and it was some days before the ambassadors could come before the king. But when they got permission to speak to him they appeared before the king, and made known King Canute's letter, and their errand which accompanied it; namely, "that King Canute considers all Norway as his property, and insists that his forefathers before him have possessed that kingdom; but as King Canute offers



peace to all countries, he will also offer peace to all here, if it can be so settled, and will not invade Norway with his army if it can be avoided. Now if King Olaf Haraldsson wishes to remain king of Norway, he will come to King Canute, and receive his kingdom as a fief from him, become his vassal, and pay the scatt which the earls before him formerly paid." Thereupon they presented their letters, which contained precisely the same conditions.

Then King Olaf replies, "I have heard say, by old stories, that the Danish king Gorm was considered but a small king of a few people, for he ruled over Denmark alone; but the kings who succeeded him thought that was too little. It has since come so far that King Canute rules over Denmark and England, and has conquered for himself a great part of Scotland. Now he claims also my paternal heritage, and will then show some moderation in his covetousness. Does he wish to rule over all the countries of the North? Will he eat up all the kail in England? He shall do so, and reduce that country to a desert, before I lay my head in his hands, or show him any other kind of vassalage. Now ye shall tell him these my words,—I will defend Norway with battle-axe and sword as long as life is given me, and will pay scatt to no man for my kingdom."

After this answer King Canute's ambassadors made themselves ready for their journey home, and were by no means rejoiced at the success of their errand.

Sigvat the scald had been with King Canute, who had given him a gold ring that weighed half a mark. The scald Birse Thorfeson was also there, and to him King Canute gave two gold rings, each weighing two marks, and besides a sword inlaid with gold. Sigvat made this song about it:—



SAGA VII. "When we came o'er the wave, you cub\*, when we came o'er the wave,  
 — To me one ring, to thee two rings, the mighty Canute gave :

One mark to me,  
 Four marks to thee,—  
 A sword too, fine and brave.  
 Now God knows well,  
 And scalds can tell,  
 What justice here would crave."

Sigvat the scald was very intimate with King Canute's messengers, and asked them many questions. They answered all his inquiries about their conversation with King Olaf, and the result of their message. They said the king listened unwillingly to their proposals. "And we do not know," say they, "to what he is trusting when he refuses becoming King Canute's vassal, and going to him, which would be the best thing he could do; for King Canute is so mild that however much a chief may have done against him, he is pardoned if he only show himself obedient. It is but lately that two kings came to him from the North, from Fife in Scotland, and he gave up his wrath against them, and allowed them to retain all the lands they had possessed before, and gave them besides very valuable gifts." Then Sigvat sang:—

"From the North land, the midst of Fife,  
 Two kings came begging peace and life;  
 Craving from Canute life and peace,—  
 May Olaf's good luck never cease!  
 May he, our gallant Norse king, never  
 Be brought, like these, his head† to offer  
 As ransom to a living man  
 For the broad lands his sword has won."

King Canute's ambassadors proceeded on their way back, and had a favourable breeze across the sea. They came to King Canute, and told him the result

\* Berse, the name of the more fortunate scald, signifies also a young bear; and Sigvat puns upon it.

† The feudal ceremony of the vassal laying his head on the knee, or between the hands of the feudal lord, appears to have been held disgraceful by the Northmen.



of their errand, and King Olaf's last words. King Canute replies, "King Olaf guesses wrong, if he thinks I shall eat up all the kail in England; for I will let him see that there is something else than kail under my ribs, and cold kail it shall be for him." The same summer Aslak and Skialg, the sons of Erling of Jederen, came from Norway to King Canute, and were well received; for Aslak was married to Sigrid, a daughter of Earl Swend Hakonsson, and she and Earl Hakon Ericsson were brothers' children. King Canute gave these brothers great fiefs over there, and they stood in great favour.

King Olaf summoned to him all the lendersmen, and had a great many people about him this summer, for a report was abroad that King Canute would come from England. People had heard from merchant vessels that Canute was assembling a great army in England. When summer was advanced, some affirmed and others denied that the army would come. King Olaf was all summer in Viken, and had spies out to learn if Canute was come to Denmark. In autumn he sent messengers eastward to Sweden to his brother-in-law King Onund, and let him know King Canute's demand upon Norway; adding, that, in his opinion, if Canute subdued Norway, King Onund would not long enjoy the Swedish dominions in peace. He thought it advisable, therefore, that they should unite for their defence. "And then," said he, "we will have strength enough to hold out against Canute." King Onund received King Olaf's message favourably, and replied to it, that he for his part would make common cause with King Olaf, so that each of them should stand by the one who first required help with all the strength of his kingdom. In these messages between them it was also determined that they should have a meeting, and consult with each other. The following winter King Onund intended to travel across West Gotland,

SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CXLI.  
King  
Olaf's al-  
liance with  
Onund the  
king of  
Sweden.



SAGA VII. and King Olaf made preparations for taking his winter abode at Sarpsburg.

CHAPTER  
CXLII.  
King  
Canute's  
embas-  
sadors to  
Onund of  
Sweden.

In autumn King Canute the Great came to Denmark, and remained there all winter with a numerous army. It was told him that ambassadors with messages had been passing between the Swedish and Norwegian kings, and that some great plans must be concerting between them. In winter King Canute sent messengers to Sweden, to King Onund, with great gifts and messages of friendship. He also told Onund that he might sit altogether quiet in this strife between him and Olaf the Thick; "for thou, Onund," says he, "and thy kingdom, shall be in peace as far as I am concerned." When the ambassadors came to King Onund they presented the gifts which King Canute sent him, together with the friendly message. King Onund did not hear their speech very willingly, and the ambassadors could observe that King Onund was most inclined to a friendship with King Olaf. They returned accordingly, and told King Canute the result of their errand, and told him not to depend much upon the friendship of King Onund.

CHAPTER  
CXLIII.  
The expe-  
dition to  
Biarmeland.

This winter King Olaf sat in Sarpsburg, and was surrounded by a very great army of people. He sent the Halogalander Carl to the north country upon his business. Carl went first to the Uplands, then across the Dovrefield, and came down to Nidaros, where he received as much money as he had the king's order for, together with a good ship, such as he thought suitable for the voyage which the king had ordered him upon; and that was to proceed north to Biarmeland.\* It was settled that the king should be in partnership with Carl, and each of them have the half of the profit. Early in spring Carl directed his course to Halogaland, where his brother Gunstein

\* The coasts of the White Sea.



prepared to accompany him, having his own merchant goods with him. There were about twenty-five men in the ship; and in spring they sailed north to Finmark. When Thorer Hund heard this, he sent a man to the brothers with the verbal message that he intended in summer to go to Biarmeland, and that he would sail with them, and that they should divide what booty they made equally between them. Carl sent him back the message that Thorer must have twenty-five men as they had, and they were willing to divide the booty that might be taken equally, but not the merchant goods which each had for himself. When Thorer's messenger came back he had put a stout long-ship he owned into the water, and rigged it, and he had put eighty men on board of his house-servants. Thorer alone had the command over this crew, and he alone had all the goods they might acquire on the cruise. When Thorer was ready for sea he set out northwards along the coast, and found Carl a little north of Sandrær. They then proceeded with good wind. Gunstein said to his brother, as soon as they met Thorer, that in his opinion Thorer was strongly manned. "I think," said he, "we had better turn back than sail so entirely in Thorer's power, for I do not trust him." Carl replies, "I will not turn back, although if I had known when we were at home on Largö Isle that Thorer Hund would join us on this voyage with so large a crew as he has, I would have taken more hands with us." The brothers spoke about it to Thorer, and asked what was the meaning of his taking more people with him than was agreed upon between them. He replies, "We have a large ship which requires many hands, and methinks there cannot be too many brave lads for so dangerous a cruise." They went in summer as fast in general as the vessels could go. When the wind was light the ship of the brothers sailed fastest, and they separated;



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but when the wind freshened Thorer overtook them. They were seldom together, but always in sight of each other. When they came to Biarmeland they went straight to the merchant town, and the market began. All who had money to pay with got filled up with goods. Thorer also got a number of furs, and of beaver and sable skins. Carl had a considerable sum of money with him, with which he purchased skins and furs. When the fair was at an end they went out of the Dwina river, and then the truce with the country people was also at an end. When they came out of the river they held a seaman's council, and Thorer asked the crews if they would like to go on the land and get booty.

They replied, that they would like it well enough, if they saw the booty before their eyes.

Thorer replies, that there was booty to be got, if the voyage proved fortunate; but that in all probability there would be danger in the attempt.

All said they would try, if there was any chance of booty. Thorer explained, that it was so established in this land, that when a rich man died all his moveable goods were divided between the dead man and his heirs. He got the half part, or the third part, or sometimes less, and that part was carried out into the forest and buried,—sometimes under a mound, sometimes in the earth, and sometimes even a house was built over it. He tells them at the same time to get ready for this expedition at the fall of day. It was resolved that one should not desert the other, and none should hold back when the commander ordered them to come on board again. They now left people behind to take care of the ships, and went on land, where they found flat fields at first, and then great forests. Thorer went first, and the brothers Carl and Gunstein in rear. Thorer commanded the people to observe the utmost silence. “And let us



peel the bark off the trees," says he, "so that one tree-mark can be seen from the other." They came to a large cleared opening, where there was a high fence upon which there was a gate that was locked. Six men of the country people held watch every night at this fence, two at a time keeping guard, each two for a third part of the night. When Thorer and his men came to the fence the guard had gone home, and those who should relieve them had not yet come upon guard. Thorer went to the fence, struck his axe up in it above his head, hauled himself up by it, and so came over the fence, and inside the gate. Carl had also come over the fence, and to the inside of the gate; so that both came at once to the port, took the bar away, and opened the port; and then the people got in within the fence. Then said Thorer, "Within this fence there is a mound in which gold, and silver, and earth are all mixed together: seize that. But within here stands the Biarmeland people's god Jomala: let no one be so presumptuous as to rob him." Thereupon they went to the mound, and took as much of the money as they could carry away in their clothes, with which, as might be expected, much earth was mixed. Thereafter Thorer said that the people now should retreat. "And ye brothers, Carl and Gunstein," says he, "do ye lead the way, and I will go last." They all went accordingly out of the gate: but Thorer went back to Jomala, and took a silver bowl that stood upon his knee full of silver money. He put the silver in his purse, and put his arm within the handle of the bowl, and so went out of the gate. The whole troop had come without the fence; but when they perceived that Thorer had staid behind, Carl returned to trace him, and when they met upon the path Thorer had the silver bowl with him. Thereupon Carl immediately ran to Jomala; and observing he had a thick gold



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ornament hanging around his neck, he lifted his axe, cut the string with which the ornament was tied behind his neck, and the stroke was so strong that the head of Jomala rang with such a great sound that they were all astonished. Carl seized the ornament, and they all hastened away. But the moment the sound was made the watchmen came forward upon the cleared space, and blew their horns. Immediately the sound of the lure\* was heard all around from every quarter, calling the people together. They hastened to the forest, and rushed into it; and heard the shouts and cries on the other side of the Biarmeland people in pursuit. Thorer Hund went the last of the whole troop; and before him went two men carrying a great sack between them, in which was something that was like ashes. Thorer took this in his hand, and strewed it upon the footpath, and sometimes over the people. They came thus out of the woods, and upon the fields, but heard incessantly the Biarmeland people pursuing with shouts and dreadful yells. The army of the Biarmeland people rushed out after them upon the field, and on both sides of them; but neither the people nor their weapons came so near as to do them any harm: from which they perceived that the Biarmeland people did not see them. Now when they reached their ships Carl and his brother went on board; for they were the foremost, and Thorer was far behind on the land. As soon as Carl and his men were on board they struck their tents, cast loose their land ropes, hoisted their sails, and their ship in all haste went to sea. Thorer and his people, on the other hand, did not get on so quickly, as their vessel was heavier to manage; so that when they got under sail

\* Ludr — the lure — is a long tube or roll of birch-bark used as a horn by the herdboys in the mountains in Norway.



Carl and his people were far off from land. Both vessels sailed across the White sea. The nights were clear, so that both ships sailed night and day; until one day, towards the time the day turns to shorten, Carl and his people took up the land near an island, let down the sail, cast anchor, and waited until the slack-tide set in, for there was a strong rost\* before them. Now Thorer came up, and lay at anchor there also. Thorer and his people then put out a boat, went into it, and rowed to Carl's ship. Thorer came on board, and the brothers saluted him. Thorer told Carl to give him the ornament. "I think," said he, "that I have best earned the ornaments that have been taken, for methinks ye have to thank me for getting away without any loss of men; and also I think thou, Carl, set us in the greatest fright."

Carl replies, "King Olaf has the half part of all the goods I gather on this voyage, and I intend the ornament for him. Go to him, if you like, and it is possible he will give thee the ornament, although I took it from Jomala."

Then Thorer insisted that they should go upon the island, and divide the booty.

Gunstein says, "It is now the turn of the tide, and it is time to sail." Whereupon they began to raise their anchor.

When Thorer saw that, he returned to his boat and rowed to his own ship. Carl and his men had hoisted sail, and were come a long way before Thorer got under way. They now sailed so that the brothers were always in advance, and both vessels made all the haste they could. They sailed thus until they came to Geirsvær, which is the first roadstead of the traders to the North. They both came there towards even-

\* Rost, or race, the heavy sea made by a strong current running against the wind.



SAGA VII. ing, and lay in the harbour near the landing place. Thorer's ship lay inside, and the brothers' the outside vessel in the port. When Thorer had set up his tents he went on shore, and many of his men with him. They went to Carl's ship, which was well provided. Thorer hailed the ship, and told the commanders to come on shore; on which the brothers, and some men with them, went on the land. Now Thorer began the same discourse, and told them to bring the goods they got in booty to the land to have them divided. The brothers thought that was not necessary, until they had arrived at their own neighbourhood. Thorer said it was unusual not to divide booty but at their own home, and thus to be left to the honour of other people. They spoke some words about it, but could not agree. Then Thorer turned away; but had not gone far before he came back, and tells his comrades to wait there. Thereupon he calls to Carl, and says he wants to speak with him alone. Carl went to meet him; and when he came near, Thorer struck at him with a spear, so that it went through him. "There," said Thorer, "now thou hast learnt to know a Biarkö Island man. I thought thou shouldst feel Asbiorn's spear." Carl died instantly, and Thorer with his people went immediately on board their ship. When Gunstein and his men saw Carl's fall they ran instantly to him, took his body and carried it on board their ship, struck their tents, and cast off from the pier, and left the land. When Thorer and his men saw this, they took down their tents, and made preparations to follow. But as they were hoisting the sail the fastenings to the mast broke in two, and the sail fell down across the ship, which caused a great delay before they could hoist the sail again. Gunstein had already got a long way a-head before Thorer's ship fetched way, and now they used both sails and oars. Gunstein did the same. On



both sides they made great way day and night; but so that they did not gain much on each other, although when they came to the small sounds among the islands Gunstein's vessel was lighter in turning. But Thorer's ship made way upon them, so that when they came up to Lenvik, Gunstein turned towards the land, and with all his men ran up into the country, and left his ship. A little after Thorer came there with his ship, sprang upon the land after them, and pursued them. There was a woman who helped Gunstein to conceal himself, and it is told that she was much acquainted with witchcraft. Thorer and his men returned to the vessels, and took all the goods out of Gunstein's vessel, and put on board stones in place of the cargo, and then hauled the ship out into the fiord, cut a hole in its bottom, and sank it to the bottom. Thereafter Thorer, with his people, returned home to Biarkö Isle. Gunstein and his people proceeded in small boats at first, and lay concealed by day, until they had passed Biarkö, and had got beyond Thorer's district. Gunstein went home first to Largö Isle for a short time, and then proceeded south, without any halt, until he came to King Olaf, to whom he told all that had happened on this Biarmeland expedition. The king was ill pleased with the voyage, but told Gunstein to remain with him, promising to assist him when opportunity offered. Gunstein took the invitation with thanks, and staid with King Olaf.

King Olaf was, as before related, in Sarpsburg the winter that King Canute was in Denmark. The Swedish king Onund rode across West Gotland the same winter, and had 3,000 men with him. Men and messages passed between them; and they agreed to meet in spring at Konghelle. The meeting had been postponed, because they wished to know before they met what King Canute intended doing. As it

CHAPTER  
CXLIV.  
Meeting of  
King Olaf  
and King  
Onund.



SAGA VII. — was now approaching towards winter, King Canute made ready to go over to England with his forces, and left his son Hardaknut to rule in Denmark, and with him Earl Ulf, a son of Thorkel Sprakalegg. Ulf was married to Astrid, King Swend's daughter, and sister of Canute the Great. Their son Swend was afterwards king of Denmark. Earl Ulf was a very distinguished man. When the kings Olaf and Onund heard that Canute the Great had gone west to England, they hastened to hold their conference, and met at Konghelle, on the Gotha river. They had a joyful meeting, and had many friendly conversations, of which something might become known to the public; but they also spake often a great deal between themselves, with none but themselves two present, of which only some things afterwards were carried into effect, and thus became known to every one. At parting the kings presented each other with gifts, and parted the best of friends. King Onund went up into Gotland, and Olaf northwards to Viken, and afterwards to Agder, and thence northwards along the coast, but lay a long time at Eggersund waiting a wind. Here he heard that Erling Skialgsson, and the inhabitants of Jederen with him, had assembled a large force. One day the king's people were talking among themselves whether the wind was south or south-west, and whether with that wind they could sail past Jederen or not. The most said it was impossible to fetch round. Then answers Hal-dor Bryniolfsson, "I am of opinion that we would go round Jederen with this wind fast enough, if Erling Skialgsson had prepared a feast for us at Sole." Then King Olaf ordered the tents to be struck, and the vessels to be hauled out, which was done. They sailed the same day past Jederen with the best wind, and in the evening reached the Whiting Isles, from



whence the king proceeded to Hordaland, and was entertained there in guest-quarters. SAGA VII.

The same summer a ship sailed from Norway to the Faroe Islands, with messengers carrying a verbal message from King Olaf, that one of his court-men, Leif Ossursson, or Lagman Gille, or Thoralf of Dimon, should come over to him from the Faroe Islands. Now when this message came to the Faroe Islands, and was delivered to those whom it concerned, they held a meeting among themselves, to consider what might lie under this message, and they were all of opinion that the king wanted to inquire into the real state of the event which some said had taken place upon the islands; namely, the failure and disappearance of the former messengers of the king, and the loss of the two ships, of which not a man had been saved. It was resolved that Thoralf should undertake the journey. He got himself ready, and rigged out a merchant-vessel belonging to himself, manned with ten or twelve men. When it was ready, waiting a wind, it happened at Osterö, in the house of Thrاند of Gatta, that he went one fine day into the room where his brother's two sons, Sigurd and Thord the Low, sons of Thorlak, were lying upon the benches in the room. Gaut the Red was also there, who was one of their relations and a man of distinction. Sigurd was the oldest, and their leader in all things. Thord had a distinguishing name, and was called Thord the Low, although in reality he was uncommonly tall, and yet in proportion more strong than large. Then Thrاند said, "How many things are changed in the course of a man's life. When we were young, it was rare for young people who were able to do any thing to sit or lie still upon a fine day, and our forefathers would scarcely have believed that Thoralf of Dimon would be bolder and more active than ye are. I believe the vessel I have

CHAPTER  
CXLV.  
Thoralf's  
murder.



SAGA VII. — standing here in the boat-house will be so old that it will rot under its coat of tar. Here are all the houses full of wool, which is neither used nor sold. It should not be so if I were a few winters younger." Sigurd sprang up, called upon Gaut and Thord, and said he would not endure Thrand's scoffs. They went out to the house-servants, and launched the vessel upon the water, brought down a cargo, and loaded the ship. They had no want of a cargo at home, and the vessel's rigging was in good order, so that in a few days they were ready for sea. There were ten or twelve men in the vessel. Thoralf's ship and theirs had the same wind, and they were generally in sight of each other. They came to the land at Herdlö\* in the evening, and Sigurd with his vessel lay outside on the strand, but so that there was not much distance between the two ships. It happened towards evening, when it was dark, that just as Thoralf and his people were preparing to go to bed, Thoralf and another went on shore for a certain purpose. When they were ready, they prepared to return on board. The man who had accompanied Thoralf related afterwards this story,—that a cloth was thrown over his head, and that he was lifted up from the ground, and he heard a great bustle. He was taken away, and thrown head foremost down; but there was sea under him, and he sank under the water. When he got to land, he went to the place where he and Thoralf had been parted, and there he found Thoralf with his head cloven down to his shoulders, and dead. When the ship's people heard of it they carried the body out to the ship, and let it remain there all night. King Olaf was at that time in guest-quarters at Lygre†, and thither they sent a message. Now a Thing was called by message-token, and the king came to the Thing. He had

\* An island near Askeland Isle, in Bergen district.

† A farm on the mainland, not far from Herdlö Isle.



also ordered the Faroe people of both vessels to be summoned, and they appeared at the Thing. Now when the Thing was seated, the king stood up and said, "Here an event has happened which (and it is well that it is so) is very seldom heard of. Here has a good man been put to death, without any cause. Is there any man upon the Thing who can say who has done it?"

Nobody could answer.

"Then," said the king, "I cannot conceal my suspicion that this deed has been done by the Faroe people themselves. It appears to me that it has been done in this way, — that Sigurd Thorlaksson has killed the man, and Thord the Low has cast his comrade into the sea. I think, too, that the motives to this must have been to hinder Thoralf from telling about the misdeed of which he had information; namely, the murder which I suspect was committed upon my messengers."

When he had ended his speech, Sigurd Thorlaksson stood up, and desired to be heard. "I have never before," said he, "spoken at a Thing, and I do not expect to be looked upon as a man of ready words. But I think there is sufficient necessity before me to reply something to this. I will venture to make a guess that the speech the king has made comes from some man's tongue who is of far less understanding and goodness than he is, and has evidently proceeded from those who are our enemies. It is speaking improbabilities to say that I could be Thoralf's murderer; for he was my foster-brother and good friend. Had the case been otherwise, and had there been any thing outstanding between me and Thoralf, yet I am surely born with sufficient understanding to have done this deed in the Faroe Islands, rather than here between your hands, sire. But I am ready to clear myself, and my whole ship's crew, of this act, and to



SAGA VII. — make oath according to what stands in your laws. Or, if ye find it more satisfactory, I offer to clear myself by the ordeal of hot iron; and I wish, sire, that you may be present yourself at the proof."

When Sigurd had ceased to speak there were many who supported his case, and begged the king that Sigurd might be allowed to clear himself of this accusation. They thought that Sigurd had spoken well, and that the accusation against him might be untrue.

The king replies, "It may be with regard to this man very differently, and if he is belied in any respect he must be a good man; and if not, he is the boldest I have ever met with: and I doubt this is the case, and that he will bear witness to it himself."

At the desire of the people, the king took Sigurd's obligation to take the iron ordeal: he should come the following day to Lygra, where the bishop should preside at the ordeal; and so the Thing closed. The king went back to Lygra, and Sigurd and his comrades to their ship.

As soon as it began to be dark at night, Sigurd said to his ship's people, "To say the truth, we have come into a great misfortune; for a great lie is got up against us, and this king is a deceitful crafty man. Our fate is easy to be foreseen where he rules; for first he made Thoralf be slain, and then made us the misdoers, without benefit of redemption by fine. For him it is an easy matter to manage the iron ordeal, so that I doubt he will come ill off who tries it against him. Now there is coming a brisk mountain breeze, blowing right out of the sound and off the land; and it is my advice that we hoist our sail, and set out to sea. Let Thrand himself come with his wool to market another summer; but if I get away, it is my opinion I shall never think of coming to Norway again."

His comrades thought the advice good, hoisted



their sail, and in the night time took to the open sea with all speed. They did not stop until they came to Faroe, and home to Gata. Thrand was ill pleased with their voyage, and they did not answer him in a very friendly way; but they remained at home, however, with Thrand. The morning after, King Olaf heard of Sigurd's departure, and heavy reports went round about this case; and there were many who believed that the accusation against Sigurd was true, although they had denied and opposed it before the king. King Olaf spoke but little about the matter, but seemed to know of a certainty that the suspicion he had taken up was founded in truth. The king afterwards proceeded in his progress, taking up his abode where it was provided for him.

King Olaf called before him the men who had come from Iceland, Thorodd Snorresson, Geller Thorkelsson, Stein Skoptason, and Egil Hallsson, and spoke to them thus: — "Ye have spoken to me much in summer about making yourselves ready to return to Iceland, and I have never given you a distinct answer. Now I will tell you what my intention is. Thee, Geller, I propose to allow to return, if thou wilt carry my message there; but none of the other Icelanders who are now here may go to Iceland before I have heard how the message which thou Geller shalt bring thither has been received."

CHAPTER  
CXLVI.  
Of the Ice-  
landers.

When the king had made this resolution known, it appeared to those who had a great desire to return, and were thus forbidden, that they were unreasonably and hardly dealt with, and that they were placed in the condition of unfree men. In the mean time Geller got ready for his journey, and sailed in summer to Iceland, taking with him the message he was to bring before the Thing the following summer. The king's message was, that he required the Icelanders to adopt the laws which he had set in Norway, also to pay him thane-



SAGA VII. tax\* and nose-tax; namely, a penny for every nose, and the penny at the rate of ten pennies to the yard of wadmal.† At the same time he promised them his friendship if they accepted, and threatened them with all his vengeance if they refused his proposals.

The people sat long in deliberation on this business; but at last they were unanimous in refusing all the taxes and burdens which were demanded of them. That summer Geller returned back from Iceland to Norway to King Olaf, and found him in autumn in the east in Viken, just as he had come from Gotland; of which I shall speak hereafter in this story of King Olaf. Towards the end of autumn King Olaf repaired north to Drontheim, and went with his people to Nidaros, where he ordered a winter residence to be prepared for him. The winter that he passed here in the merchant town of Nidaros was the thirteenth year of his reign.

CHAPTER  
CXLVII.  
Of the  
Jemteland  
people.

There was once a man called Ketil Jemte, a son of Earl Onund of Sparboe, in the Drontheim district. He fled over the ridge of mountains from Eystein Ildraade, cleared the forest, and settled the country now called the province of Jemteland. A great many people joined him from the Drontheim land, on account of the disturbances there; for this King Eystein had laid taxes on the Drontheim people, and set his dog, called Saur, to be king over them. Thorer Helsing was Ketil's grandson, and he colonised the province called Helsingialand, which is named after him. When Harald Haarfager subdued the kingdom by force, many people fled out of the country from him, both Drontheim people and Naumedal people, and thus new settle-

\* Thegn-gilldi has been probably athane-tax, or tax on free men having certain property and rank.

† Wadmal was the coarse woollen cloth made in Iceland, and so generally used for clothing that it was a measure of value in the North, like money, for other commodities.



ments were added to Jemteland; and some settlers went even eastwards to Helsingialand and down to the Baltic coast, and all became subjects of the Swedish king. While Hakon Athelstan's foster-son was over Norway there was peace, and merchant traffic from Drontheim to Jemteland; and, as he was an excellent king, the Jemtelanders came from the east to him, paid him scatt, and he gave them laws and administered justice. They would rather submit to his government than to the Swedish king's, because they were of Norwegian race; and all the Helsingialand people, who had their descent from the north side of the mountain ridge, did the same. This continued long after those times, until Olaf the Thick and the Swedish king Olaf quarrelled about the boundaries. Then the Jemteland and Helsingialand people went back to the Swedish king; and then the forest of Eida was the eastern boundary of the land, and the mountain ridge, or keel of the country, the northern: and the Swedish king took scatt of Helsingialand, and also of Jemteland. Now, thought the king of Norway, Olaf, in consequence of the agreement between him and the Swedish king, the scatt of Jemteland should be paid differently than before; although it had long been established that the Jemteland people paid their scatt to the Swedish king, and that he appointed officers over the country. The Swedes would listen to nothing, but that all the land to the east of the keel of the country belonged to the Swedish king. Now this went so, as it often happens, that although the kings were brothers-in-law and relations, each would hold fast the dominions which he thought he had a right to. King Olaf had sent a message round in Jemteland, declaring it to be his will that the Jemteland people should be subject to him, threatening them with violence if they refused; but the Jemteland people preferred being subjects of the Swedish king.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CXLVIII.  
Stein's  
story.

The Icelanders, Thorodd Snorresson and Stein Skoptason, were ill pleased at not being allowed to do as they liked. Stein was a remarkably handsome man, dexterous at all feats, a great poet, splendid in his apparel, and very ambitious of distinction. His father, Skopte, had composed a poem on King Olaf, which he had taught Stein, in the intention that he should bring it to King Olaf. Stein could not now restrain himself from making the king reproaches in word and speech, both in verse and prose. Both he and Thorodd were imprudent in their conversation, and said the king would be looked upon as a worse man than those who, under faith and law, had sent their sons to him, as he now treated them as men without liberty. The king was angry at this. One day Stein stood before the king, and asked if he would listen to the poem which his father Skopte had composed about him. The king replies, "Thou must first repeat that, Stein, which thou hast composed about me." Stein replies, that it was not the case that he had composed any. "I am no scald, sire," said he; "and if I even could compose any thing, it, and all that concerns me, would appear to thee of little value." Stein then went out, but thought he perceived what the king alluded to. Thorgeir, one of the king's land-bailiffs, who managed one of his farms in Orkadal, happened to be present, and heard the conversation of the king and Stein, and soon afterwards Thorgeir returned home. One night Stein left the city, and his footboy with him. They went up Gulaasen and into Orkadal. One evening they came to one of the king's farms which Thorgeir had the management of, and Thorgeir invited Stein to pass the night there, and asked where he was travelling to. Stein begged the loan of a horse and sledge, for he saw they were just driving home corn.

Thorgeir replies, "I do not exactly see how it stands with thy journey, and if thou art travelling



with the king's leave. The other day, methinks, the words were not very sweet that passed between the king and thee." SAGA VII.

Stein said, "If it be so that I am not my own master for the king, yet I will not submit to such treatment from his slaves;" and, drawing his sword, he killed the land-bailiff. Then he took the horse, put the boy upon him, and sat himself in the sledge, and so drove the whole night. They travelled until they came to Surendal in Möre. There they had themselves ferried across the fiord, and proceeded onwards as fast as they could. They told nobody about the murder; but wherever they came called themselves king's men, and met good entertainment every where. One day at last they came towards evening to Giskö Isle, to Thorberg Arneson's house. He was not at home himself, but his wife Ragnhild, a daughter of Erling Skialgsson, was. There Stein was well received, because formerly there had been great friendship between them. It had once happened, namely, that Stein, on his voyage from Iceland with his own vessel, had come to Giskö from sea, and had anchored at the island. At that time Ragnhild was in the pains of childbirth, and very ill, and there was no priest on the island, or in the neighbourhood of it. There came a message to the merchant-vessel to inquire if, by chance, there was a priest on board. There happened to be a priest in the vessel, who was called Baard; but he was a young man from West-fiord, who had little learning. The messengers begged the priest to go with them, but he thought it was a difficult matter; for he knew his own ignorance, and would not go. Stein added his word to persuade the priest. The priest replies, "I will go if thou wilt go with me; for then I will have confidence, if I should require advice." Stein said he was willing; and they went forthwith to the house, and to where Ragnhild



SAGA VII.  
—

was in labour. Soon after she brought forth a female child, which appeared to be rather weak. Then the priest baptized the infant, and Stein held it at the baptism, at which it got the name of Thora; and Stein gave it a gold ring. Ragnhild promised Stein her perfect friendship, and bade him come to her whenever he thought he required her help. Stein replied that he would hold no other female child at baptism, and then they parted. Now it was come to the time when Stein required this kind promise of Ragnhild to be fulfilled, and he told her what had happened, and that the king's wrath had fallen upon him. She answered, that all the aid she could give should stand at his service; but bade him wait for Thorberg's arrival. She then showed him to a seat beside her son Eystein Orre, who was then twelve years old. Stein presented gifts to Ragnhild and Eystein. Thorberg had already heard how Stein had conducted himself before he got home, and was rather vexed at it. Ragnhild went to him, and told him how matters stood with Stein, and begged Thorberg to receive him, and take care of him.

Thorberg replies, "I have heard that the king, after sending out a message-token, held a Thing concerning the murder of Thorgeir, and has condemned Stein as having fled the country, and likewise that the king is highly incensed; and I have too much sense to take the cause of a foreigner in hand, and draw upon myself the king's wrath. Let Stein, therefore, withdraw from hence as quickly as thou canst."

Ragnhild replied, that they should either both go or both stay.

Thorberg told her to go where she pleased. "For I expect," said he, "that wherever thou goest thou wilt soon come back, for here is thy importance greatest."

Her son Eystein Orre then stood forward, and said he would not stay behind if Ragnhild goes.



Thorberg said that they showed themselves very stiff and obstinate in this matter. "And it appears that ye must have your way in it, since ye take it so near to heart; but thou art reckoning too much, Ragnhild, upon thy descent, in paying so little regard to King Olaf's word."

Ragnhild replied, "If thou art so much afraid to keep Stein with thee here, go with him to my father Erling, or give him attendants, so that he may get there in safety."

Thorberg said he would not send Stein there; "for there are enough of things besides to enrage the king against Erling." Stein thus remained there all winter.

After Yule a king's messenger came to Thorberg, with the order that Thorberg should come to him before midsummer; and the order was serious and severe. Thorberg laid it before his friends, and asked their advice if he should venture to go to the king after what had taken place. The greater number dissuaded him, and thought it more advisable to let Stein slip out of his hands than to venture within the king's power; but Thorberg himself had rather more inclination not to decline the journey. Soon after Thorberg went to his brother Finn, told him the circumstances, and asked him to accompany him. Finn replied, that he thought it foolish to be so completely under woman's influence that he dared not, on account of his wife, keep the fealty and law of his sovereign.

"Thou art free," replied Thorberg, "to go with me or not; but I believe it is more fear of the king than love to him that keeps thee back." And so they parted in anger.

Then Thorberg went to his brother Arne Arneson, and asked him to go with him to the king. Arne says, "It appears to me wonderful that such a sensible, prudent man, should fall into such a misfortune, without necessity, as to incur the king's indignation. It



SAGA VII. might be excused if it were thy relation or foster-brother whom thou hadst thus sheltered; but not at all that thou shouldst take up an Iceland man, and harbour the king's outlaw, to the injury of thyself and all thy relations."

Thorberg replies, "It stands good, according to the proverb,—a rotten branch will be found in every tree. My father's greatest misfortune evidently was that he had such ill luck in producing sons that at last he produced one incapable of acting, and without any resemblance to our race, and whom in truth I never would have called brother, if it were not that it would have been to my mother's shame to have refused."

Thorberg turned away in a gloomy temper, and went home. Thereafter he sent a message to his brother Kalf in the Drontheim district, and begged him to meet him at Agdanæs; and when the messengers found Kalf he promised, without more ado, to make the journey. Ragnhild sent men east to Jederen to her father Erling, and begged him to send people. Erling's sons, Sigurd and Thord, came out, each with a ship of twenty benches of rowers and ninety men. When they came north Thorberg received them joyfully, entertained them well, and prepared for the voyage with them. Thorberg had also a vessel with twenty benches, and they steered their course northwards. When they came to the mouth of the Drontheim fiord Thorberg's two brothers, Finn and Arne, were there already, with two ships each of twenty benches. Thorberg met his brothers with joy, and observed that his whetstone had taken effect; and Finn replied he seldom needed sharpening for such work. Then they proceeded north with all their forces to Drontheim, and Stein was along with them. When they came to Agdanæs, Kalf Arneson was there before them; and he also had a well-manned ship of twenty benches. With this war-force they sailed up



to Nidaros, where they lay all night. The morning after they had a consultation with each other. Kalf and Erling's sons were for attacking the town with all their forces, and leaving the event to fate; but Thorberg wished that they should first proceed with moderation, and make an offer; in which opinion Finn and Arne also concurred. It was accordingly resolved that Finn and Arne, with a few men, should first wait upon the king. The king had previously heard that they had come so strong in men, and was therefore very sharp in his speech. Finn offered to pay mulct for Thorberg, and also for Stein, and bade the king to fix what the penalties should be, however large; stipulating only for Thorberg safety and his fiefs, and for Stein life and limb.

The king replies, "It appears to me that ye come from home so equipped that ye can determine half as much as I can myself, or more; but this I expected least of all from you brothers, that ye should come against me with an army: and this counsel, I can observe, has its origin from the people of Jederen; but ye have no occasion to offer me money in mulct."

Finn replies, "We brothers have collected men, not to offer hostility to you, sire, but to offer rather our services; but if you will bear down Thorberg altogether, we must all go to King Canute the Great with such forces as we have."

Then the king looked at him, and said, "If ye brothers will give your oaths that ye will follow me in the country and out of the country, and not part from me without my leave and permission, and shall not conceal from me any treasonable design that may come to your knowledge against me, then will I agree to a peace with you brothers."

Then Finn returned to his forces, and told the conditions which the king had proposed to them. Now they held a council upon it, and Thorberg, for his



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part, said he would accept the terms offered. "I have no wish," says he, "to fly from my property, and seek foreign masters; but, on the contrary, will always consider it an honour to follow King Olaf, and be where he is." Then says Kalf, "I will make no oath to King Olaf, but will be with him always, so long as I retain my fiefs and dignities, and so long as the king will be my friend; and my opinion is that we should all do the same." Finn says, "We will venture to let King Olaf himself determine in this matter." Arne Arneson says, "I was resolved to follow thee, brother Thorberg, even if thou hadst given battle to King Olaf, and I shall certainly not leave thee for listening to better counsel; so I intend to follow thee and Finn, and accept the conditions ye have taken."

Thereupon the brothers Thorberg, Finn, and Arne, went on board a vessel, rowed into the fiord, and waited upon the king. The agreement went accordingly into fulfilment, so that the brothers gave their oaths to the king. Then Thorberg endeavoured to make peace for Stein with the king; but the king replied that Stein might for him depart in safety, and go where he pleased, but "in my house he can never be again." Then Thorberg and his brothers went back to their men. Kalf went to Egge, and Finn to the king; and Thorberg, with the other men, went south to their homes. Stein went with Erling's sons; but early in the spring he went west to England into the service of Canute the Great, and was long with him, and was treated with great distinction.

CHAPTER  
CXLIX.  
Finn  
Arneson's  
expedition  
to Halo-  
galand.

Now when Finn Arneson had been a short time with King Olaf, the king called him to a conference, along with some other persons he usually held consultation with; and in this conference the king spoke to this effect:—"The decision remains fixed in my mind that in spring I should raise the whole country



to a levy both of men and ships, and then proceed, with all the force I can muster, against King Canute the Great; for I know for certain that he does not intend to treat as a jest the claim he has awakened upon my kingdom. Now I let thee know my will, Finn Arneson, that thou proceed on my errand to Halogaland, and raise the people there to an expedition, men and ships, and summon that force to meet me at Agdanæs." Then the king named other men whom he sent to Drontheim, and some southwards in the country, and he commanded that this order should be circulated through the whole land. Of Finn's voyage we have to relate that he had with him a ship with about thirty men, and when he was ready for sea he prosecuted his journey until he came to Halogaland. There he summoned the bonders to a Thing, laid before them his errand, and craved a levy. The bonders in that district had large vessels, suited to a levy expedition, and they obeyed the king's message, and rigged their ships. Now when Finn came farther north in Halogaland he held a Thing again, and sent some of his men from him to crave a levy where he thought it necessary. He sent also men to Biarkö Island to Thorer Hund, and there, as elsewhere, craved the quota to the levy. When the message came to Thorer he made himself ready, and manned with his house-servants the same vessel he had sailed with on his cruise to Biarmeland, and which he equipped at his own expense. Finn summoned all the people of Halogaland who were to the north to meet at Vaage. There came a great fleet together in spring, and they waited there until Finn returned from the North. Thorer Hund had also come there. When Finn arrived he ordered the signal to sound for all the people of the levy to attend a House-Thing; and at it all the men produced their weapons, and also the fighting men from each ship-district were mustered.



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When that was all finished Finn said, "I have also to bring thee a salutation, Thorer Hund, from King Olaf, and to ask thee what thou wilt offer him for the murder of his court-man Carl, or for the robbery in taking the king's goods north in Lingiovik. I have the king's orders to settle that business, and I wait thy answer to it."

Thorer looked about him, and saw standing on both sides many fully armed men, among whom were Gunstein and others of Carl's kindred. Then said Thorer, "My proposal is soon made. I will refer altogether to the king's pleasure the matter he thinks he has against me."

Finn replies, "Thou must put up with a less honour; for thou must refer the matter altogether to my decision, if any agreement is to take place."

Thorer replies, "And even then I think it will stand well with my case, and therefore I will not decline referring it to thee."

Thereupon Thorer came forward, and confirmed what he said by giving his hand upon it; and Finn repeated first all the words he should say.

Finn now pronounced his decision upon the agreement,—that Thorer should pay to the king ten marks of gold, and to Gunstein and the other kindred ten marks, and for the robbery and loss of goods ten marks more; and all which should be paid immediately.

Thorer says, "This is a heavy money mulct."

"Without it," replies Finn, "there will be no agreement."

Thorer says, there must time be allowed to gather so much in loan from his followers; but Finn told him to pay immediately on the spot; and besides, Thorer should lay down the great ornament which he took from Carl when he was dead. Thorer asserted that he had not got the ornament. Then Gunstein



pressed forward, and said that Carl had the ornament around his neck when they parted, but it was gone when they took up his corpse. Thorer said he had not observed any ornament; but if there was any such thing, it must be lying at home in Biarkö. Then Finn put the point of his spear to Thorer's breast, and said that he must instantly produce the ornament; on which Thorer took the ornament from his neck and gave it to Finn. Thereafter Thorer turned away, and went on board his ship. Finn, with many other men, followed him, went through the whole vessel, and took up the hatches. At the mast they saw two very large casks; and Finn asked, "What are these puncheons?"

Thorer replies, "It is my liquor."

Finn says, "Why don't you give us something to drink then, comrade, since you have so much liquor?"

Thorer ordered his men to run off a bowlfull from the puncheons, from which Finn and his people got liquor of the best quality. Now Finn ordered Thorer to pay the mulcts. Thorer went backwards and forwards through the ship, speaking now to the one, now to the other, and Finn calling out to produce the pence. Thorer begged him to go to the shore, and said he would bring the money there, and Finn with his men went on shore. Then Thorer came and paid silver; of which, from one purse, there were weighed ten marks. Thereafter Thorer brought many knotted nightcaps; and in some was one mark, in others half a mark, and in others some small money. "This is money my friends and other good people have lent me," said he; "for I think all my travelling money is gone." Then Thorer went back again to his ship, and returned, and paid the silver by little and little; and this lasted so long that the day was drawing towards evening. When the Thing had closed the people



SAGA VII. had gone to their vessels, and made ready to depart; and as fast as they were ready they hoisted sail and set out, so that most of them were under sail. When Finn saw that they were most of them under sail, he ordered his men to get ready too; but as yet little more than a third part of the mulct had been paid. Then Finn said, "This goes on very slowly, Thorer, with the payment. I see it costs thee a great deal to pay money. I shall now let it stand for the present, and what remains thou shalt pay to the king himself." Finn then got up and went away.

Thorer replies, "I am well enough pleased, Finn, to part now; but the good will is not wanting to pay this debt, so that both thou and the king shall say it is not unpaid."

Then Finn went on board his ship, and followed the rest of his fleet. Thorer was late before he was ready to come out of the harbour. When the sails were hoisted he steered out over Westfiord, and went to sea, keeping south along the land so far off that the hill-tops were half sunk, and soon the land altogether was sunk from view by the sea. Thorer held this course until he got into the English sea, and landed in England. He betook himself to King Canute forthwith, and was well received by him. It then came out that Thorer had with him a great deal of property; and, with other things, all the money he and Carl had taken in Biarmeland. In the great liquor-casks there were sides within the outer sides, and the liquor was between them. The rest of the casks were filled with furs, and beaver and sable skins. Thorer was then with King Canute. Finn came with his forces to King Olaf, and related to him how all had gone upon his voyage, and told at the same time his suspicion that Thorer had left the country, and gone west to England to King Canute. "And there I doubt he will be of little service to us."



The king replies, "I believe that Thorer must be our enemy, and it appears to me always better to have him at a distance than near."

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Aasmund Grankelsson had been this winter in Halogaland in his sheriffdom, and was at home with his father Grankel. There lies a rock out in the sea, on which there is both seal and bird catching, and a fishing ground, and egg-gathering; and from old times it had been an appendage to the farm which Grankel owned, but now Harek of Thiottö laid claim to it. It had gone so far, that some years he had taken by force all the gain of this rock; but Aasmund and his father thought that they might expect the king's help in all cases in which the right was upon their side. Both father and son went therefore in spring to Harek, and brought him a message and tokens from King Olaf that he should drop his claim. Harek answered Aasmund crossly, because he had gone to the king with such insinuations—"for the just right is upon my side. Thou shouldst learn moderation, Aasmund, although thou hast so much confidence in the king's favour. It has succeeded with thee to kill some chiefs, and leave their slaughter unpaid for by any mulct; and also to plunder us, although we thought ourselves at least equal to all of equal birth, and thou art far from being my equal in family."

CHAPTER  
CL.  
Dispute  
between  
Harek and  
Asmund  
Grankels-  
son.

Aasmund replies, "Many have experienced from thee, Harek, that thou art of great connections, and too great power; and many in consequence have suffered loss in their property through thee. But it is likely that now thou must turn thyself elsewhere, and not against us with thy violence, and not go altogether against law, as thou art now doing." Then they separated.

Harek sent ten or twelve of his house-servants with a large rowing boat, with which they rowed to



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the rock, took all that was to be got upon it, and loaded their boat. But when they were ready to return home, Aasmund Grankelsson came with thirty men, and ordered them to give up all they had taken. Harek's house-servants were not quick in complying, so that Aasmund attacked them. Some of Harek's men were cudgelled, some wounded, some thrown into the sea, and all they had caught was taken from on board of their boat, and Aasmund and his people took it along with them. Then Harek's servants came home, and told him the event. Harek replies, "That is called news indeed that seldom happens: never before has it happened that my people have been beaten."

The matter dropped. Harek never spoke about it, but was very cheerful. In spring, however, Harek rigged out a cutter of twenty seats of rowers, and manned it with his house-servants, and the ship was remarkably well fitted out both with people and all necessary equipment; and Harek went to the levy: but when he came to King Olaf, Aasmund was there before him. The king summoned Harek and Aasmund to him, and reconciled them so that they left the matter entirely to him. Aasmund then produced witnesses to prove that Grankel had owned the rock, and the king gave judgment accordingly. The case had a one-sided result. No mulct was paid for Harek's house-servants, and the rock was declared to be Grankel's. Harek observed it was no disgrace to obey the king's decision, whatever way the case itself was decided.

CHAPTER  
CLI.  
Thorodd's  
story.

Thorodd Snorresson had remained in Norway, according to King Olaf's commands, when Geller Thorcelsson got leave to go to Iceland, as before related. He remained there with King Olaf, but was ill pleased that he was not free to travel where he pleased. Early in winter, King Olaf, when he was in Nidaros, made it



known that he would send people to Jemteland to collect the scatt; but nobody had any great desire to go on this business, after the fate of those whom King Olaf had sent before,—namely, Thrand White and others, twelve in number, who lost their lives, as before related; and the Jemtelanders had ever since been subject to the Swedish king. Thorodd Snorreson now offered to undertake this journey, for he cared little what became of him if he could but become his own master again. The king consented, and Thorodd set out with eleven men in company. They came east to Jemteland, and went to a man called Thorer, who was lagman, and a person in high estimation. They met with an hospitable reception; and when they had been there a while, they explained their business to Thorer. He replied, that other men and chiefs of the country had in all respects as much power and right to give an answer as he had, and for that purpose he would call together a Thing. It was so done; the message-token was sent out, and a numerous Thing assembled. Thorer went to the Thing, but the messengers in the mean time remained at home. At the Thing, Thorer laid the business before the people, but all were unanimous that no scatt should be paid to the king of Norway; and some were for hanging the messengers, others for sacrificing them to the gods. At last it was resolved to hold them fast until the king of Sweden's sheriffs arrived, and they could treat them as they pleased with consent of the people; and that, in the mean time, this decision should be concealed, and the messengers treated well, and detained under pretext that they must wait until the scatt is collected; and that they should be separated, and placed two and two, as if for the convenience of boarding them. Thorodd and another remained in Thorer's house. There was a great Yule feast and ale-drinking, to which each brought his own liquor; for there



SAGA VII. — were many peasants in the village, who all drank in company together at Yule. There was another village not far distant, where Thorer's brother-in-law dwelt, who was a rich and powerful man, and had a grown-up son. The brothers-in-law intended to pass the Yule in drinking feasts, half of it at the house of the one and half with the other; and the feast began at Thorer's house. The brothers-in-law drank together, and Thorodd and the sons of the peasants by themselves; and it was a drinking match. In the evening words arose, and comparisons between the men of Sweden and of Norway, and then between their kings both of former times and at the present, and of the man-slaughters and robberies that had taken place between the countries. Then said the peasants' sons, "If our king has lost most people, his sheriffs will make it even with the lives of twelve men when they come from the south after Yule; and ye little know, ye silly fools, why ye are kept here." Thorodd took notice of these words, and many made jest about it, and scoffed at them and their king. When the ale began to talk out of the hearts of the Jemtelanders, what Thorodd had before long suspected became evident. The day after Thorodd and his comrade took all their clothes and weapons, and laid them ready; and at night, when the people were all asleep, they fled to the forest. The next morning, when the Jemtelanders were aware of their flight, men set out after them with dogs to trace them, and found them in a wood in which they had concealed themselves. They brought them home to a room in which there was a deep cellar, into which they were thrown, and the door locked upon them. They had little meat, and only the clothes they had on them. In the middle of Yule, Thorer, with all his freeborn men, went to his brother-in-law's, where he was to be a guest until the last of Yule. Thorer's slaves were to keep guard



upon the cellar, and they were provided with plenty of liquor; but as they observed no moderation in drinking, they became towards evening confused in the head with the ale. As they were quite drunk, those who had to bring meat to the prisoners in the cellar said among themselves that they should want for nothing. Thorodd amused the slaves by singing to them. They said he was a clever man, and gave him a large candle that was lighted; and the slaves who were in went to call the others to come in: but they were all so confused with the ale, that in going out they neither locked the cellar nor the room after them. Now Thorodd and his comrades tore up their skin clothes in strips, knotted them together, made a noose at one end, and threw up the rope on the floor of the room. It fastened itself around a chest, by which they tried to haul themselves up. Thorodd lifted up his comrade until he stood on his shoulders, and from thence scrambled up through the hatch-hole. . There was no want of ropes in the chamber, and he threw a rope down to Thorodd; but when he tried to draw him up, he could not move him from the spot. Then Thorodd told him to cast the rope over a cross-beam that was in the house, make a loop in it, and place as much wood and stones in the loop as would outweigh him; and the heavy weight went down into the cellar, and Thorodd was drawn up by it. Now they took as much clothes as they required in the room; and among other things they took some reindeer hides, out of which they cut sandals, and bound them under their feet, with the hoofs of the reindeer feet trailing behind. But before they set off they set fire to a large corn barn which was close by, and then ran out into the pitch-dark night. The barn blazed, and set fire to many other houses in the village. Thorodd and his comrade travelled the whole night until they came to a lonely wood, where they



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concealed themselves when it was daylight. In the morning they were missed. There was chase made with dogs to trace the footsteps all round the house; but the hounds always came back to the house, for they had the smell of the reindeer hoofs, and followed the scent back on the road that the hoofs had left, and therefore could not find the right direction. Thorodd and his comrade wandered long about in the desert forest, and came one evening to a small house, and went in. A man and a woman were sitting by the fire. The man called himself Thorer, and said it was his wife who was sitting there, and the hut belonged to them. The peasant asked them to stop there, at which they were well pleased. He told them that he had come to this place, because he had fled from the inhabited district on account of a murder. Thorodd and his comrade were well received, and they all got their supper at the fireside; and then the benches were cleared for them, and they lay down to sleep, but the fire was still burning with a clear light. Thorodd saw a man come in from another house, and never had he seen so stout a man. He was dressed in a scarlet cloak beset with gold clasps, and was of very handsome appearance. Thorodd heard him scold them for taking guests, when they had scarcely food for themselves. The housewife said, "Be not angry, brother; seldom such a thing happens; and rather do them some good too, for thou hast better opportunity to do so than we." Thorodd heard also the stout man named by the name of Arnliot Gallina, and observed that the woman of the house was his sister. Thorodd had heard speak of Arnliot as the greatest of robbers and malefactors. Thorodd and his companion slept the first part of the night, for they were wearied with walking; but when a third of the night was still to come, Arnliot woke them, told them to get up, and make ready to depart. They arose immediately,



put on their clothes, and some breakfast was given them; and Arnliot gave each of them also a pair of snow-scates.\* Arnliot made himself ready to accompany them, and got upon his snow-scates, which were both broad and long; but scarcely had he swung his snow-scate staff before he was a long way past them. He waited for them, and said they would make no progress in this way, and told them to stand upon the edge of his scates beside him. They did so. Thorodd stood nearest to him, and held by Arnliot's belt, and his comrade held by him. Arnliot strode on as quickly with them both, as if he was alone and without any weight. The following day they came, towards night, to a lodge for travellers, struck fire, and prepared some food; but Arnliot told them to throw away nothing of their food, neither bones nor crumbs. Arnliot took a silver plate out of the pocket of his cloak, and ate from it. When they were done eating, Arnliot gathered up the remains of their meal, and they prepared to go to sleep. In the other end of the house there was a loft upon cross-beams, and Arnliot and the others went up, and laid themselves down to sleep. Arnliot had a large halberd, of which the upper part was mounted with gold, and the shaft was so long that with his arm stretched out he could scarcely touch the top of it; and he was girt with a sword. They had both their weapons and their clothes up in the loft beside them. Arnliot, who lay outermost in the loft, told them to be perfectly quiet. Soon after twelve men came to the house, who were merchants going with their wares to Jemteland; and when they came into the house they made a great disturbance, were merry, and made a great fire before them; and when they took their sup-

\* Snow-scates are slips of light wood about five feet long, with a leather loop in the middle, into which the foot is thrust; and the expert scater shuffles along at a great rate, especially down a slope.



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per they cast away all the bones around them. They then prepared to go to sleep, and laid themselves down upon the benches around the fire. When they had been asleep a short time, a huge witch came into the house; and when she came in, she carefully swept together all the bones and whatever was of food kind into a heap, and threw it into her mouth. Then she gripped the man who was nearest to her, riving and tearing him asunder, and threw him upon the fire. The others awoke in dreadful fright, and sprang up; but she took them, and sent them one by one to hell, so that one only remained in life. He ran under the loft calling for help, and if there was any one on the loft to help him. Arnliot reached down his hand, seized him by the shoulder, and drew him up into the loft. The witch-wife had turned towards the fire, and began to eat the men who were roasting. Now Arnliot stood up, took his halberd, and struck her between the shoulders, so that the point came out at her breast. She writhed with it, gave a dreadful shriek, and sprang up. The halberd slipped from Arnliot's hands, and she ran out with it. Arnliot then went in; cleared away the dead corpses out of the house; set the door and the door-posts up, for she had torn them down in going out; and they slept the rest of the night. When the day broke they got up; and first they took their breakfast. When they had got food, Arnliot said, "Now we must part here. Ye can proceed upon the new-traced path the merchants have made in coming here yesterday. In the mean time I will seek after my halberd, and in reward for my labour I will take so much of the goods these men had with them as I find useful to me. Thou, Thorodd, must take my salutation to King Olaf; and say to him that he is the man I am most desirous to see, although my salutation may appear to him of little worth." Then he took his silver plate, wiped it dry with a cloth, and



said, "Give King Olaf this plate; salute him, and say it is from me." Then they made themselves ready for their journey, and parted. Thorodd went on with his comrade and the man of the merchants' company who had escaped. He proceeded until he came to King Olaf in the town (Nidaros); told the king all that had happened, and presented to him the silver plate. The king said it was wrong that Arnliot himself had not come to him; "for it is a pity so brave a hero, and so distinguished a man, should have given himself up to misdeeds."

Thorodd remained the rest of the winter with the king, and in summer got leave to return to Iceland; and he and King Olaf parted the best of friends.

King Olaf made ready in spring to leave Nidaros, and many people were assembled about him, both from Drontheim and the Northern country; and when he was ready he proceeded first with his men to Möre, where he gathered the men of the levy, and did the same at Raumsdal. He went from thence to South Möre. He lay a long time at the Herö Isles waiting for his forces; and he often held House-things, as many reports came to his ears about which he thought it necessary to hold councils. In one of these Things he made a speech, in which he spoke of the loss he suffered from the Faroe islanders. "The scatt which they promised me," he said, "is not forthcoming; and I now intend to send men thither after it." Then he proposed to different men to undertake this expedition; but the answer was, that all declined the adventure.

CHAPTER  
CLII.  
King  
Olaf's levy  
of men.

Then there stood up a stout and very remarkable-looking man in the Thing. He was clad in a red kirtle, had a helmet on his head, a sword in his belt, and a large halberd in his hands. He took up the word and said, "In truth here is a great want of men. Ye have a good king; but ye are bad servants



## SAGA VII.

who say no to this expedition he offers you, although ye have received many gifts of friendship and tokens of honour from him. I have hitherto been no friend of the king, and he has been my enemy, and says, besides, that he has good grounds for being so. Now I offer, sire, to go upon this expedition, if no better will undertake it."

The king answers, "Who is this brave man who replies to my offer? Thou showest thyself different from the other men here present, in offering thyself for this expedition from which they excuse themselves, although I expected they would willingly have undertaken it; but I do not know thee in the least, and do not know thy name."

He replies, "My name, sire, is not difficult to know, and I think thou hast heard my name before. I am Karl Mærske."

The king — "So this is Karl! I have indeed heard thy name before; and, to say the truth, there was a time when our meeting must have been such, if I had had my will, that thou shouldst not have had to tell it now. But I will not show myself worse than thou, but will join my thanks and my favour to the side of the help thou hast offered me. Now thou shalt come to me, Karl, and be my guest to-day; and then we shall consult together about this business." Karl said it should be so.

CHAPTER  
CLIII.  
Karl  
Mærske's  
story.

Karl Mærske had been a viking, and a celebrated robber. Often had the king sent out men against him, and wished to make an end of him; but Karl, who was a man of high connection, was quick in all his doings, and besides a man of great dexterity, and expert in all feats. Now when Karl had undertaken this business the king was reconciled to him, gave him his friendship, and let him be fitted out in the best manner for this expedition. There were about twenty men in the ship; and the king sent



messages to his friends in the Faroe Islands, and recommended him also to Leif Ossursson and Lagman Gille, for aid and defence; and for this purpose furnished Karl with tokens of the full powers given him. Karl set out as soon as he was ready; and as he got a favourable breeze soon came to the Faroe Islands, and landed at Thorshaven, in the island Stromsey. A Thing was called, to which there came a great number of people. Thrand of Gata came with a great retinue, and Leif and Gille came there also, with many in their following. After they had set up their tents, and put themselves in order, they went to Karl Mærske, and saluted each other on both sides in a friendly way. Then Karl produced King Olaf's words, tokens, and friendly message to Leif and Gille, who received them in a friendly manner, invited Karl to come to them, and promised him to support his errand, and give him all the aid in their power, for which he thanked them. Soon after came Thrand of Gata, who also received Karl in the most friendly manner, and said he was glad to see so able a man coming to their country on the king's business, which they were all bound to promote. "I will insist, Karl," says he, "on thy taking up thy winter abode with me, together with all those of thy people who may appear to thee necessary for thy dignity."

Karl replies, that he had already settled to lodge with Leif; "otherwise I would with great pleasure have accepted thy invitation."

"Then fate has given great honour to Leif," says Thrand; "but is there any other way in which I can be of service?"

Karl replies, that he would do him a great service by collecting the scatt of the eastern island, and of all the northern islands.

Thrand said it was both his duty and interest to assist in the king's business, and thereupon Thrand returned to his tent: and at that Thing nothing else



SAGA VII. worth speaking of occurred. Karl took up his abode with Leif Ossursson, and was there all winter. Leif collected the scatt of Stromö Island, and all the islands south of it. The spring after Thrand of Gata fell ill, and had sore eyes and other complaints; but he prepared to attend the Thing, as was his custom. When he came to the Thing he had his tent put up, and within it another black tent, that the light might not penetrate. After some days of the Thing had passed, Leif and Karl came to Thrand's tent, with a great many people, and found some persons standing outside. They asked if Thrand was in the tent, and were told he was. Leif told them to bid Thrand come out, as he and Karl had some business with him. They came back, and said that Thrand had sore eyes, and could not come out; "but he begs thee, Leif, to come to him within." Leif told his comrades to come carefully into the tent, and not to press forward, and that he who came last in should go out first. Leif went in first, followed by Karl, and then his comrades; and all fully armed as if they were going into battle. Leif went into the black tent, and asked if Thrand was there. Thrand answered, and saluted Leif. Leif returned his salutation, and asked if he had brought the scatt from the northern islands, and if he would pay the scatt that had been collected. Thrand replies, that he had not forgotten what had been spoken of between him and Karl, and that he would now pay over the scatt. "Here is a purse, Leif, full of silver, which thou canst receive." Leif looked around, and saw but few people in the tent, of whom some were lying upon the benches, and a few were sitting up. Then Leif went to Thrand, and took the purse, and carried it into the outer tent, where it was light, turned out the money on his shield, groped about in it with his hand, and told Karl to look at the silver. When they



had looked at it a while, Karl asked Leif what he thought of the silver. He replied, "I am thinking where the bad money that is in the north isles can have come from." Thrand heard this, and said, "Do you not think, Leif, the silver is good?" "No," says he. Thrand replies, "Our relations, then, are rascals not to be trusted. I sent them in spring to collect the scatt in the north isles, as I could not myself go any where, and they have allowed themselves to be bribed by the bonders to take false money, which nobody looks upon as current and good; it is better, therefore, Leif, to look at this silver which has been paid me as land-rent." Leif thereupon carried back this silver, and received another bag, which he carried to Karl, and they looked over the money together. Karl asked Leif what he thought of this money. He answered, that it appeared to him so bad that it would not be taken in payment, however little hope there might be of getting a debt paid in any other way; "therefore I will not take this money upon the king's account." A man who had been lying on the bench now cast the skin coverlet off which he had drawn over his head, and said, "True is the old word,—he grows worse who grows older: so it is with thee, Thrand, who allowest Karl Mærske to handle thy money all the day." This was Gaut the Red. Thrand sprang up at Gaut's words, and reprimanded his relation with many angry words. At last he said that Leif should leave this silver, and take a bag which his own peasants had brought him in spring. "And although I am weak-sighted, yet my own hand is the truest test." Another man who was lying on the bench raised himself now upon his elbow; and this was Thorer the Low. He said, "These are no ordinary reproaches we suffer from Karl Mærske, and therefore he well deserves a reward for them." Leif in the mean time took the bag, and carried it to Karl; and



SAGA VII. when they cast their eyes on the money, Leif said, "We need not look long at this silver, for here the one piece of money is better than the other; and this is the money we will have. Let a man come to be present at the counting it out." Thrand says that he thought Leif was the fittest man to do it upon his account. Leif and Karl thereupon went a short way from the tent, sat down, and counted and weighed the silver. Karl took the helmet off his head, and received in it the weighed silver. They saw a man coming to them who had a stick with an axe-head on it in his hand, a hat low upon his head, and a short green cloak. He was bare-legged, and had linen breeches on tied at the knee. He laid his stick down in the field, and went to Karl, and said, "Take care, Karl Mærske, that thou dost not hurt thyself against my axe-stick." Immediately a man came running, and calls with great haste to Leif Ossursson, telling him to come as quick as possible to Lagman Gille's tent; "for," says he, "Sigurd Thorlakson ran in just now into the mouth of the tent, and gave one of Gille's men a desperate wound." Leif rose up instantly, and went off to Gille's tent along with his men. Karl remained sitting, and the Norway people stood around in all corners. Gaut immediately sprang up, and struck with a hand-axe over the heads of the people, and the stroke came on Karl's head; but the wound was slight. Thord the Low seized the stick-axe, which lay in the field at his side, and struck the axe-blade right into Karl's scull. Many people now streamed out of Thrand's tent. Karl was carried away dead. Thrand was much grieved at this event, and offered money-mullets for his relations; but Leif and Gille, who had to prosecute the business, would accept no mulct. Sigurd was banished the country for having wounded Gille's tent comrade, and Gaut and Thorer for the murder of Karl. The Norway people rigged out the vessel



which Karl had with him, and sailed eastward to Olaf, and gave him these tidings. He was in no pleasant humour at it, and threatened a speedy vengeance; but it was not allotted by fate to King Olaf to revenge himself on Thrand and his relations, because of the hostilities which had begun in Norway, and which are now to be related. And there is nothing more to be told of what happened after King Olaf sent men to the Faroe Islands to take scatt of them. But great strife arose after Karl's death in the Faroe Islands between the family of Thrand of Gata and Leif Ossursson, and of which there are great sagas.

SAGA VII.

Now we must proceed with the relation we began before,—that King Olaf set out with his men, and raised a levy over the whole country. All lendermen in the North followed him excepting Einar Tambar-skelver, who sat quietly at home upon his farm since his return to the country, and did not serve the king. Einar had great estates and wealth, although he held no fiefs from the king, and he lived splendidly. King Olaf sailed with his fleet south around Stad, and many people from the districts around joined him. King Olaf himself had a ship which he had got built the winter before, and which was called the Bison.\* It was a very large ship, with a bison's head gilded all over upon the bow. Sigvat the scald speaks thus of it:—

CHAPTER  
CLIV  
King  
Olaf's ex-  
pedition  
with his  
levy.

“Tryggvesson's Long Serpent bore,  
Grim gaping o'er the waves before,  
A dragon's head with open throat,  
When last the hero was afloat:  
His cruise was closed,  
As God disposed.

---

\* Visundr is the buffalo; although the modern bison, or American animal of that name, might have been known through the Greenland colonists, who in this reign had visited some parts of America.



## SAGA VII.

Olaf has raised a bison's head,  
Which proudly seems the waves to tread,  
While o'er its golden forehead dashing  
The waves its glittering horns are washing:  
May God dispose  
A luckier close."

The king went on to Hordaland: there he heard the news that Erling Skialgsson had left the country with a great force, and four or five ships. He himself had a large war-ship, and his sons had three of twenty rowing banks each; and they had sailed westward to England to Canute the Great. Then King Olaf sailed eastward along the land with a mighty war-force, and he inquired every where if any thing was known of Canute's proceedings; and all agreed in saying he was in England, but added that he was fitting out a levy, and intended coming to Norway. As Olaf had a large fleet, and could not discover with certainty where he should go to meet King Canute, and as his people were dissatisfied with lying quiet in one place with so large an armament, he resolved to sail with his fleet south to Denmark, and took with him all the men who were best appointed and most warlike; and he gave leave to the others to return home. And it is told in the song,—

"The Bison's oars, in sunshine glancing,  
Wake the slumb'ring deep,  
As they southwards sweep  
To find King Canute's fleet advancing."

Now the people whom he thought of little use having gone home, King Olaf had many excellent and stout men-at-arms besides those who, as before related, had fled the country, or sat quietly at home; and most of the chief men and lenders of Norway were along with him.

CHAPTER  
CLV.  
Of King  
Olaf and  
King  
Onund.

When King Olaf sailed to Denmark, he set his course for Sealand; and when he came there he made incursions on the land, and began to plunder. The



country people were severely treated; some were killed, some bound and dragged to the ships. All who could do so took to flight, and made no opposition. King Olaf committed there the greatest ravages. While Olaf was in Sealand, the news came that King Onund Olafsson of Sweden had raised a levy, and fallen upon Scania, and was ravaging there; and then it became known what the resolution had been that the two kings had taken at the Gotha river, where they had concluded a union and friendship, and had bound themselves to oppose King Canute. King Onund continued his march until he met his brother-in-law King Olaf. When they met they made proclamation, both to their own people and to the people of the country, that they intended to conquer Denmark; and asked the support of the people of the country for this purpose. And it happened, as we find examples of every where, that if hostilities are brought upon the people of a country not strong enough to withstand, the greatest number will submit to the conditions by which peace can be purchased at any rate. So it happened here that many men went into the service of the kings, and agreed to submit to them. Wheresoever they went they laid the country all round in subjection to them, and otherwise laid waste all with fire and sword. Of this foray Sigvat the scald speaks, in a ballad he composed concerning King Canute the Great:—

“ ‘ Canute is on the sea !’  
 The news is told,  
 And the Norsemen bold  
 Repeat it with great glee.  
 And it runs from mouth to mouth—  
 ‘ On a lucky day  
 We came away  
 From Drontheim to the south.’  
 Across the cold East sea,  
 The Swedish king  
 His host did bring,  
 To gain great victory.



SAGA VII.  
—

King Onund came to fight,  
 In Sealand's plains,  
 Against the Danes,  
 With his steel-clad men so bright.  
 Canute is on the land ;  
 Side to side  
 His long-ships ride  
 Along the yellow strand.  
 Where waves wash the green banks,  
 Mast to mast,  
 All bound fast,  
 His great fleet lies in ranks."

CHAPTER  
CLVI.  
Of King  
Canute the  
Great.

King Canute had heard in England that King Olaf of Norway had called out a levy, and had gone with his forces to Denmark, and was making great ravages in his dominions there. Canute began to gather people, and he had speedily collected a great army and a numerous fleet. Earl Hakon was second in command over the whole.

Sigvat the scald came this summer from the West, from Rouen in Valland, and with him was a man called Berg. They had made a merchant voyage there the summer before. Sigvat had made a little poem about this journey, called "The Western Traveler's Song," which begins thus:—

"Berg! many a merry morn was pass'd,  
 When our vessel was made fast,  
 And we lay on the glittering tide  
 Of Rouen river's western side."

When Sigvat came to England he went directly to King Canute, and asked his leave to proceed to Norway; for King Canute had forbidden all merchant vessels to sail until he himself was ready with his fleet. When Sigvat arrived he went to the house in which the king was lodged; but the doors were locked, and he had to stand a long time outside, but when he got admittance he obtained the permission he desired. He then sang—

"The way to Jutland's king I sought ;  
 A little patience I was taught.



The doors were shut — all full within ;  
 The udaller could not get in.  
 But Gorm's great son did condescend  
 To his own chamber me to send,  
 And grant my prayer — although I'm one  
 Whose arms the fetters' weight have known."

When Sigvat became aware that King Canute was equipping an armament against King Olaf, and knew what a mighty force King Canute had, he made these lines : —

"The mighty Knut, and Earl Hakon,  
 Have leagued themselves, and counsel taken  
 Against King Olaf's life,  
 And are ready for the strife.  
 In spite of king and earl, I say,  
 'I love him well — may he get away :'  
 On the Fielde, wild and dreary,  
 With him I'd live, and ne'er be weary."

Sigvat made many other songs concerning this expedition of Canute and Hakon. He made this among others : —

"'Twas not the earl's intention then  
 'Twixt Olaf and the udalmen  
 Peace to establish, and the land  
 Upright to hold with Northman's hand ;  
 But ever with deceit and lies  
 Eric's descendant, Hakon, tries  
 To make ill-will and discontent,  
 Till all the udalmen are bent  
 Against King Olaf's rule to rise."

Canute the Great was at last ready with his fleet, and left the land ; and a vast number of men he had, and ships frightfully large. He himself had a dragon-ship so large that it had sixty banks of rowers, and the head was gilt all over. Earl Hakon had another dragon of forty banks, and it also had a gilt figure-head. The sails of both were in stripes of blue, red, and green, and the vessels were painted all above the water-stroke ; and all that belonged to their equipment was most splendid. They had also many other huge ships remarkably well fitted out, and

CHAPTER  
 CLVII.  
 Of King  
 Canute's  
 ship the  
 Dragon.



SAGA VII. grand. Sigvat the scald talks of this in his song on  
Knut: —

“Canute is out beneath the sky —  
Canute of the clear blue eye!  
The king is out on the ocean’s breast,  
Leading his grand fleet from the West.  
On to the East the ship-masts glide,  
Glancing and bright each long-ship’s side.  
The conqueror of great Ethelred,  
Canute, is there, his foeman’s dread:  
His dragon with her sails of blue,  
All bright and brilliant to the view,  
High hoisted on the yard-arms wide,  
Carries great Canute o’er the tide.  
Brave is the royal progress — fast  
The proud ship’s keel obeys the mast,  
Dashes through foam, and gains the land,  
Raising a surge on Lymfiord’s strand.”

It is related that King Canute sailed with this vast force from England, and came with all his force safely to Denmark, where he went into Lymfiord, and there he found gathered besides a large army of the men of the country.

CHAPTER  
CLVIII.  
Hardeca-  
nute taken  
to be king  
in Den-  
mark.

Earl Ulf Sprakalegsson had been set as protector over Denmark when King Canute went to England, and the king had intrusted his son Hardaknut in the earl’s hands. This took place the summer before, as we related. But the earl immediately gave it out that King Canute had, at parting, made known to him his will and desire that the Danes should take his son Hardaknut as king over the Danish dominions. “On that account,” says the earl, “he gave the matter into our hands; as I, and many other chiefs and leading men here in the country, have often complained to King Canute of the evil consequences to the country of being without a king, and that former kings thought it honour and power enough to rule over the Danish kingdom alone; and in the times that are past many kings have ruled over this kingdom. But now there are greater difficulties than have ever been before; for we have been so fortunate hitherto as to



live without disturbance from foreign kings, but now we hear the king of Norway is going to attack us, to which is added the fear of the people that the Swedish king will join him; and now King Canute is in England." The earl then produced King Canute's letter and seal, confirming all that the earl asserted. Many other chiefs supported this business; and in consequence of all these persuasions the people resolved to take Hardaknut as king, which was done at the same Thing. The Queen Emma had been principal promoter of this determination; for she had got the letter to be written, and provided with the seal, having cunningly got hold of the king's signet: but from him it was all concealed. Now when Hardaknut and Earl Ulf heard for certain that King Olaf was come from Norway with a large army, they went to Jutland, where the greatest strength of the Danish kingdom lies, sent out message-tokens, and summoned to them a great force; but when they heard the Swedish king was also come with his army, they thought they would not have strength enough to give battle to both, and therefore kept their army together in Jutland, and resolved to defend that country against the kings. The whole of their ships they assembled in Lymfiord, and waited thus for King Canute. Now when they heard that King Canute had come from the West to Lymfiord, they sent men to him, and to Queen Emma, and begged her to find out if the king was angry at them or not, and to let them know. The queen talked over the matter with him, and said, "Your son Hardaknut will pay the full mulct the king may demand, if he has done any thing which is thought to be against the king." He replies, that Hardaknut has not done this of his own judgment. "And therefore," says he, "it has turned out as might have been expected, that when he, a child, and without understanding, wanted to be called king, the



SAGA VII.

country, when any evil came and an enemy appeared, must be conquered by foreign princes, if our might had not come to his aid. If he will have any reconciliation with me, let him come to me, and lay down the mock title of king he has given himself." The queen sent these very words to Hardaknut, and at the same time she begged him not to decline coming; for, as she truly observed, he had no force to stand against his father. When this message came to Hardaknut, he asked advice of the earl and other chief people who were with him; but it was soon found that when the people heard King Canute the Old was arrived they all streamed to him, and seemed to have no confidence but in him alone. Then Earl Ulf and his fellows saw they had but two roads to take; either to go to the king and leave all to his mercy, or to fly the country. All pressed Hardaknut to go to his father, which advice he followed. When they met he fell at his father's feet, and laid his seal, which accompanied the kingly title, on his knee. King Canute took Hardaknut by the hand, and placed him in as high a seat as he used to sit in before. Earl Ulf sent his son Swend, who was a sister's son of King Canute, and the same age as Hardaknut, to the king. He prayed for grace and reconciliation for his father, and offered himself as hostage for the earl. King Canute ordered him to tell the earl to assemble his men and ships, and come to him, and then they would talk of reconciliation. The earl did so.

CHAPTER  
CLIX.  
Foray in  
Scania.

When King Olaf and King Onund heard that King Canute was come from the West, and also that he had a vast force, they sailed east to Scania, and allowed themselves to ravage and burn in the districts there, and then proceeded eastward along the land to the frontier of Sweden. As soon as the country people heard that King Canute was come from the West, no



one thought of going into the service of the two kings. SAGA VII.  
Sigvat speaks of these matters:—

“ Great Canute brings,  
Against the kings,  
His steel-clad band  
To fend his land:  
The greatest he,  
By land or sea.  
To Scania they  
Were driven away.”

Now the kings sailed eastward along the coast, and brought up in a river called Helge-aa, and remained there some time. When they heard that King Canute was coming eastward with his forces against them, they held a council; and the result was, that King Olaf with his people went up the country to the forest, and to the lake out of which the river Helge flows. There at the river-head they made a dam of timber and turf, and dammed in the lake. They also dug a deep ditch, through which they led several waters, so that the lake waxed very high. In the river-bed they laid large logs of timber. They were many days about this work, and King Olaf had the management of this piece of artifice; but King Onund had only to command the fleet and army. When King Canute heard of the proceedings of the two kings, and of the damage they had done to his dominions, he sailed right against them to where they lay in Helge river. He had a war-force which was one half greater than that of both the kings together. Sigvat speaks of these things:—

“ The king, who shields  
His Jutland fields  
From scaith or harm  
By foeman's arm,  
Will not allow  
Wild plundering now:  
' The greatest he,  
On land or sea.' ”



SAGA VII.

CHAPTER

CLX.

Battle in  
Helge  
river.

One day, towards evening, King Onund's spies saw King Canute coming sailing along, and he was not far off. Then King Onund ordered the war-horns to sound; on which his people struck their tents, put on their weapons, rowed out of the harbour and east round the land, bound their ships together, and prepared for battle. King Onund made his spies run up the country to look for King Olaf, and tell him the news. Then King Olaf broke up the dam, and let the river take its course. King Olaf travelled down in the night to his ships. When King Canute came outside the harbour, he saw the forces of the kings ready for battle. He thought that it would be too late in the day to begin the fight by the time his forces could be ready; for his fleet required a great deal of room at sea, and there was a long distance between the foremost of his ships and the hindmost, and between those outside and those nearest the land. Now, as Canute saw that the Swedes and Norwegians had quitted the harbour, he went into it with as many ships as it could hold; but the main strength of the fleet lay without the harbour. In the morning, when it was light, a great part of the men went on shore; some for amusement, some to converse with the people of other ships. They observed nothing until the water came rushing over them like a waterfall, carrying huge trees, which drove in among their ships, damaging all they struck; and the water covered all the fields. The men on shore perished, and many who were in the ships. All who could do it cut their cables; so that the ships were loose, and drove before the stream, and were scattered here and there. The great dragon, which King Canute himself was in, drove before the stream; and as it could not so easily be turned with oars, drove out among Olaf's and Onund's ships. As they knew the ship, they laid her on board on all quarters. But the ship was so high in the hull, as if it were a



castle, and had besides such a numerous and chosen crew on board, well armed and exercised, that it was not easy to attack her. After a short time also Earl Ulf came up with his fleet; and then the battle began, and King Canute's fleet gathered together from all quarters. But the kings Olaf and Onund, seeing they had for this time got all the victory that fate permitted them to gain, let their ships retreat, cast themselves loose from King Canute's ship, and the fleets separated. But as the attack had not been made as King Canute had determined, he made no farther attempt; and the kings on each side arranged their fleets, and put their ships in order. When the fleets were parted, and each sailing its course, Olaf and Onund looked over their forces, and found they had suffered no loss of men. In the mean time they saw that if they waited until King Canute got his large fleet in order to attack them, the difference of force was so great that for them there was little chance of victory. It was also evident that if the battle was renewed, they must suffer a great loss of men. They took the resolution, therefore, to row with the whole fleet eastward along the coast.\* Observing that King Canute did not pursue them, they raised up their masts and set sail. Ottar Swarte tells thus of it in the poem he composed upon King Canute the Great:—

“ The king, in battle fray,  
Drove the Swedish host away;  
The wolf did not miss prey,  
Nor the raven on that day.  
Great Canute might deride  
Two kings if he had pride,  
For at Helge river's side  
They would not his sword abide.”

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\* According to the Saxon Chronicle, this battle of Canute at the Helge-aa, or Holy River, took place in the year 1025. In the dates of events it is probable that the Saxon Chronicle, being a dry list of the events of each year, is much better authority than the Sagas, or Snorro.



SAGA VII.

Thord Siareksson also sang these lines in his death-song of King Olaf: —

“ King Olaf, Agder’s lord,  
Ne’er shunned the Jutland king,  
But with his blue-edged sword  
Broke many a panzer-ring.  
King Canute was not slow:  
King Onund filled the plain  
With dead, killed by his bow:  
The wolf howled o’er the slain.”

CHAPTER  
CLXI.  
King Olaf  
and King  
Onund’s  
plans.

King Olaf and King Onund sailed eastward to the Swedish king’s dominions; and one day, towards evening, landed at a place called Barvik, where they lay all night. But then it was observed of the Swedes that they were home-sick; for the greater part of their forces sailed eastward along the land in the night, and did not stop their course until they came home to their houses. Now when King Onund observed this he ordered, as soon as the day dawned, to sound the signal for a House-thing; and the whole people went on shore, and the Thing sat down. Then King Onund took up the word, and spake thus: “ So it is, King Olaf, that, as you know, we have been assembled in summer, and have forayed wide around in Denmark, and have gained much booty, but no land. I had 350 vessels, and now have not above 100 remaining with me. Now it appears to me we can make no greater progress than we have made, although you have still the 60 vessels which have followed you the whole summer. It therefore appears to me best that we come back to my kingdom; for it is always good to drive home with the waggon safe. In this expedition we have won something, and lost nothing. Now I will offer you, King Olaf, to come with me, and we shall remain assembled during the winter. Take as much of my kingdom as you will, so that you and the men who follow you may support yourselves well; and when spring comes let us take such



measures as we find serviceable. If you, however, will prefer to travel across our country, and go overland to Norway, it shall be free for you to do so."

King Olaf thanked King Onund for his friendly offer. "But if I may advise," says he, "then we should take another resolution, and keep together the forces we have still remaining. I had in the first of summer, before I left Norway, 350 ships; but when I left the country I chose from among the whole war-levy those I thought to be the best, and with them I manned 60 ships; and these I still have. Now it appears to me that the part of your war-force which has now run away is the most worthless, and of least assistance; but now I see here all your chiefs and leaders, and I know well that the people who belong to the court-troops\* are by far the best suited to carry arms. We have here chosen men and superb ships, and we can very well lie all winter in our ships, as vikings' custom is. But Canute cannot lie long in Helge river; for the harbour will not hold so many vessels as he has. If he steers eastward after us, we can escape from him, and then people will soon gather to us; but if he return to the harbours where his fleet can lie, I know for certain that the desire to return home will not be less in his army than in ours. I think, also, we have ravaged so widely in summer, that the villages, both in Sealand and Scania, know well whose favour they have to seek. Canute's army will thus be dispersed so widely, that it is uncertain to whom fate may at the last give the victory; but let us first find out what resolution he takes."

Thus King Olaf ended his speech, and it found much applause, and his advice was followed. Spies were sent into King Canute's army, and both the kings Olaf and Onund remained lying where they were.

\* The thingmen, or hired body-guard attending the court.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CLXII.  
Of King  
Canute  
and Earl  
Ulf.

When King Canute saw that the kings of Norway and Sweden steered eastward with their forces along the coast, he sent men to ride night and day on the land to follow their movements. Some spies went forward, others returned; so that King Canute had news every day of their progress. He had also spies always in their army. Now when he heard that a great part of the fleet had sailed away from the kings, he turned back with his forces to Sealand, and lay with his whole fleet in the Sound; so that part lay on the Scania\* side, and a part on the Sealand side. King Canute himself, the day before Michaelmas, rode with a great retinue to Roeskilde. There his brother-in-law, Earl Ulf, had prepared a great feast for him. The earl was the most agreeable host; but the king was silent and sullen. The earl talked to him in every way to make him cheerful, and brought forward every thing which he thought would amuse him; but the king remained stern, and speaking little. At last the earl proposed to him a game at chess, which he agreed to; and a chess-board was produced, and they played together. Earl Ulf was hasty in temper, stiff, and in nothing yielding; but every thing he managed went on well in his hands: and he was a great warrior, about whom there are many stories. He was the most powerful man in Denmark next to the king. Earl Ulf's sister Gyda was married to Earl Gudín (Godwin) Ulfnadsson; and their sons were Harald king of England, and Earl Toste, Earl Walthiof, Earl Mauro-kaare, and Earl Swend. Gyda was the name of their daughter, who was married to the English king Edward the Good.

CHAPTER  
CLXIII.  
Of the  
earl's  
murder.

When they had played a while the king made a false move, at which the earl took a knight from the king; but the king set the piece again upon the

\* Scania, on the northern or Swedish side of the Sound.



board, and told the earl to make another move; but the earl grew angry, threw over the chess-board, stood up, and went away. The king said, "Run away, Ulf the Fearful." The earl turned round at the door and said, "Thou wouldst have run farther at Helge river, if thou hadst come to battle there. Thou didst not call me Ulf the Fearful, when I hastened to thy help while the Swedes were beating thee like a dog." The earl then went out, and went to bed. The following morning while the king was putting on his clothes he said to his footboy, "Go thou to Earl Ulf, and kill him."

The lad went, was away a while, and then came back.

The king said, "Hast thou killed the earl?"

"I did not kill him, for he was gone to Saint Lucius' church."

There was a man called Ivar White, a Norwegian by birth, who was the king's courtman and chamberlain.\* The king said to him, "Go thou and kill the earl."

Ivar went to the church, and in at the choir, and thrust his sword through the earl, who died on the spot. Then Ivar went to the king, with the bloody sword in his hand.

The king said, "Hast thou killed the earl?"

"I have killed him," says he.

"Thou didst well."

After the earl was killed the monks closed the church, and locked the doors. When that was told the king he sent a message to the monks, ordering them to open the church and sing high mass. They did as the king ordered; and when the king came to the church he bestowed on it great property, so that

\* Or quartermaster — lodging-man, who had charge of the king's accommodation; and also a courtman, or one of his body-guard.



## SAGA VII.

it had a large domain, by which that place was raised very high; and these lands have since always belonged to it. King Canute rode down to his ships, and lay there till late in harvest with a very large army.

CHAPTER  
CLXIV.  
Of King  
Olaf and  
the Swedes.

When King Olaf and King Onund heard that King Canute had sailed to the Sound, and lay there with a great force, the kings held a House-thing, and spoke much about what resolution they should adopt. King Olaf wished they should remain there with all the fleet, and see what King Canute would at last resolve to do. But the Swedes held it to be unadvisable to remain until the frost set in, and so it was determined; and King Onund went home with all his army, and King Olaf remained lying after them.

CHAPTER  
CLXV.  
Of Egil  
and Tove.

While King Olaf lay there, he had frequently conferences and consultations with his people. One night Egill Hallsson and Tove Valgautsson had the watch upon the king's ship. Tove came from West Gotland, and was a man of high birth. While they sat on watch they heard much lamentation and crying among the people who had been taken in the war, and who lay bound on the shore at night. Tove said it made him ill to hear such distress, and asked Egill to go with him and let loose these people. This work they set about, cut the cords, and let the people escape, and they looked upon it as a piece of great friendship; but the king was so enraged at it, that they themselves were in the greatest danger. When Egill afterwards fell sick the king for a long time would not visit him, until many people entreated it of him. It vexed Egill much to have done any thing the king was angry at, and he begged his forgiveness. The king now dismissed his wrath against Egill, laid his hands upon the side on which Egill's pain was, and sang a prayer; upon which the pain ceased instantly, and Egill grew better. Tove came, after



entreaty, into reconciliation with the king, on condition that he should exhort his father Valgaut to come to the king. He was a heathen; but after conversation with the king he went over to Christianity, and died instantly when he was baptized.

SAGA VII.

King Olaf had now frequent conferences with his people, and asked advice from them, and from his chiefs, as to what he should determine upon. But there was no unanimity among them—some considering that unadvisable which others considered highly serviceable; and there was much indecision in their councils. King Canute had always spies in King Olaf's army, who entered into conversation with many of his men, offering them presents and favour on account of King Canute. Many allowed themselves to be seduced, and gave promises of fidelity, and to be King Canute's men, and bring the country into his hands if he came to Norway. This was apparent, afterwards, of many who at first kept it concealed. Some took at once money bribes, and others were promised money afterwards; and a great many there were who had got great presents of money from him before: for it may be said with truth of King Canute, that every man who came to him, and who he thought had the spirit of a man and would like his favour, got his hands full of gifts and money. On this account he was very popular, although his generosity was principally shown to foreigners, and was greatest the greater distance they came from.

CHAPTER  
CLXVI.  
Treachery  
towards  
King Olaf.

King Olaf had often conferences and meetings with his people, and asked their counsel; but as he observed they gave different opinions, he had a suspicion that there must be some who spoke differently from what they really thought advisable for him, and he was thus uncertain if all gave him due fidelity in council. Some pressed that with the first fair wind they should sail to the Sound, and so to Norway.

CHAPTER  
CLXVII.  
King  
Olaf's con-  
sultations.



SAGA VII.

They said the Danes would not dare to attack them, although they lay with so great a force right in the way. But the king was a man of too much understanding not to see that this was impracticable. He knew also that Olaf Tryggvesson had found it quite otherwise, as to the Danes not daring to fight, when he with a few people went into battle against a great body of them. The king also knew that in King Canute's army there were a great many Norwegians; therefore he entertained the suspicion that those who gave this advice were more favourable to King Canute than to him. King Olaf came at last to the determination, from all these considerations, that the people who would follow him should make themselves ready to proceed by land across Gotland, and so to Norway. "But our ships," said he, "and all things that we cannot take with us, I will send eastward to the Swedish king's dominions, and let them be taken care of for us there."

CHAPTER  
CLXVIII.  
Harek of  
Thiottö's  
voyage.

Harek of Thiottö replied thus to the king's speech: "It is evident that I cannot travel on foot to Norway. I am old and heavy, and little accustomed to walking. Besides, I am unwilling to part with my ship; for on that ship and its apparel I have bestowed so much labour, that it would go much against my inclination to put her into the hands of my enemies."

The king said, "Come along with us, Harek, and we shall carry thee when thou art tired of walking."

Then Harek sang these lines:—

"I'll mount my ocean steed,  
And o'er the sea I'll speed;  
Forests and hills are not for me,—  
I love the moving sea.  
Though Canute block the Sound,  
Rather than walk the ground,  
And leave my ship, I'll see  
What my ship will do for me."



Then King Olaf let every thing be put in order for the journey. The people had their walking clothing and weapons, but their other clothes and effects they packed upon such horses as they could get. Then he sent off people to take his ships east to Calmar. There he had the vessels laid up, and the ships' apparel and other goods taken care of. Harek did as he had said, and waited for a wind, and then sailed west to Scania, until, about the decline of the day, he came with a fresh and fair wind to the eastward of Holvig. There he let the sail and the vane, and flag and mast be taken down, and let the upper works of the ship be covered over with some grey tilt-canvass, and let a few men sit at the oars in the fore part and aft, but the most were sitting low down in the vessel.

When Canute's watchmen saw the ship, they talked with each other about what ship it might be, and made the guess that it must be one loaded with herrings or salt, as they only saw a few men at the oars; and the ship, besides, appeared to them grey, and wanting tar, as if burnt up by the sun, and they saw also that it was deeply loaded. Now when Harek came farther through the Sound, and past the fleet, he raised the mast, hoisted sail, and set up his gilded vane. The sail was white as snow, and in it were red and blue stripes of cloth interwoven. When the king's men saw the ship sailing in this state, they told the king that probably King Olaf had sailed through them. But King Canute replies, that King Olaf was too prudent a man to sail with a single ship through King Canute's fleet, and thought it more likely to be Harek of Thiottö, or the like of him. Many believed the truth to be that King Canute knew of this expedition of Harek, and that it would not have succeeded so if they had not concluded a friendship beforehand with each other; which seemed likely, after King



SAGA VII. Canute's and Harek's friendly understanding became generally known.

Harek made this song as he sailed northward round the isle of Vederey : —

“ The widows of Lund may smile through their tears,  
The Danish girls may have their jeers ;  
They may laugh or smile,  
But outside their isle  
Old Harek still on to his North land steers.”

Harek went on his way, and never stopped till he came north to Halogaland, to his own house in Thiotttö Isle.

CHAPTER  
CLXIX.  
King  
Olaf's  
course from  
Sweden.

When King Olaf began his journey, he came first into Smaaland, and then into West Gotland. He marched quietly and peaceably, and the country people gave him all assistance on his journey. Thus he proceeded until he came into Viken, and north through Viken to Sarpsburg, where he remained, and ordered a winter abode to be prepared. Then he gave most of the chiefs leave to return home, but kept the lendemen by him whom he thought the most serviceable. There were with him also all the sons of Arne Armodsson, and they stood in great favour with the king. Geller Thorkelsson, who the summer before had come from Iceland, also came there to the king, as before related.

CHAPTER  
CLXX.  
Of Sigvat  
the scald.

Sigvat the scald had long been in King Olaf's household, as before related, and the king made him his marshal. Sigvat had no talent for speaking in prose ; but in scaldcraft he was so practised, that the verses came as readily from his tongue as if he were speaking in usual language. He had made a mercantile journey to Normandy, and in the course of it had come to England, where he met King Canute, and obtained permission from him to sail to Norway, as before related. When he came to Norway he proceeded straight to King Olaf, and found him at



Sarpsburg. He presented himself before the king just as he was sitting down to table. Sigvat saluted him. The king looked at Sigvat and was silent. Then Sigvat sang,—

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“Great king! thy marshal is come home,  
 No more by land or sea to roam,  
 But by thy side  
 Still to abide.  
 Great king! what seat here shall he take  
 For the king’s honour—not his sake?  
 For all seats here  
 To me are dear.”

Then was verified the old saying, that “many are the ears of a king;” for King Olaf had heard all about Sigvat’s journey, and that he had spoken with Canute. He says to Sigvat, “I do not know if thou art my marshal, or hast become one of Canute’s men.” Sigvat said,—

“Canute, whose golden gifts display  
 A generous heart, would have me stay,  
 Service in his great court to take,  
 And my own Norway king forsake.  
 Two masters at a time, I said,  
 Were one too many for men bred  
 Where truth and virtue, shown to all,  
 Make all men true in Olaf’s hall.”

Then King Olaf told Sigvat to take his seat where he before used to sit; and in a short time Sigvat was in as high favour with the king as ever.

Erling Skialgsson and all his sons had been all summer in King Canute’s army, in the retinue of Earl Hakon. Thorer Hund was also there, and was in high esteem. Now when King Canute heard that King Olaf had gone overland to Norway, he discharged his army, and gave all men leave to go to their winter abodes. There was then in Denmark a great army of foreigners, both English, Norwegians, and men of other countries, who had joined the expe-

CHAPTER  
 CLXXI.  
 Of Erling  
 Skialgsson  
 and his  
 sons.



## SAGA VII.

dition in summer. In autumn Erling Skialgsson went to Norway with his men, and received great presents from King Canute at parting; but Thorer Hund remained behind in King Canute's court. With Erling went messengers from King Canute well provided with money; and in winter they travelled through all the country, paying the money which King Canute had promised to many in autumn for their assistance. They gave presents in money, besides, to many whose friendship could be purchased for King Canute. They received much assistance in their travels from Erling. In this way it came to pass that many turned their support to King Canute, promised him their services, and agreed to oppose King Olaf. Some did this openly, but many more concealed it from the public. King Olaf heard this news, for many had something to tell him about it; and the conversation in the court often turned upon it. Sigvat the scald made a song upon it: —

“The base traitors ply  
 With purses of gold,  
 Wanting to buy  
 What is not to be sold,—  
 The king's life and throne  
 Wanting to buy:  
 But our souls are our own,  
 And to hell we'll not hie.  
 No pleasure in heaven,  
 As we know full well,  
 To the traitor is given,—  
 His soul is his hell.”

Often also the conversation turned upon how ill it beseemed Earl Hakon to raise his hand in arms against King Olaf, who had given him his life when he fell into the king's power; but Sigvat was a particular friend of Earl Hakon, and when he heard the earl spoken against he sang,—

“Our own court people we may blame,  
 If they take gold to their own shame,



Their king and country to betray.  
 With those who give it's not the same,  
 From them we have no faith to claim :  
 'Tis we are wrong, if we give way."

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King Olaf gave a great feast at Yule, and many great people had come to him. It was the seventh day of Yule that the king, with a few persons, among whom was Sigvat, who attended him day and night, went to a house in which the king's most precious valuables were kept. He had, according to his custom, collected there with great care the valuable presents he was to make on New Year's eve. There was in the house no small number of gold-mounted swords; and Sigvat sang, —

CHAPTER  
 CLXXII.  
 Of King  
 Olaf's pre-  
 sents at  
 Yule.

" The swords stand there,  
 All bright and fair, —  
 Those oars that dip in blood :  
 If I in favour stood,  
 I too might have a share.  
 A sword the scald would gladly take,  
 And use it for his master's sake :  
 In favour once he stood,  
 And a sword has stained in blood."

The king took a sword of which the handle was twisted round with gold, and the guard was gold-mounted, and gave it to him. It was a valuable article; but the gift was not seen without envy, as will appear hereafter.

Immediately after Yule the king began his journey to the Uplands; for he had a great many people about him, but had received no income that autumn from the North country, for there had been an armament in summer, and the king had laid out all the revenues he could command; and also he had no vessels with which he and his people could go to the North. At the same time he had news from the North, from which he could see that there would be no safety for him in that quarter, unless he went with a great force. For these reasons he determined to proceed through



## SAGA VII.

the Uplands, although it was not so long a time since he had been there in guest-quarters as the law prescribes, and as the kings usually had the custom of observing in their visits. When he came to the Uplands the lenders and the richest bonders invited him to be their guest, and thus lightened his expenses.

CHAPTER  
CLXXIII.  
Of Biorn  
the bailiff.

There was a man called Biorn who was of Gotland family, and a friend and acquaintance of Queen Astrid, and in some way related to her. She had given him farm-management and other offices in the upper part of Hedemark. He had also the management of Osterdal district. Biorn was not in esteem with the king, nor liked by the bonders. It happened in a hamlet which Biorn ruled over, that many swine and cattle were missing; therefore Biorn ordered a Thing to be called to examine the matter. Such pillage he attributed chiefly to the people settled in forest-farms far from other men; by which he referred particularly to those who dwelt in Osterdal, for that district was very thinly inhabited, and full of lakes and forest clearings, and but in few places was any great neighbourhood together.

CHAPTER  
CLXXIV.  
Of Raud's  
sons.

There was a man called Raud who dwelt in Osterdal. His wife was called Ragnhild; and his sons, Dag and Sigurd, were men of great talent. They were present at the Thing, made a reply in defence of the Osterdal people, and removed the accusation from them. Biorn thought they were too pert in their answer, and too fine in their clothes and weapons; and therefore turned his speech against these brothers, and said it was not unlikely they may have committed these thefts. They denied it, and the Thing closed. Soon after King Olaf, with his retinue, came to guest-quarters in the house of bailiff Biorn. The matter which had been before the Thing was then complained of to the king; and Biorn said that



Raud's sons appeared to him to have committed these thefts. A messenger was sent for Raud's sons; and when they appeared before the king he said they had not at all the appearance of thieves, and acquitted them. Thereupon they invited the king, with all his retinue, to a three days' entertainment at their father's; and although Biorn dissuaded him from it, the king went. At Raud's there was a very excellent feast. The king asked Raud what people he and his wife were. Raud answered that he was originally a Swedish man, rich, and of high birth; "but I ran away with the wife I have ever since had, and she is a sister of King Ring Dagsson." The king then remembered both their families. He found that father and sons were men of understanding, and asked them what they could do. Sigurd said he could interpret dreams, and determine the time of the day although no heavenly bodies could be seen. The king made trial of his art, and found it was as Sigurd had said. Dag stated, as his accomplishment, that he could see the misdeeds and vices of every man who came under his eye, when he chose to observe him closely. The king told him to declare what faults of disposition he saw in the king himself. Dag mentioned a fault which the king was sensible he really had. Then the king asked what fault the bailiff Biorn had. Dag said Biorn was a thief; and told also where Biorn had concealed on his farm the bones, horns, and hides of the cattle he had stolen in autumn; "for he committed," said Dag, "all the thefts in autumn which he accuses other people of." Dag also told the king the places where the king should go after leaving them. When the king departed from Raud's house he was accompanied on the way, and presented with friendly gifts; and Raud's sons remained with the king. The king went first to Biorn's, and found there that all Dag had told him was true. Upon which he drove Biorn out of the



SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CLXXV.  
Thorer's  
death.

country; and he had to thank the queen that he preserved life and limbs.

Thorer, a son of Olver of Egge, a stepson of Kalf Arneson, and a sister's son of Thorer Hund, was a remarkably handsome man, stout and strong. He was at this time eighteen years old; had made a good marriage in Hedemark, by which he got great wealth; and was besides one of the most popular of men, and formed to be a chief. He invited the king and his retinue home to him to a feast. The king accepted the invitation, went to Thorer's, and was well received. The entertainment was very splendid; they were excellently treated, and all that was set before the guests was of the best that could be got. The king and his people talked among themselves of the excellence of every thing, and knew not what they should admire the most, — whether Thorer's house outside, or the inside furniture, the table service or the liquors, or the host who gave them such a feast. But Dag said little about it. The king used often to speak to Dag, and ask him about various things; and he had proved the truth of all that Dag had said, both of things that had happened or were to happen, and therefore the king had much confidence in what he said. The king called Dag to him to have a private conversation together, and spoke to him about many things. Afterwards the king turned the conversation on Thorer, — what an excellent man Thorer was, and what a superb feast he had made for them. Dag answered but little to this, but agreed it was true what the king said. The king then asked Dag what disposition or faith he found in Thorer. Dag replied that he must certainly consider Thorer of a good disposition, if he be really what most people believe him to be. The king told him to answer direct what he was asked, and said that it was his duty to do so. Dag replies, "Then thou must allow me to determine



the punishment if I disclose his faith." The king SAGA VII.  
replied that he would not submit his decision to another man, but again ordered Dag to reply to what he asked.

Dag replies, "The sovereign's order goes before all. I find this disposition in Thorer, as in so many others, that he is too greedy of money."

The king: "Is he then a thief, or a robber?"

"He is neither."

"What is he then?"

"To win money he is a traitor to his sovereign. He has taken money from King Canute the Great for thy head."

The king asks, "What proof hast thou of the truth of this?"

Dag: "He has upon his right arm, above the elbow, a thick gold ring, which King Canute gave him, and which he lets no man see."

This ended their conference, and the king was very wroth. Now as the king sat at table, and the guests had drunk a while with great mirth, and Thorer went round to see the guests well served, the king ordered Thorer to be called to him. He went up before the table, and laid his hands upon it.

The king asked, "How old a man art thou, Thorer?"

He answered, "I am eighteen years old."

"A stout man thou art for those years, and thou hast been fortunate also."

Then the king took his right hand, and felt it towards the elbow.

Thorer said, "Take care, for I have a boil upon my arm."

The king held his hand there, and felt there was something hard under it. "Hast thou not heard," said he, "that I am a physician? Let me see the boil."



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As Thorer saw it was of no use to conceal it longer, he took off the ring and laid it on the table.

The king asked if that was the gift of King Canute.

Thorer replied that he could not deny it was.

The king ordered him to be seized and laid in irons. Kalf came up and entreated for mercy, and offered money for him, which also was seconded by many; but the king was so wroth that nobody could get in a word. He said Thorer should suffer the doom he had prepared for himself. Thereupon he ordered Thorer to be killed. This deed was much detested in the Uplands, and not less in the Drontheim country, where many of Thorer's connections were. Kalf took the death of this man much to heart, for he had been his foster-son in childhood.

CHAPTER  
CLXXVI.  
The fall of  
Griotgard.

Griotgard Olversson, Thorer's brother, and the eldest of the brothers, was a very wealthy man, and had a great troop of people about him. He lived also at this time in Hedemark. When he heard that Thorer had been killed, he made an attack upon the places where the king's goods and men were; but, between whiles, he kept himself in the forest and other secret places. When the king heard of this disturbance, he had inquiry made about Griotgard's haunts, and found out that he had taken up night-quarters not far from where the king was. King Olaf set out in the night-time, came there about day-dawn, and placed a circle of men round the house in which Griotgard was sleeping. Griotgard and his men, roused by the stir of people and clash of arms, ran to their weapons, and Griotgard himself sprang to the front room. He asked who commanded the troop; and it was answered him, "King Olaf was come there." Griotgard asked if the king would hear his words. The king, who stood at the door, said that Griotgard might speak what he pleased, and he would hear his words. Griotgard said, "I do not



beg for mercy ;” and at the same moment he rushed out, having his shield over his head, and his drawn sword in his hand. It was not so much light that he could see clearly. He struck his sword at the king; but Arnbiorn Arneson ran in, and the thrust pierced him under his armour into his stomach, and Arnbiorn got his death-wound. Griotgard was killed immediately, and most of his people with him. After this event the king turned back to the south to Viken.

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Now when the king came to Tunsberg he sent men out to all the districts, and ordered the people out upon a levy. He had but a small provision of shipping, and there were only bonders' vessels to be got. From the districts in the near neighbourhood many people came to him, but few from any distance; and it was soon found that the people had turned away from the king. King Olaf sent people to Gotland for his ships, and other goods and wares which had been left there in autumn; but the progress of these men was very slow, for it was no better now than in autumn to sail through the Sound, as King Canute had in spring fitted out an army throughout the whole of the Danish dominions, and had no fewer than 1200 vessels.

CHAPTER  
CLXXVII.  
King Olaf  
sends for  
his ships  
and goods.

The news came to Norway that King Canute had assembled an immense armament through all Denmark, with which he intended to conquer Norway. When this became known the people were less willing to join King Olaf, and he got but little aid from the bonders. The king's men often spoke about this among themselves. Sigvat tells of it thus:—

CHAPTER  
CLXXVIII.  
King Olaf's  
counsels.

“ Our men are few, our ships are small,  
While England's king is strong in all;  
But yet our king is not afraid—  
O! never be such king betrayed!  
'Tis evil counsel to deprive  
Our king of countrymen to strive



## SAGA VII.

To save their country, sword in hand :  
 'Tis money that betrays our land."

The king held meetings with the men of the court, and sometimes House-things with all his people, and consulted with them what they should, in their opinion, undertake. "We must not conceal from ourselves," said he, "that Canute will come here this summer; and that he has, as ye all know, a large force, and we have at present but few men to oppose to him; and, as matters now stand, we cannot depend much on the fidelity of the country people." The king's men replied to his speech in various ways; but it is said that Sigvat the scald replied thus, advising flight, as treachery, not cowardice, was the cause of it: —

"We may well fly, when even our foe  
 Offers us money if we go.  
 I may be blamed, accused of fear;  
 But treachery, not faith, rules here.  
 Men may retire who long have shown  
 Their faith and love, and now alone  
 Retire because they cannot save —  
 This is no treachery in the brave."

CHAPTER  
 LCXXIX.  
 Harek of  
 Thiottö  
 burns  
 Grankel  
 and his  
 men.

The same spring it happened in Halogaland that Harek of Thiottö remembered how Asmund Grankel-son had plundered and beaten his house-servants. A ten-oared cutter which belonged to Harek was afloat in front of the house, with tent and deck, and he spread the report that he intended to go south to Drontheim. One evening Harek went on board with his house-servants, about eighty men, who rowed the whole night; and he came towards morning to Grankel's house, and surrounded it with his men. They then made an attack on the house, and set fire to it; and Grankel with his people were burnt, and some were killed outside; and in all about thirty men lost their lives. After this deed Harek returned home, and sat quietly in his farm. Asmund was with King



Olaf when he heard of it; therefore there was nobody in Halogaland to sue Harek for mulct for this deed, and also he offered none.

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Canute the Great collected his forces, and went to Lymfiord. When he was ready with his equipment he sailed from thence with his whole fleet to Norway; made all possible speed, and did not land to the eastward of the Fiords, but crossed Folden\*, and landed in Agder, where he summoned a Thing. The bonders came down from the upper country to hold a Thing with Canute, who was every where in that country accepted as king. Then he placed men over the districts, and took hostages from the bonders, and no man opposed him. King Olaf was in Tunsberg when Canute's fleet sailed across the mouth of the fiord. Canute sailed northwards along the coast, and people came to him from all the districts, and promised him fealty. He lay a while in Egersound, where Erling Skialgsson came to him with many people, and King Canute and Erling renewed their league of friendship. Among other things, Canute promised Erling the whole country between Stad and Rygiarbit to rule over. Then King Canute proceeded; and, to be short in our tale, did not stop until he came to Drontheim, and landed at Nidaros. In Drontheim he called together a Thing for the eight districts, at which King Canute was chosen king of all Norway. Thorer Hund, who had come with King Canute from Denmark, was there, and also Harek of Thiottö; and both were made sheriffs of the king, and took the oath of fealty to him. King Canute gave them great fiefs, and also right to the Lapland trade, and presented them besides with great gifts. He enriched all men who were inclined to enter into friendly accord with him both with fiefs and money, and gave them greater power than they had before.

CHAPTER  
CLXXX.  
King  
Canute's  
expedition  
to Norway.

\* The mouth of Christiania fiord.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CLXXXI.  
Of King  
Canute.

When King Canute had laid the whole of Norway under his authority, he called together a numerous Thing, both of his own people and of the people of the country; and at it he made proclamation, that he made his relation Earl Hakon the governor-in-chief of all the land in Norway that he had conquered in this expedition. In like manner he led his son Hardaknut to the high seat at his side, gave him the title of king, and therewith the whole Danish dominion. King Canute took as hostages from all lendemen and great bonders in Norway either their sons, brothers, or other near connections, or the men who were dearest to them and appeared to him most suitable; by which he, as before observed, secured their fidelity to him. As soon as Earl Hakon had attained this power in Norway his brother-in-law, Einar Tambarskelver, made an agreement with him, and received back all the fiefs he formerly had possessed while the earls ruled the country. King Canute gave Einar great gifts, and bound him by great kindness to his interests; and promised that Einar should be the greatest and most important man in Norway, among those who did not hold the highest dignity, as long as he had power over the country. He added to this, that Einar appeared to him the most suitable man to hold the highest title of honour in Norway if no earls remained, and his son Endrid also, on account of his high birth. Einar placed a great value on these promises, and, in return, promised the greatest fidelity. Einar's chiefship began anew with this.

CHAPTER  
CLXXXII.  
Of Thorarin Loftunge.

There was a man by name Thorarin Loftunge, an Icelander by birth, and a great scald, who had been much with the kings and other great chiefs. He was now with King Canute the Great, and had composed a flock, or short poem, in his praise. When the king heard of this he was very angry, and ordered him to



bring the next day a drapa, or long poem, by the time he went to table; and if he failed to do so, said the king, "he shall be hanged for his impudence in composing such a small poem about King Canute." Thorarin then composed a stave as a refrain, which he inserted in the poem, and also augmented it with several other strophes or verses. This was the refrain:—

"Canute protects his realm, as Jove\*,  
Guardian of Greece, his realm above."

King Canute rewarded him for the poem with fifty marks of silver. The poem was called the "Head-ransom." Thorarin composed another poem about King Canute, which was called the "Campaign Poem;" and therein he tells of King Canute's expedition when he sailed from Denmark to Norway; and the following are strophes from one of the parts of his poem:—

"Canute with all his men is out,  
Under the heavens in war-ships stout,—  
Out on the sea, from Lymfiord's green,  
My good, my brave friend's fleet is seen.  
The men of Agder on the coast  
Tremble to see this mighty host:  
The guilty tremble as they spy  
The victor's fleet beneath the sky.

"The sight surpasses far the tale,  
As glancing in the sun they sail;  
The king's ship glittering all with gold,  
And splendour there not to be told.  
Round Lyster many a coal-black mast  
Of Canute's fleet is gliding past.  
And now through Eyka sound they ride,  
Upon the gently heaving tide.

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\* "Knutr verr grund sem gætir,  
Grikialands himenriki."

The guardian of Greece is more probably an allusion to the Greek mythology than the Christian. But as Christianity came from the East, which was all included under the name Grikialand, it is perhaps an allusion to the Christian Divinity.



## SAGA VII.

“ And all the sound is covered o’er  
 With ships and sails, from shore to shore,  
 A mighty king, a mighty host,  
 Hiding the sea on Eyka coast.  
 And peaceful men in haste now hie  
 Up Hiorngla-hill the fleet to spy,  
 As round the ness where Stade lies  
 Each high-stemmed ship in splendour flies.

“ Nor seemed the voyage long, I trow,  
 To warrior on the high-built bow,  
 As o’er the ocean-mountains riding  
 The land and hills seem past him gliding.  
 With whistling breeze and flashing spray  
 Past Stein the gay ships dashed away;  
 In open sea, the southern gale  
 Filled every wide out-bellying sail.

“ Still on they fly, still northwards go,  
 Till he who conquers every foe,  
 The mighty Canute, came to land,  
 Far in the north on Drontheim’s strand.  
 There this great king of Jutland race,  
 Whose deeds and gifts surpass in grace  
 All other kings, bestowed the throne  
 Of Norway on his sister’s son.

“ To his own son he gave the crown  
 (This I must add to his renown)  
 Of Denmark—land of shadowy vales,  
 In which the white swan trims her sails.”

Here it is told that King Canute’s expedition was grander than saga can tell; but Thorarin sang thus, because he would pride himself upon being one of King Canute’s retinue when he came to Norway.

CHAPTER  
 CLXXXIII.  
 Of the  
 messengers  
 sent by  
 King Olaf  
 for his  
 ships.

The men whom King Olaf had sent eastwards to Gotland after his ships took with them the vessels they thought the best, and burnt the rest. The ship-apparel and other goods belonging to the king and his men they also took with them; and when they heard that King Canute had gone to Norway they sailed west through the Sound, and then north to Viken to King Olaf, to whom they delivered his ships. He was then at Tunsberg. When King Olaf learnt that King Canute was sailing north along the coast, King Olaf steered



with his fleet into Oslo fiord\*, and into a branch of it called Drafn†, where he lay quiet until King Canute's fleet had sailed southwards again. On this expedition which King Canute made from the North along the coast, he held a Thing in each district, and in every Thing the country was bound by oath in fealty to him, and hostages were given him. He went eastward across the mouths of the fiords to Sarpsburg, and held a Thing there, and, as elsewhere, the country was surrendered to him under oath of fidelity. King Canute then returned south to Denmark, after having conquered Norway without stroke of sword, and he ruled now over three kingdoms. So says Halvard Hareksblese when he sang of King Canute:—

“The warrior-king, whose blood-stain'd shield  
Has shone on many a hard-fought field,  
England and Denmark now has won,  
And o'er three kingdoms rules alone.  
Peace now he gives us fast and sure,  
Since Norway too is made secure  
By him who oft, in days of yore,  
Glutted the hawk and wolf with gore.”

King Olaf sailed with his ships out to Tunsberg, as soon as he heard that King Canute had turned back, and was gone south to Denmark. He then made himself ready with the men who liked to follow him, and had then thirteen ships. Afterwards he sailed out along Viken; but got little money, and few men, as those only followed him who dwelt in islands, or on outlying points of land. The king landed in such places, but got only the money and men that fell in his way; and he soon perceived that the country had abandoned him. He proceeded on according to the winds. This was in the beginning of winter. The wind turned very late in the season in their favour,

CHAPTER  
CLXXXIV.  
Of King  
Olaf and  
his pro-  
ceedings.

\* Now Christiania fiord.

† Drammen fiord.



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CHAPTER  
CLXXXV.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
voyage.

so that they lay long in the Sol Islands\*, where they heard the news from the North, through merchants, who told the king that Erling Skialgsson had collected a great force in Jederen, and that his ship lay fully rigged outside of the land, together with many other vessels belonging to the bonders; namely, skiffs, fisher-yachts, and great row-boats. Then the king sailed with his fleet from the East, and lay a while in Eger sound. Both parties heard of each other now, and Erling assembled all the men he could.

On Thomasmas, before Yule, the king left the harbour as soon as day appeared. With a good but rather strong gale he sailed northwards past Jederen. The weather was rainy, with dark flying clouds in the sky. The spies went immediately in through the Jederen country when the king sailed past it; and as soon as Erling heard that the king was sailing past from the East, he let the war-horn call all the people on board, and the whole force hastened to the ships, and prepared for battle. The king's ship passed by Jederen at a great rate; but thereafter turned in towards the land, intending to run up the fiords to gather men and money. Erling Skialgsson perceived this, and sailed after him with a great force and many ships. Swiftly their vessels flew, for they had nothing on board but men and arms: but Erling's ship went much faster than the others; therefore he took in a reef in the sails, and waited for the other vessels. Then the king saw that Erling with his fleet gained upon him fast; for the king's ships were heavily laden, and were besides water-soaked, having been in the sea the whole summer, autumn, and winter, up to this time. He saw also that there would be a great want of men, if he should go against the whole of Erling's fleet when it was assembled. He hailed from ship to ship the

\* Sol Isles are a little north of the Naze.



orders to let the sails gently sink, and to unship the booms and out-riggers, which was done. When Erling saw this he calls out to his people, and orders them to get on more sail. "Ye see," says he, "that their sails are diminishing, and they are getting fast away from our sight." He took the reef out of the sails of his ship, and outsailed all the others immediately; for Erling was very eager in his pursuit of King Olaf.

King Olaf then steered in towards the Isle of Böken, by which the ships came out of sight of each other. Thereafter the king ordered his men to strike the sails, and row forwards through a narrow sound that was there, and all the ships lay collected within a rocky point. Then all the king's men put on their weapons. Erling sailed in through the sound, and observed nothing until the whole fleet was before him, and he saw the king's men rowing towards him with all their ships at once. Erling and his crew let fall the sails, and seized their weapons; but the king's fleet surrounded his ship on all sides. Then the fight began, and it was of the sharpest; but soon the greatest loss was among Erling's men. Erling stood on the quarter-deck of his ship. He had a helmet on his head, a shield before him, and a sword in his hand. Sigvat the scald had remained behind in Viken, and heard the tidings. He was a great friend of Erling, had received presents from him, and had been at his house. Sigvat composed a poem upon Erling's fall, in which there is the following verse:—

CHAPTER  
CLXXXVI.  
Of Erling  
Skialgs-  
son's fall.

"Erling has set his ship on sea—  
Against the king away is he:  
He who oft lets the eagle stain  
Her yellow feet in blood of slain.  
His little war-ship side by side  
With the king's fleet, the fray will bide.  
Now sword to sword the fight is raging,  
Which Erling with the king is waging."

Then Erling's men began to fall, and at the same



SAGA VII. — moment his ship was carried by boarding, and every man of his died in his place. The king himself was among the foremost in the fray. So says Sigvat: —

“ The king’s men hewed with hasty sword, —  
The king urged on the ship to board, —  
All o’er the decks the wounded lay :  
Right fierce and bloody was that fray.  
In Tungen sound, on Jederen shore,  
The decks were slippery with red gore ;  
Warm blood was dropping in the sound,  
Where the king’s sword was gleaming round.”

So entirely had Erling’s men fallen, that not a man remained standing in his ship but himself alone ; for there was none who asked for quarter, or none who got it if he did ask. There was no opening for flight, for there lay ships all around Erling’s ship on every side, and it is told for certain that no man attempted to fly ; and Sigvat says, —

“ All Erling’s men fell in the fray,  
Off Böken Isle, this hard-fought day.  
The brave king boarded, onward cheered,  
And north of Tung the deck was cleared.  
Erling alone, the brave, the stout,  
Cut off from all, yet still held out ;  
High on the stern — a sight to see —  
In his lone ship alone stood he.”

Then Erling was attacked both from the forecastle and from the other ships. There was a large space upon the poop which stood high above the other ships, and which nobody could reach but by arrow-shot, or partly with the thrust of spear, but which he always struck from him by parrying. Erling defended himself so manfully, that no example is known of one man having sustained the attack of so many men so long. Yet he never tried to get away, nor asked for quarter. So says Sigvat : —

“ Skialg’s brave son no mercy craves, —  
The battle’s fury still he braves ;  
The spear-storm, through the air sharp singing,  
Against his shield was ever ringing.



So Erling stood ; but fate had willed  
His life off Böken should be spilled.  
No braver man has, since his day,  
Past Böken Island ta'en his way."

When Olaf went back a little upon the fore-deck he saw Erling's behaviour ; and the king accosted him thus :—" Thou hast turned against me to-day, Erling."

He replies, " The eagle turns his claws in defence when torn asunder." Sigvat the scald tells thus of these words of Erling :—

" Erling, our best defence of old,—  
Erling the brave, the brisk, the bold,—  
Stood to his arms, gaily crying,  
' Eagles should show their claws, though dying :'  
The very words which once before  
To Olaf he had said on shore,  
At Utstein, when they both prepared  
To meet the foe, and danger shared."

Then said the king, " Wilt thou enter into my service, Erling ?"

" That I will," said he ; took the helmet off his head, laid down his sword and shield, and went forward to the fore-castle deck.

The king stuck him in the chin with the sharp point of his battle-axe, and said, " I shall mark thee as a traitor to thy sovereign."

Then Aslak Fitiaskalle rose up, and struck Erling in the head with an axe, so that it stood fast in his brain, and was instantly his death-wound. Thus Erling lost his life.

The king said to Aslak, " May all ill luck attend thee for that stroke ; for thou hast struck Norway out of my hands."

Aslak replied, " It is bad enough if that stroke displease thee, for I thought it was striking Norway into thy hands ; and if I have given thee offence, sire, by this stroke, and have thy ill-will for it, it will go badly with me, for I will get so many men's ill-will and



SAGA VII. enmity for this deed that I would need all your protection and favour."

The king replied that he should have it.

Thereafter the king ordered every man to return to his ship, and make ready for battle as fast as he could; and scarcely was this done before the other vessels ran in from the south into the sound. It went with the bonder army as is often seen, that the men, although many in numbers, know not what to do when they have experienced a check, have lost their chief, and are without leaders. None of Erling's sons were there, and the bonders therefore made no attack, and the king sailed on his way northwards. But the bonders took Erling's corpse, adorned it, and carried it with them home to Sole, and also the bodies of all who had fallen. There was great lamentation over Erling; and it has been a common observation among people, that Erling Skialgsson was the greatest and worthiest man in Norway of those who had no high title. Sigvat made these verses upon the occasion:—

"Thus Erling fell—and such a gain  
To buy with such a loss was vain;  
For better man than he ne'er died,  
And the king's gain was small beside.  
In truth no man I ever knew  
Was, in all ways, so firm and true;  
Free from servility and pride,  
Honoured by all—yet thus he died."

Sigvat also says that Aslak had very unthinkingly committed this murder of his own kinsman:—

"Norway's brave defender's dead!  
Aslak has heaped on his own head  
The guilt of murdering his own kin:  
May few be guilty of such sin!  
His kinsman's murder on him lies—  
Our forefathers, in sayings wise,  
Have said, what is unknown to few,  
'Kinsmen to kinsmen should be true.'"

CHAPTER  
CLXXXVII.  
Of the in-

Of Erling's sons some at that time were north in Drontheim, some in Hordaland, and some in the



Fiorde district, for the purpose of collecting men. When Erling's death was reported, the news came also that there was a levy raising in Agder, Hordaland, and Rogaland. Forces were raised and a great army assembled, under Erling's sons, to pursue King Olaf.

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surrection  
of Agder  
district.

When King Olaf retired from the battle with Erling, he went northward through the sounds, and it was late in the day. It is related that the king then made the following verses : —

“ This night, with battle sounds wild ringing,  
Small joy to the fair youth is bringing  
Who sits in Jederen, little dreaming  
O'er what this night the raven's screaming.  
The far-descended Erling's life  
Too soon has fallen ; but, in the strife,  
He met the luck they well deserve  
Who from their faith and fealty swerve.”

Afterwards the king sailed with his fleet along the land northwards, and got certain tidings of the bonders assembling an army. There were many chiefs and lendermen at this time with King Olaf, and all the sons of Arne. Of this Biorn Guldbraascald speaks in the poem he composed about Kalf Arne-son : —

“ Kalf ! thou hast fought at Böken well ;  
Of thy brave doings all men tell :  
When Harald's son his men urged on  
To the hard strife, thy courage shone.  
Thou soon hadst made a good Yule feast  
For Gridur's wolf there in the East :  
Where stone and spear were flying round,  
There thou wast still the foremost found.  
The people suffered in the strife  
When noble Erling lost his life,  
And north of Utstein many a speck  
Of blood lay black upon the deck.  
The king, 'tis clear, has been deceived,  
By treason of his land bereaved ;  
And Agder now, whose force is great,  
Will rule o'er all parts of the state.”

King Olaf continued his voyage until he came



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CLXXXVIII.  
Death of  
Aslak  
Fitiaskalle.

north of Stad, and brought up at the Herö Isles. Here he heard the news that Earl Hakon had a great war-force in Drontheim, and thereupon the king held a council with his people. Kalf Arneson urged much to advance to Drontheim, and fight Earl Hakon, notwithstanding the difference of numbers. Many others supported this advice, but others dissuaded from it, and the matter was left to the king's judgment.

Afterwards the king went into Steinvaag, and remained there all night; but Aslak Fitiaskalle ran into Borgund, where he remained the night, and where Vigleik Arneson was before him. In the morning, when Aslak was about returning on board, Vigleik assaulted him, and sought to avenge Erling's murder. Aslak fell there. Some of the king's court-men, who had been home all summer, joined the king here. They came from Frekösund, and brought the king tidings that Earl Hakon, and many lendersmen with him, had come in the morning to Frekösund with a large force; "and they will end thy days, sire, if they have strength enough." Now the king sent his men up to a hill that was near; and when they came to the top, and looked northwards to Biarnö Island, they perceived that a great armament of many ships was coming from the north, and they hastened back to the king with this intelligence. The king, who was lying there with only twelve ships, ordered the war-horn to sound, the tents to be taken down on his ships, and they took to their oars. When they were quite ready, and were leaving the harbour, the bonder army sailed north around Thiotand with twenty-five ships. The king then steered inside of Nyrfe Island, and inside of the Hund skerries. Now when King Olaf came right abreast of Borgund, the ship which Aslak had steered came out to meet him, and when they found the king told him the tidings, — that Vigleik Arneson had killed Aslak Fitiaskalle, because he had killed Erling



Skialgsson. The king took this news very angrily, but could not delay his voyage on account of the enemy, and he sailed in by Vegsund and Skot. There some of his people left him; among others, Kalf Arneson, with many other lendermen and ship commanders, who all went to meet Earl Hakon. King Olaf, however, proceeded on his way without stopping until he came to Fodrar fiord, where he brought up at Valdál, and landed from his ship. He had then five ships with him, which he drew up upon the shore, and took care of their sails and materials. Then he set up his land tent upon a point of land called Sult, where there are pretty flat fields, and set up a cross near to the point of land. A bonder, by name Bruse, who dwelt there in Möre, and was chief over the valley, came down to King Olaf, together with many other bonders, and received him well, and according to his dignity; and he was friendly, and pleased with their reception of him. Then the king asked if there was a passable road up in the country from the valley to Lesie; and Bruse replied, that there was a slope in the valley called Sessur not passable for man or beast. King Olaf answers, "That we must try, bonder, and it will go as God pleases. Come here in the morning with your yoke, and come yourself with it, and let us then see, when we come to the sloping precipice, what chance there may be, and if we cannot devise some means of coming over it with horses and people."

Now when day broke the bonders drove down with their yokes, as the king had told them. The clothes and weapons were packed upon horses, but the king and all the people went on foot. He went thus until he came to a place called Aros-Brukke; and when he came up upon the hill he rested himself, sat down there a while, looked down over the fiord, and said, "A difficult expedition ye have thrown

CHAPTER  
CLXXXIX.  
Clearing of  
the road.



SAGA VII.

upon my hands, ye lendersmen, who have now changed your fealty, although but a little while ago ye were my friends and faithful to me." There are now two crosses erected upon the bank on which the king sat. Then the king mounted a horse, and rode without stopping up the valley, until he came to the precipice. Then the king asked Bruse if there was no summer hut of cattle-herds\* in the neighbourhood, where they could remain. He said there was. The king ordered his land-tent to be set up, and remained there all night. In the morning the king ordered them to drive to the steep slope, and try if they could get across it with the waggons. They drove there, and the king remained in the mean time in his tent. Towards evening the king's court-men and the bonders came back, and told how they had had a very fatiguing labour, without making any progress, and that there never could be a road made that they could get across; so they continued there the second night, during which, for the whole night, the king was occupied in prayer. As soon as he observed day dawning he ordered his men to drive again to the steep, and try once more if they could get across it with the waggons; but they went very unwillingly, saying nothing could be gained by it. When they were gone the man who had charge of the king's kitchen came, and said there were only two carcasses of young cattle remaining of provision: "although you, sire, have 300 men, and there are 100 bonders besides." Then the king ordered that he should set all the kettles on the fire, and put a little bit of meat in each kettle, which was done. Then the king went there, and made the sign of the cross over each kettle, and told them to make ready the meat. The king then went to the steep

\* Sel — Sæter in Norwegian — is a chalôt or sheeling; viz. a summer hut among the mountains for herds and their cattle.



slope called Sessur, where a road should be cleared. When the king came all his people were sitting down, quite worn out with the hard labour. Bruse said, "I told you, sire, but you would not believe me, that we could make nothing of this steep." The king laid aside his cloak, and told them to go to work once more at the steep slope. They did so, and now twenty men could handle stones which before 100 men could not move from the place; and thus before mid-day the road was cleared so well, that it was as passable for men, and for horses with packs, as a road in the plain fields. The king, after this, went down again to where the meat was, which place is still called Olaf's Hillock. At the hillock is a spring, at which Olaf washed himself; and therefore at the present day, when the cattle in the valley are sick, their illness is made better by their drinking at this well. Thereafter the king sat down to table with all the others; and when he was satisfied he asked if there was any other sheeling on the other side of the steep, and near the mountains, where they could pass the night. Bruse said there was such a sheeling, called Gronningen; but that nobody could pass the night there on account of witchcraft, and evil beings who were in the sheeling. Then the king said they must get ready for their journey, as he wanted to be at the sheeling for the night. Then came the kitchen-master to the king, and tells that there was come an extraordinary supply of provisions, and he did not know where it had come from, or how. The king thanked God for this blessing, and gave the bonders who drove down again to their valley some rations of food, but remained himself all night in the sheeling. In the middle of the night, while the people were asleep, there was heard in the cattle-fold a dreadful cry, and these words: "Now Olaf's prayers are burning me," says the spirit, "so that I can no longer be in my habitation; now



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must I fly, and never more come to this fold." When the king's people awoke in the morning the king proceeded to the mountains, and said to Bruse, "Here shall now a farm be settled, and the bonder who dwells here shall never want what is needful for the support of life; and never shall his crop be destroyed by frost, although the crops be frozen on the farms both above it and below it." Then the king proceeded over the mountains, and came to a farm called Einbö, where he remained for the night. King Olaf had then been fifteen years king of Norway, including the year both he and Swend were in the country, and this year we have now been telling about. It was, namely, a little past Yule when the king left his ships and took to the land, as before related. Of this portion of his reign the priest Are Thorgilson the Wise was the first who wrote; and he was both faithful in his story, of a good memory, and so old a man that he could remember the men, and had heard their accounts, who were so old that through their age they could remember these circumstances as he himself wrote them in his books, and he named the men from whom he received his information. Otherwise it is generally said that King Olaf had been fifteen years king of Norway when he fell; but they who say so reckon to Earl Swend's government, the last year he was in the country, for King Olaf lived fifteen years afterwards as king.

CHAPTER  
CXC.  
Olaf's prophecies.

When the king had been one night in Lesie he proceeded on his journey with his men, day by day; first into Gudbrandsdal, and from thence out to Hedemark. Now it was seen who had been his friends, for they followed him; but those who had served him with less fidelity separated from him, and some showed him even indifference, or even full hostility, which afterwards was apparent; and also it could be seen clearly in many Upland people that they took very ill his putting Thorer to death, as before related.



King Olaf gave leave to return home to many of his men who had farms and children to take care of; for it seemed to them uncertain what safety there might be for the families and property of those who left the country with him. Then the king explained to his friends his intention of leaving the country, and going first east into Sweden, and there taking his determination as to where he should go: but he let his friends know his intention to return to the country, and regain his kingdom, if God should grant him longer life; and he did not conceal his expectation that the people of Norway would again return to their fealty to him. "I think," says he, "that Earl Hakon will have Norway but a short time under his power, which many will not think an extraordinary expectation, as Earl Hakon has had but little luck against me: but probably few people will trust to my prophecy, that Canute the Great will in the course of a few years die, and his kingdoms vanish; and there will be no risings in favour of his race." When the king had ended his speech, his men prepared themselves for their departure. The king, with the troop that followed him, turned east to Eida forest. And there were along with him the Queen Astrid; their daughter Ulfhild; Magnus, King Olaf's son; Rognvald Brusesson; the three sons of Arne, Thorberg, Finn, and Arne, with many lendersmen; and the king's attendants consisted of many chosen men. Biorn the marshal got leave to go home, and he went to his farm, and many others of the king's friends returned home with his permission to their farms. The king begged them to let him know the events which might happen in the country, and which it might be important for him to know: and now the king proceeded on his way.

It is to be related of King Olaf's journey, that he went first from Norway eastward through Eyda



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proceeds to  
Russia.

forest to Vermeland, then to Vatsbo, and through the forests in which there are roads, until he came out in Nerike district. There dwelt a rich and powerful man in that part called Sigtryg, who had a son, Ivar, who afterwards became a distinguished person. Olaf staid with Sigtryg all spring; and when summer came he made ready for a journey, procured a ship for himself, and without stopping went on to Russia to King Jarisleif and his queen Ingigerd; but his own queen Astrid, and their daughter Ulfhild, remained behind in Sweden, and the king took his son Magnus eastward with him. King Jarisleif received King Olaf in the kindest manner, and made him the offer to remain with him, and to have so much land as was necessary for defraying the expense of the entertainment of his followers. King Olaf accepted this offer thankfully, and remained there. It is related that King Olaf was distinguished all his life for pious habits, and zeal in his prayers to God. But afterwards, when he saw his own power diminished, and that of his adversaries augmented, he turned all his mind to God's service; for he was not distracted by other thoughts, or by the labour he formerly had upon his hands, for during all the time he sat upon the throne he was endeavouring to promote what was most useful: and first to free and protect the country from foreign chiefs' oppressions, then to convert the people to the right faith; and also to establish law and the rights of the country, which he did by letting justice have its way, and punishing evil-doers.

CHAPTER  
CXCII.  
Causes of  
the revolt  
against  
King Olaf.

It had been an old custom in Norway that the sons of lendermen, or other great men, went out in war-ships to gather property, and they marauded both in the country and out of the country. But after King Olaf came to the sovereignty he protected the country, so that he abolished all plundering there; and even if they were the sons of powerful men who com-



mitted any depredation, or did what the king considered against law, he did not spare them at all, but they must suffer in life or limbs; and no man's entreaties, and no offer of money-penalties, could help them. So says Sigvat:—

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—

“ They who on viking cruises drove  
With gifts of red gold often strove  
To buy their safety — but our chief  
Had no compassion for the thief.  
He made the bravest lose his head  
Who robbed at sea, and pirates led;  
And his just sword gave peace to all,  
Sparing no robber, great or small.”

And he also says:—

“ Great king! whose sword on many a field  
Food to the wandering wolf did yield,  
And then the thief and pirate band  
Swept wholly off by sea and land —  
Good king! who for the people's sake  
Set hands and feet upon a stake,  
When plunderers of great name and bold  
Harried the country as of old.

“ The country's guardian showed his might  
When oft he made his just sword bite  
Through many a viking's neck and hair,  
And never would the guilty spare.  
King Magnus' father, I must say,  
Did many a good deed in his day.  
Olaf the Thick was stern and stout,  
Much good his victories brought out.”

He punished great and small with equal severity, which appeared to the chief people of the country too severe; and animosity rose to the highest when they lost relatives by the king's just sentence, although they were in reality guilty. This was the origin of the hostility of the great men of the country to King Olaf, that they could not bear his just judgments. He again would rather renounce his dignity than omit righteous judgment. The accusation against him, of being stingy with his money, was not just, for he was a most generous man towards his friends; but that alone was the cause of the discontent raised



SAGA VII. — against him, that he appeared hard and severe in his retributions. Besides, King Canute offered great sums of money, and the great chiefs were corrupted by this, and by his offering them greater dignities than they had possessed before. The inclinations of the people, also, were all in favour of Earl Hakon, who was much beloved by the country folks when he ruled the country before.

CHAPTER  
CXCIIL.  
Of Jokul  
Bardson.

Earl Hakon had sailed with his fleet from Drontheim, and gone south to Möre against King Olaf, as before related. Now when the king bore away, and ran into the fiord, the earl followed him thither; and then Kalf Arneson came to meet him, with many of the men who had deserted King Olaf. Kalf was well received. The earl steered in through Todarfiord to Valdal, where the king had laid up his ships on the strand. He took the ships which belonged to the king, had them put upon the water and rigged, and cast lots, and put commanders in charge of them according to the lots. There was a man called Jokul, who was an Icclander, a son of Bard Jokulson of Vatsdal: the lot fell upon Jokul to command the Bison, which King Olaf himself had commanded. Jokul made these verses upon it:—

“ Mine is the lot to take the helm  
Which Olaf owned, who owned the realm;  
From Sult King Olaf’s ship to steer  
(Ill luck I dread on his reindeer).  
My girl will never hear the tiding,  
Till o’er the wild wave I come riding  
In Olaf’s ship, who loved his gold,  
And lost his ships with wealth untold.”

We may here shortly tell what happened a long time after,—that this Jokul fell in with King Olaf’s men in the island of Gotland, and the king ordered him to be taken out to be beheaded. A willow twig accordingly was plaited in with his hair, and a man held him fast by it. Jokul sat down upon a bank,



and a man swung the axe to execute him; but Jokul hearing the sound, raised his head, and the blow struck him in the head, and made a dreadful wound. As the king saw it would be his death-wound, he ordered them to let him lie with it. Jokul raised himself up, and he sang:—

“ My hard fate I mourn,—  
 Alas! my wounds burn,  
 My red wounds are gaping,  
 My life-blood escaping.  
 My wounds burn sore;  
 But I suffer still more  
 From the king's angry word,  
 Than his sharp-biting sword.”

Kalf Arneson went with Earl Hakon north to Drontheim, and the earl invited him to enter into his service. Kalf said he would first go home to his farm of Egge, and afterwards make his determination; and Kalf did so. When he came home he found his wife Sigrid much irritated; and she reckoned up all the sorrow inflicted on her, as she insisted, by King Olaf. First, he had ordered her first husband Olver to be killed. “And now since,” says she, “my two sons; and thou thyself, Kalf, wert present when they were cut off, and which I little expected from thee.” Kalf says, it was much against his will that Thorer was killed. “I offered money-penalty for him,” says he; “and when Griotgard was killed, I lost my brother Arnbiorn at the same time.” She replies, “It is well thou hast suffered this from the king; for thou mayst perhaps avenge him, although thou wilt not avenge my injuries. Thou sawest how thy foster-son Thorer was killed, with all the regard of the king for thee.” She frequently brought out such vexatious speeches to Kalf, to which he often answered angrily; but yet he allowed himself to be persuaded by her to enter into the earl's service, on condition of renewing his fiefs to him. Sigrid sent word to the earl how far she had

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 Of Kalf  
 Arneson.



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brought the matter with Kalf. As soon as the earl heard of it, he sent a message to Kalf that he should come to the town to him. Kalf did not decline the invitation, but came directly to Nidaros, and waited on the earl who received him kindly. In their conversation it was fully agreed upon that Kalf should go into the earl's service, and should receive great fiefs. After this Kalf returned home, and had the greater part of the interior of the Drontheim country under him. As soon as it was spring Kalf rigged out a ship that belonged to him, and when she was ready he put to sea, and sailed west to England; for he had heard that in spring King Canute was to sail from Denmark to England, and that King Canute had given Harald, a son of Thorkel the High, an earldom in Denmark. Kalf Arneson went to King Canute as soon as he arrived in England. Biorn Guldbraa-scald tells of this:—

“ King Olaf eastward o’er the sea  
To Russia’s monarch had to flee ;  
Our Harald’s brother ploughed the main,  
And furrowed white its dark-blue plain.  
Whilst thou—the truth I still will say,  
Nor fear nor favour can me sway —  
Thou to King Canute hastened fast,  
As soon as Olaf’s luck was past.”

Now when Kalf came to King Canute the king received him particularly well, and had many conversations with him. Among other things, King Canute, in a conference, asked Kalf to bind himself to raise a warfare against King Olaf, if ever he should return to the country. “And for which,” says the king, “I will give thee the earldom, and place thee to rule over Norway; and my relation Hakon shall come to me, which will suit him better, for he is so honourable and trustworthy that I believe he would not even throw a spear against the person of King Olaf if he came back to the country.” Kalf lent his ear to what



the king proposed, for he had a great desire to attain this high dignity; and this conclusion was settled upon between King Canute and Kalf. Kalf then prepared to return home, and on his departure he received splendid presents from King Canute. Biorn the scald tells of these circumstances:—

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“ Sprung from old earls ! — to England’s lord  
 Thou owest many a thankful word  
 For many a gift : if all be true,  
 Thy interest has been kept in view ;  
 For when thy course was bent for home,  
 (Although that luck is not yet come,)  
 ‘ That Norway should be thine,’ ’tis said,  
 The London king a promise made.”

Kalf thereafter returned to Norway, and came to his farm.

Earl Hakon left the country this summer, and went to England, and when he came there was well received by the king. The earl had a bride in England, and he travelled to conclude this marriage; and as he intended holding his wedding in Norway, he came to procure those things for it in England which it was difficult to get in Norway. In autumn he made ready for his return, but it was somewhat late before he was clear for sea; but at last he set out. Of his voyage all that can be told is, that the vessel was lost, and not a man escaped. Some relate that the vessel was seen north of Caithness in the evening in a heavy storm, and the wind blowing out of Pentland Firth. They who believe this report say the vessel drove out among the breakers of the ocean; but with certainty people knew only that Earl Hakon was missing in the ocean, and nothing belonging to the ship ever came to land. The same autumn some merchants came to Norway, who told the tidings that were going through the country of Earl Hakon being missing; and all men knew that he neither came to Norway nor to

CHAPTER  
 CXCIV.  
 Of the  
 death of  
 Earl  
 Hakon.



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CHAPTER  
CXCVI.  
Of Biorn  
the marshal.

England that autumn, so that Norway that winter was without a head.

Biorn the marshal sat at home on his farm after his parting from King Olaf. Biorn was a celebrated man; therefore it was soon reported far and wide that he had set himself down in quietness. Earl Hakon and the other chiefs of the country heard this also, and sent persons with a verbal message to Biorn. When the messengers arrived Biorn received them well; and afterwards Biorn called them to him to a conference, and asked their business. He who was their foreman presented to Biorn the salutations of King Canute, Earl Hakon, and of several chiefs. "King Canute," says he, "has heard much of thee, and that thou hast been long a follower of King Olaf the Thick, and hast been a great enemy of King Canute; and this he thinks not right, for he will be thy friend, and the friend of all worthy men, if thou wilt turn from thy friendship to King Olaf and become his enemy. And the only thing now thou canst do is to seek friendship and protection there where it is most readily to be found, and which all men in this northern world think it most honourable to be favoured with. Ye who have followed Olaf the Thick should consider how he is now separated from you; and that now ye have no aid against King Canute and his men, whose lands ye plundered last summer, and whose friends ye murdered. Therefore ye ought to accept, with thanks, the friendship which the king offers you; and it would become you better if you offered money even in mulet to obtain it."

When he had ended his speech Biorn replies, "I wish now to sit quietly at home, and not to enter into the service of any chief."

The messenger answers, "Such men as thou art are just the right men to serve the king; and now I can tell thee there are just two things for thee to



choose,—either to depart in peace from thy property, and wander about as thy comrade Olaf is doing; or, which is evidently better, to accept King Canute's and Earl Hakon's friendship, become their man, and take the oaths of fealty to them. Receive now thy reward." And he displayed to him a large bag full of English money. SAGA VII.

Biorn was a man fond of money, and self-interested; and when he saw the silver he was silent, and reflected with himself what resolution he should take. It seemed to him much to abandon his property, as he did not think it probable that King Olaf would ever have a rising in his favour in Norway. Now when the messenger saw that Biorn's inclinations were turned towards the money, he threw down two thick gold rings, and said, "Take the money at once, Biorn, and swear the oaths to King Canute; for I can promise thee that this money is but a trifle, compared to what thou wilt receive if thou followest King Canute."

By the heap of money, the fine promises, and the great presents, he was led by covetousness, took the money, went into King Canute's service, and gave the oaths of fealty to King Canute and Earl Hakon, and then the messengers departed.

When Biorn heard the tidings that Earl Hakon was missing he soon altered his mind, and was much vexed with himself for having been a traitor in his fidelity to King Olaf. He thought, now, that he was freed from the oath by which he had bound himself to Earl Hakon. It seemed to Biorn that now there was some hope that King Olaf might again come to the throne of Norway if he came back, as the country was without a head. Biorn therefore immediately made himself ready to travel, and took some men with him. He then set out on his journey, travelling night and day, on horseback when he could, and by

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CXC VII.  
Of Biorn  
the mar-  
shal's  
journey.



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ship when he found occasion; and never halted until he came east to Russia to King Olaf, who was very glad to see Biorn. Then the king inquired much about the news from Norway. Biorn tells him that Earl Hakon was missing, and the kingdom left without a head. At this news the men who had followed King Olaf were very glad,—all who had left property, connections, and friends in Norway; and the longing for home was awakened in them. Biorn told King Olaf much news from Norway, and very anxious the king was to know, and asked much how his friends had kept their fidelity towards him. Biorn answered, it had gone differently with different people.

Then Biorn stood up, fell at the king's feet, held his foot, and said, "All is in your power, sire, and in God's! I have taken money from King Canute's men, and sworn them the oaths of fealty; but now will I follow thee, and not part from thee so long as we both live."

The king replies, "Stand up, Biorn: thou shalt be reconciled with me; but reconcile thy perjury with God. I can see that but few men in Norway have held fast by their fealty, when such men as thou art could be false to me. But true it is also that people sit in great danger when I am distant, and they are exposed to the wrath of my enemies."

Biorn then reckoned up those who had principally bound themselves to rise in hostility against the king and his men; and named, among others, Erling's son in Jederen and their connections, Einar Tambar-skelver, Kalf Arneson, Thoror Hund, and Harek of Thiottö.

CHAPTER  
CXCVIII.  
Of King  
Olaf.

After King Olaf came to Russia he was very thoughtful, and weighed what counsel he now should follow. King Jarisleif and Queen Ingigerd offered him to remain with them, and receive a kingdom



called Bulgaria\*, which is a part of Russia, and in which land the people were still heathen. King Olaf thought over this offer; but when he proposed it to his men they dissuaded him from settling himself there, and urged the king to betake himself to Norway to his own kingdom: but the king himself had resolved almost in his own mind to lay down his royal dignity, to go out into the world to Jerusalem, or other holy places, and to enter into some order of monks. But yet the thought lay deep in his soul to recover again, if there should be any opportunity for him, his kingdom in Norway. When he thought over this, it recurred to his mind how all things had gone prosperously with him during the first ten years of his reign, and how afterwards every thing he undertook became heavy, difficult, and hard; and that he had been unlucky on all occasions in which he had tried his luck. On this account he doubted if it would be prudent to depend so much upon his luck, as to go with so little strength into the hands of his enemies, seeing that all the people of the country had taken part with them to oppose King Olaf. Such cares he had often on his mind, and he left his cause to God, praying that he would do what to him seemed best. These thoughts he turned over in his mind, and knew not what to resolve upon; for he saw how evidently dangerous that was which his inclination was most bent upon.

One night the king lay awake in his bed, thinking with great anxiety about his determination, and at last, being tired of thinking, sleep came over him towards morning; but his sleep was so light that he thought he was awake, and could see all that was doing in the house. Then he saw a great and superb

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CHAPTER  
CXCIX.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
dream.

\* Valgaria was not the present province Bulgaria of the Turkish empire; but the present Russian province Casan, on the east of the Wolga.



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man, in splendid clothes, standing by his bed; and it came into the king's mind that this was King Olaf Tryggvesson who had come to him. This man said to him, "Thou art very sick of thinking about thy future resolutions; and it appears to me wonderful that these thoughts should be so tumultuous in thy soul that thou shouldst even think of laying down the kingly dignity which God hath given thee, and of remaining here, and accepting of a kingdom from foreign and unknown kings. Go back rather to that kingdom which thou hast received in heritage, and rule over it with the strength which God hath given thee, and let not thy inferiors take it from thee. It is the glory of a king to be victorious over his enemies, and it is a glorious death to die in battle. Or art thou doubtful if thou hast right on thy side in the strife with thine enemies? Thou must have no doubts, and must not conceal the truth from thyself. Thou must go back to thy country, and God will give open testimony that the kingdom is thine by property." When the king awoke he thought he saw the man's shoulders going out. From this time the king's courage rose, and he fixed firmly his resolution to return to Norway; to which his inclination also tended most, and which he also found was the desire of all his men. He bethought himself also that the country being without a chief could be easily attacked, from what he had heard, and that after he came himself many would turn back towards him. When the king told his determination to his people they all gave it their approbation joyfully.

CHAPTER  
CC.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
healing  
powers.

It is related that once upon a time, while King Olaf was in Russia, it happened that the son of an honest widow had a sore boil upon his neck, of which the lad lay very ill; and as he could not swallow any food, there was little hope of his life. The boy's mother went to Queen Ingigerd, with whom she was



acquainted, and showed her the lad. The queen said she knew no remedy for it. "Go," said she, "to King Olaf, he is the best physician here; and beg him to lay his hands on thy lad, and bring him my words if he will not otherwise do it." She did as the queen told her; and when she found the king she says to him that her son is dangerously ill of a boil in his neck, and begs him to lay his hand on the boil. The king tells her he is not a physician, and bids her go to where there were physicians. She replies, that the queen had told her to come to him; "and told me to add the request from her, that you would use the remedy you understood, and she said that thou art the best physician here in the town." Then the king took the lad, laid his hands upon his neck, and felt the boil for a long time, until the boy made a very wry face. Then the king took a piece of bread, laid it in the figure of the cross upon the palm of his hand, and put it into the boy's mouth. He swallowed it down, and from that time all the soreness left his neck, and in a few days he was quite well, to the great joy of his mother and all his relations. Then first came Olaf into the repute of having as much healing power in his hands\* as is ascribed to men who have been gifted by nature with healing by the touch; and afterwards, when his miracles were universally acknowledged, this also was considered one of his miracles.

It happened one Sunday that the king sat in his high seat at the dinner table, and had fallen into such deep thought that he did not observe how time went. In one hand he had a knife, and in the other a piece of fir-wood from which he cut splinters from time to time. The table-servant stood before him with a bowl in his hands; and seeing what the king was about, and

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CHAPTER  
CCL.  
King Olaf  
burns the  
wood  
shavings on  
his hand  
for his  
Sabbath  
breach.

\* Is the touching for the king's evil, which was continued down to the time of Charles I. or later, any way connected with this royal saint's gift of healing by the touch?



SAGA VII. — that he was involved in thought, he said, "It is Monday, sire, to-morrow." The king looked at him when he heard this, and then it came into his mind what he was doing on the Sunday. Then the king ordered a lighted candle to be brought him, swept together all the shavings he had made, set them on fire, and let them burn upon his naked hand; showing thereby that he would hold fast by God's law and commandment, and not trespass without punishment on what he knew to be right.

CHAPTER  
CCII.  
Of King  
Olaf.

When King Olaf had resolved on his return home, he made known his intention to King Jarisleif and Queen Ingigerd. They dissuaded him from this expedition, and said he should receive as much power in their dominions as he thought desirable; but begged him not to put himself within the reach of his enemies with so few men as he had. Then King Olaf told them of his dream; adding, that he believed it to be God's will and providence that it should be so. Now when they found he was determined on travelling to Norway, they offered him all the assistance to his journey that he would accept from them. The king thanked them in many fine words for their good will; and said that he accepted from them, with no ordinary pleasure, what might be necessary for his undertaking.

CHAPTER  
CCIII.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
journey  
from  
Russia.

Immediately after Yule, King Olaf made himself ready; and had about 200 of his men with him. King Jarisleif gave him all the horses, and whatever else he required; and when he was ready he set off. King Jarisleif and Queen Ingigerd parted from him with all honour; and he left his son Magnus behind with the king. The first part of his journey, down to the sea-coast, King Olaf and his men made on the ice; but as spring approached, and the ice broke up, they rigged their vessels, and when they were ready and got a wind they set out to sea, and had a good



voyage. When Olaf came to the island of Gotland with his ships he heard the news—which was told as truth, both in Sweden, Denmark, and over all Norway—that Earl Hakon was missing, and Norway without a head. This gave the king and his men good hope of the issue of their journey. From thence they sailed, when the wind suited, to Sweden, and went into the Mælare lake, to Westeraas, and sent men to the Swedish King Onund appointing a meeting. King Onund received his brother-in-law's message in the kindest manner, and went to him according to his invitation. Astrid also came to King Olaf, with the men who had attended her; and great was the joy on all sides at this meeting. The Swedish king also received his brother-in-law King Olaf with great joy when they met.

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Now we must relate what, in the mean time, was going on in Norway. Thorer Hund, in these two winters, had made a Lapland journey, and each winter had been a long time on the Fielde, and had gathered to himself great wealth by trading in various wares with the Laplanders. He had twelve large coats of reindeer-skin made for him, with so much Lapland witchcraft that no weapon could cut or pierce them any more than if they were armour of ring-mail, nor so much. The spring thereafter Thorer rigged a long-ship which belonged to him, and manned it with his house-servants. He summoned the bonders, demanded a levy from the most northern Thing district, collected in this way a great many people, and proceeded with this force southwards. Harek of Thiottö had also collected a great number of people; and in this expedition many people of consequence took a part, although these two were the most distinguished. They made it known publicly that with this war-force they were going against King Olaf, to defend the

CHAPTER  
CCIV.  
Of the  
barons in  
Norway.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CCV.  
Of Einar  
Tambar-  
skelver.

country against him, in case he should come from the eastward.

Einar Tambarskelver had most influence in the outer part of the Drontheim country after Earl Hakon's death was no longer doubtful; for he and his son Endrid appeared to be the nearest heirs to the moveable property the earl had possessed. Then Einar remembered the promises and offers of friendship which King Canute had made him at parting; and he ordered a good vessel which belonged to him to be got ready, and embarked with a great retinue, and when he was ready sailed southwards along the coast, then set out to sea westwards, and sailed without stopping until he came to England. He immediately waited on King Canute, who received him well and joyfully. Then Einar opened his business to the king, and said he was come there to see the fulfilment of the promises the king had made him; namely, that he, Einar, should have the highest title of honour in Norway if Earl Hakon were no more. King Canute replies, that now the circumstances were altered. "I have now," said he, "sent men and tokens to my son Swend in Denmark, and promised him the kingdom of Norway; but thou shalt retain my friendship, and get the dignity and title which thou art entitled by birth to hold. Thou shall be lenderman with great fiefs, and be so much more raised above other lendermen as thou art more able than they." Einar saw sufficiently how matters stood with regard to his business, and got ready to return home; but as he now knew the king's intentions, and thought it probable if King Olaf came from the East the country would not be very peaceable, it came into his mind that it would be better to proceed slowly, and not to be hastening his voyage, in order to fight against King Olaf without his being advanced by it to any higher dignity than he had before. Einar accordingly



went to sea when he was ready; but only came to Norway after the events were ended which took place there during that summer.

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The chiefs in Norway had their spies east in Sweden, and south in Denmark, to find out if King Olaf had come from Russia. As soon as these men could get across the country, they heard the news that King Olaf was arrived in Sweden; and as soon as full certainty of this was obtained, the war message-token went round the land. The whole people were called out to a levy, and a great army was collected. The lendemen who were from Agder, Rogaland, and Hordaland, divided themselves, so that some went towards the north, and some towards the east; for they thought they required people on both sides. Erling's sons from Jederen went eastward, with all the men who lived east of them, and over whom they were chiefs; Aslak of Finnö, and Erlend of Garde, with the lendemen north of them, went towards the north. All those now named had sworn an oath to King Canute to deprive Olaf of life, if opportunity should offer.

CHAPTER  
CCVI.  
Of the  
chief people  
in Norway.

Now when it was reported in Norway that King Olaf was come from the East to Sweden, his friends gathered together to give him aid. The most distinguished man in this flock was Harald Sigurdsson, a brother\* of King Olaf, who then was fifteen years of age, very stout, and manly of growth as if he were full-grown. Many other brave men were there also; and there were in all 600 men when they proceeded from the Uplands, and went eastward with their force through Eida forest to Værmeland. From thence they went eastward through the forests to Sweden, and made inquiry about King Olaf's proceedings.

CHAPTER  
CCVII.  
Of Harald  
Sigurds-  
son's pro-  
ceedings.

\* His step-brother—a son of Sigurd Syr, and of Astrid, King Olaf's mother. He must have been more than fifteen years of age, being described as a boy of four or five years old on King Olaf's visit to his mother.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CCVIII.  
Of King  
Olaf's pro-  
ceedings in  
Sweden.

King Olaf was in Sweden in spring, and had sent spies from thence into Norway. All accounts from that quarter agreed that there was no safety for him if he went there, and the people who came from the north dissuaded him much from penetrating into the country. But he had firmly resolved within himself, as before stated, to go into Norway; and he asked King Onund what strength King Onund would give him to conquer his kingdom. King Onund replied, that the Swedes were little inclined to make an expedition against Norway. "We know," says he, "that the Northmen are rough and warlike, and it is dangerous to carry hostility to their doors; but I will not be slow in telling thee what aid I can give. I will give thee 400 chosen men from my court-men, active, and warlike, and well equipt for battle; and moreover will give thee leave to go through my country, and gather to thyself as many men as thou canst get to follow thee." King Olaf accepted this offer, and got ready for his march. Queen Astrid, and Ulfhild the king's daughter, remained behind in Sweden.

CHAPTER  
CCIX.  
King Olaf  
advances to  
Jærnbera-  
land.

Just as King Olaf began his journey the men came to him whom the Swedish king had given, in all 400 men, and the king took the road the Swedes showed him. He advanced upwards in the country to the forests, and came to a district called Jærnberaland.\* Here the people joined him who had come out of Norway to meet him, as before related; and he met here his brother Harald, and many other of his relations, and it was a joyful meeting. They made out together 1200 men.

CHAPTER  
CCX.  
Of Dag  
Ringsson.

There was a man called Dag, who is said to have been a son of King Ring, who fled the country from King Olaf. This Ring, it is said further, had been a son of Dag, and grandson of Ring, Harald Haar-

\* Now Dalcarlia, the most productive in iron and other metals of the Swedish provinces.



fager's son. Thus was Dag King Olaf's relative. Both Ring the father, and Dag the son, had settled themselves in Sweden, and got land to rule over. In spring, when Olaf came from the East to Sweden, he sent a message to his relation Dag, that he should join him in this expedition with all the force he could collect; and if they gained the country of Norway again, Dag should have no smaller part of the kingdom under him than his forefathers had enjoyed. When this message came to Dag it suited his inclination well, for he had a great desire to go to Norway and get the dominion his family had ruled over. He was not slow, therefore, to reply, and promised to come. Dag was a quick-speaking, quick-resolving man, mixing himself up in every thing; eager, but of little understanding. He collected a force of almost 1200 men, with which he joined King Olaf.

SAGA VII.

King Olaf sent a message before him to all the inhabited places he passed through, that the men who wished to get goods and money, and share of booty, and the lands besides which now were in the hands of his enemies, should come to him, and follow him. Thereafter King Olaf led his army through forests, often over desert moors, and often over large lakes; and they dragged, or carried the boats, from lake to lake. On the way a great many followers joined the king, partly forest settlers, partly vagabonds. The places at which he halted for the night are since called Olaf's Huts. He proceeded without any break upon his journey until he came to Jemteland, from which he marched north over the keel or ridge of the land. The men spread themselves over the hamlets, and proceeded, much scattered, so long as no enemy was expected; but always, when so dispersed, the Northmen accompanied the king. Dag proceeded with his men on another line of march, and the Swedes on a third with their troop.

CHAPTER  
CCXI.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
journey.



SAGA VII.  
CHAPTER  
CCXII.  
Of vaga-  
bond-men.

There were two men, the one called Gauka-Thorer, the other Afarfaste, who were vagabonds and great robbers, and had a company of thirty men such as themselves. These two men were larger and stronger than other men, and they wanted neither courage nor impudence. These men heard speak of the army that was crossing the country, and said among themselves it would be a clever counsel to go to the king, follow him to his country, and go with him into a regular battle, and try themselves in this work; for they had never been in any battle in which people were regularly drawn up in line, and they were curious to see the king's order of battle. This counsel was approved of by their comrades, and accordingly they went to the road on which King Olaf was to pass. When they came there they presented themselves to the king, with their followers, fully armed. They saluted him, and he asked what people they were. They told their names, and said they were natives of the place; and told their errand, and that they wished to go with the king. The king said, it appeared to him there was good help in such folks. "And I have a great inclination," said he, "to take such; but are ye Christian men?"

Gauka-Thorer replies, that he is neither Christian nor heathen. "I and my comrades have no faith but on ourselves, our strength, and the luck of victory; and with this faith we slip through sufficiently well."

The king replies, "A great pity it is that such brave slaughtering fellows did not believe in Christ their Creator."

Thorer replies, "Is there any Christian man, king, in thy following, who stands so high in the air as we two brothers?"

The king told them to let themselves be baptized, and to accept the true faith. "Follow me then, and I



will advance you to great dignities; but if ye will not do so, return to your former vocation." SAGA VII.

Afarfaste said he would not take on Christianity, and he turned away.

Then said Gauka-Thorkel, "It is a great shame that the king drives us thus away from his army, and I never before came where I was not received into the company of other people, and I shall never return back on this account." They joined accordingly the rear with other forest-men, and followed the troops. Thereafter the king proceeded west up to the keel-ridge of the country.

Now when King Olaf, coming from the east, went over the keel-ridge and descended on the west side of the Fielde, where it declines towards the sea, he could see from thence far over the country. Many people rode before the king and many after, and he himself rode so that there was a free space around him. He was silent, and nobody spoke to him, and thus he rode a great part of the day without looking much about him. Then the bishop rode up to him, asked him why he was so silent, and what he was thinking of; for, in general, he was very cheerful, and very talkative on a journey to his men, so that all who were near him were merry. The king replied, full of thought, "Wonderful things have come into my mind a while ago. As I just now looked over Norway, out to the west from the Fielde, it came into my mind how many happy days I have had in that land. It appeared to me at first as if I saw over all the Drontheim country, and then over all Norway; and the longer this vision was before my eyes the farther, methought, I saw, until I saw over the whole wide world, both land and sea. Well I know the places at which I have been in former days; some even which I have only heard speak of, and some I saw of which I had never heard, both inhabited and uninhabited, in this

CHAPTER  
CCXIII.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
vision.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CCXIV.  
Of the  
miracle on  
the corn  
land.

wide world." The bishop replied that this was a holy vision, and very remarkable.

When the king had come lower down on the Fielde, there lay a farm before him called Suul\*, on the highest part of Værdal district; and as they came nearer to the house the corn-land appeared on both sides of the path. The king told his people to proceed carefully, and not destroy the corn to the bonder. The people observed this when the king was near; but the crowd behind paid no attention to it, and the people ran over the corn, so that it was trodden flat to the earth. There dwelt a bonder there called Thorgeir Flek, who had two sons nearly grown up. Thorgeir received the king and his people well, and offered all the assistance in his power. The king was pleased with his offer, and asked Thorgeir what was the news of the country, and if any forces were assembled against him. Thorgeir says that a great army was drawn together in the Drontheim country, and that there were some lendermen both from the south of the country, and from Halogaland in the north; "but I do not know," says he, "if they are intended against you, or going elsewhere." Then he complained to the king of the damage and waste done him by the people breaking and treading down all his corn-fields. The king said it was ill done to bring upon him any loss. Then the king rode to where the corn had stood, and saw it was laid flat on the earth; and he rode round the field, and said, "I expect, bonder, that God will repair thy loss, so that the field, within a week, will be better;" and it proved the best of the corn, as the king had said. The king remained all night there, and in the morning he made himself ready, and told Thorgeir the bonder to accom-

\* Suul is a farm still known by the same name at the head of Værdal.



pany him, and Thorgeir offered his two sons also for the journey; and although the king said that he did not want them with him, the lads would go. As they would not stay behind, the king's court-men were about binding them; but the king seeing it said, "Let them come with us: the lads will come safe back again." And it was with the lads as the king foretold.

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Thereafter the army advanced to Staf\*, and when the king reached Staf's moor he halted. There he got the certain information that the bonders were advancing with an army against him, and that he might soon expect to have a battle with them. He mustered his force here, and, after reckoning them up, found he had more than 3000 men. There were in the army 900 heathen men, and when he came to know it he ordered them to allow themselves to be baptized, saying that he would have no heathens with him in battle. "We must not," says he, "put our confidence in numbers, but in God alone must we trust; for through his power and favour we must be victorious, and I will not mix heathen people with my own." When the heathens heard this, they held a council among themselves, and at last 400 men agreed to be baptized; but 500 men refused to adopt Christianity, and that body returned home to their land. Then the brothers Gauka-Thorer and Afarfaste presented themselves to the king, and offered again to follow him. The king asked if they had now taken baptism. Gauka-Thorer replied that they had not. Then the king ordered them to accept baptism and the true faith, or otherwise to go away. They stepped aside to talk with each other on what resolution they should take. Afarfaste said, "To give my opinion, I will not turn back, but go into the battle, and take a part on the one side or the other; and I don't care much in

CHAPTER  
CCXV.  
Of the baptism of the  
vagabond  
forest-men.

\* A farm in Værdal.



SAGA VII.

which army I am." Gauka-Thorer replies, "If I go into battle I will give my help to the king, for he has most need of help. And if I must believe in a God, why not in the white Christ as well as in any other? Now it is my advice, therefore, that we let ourselves be baptized, since the king insists so much upon it, and then go into the battle with him." They all agreed to this, and went to the king, and said they would receive baptism. Then they were baptized by a priest, and the baptism was confirmed by the bishop. The king then took them into the troop of his court-men, and said they should fight under his banner in the battle.

CHAPTER  
CCXVI.  
King  
Olaf's  
speech.

King Olaf got certain intelligence now that it would be but a short time until he had a battle with the bonders; and after he had mustered his men, and reckoned up the force, he had more than 3000 men\*, which appears to be a great army in one field. Then the king made the following speech to the people: "We have a great army, and excellent troops; and now I will tell you, my men, how I will have our force drawn up. I will let my banner go forward in the middle of the army, and my court-men, and pursuivants shall follow it, together with the war forces that joined us from the Uplands, and also those who may come to us here in the Drontheim land. On the right hand of my banner shall be Dag Ringson, with all the men he brought to our aid; and he shall have the second banner. And on the left hand of our line shall the men be whom the Swedish king gave us, together with all the people who came to us in Sweden; and they shall have the third banner. I will

\* It does not appear that more than three or four thousand men could be collected and supported in those days, in one body, by any king of Norway. We may judge that the numbers of Danes or Northmen who invaded England or Normandy were in reality small. They conquered because the people had no interests to defend against them



also have the people divide themselves into distinct flocks or parcels, so that relations and acquaintances should be together; for thus they defend each other best, and know each other. We will have all our men distinguished by a mark, so as to be a field-token upon their helmets and shields, by painting the holy cross thereupon with white colour. When we come into battle we shall all have one countersign and field-cry, — ‘Forward, forward, Christian men! cross men! king’s men!’ We must draw up our men in thinner ranks, because we have fewer people, and I do not wish to let them surround us with their men. Now let the men divide themselves into separate flocks, and then each flock into ranks; then let each man observe well his proper place, and take notice what banner he is drawn up under. And now we shall remain drawn up in array; and our men shall be fully armed, night and day, until we know where the meeting shall be between us and the bonders.” When the king had finished speaking, the army arrayed, and arranged itself according to the king’s orders.

Thereafter the king had a meeting with the chiefs of the different divisions, and then the men had returned whom the king had sent out into the neighbouring districts to demand men from the bonders. They brought the tidings from the inhabited places they had gone through, that all around the country was stripped of all men able to carry arms, as all the people had joined the bonders’ army; and where they did find any they got but few to follow them, for the most of them answered that they staid at home because they would not follow either party: they would not go out against the king, nor yet against their own relations. Thus they had got but few people. Now the king asked his men their counsel, and what they now should do. Finn Arneson answered thus to the king’s question: “I will say what should be done, if

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CHAPTER  
CCXVII.  
King  
Olaf’s  
counsel.



SAGA VII. I may advise. We should go with armed hand over all the inhabited places, plunder all the goods, and burn all the habitations, and leave not a hut standing, and thus punish the bonders for their treason against their sovereign. I think many a man will then cast himself loose from the bonders' army, when he sees smoke and flame at home on his farm, and does not know how it is going with children, wives, or old men, fathers, mothers, and other connections. I expect also," he added, "that if we succeed in breaking the assembled host, their ranks will soon be thinned; for so it is with the bonders, that the counsel which is the newest is always the dearest to them all, and most followed." When Finn had ended his speech it met with general applause; for many thought well of such a good occasion to make booty, and all thought the bonders well deserved to suffer damage; and they also thought it probable, what Finn said, that many would in this way be brought to forsake the assembled army of the bonders. Thormod Kolbrunarscald made these verses to the same effect:—

" Fire house and hut throughout the land !  
Burn all around, our mountain-band !  
And with our good swords stout and bold  
The king's own we'll win back, and hold.  
The Drontheimers should nothing find  
But ashes whirling in the wind,  
Where houses stood — what melts the ice  
Should burn the hut, by my advice."

Now when the king heard the warm expressions of his people he told them to listen to him, and said, " The bonders have well deserved that it should be done to them as ye desire. They also know that I have formerly done so, burning their habitations, and punishing them severely in many ways; but then I proceeded against them with fire and sword because they rejected the true faith, betook themselves to sacrifices, and would not obey my commands. We



had then God's honour to defend. But this treason against their sovereign is a much less grievous crime, although it does not become men who have any manhood in them to break the faith and vows they have sworn to me. Now, however, it is more in my power to spare those who have dealt ill with me, than those whom God hated. I will, therefore, that my people proceed gently, and commit no ravage. First, I will proceed to meet the bonders: if we can then come to a reconciliation, it is well; but if they will fight with us, then there are two things before us: either we fail in the battle, and then it will be well advised not to have to retire encumbered with spoil and cattle; or we gain the victory, and then ye will be the heirs of all who fight now against us: for some will fall, and others will fly, but both will have forfeited their goods and properties, and then it will be good to enter into full houses and well-stocked farms; but what is burnt is of use to no man, and with pillage and force more is wasted than what turns to use. Now we will spread out far through the inhabited places, and take with us all the men we can find able to carry arms. The men will also capture cattle for slaughter, or whatever else of provision that can serve for food; but not do any other ravage. But I will see willingly that ye kill any spies of the bonder army ye may fall in with. Dag and his people shall go by the north side down along the valley, and I will go on along the country road, and so we shall meet in the evening, and all have one night quarter."

It is related that when King Olaf drew up his men in battle order, he made a shield rampart with his troop that should defend him in battle, for which he selected the strongest and boldest. Thereafter he called his scalds, and ordered them to go in within the shield defence. "Ye shall," says the king, "remain here, and see the circumstances which may take

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CHAPTER  
CCXVIII.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
scalds.



## SAGA VII.

place, and then ye will not have to follow the reports of others in what ye afterwards tell or sing concerning it." There were Thormod Kolbrunarscald, Gissur Gulbraascald, a foster-son of Hofgarde Refr, and Thorfin Mudr. Then said Thormod to Gissur, "Let us not stand so close together, brother, that Sigvat the scald should not find room when he comes. He must stand before the king, and the king will not have it otherwise." The king heard this, and said, "Ye need not sneer at Sigvat, because he is not here. Often has he followed me well, and now he is praying for us, and that we greatly need." Thormod replies, "It may be, sire, that ye now require prayers most; but it would be thin around the banner-staff if all thy court-men were now on the way to Rome. True it was what we spoke about, that no man who would speak with you could find room for Sigvat."

Thereafter the scalds talked among themselves that it would be well to compose a few songs of remembrance about the events which would soon be taking place. Then Gissur sang:—

"From me shall bonder girl ne'er hear  
A thought of sorrow, care, or fear:  
I wish my girl knew how gay  
We arm us for our viking fray.  
Many and brave they are, we know,  
Who come against us there below;  
But, life or death, we, one and all,  
By Norway's king will stand or fall."

And Thorfin Mudr made another song, viz.:—

"Dark is the cloud of men and shields,  
Slow moving up through Værdal's fields:  
These Værdal folks presume to bring  
Their armed force against their king.  
On! let us feed the carrion crow,—  
Give her a feast in every blow;  
And, above all, let Drontheim's hordes  
Feel the sharp edge of true men's swords."

And Thormod sang,—



“The whistling arrows pipe to battle,  
 Sword and shield their war-call rattle.  
 Up! brave men, up! the faint heart here  
 Finds courage when the danger's near.  
 Up! brave men, up! with Olaf on!  
 With heart and hand a field is won.  
 One viking cheer! — then, stead of words,  
 We'll speak with our death-dealing swords.”

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These songs were immediately got by heart by the army.

Thereafter the king made himself ready, and marched down through the valley. His whole forces took up their night-quarter in one place, and lay down all night under their shields; but as soon as day broke the king again put his army in order, and that being done they proceeded down through the valley. Many bonders then came to the king, of whom the most joined his army; and all, as one man, told the same tale,—that the lendermen had collected an enormous army, with which they intended to give battle to the king.

CHAPTER  
 CCXIX.  
 Of King  
 Olaf's gifts  
 for the  
 souls of  
 those who  
 should be  
 slain.

The king took many marks of silver, and delivered them into the hands of a bonder, and said, “This money thou shalt conceal, and afterwards lay out,—some to churches, some to priests, some to alms-men,—as gifts for the life and souls of those who fight against us, and may fall in battle.”

The bonder replies, “Should you not rather give this money for the soul-mulct of your own men?”

The king says, “This money shall be given for the souls of those who stand against us in the ranks of the bonders' army, and fall by the weapons of our own men. The men who follow us to battle, and fall therein, will all be saved together with ourself.”

This night the king lay with his army around him on the field, as before related, and lay long awake in prayer to God, and slept but little. Towards morning a slumber fell on him, and when he awoke daylight

CHAPTER  
 CCXX.  
 Of Thor-  
 mod Kol-  
 brunar-  
 scald.



SAGA VII. was shooting up. The king thought it too early to awaken the army, and asked where Thormod the scald was. Thormod was at hand, and asked what was the king's pleasure. "Sing us a song," said the king. Thormod raised himself up, and sang so loud that the whole army could hear him. He began to sing the old Biarkamal\*, of which these are the first verses:—

"The day is breaking,—  
The house cock, shaking  
His rustling wings,  
While priest-bell rings,  
Crows up the morn,  
And touting horn  
Wakes thralls to work and weep:  
Ye sons of Adil†, cast off sleep!  
Wake up! wake up!  
Nor wassail cup,  
Nor maiden's jeer,  
Awaits you here.  
Hrolf‡ of the bow!  
Hare§ of the blow!

Up in your might! the day is breaking;  
'Tis Hildur's game|| that bides your waking."

Then the troops awoke, and when the song was ended the people thanked him for it; and it pleased many, as it was suitable to the time and occasion, and they called it the house-carle's whet. The king thanked him for the pleasure, and took a gold ring that weighed half a mark and gave it him. Thormod thanked the king for the gift, and said, "We have a good king; but it is not easy to say how long the

\* The Biarkamal is so called because it was composed and sung by Bodvar Biarke, a great hero among the Northmen, before the battle in which he, Rolf Krake, and many others fell. Saxo Grammaticus, lib. ii., gives a paraphrase in Latin hexameters of part of the Biarkamal not in Snorro. The Edda has also some strophes of the Biarkamal.

† Rolf Krake's men were on the side of Adil fighting against King Ale, and therefore are called Adil's sons.

‡ Hrolf appears to have been a name applied to bowmen, and Hare to axemen, as we apply Jack to seamen.

§ Hare was one of Odin's names — the striker.

|| Hildur's game is the battle,—from the name of the war-goddess Hildur.



king's life may be. It is my prayer, sire, that thou shouldst never part from me either in life or death." SAGA VII.

The king replies, "We shall all go together so long as I rule, and as ye will follow me."

Thormod says, "I hope, sire, that whether in safety or danger I may stand near you as long as I can stand, whatever we may hear of Sigvat travelling with his gold-hilted sword." Then Thormod made these lines:—

"To thee, my king, I'll still be true,  
Until another scald I view,  
Here in the field with golden sword,  
As in thy hall, with flattering word.  
Thy scald shall never be a craven,  
Though he may feast the croaking raven.  
The warrior's fate unmoved I view,—  
To thee, my king, I'll still be true."

King Olaf led his army farther down through the valley, and Dag and his men went another way, and the king did not halt until he came to Stiklestad. There he saw the bonder army spread out all around; and there were so great numbers that people were going on every footpath, and great crowds were collected far and near. They also saw there a troop which came down from Værdal, and had been out to spy. They came so close to the king's people that they knew each other. It was Rut of Viggia, with thirty men. The king ordered his pursuivants to go out against Rut, and make an end of him, to which his men were instantly ready. The king said to the Icelanders, "It is told me that in Iceland it is the custom that the bonders give their house-servants a sheep to slaughter; now I give you a ram to slaughter.\* The Icelanders were easily invited to this, and went out immediately with a few men against Rut, and killed him and the troop that followed him. When the king came to Stiklestad he made a halt,

CHAPTER  
CCXXI.  
King Olaf  
comes to  
Stiklestad.

\* Rut means a young ram.



## SAGA VII.

and made the army stop, and told his people to alight from their horses, and get ready for battle; and the people did as the king ordered. Then he placed his army in battle array, and raised his banner. Dag was not yet arrived with his men, so that his wing of the battle array was wanting. Then the king said the Upland men should go forward in their place, and raise their banner there. "It appears to me advisable," says the king, "that Harald my brother should not be in the battle, for he is still in the years of childhood only." Harald replies, "Certainly I shall be in the battle, for I am not so weak that I cannot handle the sword; and as to that, I have a notion of tying the sword-handle to my hand. None is more willing than I am to give the bonders a blow; so I shall go with my comrades." It is said that Harald made these lines:—

"Our army's wing, where I shall stand,  
I will hold good with heart and hand;  
My mother's eye shall joy to see  
A battered, blood-stained shield from me.  
The brisk young scald should gaily go  
Into the fray, give blow for blow,  
Cheer on his men, gain inch by inch,  
And from the spear-point never flinch."

Harald got his will, and was allowed to be in the battle.

CHAPTER  
CCXXII.  
Of Thorgils  
Hialmeson.

A bonder, by name Thorgils Hialmeson, father to Grim the Good, dwelt in Stiklestad farm. Thorgils offered the king his assistance, and was ready to go into battle with him. The king thanked him for the offer. "I would rather," says the king, "thou shouldst not be in the fight. Do us rather the service to take care of the people who are wounded, and to bury those who may fall, when the battle is over. Should it happen, bonder, that I fall in this battle, bestow the care on my body that may be necessary, if that be not forbidden thee." Thorgils promised the king what he desired.



Now when King Olaf had drawn up his army in battle array he made a speech, in which he told the people to raise their spirit, and go boldly forward, if it came to a battle. "We have," says he, "many men, and good; and although the bonders may have a somewhat larger force than we, it is fate that rules over victory. This I will make known to you solemnly, that I shall not fly from this battle, but shall either be victorious over the bonders, or fall in the fight. I will pray to God that the lot of the two may befall me which will be most to my advantage. With this we may encourage ourselves, that we have a more just cause than the bonders; and likewise that God must either protect us and our cause in this battle, or give us a far higher recompence for what we may lose here in the world than what we ourselves could ask. Should it be my lot to have any thing to say after the battle, then shall I reward each of you according to his service, and to the bravery he displays in the battle; and if we gain the victory, there must be land and moveables enough to divide among you, and which are now in the hands of your enemies. Let us at the first make the hardest onset, for then the consequences are soon seen. There being a great difference in the numbers, we have to expect victory from a sharp assault only; and, on the other hand, it will be heavy work for us to fight until we are tired, and unable to fight longer; for we have fewer people to relieve with than they, who can come forward at one time and retreat and rest at another. But if we advance so hard at the first attack that those who are foremost in their ranks must turn round, then the one will fall over the other, and their destruction will be the greater the greater numbers there are together." When the king had ended his speech it was received with loud applause, and the one encouraged the other.

SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CCXXIII.  
Olaf's  
speech.



## SAGA VII.

CHAPTER  
CCXXIV.  
Of Thord  
Folason.

Thord Folason carried King Olaf's banner. So says Sigvat the scald, in the death song which he composed about King Olaf, and put together according to the saga of this insurrection:—

“Thord, I have heard, by Olaf's side,  
Where raged the battle's wildest tide,  
Moved on, and, as by one accord,  
Moved with them every heart and sword.  
The banner of the king on high,  
Floating all splendid in the sky  
From golden shaft, aloft he bore, —  
The Norsemen's rallying point of yore.”

CHAPTER  
CCXXV.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
armour.

King Olaf was armed thus:—He had a gold-mounted helmet on his head, and had in one hand a white shield, on which the holy cross was inlaid in gold. In his other hand he had a lance, which to the present day stands beside the altar in Christ Church. In his belt he had a sword, which was called Hneyter, which was remarkably sharp, and of which the handle was worked with gold. He had also a strong coat of ring-mail. Sigvat the scald speaks of this:—

“A greater victory to gain,  
Olaf the Stout strode o'er the plain  
In strong chain armour, aid to bring  
To his brave men on either wing.  
High rose the fight and battle-heat,—  
The clear blood ran beneath the feet  
Of Swedes, who from the East came there,  
In Olaf's gain or loss to share.”

CHAPTER  
CCXXVI.  
King  
Olaf's  
dream.

Now when King Olaf had drawn up his men the army of the bonders had not yet come near upon any quarter, so the king said the people should sit down and rest themselves. He sat down himself, and the people sat around him in a wide-spread crowd. He leaned down, and laid his head upon Finn Arneson's knee. There a slumber came upon him, and he slept a little while; but at the same time the bonders' army was seen advancing with raised banners, and the multitude of these was very great.



Then Finn awakened the king, and said that the bonder-army advanced against them. SAGA VII.

The king awoke, and said, "Why did you waken me, Finn, and did not allow me to enjoy my dream?"

Finn, "Thou must not be dreaming; but rather thou shouldst be awake, and preparing thyself against the host which is coming down upon us; or, dost thou not see that the whole bonder crowd is coming?"

The king replies, "They are not yet so near to us, and it would have been better to have let me sleep."

Then said Finn, "What was the dream, sire, of which the loss appears to thee so great that thou wouldst rather have been left to waken of thyself?"

Now the king told his dream,—that he seemed to see a high ladder, upon which he went so high in the air that heaven was open: for so high reached the ladder. "And when you awoke me, I was come to the highest step towards heaven."

Finn replies, "This dream does not appear to me so good as it does to thee. I think it means that thou art *fey*\*; unless it be the mere want of sleep that has worked upon thee."

When King Olaf was arrived at Stiklestad, it happened, among other circumstances, that a man came to him; and although it was nowise wonderful that there came many men from the districts, yet this must be regarded as unusual, that this man did not appear like the other men who came to him. He was so tall that none stood higher than up to his shoulders: very handsome he was in countenance, and had beautiful fair hair. He was well armed; had a fine helmet, and ring armour; a red shield; a superb sword in his belt; and in his hand a gold-mounted spear, the shaft of it so thick that it was a handful to grasp.

CHAPTER  
CCXXVII.  
Of Arnliot  
Gellina's  
baptism.

\* The involuntary actions or words of a man doomed, not sane and composed action or word; but foretelling his speedy death.



## SAGA VII.

The man went before the king, saluted him, and asked if the king would accept his services.

The king asked his name and family, also what countryman he was.

He replies, "My family is in Jemteland and Helsingland, and my name is Arnliot Gellina; but this I must not forget to tell you, that I came to the assistance of those men you sent to Jemteland to collect scatt, and I gave into their hands a silver dish, which I sent you as a token that I would be your friend."

Then the king asked Arnliot if he was a Christian or not.

He replied, "My faith has been this, to rely upon my power and strength, and which faith hath hitherto given me satisfaction; but now I intend rather to put my faith, sire, in thee."

The king replies, "If thou wilt put faith in me, thou must also put faith in what I will teach thee. Thou must believe that Jesus Christ has made heaven and earth, and all mankind, and to him shall all those who are good and rightly believing go after death."

Arnliot answers, "I have indeed heard of the white Christ, but neither know what he proposes, nor what he rules over; but now I will believe all that thou sayest to me, and lay down my lot in your hands."

Thereupon Arnliot was baptized. The king taught him so much of the holy faith as appeared to him needful, and placed him in the front rank of the order of battle, in advance of his banner, where also Gauka-Thorer and Afarfaste with their men were.

CHAPTER  
CCXXVIII.  
Concerning  
the army  
collected  
in Norway.

Now shall we relate what we have left behind in our tale,—that the lendersmen and bonders had collected a vast host as soon as it was reported that King Olaf was come from Russia, and had arrived in Sweden; but when they heard that he had come to



Jemteland, and intended to proceed westwards over the keel-ridge to Værdal, they brought their forces into the Drontheim country, where they gathered together the whole people, free and unfree, and proceeded towards Værdal with so great a body of men, that there was nobody in Norway at that time who had seen so large a force assembled. But the force, as it usually happens in so great a multitude, consisted of many different sorts of people. There were many lendermen, and a great many powerful bonders; but the great mass consisted of labourers and cottars. The chief strength of this army lay in the Drontheim land, and it was the most warm in enmity and opposition to the king.

SAGA VII.

When King Canute had, as before related, laid all Norway under his power, he set Earl Hakon to manage it, and gave the earl a court-bishop, by name Sigurd, who was of Danish descent, and had been long with King Canute. This bishop was of a very hot temper, and particularly obstinate, and haughty in his speech; but supported King Canute all he could in conversation, and was a great enemy of King Olaf. He was now also in the bonders' army, spoke often before the people, and urged them much to insurrection against King Olaf.

CHAPTER  
CCXXIX.  
Of Bishop  
Sigurd.

At a House-thing, at which a great many people were assembled, the bishop desired to be heard, and made the following speech: "Here are now assembled a great many men, so that probably there will never be opportunity in this poor country of seeing so great a native army; but it would be desirable if this strength and multitude could be a protection: for it will all be needed, if this Olaf does not give over bringing war and strife upon you. From his very earliest youth he has been accustomed to plunder and kill: for which purposes he drove widely around through all countries, until he turned at last against this,

CHAPTER  
CCXXX.  
Bishop  
Sigurd's  
speech.



SAGA VII. where he began to show hostilities against the men who were the best and most powerful; and even against King Canute, whom all are bound to serve according to their ability, and in whose scatt-lands he set himself down. He did the same to Olaf the Swedish king. He drove the earls Swend and Hakon away from their heritages; and was even most tyrannical towards his own connections, as he drove all the kings out of the Uplands: although, indeed, it was but just reward for having been false to their oaths of fealty to King Canute, and having followed this King Olaf in all the folly he could invent; so their friendship ended according to their deserts, by this king mutilating some of them, taking their kingdoms himself, and ruining every man in the country who had an honourable name. Ye know yourselves how he has treated the lendemen, of whom many of the worthiest have been murdered, and many obliged to fly from their country; and how he has roamed far and wide through the land with robber bands, burning and plundering houses, and killing people. Who is the man among us here of any consideration who has not some great injury from him to avenge? Now he has come hither with a foreign troop, consisting mostly of forest-men, vagabonds, and such marauders. Do ye think he will now be more merciful to you, when he is roaming about with such a bad crew, after committing devastations which all who followed him dissuaded him from? Therefore it is now my advice, that ye remember King Canute's words when he told you, if King Olaf attempted to return to the country ye should defend the liberty King Canute had promised you, and should oppose and drive away such a vile pack. Now the only thing to be done is, to advance against them, and cast forth these malefactors to the wolves and eagles, leaving their corpses on the spot they cover, unless ye drag them aside



to out-of-the-way corners in the woods or rocks. No man would be so imprudent as to remove them to churches, for they are all robbers and evil-doers." When he had ended his speech it was hailed with the loudest applause, and all unanimously agreed to act according to his recommendation.

The lendersmen who had come together appointed meetings with each other, and consulted together how they should draw up their troops, and who should be their leader. Kalf Arneson said that Harek of Thiotto was best fitted to be the chief of this army, for he was descended from Harald Haarfager's race. "The king also is particularly enraged against him on account of the murder of Grankel, and therefore he would be exposed to the severest fate if Olaf recovered the kingdom: and Harek withal is a man experienced in battles, and a man who does much for honour alone."

SAGA VII.  
  
CHAPTER  
CCXXXI.  
Of the  
lendersmen.

Harek replies, that the men are best suited for this who are in the flower of their age. "I am now," says he, "an old and decaying man, not able to do much in battle: besides, there is near relationship between me and King Olaf; and although he seems not to put great value upon that tie, it would not be seem me to go as leader of the hostilities against him, before any other in this meeting. On the other hand, thou, Thorer, art well suited to be our chief in this battle against King Olaf; and thou hast distinct grounds for being so, both because thou hast to avenge the death of thy relation, and also hast been driven by him as an outlaw from thy property. Thou hast also promised King Canute, as well as thy connections, to avenge the murder of thy relative Asbiorn; and dost thou suppose there ever will be a better opportunity than this of taking vengeance on Olaf for all these insults and injuries?"

Thorer replies thus to his speech: "I do not con-



SAGA VII.

fide in myself so much as to raise the banner against King Olaf, or, as chief, to lead on this army; for the people of Drontheim have the greatest part in this armament, and I know well their haughty spirit, and that they would not obey me, or any other Halogaland man, although I need not be reminded of my injuries to be roused to vengeance on King Olaf. I remember well my heavy loss when King Olaf slew four men, all distinguished both by birth and personal qualities; namely, my brother's son Asbiorn, my sister's sons Thorer and Griotgard, and their father Olver; and it is my duty to take vengeance for each man of them. I will not conceal that I have selected eleven of my house-servants for that purpose, and of those who are the most daring; and I do not think we shall be behind others in exchanging blows with King Olaf, should opportunity be given."

CHAPTER  
CCXXXII.  
Kalf  
Arneson's  
speech.

Then Kalf Arneson desired to speak. "It is highly necessary," says he, "that this business we have on hand do not turn out a mockery and childwork, now that an army is collected. Something else is needful, if we are to stand battle with King Olaf, than that each should shove the danger from himself; for we must recollect that although King Olaf has not many people compared to this army of ours, the leader of them is intrepid, and the whole body of them will be true to him, and obedient in the battle. But if we who should be the leaders of this army show any fear, and will not encourage the army and go at the head of it, it must happen that with the great body of our people the spirit will leave their hearts, and the next thing will be that each will seek his own safety. Although we have now a great force assembled, we shall find our destruction certain, when we meet King Olaf and his troops, if we the chiefs of the people are not confident in our cause, and have not the whole army confidently and bravely going along



SAGA VII.  
—

with us. If it cannot be so, we had better not risk a battle; and then it is easy to see that nothing would be left us but to shelter ourselves under King Olaf's mercy, however hard it might be, as then we would be less guilty than we now may appear to him to be. Yet I know there are men in his ranks who would secure my life and peace if I would seek it. Will ye now adopt my proposal — then shalt thou, friend Thoror, and thou, Harek, go under the banner which we will all of us raise up, and then follow. Let us all be speedy and determined in the resolution we have taken, and put ourselves so at the head of the bonders' army that they see no distrust in us; for then will the common man advance with spirit when we go merrily to work in placing the army in battle-order, and in encouraging the people to the strife."

When Kalf had ended they all concurred in what he proposed, and all would do what Kalf thought of advantage. All desired Kalf to be the leader of the army, and to give each what place in it he chose.

Kalf Arneson then raised his banner, and drew up his house-servants along with Harek of Thiottö and his men. Thoror Hund, with his troop, was at the head of the order of battle in front of the banner; and on both sides of Thoror was a chosen body of bonders, all of them the most active and best armed in the forces. This part of the array was long and thick, and in it were drawn up the Drontheim people and the Halogalanders. On the right wing was another array; and on the left of the main array were drawn up the men from Rogaland, Hordaland, the Fiord districts, and Sogn, and they had the third banner.

There was a man called Thorstein Knarrarsmed, who was a merchant and master ship-carpenter, stout and strong, very passionate, and a great manslayer. He had been in enmity against King Olaf, who had taken from him a new and large merchant vessel he

CHAPTER  
CCXXXIII.  
How the  
barons set  
up their  
banners.

CHAPTER  
CCXXXIV.  
Of Thors-  
tein Knar-  
rarsmed.



SAGA VII. — had built, on account of some manslaughter-mulct, incurred in the course of his misdeeds, which he owed to the king. Thorstein, who was with the bonders' army, went forward in front of the line in which Thorer Hund stood, and said, "Here I will be, Thorer, in your ranks; for I think if I and King Olaf meet, to be the first to drive a weapon at him, if I can get so near, to repay him for the robbery of the ship he took from me, which was the best that ever went on merchant voyage." Thorer and his men received Thorstein, and he went into their ranks.

CHAPTER  
CCXXXV.  
Of the pre-  
parations of  
the pea-  
sants.

When the bonders' men and array were drawn up the lendersmen addressed the men, and ordered them to take notice of the place to which each man belonged, under which banner each should be, who there were in front of the banner, who were his side-men, and that they should be brisk and quick in taking up their places in the array; for the army had still to go a long way, and the array might be broken in the course of march. Then they encouraged the people; and Kalf invited all the men who had any injury to avenge on King Olaf, to place themselves under the banner which was advancing against King Olaf's own banner. They should remember the distress he had brought upon them; and, he said, never was there a better opportunity to avenge their grievances, and to free themselves from the yoke and slavery he had imposed on them. "Let him," says he, "be held a useless coward who does not fight this day boldly: and they are not innocents who are opposed to you, but people who will not spare you if ye spare them."

Kalf's speech was received with loud applause, and shouts of encouragement were heard through the whole army.

CHAPTER  
CCXXXVI.  
Of the  
king's and

Thereafter the bonders' army advanced to Stiklestad, where King Olaf was already with his people. Kalf and Harek went in front, at the head of the army



under their banners. But the battle did not begin immediately on their meeting; for the bonders delayed the assault, because all their men were not come upon the plain, and they waited for those who came after them. Thorer Hund had come up with his troop the last, for he had to take care that the men did not go off behind when the battle-cry was raised, or the armies were closing with each other; and therefore Kalf and Harek waited for Thorer. For the encouragement of their men in the battle the bonders had the field-cry — “Forward, forward, bonderman!” King Olaf also made no attack, for he waited for Dag and the people who followed him. At last the king saw Dag and his men approaching. It is said that the army of the bonders was not less on this day than a hundred times a hundred men. Sigvat the scald speaks thus of the numbers:—

SAGA VII.  
the peasants’  
armies.

“I grieve to think the king had brought  
Too small a force for what he sought:  
He held his gold too fast to bring  
The numbers that could make him king.  
The foemen, more than two to one,  
The victory by numbers won;  
And this alone, as I’ve heard say,  
Against King Olaf turned the day.”

As the armies on both sides stood so near that people knew each other, the king said, “Why art thou here, Kalf, for we parted good friends south in Möre? It beseems thee ill to fight against us, or to throw a spear into our army; for here are four of thy brothers.”

CHAPTER  
CCXXXVII.  
Meeting of  
the king  
and the  
peasants.

Kalf replied, “Many things come to pass differently from what may appear seemly. You parted from us so that it was necessary to seek peace with those who were behind in the country. Now each must remain where he stands; but if I might advise, we should be reconciled.”

Then Finn, his brother, answered, “This is to be



SAGA VII. — observed of Kalf, that when he speaks fairly he has it in his mind to do ill."

The king answered, "It may be, Kalf, that thou art inclined to reconciliation; but, methinks, the bonders do not appear so peaceful."

Then Thorgeir of Quiststad said, "You shall now have such peace as many formerly have received at your hands, and which you shall now pay for."

The king replies, "Thou hast no occasion to hasten so much to meet us; for fate has not decreed to thee to-day a victory over me, who raised thee to power and dignity from a mean station."

CHAPTER  
CCXXXVIII.  
Beginning  
of the battle  
of Stikle-  
stad.

Now came Thorer Hund, went forward in front of the banner with his troop, and called out, "Forward, forward, bonderman!" Thereupon the bondermen raised the war-cry, and shot their arrows and spears. The king's men raised also a war-shout; and that done, encouraged each other to advance, crying out, "Forward, forward, Christ-man! cross-man! king's man!" When the bonders who stood outermost on the wings heard it, they repeated the same cry; but when the other bonders heard them they thought these were king's men, turned their arms against them, and they fought together, and many were slain before they knew each other. The weather was beautiful, and the sun shone clear; but when the battle began the heaven and the sun became red, and before the battle ended it became as dark as at night. King Olaf had drawn up his army upon a rising ground, and it rushed down from thence upon the bonder-army with such a fierce assault, that the bonders' array bent before it; so that the breast of the king's array came to stand upon the ground on which the rear of the bonders' array had stood, and many of the bonders' army were on the way to fly, but the lendersmen and their house-men stood fast, and the battle became very severe. So says Sigvat: —



“ Thundered the ground beneath their tread,  
As, iron-clad, thick-tramping, sped  
The men-at-arms, in row and rank,  
Past Stiklestad’s sweet grassy bank.  
The clank of steel, the bowstrings’ twang,  
The sounds of battle, loudly rang;  
And bowmen hurried on advancing,  
Their bright helmets in the sunshine glancing.”

The lendersmen urged their men, and forced them to advance. Sigvat speaks of this: —

“ Midst in their line their banner flies,  
Thither the stoutest bonder hies:  
But many a bonder thinks of home,  
And many wish they ne’er had come.”

Then the bonder-army pushed on from all quarters. They who stood in front hewed down with their swords; they who stood next thrust with their spears; and they who stood hindmost shot arrows, cast spears, or threw stones, hand-axes, or sharp stakes. Soon there was a great fall of men in the battle. Many were down on both sides. In the first onset fell Arnliot Gallina, Gauka Thorer, and Afarfaste, with all their men, after each had killed a man or two, and some indeed more. Now the ranks in front of the king’s banner began to be thinned, and the king ordered Thord to carry the banner forward, and the king himself followed it with the troop he had chosen to stand nearest to him in battle; and these were the best armed men in the field, and the most expert in the use of their weapons. Sigvat the scald tells of this: —

“ Loud was the battle-storm there,  
Where the king’s banner flamed in air.  
The king beneath his banner stands,  
And there the battle he commands.”

Olaf came forth from behind the shield-bulwark, and put himself at the head of the array; and when the bonders looked him in the face they were frightened, and let their hands drop. So says Sigvat: —



## SAGA VII.

“ I think I saw them shrink with fear  
 Who would not shrink from foeman’s spear,  
 When Olaf’s lion-eye was cast  
 On them, and called up all the past.  
 Clear as the serpent’s eye — his look  
 No Drontheim man could stand, but shook  
 Beneath its glance, and skulked away,  
 Knowing his king — and cursed the day.”

The combat became fierce, and the king went forward in the fray. So says Sigvat: —

“ When on they came in fierce array,  
 And round the king arose the fray,  
 With shield on arm brave Olaf stood,  
 Dyeing his sword in their best blood.  
 For vengeance on his Drontheim foes,  
 On their best men he dealt his blows :  
 He who knew well death’s iron play,  
 To his deep vengeance gave full sway.”

CHAPTER  
 CCXXXIX.  
 Thorgeir  
 of Quist-  
 stad’s fall.

King Olaf fought most desperately. He struck the lenderman before mentioned (Thorgeir of Quiststad) across the face, cut off the nose-piece of his helmet, and clove his head down below the eyes so that they almost fell out. When he fell the king said, “ Was it not true, Thorgeir, what I told thee, that thou shouldst not be victor in our meeting?” At the same instant Thord stuck the banner-pole so fast in the earth that it remained standing. Thord had got his death-wound, and fell beneath the banner. There also fell Thorfinn Mudr, and also Gissur Gulbraascald, who was attacked by two men, of whom he killed one, but only wounded the other before he fell. So says Hofgarda Refr: —

“ Bold in the iron-storm was he,  
 Firm and stout as forest tree,  
 The hero who, ’gainst two at once,  
 Made Odin’s fire from sword-edge glance ;  
 Dealing a death-blow to the one,  
 Known as a brave and generous man,  
 Wounding the other, ere he fell, —  
 His bloody sword his deeds showed well.”

It happened then, as before related, that the sun, although the air was clear, withdrew from the



sight, and it became dark. Of this Sigvat the scald SAGA VII.  
speaks: —

“No common wonder in the sky  
Fell out that day — the sun on high,  
And not a cloud to see around,  
Shone not, nor warmed Norway's ground.  
The day on which fell out this fight  
Was marked by dismal dusky light.  
This from the East I heard \* — the end  
Of our great king it did portend.”

At the same time Dag Ringson came up with his people, and began to put his men in array, and to set up his banner; but on account of the darkness the onset could not go on so briskly, for they could not see exactly whom they had before them. They turned, however, to that quarter where the men of Hordaland and Rogaland stood. Many of these circumstances took place at the same time, and some happened a little earlier, and some a little later.

On the one side of Kalf Arneson stood his two relations, Olaf and Kalf, with many other brave and stout men. Kalf was a son of Arnfinn Armodson, and a brother's son of Arne Armodson. On the other side of Kalf Arneson stood Thorer Hund. King Olaf hewed at Thorer Hund, and struck him across the shoulders; but the sword would not cut, and it was as if dust flew from his reindeer-skin coat. So says Sigvat: —

CHAPTER  
CCXL.  
King  
Olaf's fall.

“The king himself now proved the power  
Of Finn-folk's craft in magic hour,  
With magic song; for stroke of steel  
Thor's reindeer coat would never feel.  
Bewitched by them it turned the stroke  
Of the king's sword, — a dust-like smoke  
Rose from Thor's shoulders from the blow  
Which the king thought would end his foe.”

Thorer struck at the king, and they exchanged some blows; but the king's sword would not cut

\* The scald has been in Iceland, or in the West, and where the eclipse has not been total.



SAGA VII. — where it met the reindeer skin, although Thorer was wounded in the hands. Sigvat sang thus of it:—

“Some say that Thor is not right bold;  
 Why never yet have I been told  
 Of one who did a bolder thing  
 Than to change blows with his true king.  
 Against his king his sword to wield,  
 Leaping across the shield on shield  
 Which fenced the king round in the fight,  
 Shows the dog’s\* courage — brave, not bright.”

The king said to Biorn the marshal, “Do thou kill the dog on whom steel will not bite.” Biorn turned round the axe in his hands, and gave Thorer a blow with the hammer of it on the shoulder so hard that he tottered. The king at the same moment turned against Kalf’s relation Olaf, and gave him his death-wound. Thorer Hund struck his spear right through the body of Marshal Biorn, and killed him outright; and Thorer said, “It is thus we hunt the bear.”† Thorstein Knararsmed struck at King Olaf with his axe, and the blow hit his left leg above the knee. Finn Arneson instantly killed Thorstein. The king after the wound staggered towards a stone, threw down his sword, and prayed God to help him. Then Thorer Hund struck at him with his spear, and the stroke went in under his mail-coat and into his belly. Then Kalf struck at him on the left side of the neck. But all are not agreed upon Kalf having been the man who gave him the wound in the neck. These three wounds were King Olaf’s death; and after the king’s death the greater part of the forces which had advanced with him fell with the king. Biorn Gulbraa-scald sang these verses about Kalf Arneson:—

“Warrior! who Olaf dared withstand,  
 Who against Olaf held the land,

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\* Thor or Thorer’s name was Hund — the dog; and a play upon Thorer Hund’s name was intended by the scald.

† Biorn, the marshal’s name, signifies a bear.



Thou hast withstood the bravest, best,  
 Who e'er has gone to his long rest.  
 At Stiklestad thou wast the head ;  
 With flying banners onwards led  
 Thy bonder troops, and still fought on,  
 Until he fell — the much-mourned one."

Sigvat also made these verses on Biorn : —

" The marshal Biorn, too, I find,  
 A great example leaves behind,  
 How steady courage should stand proof,  
 Though other servants stand aloof.  
 To Russia first his steps he bent,  
 To serve his master still intent ;  
 And now beside his king he fell, —  
 A noble death for scalds to tell."

Dag Ringson still kept up the battle, and made in the beginning so fierce an assault that the bonders gave way, and some betook themselves to flight. There a great number of the bonders fell, and these lendermen, Erlend of Gerdi and Aslak of Finnö ; and the banner also which they had stood under was cut down. This onset was particularly hot, and was called Dag's storm. But now Kalf Arneson, Harek of Thiottö, and Thorer Hund turned against Dag, with the array which had followed them, and then Dag was overwhelmed with numbers ; so he betook himself to flight with the men still left him. There was a valley through which the main body of the fugitives fled, and men lay scattered in heaps on both sides ; and many were severely wounded, and many so fatigued that they were fit for nothing. The bonders pursued only a short way ; for their leaders soon returned back to the field of battle, where they had their friends and relations to look after.

CHAPTER  
CCXLI.  
Beginning  
of Dag  
Ringson's  
attack.

Thorer Hund went to where King Olaf's body lay, took care of it, laid it straight out on the ground, and spread a cloak over it. He told since that when he wiped the blood from the face it was very beautiful ; and there was red in the cheeks, as if he only slept, and even much clearer than when he was in life. The

CHAPTER  
CCXLII.  
King  
Olaf's  
miracle  
shown to  
Thorer  
Hund.



## SAGA VII.

king's blood came on Thorer's hand, and ran up between his fingers to where he had been wounded, and the wound grew up so speedily that it did not require to be bound up. This circumstance was testified by Thorer himself when King Olaf's holiness came to be generally known among the people; and Thorer Hund was among the first of the king's powerful opponents who endeavoured to spread abroad the king's sanctity.

CHAPTER  
CCXLIII.  
Of Kalf  
Arneson's  
brothers.

Kalf Arneson searched for his brothers who had fallen, and found Thorberg and Finn. It is related that Finn threw his dagger at him, and wanted to kill him, giving him hard words, and calling him a faithless villain, and a traitor to his king. Kalf did not regard it, but ordered Finn and Thorberg to be carried away from the field. When their wounds were examined they were found not to be deadly, and they had fallen from fatigue, and under the weight of their weapons. Thereafter Kalf tried to bring his brothers down to a ship, and went himself with them. As soon as he was gone the whole bonder-army, having their homes in the neighbourhood, went off also, excepting those who had friends or relations to look after, or the bodies of the slain to take care of. The wounded were taken home to the farms, so that every house was full of them; and tents were erected over some. But wonderful as was the number collected in the bonder-army, no less wonderful was the haste with which this vast body was dispersed when it was once free; and the cause of this was, that the most of the people gathered together from the country places were longing for their homes.

CHAPTER  
CCXLIV.  
Of the peasants of  
Værdal.

The bonders who had their homes in Værdal went to the chiefs Harek and Thorer, and complained of their distress, saying, "The fugitives who have escaped from the battle have proceeded up over the valley of Værdal, and are destroying our habitations, and there is no safety for us to travel home so long as they are



in the valley. Go after them with war-force, and let no mother's son of them escape with life; for that is what they intended for us if they had got the upper hand in the battle, and the same they would do now if they met us hereafter, and had better luck than we. It may also be that they will linger in the valley if they have nothing to be frightened for, and then they would not proceed very gently in the inhabited country." The bonders made many words about this, urging the chiefs to advance directly, and kill those who had escaped. Now when the chiefs talked over this matter among themselves, they thought there was much truth in what the bonders said. They resolved, therefore, that Thorer Hund should undertake this expedition through Værdal, with 600 men of his own troops. Then, towards evening, he set out with his men; and Thorer continued his march without halt until he came in the night to Suul, where he heard the news that Dag Ringson had come there in the evening, with many other flocks of the king's men, and had halted there until they took supper, but were afterwards gone up to the Fielde. Then Thorer said he did not care to pursue them up through the Fielde, and he returned down the valley again, and they did not kill many of them this time. The bonders then returned to their homes, and the following day Thorer, with his people, went to their ships. The part of the king's men who were still on their legs concealed themselves in the forests, and some got help from the people.

Harald Sigurdsson\* was severely wounded; but Rognvald Brusesson brought him to a bonder's the night after the battle, and the bonder took in Harald, and healed his wound in secret, and afterwards gave him his son to attend him. They went secretly over

CHAPTER  
CCXLV.  
Of the  
king's  
brother,  
Harald  
Sigurdsson.

\* King Olaf's half-brother, the son of Sigurd Syr.



## SAGA VII.

the Fielde, and through the waste forests, and came out in Jemteland. Harald Sigurdsson was fifteen years old when King Olaf fell. In Jemteland, Harald found Rognvald Brusesson; and they went both east to King Jarisleif in Russia, as is related in the Saga of Harald Sigurdsson.

CHAPTER  
CCXLVI.  
Of Thor-  
mod Kol-  
brunar-  
scald.

Thormod Kolbrunarscald was under King Olaf's banner in the battle; but when the king had fallen, the battle was raging so that of the king's men the one fell by the side of the other, and the most of those who stood on their legs were wounded. Thormod was also severely wounded, and retired, as all the others did, back from where there was most danger of life, and some even fled. Now when the onset began which is called Dag's storm, all of the king's men who were able to combat went there; but Thormod did not come into that combat, being unable to fight, both from his wound and from weariness, but he stood by the side of his comrade in the ranks, although he could do nothing. There he was struck by an arrow in the left side; but he broke off the shaft of the arrow, went out of the battle, and up towards the houses, where he came to a barn which was a large building. Thormod had his drawn sword in his hand; and as he went in a man met him, coming out, and said, "It is very bad there with howling and screaming; and a great shame it is that brisk young fellows cannot bear their wounds: it may be that the king's men have done bravely to-day, but they certainly bear their wounds very ill."

Thormod asks, "What is thy name?"

He called himself Kimbe.

Thormod: "Wast thou in the battle too?"

"I was with the bonders, which was the best side," says he.

"And art thou wounded any way?" says Thormod.



“A little,” said Kimbe. “And hast thou been in the battle too?” SAGA VII.

Thormod replied, “I was with them who had the best.”

“Art thou wounded?” says Kimbe.

“Not much to signify,” replies Thormod.

As Kimbe saw that Thormod had a gold ring on his arm, he said, “Thou art certainly a king’s man. Give me thy gold ring, and I will hide thee. The bonders will kill thee if thou fallest in their way.”

Thormod says, “Take the ring if thou canst get it: I have lost that which is more worth.”

Kimbe stretched out his hand, and wanted to take the ring; but Thormod, swinging his sword, cut off his hand: and it is related that Kimbe behaved himself no better under his wound than those he had been blaming just before. Kimbe went off, and Thormod sat down in the barn, and listened to what people were saying. The conversation was mostly about what each had seen in the battle, and about the valour of the combatants. Some praised most King Olaf’s courage, and some named others who stood nowise behind him in bravery. Then Thormod sang these verses:—

“Olaf was brave beyond all doubt,—  
At Stiklestad was none so stout;  
Spattered with blood, the king, unsparing,  
Cheered on his men with deed and daring.  
But I have heard that some were there  
Who in the fight themselves would spare;  
Though, in the arrow-storm, the most  
Had perils quite enough to boast.”

Thormod went out, and entered into a chamber apart, in which there were many wounded men, and with them a woman binding their wounds. There was fire upon the floor, at which she warmed water to wash and clean their wounds. Thormod sat himself down beside the door, and one came in, and another

CHAPTER  
CCXLVII.  
Thormod’s  
death.



SAGA VII.

went out, of those who were busy about the wounded men. One of them turned to Thormod, looked at him, and said, "Why art thou so dead-pale? Art thou wounded? Why dost thou not call for the help of the wound-healers? Thormod then sang these verses:—

"I am not blooming, and the fair  
And slender girl loves to care  
For blooming youths — few care for me;  
With Finri's meal\* I cannot fee.  
This is the reason why I feel  
The slash and thrust of Danish steel;  
And pale and faint, and bent with pain,  
Return from yonder battle-plain."

Then Thormod stood up and went in towards the fire, and stood there awhile. The young woman said to him, "Go out, man, and bring in some of the split fire-wood which lies close beside the door." He went out and brought in an armful of wood, which he threw down upon the floor. Then the nurse-girl looked him in the face, and said, "Dreadfully pale is this man—why art thou so?" Then Thormod sang:—

"Thou wonderest, sweet sprig, at me,  
A man so hideous to see:  
Deep wounds but rarely mend the face,  
The crippling blow gives little grace.  
The arrow-drift o'ertook me, girl,—  
A fine-ground arrow in the whirl  
Went through me, and I feel the dart  
Sits, lovely girl, too near my heart."

The girl said, "Let me see thy wound, and I will bind it." Thereupon Thormod sat down, cast off his clothes, and the girl saw his wounds, and examined that which was in his side, and felt that a piece of iron was in it, but could not find where the iron had gone in. In a stone pot she had stirred together leeks and other herbs, and boiled them, and gave the

\* Finri, one of Loke's daughters: her meal was gold.



wounded men of it to eat, by which she discovered if the wounds had penetrated into the belly; for if the wound had gone so deep, it would smell of leek. She brought some of this now to Thormod, and told him to eat of it. He replied, "Take it away, I have no appetite for my broth." Then she took a large pair of tongs, and tried to pull out the iron; but it sat too fast, and would in no way come, and as the wound was swelled, little of it stood out to lay hold of. Now said Thorer, "Cut so deep in that thou canst get at the iron with the tongs, and give me the tongs and let me pull." She did as he said. Then Thormod took a gold ring from his hand, gave it to the nurse-woman, and told her to do with it what she liked. "It is a good man's gift," said he: "King Olaf gave me the ring this morning." Then Thormod took the tongs, and pulled the iron out; but on the iron there was a hook, at which there hung some morsels of flesh from the heart,—some white, some red. When he saw that, he said, "The king has fed us well. I am fat even at the heart-roots:" and so saying he leant back, and was dead. And with this ends what we have to say about Thormod.

King Olaf fell on Wednesday, the 29th of July.\* It was near mid-day when the two armies met, and the battle began before half-past one, and before three

CHAPTER  
CCXLVIII.  
Of some  
circum-  
stances of  
the battle.

\* The date given in the text is Midvikodag IV. Calendas Augusti manader; and the year which antiquaries have reckoned, in conformity with the other events in Snorro's saga, and with all historical researches, as that of this battle and King Olaf's death, is 1033. But there was no eclipse of the sun on the IV. Calends of August, viz. the 29th July of that year, visible at Stiklestad. Professor Hansten, of Christiania, has calculated that the nearest total eclipse of the sun visible at Stiklestad was on the 31st August, 1030; and the eclipse during the battle being a fixed point for chronology, some error of Snorro or his transcribers has crept in, and damages a great deal of antiquarian lore by this difference of three years in the time of so important an event, from which many others were dated. The Saxon Chronicle gives the right date, 1030, to this battle.



SAGA VII.

the king fell. The darkness continued from about half-past one to three also. Sigvat the scald speaks thus of the result of the battle :—

“The loss was great to England’s foes,  
When their chief fell beneath the blows  
By his own thoughtless people given,—  
When the king’s shield in two was riven.  
The people’s sovereign took the field,  
The people clove the sovereign’s shield.  
Of all the chiefs, that bloody day,  
Dag only came out of the fray.”

And he composed these :—

“Such mighty bonder-power, I ween,  
With chiefs or rulers ne’er was seen.  
It was the people’s mighty power  
That struck the king that fatal hour.  
When such a king, in such a strife,  
By his own people lost his life,  
Full many a gallant man must feel  
The death-wound from the people’s steel.”

The bonders did not spoil the slain upon the field of battle, for immediately after the battle there came upon many of them who had been against the king a kind of dread as it were; yet they held by their evil inclination, for they resolved among themselves that all who had fallen with the king should not receive the interment which belongs to good men, but reckoned them all robbers and outlaws. But the men who had power, and had relations on the field, cared little for this, but removed their remains to the churches, and took care of their burial.

CHAPTER  
CCXLIX.  
A miracle  
on a blind  
man.

Thorgils Halmesson and his son Grim went to the field of battle towards evening when it was dusk, took King Olaf’s corpse up, and bore it to a little empty houseman’s hut which stood on the other side of their farm. They had light and water with them. Then they took the clothes off the body, swathed it in a linen cloth, laid it down in the house, and concealed it under some fire-wood so that nobody could see it, even if people came into the hut. Thereafter they



went home again to the farm-house. A great many beggars and poor people had followed both armies, who begged for meat; and the evening after the battle many remained there, and sought lodging round about in all the houses, great or small. It is told of a blind man who was poor, that a boy attended him and led him. They went out around the farm to seek a lodging, and came to the same empty house, of which the door was so low that they had almost to creep in. Now when the blind man had come in, he fumbled about the floor seeking a place where he could lay himself down. He had a hat on his head, which fell down over his face when he stooped down. He felt with his hands that there was moisture on the floor, and he put up his wet hand to raise his hat, and in doing so put his fingers on his eyes. There came immediately such an itching in his eyelids, that he wiped the water with his fingers from his eyes, and went out of the hut, saying nobody could lie there it was so wet. When he came out of the hut he could distinguish his hands, and all that was near him, as far as things can be distinguished by sight in the darkness of night; and he went immediately to the farm-house into the room, and told all the people he had got his sight again, and could see every thing, although many knew he had been blind for a long time, for he had been there before going about among the houses of the neighbourhood. He said he first got his sight when he was coming out of a little ruinous hut which was all wet inside. "I groped in the water," said he, "and rubbed my eyes with my wet hands." He told where the hut stood. The people who heard him wondered much at this event, and spoke among themselves of what it could be that produced it: but Thorgils the peasant and his son Grim thought they knew how this came to pass; and as they were much afraid the king's enemies might go there



## SAGA VII.

and search the hut, they went and took the body out of it, and removed it to a garden, where they concealed it, and then returned to the farm, and slept there all night.

CHAPTER  
CCL.  
Of Thorer  
Hund.

The fifth day after this, Thorer Hund came down the valley of Værdal to Stiklestad; and many people, both chiefs and bonders, accompanied him. The field of battle was still being cleared, and people were carrying away the bodies of their friends and relations, and were giving the necessary help to such of the wounded as they wished to save; but many had died since the battle. Thorer Hund went to where the king had fallen, and searched for his body; but not finding it, he inquired if any one could tell him what had become of the corpse, but nobody could tell him where it was. Then he asked the bonder Thorgils, who said, "I was not in the battle, and knew little of what took place there; but many reports are abroad, and among others that King Olaf has been seen in the night up at Staf, and a troop of people with him: but if he fell in the battle, your men must have concealed him in some hole, or under some stone-heap." Now although Thorer Hund knew for certain that the king had fallen, many allowed themselves to believe, and to spread abroad the report, that the king had escaped from the battle, and would in a short time come again upon them with an army. Then Thorer went to his ships, and sailed down the fiord, and the bonder-army dispersed, carrying with them all the wounded men who could bear to be removed.

CHAPTER  
CCLI.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
body.

Thorgils Halmesson and his son Grim had King Olaf's body, and were anxious about preserving it from falling into the hands of the king's enemies, and being ill-treated; for they heard the bonders speaking about burning it, or sinking it in the sea. The father and son had seen a clear light burning at night over the spot on the battle-field where King Olaf's body



lay, and since, while they concealed it, they had always seen at night a light burning over the corpse; therefore they were afraid the king's enemies might seek the body where this signal was visible. They hastened, therefore, to take the body to a place where it would be safe. Thorgils and his son accordingly made a coffin, which they adorned as well as they could, and laid the king's body in it; and afterwards made another coffin, in which they laid stones and straw, about as much as the weight of a man, and carefully closed the coffins. As soon as the whole bonder-army had left Stiklestad, Thorgils and his son made themselves ready, got a large rowing boat, and took with them seven or eight men, who were all Thorgil's relations or friends, and privately took the coffin with the king's body down to the boat, and set it under the foot-boards. They had also with them the coffin containing the stones, and placed it in the boat where all could see it; and then went down the fiord with a good opportunity of wind and weather, and arrived in the dusk of the evening at Nidaros, where they brought up at the king's pier. Then Thorgils sent some of his men up to the town to Bishop Sigurd, to say that they were come with the king's body. As soon as the bishop heard this news, he sent his men down to the pier, and they took a small rowing boat, came alongside of Thorgil's ship, and demanded the king's body. Thorgils and his people then took the coffin which stood in view, and bore it into the boat; and the bishop's men rowed out into the fiord, and sank the coffin in the sea. It was now quite dark. Thorgils and his people now rowed up into the river past the town, and landed at a place called Saurlid, above the town. Then they carried the king's body to an empty house standing at a distance from other houses, and watched over it for the night, while Thorgils went down to the town, where he spoke with



SAGA VII. some of the best friends of King Olaf, and asked them if they would take charge of the king's body; but none of them dared to do so. Then Thorgils and his men went with the body higher up the river, buried it in a sand-hill on the banks, and levelled all around it so that no one could observe that people had been at work there. They were ready with all this before break of day, when they returned to their vessel, went immediately out of the river, and proceeded on their way home to Stiklestad.

CHAPTER  
CCLII.  
Of the be-  
ginning of  
King  
Swend  
Alfifason's  
govern-  
ment.

Swend, a son of King Canute, and of Alfifa, a daughter of Earl Alfrim, had been appointed to govern Jomsberg in Vendland. There came a message to him from his father King Canute, that he should come to Denmark; and likewise that afterwards he should proceed to Norway, and take that kingdom under his charge, and assume, at the same time, the title of king of Norway. Swend repaired to Denmark, and took many people with him from thence, and also Earl Harald and many other people of consequence attended him. Thorarin Loftunge speaks of this in the song he composed about King Swend, called the Glelogn song:—

“’Tis told by fame,  
How grandly came  
The Danes to tend  
Their young king Swend.  
Grandest was he,  
That all could see;  
Then, one by one,  
Each following man  
More splendour wore  
Than him before.”

Then Swend proceeded to Norway, and his mother Alfifa was with him; and he was taken to be king at every Law-thing in the country. He had already come as far as Viken at the time the battle was fought at Stiklestad, and King Olaf fell. Swend continued his journey until he came north, in autumn, to the



Drontheim country; and there, as elsewhere, he was received as king. SAGA VII.

King Swend introduced new laws in many respects into the country, partly after those which were in Denmark, and in part much more severe. No man must leave the country without the king's permission; or if he did, his property fell to the king. Whoever killed a man outright, should forfeit all his land and moveables. If any one was banished the country, and an heritage fell to him, the king took his inheritance. At Yule every man should pay the king a meal\* of malt from every harvest steading, and a leg of a three-year old ox, which was called a friendly gift, together with a spand† of butter; and every housewife a rock‡ full of unspun lint, as thick as one could span with the fingers of the longest hand. The bonders were bound to build all the houses the king required upon his farms. Of every seven males one should be taken for the service of war, and reckoning from the fifth year of age; and the outfit of ships should be reckoned in the same proportion. Every man who rowed upon the sea to fish should pay the king five fish as a tax, for the land defence, wherever he might come from. Every ship that went out of the country should have stowage reserved open for the king in the middle of the ship. Every man, foreigner or native, who went to Iceland, should pay a tax to the king. And to all this was added, that Danes should enjoy so much consideration in Norway, that one witness of them should invalidate ten of Northmen.§

CHAPTER  
CCLIII.  
Of King  
Swend's  
laws.

\* A meal of corn was a measure, and is still used in Orkney and Shetland rentals.

† A spand of butter was eighteen marks.

‡ A "rock of tow" would still be understood in the north of Scotland. The rock—rykiar—is the wooden pin round which the lint to be spun is bound, to be drawn out by the fingers of the spinner.

§ This may probably have referred not to witnesses of an act, but to



## SAGA VII.

When these laws were promulgated the minds of the people were instantly raised against them, and murmurs were heard among them. They who had not taken part against King Olaf said, "Now take your reward and friendship from the Canute race, ye men of the interior of Drontheim who fought against King Olaf, and deprived him of his kingdom. Ye were promised peace and justice, and now ye have got oppression and slavery for your great treachery and crime." Nor was it very easy to contradict them, as all men saw how miserable the change had been. But people had not the boldness to make an insurrection against King Swend, principally because many had given King Canute their sons or other near relations as hostages; and also because no one appeared as leader of an insurrection. They very soon, however, complained of King Swend; and his mother Alfifa got much of the blame of all that was against their desire. Then the truth, with regard to Olaf, became evident to many.

CHAPTER  
CCLIV.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
sanctity.

This winter many in the Drontheim land began to declare that Olaf was in reality a holy man, and his sanctity was confirmed by many miracles. Many began to make promises and prayers to King Olaf in the matters in which they thought they required help, and many found great benefit from these invocations; some in respect of health, others of a journey, or other circumstances in which such help seemed needful.

CHAPTER  
CCLV.  
Of Einar  
Tambar-  
skelver.

Einar Tambarskelver was come home from England to his farm, and had the fiefs which King Canute had given him when they met in Drontheim, and which were almost an earldom. Einar had not been in the

the class of witnesses in the jurisprudence of the middle ages called compurgators, who testified not the fact, but their confidence in the statements of the accused; and from which, possibly, our English bail for offenders arose.



strife against King Olaf, and congratulated himself upon it. He remembered that King Canute had promised him the earldom over Norway, and at the same time remembered that King Canute had not kept his promise. He was accordingly the first great person who looked upon King Olaf as a saint.\*

SAGA VII.

Finn Arneson remained but a short time at Egge with his brother Kalf; for he was in the highest degree ill-pleased that Kalf had been in the battle against King Olaf, and always made his brother the bitterest reproaches on this account. Thorberg Arneson was much more temperate in his discourse than Finn; but yet he hastened away, and went home to his farm. Kalf gave the two brothers a good long-ship, with full rigging and other necessaries, and a good retinue. Therefore they went home to their farms, and sat quietly at home. Arne Arneson lay long ill of his wounds, but got well at last without injury of any limb, and in winter he proceeded south to his farm. All the brothers made their peace with King Swend, and sat themselves quietly down in their homes.

CHAPTER  
CCLVI.  
Of the sons  
of Arne.

The summer after there was much talk about King Olaf's sanctity, and there was a great alteration in the expressions of all people concerning him. There were many who now believed that King Olaf must be a saint, even among those who had persecuted him with the greatest animosity, and would never in their conversation allow truth or justice in his favour. People began then to turn their reproaches against the men who had principally excited opposition to the king; and on this account Bishop Sigurd in particular was accused. He got so many enemies, that he found it most advisable to go over to England to King Canute. Then the Drontheim people sent men

CHAPTER  
CCLVII.  
Bishop  
Sigurd's  
flight.

\* These shrewd sly hits at Saint Olaf's saintship, and the honesty of the great people of the time, are very characteristic of Snorro Sturleson—a man far in advance of his age.



## SAGA VII.

with a verbal message to the Uplands, to Bishop Grimkel, desiring him to come north to Drontheim. King Olaf had sent Bishop Grimkel back to Norway when he went east into Russia, and since that time Grimkel had been in the Uplands. When the message came to the bishop he made ready to go, and it contributed much to this journey that the bishop considered it as true what was told of King Olaf's miracles and sanctity.

CHAPTER  
CCLVIII.  
King Olaf  
the Saint's  
remains  
disinterred.

Bishop Grimkel went to Einar Tambarskelver, who received him joyfully. They talked over many things, and, among others, of the important events which had taken place in the country; and concerning these they were perfectly agreed. Then the bishop proceeded to the town (Nidaros), and was well received by all the community. He inquired particularly concerning the miracles of King Olaf that were reported, and received satisfactory accounts of them. Thereupon the bishop sent a verbal message to Stiklestad to Thorgils and his son Grim, inviting them to come to the town to him. They did not decline the invitation, but set out on the road immediately, and came to the town and to the bishop. They related to him all the signs that had presented themselves to them, and also where they had deposited the king's body. The bishop sent a message to Einar Tambarskelver, who came to the town. Then the bishop and Einar had an audience of the king and Alfifa, in which they asked the king's leave to have King Olaf's body taken up out of the earth. The king gave his permission, and told the bishop to do as he pleased in the matter. At that time there were a great many people in the town. The bishop, Einar, and some men with them, went to the place where the king's body was buried, and had the place dug; but the coffin had already raised itself almost to the surface of the earth. It was then the opinion of many that the bishop should



proceed to have the king buried in the earth at Clement's church; and it was so done. Twelve months and three days after King Olaf's death his holy remains were dug up, and the coffin had raised itself almost entirely to the surface of the earth; and the coffin appeared quite new, as if it had but lately been made. When Bishop Grimkel came to King Olaf's opened coffin, there was a delightful and fresh smell. Thereupon the bishop uncovered the king's face, and his appearance was in no respect altered, and his cheeks were as red as if he had but just fallen asleep. The men who had seen King Olaf when he fell remarked, also, that his hair and nails had grown as much as if he had lived on the earth all the time that had passed since his fall. Thereupon King Swend, and all the chiefs who were at the place, went out to see King Olaf's body. Then said Alfifa, "People buried in sand rot very slowly, and it would not have been so if he had been buried in earth." Afterwards the bishop took scissars, clipped the king's hair, and arranged his beard; for he had had a long beard, according to the fashion of that time. Then said the bishop to the king and Alfifa, "Now the king's hair and beard are such as when he gave up the ghost, and it has grown as much as ye see has been cut off." Alfifa answers, "I will believe in the sanctity of his hair, if it will not burn in the fire; but I have often seen men's hair whole and undamaged after lying longer in the earth than this man's." Then the bishop had live coals put into a pan, blessed it, cast incense upon it, and then laid King Olaf's hair on the fire. When all the incense was burnt the bishop took the hair out of the fire, and showed the king and the other chiefs that it was not consumed. Now Alfifa asked that the hair should be laid upon unconsecrated fire; but Einar Tambarskelver told her to be silent, and gave her many severe reproaches for her



## SAGA VII.

unbelief. After the bishop's recognition, with the king's approbation and the decision of the Thing, it was determined that King Olaf should be considered a man truly holy; whereupon his body was transported into Clement's church, and a place was prepared for it near the high altar. The coffin was covered with costly cloth, and stood under a gold embroidered tent. Many kinds of miracles were soon wrought by King Olaf's holy remains.

CHAPTER  
CCLIX.  
Of King  
Olaf's  
miracles.

In the sand-hill where King Olaf's body had lain on the ground a beautiful spring of water came up, and many human ailments and infirmities were cured by its waters. Things were put in order around it, and the water ever since has been carefully preserved. There was first a chapel built, and an altar consecrated, where the king's body had lain; but now Christ's church stands upon the spot. Archbishop Eystein\* had a high altar raised upon the spot where the king's grave had been, when he erected the great temple which now stands there; and it is the same spot on which the altar of the old Christ church had stood. It is said that Olaf's church stands on the spot on which the empty house had stood in which King Olaf's body had been laid for the night. The place over which the holy remains of King Olaf were carried up from the vessel is now called Olaf's Road, and is now in the middle of the town. The bishop adorned King Olaf's holy remains, and cut his nails and hair; for both grew as if he had still been alive. So says Sigvat the scald:—

“ I lie not, when I say the king  
Seemed as alive in every thing:  
His nails, his yellow hair still growing,  
And round his ruddy cheek still flowing,

---

\* Archbishop Eystein, or Augustinus, the second archbishop of Drontheim, died 1188. He built the present cathedral of Drontheim.



As when, to please the Russian queen,  
His yellow locks adorned were seen;  
Or to the blind he cured he gave  
A tress, their precious sight to save."

Thorarin Loftunge also composed a song upon Swend Alfifason, called the Glelogn\* Song, in which are these verses:—

"Swend, king of all,  
In Olaf's hall  
Now sits on high;  
And Olaf's eye  
Looks down from heaven,  
Where it is given  
To him to dwell:  
Or here in cell,  
As heavenly saint,  
To heal men's plaint.  
May our gold-giver  
Live here for ever!

"King Olaf there  
To hold a share  
On earth prepared,  
Nor labour spared  
A seat to win  
From heaven's great King;  
Which he has won  
Next God's own Son.

"His holy form,  
Untouched by worm,  
Lies at this day  
Where good men pray,  
And nails and hair  
Grow fresh and fair;  
His cheek is red,  
His flesh not dead.

"Around his bier,  
Good people hear  
The small bells ring  
Over the king,  
Or great bell toll;  
And living soul  
Not one can tell  
Who tolls the bell.

---

\* Glelogn means the clear air; but it does not appear why this name is applied to this very curious old song.



SAGA VII.  

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“Tapers up there,  
(Which Christ holds dear,)  
By day and night  
The altar light :  
Olaf did so,  
And all men know  
In heaven he  
From sin sits free.

“And crowds do come,  
The deaf and dumb,  
Cripple and blind,  
Sick of all kind,  
Cured to be  
On bended knee;  
And off the ground  
Rise whole and sound.

“To Olaf pray  
To eke thy day,  
To save thy land  
From spoiler's hand.  
God's man is he  
To deal to thee  
Good crops and peace;  
Let not prayer cease.

“Book-prayers prevail,  
If, nail for nail\*,  
Thou tellest on,  
Forgetting none.”

Thorarin Loftunge was himself with King Swend, and heard these great testimonials of King Olaf's holiness, that people, by the heavenly power, could hear a sound over his holy remains as if bells were ringing, and that candles were lighted of themselves upon the altar as by a heavenly fire. But when Thorarin says that a multitude of lame, and blind, and other sick, who came to the holy Olaf, went back cured, he means nothing more than that there were a vast many persons who at the beginning of King Olaf's miraculous

\* Before the entrance of the temples or churches were posts called Aundveigis-sulor, with nails called Reigin-naglar—the gods' nails—either for ornament, or, as Schoning suggests, to assist the people in reckoning weeks, months, festivals, and in reckoning or keeping tale of prayers repeated, and to recall them to memory, in the same way as beads are used still by the common people in Catholic countries for the same purpose.



working regained their health. King Olaf's first miracles are clearly written down, although they occurred somewhat later. SAGA VII.

It is reckoned by those who have kept an exact account, that Olaf the Saint was king of Norway for fifteen years from the time Earl Swend left the country; but he had received the title of king from the people of the Uplands the winter before. Sigvat the scald tells this:— CHAPTER  
CCLX.  
Of King  
Olaf's age  
and reign.

“For fifteen winters o’er the land  
King Olaf held the chief command,  
Before he fell up in the North:  
His fall made known to us his worth.  
No worthier prince before his day  
In our North land e’er held the sway.  
Too short he held it for our good:  
All men wish now that he had stood.”

Saint Olaf was thirty-five years old when he fell, according to what Are hinn Frode the priest says, and he had been in twenty pitched battles. So says Sigvat the scald:—

“Some leaders trust in God—some not;  
Even so their men; but well I wot  
God-fearing Olaf fought and won  
Twenty pitched battles, one by one,  
And always placed upon his right  
His Christian men in a hard fight.  
May God be merciful, I pray,  
To him—for he ne’er shunned the fray.”

We have now related a part of King Olaf's story, namely, the events which took place while he ruled over Norway; also his death, and how his holiness was manifested. Now shall we not neglect to mention what it was that most advanced his honour. This was his miracles; but these will come to be treated of afterwards in this book.

King Swend, the son of Canute the Great, ruled over Norway for some years; but was a child both in age and understanding. His mother Alfifa had most sway in the country; and the people of the country CHAPTER  
CCLXI.  
Of the  
Drontheim  
people.



SAGA VII. were her great enemies, both then and ever since. Danish people had a great superiority given them within the country, to the great dissatisfaction of the people; and when conversation turned that way, the people of the rest of Norway accused the Drontheim people of having principally occasioned King Olaf the Holy's fall, and also that the men of Norway were subject, through them, to the ill government by which oppression and slavery had come upon all the people, both great and small; indeed upon the whole community. They insisted that it was the duty of the Drontheim people to attempt opposition and insurrection, and thus relieve the country from such tyranny; and, in the opinion of the common people, Drontheim was also the chief seat of the strength of Norway at that time, both on account of the chiefs and of the population of that quarter. When the Drontheim people heard these remarks of their countrymen, they could not deny that there was much truth in them, and that in depriving King Olaf of life and land they had committed a great crime, and at the same time the misdeed had been ill paid. The chiefs began to hold consultations and conferences with each other, and the leader of these was Einar Tambarskelver. It was likewise the case with Kalf Arneson, who began to find into what errors he had been drawn by King Canute's persuasion. All the promises which King Canute had made to Kalf had been broken; for he had promised him the earldom and the highest authority in Norway: and although Kalf had been the leader in the battle against King Olaf, and had deprived him of his life and kingdom, Kalf had not got any higher dignity than he had before. He felt that he had been deceived, and therefore messages passed between the brothers Kalf, Finn, Thorberg, and Arne, and they renewed their family friendship.



When King Swend had been three years in Norway the news was received that a force was assembled in the western countries, under a chief who called himself Tryggve, and gave out that he was a son of Olaf Tryggvesson and Queen Gyda of England. Now when King Swend heard that foreign troops had come to the country, he ordered out the people on a levy in the north, and the most of the lendersmen hastened to him; but Einar Tambarskelver remained at home, and would not go out with King Swend. When King Swend's order came to Kalf Arneson at Egge, that he should go out on a levy with King Swend, he took a twenty-benched ship which he owned, went on board with his house-servants, and in all haste proceeded out of the fiord, without waiting for King Swend, sailed southwards to Möre, and continued his voyage south until he came to Giskö Island to his brother Thorberg. Then all the brothers, the sons of Arne, held a meeting, and consulted with each other. After this Kalf returned to the north again; but when he came to Frekösund, King Swend was lying in the sound before him. When Kalf came rowing from the south into the sound they hailed each other, and the king's men ordered Kalf to bring up with his vessel, and follow the king for the defence of the country. Kalf replies, "I have done enough, if not too much, when I fought against my own countrymen to increase the power of the Canute family." Thereupon Kalf rowed away to the north until he came home to Egge. None of these Arnesons appeared at this levy to accompany the king. He steered with his fleet southwards along the land; but as he could not hear the least news of any fleet having come from the west, he steered south to Rogaland, and all the way to Agder: for many guessed that Tryggve would first make his attempt on Viken, because his forefathers had been there, and had most of their strength

SAGA VII.  
CHAPTER  
CCLXII.  
Of King  
Swend's  
levy.



SAGA VII. from that quarter, and he had himself great strength by family connection there.

CHAPTER  
CCLXIII.  
King  
Tryggve  
Olafsson's  
fall.

When Tryggve came from the west he landed first on the coast of Hordaland, and when he heard King Swend had gone south he went the same way to Rogaland. As soon as Swend got the intelligence that Tryggve had come from the west he returned, and steered north with his fleet; and both fleets met within Bokn in Soknasund, not far from the place where Einar Skialgsson fell. The battle, which took place on a Sunday, was great and severe. People tell that Tryggve threw spears with both hands at once. "So my father," said he, "taught me to celebrate mass." His enemies had said that he was the son of a priest; but the praise must be allowed him that he showed himself more like a son of King Olaf Tryggvesson, for this Tryggve was a slaughtering man. In this battle King Tryggve fell, and many of his men with him; but some fled, and some received quarter and their lives. It is thus related in the ballad of Tryggve:—

"Tryggve comes from the northern coast,  
King Swend turns round with all his host;  
To meet and fight they both prepare,  
And where they met grim death was there.  
From the sharp strife I was not far,—  
I heard the din and the clang of war;  
And the Hordaland men at last gave way,  
And their leader fell, and they lost the day."

This battle is also told of in the ballad about King Swend, thus:—

"My girl! it was a Sunday morn,  
And many a man ne'er saw its eve,  
Though ale and leeks by old wives borne  
The bruised and wounded did relieve.  
'Twas Sunday morn, when Swend calls out,  
'Stem to stem your vessels bind:'  
The raven a mid-day feast smells out,  
And he comes croaking up the wind."

After this battle King Swend ruled the country for



some time, and there was peace in the land. The winter after it he passed in the south parts of the country. SAGA VII.

Einar Tambarskelver and Kalf Arneson had this winter meetings and consultations between themselves in the merchant town.\* Then there came a messenger from King Canute to Kalf Arneson, with a message to send him three dozen axes, which must be chosen and good. Kalf replies, "I will send no axes to King Canute. Tell him I will bring his son Swend so many, that he shall not think he is in want of any."

CHAPTER  
CCLXIV.  
Of the  
counsels of  
Einar Tam-  
barskelver  
and Kalf  
Arneson.

Early in spring Einar Tambarskelver and Kalf Arneson made themselves ready for a journey, with a great retinue of the best and most select men that could be found in the Drontheim country. They went in spring eastward over the ridge of the country to Jemteland, from thence to Helsingialand, and came to Sweden, where they procured ships, with which in summer they proceeded east to Russia, and came in autumn to Ladoga. They sent men up to Novogorod to King Jarisleif, with the errand that they offered Magnus, the son of King Olaf the Saint, to take him with them, follow him to Norway, and give him assistance to attain his father's heritage and be made king over the country. When this message came to King Jarisleif he held a consultation with the queen and some chiefs, and they all resolved unanimously to send a message to the Northmen, and ask them to come to King Jarisleif and Magnus; for which journey safe conduct was given them. When they came to Novogorod it was settled among them that the Northmen who had come there should become Magnus's men, and be his subjects; and to this Kalf and the other men who had been against King Olaf at Stiklestad

CHAPTER  
CCLXV.  
Of Einar  
Tambar-  
skelver and  
Kalf Arne-  
son's jour-  
ney out of  
the country.

\* Nidaros, or Drontheim, is usually called merely the merchant town.



## SAGA VII.

were solemnly bound by oath. On the other hand, King Magnus promised them, under oath, secure peace and full reconciliation; and that he would be true and faithful to them all when he got the dominions and kingdom of Norway. He was to become Kalf Arneson's foster-son; and Kalf should be bound to do all that Magnus might think necessary for extending his dominion, and making it more independent than formerly.



## VIII.

## SAGA VIII.

## SAGA OF MAGNUS THE GOOD.\*

AFTER Yule Magnus Olafsson began his journey from the East from Novogorod to Ladoga, where he rigged out his ships as soon as the ice was loosened in spring. Arnor, the earl's scald, tells of this in the poem on Magnus:—

CHAPTER  
I.  
Magnus  
Olafsson's  
journey  
from the  
East.

“It is no loose report that he,  
Who will command on land and sea,  
In blood will make his foemen feel  
Olaf's sword Hneiter's sharp blue steel.  
This generous youth, who scatters gold,  
Norway's brave son, but ten years old,  
Is rigging ships in Russia's lake,  
His crown, with friends' support, to take.”

In spring Magnus sailed from the East to Sweden. So says Arnor:—

“The young sword-stainer called a Thing,  
Where all his men should meet their king:  
Heroes who find the eagle food  
Before their lord in arms stood.  
And now the curved plank of the bow  
Cleaves the blue sea; the ocean-plough,  
By grey winds driven across the main,  
Reaches Sigtuna's grassy plain.”

Here it is related that when King Magnus and his fellow-travellers sailed from the East to Sweden, they brought up at Sigtun. Onund Olafsson was then king in Sweden. Queen Astrid, who had been married to King Olaf the Saint, was also there. She received very gladly and well her stepson King Magnus, and summoned immediately a numerous Thing of Swedes at a place called Hungrar. At the Thing

\* Magnus reigned from about 1035 to about 1047.



SAGA VIII. Queen Astrid spoke these words:—“Here is come to us a son of Olaf the Saint, called Magnus, who intends to make an expedition to Norway to seek his father’s heritage. It is my great duty to give him aid towards this expedition; for he is my stepson, as is known to all, both Swedes and Norwegians. Neither shall he want men or money, in so far as I can procure them or have influence, in order that his strength may be as great as possible; and all the men who will support this cause of his shall have my fullest friendship; and I would have it known that I intend myself to go with him on this attempt, that all may see I will spare nothing that is in my power to help him.” She spoke long and cleverly in this strain; but when she had ended many replied thus:—“The Swedes made no honourable progress in Norway when they followed King Olaf his father, and now no better success is to be expected, as this man is but in years of boyhood; and therefore we have little inclination for this expedition.” Astrid replies, “All men who wish to be thought of true courage must not be deterred by such considerations. If any have lost connections at the side of King Olaf, or been themselves wounded, now is the time to show a man’s heart and courage, and go to Norway to take vengeance.” Astrid succeeded so far with words and encouragement that many men determined to go with her, and follow King Magnus to Norway. Sigvat the scald speaks of this:—

“Now Astrid, Olaf’s widowed queen,—  
She who so many a change had seen,—  
Took all the gifts of happier days,  
Jewels and rings, all she could raise,  
And at a Thing at Hungrar, where  
The Swedes were numerous, did declare  
What Olaf’s son proposed to do,  
And brought her gifts—their pay—in view.

“And with the Swedes no wiser plan,  
To bring out every brave bold man,



Could have been found, had Magnus been  
The son himself of the good queen.  
With help of Christ, she hoped to bring  
Magnus to be the land's sole king,  
As Harald was, who in his day  
Obtained o'er all the upper sway.

“And glad are we so well she sped,—  
The people's friend is now their head;  
And good King Magnus always shows  
How much he to Queen Astrid owes.  
Such stepmothers as this good queen  
In truth are very rarely seen;  
And to this noble woman's praise  
The scald with joy his song will raise.”

Thiodolf the scald also says in his song of Magnus:—

“When thy brave ship left the land,  
The bending yard could scarce withstand  
The fury of the whistling gale,  
That split thy many-coloured sail;  
And many a stout ship, tempest-tost,  
Was in that howling storm lost  
That brought thee safe to Sigtun's shore,  
Far from the sound of ocean's roar.”

King Magnus set out on his journey from Sigtun with a great force, which he had gathered in Sweden. They proceeded through Sweden on foot to Helsingia-land. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

CHAPTER  
II.  
Magnus's  
expedition  
from  
Sweden.

“And many a dark-red Swedish shield  
Marched with thee from the Swedish field.  
The country people crowded in,  
To help Saint Olaf's son to win;  
And chosen men by thee were led,  
Men who have stained the wolf's tongue red.  
Each milk-white shield and polished spear  
Came to a splendid gathering there.”

Magnus Olafsson went from the East through Jemteland over the keel-ridge\* of the country, and

\* The Kiöl, or keel-ridge of the country, is now, as formerly, applied to the chain of hills that divides the waters of the peninsula falling to the east from those which fall to the west and north, and is taken from the figure of a boat turned upside down; the keel representing the dividing ridge of the country so truly, that the figure of speech has been used in all ages.



## SAGA VIII.

came down upon the Drontheim district, where all men welcomed the king with joy. But no sooner did the men of King Swend, the son of Alfifa, hear that King Magnus Olafsson was come to the country, than they fled on all sides and concealed themselves, so that no opposition was made to King Magnus; for King Swend was in the south part of the country. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

“ He who the eagle's talons stains  
Rushed from the East on Drontheim's plains;  
The terror of his plumed helm  
Drove his pale foemen from the realm.  
The lightning of thy eye so near,  
Great king! thy foemen could not bear.  
Scattered they fled—their only care  
If thou their wretched lives wilt spare.”

CHAPTER  
III.  
Magnus  
made king.

Magnus Olafsson advanced to the town (Nidaros), where he was joyfully received. He then summoned the people to the Eyra-thing\*; and when the bonders met at the Thing, Magnus was taken to be king over the whole land, as far as his father Olaf had possessed it. Then the king selected a court, and named lendermen, and placed bailiffs and officers in all domains and offices. Immediately after harvest King Magnus ordered a levy through all Drontheim land, and he collected men readily; and thereafter he proceeded southwards along the coast.

CHAPTER  
IV.  
King  
Swend's  
flight.

King Swend Alfifason was staying in South Hordaland when he heard this news of war. He immediately sent out war-tokens to four different quarters, summoned the bonders to him, and made it known to all that they should join him with men and ships to defend the country. All the men who were in the

\* Eyra or Oyra Thing, held on the ayr of the river Nid, that is, on the spit of sand, still called an ayr in the north of Scotland, dividing a lake, pond, or river-mouth from the sea. At the Thing held here the kings of Norway were chosen and proclaimed. It was held to be the proper Thing for settling disputes between kings in Norway.



neighbourhood of the king presented themselves; and the king formed a Thing, at which in a speech he set forth his business, and said he would advance against Magnus Olafsson and have a battle with him, if the bonders would aid his cause. The king's speech was not very long, and was not received with much approbation by the bonders. Afterwards the Danish chiefs who were about the king made long and clever speeches; but the bonders then took up the word, and answered them; and although many said they would follow Swend, and fight on his side, some refused to do so bluntly, some were altogether silent, and some declared they would join King Magnus as soon as they had an opportunity. Then King Swend says, "Methinks very few of the bonders to whom we sent a message have appeared here; and of those who have come, and tell us to our face that they will join King Magnus as soon as they can, we shall have as little benefit as of those who say they will sit at home quietly. It is the same with those who say nothing at all. But as to those who promise to help us, there are not more than every other man; and that force will avail us little against King Magnus. It is my counsel, therefore, that we do not trust to these bonders; but let us rather go to the land where all the people are sure and true to us, and where we will obtain forces to conquer this country again." As soon as the king had made known this resolution all his men followed it, turned their ships' bows, and hoisted sail. King Swend sailed eastward along the land, and then set right over to Denmark without delay, and Hardacanut received his brother Swend very kindly. At their first meeting Hardacanut offered King Swend to divide the kingdom of Denmark with him, which offer King Swend accepted.

In autumn King Magnus proceeded eastward to the end of the country, and was received as king



SAGA VIII.

journey to  
Norway.CHAPTER  
VI.Death of  
King Canute the  
Great and  
his son  
Swend.

throughout the whole land, and the country people were rejoiced at his arrival.

King Swend, Canute's son, went to Denmark, as before related, and took part in the government with his brother Hardacanute. In the same autumn King Canute the Great died in England\*, the 13th November, forty years old, and was buried at Winchester. He had been king of Denmark for twenty-seven years, and over Denmark and England together twenty-four years, and also over Norway for seven years. King Canute's son Harald was then made king in England. The same winter King Swend, Alfifa's son, died in Denmark. Thiodolf the scald made these lines concerning King Magnus:—

“Through Sweden's dirty roads the throng  
Followed the king in spearmen strong.  
Swend Alfi flies, in truth afraid,  
And partly by his men betrayed:  
Flying to Denmark o'er the sea,  
He leaves the land quite clear to thee.”

Biorn Gulbraascald composed the following lines concerning Kalf Arneson:—

“By thee the kings got each his own,—  
Magnus by thee got Norway's throne;  
And Swend in Denmark got a seat,  
When out of Norway he was beat.  
Kalf! it was you who showed the way  
To our young king, the battle-lover,—  
From Russia to his father's sway  
You showed the way, and brought him over.”

King Magnus ruled over Norway this winter, and Hardacanute over Denmark.

CHAPTER  
VII.Fealty be-  
tween King  
Harda-  
canute  
and King  
Magnus.

The following spring the kings on both sides ordered out a levy, and the news was that they would have a battle at the Gotha river; but when the two armies approached each other, the lendermen in the one army

\* In the year 1036, according to the Saxon Chronicle, after reigning nearly twenty years over all England.



sent messengers to their connections and friends in the other; and it came to a proposal for a reconciliation between the two kings, especially as, from both kings being but young and childish, some powerful men, who had been chosen in each of the countries for that purpose, had the rule of the country on their account. It thus was brought about that there was a friendly meeting between the kings, and in this meeting a peace was proposed; and the peace was to be a brotherly union under oath to keep the peace towards each other to the end of their lives; and if one of them should die without leaving a son, the longest liver should succeed to the whole land and people. Twelve of the principal men in each kingdom swore to the kings that this treaty should be observed, so long as any one of them was in life. Then the kings separated, and each returned home to his kingdom; and the treaty was kept as long as both lived.

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Queen Astrid, who had been married to King Olaf the Saint, came to Norway with King Magnus her stepson, as before related, and was held by him deservedly in great honour and esteem. Then came also Alfild, King Magnus's mother, to the court, and the king received her with the greatest affection, and showed her great respect. But it went with Alfild, as it does with many who come to power and honour, that pride keeps pace with promotion. She was ill pleased that Queen Astrid was treated with more respect, had a higher seat, and more attention. Alfild wanted to have a seat next to the king, but Astrid called Alfild her slave-woman, as indeed she had formerly been when Astrid was queen of Norway and King Olaf ruled the land, and therefore would on no account let her have a seat beside her, and they could not lodge in the same house.

CHAPTER  
VIII.  
Of Queen  
Astrid.

Sigvat the scald had got leave from King Olaf to go home when the king went to Russia. The summer

CHAPTER  
IX.  
Of Sigvat  
the scald.



SAGA VIII. after Sigvat left the country, and went south to Rome, where he was at the time of the battle of Stiklestad. He made these verses then : —

“Tired of war, I left my home,  
And took the saving road to Rome;  
No more the wild wolf’s jaws to fill,  
No more the blood of man to spill.  
The gold-entwined sword I left,  
The blue steel sword — the king’s own gift;  
And with the pilgrim’s staff in hand,  
I took my way through many a land.”

In autumn, as Sigvat was on his way back from the South, he heard the tidings of King Olaf’s fall, which gave him great grief. He then sang these lines : —

“One morning early on a hill,  
The misty towns asleep and still,  
Wandering I thought upon the fields,  
Strewed o’er with broken mail and shields,  
Where our king fell, — our kind good king  
Where now his happy youthful spring?  
My father too ! — for Thord was then  
One of the good king’s chosen men.”

One day Sigvat went through a village, and heard a husband lamenting grievously over the loss of his wife, striking his breast, tearing his clothes, weeping bitterly, and saying he wanted to die; and Sigvat sang these lines : —

“This poor man mourns a much-loved wife,  
Gladly would he be quit of life.  
Must love be paid for by our grief?  
The price seems great for joy so brief.  
But the brave man who knows no fear  
Drops for his king a silent tear,  
And feels, perhaps, his loss as deep  
As those who clamour when they weep.”

Sigvat came home to Norway to the Drontheim country, where he had a farm and children. He came from the South along the coast in a merchant vessel, and as they lay in Hillar sound they saw a great many ravens flying about. Then Sigvat said,—



"I see here many a croaking raven  
 Flying about the well-known haven :  
 When Olaf's ship was floating here,  
 They knew that food for them was near ;  
 When Olaf's ship lay here wind-bound,  
 Oft screamed the erne o'er Hilla sound,  
 Impatient for the expected prey,  
 And wont to follow to the fray."

When Sigvat came north to the town of Drontheim King Swend was there before him. He invited Sigvat to stay with him, as Sigvat had formerly been with his father King Canute the Great ; but Sigvat said he would first go home to his farm. One day, as Sigvat was walking in the street, he saw the king's men at play, and he sang,—

"One day before I passed this way,  
 When the king's guards were at their play,  
 Something there was—I need not tell—  
 That made me pale, and feel unwell.  
 Perhaps it was I thought, just then,  
 How noble Olaf with his men,  
 In former days, I oft have seen  
 In manly games upon this green."

Sigvat then went to his farm ; and as he heard that many men upbraided him with having deserted King Olaf, he made these verses :—

"May Christ condemn me still to burn  
 In quenchless fire, if I did turn,  
 And leave King Olaf in his need,—  
 My soul is free from such base deed.  
 I was at Rome, as men know well  
 Who saw me there, and who can tell  
 That there in danger I was then :  
 The truth I need not hide from men."

Sigvat was ill at ease in his home. One day he went out and sang,—

"While Olaf lived, how smiled the land!—  
 Mountain and cliff, and pebbly strand.  
 All Norway then, so fresh, so gay,  
 On land or sea, where oft I lay.  
 But now to me all seems so dreary,  
 All black and dull—of life I'm weary :  
 Cheerless to-day, cheerless to-morrow—  
 Here in the North we have great sorrow."



## SAGA VIII.

Early in winter Sigvat went westward over the ridge of the country to Jemteland, and onwards to Helsingialand, and came to Sweden. He went immediately to Queen Astrid, and was with her a long time, and was a welcome guest. He was also with her brother King Onund, and received from him ten marks of proved silver, as is related in the song of Canute. Sigvat always inquired of the merchants who traded to Novogorod if they could tell him any news of Magnus Olafsson. Sigvat composed these lines at that time:—

“ I ask the merchant oft who drives  
His trade to Russia, ‘ How he thrives,  
Our noble prince? How lives he there?’  
And still good news—his praise—I hear  
To little birds, which wing their way  
Between the lands, I fain would say  
How much we long our prince to see;  
They seem to bear a wish from me.”

CHAPTER  
X.  
Of King  
Magnus's  
first arrival  
in Sweden.

Immediately after Magnus Olafsson came to Sweden from Russia, Sigvat met him at Queen Astrid's house, and glad they all were at meeting. Sigvat then sang,—

“ Thou art come here, prince, young and bold!  
Thou art come home! With joy behold  
Thy land and people. From this hour  
I join myself to thy young power.  
I could not o'er to Russia hie,—  
Thy mother's guardian here was I.  
It was my punishment for giving\*  
Magnus his name, while scarcely living.”

Afterwards Sigvat travelled with Queen Astrid, and followed Magnus to Norway. Sigvat sang thus:—

“ To the crowds streaming to the Thing,  
To see and hear Magnus their king,  
Loudly, young king, I'll speak my mind—  
‘ God to his people has been kind.’

---

\* Sigvat often refers to the circumstance of his having been the god-father of King Magnus, and having given him his name in baptism. See Olaf the Saint's Saga, chapter 131.



If He, to whom be all the praise,  
Give us a son in all his ways  
Like to his sire, no folk on earth  
Will bless so much a royal birth."

Now when Magnus became king of Norway Sigvat attended him, and was his dearest friend. Once it happened that Queen Astrid and Alfild the king's mother had exchanged some sharp words with each other, and Sigvat said,—

"Alfhilda! though it was God's will  
To raise thee—yet remember still  
The queen-born Astrid should not be  
Kept out of due respect by thee."

King Magnus had a shrine made and mounted with gold and silver, and studded with jewels. This shrine was made so that in shape and size it was like a coffin. Under it was an arched way, and above was a raised roof, with a head and a roof-ridge. Behind were plaited hangings; and before were gratings with padlocks, which could be locked with a key. In this shrine King Magnus had the holy remains of King Olaf deposited, and many were the miracles there wrought. Of this Sigvat speaks:—

CHAPTER  
XI.  
King  
Olaf's  
shrine.

"For him a golden shrine is made,  
For him whose heart was ne'er afraid  
Of mortal man—the holy king,  
Whom the Lord God to heaven did bring.  
Here many a man shall feel his way,  
Stone-blind, unconscious of the day,  
And at the shrine where Olaf lies  
Give songs of praise for opened eyes."

It was also appointed by law that King Olaf's holy day should be held holy over all Norway, and that day has been kept ever afterwards as the greatest of church days. Sigvat speaks of it:—

"To Olaf, Magnus' father, raise,  
Within my house, the song of praise!  
With joy, yet grief, we'll keep the day  
Olaf to heaven was called away."



## SAGA VIII.

Well may I keep within my breast  
 A day for him in holy rest, —  
 My upraised hands a golden ring  
 On every branch \* bear from that king."

CHAPTER  
 XII.  
 Of Thorer  
 Hund.

Thorer Hund left the country immediately after King Olaf's fall. He went all the way to Jerusalem, and many people say he never came back. Thorer Hund had a son called Sigurd, father of Ranveig who was married to John, a son of Arne Arneson. Their children were Vidkun of Biorkö, Sigurd Hund, Erling, and Jardthrud.

CHAPTER  
 XIII.  
 Of the  
 murder of  
 Harek of  
 Thiottö.

Harek of Thiottö sat at home in his farm, till King Magnus Olafsson came to the country and was made king. Then Harek went south to Drontheim to King Magnus. At that time Asmund Gankelsson was in the king's house. When Harek came to Nidaros, and landed out of the ship, Asmund was standing with the king in the gallery outside the loft, and both the king and Asmund knew Harek when they saw him. "Now," says Asmund to the king, "I will pay Harek for my father's murder." He had in his hand a little thin hatchet. The king looked at him, and said, "Rather take this axe of mine." It was thick, and made like a club. "Thou must know, Asmund," added he, "that there are hard bones in the old fellow." Asmund took the axe, went down, and through the house, and when he came down to the cross road Harek and his men coming up met him. Asmund struck Harek on the head, so that the axe penetrated to the brains; and that was Harek's death-wound. Asmund turned back directly to the king's house, and the whole edge of the axe was turned with the blow. Then said the king, "What would thy axe have done, for even this one, I think, is spoilt?" King Magnus afterwards gave him a fief

\* The fingers, the branches of the hand, bore golden fruits from the generosity of the king.



and office in Halogaland, and many are the tales about the strife between Asmund and Harek's sons. SAGA VIII.

Kalf Arneson had at first, for some time, the greatest share of the government of the country under King Magnus; but afterwards there were people who reminded the king of the part Kalf had taken at Stiklestad, and then it became difficult for Kalf to give the king satisfaction in any thing. Once it happened there were many men with the king bringing their affairs before him; and Thorgeir Flek from Suul in Værdal, of whom mention is made before in the history of King Olaf the Saint, came to him about some needful business. The king paid no attention to his words, but was listening to people who stood near him. Then Thorgeir said to the king, so loud that all who were around him could hear,—

CHAPTER  
XIV.  
Of Thor-  
geir Flek.

“ Listen, my lord,  
To my plain word.  
I too was there,  
And had to bear  
A bloody head  
From Stiklested:  
For I was then  
With Olaf's men.  
Listen to me:  
Well did I see  
The men you're trusting  
The dead corpse thrusting  
Out of their way,  
As dead it lay;  
And striding o'er  
Your father's gore.”

There was instantly a great uproar, and some told Thorgeir to go out; but the king called him, and not only despatched his business to his satisfaction, but promised him favour and friendship.

Soon after this the king was at a feast at the farm of Haug in Værdal, and at the dinner-table Kalf Arneson sat upon one side of him, and Einar Tam-barskelver on the other. It was already come so far

CHAPTER  
XV.  
Kalf Arne-  
son flies the  
country.



## SAGA VIII.

that the king took little notice of Kalf, but paid most attention to Einar. The king said to Einar, "Let us ride to-day to Stiklestad. I should like to see the memorials of the things which took place there." Einar replies, "I can tell thee nothing about it; but take thy foster-father Kalf with thee: he can give thee information about all that took place." When the tables were removed, the king made himself ready, and said to Kalf, "Thou must go with me to Stiklestad."

Kalf replied, "That is really not my duty."

Then the king stood up in a passion, and said, "Go thou shalt, Kalf!" and thereupon he went out.

Kalf put on his riding clothes in all haste, and said to his foot-boy, "Thou must ride directly to Egge, and order my house-servants to ship all my property on board my ship before sunset."

King Magnus now rides to Stiklestad, and Kalf with him. They alighted from horseback, and went to the place where the battle had been. Then said the king to Kalf, "Where is the spot at which the king fell?"

Kalf stretched out his spear-shaft, and said, "There he lay when he fell."

The king: "And where wast thou, Kalf?"

Kalf: "Here where I am now standing."

The king turned red as blood in the face, and said, "Then thy axe could well have reached him."

Kalf replied, "My axe did not come near him;" and immediately went to his horse, sprang on horseback, and rode away with all his men; and the king rode back to Haug. Kalf did not stop until he got home in the evening to Egge. There his ship lay ready at the shore side, and all his effects were on board, and the vessel manned with his house-servants. They set off immediately by night down the fiord, and afterwards proceeded day and night, when the wind suited. He sailed out into the West sea, and



was there a long time plundering in Ireland, Scotland, SAGA VIII.  
and the Hebudes. Biorn Guldbraascald tells of this  
in the song about Kalf:—

“ Brother of Thorberg\*, who still stood  
Well with the king! in angry mood  
He is the first to break with thee,  
Who well deserves esteemed to be:  
He is the first who friendship broke,  
For envious men the falsehood spoke;  
And he will be the first to rue  
The breach of friendship 'twixt you two.”

King Magnus added to his property Veggia, which  
Rut had been owner of, and Quiststad, which had  
belonged to Thorgeir, and also Egge, with all the  
goods which Kalf had left behind him; and thus he  
confiscated to the king's estate many great farms,  
which had belonged to those of the bonder-army who  
had fallen at Stiklestad. In like manner, he laid heavy  
fines upon many of those who made the greatest op-  
position to King Olaf. He drove some out of the  
country, took large sums of money from others, and  
had the cattle of others slaughtered for his use. Then  
the bonders began to murmur, and to say among  
themselves, “ Will he go on in the same way as his  
father and other chiefs, whom we made an end of  
when their pride and lawless proceedings became in-  
supportable?” This discontent spread widely through  
the country. The people of Sogn gathered men, and,  
it was said, were determined to give battle to King  
Magnus, if he came into the Fiord district. King  
Magnus was then in Hordaland, where he had re-  
mained a long time with a numerous retinue, and was  
now come to the resolution to proceed north to Sogn.  
When the king's friends observed this, twelve men  
had a meeting, and resolved to determine by casting  
lots which of them should inform the king of the

CHAPTER  
XVI.  
Of the  
threats of  
the pea-  
sants.

\* Thorberg was a brother of Kalf Arneson.



SAGA VIII. — discontent of the people; and it so happened that the the lot fell upon Sigvat.

CHAPTER  
XVII.  
Of the Free-  
speaking  
Song, and  
of the law  
book.

Sigvat accordingly composed a poem, which he called the Free-speaking Song, which begins with saying the king had delayed too long to pacify the people, who were threatening to rise in tumult against him. He said:—

“ Here in the South, from Sogn is spread  
The news that strife draws to a head :  
The bonders will the king oppose —  
Kings and their folk should ne’er be foes.  
Let us take arms, and briskly go  
To battle, if it must be so ;  
Defend our king, —but still deplore  
His land plunged in such strife once more.”

In this song are also these verses :—

“ Hakon\*, who at Fitia died,—  
Hakon the Good, could not abide  
The viking rule, or robber train,  
And all men’s love he thus did gain.  
The people since have still in mind  
The laws of Hakon, just and kind ;  
And men will never see the day  
When Hakon’s laws have passed away.

“ The bonders ask but what is fair :  
The Olafs† and the Earls‡, when there  
Where Magnus sits, confirmed to all  
Their lands and gear — to great and small.  
Bold Tryggve’s son, and Harald’s heir,  
The Olafs, while on earth they were,  
Observed the laws themselves had made,  
And none was for his own afraid.

“ Let not thy counsellors stir thy wrath  
Against the man who speaks the truth :  
Thy honour lies in thy good sword,  
But still more in thy royal word ;

---

\* This song appears to refer to some attempt to introduce the feudal system, with its escheats and forfeitures, instead of the udal rights, by King Magnus.

† Olaf Trygvesson, and Olaf the Saint, Harald’s son.

‡ Earl Hakon the Great, and Earl Swend.



And, if the people do not lie,  
The new laws turn out not nigh  
So just and mild, as the laws given  
At Ulversound in face of heaven.

“Dread king! who urges thee to break  
Thy pledged word, and back to take  
Thy promise given? Thou warrior bold!  
With thy own people word to hold,  
Thy promise fully to maintain,  
Is to thyself the greatest gain:  
The battle-storm raiser he  
Must by his own men trusted be.

“Who urges thee, who seek'st renown,  
The bonders' cattle to cut down?  
No king before e'er took in hand  
Such viking-work in his own land.  
Such rapine men will not long bear,  
And the king's counsellors will but share  
In their ill-will: when once inflamed,  
The king himself for all is blamed.

“Be cautious, with this news of treason  
Flying about—give them no reason.  
We hang the thief, but then we use  
Consideration of the excuse.  
I think, great king (who wilt rejoice  
Eagle and wolf with battle voice),  
It would be wise not to oppose  
Thy bonders, and make them thy foes.

“A dangerous sign it is, I fear,  
That old grey-bearded men appear  
In corners whispering at the Thing,  
As if they had bad news to bring.  
The young sit still, — no laugh, or shout, —  
More looks than words passing about;  
And groups of whispering heads are seen,  
On buttoned breasts, with lowering mien.

“Among the udalmen, they say  
The king, if he could have his way,  
Would seize the bonders' udal land,  
And free-born men must this withstand.  
In truth the man whose udal field,  
By any doom that law can yield  
From him adjudged the king would take,  
Could the king's throne and power shake.”



## SAGA VIII.

This verse is the last:—

“A holy bond between us still\*  
 Makes me wish speedy end to ill:  
 The sluggard waits till afternoon,—  
 At once, great Magnus! grant our boon.  
 Thee we will serve with heart and hand,  
 With thee we'll fight by sea or land:  
 With Olaf's sword take Olaf's mind,  
 And to thy bonders be more kind.”

In this song the king was exhorted to observe the laws which his father had established. This exhortation had a good effect on the king, for many others held the same language to him. So at last the king consulted the most prudent men, who ordered all affairs according to law. Thereafter King Magnus had the law-book composed in writing which is still in use in Drontheim district, and is called The Grey Goose.† King Magnus afterwards became very popular, and was beloved by all the country people, and therefore he was called Magnus the Good.

CHAPTER  
 XVIII.  
 Of the  
 English  
 kings.

The king of the English, King Harald, died ‡ five years after his father King Canute, and was buried beside his father at Winchester. After his death his brother Hardacanute, the second son of the old King Canute, was king of England, and was thus king both

\* The bond of godfather at his baptism, to which Sigvat often alludes.

† The Grey Goose, so called probably from the colour of the parchment on which it is written, is one of the most curious relics of the middle ages, and gives us an unexpected view of the social condition of the Northmen in the eleventh century. Law appears to have been so far advanced among them that the forms were not merely established, but the slightest breach of the legal forms of proceeding involved the loss of the case. The Grey Goose embraces subjects not dealt with probably by any other code in Europe at that period. The provision for the poor, the equality of weights and measures, police of markets and of sea havens, provision for illegitimate children of the poor, inns for travellers, wages of servants and support of them in sickness, protection of pregnant women and even of domestic animals from injury, roads, bridges, vagrants, beggars, are subjects treated of in this code.—See Nordisk Tidsskrift for Oldkyndighed 1 H. 1 B. 1832 om Graagaasen ved Schlegel.

‡ In 1039, according to the Saxon Chronicle.



of Denmark and England. He ruled these kingdoms two years, and then died of sickness in England\*, leaving no children. He was buried at Winchester beside his father. After his death Edward the Good, a son of the English king Ethelred, and Emma a daughter of Richard earl of Rouen, was chosen king in England. King Edward the Good was, on his mother's side, a brother of Harald and Hardacanute, the sons of Canute the Great; and the daughter of Canute and Queen Emma was Gunhild, who was married to the Emperor Henry of Germany, who was called Henry the Mild. Gunhild was three years in Germany when she fell sick, and she died five years after the death of her father King Canute the Great.

SAGA VIII.

When King Magnus Olafsson heard of Hardacanute's death, he immediately sent people south to Denmark, with a message to the men who had bound themselves by oath to the peace and agreement which was made between King Magnus and Hardacanute, and reminded them of their pledge. He added, as a conclusion, that in summer he would come with his army to Denmark to take possession of his Danish dominions, in terms of the agreement, or to fall in the field with his army. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

CHAPTER  
XIX.  
Of King  
Magnus  
Olafsson.

“ Wise were the words, exceeding wise,  
Of him who stills the hungriest cries  
Of beasts of prey — the earls' lord;  
And soon fulfilled will be his word:  
' With his good sword he'll Denmark gain,  
Or fall upon a bloody plain;  
And rather than give up his cause,  
Will leave his corpse to ravens' claws.' ”

Thereafter King Magnus gathered together a great army, and summoned to him all lendemen and powerful bonders, and collected war-ships. When the army was assembled it was very handsome, and

CHAPTER  
XX.  
King  
Magnus's  
armament.

\* In 1041, according to the Saxon Chronicle.



SAGA VIII. well fitted out. He had seventy large vessels when he sailed from Norway. So says Thiodolf the scald:—

“ Brave king! the terror of the foe,  
With thee will many a long-ship go.  
Full seventy sail are gathered here,  
Eastward with their great king to steer.  
And southward now the bright keel glides;  
O'er the white waves the Bison rides.  
Sails swell, yards crack, the highest mast  
O'er the wide sea scarce seen at last.”

Here it is related that King Magnus had the great Bison, which his father King Olaf had built. It had more than thirty banks of rowers; and forward on the bow was a great buffalo head, and aft on the stern-post was its tail. Both the head and the tail, and both sides of the ship, were gilded over. Of this speaks Arnor, the earl's scald:—

“ The white foam lashing o'er the deck  
Oft made the gilded head to shake:  
The helm down, the vessel's heel  
Oft showed her stem's bright glancing steel.  
Around Stavangar-point careering,  
Through the wild sea's white flames steering,  
Tackle loud singing to the strain,  
The storm-horse flies to Denmark's plain.”

King Magnus set out to sea from Agder, and sailed over to Jutland. So says Arnor:—

“ I can relate how through the gale  
The gallant Bison carried sail,  
With her lee gunwale in the wave,  
The king on board, Magnus the brave!  
The iron-clad Thingmen's chief to see  
On Jutland's coast right glad were we,—  
Right glad our men to see a king  
Who in the fight his sword could swing.”

CHAPTER  
XXI.  
King  
Magnus  
comes to  
Denmark.

When King Magnus came to Denmark he was joyfully received. He appointed a Thing without delay, to which he summoned the people of the country, and desired they would take him as king, according to the agreement which had been entered into. As the



highest of the chiefs of the country were bound by oath to King Magnus, and were desirous of keeping their word and oath, they endeavoured zealously to promote the cause with the people. It contributed also that King Canute the Great, and all his descendants, were dead; and a third assistance was, that his father King Olaf's sanctity and miracles were become celebrated in all countries. SAGA VIII.  
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King Magnus afterwards ordered the people to be summoned to Viburg\* to a Thing. Both in older and later times, the Danes elected their kings at the Viburg Thing. At this Thing the Danes chose Magnus Olafsson to be king of all the Danish dominions. King Magnus remained long in Denmark during the summer; and wherever he came the people received him joyfully, and obeyed him willingly. He divided the country into baronies and districts, and gave fiefs to men of power in the land. Late in autumn he returned with his fleet to Norway, but lay for some time at the river Gotha. CHAPTER  
XXII.  
King  
Magnus  
chosen king  
of Den-  
mark.

There was a man, by name Swend, a son of Earl Ulf, and grandson of Thorgils Sprakaleg. Swend's mother was Astrid, a daughter of King Swein of England. She was a sister of Canute the Great by the father's side, and of the Swedish King Olaf Ericsson by the mother's side; for her mother was Queen Sigrid the Haughty, a daughter of Skoglar-Toste. Swend Ulfsson had been a long time living with his relation the Swedish king, ever since King Canute had ordered his father Ulf to be killed, as is related in the saga of old King Canute,—that he had his brother-in-law, Earl Ulf, murdered in Roskilda; and on which account Swend had not since been in Denmark. Swend Ulfsson was one of the handsomest men that could be seen; he was very stout and strong, CHAPTER  
XXIII.  
Of Swend  
Ulfsson.

\* Vibjurger, now Viburg, is an ancient little town in North Jutland.



## SAGA VIII.

and very expert in all exercises, and a well-spoken man withal. Every one who knew him said he had every quality which became a good chief. Swend Ulfsson waited upon King Magnus while he lay in the Gotha river, as before mentioned, and the king received him kindly, as he was by many advised to do; for Swend was a particularly popular man. He could also speak for himself to the king well and cleverly; so that it came at last to Swend's entering into King Magnus's service, and becoming his man. They often talked together afterwards in private concerning many affairs.

CHAPTER  
XXIV.

Swend  
Ulfsson  
created an  
earl.

One day, as King Magnus sat in his high seat and many people were around him, Swend Ulfsson sat upon a footstool before the king. The king then made a speech:—"Be it known to you, chiefs, and the people in general, that I have taken the following resolution. Here is a distinguished man, both for family and for his own merits, Swend Ulfsson, who has entered into my service, and given me promise of fidelity. Now, as ye know, the Danes have this summer become my men, so that when I am absent from the country it is without a head; and it is not unknown to you how it is ravaged by the people of Vendland, Courland, and others from the Baltic, as well as by Saxons. Therefore I promised them a chief who could defend and rule their land; and I know no man better fitted, in all respects, for this than Swend Ulfsson, who is of birth to be chief of the country. I will therefore make him my earl, and give him the government of my Danish dominions while I am in Norway; just as King Canute the Great set his father, Earl Ulf, over Denmark while he was in England."

Then Einar Tambarskelver said, "Too great an earl—too great an earl, my foster-son!"

The king replied in a passion, "Ye have a poor



opinion of my judgment, I think. Some consider that ye are too great earls, and others that ye are fit for nothing.” SAGA VIII.

Then the king stood up, took a sword, and girt it on the earl's loins, and took a shield and fastened it on his shoulders, put a helmet upon his head, and gave him the title of earl, with the same fiefs in Denmark which his father Earl Ulf had formerly held. Afterwards a shrine was brought forth containing holy relics, and Swend laid his hand thereon, and swore the oath of fidelity to King Magnus; upon which the king led the earl to the high seat by his side. So says Thiodolf:—

“ ’Twas at the Gotha river's shore,  
With hand on shrine Swend Ulfsson swore.  
King Magnus first said o'er the oath,  
With which Swend Ulfsson pledged his troth.  
The vows by Swend solemnly given,  
On holy bones of saints in heaven,  
To Magnus seemed both fair and fast:  
He found they were too fair to last.”

Earl Swend went thereafter to Denmark, and the whole nation received him well. He established a court about him, and soon became a great man. In winter he went much about the country, and made friends among the powerful chiefs; and, indeed, he was beloved by all the people of the land.

King Magnus proceeded northward to Norway with his fleet, and wintered there; but when the spring set in he gathered a large force, with which he sailed south to Denmark, having heard the news from Vendland that the Vendland people in Jomsburg had withdrawn from their submission to him. The Danish kings had formerly had a very large earldom there, and they first founded Jomsburg; and now the place was become a very strong fortress. When King Magnus heard of this, he ordered a large fleet and army to be levied in Denmark, and sailed in summer to

CHAPTER  
XXV.  
King  
Magnus's  
foray.



SAGA VIII. Vendland with all his forces, which made a very large army altogether. Arnor, the earl's scald, tells of it thus:—

“Now in this strophe, royal youth!  
I tell no more than the plain truth.  
Thy armed outfit from the strand  
Left many a keel-trace on the sand,  
And never did a king before  
So many ships to any shore  
Lead on, as thou to Vendland's isle:  
The Vendland men in fright recoil.”

Now when King Magnus came to Vendland he attacked Jomsburg, and soon took the fortress, killing many people, burning and destroying both in the town and in the country all around, and making the greatest havoc. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

“The robbers, hemmed 'twixt death and fire,  
Knew not how to escape thy ire;  
O'er Jomsburg castle's highest towers  
Thy wrath the whirlwind-fire pours.  
The heathen on his false gods calls,  
And trembles even in their halls;  
And by the light from its own flame  
The king this viking-hold o'ercame.”

Many people in Vendland submitted to King Magnus, but many more got out of the way and fled. King Magnus returned to Denmark, and prepared to take his winter abode there, and sent away the Danish, and also a great many of the Norwegian people, he had brought with him.

CHAPTER  
XXVI.  
Swend receives the  
title of  
king.

The same winter in which Swend Ulfsson was raised to the government of the whole Danish dominions, and had made friends of a great number of the principal chiefs in Denmark, and obtained the affections of the people, he assumed, by the advice of many of the chiefs, the title of king. But when in the spring thereafter he heard that King Magnus had come from the north with a great army, Swend went over to Scania, from thence up to Gotland, and so on to Sweden to his relation King Onund, where he re-



mained all summer, and sent spies out to Denmark, to inquire about the king's proceedings and the number of his men. Now when Swend heard that King Magnus had let a great part of his army go away, and also that he was south in Jutland, he rode from Sweden with a great body of people which the Swedish king had given him. When Swend came to Scania the people of that country received him well, treated him as their king, and men joined him in crowds. He then went on to Sealand, where he was also well received, and the whole country joined him. He then went to Fyen, and laid all the islands under his power; and as the people also joined him, he collected a great army, and many ships of war. King Magnus married his sister Ulfhild, Olaf's daughter, to Otto duke of Saxony. They had a son who was called Magnus, from whom a great family has descended. The dukes who rule over Brunswig reckon their descent from King Olaf the Saint.

King Magnus heard this news, and at the same time that the people of Vendland had a large force on foot. He summoned people therefore to come to him, and drew together a great army in Jutland. Otto also, the duke of Brunswig, who had married Ulfhild, King Olaf the Saint's daughter, and the sister of King Magnus, came to him with a great troop. The Danish chiefs pressed King Magnus to advance against the Vendland army, and not to allow pagans to march over and lay waste the country; so it was resolved that the king with his army should proceed south to Heidaby.\* While King Magnus lay at Skotburg river, on Leyrskog's Heath, he got intelligence concerning the Vendland army, and that it was so numerous it could not be counted; whereas King Mag-

CHAPTER  
XXVII.  
Of King  
Magnus's  
military  
force.

\* Now Haddeby, at the town of Sleswig. The river Slie divides this ancient town site from the present town of Sleswig.



SAGA VIII. nus had so few, that there seemed no chance for him but to fly. The king, however, determined on fighting, if there was any possibility of gaining the victory; but the most dissuaded him from venturing on an engagement, and all, as one man, said that the Vendland people had undoubtedly a prodigious force. Duke Otto, however, pressed much to go to battle. Then the king ordered the whole army to be gathered by the war trumpets into battle array, and ordered all the men to arm, and to lie down for the night under their shields; for he was told the enemy's army had come to the neighbourhood. The king was very thoughtful; for he was vexed that he should be obliged to fly, which fate he had never experienced before. He slept but little all night, and chaunted his prayers.

CHAPTER  
XXVIII.  
Of King  
Olaf's mi-  
racle.

The following day was Michaelmas eve. Towards dawn the king slumbered, and dreamt that his father King Olaf the Saint appeared to him, and said, "Art thou so melancholy and afraid, because the Vendland people come against thee with a great army? Be not afraid of heathens, although they be many; for I shall be with thee in the battle. Prepare, therefore, to give battle to the Vendlanders, when thou hearest my trumpet." When the king awoke he told his dream to his men, and the day was then dawning. At that moment all the people heard a ringing of bells in the air; and those among King Magnus's men who had been in Nidaros thought that it was the ringing of the bell called Glod, which King Olaf had presented to the church of Saint Clement in the town of Nidaros.

CHAPTER  
XXIX.  
Battle of  
Leyrskog's  
heath.

Then King Magnus stood up, and ordered the war trumpets to sound, and at that moment the Vendland army advanced from the south across the river against him; on which the whole of the king's army stood up, and advanced against the heathens. King Magnus threw off from him his coat of ring-mail, and



had a red silk shirt outside over his clothes, and had in his hands the battle-axe called Hel\* which had belonged to King Olaf. King Magnus ran on before all his men to the enemy's army, and instantly hewed down with both hands every man who came against him. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

“ His armour on the ground he flung,  
His broad axe round his head he swung;  
And Norway's king strode on in might,  
Through ringing swords, to the wild fight.  
His broad axe Hel with both hands wielding,  
Shields, helms, and skulls before it yielding,  
He seemed with Fate the world to share,  
And life or death to deal out there.”

This battle was not very long; for the king's men were very fiery, and where they came the Vendland men fell as thick as tangles heaped up by the waves on the strand. They who stood behind betook themselves to flight, and were hewed down like cattle at a slaughter. The king himself drove the fugitives eastward over the heath, and people fell all over the moor. So says Thiodolf:—

“ And foremost he pursued,  
And the flying foe down hewed;  
An eagle's feast each stroke,  
As the Vendland helms he broke.  
He drove them o'er the heath,  
And they fly from bloody death;  
But the moor, a mile or more,  
With the dead was studded o'er.”

It is a common saying, that there never was so great a slaughter of men in the northern lands, since the time of Christianity, as took place among the Vendland people on Lyrskog's Heath. On the other side, not many of King Magnus's people were killed, although many were wounded. It is told in the Bremen Book†, that the Danes had killed Rettebur, a

\* Hel—Death; the goddess of Death.

† *Historia Ecclesiastica Adami Bremensis*, lib. ii. cap. 59. Adam of Bremen wrote about 1075, about thirty years only after this battle.



SAGA VIII. a Vendland king; and that he had eight sons, who sought to avenge their father, and laid waste a great part of Denmark, as far north as Ribe; but they all fell on Lyrskog's Heath before King Magnus, and 15,000 men with them. After the battle, the king ordered the wounds of his men to be bound; but there were not so many doctors in the army as were necessary, so the king himself went round, and felt the hands of those he thought best suited for the business; and when he had thus stroked their palms he named twelve men, who, he thought, had the softest hands, and told them to bind the wounds of the people; and although none of them had ever tried it before, they all became afterwards the best of doctors. There were two Iceland men among them: the one was Thor-kil, a son of Geisel, from Lyngar; the other was Atle, father of Bard Swart of Selardal, from whom many good doctors are descended. After this battle, the report of the miracle which King Olaf the Saint had worked was spread widely through the country; and it was the common saying of the people, that no man could venture to fight against King Magnus Olafsson, for his father Saint Olaf stood so near to him that his enemies, on that account, never could do him harm.

CHAPTER  
XXX.  
Battle  
at Re.

King Magnus immediately turned round with his army against Swend, whom he called his earl, although the Danes called him their king; and he collected ships, and a great force, and on both sides a great strength was assembled. In Swend's army were many chiefs from Scania, Halland, Sealand, and Fyen; while King Magnus, on the other hand, had mostly Norway and Jutland men, and with that war-force he hastened to meet Swend. They met at Re, on the west side of the isle of Rugen; and there was a great battle, which ended in King Magnus gaining the victory, and Swend taking flight. After losing many



people, Swend fled back to Scania, and from thence to Gotland, which was a safe refuge if he needed it, and stood open to him. King Magnus returned to Jutland, where he remained all winter with many people, and had a guard to watch his ships. Arnold, the earl's scald, speaks of this:—

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“ At Re our battle-loving lord  
 In bloody meeting stained his sword,—  
 At Re, upon the western shore,  
 In Westland warriors' blood once more.”

Swend Ulfsson went directly to his ships as soon as he heard that King Magnus had left his fleet. He drew to him all the men he could, and went round in winter among the islands, Sealand, Fyen, and others. Towards Yule he sailed to Jutland, and went into Lymfiord, where many people submitted to him. He imposed scatt upon some, but some joined King Magnus. Now when King Magnus heard what Swend was doing, he betook himself to his ships with all the Northmen then in Denmark, and a part of the Danish troops, and steered south along the land. Swend was then in Aarhus with a great force; and when he heard of King Magnus he laid his vessels without the town, and prepared for battle. When King Magnus heard for certain where Swend was, and that the distance between them was but short, he held a House-thing, and addressed his people thus: “ It is reported to me that the earl and his fleet are lying not far from us, and that he has many people. Now I would let you know that I intend to go out against the earl and fight for it, although we have fewer people. We will, as formerly, put our trust in God, and Saint Olaf my father, who has given us victory sometimes when we fought, even though we had fewer men than the enemy. Now I would have you get ready to seek out the enemy, and give battle the moment we find him by rowing all to the attack, and

CHAPTER  
 XXXI.  
 Battle at  
 Aarhus.



SAGA VIII. being all ready for battle." Thereupon the men put on their weapons, each man making himself and his place ready; and then they stretched themselves to their oars. When they saw the earl's ships they rowed towards them, and made ready to attack. When Swend's men saw the forces they armed themselves, bound their ships together, and then began one of the sharpest of battles. So says Thiodolf the scald:—

"Shield against shield, the earl and king  
Made shields and swords together ring.  
The gold-decked heroes made a play  
Which Hilda's iron-shirt men say  
They never saw before or since  
On battle-deck: the brave might wince,  
As spear and arrow whistling flew,  
Point blank, death-bringing, quick and true."

They fought at the bows, so that the men only on the bows could strike; the men on the forecastle thrust with spears; and all who were farther off shot with light spears or javelins, or war-arrows. Some fought with stones, or short stakes; and those who were aft of the mast shot with the bow. So says Thiodolf:—

"Steel-pointed spear, and sharpened stake,  
Made the broad shield on arm shake:  
The eagle, hovering in the air,  
Screamed o'er the prey preparing there.  
And stones and arrows thickly flew,  
And many a warrior bold they slew.  
The bowman never twanged his bow  
And drew his shaft so oft as now;  
And Drontheim's bowmen on that day  
Were not first tired of this play:  
Arrows and darts so quickly fly,  
You could not follow with the eye."

Here it appears how hot the battle was with casting weapons. King Magnus stood in the beginning of the battle within a shield-rampart; but as it appeared to him that matters were going on too slowly, he leaped over the shields, and rushed forward in the



ship, encouraging his men with a loud cheer, and springing to the bows, where the battle was going on hand to hand. When his men saw this they urged each other on with mutual cheering, and there was one great hurra through all the ships. So says Thiodolf:—

SAGA VIII.

“ ‘On with our ships! on to the foe!’  
 Cry Magnus’ men — on, on they go.  
 Spears against shields in fury rattle,—  
 Was never seen so fierce a battle.”

And now the battle was exceedingly sharp; and in the assault Swend’s ship was cleared of all her fore-castle men upon and on both sides of the fore-castle. Then Magnus boarded Swend’s ship, followed by his men; and one after the other came up, and made so stout an assault that Swend’s men gave way, and King Magnus first cleared that ship, and then the rest, one after the other. Swend fled, with a great part of his people; but many fell, and many got life and peace. Thiodolf tells of this:—

“ Brave Magnus, from the stern springing  
 On to the stem, where swords were ringing  
 From his sea-raven’s beak of gold  
 Deals death around — the brave! the bold!  
 The earl’s housemen now begin  
 To shrink and fall: their ranks grow thin—  
 The king’s luck thrives—their decks are cleared,  
 Of fighting men no more appeared.  
 The earl’s ships are driven to flight,  
 Before the king would stop the fight:  
 The gold-distributor first then  
 Gave quarters to the vanquished men.”

This battle was fought on the last Sunday before Yule. So says Thiodolf:—

“ ‘Twas on a Sunday morning bright,  
 Fell out this great and bloody fight,  
 When men were arming, fighting, dying,  
 Or on the red decks wounded lying.  
 And many a man, foredoomed to die,  
 To save his life o’erboard did fly,  
 But sank; for swimming could not save,  
 And dead men rolled in every wave.”



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Magnus took seven ships from Swend's people. So says Thiodolf:—

“Thick Olaf's son seven vessels cleared,  
And with his fleet the prizes steered.  
The Norway girls will not be sad  
To hear such news — each from her lad.”

He also sings:—

“The captured men will grieve the most  
Swend and their comrades to have lost;  
For it went ill with those who fled,  
Their wounded had no easy bed.  
A heavy storm that very night  
O'ertook them flying from the fight;  
And skulls and bones are tumbling round,  
Under the sea, on sandy ground.”

Swend fled immediately by night to Sealand, with the men who had escaped and were inclined to follow him; but King Magnus brought his ships to the shore, and sent his men up the country in the night-time, and early in the morning they came down to the strand with a great booty in cattle. Thiodolf tells about it:—

“But yesterday with heavy stones  
We crushed their skulls, and broke their bones,  
And thinned their ranks; and now to-day  
Up through their land we've ta'en our way,  
And driven their cattle to the shore,  
And filled our ships with food in store.  
To save his land from our quick swords,  
Swend will need something more than words.”

CHAPTER  
XXXII.  
Swend's  
flight.

King Magnus sailed with his fleet from the south after Swend to Sealand; but as soon as the king came there Swend fled up the country with his men, and Magnus followed them, and pursued the fugitives, killing all that were laid hold of. So says Thiodolf:—

“The Sealand girl asks with fear,  
'Whose blood-bespattered shield and spear—  
The earl's or king's — up from the shore  
Moved on with many a warrior more?'  
We scoured through all their muddy lanes,  
Woodlands, and fields, and miry plains.



Their hasty footmarks in the clay  
Showed that to Ringsted led their way.

“Spattered with mud from heel to head,  
Our gallant lord his true men led.  
Will Lund’s earl halt his hasty flight,  
And try on land another fight?  
His banner yesterday was seen,  
The sand-hills and green trees between,  
Through moss and mire to the strand,  
In arrow flight, leaving the land.”

Then Swend fled over to Fyen Island, and King Magnus carried fire and sword through Sealand, and burnt all round, because their men had joined Swend’s troop in harvest. So says Thiodolf:—

“As Swend in winter had destroyed  
The royal house, the king employed  
No little force to guard the land,  
And the earl’s forays to withstand.  
An armed band one morn he found,  
And so beset them round and round,  
That Canute’s nephew quickly fled,  
Or he would have been captive led.

“Our Drontheim king in his just ire  
Laid waste the land with sword and fire,  
Burnt every house, and over all  
Struck terror into great and small.  
To the earl’s friends he well repaid  
Their deadly hate—such wild work made  
On them and theirs, that from his fury,  
Flying for life, away they hurry.”

As soon as King Magnus heard that Swend with his troops had gone across to Fyen, he sailed after them; and when Swend heard this news he went on board ship and sailed to Scania, and from thence to Gotland, and at last to the Swedish king. King Magnus landed in Fyen, and plundered and burned over all; and all of Swend’s men who came there fled far enough. Thiodolf speaks of it thus:—

CHAPTER  
XXXIII.  
Burning  
in Fyen.

“Fiona Isle, once green and fair,  
Lies black and reeking through the air:  
The red fog rises, thick and hot,  
From burning farm and smouldering cot.



## SAGA VIII.

The gaping thralls in terror gaze  
On the broad upward spiring blaze,  
From thatched roofs and oak-built walls,  
Their murdered masters' stately halls.

"Swend's men, my girl, will not forget  
That thrice they have the Norsemen met, —  
By sea, by land, with steel, with fire,  
Thrice have they felt the Norse king's ire.  
Fiona's maids are slim and fair,  
The lovely prizes, lads, we'll share:  
Some stand to arms in rank and row,  
Some seize, bring off, and fend with blow."

After this the people of Denmark submitted to King Magnus, and during the rest of the winter there was peace. King Magnus then appointed some of his men to govern Denmark; and when spring was advanced he sailed northwards with his fleet to Norway, where he remained a great part of the summer.

CHAPTER  
XXXIV.  
Battle at  
Helganess.

Now when Swend heard that King Magnus had gone to Norway he rode straight down, and had many people out of Sweden with him. The people of Scania received him well, and he again collected an army, with which he first crossed over into Sealand, and seized upon it and Fyen, and all the other isles. When King Magnus heard of this he gathered together men and ships, and sailed to Denmark; and as soon as he knew where Swend was lying with his ships, King Magnus sailed to meet him. They met at a place called Helganess\*, and the battle began about the fall of day. King Magnus had fewer men, but larger and better equipt vessels. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

"At Helganess — so goes the tale—  
The brave wolf-feeder, under sail,  
Made many an ocean-elk\* his prey,  
Seized many a ship ere break of day.

\* Helganess is eastward of the town Aarhuus, in North Jutland, in the parish of Helganess, barony of Mots.

† Ship.



When twilight fell he urged the fight,  
Close combat — man to man — all night;  
Through a long harvest night's dark hours,  
Down poured the battle's iron showers."

The battle was very hot, and as night advanced the fall of men was great. King Magnus, during the whole night, threw hand-spears. Thiodolf speaks of this:—

"And there at Helganes sank down,  
Sore wounded, men of great renown;  
And Swend's retainers lost all heart,  
Ducking before the flying dart.  
The Norsemen's king let fly his spears,  
His death-wounds adding to their fears;  
For each spear-blade was wet all o'er,  
Up to the shaft in their life-gore."

To make a short tale, King Magnus won the victory in this battle, and Swend fled. His ship was cleared of men from stem to stern; and it went so on board many others of his ships. So says Thiodolf:—

"Earl Swend fled from the empty deck,  
His lonely ship an unmann'd wreck;  
Magnus the Good, the people's friend,  
Pressed to the death on the false Swend.  
Hneiti\*, the sword his father bore,  
Was, edge and point, stained red with gore:  
Swords sprinkle blood o'er armour bright,  
When kings for land and power fight."

And he also says,—

"The cutters of Biorne's brother†  
Soon changed their owner for another;  
The king took them and all their gear:  
The crews, however, got off clear."

A great number of Swend's men fell, and King Magnus and his men had a vast booty to divide. So says Thiodolf:—

"Where the Norsemen the Danish slew,  
A Gotland shield and breast-plate true

---

\* This was the name of Saint Olaf's sword, which Magnus had recovered.

† Swend Ulfsson had a brother called Biorn, or by the English chroniclers Esbern.



SAGA VIII.  
—

Fell to my share of spoil by lot;  
 And something more i' the south I got:  
 (There all the summer swords were ringing:)  
 A helm, gay arms, and gear worth bringing,  
 Home to my quiet lovely one  
 I sent—with news how we had won."

Swend fled up to Scania with all the men who escaped with him; and King Magnus and his people drove the fugitives up through the country, without meeting any opposition either from Swend's men or the bonders. So says Thiodolf:—

"Olaf's brave son then gave command,  
 All his ships' crews should quickly land:  
 King Magnus, marching at their head,  
 A noble band of warriors led.  
 A foray through the land he makes;  
 Denmark in every quarter shakes.  
 Up hill and down the horses scour,  
 Carrying the Danes from Norsemen's power."

King Magnus drove with fire and sword through the land. So says Thiodolf:—

"And now the Norsemen storm along,  
 Following their banner in a throng:  
 King Magnus' banner flames on high,  
 A star to guide our roaming by.  
 To Lund, o'er Scania's peaceful field,  
 My shoulder bore my useless shield:  
 A fairer land, a better road,  
 As friend or foe, I never trod."

They began to burn the habitations all around, and the people fled on every side. So says Thiodolf:—

"Our ice-cold iron in great store,  
 Our arms, beside the king we bore:  
 The Scanian rogues fly at the view  
 Of men and steel all sharp and true.  
 Their timbered houses flame on high,  
 Red flashing over half the sky;  
 The blazing town flings forth its light,  
 Lighting the cowards on their flight."

And he also sang,—

"The king o'er all the Danish land  
 Roams, with his fire-bringing band:



The house, the hut, the farm, the town,  
 All where men dwelt is burned down.  
 O'er Denmark's plains and corn-fields,  
 Meadows and moors, are seen our shields:  
 Victorious over all, we chase  
 Swend's wounded men from place to place.

"Across Fiona's moor again,  
 The paths late trodden by our men  
 We tread once more, until quite near,  
 Through morning mist, the foes appear.  
 Then up our numerous banners flare  
 In the cold early morning air;  
 And they from Magnus' power who fly  
 Cannot his quick war-work deny."

Then Swend fled eastwards along Scania, and King Magnus returned to his ships, and steered eastwards also along the Scanian coast, having got ready with the greatest haste to sail. Thiodolf sings thus about it:—

"No drink but the salt sea  
 On board our ships had we,  
 When, following our king,  
 On board our ships we spring.  
 Hard work on the salt sea,  
 Off Scania's coast, had we;  
 But we laboured for the king,  
 To his foemen death to bring."

Swend fled to Gotland, and then sought refuge with the Swedish king, with whom he remained all winter, and was treated with great respect.

When King Magnus had subdued Scania he turned about, and first went to Falster, where he landed, plundered, and killed many people who had before submitted to Swend. Arnor speaks of this:—

CHAPTER  
 XXXV.  
 Of King  
 Magnus's  
 campaign.

"A bloody vengeance for their guile  
 King Magnus takes on Falster Isle;  
 The treacherous Danes his fury feel,  
 And fall before his purpled steel.  
 The battle-field is covered o'er  
 With eagles' prey from shore to shore;  
 And the king's courtmen were the first  
 To quench with blood the ravens' thirst."



## SAGA VIII.

Thereafter Magnus with his fleet proceeded to the isle of Fyen, went on land, plundered, and made great devastation. So says Arnor, the earl's scald:—

“To fair Fiona's grassy shore  
His banner now again he bore:  
He who the mail-shirt's linked chains  
Severs, and all its lustre stains,—  
He will be long remembered there,  
The warrior in his twentieth year,  
Whom their black ravens from afar  
Saluted as he went to war.”

CHAPTER  
XXXVI.  
Of King  
Magnus's  
battles.

King Magnus remained in Denmark all that winter, and sat in peace. He had held many battles, and had gained the victory in all. So says Odd Kikina-scald:—

“'Fore Michaelmas was struck the blow  
That laid the Vendland vikings low;  
And people learned with joy to hear  
The clang of arms, and leaders' cheer.  
Short before Yule fell out the day,  
Southward of Aarhus, where the fray,  
Though not enough the foe to quell,  
Was of the bloodiest men can tell.”

And Arnor says:—

“Olaf's avenger who can sing?  
The scald cannot o'ertake the king,  
Who makes the war-bird daily drain  
The corpse-blood of his foemen slain.  
Four battles won within a year,—  
Breaker of shields! with sword and spear,  
And hand to hand, exalt thy fame  
Above the kings of greatest name.”

King Magnus had three battles with Swend Ulfs-son. So says Thiodolf:—

“To our brave Drontheim sovereign's praise  
The scald may all his scaldcraft raise;  
For fortune, and for daring deed,  
His song will not the truth exceed.  
After three battles to regain  
What was his own, unjustly ta'en,  
Unjustly kept, and dues denied,  
He levied dues in red-blood dyed.”



While King Magnus the Good, a son of King Olaf the Saint, ruled over Norway, as before related, the Earl Rognvald Brusesson lived with him. Earl Thorfinn Sigurdsson, the uncle of Rognvald, ruled then over Orkney. King Magnus sent Rognvald west to Orkney, and ordered that Thorfinn should let him have his father's heritage. Thorfinn let Rognvald have a third part of the land along with him; for so had Bruse, the father of Rognvald, had it at his dying day. Earl Thorfinn was married to Ingeborg, the earl-mother, who was a daughter of Finn Arneson. Earl Rognvald thought he should have two thirds of the land, as Olaf the Saint had promised to his father Bruse, and as Bruse had enjoyed as long as Olaf lived. This was the origin of a great strife between these relations, concerning which we have a long saga. They had a great battle in Pentland Firth, in which Kalf Arneson was with Earl Thorfinn. So says Biorn Gulbraascald:—

“ Thy cutters, dashing through the tide,  
Brought aid to Earl Thorfinn's side,  
Finn's son-in-law, and people say  
Thy aid made Bruse's son give way.  
Kalf, thou art fond of warlike toil,  
Gay in the strife and bloody broil;  
But here 'twas hate made thee contend  
Against Earl Rognvald, the king's friend.”

King Magnus ruled then both over Denmark and Norway; and when he had got possession of the Danish dominions he sent ambassadors over to England to King Edward, who brought to him King Magnus's letter and seal. And in this letter there stood, along with a salutation from King Magnus, these words: “ Ye must have heard of the agreement which I and Hardacanute made,— that he of us two who survived the other should have all the land and people which the deceased had possessed. Now it has so turned

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CHAPTER  
XXXVII.  
Of King  
Magnus,  
and Thor-  
finn and  
Rognvald  
earls of  
Orkney.

CHAPTER  
XXXVIII.  
Of King  
Magnus's  
letters.



## SAGA VIII.

CHAPTER  
XXXIX.  
King  
Edward's  
answer to  
to King  
Magnus's  
letter.

out, as ye have no doubt heard, that I have taken the Danish dominions as my heritage after Hardacanute. But before he departed this life he had England as well as Denmark; therefore I consider myself now, in consequence of my rights by this agreement, to own England also. Now I will therefore that thou deliver to me the kingdom; otherwise I will seek to take it by arms, both from Denmark and Norway: and let him rule the land to whom fate gives the victory."

Now when King Edward had read this letter, he replied thus: "It is known to all men in this country that King Ethelred, my father, was udal-born to this kingdom, both after the old and new law of inheritance. We were four sons after him; and when he by death left the throne, my brother Edmund took the government and kingdom; for he was the oldest of us brothers, and I was well satisfied that it was so. And after him my stepfather, Canute the Great, took the kingdom, and so long as he lived there was no access to it. After him my brother Harald was king as long as he lived; and after him my brother Hardacanute took the kingdoms both of Denmark and England; for he thought that a just brotherly division that he should have both England and Denmark, and that I should have no kingdom at all. Now he died, and then it was the resolution of all the people of the country to take me for king here in England. So long as I had no kingly title I served my superiors, in all respects, like those who had no claims by birth to land or kingdom. Now, however, I have received the kingly title, and am consecrated king. I have established my royal dignity and authority, as my father before me; and while I live I will not renounce my title. If King Magnus come here with an army, I will gather no army against him; but he shall only get the opportunity of taking England when he has



taken my life. Tell him these words of mine." The SAGA VIII.  
embassadors went back to King Magnus, and told him  
the answer to their message. King Magnus reflected  
a while, and answered thus: "I think it wisest, and  
will succeed best, to let King Edward have his king-  
dom in peace for me, and that I keep the kingdoms  
God has put into my hands."

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