The Story of Sigurd the Volsung

William Morris

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Story of Sigurd the Volsung

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Story of Sigurd the Volsung

Author: William Morris

Contributor: J. W. Mackail

Editor: Helen Scott
Winifred Turner

Release date: September 17, 2004 [eBook #13486]
Most recently updated: October 28, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/13486

Credits: E-text prepared by David Starner, Cori

Samuel, and the Project Gutenberg Online Distributed Proofreading Team

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG ***

The Project Gutenberg eBook, The Story of Sigurd the Volsung, by William Morris, et al

---

THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG

Written In Verse By

WILLIAM MORRIS

With Portions Condensed Into Prose By

WINIFRED TURNER, B.A.

Late Assistant Mistress, Ware Grammar School For Girls And

HELEN SCOTT, M.A.

1922

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION TO SIGURD
BOOK I.
BOOK II.
BOOK III.
GLOSSARY

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

By J. W. Mackail

William Morris, one of the most eminent imaginative writers of the Victorian age, differs from most other poets and men of letters in two ways—first, he did great work in many other things as well as in literature; secondly, he had beliefs of his own about

the meaning and conduct of life, about all that men think and do and make, very different from those of ordinary people, and he carried out these views in his writings as well as in all the other work he did throughout his life.

He was born in 1834. His father, a member of a business firm in the City of London, was a wealthy man and lived in Essex, in a country house with large gardens and fields belonging to it, on the edge of Epping Forest. Until the age of thirteen Morris was at home among a large family of brothers and sisters. He delighted in the country life and especially in the Forest, which is one of the most romantic parts of England, and which he made the scene of many real and imaginary adventures. From fourteen to eighteen he was at school at Marlborough among the Wiltshire downs, in a country full of beauty and history, and close to another of the ancient forests of England, that of Savernake. He proceeded from school to Exeter College, Oxford, where he soon formed a close friendship with a remarkable set of young men of his own age; chief among these, and Morris's closest friend for the rest of his life, was Edward Burne-Jones, the painter. Study of the works of John Ruskin confirmed them in the admiration which they already felt for the life and art of the Middle Ages. In the summer vacation of 1855 the two friends went to Northern France to see the beautiful towns and splendid churches with which that country had been filled between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries; and there they made up their minds that they cared for art more than for anything else, such as wealth or ease or the opinion of the world, and that as soon as they left Oxford they would become artists. By art they meant the making of beauty for the adornment and enrichment

of human life, and as artists they meant to strive against all that was ugly or mean or untruthful in the life of their own time.

Art, as they understood it, is one single thing covering the whole of life but practised in many special forms that differ one from another. Among these many forms of art there are two of principal importance. One of the two is the art which is concerned with the making and adorning of the houses in which men and women live; that is to say, architecture, with all its attendant arts of decoration, including sculpture, painting, the designing and ornamenting of metal, wood and glass, carpets, paper-hangings, woven, dyed and embroidered cloths of all kinds, and all the furniture which a house may have for use or pleasure. The other is the art which is concerned with the making and adorning of stories in prose and verse. Both of these kinds of art were practised by Morris throughout his life. The former was his principal occupation; he made his living by it, and built up in it a business which alone made him famous, and which has had a great influence towards bringing more beauty into daily domestic life in England and in other countries also. His profession was thus that of a manufacturer, designer, and decorator. When he had to describe himself by a single word, he called himself a designer. But it is the latter branch of his art which principally concerns us now, the art of a maker and adorner of stories. He became famous in this kind of art also, both in prose and verse, as a romance-writer and a poet. But he spoke of it as play rather than work, and although he spent much time and great pains on it, he regarded it as relaxation from the harder and more constant work of his life, which was carrying on the business of designing, painting, weaving, dyeing, printing and

other occupations of that kind. In later life he also gave much of his time to political and social work, with the object of bringing back mankind into a path from which they had strayed since the end of the Middle Ages, and creating a state of society in which art, by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user, might be naturally, easily, and universally produced.

Even as a boy Morris had been noted for his love of reading and inventing tales; but he did not begin to write any until he had been for a couple of years at Oxford. His earliest poems and his earliest written prose tales belong to the same year, 1855, in which he determined to make art his profession. The first of either that he published appeared in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine, which was started and managed by him and his friends in 1856. In 1858, after he had left Oxford, he brought out a volume of poems called, after the title of the first poem in the book, "The Defence of Guenevere." Soon afterwards he founded, with some of his old Oxford friends and others whom he had made in London, among whom Dante Gabriel Rossetti was the leading spirit, the firm of Morris and Company, manufacturers and decorators. His business, in which he was the principal and finally the sole partner, took up the main part of his time. He had also married, and built himself a beautiful small house in Kent, the decoration of which went busily on for several years. Among all these other occupations he almost gave up writing stories, but never ceased reading and thinking about them. In 1865 he came back to live in London, where, being close to his work, he had more leisure for other things; and between 1865 and 1870 he wrote between thirty and forty tales in verse, containing not less than seventy or eighty thousand

lines in all. The longest of these tales, "The Life and Death of Jason," appeared in 1867. It is the old Greek story of the ship Argo and the voyage in quest of the Golden Fleece. Twenty-five other tales are included in "The Earthly Paradise," published in three parts between 1868 and 1870.

During these years Morris learned Icelandic, and his next published works were translations of some of the Icelandic sagas, writings composed from six to nine hundred years ago, and containing a mass of legends, histories and romances finely told in a noble language. These translations were followed in 1876 by his great epic poem, "Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs." In that poem he retold a story of which an Icelandic version, the "Volsunga Saga," written in the twelfth century, is one of the world's masterpieces. It is the great epic of Northern Europe, just as the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" of Homer are the chief epics of ancient Greece, and the "Æneid" of Virgil the chief epic of the Roman Empire. Morris's love for these great stories of ancient times led him to rewrite the tale of the Volsungs and Niblungs, which he reckoned the finest of them all, more fully and on a larger scale than it had ever been written before. He had already, in 1875, translated the "Æneid" into verse, and some ten years later, in 1886-87, he also made a verse translation of the "Odyssey." In 1873 he had also written another very beautiful poem, "Love is Enough," containing the story of three pairs of lovers, a countryman and country-woman, an emperor and empress, and a prince and peasant girl. This poem was written in the form of a play, not of a narrative.

To write prose was at first for Morris more difficult than to write poetry. Verse came naturally to him,

and he composed in prose only with much effort until after long practice. Except for his early tales in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine and his translations of Icelandic sagas, he wrote little but poetry until the year 1882. About that time he began to give lectures and addresses, and wrote them in great numbers during the latter part of his life. A number of them were collected and published in two volumes called "Hopes and Fears for Art" and "Signs of Change," and many others have been published separately. He thus gradually accustomed himself to prose composition. For several years he was too busy with other things, which he thought more important, to spend time on storytelling; but his instinct forced itself out again, and in 1886 he began the series of romances in prose or in mixed prose and verse which went on during the next ten years. The chief of these are, "A Dream of John Ball," "The House of Wolfings," "The Roots of the Mountains," "News from Nowhere," "The Glittering Plain," "The Wood beyond the World," "The Well at the World's End," "The Water of the Wondrous Isles," and "The Sundering Flood." During the same years he also translated, out of Icelandic and old French books, more of the stories which he had long known and admired. "The Sundering Flood" was written in his last illness, and finished by him within a few days of his death, in the autumn of 1896.

INTRODUCTION TO SIGURD

By The Editors

The story of Sigurd is important to English people not only for its wondrous beauty, but also on account of its great age, and of what it tells us about our own Viking ancestors, who first knew the story.

The tale was known all over the north of Europe, in Denmark, in Germany, in Norway and Sweden, and in Iceland, hundreds of years before it was written down. Sometimes different names were given to the characters, sometimes the events of the story were slightly altered, but in the main points it was one and the same tale.

If we look at a map of Europe showing the nations as they were rather more than a thousand years ago, we see the names of Saxons, Goths, Danes, and Frisians marked on the lands around the Baltic Sea. Those who bore these names were the makers of the tale of Sigurd. The name of the Saxons is, of course, the best known to us, and next in importance come the people we call Danes, or Northmen, or Vikings, who attacked the coasts of the Saxon kingdoms in England. The Saxons came from part of the land that is now known as Germany, and the Vikings from Denmark and from Scandinavia.

A third important tribe was that of the Goths, who dwelt first in South Sweden, and then in Germany.

All these people resembled one another in their way of life, in their religion, and in their ideas of what deeds were good and what were evil. Their lands were barren—too mountainous or too cold to bring forth fruitful crops, and their homes were not such as would tempt men never to leave them. So, though they built their little groups of wooden houses in the

valleys of their lands, and made fields and pastures about them, these were often left to the care of the women and the feeble men, while the strong men made raids over the sea to other countries, where they engaged in the fighting which they loved, and whence they brought back plunder to their homes. North, South, East, and West they went, till few parts of Europe had not learnt to know and fear them.

Their ships were long and narrow, driven often by oars as well as sails, and outside them, along the bulwarks, the crew hung their round shields made of yellow wood from the lime-tree. The men wore byrnies or breast-plates, and helmets, and they were armed with swords, long spears, or heavy battle-axes. They were enemies none could afford to despise, for they had great stature and strength of body, joined to such fierceness and delight in war that they held a man disgraced if he died peacefully at home. Moreover, they knew nothing of mercy to the conquered.

Courage, not only to fight, but also to bear suffering without impatience or complaint, and the virtue of faithfulness were the qualities they most honoured. To be wanting in courage was disgraceful in their eyes, but it was equally disgraceful to refuse to help kinsfolk, to lie, to deceive, or to desert a chief.

If they put their enemies to death with fearful tortures, they did not treat them more severely than the traitors they discovered among themselves, and if they had no pity for those they conquered, yet they knew well how to admire great leaders, and how to serve them faithfully. But we can best realise their ideas on these matters by considering their religion and their stories.

They worshipped one chief god, Odin, and other gods and goddesses who were his children. Odin was often called All-father because he was the helper and friend of human beings, and appeared on earth in the form of an old man, "one-eyed and seeming ancient," with cloud-blue hood and grey cloak. He had courage, strength, and wondrous wisdom, for he knew all events that happened in the world, and he understood the speech of birds, and all kinds of charms and magic arts. Men served him by brave fighting in a good cause, and when they perished in battle he received their souls in his dwelling of Valhalla in the city of Asgard, where they spent each day in warfare, and where at evening the dead were revived, the wounded healed, and all feasted together in Odin's palace. There they fed upon the flesh of the boar Saehrimner, which was renewed as fast as it was eaten. Certain maidens called Valkyrie, or Choosers of the Slain, were Odin's messengers whom he sent forth into the battles of the world to find the warriors whom he had appointed to die, and to bring them to Valhalla.

In the story of Sigurd Odin has a very important part to play, but for the understanding of the tale it is necessary to know something about another of the gods. This is Loki, who, though sprung from the race of the giants, yet lived with the sons of Odin in Asgard, behaving sometimes as their trusty helper, but more often as their cunning enemy. He caused much wretchedness, not only among the gods, but on earth also, for he delighted in the sight of misery. His vices were all those most hateful to the Norse people, for he was before all things a liar, a deceiver, a faith-breaker, a skilful worker of mischief by guile instead of by fair fight. There are many stories of his cunning thefts, of the miseries he wrought among his

companions, and of his envy of the beloved god Balder, whom he slew by a trick. His children were terrible monsters, as hated as himself. Yet, strange to say, Loki was Odin's companion in many of his adventures.

The gods inhabited Asgard, a city standing on a high mountain in the middle of the world. Odin's palace of Valhalla was there, and other palaces for his sons and daughters. All round Asgard lay Midgard, or the ordinary world of men and women. Its caves and waste places were inhabited by dwarfs, whom Odin had banished from the light of day for various ill deeds. They were a spiteful and cunning race, jealous of mankind, and eager to recover their lost power. Their strength lay in their wondrous skill in handicraft, for they could forge more deadly weapons, and fashion more lovely jewels than any made by the hands of men. But, though possessed of wisdom, they had no spirit of kindness, no respect for right, and no dislike of wrong.

Around Midgard lay the sea, and beyond that Utgard, a hideous frozen country inhabited by giants, enemies of the gods.

But this arrangement of the world was only for a season. The gods themselves looked forward to a time of defeat and death, when Asgard should perish in flames and the world with it, and the sun and moon should be darkened, and they themselves should be slain. This great day was called Ragnarok, or sometimes the Twilight of the Gods. Then Loki would gather giants and monsters to a great battle against the gods, who would slay their enemies, but who would themselves fall in the struggle. The sea would drown the earth, the stars would fall, and all

things would pass away.

This terrible fate the gods awaited with calm and cheerfulness, showing even greater courage than in their many deeds of war. They had to submit to this fate, for there were three beings even greater than they. These were the Norns, deciders of the fate of gods and men alike. They were three giant maidens who dwelt by a sacred, wisdom-giving fountain, and who controlled the lives of men, giving to each sickness and health, success and failure and death when they would. No man or god might escape what the Norns decreed for him.

Many stories of these gods, together with tales of famous men, were told among the northern peoples. These stories were passed on from one to another by word of mouth, till they grew much longer and fuller, and the happening of certain historical events helped to take them from country to country.

As we have seen, all the races of the North were warlike and eager for adventure, and so when trouble came upon them in their own homes, they readily took to the sea to plunder the coasts or to conquer other lands. Between 800 and 900 A.D., when the Danes were invading England, many were driven from Norway because they refused to submit to a king called Harold Fairhair, and when he pursued them to the Orkney and Faroe Islands they took refuge on the coasts of Iceland. There they settled, built themselves wooden houses, planted such crops as would grow in that bleak land, and founded a commonwealth. Little by little they left the old Viking life, and it lived only in their songs and stories.

They had come to Iceland with a vast stock of tales

in poetry, which were related or sung by professional poets, called skalds, at all kinds of feasts and gatherings. The skalds arranged and improved the old stories, but they were not written down until about the time of our King Stephen, when some unknown writer collected them into one book called the Elder Edda. Very soon after this another book was written containing the same stories in prose and called the Younger or Prose Edda. In this way many of the old poems, and a great many stories containing much information about the religion which the people took with them to Iceland, have been preserved.

But it was from neither of the Eddas that William Morris took his story of Sigurd.

All through the period from 800 A.D. till about the time of Henry III. of England, the skalds had been re-telling many of the poetic stories in prose, and as the people grew more civilised, one tale after another was written down in its new form.

These prose tales were called Sagas, and among the very greatest is the Volsunga Saga, or Story of Sigurd. It is a tale which has been told in other lands besides Iceland. We read part of the same story in the Old English poem of Beowulf, and in Germany it was made into a great poem called the Nibelungenlied. The German musician, Richard Wagner, set it to music in a famous series of operas called the Nibelungen Ring. But his tale differs in many points from that contained in Morris's poem, for Morris chose the old saga as it was written in Iceland, not the German story. On this he founded his poem, adding much beautiful description, and greatly lengthening the whole.

The story deals first with a certain King Volsung, to whose son, Sigmund, Odin presented a magic sword.

But Siggeir, the jealous king of the Goths, slew Volsung, and took Sigmund prisoner that he might have the sword for himself. Only after many toils and perils did Sigmund win it back and reign in his father's kingdom. At last in his old age he fell in battle and the sword of Odin was shattered. But his wife, Queen Hiordis, kept the fragments for the son who was born to her soon after in Denmark, whither she fled for safety. This son of Sigmund and Hiordis was Sigurd the Volsung. He was brought up in Denmark and grew strong and beautiful, brave, kind of heart, and utterly truthful in word and deed.

When he became a man he longed to win fame and kingship by mighty deeds, and when his tutor told him of a great dragon that guarded a hoard of ill-gotten gold in the mountains, he resolved to kill it. So the fragments of Odin's sword were forged into a new blade, and Sigurd slew the dragon and took the gold, but with it he brought on himself a curse which had been put upon the treasure by the dwarf from whom it had been stolen.

Sigurd then found and wakened Brynhild, a maiden who lay in an enchanted sleep upon a high mountain. They loved one another, and Sigurd gave her a ring from the dragon's treasure, promising to return and marry her.

Then the curse led him to join with the fierce and treacherous Niblungs or Cloudy People. Their king and his mother grew jealous when they saw Sigurd more mighty and more beloved than themselves, and by enchantments they caused him to forget Brynhild, to wed the princess Gudrun, and at last to aid the

Niblung king, Gunnar, to win Brynhild for his own wife.

Then the curse of the gold brought death to many, for Sigurd and Brynhild discovered all the treachery of the Niblungs, who, in their anger, slew Sigurd, and Brynhild killed herself that she might not live and sorrow for him.

Such is the story of Sigurd as it was told a thousand years ago in distant Iceland, and as it is retold in this poem by William Morris.

THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG.

BOOK I.

SIGMUND.

Of the dwelling of King Volsung, and the wedding of Signy his daughter.

There was a dwelling of Kings ere the
world was waxen old;
Dukes were the door-wards there, and the
roofs were thatched with gold:
Earls were the wrights that wrought it,

and silver nailed its doors;
Earls' wives were the weaving-women,
queens' daughters strewed its
floors,
And the masters of its song-craft were the
mightiest men that cast
The sails of the storm of battle adown the
bickering blast.
There dwelt men merry-hearted, and in
hope exceeding great
Met the good days and the evil as they
went the way of fate:
There the Gods were unforgotten, yea
whiles they walked with men,
Though e'en in that world's beginning rose
a murmur now and again
Of the midward time and the fading and
the last of the latter days,
And the entering in of the terror, and the
death of the People's Praise.

Thus was the dwelling of Volsung, the
King of the Midworld's Mark,
As a rose in the winter season, a candle in
the dark;
And as in all other matters 'twas all
earthly houses' crown,
And the least of its wall-hung shields was
a battle-world's renown,
So therein withal was a marvel and a
glorious thing to see,
For amidst of its midmost hall-floor sprang
up a mighty tree,
That reared its blessings roofward, and
wreathed the roof-tree dear
With the glory of the summer and the

garland of the year.
I know not how they called it ere Volsung
changed his life,
But his dawning of fair promise, and his
noontide of the strife,
His eve of the battle-reaping and the
garnering of his fame,
Have bred us many a story and named us
many a name;
And when men tell of Volsung, they call
that war-duke's tree,
That crownèd stem, the Branstock; and so
was it told unto me.

So there was the throne of Volsung
beneath its blossoming bower,
But high o'er the roof-crest red it rose
'twixt tower and tower,
And therein were the wild hawks
dwelling, abiding the dole of their
lord;
And they wailed high over the wine, and
laughed to the waking sword.

Still were its boughs but for them, when
lo, on an even of May
Comes a man from Siggeir the King with a
word for his mouth to say:
"All hail to thee King Volsung, from the
King of the Goths I come:
He hath heard of thy sword victorious and
thine abundant home;
He hath heard of thy sons in the battle,
the fillers of Odin's Hall;
And a word hath the west-wind blown
him, (full fruitful be its fall!)
A word of thy daughter Signy the crown

of womanhood:
Now he deems thy friendship goodly, and
thine help in the battle good,
And for these will he give his friendship
and his battle-aid again:
But if thou wouldst grant his asking, and
make his heart full fain,
Then shalt thou give him a matter, saith
he, without a price,
—Signy the fairer than fair, Signy the
wiser than wise."

Now the message gladdened Volsung and his sons, but no word spake Signy, till the king asked her what her mind might be. Then said Signy, "I will wed the Goth king, and yet shall I rue my lot in his hall." And Volsung urged her with kind words to do nought against her will, but her mind was fixed, and she said she wrought but what the gods had fore-ordained. So the earl of Siggeir went his way with gifts and fair words, bidding the Goth king come ere a month was over to wed the white-handed Signy and bear her home.

So on Mid-Summer Even ere the undark
night began
Siggeir the King of the Goth-folk went up
from the bath of the swan
Unto the Volsung dwelling with many an
Earl about;
There through the glimmering thicket the
linkèd mail rang out,
And sang as mid the woodways sings the
summer-hidden ford:
There were gold-rings God-fashioned, and
many a Dwarf-wrought sword,
And many a Queen-wrought kirtle and

many a written spear;
So came they to the acres, and drew the threshold near,
And amidst of the garden blossoms, on the grassy, fruit-grown land,
Was Volsung the King of the Wood-world with his sons on either hand;
Therewith down lighted Siggeir the lord of a mighty folk,
Yet showed he by King Volsung as the bramble by the oak,
Nor reached his helm to the shoulder of the least of Volsung's sons.
And so into the hall they wended, the Kings and their mighty ones;
And they dight the feast full glorious, and drank through the death of the day,
Till the shadowless moon rose upward, till it wended white away;
Then they went to the gold-hung beds, and at last for an hour or twain
Were all things still and silent, save a flaw of the summer rain.

But on the morrow noontide when the sun was high and bare,
More glorious was the banquet, and now was Signy there,
And she sat beside King Siggeir, a glorious bride forsooth;
Ruddy and white was she wrought as the fair-stained sea-beast's tooth,
But she neither laughed nor spake, and her eyes were hard and cold,
And with wandering side-long looks her lord would she behold.

That saw Sigmund her brother, the eldest
Volsung son,
And oft he looked upon her, and their eyes
met now and anon,
And ruth arose in his heart, and hate of
Siggeir the Goth,
And there had he broken the wedding, but
for plighted promise and troth.
But those twain were beheld of Siggeir,
and he deemed of the Volsung kin,
That amid their might and their malice
small honour should he win;
Yet thereof made he no semblance, but
abided times to be,
And laughed out with the loudest, amid
the hope and the glee.
And nought of all saw Volsung, as he
dreamed of the coming glory,
And how the Kings of his kindred should
fashion the round world's story.

So round about the Branstock they feast in
the gleam of the gold;
And though the deeds of man-folk were
not yet waxen old,
Yet had they tales for songcraft, and the
blossomed garth of rhyme;
Tales of the framing of all things and the
entering in of time
From the halls of the outer heaven; so
near they knew the door.
Wherefore uprose a sea-king, and his
hands that loved the oar
Now dealt with the rippling harp-gold,
and he sang of the shaping of earth,
And how the stars were lighted, and

where the winds had birth,
And the gleam of the first of summers on
the yet untrodden grass.
But e'en as men's hearts were hearkening
some heard the thunder pass
O'er the cloudless noontide heaven; and
some men turned about
And deemed that in the doorway they
heard a man laugh out.
Then into the Volsung dwelling a mighty
man there strode,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, yet bright
his visage glowed:
Cloud-blue was the hood upon him, and
his kirtle gleaming-grey
As the latter morning sundog when the
storm is on the way:
A bill he bore on his shoulder, whose
mighty ashen beam
Burnt bright with the flame of the sea and
the blended silver's gleam.
And such was the guise of his raiment as
the Volsung elders had told
Was borne by their fathers' fathers, and
the first that warred in the wold.

So strode he to the Branstock nor greeted
any lord,
But forth from his cloudy raiment he drew
a gleaming sword,
And smote it deep in the tree-hole, and
the wild hawks overhead
Laughed 'neath the naked heaven as at last
he spake and said:

"Earls of the Goths, and Volsungs, abiders
on the earth,

Lo there amid the Branstock a blade of
plenteous worth!
The folk of the war-wand's forgers
wrought never better steel
Since first the burg of heaven uprose for
man-folk's weal.
Now let the man among you whose heart
and hand may shift
To pluck it from the oakwood e'en take it
for my gift.
Then ne'er, but his own heart falter, its
point and edge shall fail
Until the night's beginning and the ending
of the tale.
Be merry Earls of the Goth-folk, O Volsung
Sons be wise
And reap the battle-acre that ripening for
you lies:
For they told me in the wild wood, I heard
on the mountain side,
That the shining house of heaven is
wrought exceeding wide,
And that there the Early-comers shall have
abundant rest
While Earth grows scant of great ones, and
fadeth from its best,
And fadeth from its midward and groweth
poor and vile:—
All hail to thee King Volsung! farewell for
a little while!"

So sweet his speaking sounded, so wise his
words did seem,
That moveless all men sat there, as in a
happy dream
We stir not lest we waken; but there his

speech had end,
And slowly down the hall-floor, and
outward did he wend;
And none would cast him a question or
follow on his ways,
For they knew that the gift was Odin's, a
sword for the world to praise.

But now spake Volsung the King: "Why sit
ye silent and still?
Is the Battle-Father's visage a token of
terror and ill?
Arise O Volsung Children, Earls of the
Goths arise,
And set your hands to the hilts as mighty
men and wise!
Yet deem it not too easy; for belike a
fateful blade
Lies there in the heart of the Branstock for
a fated warrior made."

Now therewith spake King Siggeir: "King
Volsung give me a grace
To try it the first of all men, lest another
win my place
And mere chance-hap steal my glory and
the gain that I might win."

Then somewhat laughed King Volsung,
and he said: "O Guest, begin;
Though herein is the first as the last, for
the Gods have long to live,
Nor hath Odin yet forgotten unto whom
the gift he would give."

Then forth to the tree went Siggeir, the
Goth-folk's mighty lord,

And laid his hand on the gemstones, and
strained at the glorious sword
Till his heart grew black with anger; and
never a word he said
As he wended back to the high-seat: but
Signy waxed blood-red
When he sat him adown beside her; and
her heart was nigh to break
For the shame and the fateful boding: and
therewith King Volsung spake:

"Thus comes back empty-handed the
mightiest King of Earth,
And how shall the feeble venture? yet
each man knows his worth;
And today may a great beginning from a
little seed upspring
To o'erpass many a great one that hath the
name of King:
So stand forth free and unfree; stand forth
both most and least:
But first ye Earls of the Goth-folk, ye
lovely lords we feast."

Upstood the Earls of Siggeir, and each
man drew anigh
And deemed his time was coming for a
glorious gain and high;
But for all their mighty shaping and their
deeds in the battle-wood,
No looser in the Branstock that gift of
Odin stood.
Then uprose Volsung's homemen, and the
fell-abiding folk;
And the yellow-headed shepherds came
gathering round the Oak,
And the searchers of the thicket and the

dealers with the oar:
And the least and the worst of them all
was a mighty man of war.
But for all their mighty shaping, and the
struggle and the strain
Of their hands, the deft in labour, they
tugged thereat in vain;
And still as the shouting and jeers, and the
names of men and the laughter
Beat backward from gable to gable, and
rattled o'er roof-tree and rafter,
Moody and still sat Siggeir; for he said:
"They have trained me here
As a mock for their woodland bondsmen;
and yet shall they buy it dear."

Now the tumult sank a little, and men
cried on Volsung the King
And his sons, the hedge of battle, to try
the fateful thing.
So Volsung laughed, and answered: "I will
set me to the toil,
Lest these my guests of the Goth-folk
should deem I fear the foil.
Yet nought am I ill-sworded, and the
oldest friend is best;
And this, my hand's first fellow, will I bear
to the grave-mound's rest,
Nor wield meanwhile another: Yea, this
shall I have in hand
When mid the host of Odin in the Day of
Doom I stand."

Therewith from his belt of battle he raised
the golden sheath,
And showed the peace-strings glittering
about the hidden death:

Then he laid his hand on the Branstock,
and cried: "O tree beloved,
I thank thee of thy good-heart that so little
thou art moved:
Abide thou thus, green bower, when I am
dead and gone
And the best of all my kindred a better
day hath won!"

Then as a young man laughed he, and on
the hilts of gold
His hand, the battle-breaker, took fast and
certain hold,
And long he drew and strained him, but
mended not the tale,
Yet none the more thereover his mirth of
heart did fail;
But he wended to the high-seat and thence
began to cry:

"Sons I have gotten and cherished, now
stand ye forth to try;
Lest Odin tell in God-home how from the
way he strayed,
And how to the man he would not he gave
away his blade."
So therewithal rose Rerir, and wasted
might and main;
Then Gunthiof, and then Hunthiof, they
wearied them in vain;
Nought was the might of Agnar; nought
Helgi could avail;
Sigi the tall and Solar no further brought
the tale,
Nor Geirmund the priest of the temple,
nor Gylfi of the wood.

At last by the side of the Branstock
Sigmund the Volsung stood,
And with right hand wise in battle the
precious sword-hilt caught,
Yet in a careless fashion, as he deemed it
all for nought:
When lo, from floor to rafter went up a
shattering shout,
For aloft in the hand of Sigmund the
naked blade shone out
As high o'er his head he shook it: for the
sword had come away
From the grip of the heart of the
Branstock, as though all loose it
lay.
A little while he stood there mid the glory
of the hall,
Like the best of the trees of the garden,
when the April sunbeams fall
On its blossomed boughs in the morning,
and tell of the days to be;
Then back unto the high-seat he wended
soberly;
For this was the thought within him;
Belike the day shall come
When I shall bide here lonely amid the
Volsung home,
Its glory and sole avenger, its after-
summer seed.
Yea, I am the hired of Odin, his workday
will to speed,
And the harvest-tide shall be heavy.—
What then, were it come and past
And I laid by the last of the sheaves with
my wages earned at the last?

He lifted his eyes as he thought it, for now
was he come to his place,
And there he stood by his father and met
Siggeir face to face,
And he saw him blithe and smiling, and
heard him how he spake:
"O best of the sons of Volsung, I am merry
for thy sake
And the glory that thou hast gained us;
but whereas thine hand and heart
Are e'en now the lords of the battle, how
lack'st thou for thy part
A matter to better the best? Wilt thou
overgild fine gold
Or dye the red rose redder? So I prithee
let me hold
This sword that comes to thine hand on
the day I wed thy kin.
For at home have I a store-house; there is
mountain-gold therein
The weight of a war-king's harness; there
is silver plenteous store;
There is iron, and huge-wrought amber,
that the southern men love sore,
When they sell me the woven wonder, the
purple born of the sea;
And it hangeth up in that bower, and all
this is a gift for thee:
But the sword that came to my wedding,
methinketh it meet and right,
That it lie on my knees in the council and
stead me in the fight."

But Sigmund laughed and answered, and
he spake a scornful word:
"And if I take twice that treasure, will it

buy me Odin's sword,
And the gift that the Gods have given?
will it buy me again to stand
Betwixt two mightiest world-kings with a
longed-for thing in mine hand
That all their might hath missed of? when
the purple-selling men
Come buying thine iron and amber, dost
thou sell thine honour then?
Do they wrap it in bast of the linden, or
run it in moulds of earth?
And shalt thou account mine honour as a
matter of lesser worth?
Came the sword to thy wedding, Goth-
king, to thine hand it never came,
And thence is thine envy whetted to deal
me this word of shame."

Black then was the heart of Siggeir, but
his face grew pale and red,
Till he drew a smile thereover, and spake
the word and said:
"Nay, pardon me, Signy's kinsman! when
the heart desires o'ermuch
It teacheth the tongue ill speaking, and my
word belike was such.
But the honour of thee and thy kindred, I
hold it even as mine,
And I love you as my heart-blood, and
take ye this for a sign.
I bid thee now King Volsung, and these
thy glorious sons,
And thine earls and thy dukes of battle
and all thy mighty ones,
To come to the house of the Goth-kings as
honoured guests and dear

And abide the winter over; that the dusky
days and drear
May be glorious with thy presence, that all
folk may praise my life,
And the friends that my fame hath gotten;
and that this my new-wed wife
Thine eyes may make the merrier till she
bear my eldest born."

Then speedily answered Volsung: "No king
of the earth might scorn
Such noble bidding, Siggeir; and surely
will I come
To look upon thy glory and the Goths'
abundant home.
But let two months wear over, for I have
many a thing
To shape and shear in the Woodland, as
befits a people's king:
And thou meanwhile here abiding of all
my goods shalt be free,
And then shall we twain together roof
over the glass-green sea
With the sides of our golden dragons; and
our war-hosts' blended shields
Shall fright the sea-abiders and the folk of
the fishy fields."

Answered the smooth-speeched Siggeir: "I
thank thee well for this,
And thy bidding is most kingly; yet take it
not amiss
That I wend my ways in the morning; for
we Goth-folk know indeed
That the sea is a foe full deadly, and a
friend that fails at need."

And for all the words of Volsung e'en so
must the matter be,
And Siggeir the Goth and Signy on the
morn shall sail the sea.

Then the feast sped on the fairer, far into the night, but amidst the mirth Sigmund and Signy were sad at heart. And before the sun was risen next day Signy came to her father in secret and begged him to stay in his own country rather than trust the guileful heart and murder-loving hand of Siggeir. But Volsung answered that he must go to be Siggeir's guest, for he could not break his pledged word through fear of peril. So on the morrow the smooth-speeched Siggeir departed with Signy, and when two months were passed Volsung made ready to visit them.

How the Volsungs fared to the Land of the Goths, and of the fall of King Volsung.

So now, when all things were ready, in the
first of the autumn tide
Adown unto the swan-bath the Volsung
Children ride;
And lightly go a shipboard, a goodly
company,
Though the tale thereof be scanty and
their ships no more than three:
But kings' sons dealt with the sail-sheets
and earls and dukes of war
Were the halers of the hawsers and the

tuggers at the oar.

But when the sun on the morrow shone
over earth and sea
Ashore went the Volsung Children a
goodly company,
And toward King Siggeir's dwelling o'er
heath and holt they went.
But when they came to the topmost of a
certain grassy bent,
Lo there lay the land before them as thick
with shield and spear
As the rich man's wealthiest acre with the
harvest of the year.
There bade King Volsung tarry and dight
the wedge-array;
"For duly," he said, "doeth Siggeir to meet
his guests by the way."
So shield by shield they serried, nor ever
hath been told
Of any host of battle more glorious with
the gold;
And there stood the high King Volsung in
the very front of war;
And lovelier was his visage than ever
heretofore,
As he rent apart the peace-strings that his
brand of battle bound
And the bright blade gleamed to the
heavens, and he cast the sheath to
the ground.
Then up the steep came the Goth-folk, and
the spear-wood drew anigh,
And earth's face shook beneath them, yet

cried they never a cry;
And the Volsungs stood all silent,
although forsooth at whiles
O'er the faces grown earth-weary would
play the flickering smiles,
And swords would clink and rattle: not
long had they to bide,
For soon that flood of murder flowed
round the hillock-side;
Then at last the edges mingled, and if men
forbore the shout,
Yet the din of steel and iron in the grey
clouds rang about;
But how to tell of King Volsung, and the
valour of his folk!
Three times the wood of battle before
their edges broke;
And the shield-wall, sorely dwindled and
reft of the ruddy gold,
Against the drift of the war-blast for the
fourth time yet did hold.
But men's shields were waxen heavy with
the weight of shafts they bore,
And the fifth time many a champion cast
earthward Odin's door
And gripped the sword two-handed; and
in sheaves the spears came on.
And at last the host of the Goth-folk
within the shield-wall won,
And wild was the work within it, and oft
and o'er again
Forth brake the sons of Volsung, and
drave the foe in vain;
For the driven throng still thickened, till it
might not give aback.
But fast abode King Volsung amid the

shifting wrack
In the place where once was the forefront:
for he said: "My feet are old,
And if I wend on further there is nought
more to behold
Than this that I see about me."—Whiles
drew his foes away
And stared across the corpses that before
his sword-edge lay.
But nought he followed after: then needs
must they in front
Thrust on by the thickening spear-throng
come up to bear the brunt,
Till all his limbs were weary and his body
rent and torn:
Then he cried: "Lo now, Allfather, is not
the swathe well shorn?
Wouldst thou have me toil for ever, nor
win the wages due?"

And mid the hedge of foemen his blunted
sword he threw,
And, laid like the oars of a longship the
level war-shafts pressed
On 'gainst the unshielded elder, and
clashed amidst his breast;
And dead he fell, thrust backward, and
rang on the dead men's gear:
But still for a certain season durst no man
draw anear,
For 'twas e'en as a great God's slaying, and
they feared the wrath of the sky;
And they deemed their hearts might
harden if awhile they should let
him lie.

Of the ending of all Volsung's Sons save Sigmund only, and of how he abideth in the wild wood.

They joined battle again, but the fight grew feeble after Volsung fell, and his earls were struck down one by one. Last of all, his sons were borne to earth and carried captive to the hall, where Siggeir awaited them, for he himself had feared to face the Volsung swords.

Then he would have slain them at once without torture, but Signy besought him that they might breathe the earthly air a day or two before their death, and he listened to her, for he saw how he might thus give them greater pain. He bade his men lead them to a glade in the forest and fetter them to the mightiest tree that grew there. So the ten Volsungs were fettered with iron to a great oak, and on the morrow Siggeir's woodmen told him sweet tidings, for beasts of the wood had devoured two and left their bones in the fetters. So it befell every night till the woodmen brought word that nothing remained of the king's foemen save their bones in the fetters that had bound them.

Now a watch had been set on Signy lest she should send help to her brethren, but henceforth no man hindered her from going out to the wood. So that night she came to the glade in the forest, and saw in the midst of it a mighty man who was toiling to dig a grave in the greensward.

And behold, it was Sigmund the Volsung:
but she cried and had no fear:

"If thou art living, Sigmund, what day's
work dost thou here
In the midnight and the forest? but if thou

art nought but a ghost
Then where are those Volsung brethren, of whom thou wert best and most?"

Then he turned about unto her, and his raiment was fouled and torn,
And his eyen were great and hollow, as a famished man forlorn;

But he cried: "Hail, Sister Signy! I looked for thee before,
Though what should a woman compass, she one alone and no more,
When all we shielded Volsungs did nought in Siggeir's land?
O yea, I am living indeed, and this labour of mine hand
Is to bury the bones of the Volsungs; and lo, it is well-nigh done.
So draw near, Volsung's daughter, and pile we many a stone
Where lie the grey wolf's gleanings of what was once so good."

So she set her hand to the labour, and they toiled, they twain in the wood,
And when the work was over, dead night was beginning to fall:
Then spake the white-hand Signy: "Now shall thou tell the tale
Of the death of the Volsung brethren ere the wood thy wrath shall hide,
Ere I wend me back sick-hearted in the dwelling of kings to abide."

Then said Sigmund:

"We lay fettered to the tree and at midnight there came from the thicket two mighty wood-wolves, and falling on my brethren Gylfi and Geirmund, they devoured them in their bonds, and turned again to the forest. Night after night, my sister, this befell, till I was left alone with our brother Sigi to await the wood-beasts. Then came midnight, and one of the wolves fell upon Sigi and the other turned on me. But I met it with snarling like its own, and my teeth gripped its throat, and my hands strove with the fetters till they burst. So I slew the beast with my irons, but when I looked, Sigi lay dead, and the other wolf had fled again to the thicket. Then I lay hid till Siggeir's woodmen had looked on the place and departed with their tidings, and as I beheld them I knew that pity was killed in my heart, and that henceforward I should live but to avenge me on him who hath so set the gods at nought." Then Signy spake noble words of comfort, saying: "I wot well that Siggeir shall pay the due price of his deeds, though the vengeance may tarry long, and I wot also that thy life shall yet know gladness. Bear a stout heart, therefore, to meet the waiting time, and make thee a lair in the woods whence thou mayest fall on men of the Goth-folk, and win what thy life needeth. As for me, I will see thy face once again ere many days are past to wot where thou dwellest and then must we meet no more."

And so saying, she kissed him and departed, but Sigmund turned in the dawn-light, and sought a wood-lair as she had bidden him.

Of the fostering of Sinfiotli, Signy's son, and of the slaying of Siggeir the Goth-king.

So wrought is the will of King Siggeir, and
he weareth Odin's sword
And it lies on his knees in the council and
hath no other lord:
And he sendeth earls o'er the sea-flood to
take King Volsung's land,
And those scattered and shepherdless
sheep must come beneath his hand.
And he holdeth the milk-white Signy as
his handmaid and his wife,
And nought but his will she doeth, nor
raiseth a word of strife;
So his heart is praising his wisdom, and he
deems him of most avail
Of all the lords of the cunning that
teacheth how to prevail.

Now Sigmund dwelt long in the wild-wood, abiding in a strong cave deep hidden in a thicket by the river-side.

And now and again he fell upon the folk of Siggeir as they journeyed, and slew them, and thus he had war-gear and gold as much as he would. Also he became a master of masters in the smithying craft, and the folk who beheld the gleam of his forge by night, deemed that a king of the Giants was awakened from death to dwell there, and they durst not wander near the cavern.

So passed the years till on a springtide morning Signy sent forth to Sigmund a damsel leading her eldest son, a child of ten summers, and bearing a word of her mouth to bid him foster the child for his helper, if he should prove worthy and bold-hearted. And Sigmund heeded her words and fostered the child for the space of three months even though he

could give no love to a son of Siggeir.

At last he was minded to try the boy's courage, to which end he set a deadly ash-grey adder in the meal-sack, and bade the child bake bread. But he feared when he found something that moved in the meal and had not courage to do the task. Then would Sigmund foster him no longer, but thrust him out from the woods to return to his father's hall.

So ten years won over again, and Signy sent another son to the wild-wood, and the lad was called Sinfiotli. Sigmund thrust him into many dangers, and burdened him with heavy loads, and he bore all passing well.

Now after a year Sigmund deemed that the time for his testing was come, and once again he set an adder in the meal-sack and bade the lad bake bread. And the boy feared not the worm, but kneaded it with the dough and baked all together. So Sigmund cherished him as his own son, and he grew strong and valiant and loved Sigmund as his father.

Now Sigmund began to ponder how he might at last take vengeance on Siggeir, and gladly did Sinfiotli hear him, for all his love was given to Sigmund, so that he no longer deemed himself the Goth-king's son.

At last when the long mirk nights of winter were come, Sigmund and his foster-son went their way to the home of Siggeir and sought to lurk therein. Then Sinfiotli led the way to a storehouse where lay great wine-casks, and whence they could see the lighted feast-hall, and hear the clamour of Siggeir's folk. There they had to abide the time when the feasters should be hushed in sleep. Long seemed the hours to

Sinfiotli, but Sigmund was calm and clear-eyed.

Then it befell that two of Queen Signy's youngest-born children threw a golden toy hither and thither in the feast-hall, and at last it rolled away among the wine-casks till it lay at Sigmund's feet. So the children followed it, and coming face to face with those lurkers, they fled back to the feast-hall. And Sigmund and his foster-son saw all hope was ended, for they heard the rising tumult as men ran to their weapons; so they made ready to go forth and die in the hall. Then on came the battle around the twain, and but short is the tale to tell, for Sinfiotli slipped on the blood-stained floor and the shield wall encompassed Sigmund, and so they were both hoppled strait and fast.

The Goth-folk washed their hall of blood and got them to slumber, but Siggeir lay long pondering what dire death he might bring on his foes.

Now at the first grey dawning Siggeir's folk dight a pit and it had two chambers with a sundering stone in the midst. Then they brought the Volsung kindred and set them therein, one in each chamber, that they might abide death alone, and yet in hearing of one another's woe. And over the top the thralls laid roofing turfs, but so lingering were their hands that eve drew on ere the task was finished. Then stole Signy forth in the dusk, and spake the thralls fair, and gave them gold that they might hold their peace of what she did. And when they gainsaid her nought she drew out something wrapped in wheat straw, and cast it down swiftly into the pit where Sinfiotli lay, and departed.

Sinfiotli at first deemed it food, but after a space Sigmund heard him laugh aloud for joy, for within

the wrappings lay the sword of the Branstock. And Sinfiotli cried out the joyous tidings to his foster-father, and tarried not to set the point to the stone that sundered them, and lo, the blade pierced through, and Sigmund grasped the point. Then sawed Sigmund and Sinfiotli together till they cleft the stone, and they hewed full hard at the roofing, till they cast the turfs aside, and their hearts were gladdened with the sight of the starry heaven.

Forth they leapt, and no words were needed of whither they should wend, but they fell on King Siggeir's night-watch and slew them sleeping, and made haste to find the store of winter faggots, wherewith they built a mighty bale about the hall of Siggeir. They set a torch to the bale, and Sigmund gat him to one hall door and Sinfiotli to the other, and now the Goth-folk awoke to their last of days.

Then cried Siggeir to his thralls and offered them joyous life-days and plenteous wealth if they would give him life, deeming that they had fired the hall in hatred. But there came a great voice crying from the door, "Nay, no toilers are we; wealth is ours when we list, but now our hearts are set to avenge our kin; now hath the murder seed sprung and borne its fruit; now the death-doomed and buried work this deed; now doom draweth nigh thee at the hand of Sigmund the Volsung, and Sinfiotli, Signy's son."

Then the voice cried again, "Come ye forth, women of the Goths, and thou, O Signy, my sister, come forth to seek the boughs of the Branstock." So fled the white-faced women from the fire, and passed scatheless by Sinfiotli's blade, but Signy came not at all. Then the earls of Siggeir strove to burst from the hall, but ever the two glaives at the doorways drove

them back to the fire.

And, lo, now came Signy in queenly raiment, and stood before Sinfiotli and said, "O mightiest son, this is the hour of our parting, and fain am I of slumber and the end of my toil now I have seen this day. And the blither do I leave thee because thy days on earth shall be but few; I charge thee make thy life glorious, and leave a goodly tale."

She kissed him and turned to Sigmund, and her face in the dawn-light seemed to him fair and ruddy as in the days when they twain dwelt by the Branstock. And she said, "My youth was happy, yet this hour is the crown of my life-days which draw nigh their ending. And now I charge thee, Sigmund, when thou sittest once more a mighty king beneath the boughs of the Branstock, that thou remember how I loved the Volsung name, and spared not to spend all that was mine for its blossoming." Then she kissed him and turned again, and the dawn brightened at her back, and the fire shone red before her, and so for the last time was Signy beheld by the eyes of men. Thereafter King Siggeir's roof-tree bowed earthward, and the mighty walls crashed down, and so that dark murder-hall lay wasted, and its glory was swept away.

How Sigmund cometh to the Land of the Volsungs again, and of the death of Sinfiotli his Son.

Now Sigmund the king bestirs him, and
Sinfiotli, Sigmund's son,
And they gather a host together, and
many a mighty one;
Then they set the ships in the sea-flood

and sail from the stranger's shore,
And the beaks of the golden dragons see
the Volsungs' land once more;
And men's hearts are fulfilled of joyance;
and they cry, The sun shines now
With never a curse to hide it, and they
shall reap that sow!
Then for many a day sits Sigmund 'neath
the boughs of the Branstock green,
With his earls and lords about him as the
Volsung wont hath been.
And oft he thinketh on Signy and oft he
nameth her name,
And tells how she spent her joyance and
her life-days and her fame
That the Volsung kin might blossom and
bear the fruit of worth
For the hope of unborn people and the
harvest of the earth.
And again he thinks of the word that he
spake that other day,
How he should abide there lonely when
his kin was passed away,
Their glory and sole avenger, their after-
summer seed.

But far and wide went Sinfiotli through the earth, mowing the war swathe and wasting the land, and passing but little time in song and laughter in his father's hall. So went his days in warfare and valour, and yet his end was not glorious, for he drank of the poisoned cup given him by the sister of a warrior he had rightly slain.

None might come nigh Sigmund in his anguish as he lifted the head of his fallen foster-child, and then swiftly bare him from the hall. On he went through

dark thicket and over wind-swept heath, past the foot-hills and the homes of the deer, till he came to a great rushing water, whereon was a white-sailed boat, manned by a mighty man, "one-eyed and seeming ancient." This mighty one told Sigmund he had been bidden to waft a great king over the water, and bade him lay his burden on board, but when Sigmund would have followed he could see neither ship nor man.

But Sigmund went back to his throne, and behaved himself as a king, listening to his people's plaints, and dealing out justice.

Of the last battle of King Sigmund, and the death of him.

Now there was a king of the Islands,
whom the tale doth Eylimi call,
And saith he was wise and valiant, though
his kingdom were but small:
He had one only daughter that Hiordis
had to name,
A woman wise and shapely beyond the
praise of fame.
And now saith the son of King Volsung
that his time is short enow
To labour the Volsung garden, and the
hand must be set to the plough:
So he sendeth an earl of the people to
King Eylimi's high-built hall,
Bearing the gifts and the tokens, and this
word in his mouth withal:

"King Sigmund the son of Volsung hath
sent me here with a word
That plenteous good of thy daughter

among all folk he hath heard,
And he wooeth that wisest of women that
she may sit on his throne.

"Now hereof would he have an answer
within a half-month's space,
And these gifts meanwhile he giveth for
the increase of thy grace."

So King Eylimi hearkened the message,
and hath no word to say,
For an earl of King Lyngi the mighty is
come that very day,
He too for the wooing of Hiordis: and
Lyngi's realm is at hand,
But afar King Sigmund abideth o'er many
a sea and land:
And the man is young and eager, and grim
and guileful of mood.

At last he sayeth: "Abide here such space
as thou deemest good,
But tomorn shalt thou have thine answer
that thine heart may the lighter be,
For the hearkening of harp and songcraft,
and the dealing with game and
glee."
Then he went to Queen Hiordis' bower,
where she worked in the silk and
the gold
The deeds of the world that should be,
and the deeds that were of old.
And he stood before her and said:

"Often have I told thee that thou shouldst wed only the man thou wouldst. Now it hath come to pass that two kings desire thee."

And she swiftly rose to her feet as she said, "And which be they?"

He spake: "The first is Lyngi, a valiant
man and a fair,
A neighbour ill for thy father, if a foe's
name he must bear:
And the next is King Sigmund the Volsung
of a land far over sea,
And well thou knowest his kindred, and
his might and his valiancy,
And the tales of his heart of a God; and
though old he be waxen now,
Yet men deem that the wide world's
blossom from Sigmund's loins shall
grow."

Said Hiordis: "I wot, my father, that hereof
may strife arise;
Yet soon spoken is mine answer; for I,
who am called the wise,
Shall I thrust by the praise of the people,
and the tale that no ending hath,
And the love and the heart of the godlike,
and the heavenward-leading path,
For the rose and the stem of the lily, and
the smooth-lipped youngling's kiss,
And the eyes' desire that passeth, and the
frail unstable bliss?
Now shalt thou tell King Sigmund, that I
deem it the crown of my life
To dwell in the house of his fathers amidst
all peace and strife."

Now the king's heart sore misgave him,
but herewith must he be content,
And great gifts to the earl of Lyngi and a
word withal he sent,
That the woman's troth was plighted to
another people's king.
But King Sigmund's earl on the morrow
hath joyful yea-saying,
And ere two moons be perished he shall
fetch his bride away.
"And bid him," King Eylimi sayeth, "to
come with no small array,
But with sword and shield and war-shaft,
lest aught of ill betide."

So forth goes the earl of Sigmund across
the sea-flood wide,
And comes to the land of the Volsungs,
and meeteth Sigmund the king,
And tells how he sped on his errand, and
the joyful yea-saying.
So King Sigmund maketh him ready, and
they ride adown to the sea
All glorious of gear and raiment, and a
goodly company.
Yet hath Sigmund thought of his father,
and the deed he wrought before,
And hath scorn to gather his people and
all his hosts of war
To wend to the feast and the wedding: yet
are their long-ships ten,
And the shielded folk aboard them are the
mightiest men of men.
So Sigmund goeth a shipboard, and they

hoist their sails to the wind,
And the beaks of the golden dragons leave
the Volsungs' land behind.
Then come they to Eylimi's kingdom, and
good welcome have they there,
And when Sigmund looked on Hiordis, he
deemed her wise and fair.
But her heart was exceeding fain when she
saw the glorious king,
And it told her of times that should be full
many a noble thing.

So there is Sigmund wedded at a great and
goodly feast,
And day by day on Hiordis the joy of her
heart increased;
And her father joyed in Sigmund and his
might and majesty,
And dead in the heart of the Isle-king his
ancient fear did lie.

Yet, forsooth, had men looked seaward,
they had seen the gathering cloud,
And the little wind arising, that should
one day pipe so loud.
For well may ye wot indeed that King
Lyngi the Mighty is wroth,
When he getteth the gifts and the answer,
and that tale of the woman's troth:
And he saith he will have the gifts and the
woman herself withal,
Either for loving or hating, and that both
those heads shall fall.
So now when Sigmund and Hiordis are
wedded a month or more,
And the Volsung bids men dight them to
cross the sea-flood o'er,

Lo, how there cometh the tidings of
measureless mighty hosts
Who are gotten ashore from their long-
ships on the skirts of King Eylimi's
coasts.

Sore boded the heart of the Isle-king of
what the end should be.
But Sigmund long beheld him, and he
said: "Thou deem'st of me
That my coming hath brought thee evil;
but put aside such things;
For long have I lived, and I know it, that
the lives of mighty kings
Are not cast away, nor drifted like the
down before the wind;
And surely I know, who say it, that never
would Hiordis' mind
Have been turned to wed King Lyngi or
aught but the Volsung seed.
Come, go we forth to the battle, that shall
be the latest deed
Of thee and me meseemeth: yea, whether
thou live or die,
No more shall the brand of Odin at peace
in his scabbard lie."

And therewith he brake the peace-strings
and drew the blade of bale,
And Death on the point abided, Fear sat
on the edges pale.

So men ride adown to the sea-strand, and
the kings their hosts array
When the high noon flooded heaven; and
the men of the Volsungs lay,
With King Eylimi's shielded champions

mid Lyngi's hosts of war,
As the brown pips lie in the apple when ye
cut it through the core.

But now when the kings were departed,
from the King's house Hiordis went,
And before men joined the battle she
came to a woody bent,
Where she lay with one of her maidens
the death and the deeds to behold.

In the noon sun shone King Sigmund as an
image all of gold,
And he stood before the foremost and the
banner of his fame,
And many a thing he remembered, and he
called on each earl by his name
To do well for the house of the Volsungs,
and the ages yet unborn.
Then he tossed up the sword of the
Branstock, and blew on his father's
horn,
Dread of so many a battle, doom-song of
so many a man.
Then all the earth seemed moving as the
hosts of Lyngi ran
On the Volsung men and the Isle-folk like
wolves upon the prey;
But sore was their labour and toil ere the
end of their harvesting day.

On went the Volsung banners, and on
went Sigmund before,
And his sword was the flail of the tiller on
the wheat of the wheat-thrashing
floor,
And his shield was rent from his arm, and

his helm was sheared from his
head:
But who may draw nigh him to smite for
the heap and the rampart of dead?
White went his hair on the wind like the
ragged drift of the cloud,
And his dust-driven, blood-beaten harness
was the death-storm's angry shroud,
When the summer sun is departing in the
first of the night of wrack;
And his sword was the cleaving lightning,
that smites and is hurried aback
Ere the hand may rise against it; and his
voice was the following thunder.

Then cold grew the battle before him,
dead-chilled with the fear and the
wonder:
For again in his ancient eyes the light of
victory gleamed;
From his mouth grown tuneful and sweet
the song of his kindred streamed;
And no more was he worn and weary, and
no more his life seemed spent:
And with all the hope of his childhood
was his wrath of battle blent;
And he thought: A little further, and the
river of strife is passed,
And I shall sit triumphant the king of the
world at last.

But lo, through the hedge of the war-
shafts a mighty man there came,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, but his
visage shone like flame:
Gleaming-grey was his kirtle, and his hood
was cloudy blue;

And he bore a mighty twi-bill, as he
waded the fight-sheaves through,
And stood face to face with Sigmund, and
upheaved the bill to smite.
Once more round the head of the Volsung
fierce glittered the Branstock's light,
The sword that came from Odin; and
Sigmund's cry once more
Rang out to the very heavens above the
din of war.
Then clashed the meeting edges with
Sigmund's latest stroke,
And in shivering shards fell earthward
that fear of worldly folk.
But changed were the eyes of Sigmund,
and the war-wrath left his face;
For that grey-clad mighty helper was
gone, and in his place
Drave on the unbroken spear-wood 'gainst
the Volsung's empty hands:
And there they smote down Sigmund, the
wonder of all lands,
On the foemen, on the death-heap his
deeds had piled that day.

Ill hour for Sigmund's fellows! they fall
like the seeded hay
Before the brown scythes' sweeping, and
there the Isle-king fell
In the fore-front of his battle, wherein he
wrought right well,
And soon they were nought but foemen
who stand upon their feet
On the isle-strand by the ocean where the
grass and the sea-sand meet.

And now hath the conquering War-king

another deed to do,
And he saith: "Who now gainsayeth King
Lyngi come to woo,
The lord and the overcomer and the bane
of the Volsung kin?"
So he fares to the Isle-king's dwelling a
wife of the kings to win;
And the host is gathered together, and
they leave the field of the dead;
And round as a targe of the Goth-folk the
moon ariseth red.

And so when the last is departed, and she
deems they will come not aback,
Fares Hiordis forth from the thicket to the
field of the fateful wrack,
And half-dead was her heart for sorrow as
she waded the swathes of the
sword.
Not far did she search the death-field ere
she found her king and lord
On the heap that his glaive had fashioned:
not yet was his spirit past,
Though his hurts were many and grievous,
and his life-blood ebbing fast;
And glad were his eyes and open as her
wan face over him hung,
And he spake:
"Thou art sick with sorrow, and I
would thou wert not so
young;
Yet as my days passed shall thine pass;
and a short while now it seems
Since my hand first gripped the sword-
hilt, and my glory was but in
dreams."

She said: "Thou livest, thou livest! the
leeches shall heal thee still."

"Nay," said he, "my heart hath hearkened
to Odin's bidding and will;
For today have mine eyes beheld him:
nay, he needed not to speak:
Forsooth I knew of his message and the
thing he came to seek.
And now do I live but to tell thee of the
days that are yet to come:
And perchance to solace thy sorrow; and
then will I get me home
To my kin that are gone before me. Lo,
yonder where I stood
The shards of a glaive of battle that was
once the best of the good:
Take them and keep them surely. I have
lived no empty days;
The Norns were my nursing mothers; I
have won the people's praise.
When the Gods for one deed asked me I
ever gave them twain;
Spendthrift of glory I was, and great was
my life-days' gain;
Now these shards have been my fellow in
the work the Gods would have,
But today hath Odin taken the gift that
once he gave.
I have wrought for the Volsungs truly, and
yet have I known full well
That a better one than I am shall bear the
tale to tell:
And for him shall these shards be
smithied; and he shall be my son
To remember what I have forgotten and to

do what I left undone."

Then failed the voice of Sigmund; but so
mighty was the man,
That a long while yet he lingered till the
dusky night grew wan,
And she sat and sorrowed o'er him, but no
more a word he spake.
Then a long way over the sea-flood the
day began to break;
And when the sun was arisen a little he
turned his head
Till the low beams bathed his eyen, and
there lay Sigmund dead.
And the sun rose up on the earth; but
where was the Volsung kin
And the folk that the Gods had begotten
the praise of all people to win?

How King Sigmund the Volsung was laid in mound on the sea-side of the Isle-realm.

Now Hiordis looked from the dead, and
her eyes strayed down to the sea,
And a shielded ship she saw, and a war-
dight company,
Who beached the ship for the landing: so
swift she fled away,
And once more to the depth of the thicket,
wherein her handmaid lay:
And she said: "I have left my lord, and my
lord is dead and gone,

And he gave me a charge full heavy, and
here are we twain alone,
And earls from the sea are landing: give
me thy blue attire,
And take my purple and gold and my
crown of the sea-flood's fire,
And be thou the wife of King Volsung
when men of our names shall ask,
And I will be the handmaid: now I bid
thee to this task,
And I pray thee not to fail me, because of
thy faith and truth,
And because I have ever loved thee, and
thy mother fostered my youth."

So the other nought gainsaith it and they
shift their raiment there:
But well-spoken was the maiden, and a
woman tall and fair.

Now the lord of those new-coming men
was a king and the son of a king,
King Elf the son of the Helper, and he
sailed from warfaring
And drew anigh to the Isle-realm and
sailed along the strand;
For the shipmen needed water and fain
would go a-land;
And King Elf stood hard by the tiller while
the world was yet a-cold:
Then the red sun lit the dawning, and they
looked, and lo, behold!
The wrack of a mighty battle, and heaps
of the shielded dead,

And a woman alive amidst them, a queen
with crownèd head,
And her eyes strayed down to the sea-
strand, and she saw that weaponed
folk,
And turned and fled to the thicket: then
the lord of the shipmen spoke:
"Lo, here shall we lack for water, for the
brooks with blood shall run,
Yet wend we ashore to behold it and to
wot of the deeds late done."

So they turned their faces to Sigmund, and
waded the swathes of the sword.
"O, look ye long," said the Sea-king, "for
here lieth a mighty lord:
And all these are the deeds of his war-
flame, yet hardy hearts, be sure,
That they once durst look in his face or
the wrath of his eyen endure;
Though his lips be glad and smiling as a
God that dreameth of mirth.
Would God I were one of his kindred, for
none such are left upon earth.
Now fare we into the thicket, for thereto is
the woman fled,
And belike she shall tell us the story of
this field of the mighty dead."

So they wend and find the women, and
bespeak them kind and fair:
Then spake the gold-crowned handmaid:
"Of the Isle-king's house we were,
And I am the Queen called Hiordis; and
the man that lies on the field
Was mine own lord Sigmund the Volsung,
the mightiest under shield."

Then all amazed were the sea-folk when
they hearkened to that word,
And great and heavy tidings they deem
their ears have heard:
But again spake out the Sea-king: "And
this blue-clad one beside,
So pale, and as tall as a Goddess, and
white and lovely eyed?"

"In sooth and in troth," said the woman,
"my serving-maid is this;
She hath wept long over the battle, and
sore afraid she is."

Now the king looks hard upon her, but he
saith no word thereto,
And down again to the death-field with
the women-folk they go.
There they set their hands to the labour,
and amidst the deadly mead
They raise a mound for Sigmund, a mighty
house indeed;
And therein they set that folk-king, and
goodly was his throne,
And dight with gold and scarlet: and the
walls of the house were done
With the cloven shields of the foemen, and
banners borne to field;
But none might find his war-helm or the
splinters of his shield,
And clenched and fast was his right hand,
but no sword therein he had:
For Hiordis spake to the shipmen:
"Our lord and
master
bade
That the shards of his glaive of battle

should go with our lady the Queen:
And by them that lie a-dying a many
things are seen."

How Queen Hiordis is known; and how she abideth in the house of Elf the son of the Helper.

Then Elf asked of the two women where they would go, and they prayed that he would take them to his land, where they dwelt for long in all honour.

But the old queen, the mother of Elf, was indeed a woman wise above many, and fain would she know why the less noble of the two was dressed the more richly and why the handmaid gave always wiser counsel than her mistress. So she bade her son to speak suddenly and to take them unawares.

Then he asked the gold-clad one how she knew in the dark winter night that the dawn was near. She answered that ever in her youth she awoke at the dawn to follow her daily work, and always was she wont to drink of whey, and now, though the times were changed, she still woke athirst near the dawning.

To Elf it seemed strange that a fair queen in her youth had need to arise to follow the plough in the dark of the winter morning, and turning to the handmaid he asked of her the same question. She replied that in her youth her father had given her the gold ring she still wore, and which had the magic power of growing cold as the hours neared daybreak, and such was her dawning sign.

Then did Elf know of their exchange, and he told Hiordis that long had he loved her and felt pity for

her sorrow, and that he would make her his wife. So that night she sat on the high-seat with the crown on her head, and dreamt of what had been and what was to be.

So passeth the summer season, and the
harvest of the year,
And the latter days of the winter on
toward the springtide wear.

BOOK II.

REGIN.

Of the birth of Sigurd the son of Sigmund.

Peace lay on the land of the Helper and
the house of Elf his son;
There merry men went bedward when
their tide of toil was done,
And glad was the dawn's awakening, and
the noontide fair and glad:
There no great store had the franklin, and
enough the hireling had;
And a child might go unguarded the
length and breadth of the land
With a purse of gold at his girdle and gold
rings on his hand.
'Twas a country of cunning craftsmen, and
many a thing they wrought,
That the lands of storm desired, and the

homes of warfare sought.
But men deemed it o'er-well warded by
more than its stems of fight,
And told how its earth-born watchers yet
lived of plenteous might.
So hidden was that country, and few men
sailed its sea,
And none came o'er its mountains of men-
folk's company.
But fair-fruited, many-peopled, it lies a
goodly strip,
'Twixt the mountains cloudy-headed and
the sea-flood's surging lip,
And a perilous flood is its ocean, and its
mountains, who shall tell
What things, in their dales deserted and
their wind-swept heaths may dwell.

Again, in the house of the Helper there
dwelt a certain man
Beardless and low of stature, of visage
pinched and wan:
So exceeding old was Regin, that no son of
man could tell
In what year of the days passed over he
came to that land to dwell:
But the youth of King Elf had he fostered,
and the Helper's youth thereto,
Yea and his father's father's: the lore of all
men he knew,
And was deft in every cunning, save the
dealings of the sword:
So sweet was his tongue-speech fashioned,
that men trowed his every word;

His hand with the harp-strings blended
was the mingler of delight
With the latter days of sorrow; all tales he
told aright;
The Master of the Masters in the
smithying craft was he;
And he dealt with the wind and the
weather and the stilling of the sea;
Nor might any learn him leech-craft, for
before that race was made,
And that man-folk's generation, all their
life-days had he weighed.

In this land of the Helper and Elf, his son, dwelt Hiordis, and here her son, the last of the Volsungs, was born. The babe had eyes of such wondrous brightness that the folk shrank from him, while they rejoiced over his birth, but his mother spake to the babe as to one who might understand, and she told him of Sigmund and Volsung, of their wars and their troubles and their joys. Then she gave him to her maids to bear him to the kings of the land that they might rejoice with her.

But there sat the Helper of Men with King
Elf and his Earls in the hall,
And they spake of the deeds that had
been, and told of the times to
befall,
And they hearkened and heard sweet
voices and the sound of harps draw
nigh,
Till their hearts were exceeding merry and
they knew not wherefore or why:
Then, lo, in the hall white raiment, as
thither the damsels came,
And amid the hands of the foremost was

the woven gold aflame.

"O daughters of earls," said the Helper,
"what tidings then do ye bear?
Is it grief in the merry morning, or joy or
wonder or fear?"

Quoth the first: "It is grief for the foemen
that the Masters of God-home
would grieve."

Said the next: "'Tis a wonder of wonders,
that the hearkening world shall
believe."

"A fear of all fears," said the third, "for the
sword is uplifted on men."

"A joy of all joys," said the fourth, "once
come, and it comes not again!"

"What then hath betid," said King Elf, "do
the high Gods stand in our gate?"

"Nay," said they, "else were we silent, and
they should be telling of fate."

"Is the bidding come," said the Helper,
"that we wend the Gods to see?"

"Many summers and winters," they said,
"ye shall live on the earth, it may
be."

"Speak then," said the ancient Helper, "let
the worst and the best be said."

They said: "The earth is weary: but the
tender blade hath sprung,
That shall wax till beneath its branches
fair bloom the meadows green;
For the Gods and they that were mighty
were glad erewhile with the
Queen."

Said King Elf: "How say ye, women? Of a
King new-born do ye tell,
By a God of the Heavens begotten in our
fathers' house to dwell?"

"By a God of the Earth," they answered;
"but greater yet is the son,
Though long were the days of Sigmund,
and great are the deeds he hath
done."

Then she with the golden burden to the
kingly high-seat stepped
And away from the new-born baby the
purple cloths she swept,
And cried: "O King of the people, long
mayst thou live in bliss,
As our hearts today are happy! Queen
Hiordis sends thee this,
And she saith that the world shall call it
by the name that thou shalt name;

Now the gift to thee is given, and to thee
is brought the fame."

Then e'en as a man astonied King Elf the
Volsung took,
While his feast-hall's ancient timbers with
the cry of the earl-folk shook;

With the love of many peoples was the
wise king smitten through,
As he hung o'er the new-born Volsung: but
at last he raised his head,
And looked forth kind o'er his people, and
spake aloud and said:

"O Sigmund King of Battle; O man of
many days,
Whom I saw mid the shields of the fallen
and the dead men's silent praise,
Lo, how hath the dark tide perished and
the dawn of day begun!
And now, O mighty Sigmund, wherewith
shall we name thy son?"

But there rose up a man most ancient, and
he cried: "Hail Dawn of the Day!
How many things shalt thou quicken, how
many shalt thou slay!
How many things shalt thou waken, how
many lull to sleep!
How many things shalt thou scatter, how
many gather and keep!
O me, how thy love shall cherish, how
thine hate shall wither and burn!

How the hope shall be sped from thy right
hand, nor the fear to thy left
return!
O thy deeds that men shall sing of! O thy
deeds that the Gods shall see!
O SIGURD, Son of the Volsungs, O Victory
yet to be!"

Men heard the name and they knew it,
and they caught it up in the air,
And it went abroad by the windows and
the doors of the feast-hall fair,
It went through street and market; o'er
meadow and acre it went,
And over the wind-stirred forest and the
dearth of the sea-beat bent,
And over the sea-flood's welter, till the
folk of the fishers heard,
And the hearts of the isle-abiders on the
sun-scorched rocks were stirred.

Sigurd getteth to him the horse that is called Greyfell.

Now waxeth the son of Sigmund in might
and goodliness,
And soft the days win over, and all men
his beauty bless.
But amidst the summer season was the
Isle-queen Hiordis wed
To King Elf the son of the Helper, and fair
their life-days sped.
Peace lay on the land for ever, and the
fields gave good increase,
And there was Sigurd waxing mid the

plenty and the peace.
Now hath the child grown greater, and is
keen and eager of wit
And full of understanding, and oft hath he
joy to sit
Amid talk of weighty matters when the
wise men meet for speech;
And joyous he is moreover and blithe and
kind with each.
But Regin the wise craftsmaster heedeth
the youngling well,
And before the Kings he cometh, and saith
such words to tell.

"I have fostered thy youth, King Elf, and
thine O Helper of men,
And ye wot that such a master no king
shall see again;
And now would I foster Sigurd; for,
though he be none of thy blood,
Mine heart of his days that shall be
speaketh abundant good."

Then spake the Helper of men-folk: "Yea,
do herein thy will:
For thou art the Master of Masters, and
hast learned me all my skill:
But think how bright is this youngling,
and thy guile from him withhold;
For this craft of thine hath shown me that
thy heart is grim and cold,
Though three men's lives thrice over thy
wisdom might not learn;
And I love this son of Sigmund, and mine
heart to him doth yearn."

Then Regin laughed, and answered: "I

doled out cunning to thee;
But nought with him will I measure: yet
no cold-heart shall he be,
Nor grim, nor evil-natured: for whate'er
my will might frame,
Gone forth is the word of the Norns, that
abideth ever the same.
And now, despite my cunning, how deem
ye I shall die?"

And they said he would live as he listed,
and at last in peace should lie
When he listed to live no longer; so
mighty and wise he was.

But again he laughed and answered: "One
day it shall come to pass,
That a beardless youth shall slay me: I
know the fateful doom;
But nought may I withstand it, as it
heaves up dim through the gloom."

So is Sigurd now with Regin, and he
learns him many things;
Yea, all save the craft of battle, that men
learned the sons of kings:
The smithying sword and war-coat; the
carving runes aright;
The tongues of many countries, and soft
speech for men's delight;
The dealing with the harp-strings, and the
winding ways of song.
So wise of heart waxed Sigurd, and of
body wondrous strong:
And he chased the deer of the forest, and
many a wood-wolf slew,
And many a bull of the mountains: and

the desert dales he knew,
And the heaths that the wind sweeps over;
and seaward would he fare,
Far out from the outer skerries, and alone
the sea-wights dare.

One day did Regin tell Sigurd of deeds done in the past by kings both bold and wise, and the lad longed, too, to do the like, and his bright eyes glowed with desire. And Regin told him that he should follow his Volsung fathers and roam far and wide, leaving the peace-lovers and home-abiders who had cherished his youth.

This roused Sigurd's wrath, for he would have nought said against those who had reared him, but Regin bade him ask for one of the horses of Gripir, and banished his anger by a song of the deeds of the Choosers of the Slain. Before the song was finished Sigurd went to King Elf and asked that he might have authority to seek a horse from King Gripir.

Then smiled King Elf, and answered: "A
long way wilt thou ride,
To where unpeace and troubles and the
griefs of the soul abide,
Yea unto the death at the last: yet surely
shall thou win
The praise of many a people: so have thy
way herein.
Forsooth no more may we hold thee than
the hazel copse may hold
The sun of the early dawning, that turneth
it all unto gold."

Then sweetly Sigurd thanked them; and
through the night he lay

Mid dreams of many a matter till the
dawn was on the way;
Then he shook the sleep from off him, and
that dwelling of Kings he left
And wended his ways unto Gripir. On a
crag from the mountain reft
Was the house of the old King builded;
and a mighty house it was,
Though few were the sons of men that
over its threshold would pass:
But the wild ernes cried about it, and the
vultures toward it flew,
And the winds from the heart of the
mountains searched every chamber
through,
And about were meads wide-spreading;
and many a beast thereon,
Yea some that are men-folk's terror, their
sport and pasture won.

So into the hall went Sigurd; and amidst
was Gripir set
In a chair of the sea-beast's tooth; and his
sweeping beard nigh met
The floor that was green as the ocean, and
his gown was of mountain-gold,
And the kingly staff in his hand was
knobbed with the crystal cold.

Now the first of the twain spake Gripir:
"Hail King with the eyen bright!
Nought needest thou show the token, for I
know of thy life and thy light.
And no need to tell of thy message; it was
wafted here on the wind,
That thou wouldst be coming today a
horse in my meadow to find:

And strong must he be for the bearing of
those deeds of thine that shall be.
Now choose thou of all the way-wearers
that are running loose in my lea."

Then again gat Sigurd outward, and
adown the steep he ran
And unto the horse-fed meadow: but lo, a
grey-clad man,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, there met
him by the way:
And he spake: "Thou hastest, Sigurd; yet
tarry till I say
A word that shall well bestead thee: for I
know of these mountains well
And all the lea of Gripir, and the beasts
that thereon dwell."

"Wouldst thou have red gold for thy
tidings? art thou Gripir's horse-herd
then?
Nay sure, for thy face is shining like the
battle-eager men
My master Regin tells of: and I love thy
cloud-grey gown,
And thy visage gleams above it like a
thing my dreams have known."

"Nay whiles have I heeded the horse-kind,"
then spake that elder of days,
"And sooth do the sages say, when the
beasts of my breeding they praise.
There is one thereof in the meadow, and,
wouldst thou cull him out,

Thou shalt follow an elder's counsel, who
hath brought strange things about,
Who hath known thy father aforetime,
and other kings of thy kin."

So Sigurd said, "I am ready; and what is
the deed to win?"
He said: "We shall drive the horses adown
to the water-side,
That cometh forth from the mountains,
and note what next shall betide."

Then the twain sped on together, and they
drave the horses on
Till they came to a rushing river, a water
wide and wan;
And the white mews hovered o'er it; but
none might hear their cry
For the rush and the rattle of waters, as
the downlong flood swept by.
So the whole herd took the river and
strove the stream to stem,
And many a brave steed was there; but the
flood o'ermastered them:
And some, it swept them down-ward, and
some won back to bank,
Some, caught by the net of the eddies, in
the swirling hubbub sank;
But one of all swam over, and they saw
his mane of grey
Toss over the flowery meadows, a bright
thing far away:
Wide then he wheeled about them, then
took the stream again
And with the waves' white horses mingled
his cloudy mane.

Then spake the elder of days: "Hearken
now, Sigurd, and hear;
Time was when I gave thy father a gift
thou shalt yet deem dear,
And this horse is a gift of my giving:—
heed nought where thou mayst
ride:
For I have seen thy fathers in a shining
house abide,
And on earth they thought of its
threshold, and the gifts I had to
give;
Nor prayed for a little longer, and a little
longer to live."

Then forth he strode to the mountains,
and fain was Sigurd now.
To ask him many a matter: but dim did his
bright shape grow,
As a man from the litten doorway fades
into the dusk of night;
And the sun in the high-noon shone, and
the world was exceeding bright.

So Sigurd turned to the river and stood by
the wave-wet strand,
And the grey horse swims to his feet and
lightly leaps aland,
And the youngling looks upon him, and
deems none beside him good.
And indeed, as tells the story, he was
come of Sleipnir's blood,
The tireless horse of Odin: cloud-grey he
was of hue,
And it seemed as Sigurd backed him that
Sigmund's son he knew,
So glad he went beneath him. Then the

youngling's song arose
As he brushed through the noontide
blossoms of Gripir's mighty close,
Then he singeth the song of Greyfell, the
horse that Odin gave,
Who swam through the sweeping river,
and back through the toppling
wave.

Regin telleth Sigurd of his kindred, and of the Gold that was accursed from ancient days.

Now yet the days pass over, and more
than words may tell
Grows Sigurd strong and lovely, and all
children love him well.
But oft he looks on the mountains and
many a time is fain
To know of what lies beyond them, and
learn of the wide world's gain.

Now again it happed on a day that he sat
in Regin's hall
And hearkened many tidings of what had
chanced to fall,
And of kings that sought their kingdoms
o'er many a waste and wild,
And at last saith the crafty master:
"Thou art King
Sigmund's
child:
Wilt thou wait till these kings of the carles

shall die in a little land,
Or wilt thou serve their sons and carry the cup to their hand;
Or abide in vain for the day that never shall come about,
When their banners shall dance in the wind and shake to the war-gods' shout?"

Then Sigurd answered and said: "Nought such do I look to be.
But thou, a deedless man, too much thou eggest me:
And these folk are good and trusty, and the land is lovely and sweet,
And in rest and in peace it lieth as the floor of Odin's feet:
Yet I know that the world is wide, and filled with deeds unwrought;
And for e'en such work was I fashioned, lest the songcraft come to nought."

Then answered Regin the guileful: "The deed is ready to hand,
Yet holding my peace is the best, for well thou lovest the land;
And thou lovest thy life moreover, and the peace of thy youthful days,
And why should the full-fed feaster his hand to the rye-bread raise?
Yet they say that Sigmund begat thee and he looked to fashion a man.
Fear nought; he lieth quiet in his mound by the sea-waves wan."

So shone the eyes of Sigurd, that the
shield against him hung
Cast back their light as the sunbeams; but
his voice to the roof-tree rung:
"Tell me, thou Master of Masters, what
deed is the deed I shall do?
Nor mock thou the son of Sigmund lest
the day of his birth thou rue."

Then answered the Master of Sleight: "The
deed is the righting of wrong,
And the quelling a bale and a sorrow that
the world hath endured o'erlong,
And the winning a treasure untold, that
shall make thee more than the
kings;
Thereof is the Helm of Aweing, the
wonder of earthly things,
And thereof is its very fellow, the War-
Coat all of gold,
That has not its like in the heavens, nor
has earth of its fellow told."

Then answered Sigurd the Volsung: "How
long hereof hast thou known?
And what unto thee is this treasure, that
thou seemest to give as thine own?"

"Alas!" quoth the smithying master, "it is
mine, yet none of mine,
Since my heart herein avails not, and my
hand is frail and fine—
It is long since I first came hither to seek a
man for my need;
For I saw by a glimmering light that hence
would spring the deed,
And many a deed of the world: but the

generations passed,
And the first of the days was as near to the
end that I sought as the last;
Till I looked on thine eyes in the cradle:
and now I deem through thee,
That the end of my days of waiting, and
the end of my woes shall be."

Then Sigurd awhile was silent; but at last
he answered and said:
"Thou shalt have thy will and the treasure,
and shalt take the curse on thine
head
If a curse the gold enwrappeth: but the
deed will I surely do,
For today the dreams of my childhood
hath bloomed in my heart anew:
And I long to look on the world and the
glory of the earth
And to deal in the dealings of men, and
garner the harvest of worth.
But tell me, thou Master of Masters, where
lieth this measureless wealth;
Is it guarded by swords of the earl-folk, or
kept by cunning and stealth?
Is it over the main sea's darkness, or
beyond the mountain wall?
Or e'en in these peaceful acres anigh to
the hands of all?"

Then Regin answered sweetly: "Hereof
must a tale be told:
Bide sitting, thou son of Sigmund, on the
heap of unwrought gold,
And hearken of wondrous matters, and of
things unheard, unsaid,
And deeds of my beholding ere the first of

Kings was made.

"And first ye shall know of a sooth, that I
never was born of the race
Which the masters of God-home have
made to cover the fair earth's face;
But I come of the Dwarfs departed; and
fair was the earth whileome
Ere the short-lived thralls of the Gods
amidst its dales were come.

"It was Reidmar the Ancient begat me; and
now was he waxen old,
And a covetous man and a king; and he
bade, and I built him a hall,
And a golden glorious house; and thereto
his sons did he call,
And he bade them be evil and wise, that
his will through them might be
wrought.
Then he gave unto Fafnir my brother the
soul that feareth nought,
And the brow of the hardened iron, and
the hand that may never fail,
And the greedy heart of a king, and the
ear that hears no wail.

"But next unto Otter my brother he gave
the snare and the net,
And the longing to wend through the
wild-wood, and wade the highways
wet:
And the foot that never resteth, while
aught be left alive

That hath cunning to match man's cunning
or might with his might to strive.

"And to me, the least and the youngest,
what gift for the slaying of ease?
Save the grief that remembers the past,
and the fear that the future sees;
And the hammer and fashioning-iron, and
the living coal of fire;
And the craft that createth a semblance,
and fails of the heart's desire;
And the toil that each dawning quickens
and the task that is never done;
And the heart that longeth ever, nor will
look to the deed that is won.

"Thus gave my father the gifts that might
never be taken again;
Far worse were we now than the Gods,
and but little better than men.
But yet of our ancient might one thing had
we left us still:
We had craft to change our semblance,
and could shift us at our will
Into bodies of the beast-kind, or fowl, or
fishes cold;

"So dwelt we, brethren and father; and
Fafnir my brother fared
As the scourge and compeller of all things,
and left no wrong undared;
But for me, I toiled and I toiled; and fair
grew my father's house;
But writhen and foul were the hands that

had made it glorious;

"And myself a little fragment amidst it all I saw,
Grim, cold-hearted, and unmighty as the tempest-driven straw.
—Let be.—For Otter my brother saw seldom field or fold,
And he oftenest used that custom, whereof e'en now I told,
And would shift his shape with the wood-beasts and the things of land and sea;
And he knew what joy their hearts had, and what they longed to be,
And their dim-eyed understanding, and his wood-craft waxed so great,
That he seemed the king of the creatures and their very mortal fate.

"Now as the years won over three folk of the heavenly halls
Grew aweary of sleepless sloth, and the day that nought befalls;
And they fain would look on the earth, and their latest handiwork,
And turn the fine gold over, lest a flaw therein should lurk.
And the three were the heart-wise Odin, the Father of the Slain,
And Loki, the World's Begrudger, who maketh all labour vain,
And Hœnir, the Utter-Blameless, who wrought the hope of man,

And his heart and inmost yearnings, when
first the work began;—"

The three wandered over the earth till they came to a mighty river, haunted for long by Otter, by reason of its great wealth of fish. There he lay on the bank, and as he watched the fish in the water his shape was changed to that of a true otter, and he began to devour a golden trout. Two of the gods would have passed without stay, but in the otter Loki saw an enemy, and straightway killed him, rejoicing over his dead body.

As night fell the three gods came to a great hall, wondrously wrought and carved, with golden hangings and forests of pillars. In the midst of the hall sat a king on an ivory throne, and his garments were made of purple from the sea. Kind welcome he gave to the wanderers, and there they feasted and delighted in music and song; but even as they drank and made merry they knew they were caught in the snare.

The king's welcome changed to scornful laughter, and thus he spoke: "Truly are ye gods, but ye are come to people who want you not. Before ye were known to us, still was the winter cold, and the summer warm, and still could we find meat and drink. I am Reidmar, and ye come straight from the slaying of Reidmar's son. Shall I not then take the vengeance I will? Unless, indeed, ye give me the treasure I covet, and then shall ye go your way. This is my sentence. Choose ye which ye will."

Then spake the wise Allfather and prayed Reidmar to unsay his word, and cease to desire the gold. But Reidmar the Wise, and Fafnir the Lord, and Regin the Worker cried aloud in their wrath:—

"'O hearken Gods of the Goths! ye shall
die, and we shall be Gods,
And rule your men belovèd with bitter-
heavy rods,
And make them beasts beneath us, save
today ye do our will,
And pay us the ransom of blood, and our
hearts with the gold fulfill.'

"But Odin spake in answer, and his voice
was awful and cold:
'Give righteous doom, O Reidmar! say
what ye will of the Gold!'

"Then Reidmar laughed in his heart, and
his wrath and his wisdom fled,
And nought but his greed abided; and he
spake from his throne and said:

"'Now hearken the doom I shall speak! Ye
stranger-folk shall be free
When ye give me the Flame of the Waters,
the gathered Gold of the Sea,
That Andvari hideth rejoicing in the wan
realm pale as the grave;
And the Master of Sleight shall fetch it,
and the hand that never gave,
And the heart that begrudgeth for ever
shall gather and give and rue.
—Lo this is the doom of the wise, and no
doom shall be spoken anew.'

"Then Odin spake: 'It is well; the Curser
shall seek for the curse;
And the Greedy shall cherish the evil—
and the seed of the Great they shall
nurse.'

"No word spake Reidmar the great, for the
eyes of his heart were turned
To the edge of the outer desert, so sore for
the gold he yearned.
But Loki I loosed from the toils, and he
goeth his way abroad;
And the heart of Odin he knoweth, and
where he shall seek the Hoard.

"There is a desert of dread in the
uttermost part of the world,
Where over a wall of mountains is a
mighty water hurled,
Whose hidden head none knoweth, nor
where it meeteth the sea;
And that force is the Force of Andvari, and
an Elf of the Dark is he.
In the cloud and the desert he dwelleth
amid that land alone;
And his work is the storing of treasure
within his house of stone.
Time was when he knew of wisdom, and
had many a tale to tell
Of the days before the Dwarf-age, and of
what in that world befell:
And he knew of the stars and the sun, and
the worlds that come and go
On the nether rim of heaven, and whence
the wind doth blow,
And how the sea hangs balanced betwixt
the curving lands,
And how all drew together for the first
Gods' fashioning hands.
But now is all gone from him, save the
craft of gathering gold,
And he heedeth nought of the summer,

nor knoweth the winter cold,
Nor looks to the sun nor the snowfall, nor ever dreams of the sea,
Nor hath heard of the making of men-folk, nor of where the high Gods be;
But ever he gripeth and gathereth, and he toileth hour by hour,
Nor knoweth the noon from the midnight as he looks on his stony bower,
And saith: 'It is short, it is narrow for all I shall gather and get;
For the world is but newly fashioned, and long shall its years be yet.'

"There Loki fareth, and seeth in a land of nothing good,
Far off o'er the empty desert, the reek of the falling flood
Go up to the floor of heaven, and thither turn his feet
As he weaveth the unseen meshes and the snare of strong deceit;
So he cometh his ways to the water, where the glittering foam-bow glows,
And the huge flood leaps the rock-wall and a green arch over it throws.
There under the roof of water he treads the quivering floor,
And the hush of the desert is felt amid the water's roar,
And the bleak sun lighteth the wave-vault, and tells of the fruitless plain,
And the showers that nourish nothing, and the summer come in vain.

"There did the great Guile-master his toils

and his tangles set,
And as wide as was the water, so wide
was woven the net;
And as dim as the Elf's remembrance did
the meshes of it show;
And he had no thought of sorrow, nor
spared to come and go
On his errands of griping and getting till
he felt himself tangled and caught:
Then back to his blinded soul was his
ancient wisdom brought,
And he saw his fall and his ruin, as a man
by the lightning's flame
Sees the garth all flooded by foemen; and
again he remembered his name;
And e'en as a book well written the tale of
the Gods he knew,
And the tale of the making of men, and
much of the deeds they should do.

"Then Andvari groaned and answered: 'I
know what thou wouldst have,
The wealth mine own hands gathered, the
gold that no man gave.'

"'Come forth,' said Loki, 'and give it, and
dwell in peace henceforth—
Or die in the toils if thou listeth, if thy life
be nothing worth.'

"Full sore the Elf lamented, but he came
before the God,
And the twain went into the rock-house
and on fine gold they trod,

And the walls shone bright, and brighter
than the sun of the upper air.
How great was that treasure of treasures:
and the Helm of Dread was there;
The world but in dreams had seen it; and
there was the hauberk of gold;
None other is in the heavens, nor has
earth of its fellow told.

"Then Loki bade the Elf-king bring all to
the upper day,
And he dight himself with his Godhead to
bear the treasure away:
So there in the dim grey desert before the
God of Guile,
Great heaps of the hid-world's treasure the
weary Elf must pile,
And Loki looked on laughing: but, when it
all was done,
And the Elf was hurrying homeward, his
finger gleamed in the sun:
Then Loki cried: 'Thou art guileful: thou
hast not learned the tale
Of the wisdom that Gods hath gotten and
their might of all avail.

"'Come hither again to thy master, and
give the ring to me;
For meseems it is Loki's portion, and the
Bale of Men shall it be.'

"Then the Elf drew off the gold-ring and
stood with empty hand
E'en where the flood fell over 'twixt the

water and the land,
And he gazed on the great Guile-master,
and huge and grim he grew;
And his anguish swelled within him, and
the word of the Norns he knew;
How that gold was the seed of gold to the
wise and the shapers of things,
The hoarders of hidden treasure, and the
unseen glory of rings;
But the seed of woe to the world and the
foolish wasters of men,
And grief to the generations that die and
spring again:
Then he cried:
'There farest thou Loki, and
might I load thee worse
Than with what thine ill heart beareth,
then shouldst thou bear my curse:
But for men a curse thou bearest:
entangled in my gold,
Amid my woe abideth another woe
untold.
Two brethren and a father, eight kings my
grief shall slay;
And the hearts of queens shall be broken,
and their eyes shall loathe the day.'

"But Loki laughed in silence, and swift in
Godhead went,
To the golden hall of Reidmar and the
house of our content.
But when that world of treasure was laid
within our hall
'Twas as if the sun were minded to live

'twixt wall and wall,
And all we stood by and panted. Then
Odin spake and said:

"'O Kings, O folk of the Dwarf-kind, lo, the
ransom duly paid!
Will ye have this sun of the ocean, and
reap the fruitful field,
And garner up the harvest that earth
therefrom shall yield.'

"So he spake; but a little season nought
answered Reidmar the wise,
But turned his face from the Treasure, and
peered with eager eyes
Endlong the hall and athwart it, as a man
may chase about
A ray of the sun of the morning that a
naked sword throws out;
And lo from Loki's right-hand came the
flash of the fruitful ring,
And at last spake Reidmar scowling:
'Ye wait for my
yea-
saying
That your feet may go free on the earth,
and the fear of my toils may be
done;
That then ye may say in your laughter:
The fools of the time agone!
The purblind eyes of the Dwarf-kind! they
have gotten the garnered sheaf
And have let their Masters depart with the
Seed of Gold and of Grief:
O Loki, friend of Allfather, cast down
Andvari's ring,
Or the world shall yet turn backward and

the high heavens lack a king.'

"Then Loki drew off the Elf-ring and cast it
down on the heap,
And forth as the gold met gold did the
light of its glory leap:
But he spake: 'It rejoiceth my heart that no
whit of all ye shall lack.
Lest the curse of the Elf-king cleave not,
and ye 'scape the utter wrack.'

Then Regin loosed the shackles of the gods and they departed into the night, but Odin stayed in the doorway and thus he spake: "Why do ye thus desire treasure and take sorrow to yourselves? Know ye not that I was before your fathers' fathers, and that I can foresee your fate, and the end of the gold ye covet? I am the Wise One who ordereth all."

Then they went, but Regin afterwards often recalled Odin's words and the evening filled with the gleam of the gold, but little cared he then, so well he loved the gold. And he prayed his father to keep the treasure, but give a little unto him and Fafnir for the help they had given him that day.

His father in no wise heeded his words, but sat ever on his ivory throne, staring moodily at the gold. But Fafnir grew fierce and grim as he watched him.

"The night waned into the morning, and
still above the Hoard
Sat Reidmar clad in purple; but Fafnir
took his sword,
And I took my smithying-hammer, and
apart in the world we went;
But I came aback in the even, and my

heart was heavy and spent;
And I longed, but fear was upon me and I
durst not go to the Gold;
So I lay in the house of my toil mid the
things I had fashioned of old;
And methought as I lay in my bed 'twixt
waking and slumber of night
That I heard the tinkling metal and beheld
the hall alight,
But I slept and dreamed of the Gods, and
the things that never have slept,
Till I woke to a cry and a clashing and
forth from the bed I leapt,
And there by the heaped-up Elf-gold my
brother Fafnir stood,
And there at his feet lay Reidmar and
reddened the Treasure with blood;
And e'en as I looked on his eyen they
glazed and whitened with death,
And forth on the torch-litten hall he shed
his latest breath.

"But I looked on Fafnir and trembled for
he wore the Helm of Dread,
And his sword was bare in his hand, and
the sword and the hand were red
With the blood of our father Reidmar, and
his body was wrapped in gold,
With the ruddy-gleaming mailcoat of
whose fellow hath nought been
told,
And it seemed as I looked upon him that
he grew beneath mine eyes:
And then in the mid-hall's silence did his
dreadful voice arise:

"'I have slain my father Reidmar, that I

alone might keep
The Gold of the darksome places, the
Candle of the Deep.
I am such as the Gods have made me, lest
the Dwarf-kind people the earth,
Or mingle their ancient wisdom with its
short-lived latest birth.
I shall dwell alone henceforward, and the
Gold and its waxing curse,
I shall brood on them both together, let
my life grow better or worse.
And I am a King henceforward and long
shall be my life,
And the Gold shall grow with my longing,
for I shall hide it from strife,'
And hoard up the Ring of Andvari in the
house thine hand hath built.
O thou, wilt thou tarry and tarry, till I cast
thy blood on the guilt?
Lo, I am a King for ever, and alone on the
Gold shall I dwell
And do no deed to repent of and leave no
tale to tell.'

"More awful grew his visage as he spake
the word of dread,
And no more durst I behold him, but with
heart a-cold I fled;
I fled from the glorious house my hands
had made so fair,
As poor as the new-born baby with nought
of raiment or gear:
I fled from the heaps of gold, and my
goods were the eager will,
And the heart that remembereth all, and
the hand that may never be still.

"Then unto this land I came, and that was
long ago.
As men-folk count the years; and I taught
them to reap and to sow,

"And I grew the master of masters—Think
thou how strange it is
That the sword in the hands of a stripling
shall one day end all this!

"Yet oft mid all my wisdom did I long for
my brother's part,
And Fafnir's mighty kingship weighed
heavy on my heart
When the Kings of the earthly kingdoms
would give me golden gifts
From out of their scanty treasures, due
pay for my cunning shifts.
And once—didst thou number the years
thou wouldst think it long ago—
I wandered away to the country from
whence our stem did grow.

"Then I went to the pillared hall-stead,
and lo, huge heaps of gold,
And to and fro amidst them a mighty
Serpent rolled:
Then my heart grew chill with terror, for I
thought on the wont of our race,
And I, who had lost their cunning, was a
man in a deadly place,

A feeble man and a swordless in the lone
destroyer's fold;
For I knew that the Worm was Fafnir, the
Wallower on the Gold.

"So I gathered my strength and fled, and
hid my shame again
Mid the foolish sons of men-folk; and the
more my hope was vain,
The more I longed for the Treasure, and
deliv'rance from the yoke:
And yet passed the generations, and I
dwelt with the short-lived folk.

"Long years, and long years after, the tale
of men-folk told
How up on the Glittering Heath was the
house and the dwelling of gold,
And within that house was the Serpent,
and the Lord of the Fearful Face:
Then I wondered sore of the desert; for I
thought of the golden place
My hands of old had builded; for I knew
by many a sign
That the Fearful Face was my brother, that
the blood of the Worm was mine.
This was ages long ago, and yet in that
desert he dwells,
Betwixt him and men death lieth, and no
man of his semblance tells;
But the tale of the great Gold-wallower is
never the more outworn.
Then came thy kin, O Sigurd, and thy
father's father was born,
And I fell to the dreaming of dreams, and I
saw thine eyes therein,
And I looked and beheld thy glory and all

that thy sword should win;
And I thought that thou shouldst be he,
who should bring my heart its rest,
That of all the gifts of the Kings thy sword
should give me the best.

"Ah, I fell to the dreaming of dreams; and
oft the gold I saw,
And the golden-fashioned Hauberk, clean-
wrought without a flaw,
And the Helm that aweth the world; and I
knew of Fafnir's heart
That his wisdom was greater than mine,
because he had held him apart,
Nor spilt on the sons of men-folk our
knowledge of ancient days,
Nor bartered one whit for their love, nor
craved for the people's praise.

"And some day I shall have it all, his gold
and his craft and his heart
And the gathered and garnered wisdom he
guards in the mountains apart."

And he spake: "Hast thou hearkened,
Sigurd, wilt thou help a man that is
old
To avenge him for his father? Wilt thou
win that Treasure of Gold
And be more than the Kings of the earth?
Wilt thou rid the earth of a wrong
And heal the woe and the sorrow my heart
hath endured o'erlong?"

Then Sigurd looked upon him with
steadfast eyes and clear,
And Regin drooped and trembled as he
stood the doom to hear:
But the bright child spake as aforetime,
and answered the Master and said:
"Thou shalt have thy will, and the
Treasure, and take the curse on
thine head."

Of the forging of the Sword that is called The Wrath of Sigurd.

But when the morrow was come he went
to his mother and spake:
"The shards, the shards of the sword, that
thou gleanedst for my sake
In the night on the field of slaughter, in
the tide when my father fell,
Hast thou kept them through sorrow and
joyance? hast thou warded them
trusty and well?
Where hast thou laid them, my mother?"
Then she
looked
upon
him
and
said:
"Art thou wroth, O Sigurd my son, that
such eyes are in thine head?
And wilt thou be wroth with thy mother?
do I withstand thee at all?"

"Nay," said he, "nought am I wrathful, but
the days rise up like a wall
Betwixt my soul and the deeds, and I
strive to rend them through.

"Now give me the sword, my mother, that
Sigmund gave thee to keep."

She said: "I shall give it thee gladly, for
fain shall I be of thy praise
When thou knowest my careful keeping of
that hope of the earlier days."

So she took his hand in her hand, and they
went their ways, they twain;
Till they came to the treasure of queen-
folk, the guarded chamber of gain:
They were all alone with its riches, and
she turned the key in the gold,
And lifted the sea-born purple, and the
silken web unrolled,
And lo, 'twixt her hands and her bosom
the shards of Sigmund's sword;
No rust-fleck stained its edges, and the
gems of the ocean's hoard
Were as bright in the hilts and glorious, as
when in the Volsungs' hall
It shone in the eyes of the earl-folk and
flashed from the shielded wall.

But Sigurd smiled upon it, and he said: "O
Mother of Kings,
Well hast thou warded the war-glaive for
a mirror of many things,

And a hope of much fulfilment: well hast
thou given to me
The message of my fathers, and the word
of thing to be:
Trusty hath been thy warding, but its hour
is over now:
These shards shall be knit together, and
shall hear the war-wind blow."

Then she felt his hands about her as he
took the fateful sword,
And he kissed her soft and sweetly; but
she answered never a word:

But swift on his ways went Sigurd, and to
Regin's house he came,
Where the Master stood in the doorway
and behind him leapt the flame,
And dark he looked and little: no more his
speech was sweet,
No words on his lip were gathered the
Volsung child to greet,
Till he took the sword from Sigurd and the
shards of the days of old;
Then he spake:
"Will nothing serve thee save this
blue steel and cold,
The bane of thy father's father, the fate of
all his kin,
The baleful blade I fashioned, the Wrath
that the Gods would win?"

Then answered the eye-bright Sigurd: "If
thou thy craft wilt do,
Nought save these battle-gleanings shall
be my helper true:"

So Regin welded together the shards of Sigmund's sword, and wrought the Wrath of Sigurd, whose hilts were great and along whose edge ran a living flame so that men thought it like sunlight and lightning mingled. Then on Greyfell, with the Wrath girt by his side, Sigurd rode to the hall of Gripir, who told him of deeds to be and of the fate that would befall him. In no wise was Sigurd troubled, but smiled as a happy child, and together they talked of the deeds of the kings of the Earth, of the wonders of Heaven, and of the Queen of the Sea.

And Sigurd told Gripir that he indeed was wise above all men, but for himself had the Wrath been fashioned, and he was ready to ride to the Glittering Heath. So they took leave of one another, and as the sky grew blood-red in the West, and the birds were flying homeward, Sigurd drew near to Regin's dwelling.

Sigurd rideth to the Glittering Heath.

Again on the morrow morning doth Sigurd the Volsung ride,
And Regin, the Master of Masters, is faring by his side,
And they leave the dwelling of kings and ride the summer land,
Until at the eve of the day the hills are on either hand;
Then they wend up higher and higher, and over the heaths they fare
Till the moon shines broad on the midnight, and they sleep 'neath the heavens bare;
And they waken and look behind them, and lo, the dawning of day
And the little land of the Helper and its valleys far away;
But the mountains rise before them, a wall exceeding great.

Then spake the Master of Masters: "We have come to the garth and the gate;
There is youth and rest behind thee and many a thing to do,
There is many a fond desire, and each day born anew;
And the land of the Volsungs to conquer, and many a people's praise:
And for me there is rest it may be, and the peaceful end of days.
We have come to the garth and the gate;

to the hall-door now shall we win,
Shall we go to look on the high-seat and
see what sitteth therein?"

"Yea, and what else?" said Sigurd, "was thy
tale but mockeries,
And have I been drifted hither on a wind
of empty lies?"

"It was sooth, it was sooth," said Regin,
"and more might I have told
Had I heart and space to remember the
deeds of the days of old."

Day-long they fared through the
mountains, and that highway's
fashioner,
Forsooth, was a fearful craftsman, and his
hands the waters were,
And the heaped-up ice was his mattock,
and the fire-blast was his man,
And never a whit he heeded though his
walls were waste and wan,
And the guest-halls of that wayside great
heaps of the ashes spent.
But, each as a man alone, through the sun-
bright day they went,
And they rode till the moon rose upward,
and the stars were small and fair,
Then they slept on the long-slaked ashes
beneath the heavens bare;
And the cold dawn came and they
wakened, and the King of the
Dwarf-kind seemed

As a thing of that wan land fashioned; but
Sigurd glowed and gleamed
Amid a shadowless twilight by Greyfell's
cloudy flank,
As a little space they abided while the
latest star-world shrank;
On the backward road looked Regin and
heard how Sigurd drew
The girths of Greyfell's saddle, and the
voice of his sword he knew,

And his war-gear clanged and tinkled as
he leapt to the saddle-stead:
And the sun rose up at their backs and the
grey world changed to red,
And away to the west went Sigurd by the
glory wreathed about,
But little and black was Regin as a fire
that dieth out.
Day-long they rode the mountains by the
crags exceeding old,
And the ash that the first of the Dwarf-
kind found dull and quenched and
cold.
Then the moon in the mid-sky swam, and
the stars were fair and pale,
And beneath the naked heaven they slept
in an ash-grey dale;
And again at the dawn-dusk's ending they
stood upon their feet,
And Sigurd donned his war-gear nor his
eyes would Regin meet.

A clear streak widened in heaven low

down above the earth;
And above it lay the cloud-flecks, and the
sun, anigh its birth,
Unseen, their hosts was staining with the
very hue of blood,
And ruddy by Greyfell's shoulder the Son
of Sigmund stood.

Then spake the Master of Masters: "What
is thine hope this morn
That thou dightest thee, O Sigurd, to ride
this world forlorn?"

"What needeth hope," said Sigurd, "when
the heart of the Volsungs turns
To the light of the Glittering Heath, and
the house where the Waster burns?
I shall slay the Foe of the Gods, as thou
badst me a while agone,
And then with the Gold and its wisdom
shalt thou be left alone."

"O Child," said the King of the Dwarf-kind,
"when the day at last comes round
For the dread and the Dusk of the Gods,
and the kin of the Wolf is unbound,
When thy sword shall hew the fire, and
the wildfire beateth thy shield,
Shalt thou praise the wages of hope and
the Gods that pitched the field?"

"O Foe of the Gods," said Sigurd, "wouldst
thou hide the evil thing,
And the curse that is greater than thou,
lest death end thy labouring,
Lest the night should come upon thee
amidst thy toil for nought?

It is me, it is me that thou fearest, if
indeed I know thy thought;
Yea me, who would utterly light the face
of all good and ill,
If not with the fruitful beams that the
summer shall fulfill,
Then at least with the world a-blazing,
and the glare of the grinded sword.

"I have hearkened not nor heeded the
words of thy fear and thy ruth:
Thou hast told thy tale and thy longing,
and thereto I hearkened well:—
Let it lead thee up to heaven, let it lead
thee down to hell,
The deed shall be done tomorrow: thou
shalt have that measureless Gold,
And devour the garnered wisdom that
blessed thy realm of old,
That hath lain unspent and begrudged in
the very heart of hate:
With the blood and the might of thy
brother thine hunger shalt thou
sate;
And this deed shall be mine and thine; but
take heed for what followeth then!
Let each do after his kind! I shall do the
deeds of men;
I shall harvest the field of their sowing, in
the bed of their strewing shall
sleep;
To them shall I give my life-days, to the
Gods my glory to keep.
But them with the wealth and the wisdom

that the best of the Gods might
praise,
If thou shall indeed excel them and
become the hope of the days,
Then me in turn hast thou conquered, and
I shall be in turn
Thy fashioned brand of the battle through
good and evil to burn,
Or the flame that sleeps in thy stithy for
the gathered winds to blow,
When thou listest to do and undo and
thine uttermost cunning to show.
But indeed I wot full surely that thou shalt
follow thy kind;
And for all that cometh after, the Norns
shall loose and bind."

Then his bridle-reins rang sweetly, and the
warding-walls of death,
And Regin drew up to him, and the Wrath
sang loud in the sheath,
And forth from that trench in the
mountains by the westward way
they ride;
And little and black goes Regin by the
golden Volsung's side;

So ever they wended upward, and the
midnight hour was o'er,
And the stars grew pale and paler, and
failed from the heaven's floor,
And the moon was a long while dead, but
where was the promise of day?
No change came over the darkness, no

streak of the dawning grey;
No sound of the wind's uprising adown the night there ran:
It was blind as the Gaping Gulf ere the first of the worlds began.

Then athwart and athwart rode Sigurd and sought the walls of the pass,
But found no wall before him; and the road rang hard as brass
Beneath the hoofs of Greyfell, as up and up he trod:
—Was it the daylight of Hell, or the night of the doorway of God?
But lo, at the last a glimmer, and a light from the west there came,
And another and another, like points of far-off flame;
And they grew and brightened and gathered; and whiles together they ran
Like the moonwake over the waters; and whiles they were scant and wan,
Some greater and some lesser, like the boats of fishers laid
About the sea of midnight; and a dusky dawn they made,
A faint and glimmering twilight: So Sigurd strains his eyes,
And he sees how a land deserted all round about him lies
More changeless than mid-ocean, as fruitless as its floor:
Then the heart leaps up within him, for he knows that his journey is o'er,
And there he draweth bridle on the first of

the Glittering Heath:
And the Wrath is waxen merry and sings
in the golden sheath
As he leaps adown from Greyfell, and
stands upon his feet,
And wends his ways through the twilight
the Foe of the Gods to meet.

Sigurd slayeth Fafnir the Serpent.

Nought Sigurd seeth of Regin, and nought
he heeds of him,
As in watchful might and glory he strides
the desert dim,
And behind him paceth Greyfell; but he
deems the time o'erlong
Till he meet the great gold-warden, the
over-lord of wrong.

So he wendeth midst the silence through
the measureless desert place,
And beholds the countless glitter with
wise and steadfast face,
Till him-seems in a little season that the
flames grown somewhat wan,
And a grey thing glimmers before him,
and becomes a mighty man,
One-eyed and ancient-seeming, in cloud-
grey raiment clad;
A friendly man and glorious, and of visage
smiling-glad:
Then content in Sigurd groweth because
of his majesty,
And he heareth him speak in the desert as
the wind of the winter sea:

"Hail Sigurd! Give me thy greeting ere thy ways alone thou wend!"

Said Sigurd: "Hail! I greet thee, my friend and my fathers' friend."

"Now whither away," said the elder, "with the Steed and the ancient Sword?"

"To the greedy house," said Sigurd, "and the King of the Heavy Hoard."

"Wilt thou smite, O Sigurd, Sigurd?" said the ancient mighty-one.

"Yea, yea, I shall smite," said the Volsung, "save the Gods have slain the sun."

"What wise wilt thou smite," said the elder, "lest the dark devour thy day?"

"Thou hast praised the sword," said the child, "and the sword shall find a way."

"Be learned of me," said the Wise-one, "for I was the first of thy folk."

Said the child: "I shall do thy bidding, and for thee shall I strike the stroke."

Spake the Wise-one: "Thus shalt thou do when thou wendest hence alone:
Thou shalt find a path in the desert, and a road in the world of stone;
It is smooth and deep and hollow, but the rain hath riven it not,

And the wild wind hath not worn it, for it
is but Fafnir's slot,
Whereby he wends to the water and the
fathomless pool of old,
When his heart in the dawn is weary, and
he loathes the ancient Gold:
There think of the great and the fathers,
and bare the whetted Wrath,
And dig a pit in the highway, and a grave
in the Serpent's path:
Lie thou therein, O Sigurd, and thine hope
from the glooming hide,
And be as the dead for a season, and the
living light abide!
And so shall thine heart avail thee, and
thy mighty fateful hand,
And the Light that lay in the Branstock,
the well-belovèd brand."

Said the child: "I shall do thy bidding, and
for thee shall I strike the stroke;
For I love thee, friend of my fathers, Wise
Heart of the holy folk."

So spake the Son of Sigmund, and beheld
no man anear,
And again was the night the midnight, and
the twinkling flame shone clear
In the hush of the Glittering Heath; and
alone went Sigmund's son
Till he came to the road of Fafnir, and the
highway worn by one,
By the drift of the rain unfurrowed, by the
windy years unrent,
And forth from the dark it came, and into
the dark it went.

Great then was the heart of Sigurd, for
there in the midmost he stayed,
And thought of the ancient fathers, and
bared the bright blue blade,
That shone as a fleck of the day-light, and
the night was all around.
Fair then was the Son of Sigmund as he
toiled and laboured the ground;
Great, mighty he was in his working, and
the Glittering Heath he clave,
And the sword shone blue before him as
he dug the pit and the grave:
There he hid his hope from the night-tide
and lay like one of the dead,
And wise and wary he bided; and the
heavens hung over his head.

Now the night wanes over Sigurd, and the
ruddy rings he sees,
And his war-gear's fair adornment, and the
God-folk's images;
But a voice in the desert ariseth, a sound
in the waste has birth,
A changing tinkle and clatter, as of gold
dragged over the earth:
O'er Sigurd widens the day-light, and the
sound is drawing close,
And speedier than the trample of speedy
feet it goes;
But ever deemeth Sigurd that the sun
brings back the day,
For the grave grows lighter and lighter
and heaven o'erhead is grey.

But now, how the rattling waxeth till he
may not heed nor hark!
And the day and the heavens are hidden,

and o'er Sigurd rolls the dark,
As the flood of a pitchy river, and heavy-
thick is the air
With the venom of hate long hoarded, and
lies once fashioned fair:
Then a wan face comes from the darkness,
and is wrought in man-like wise,
And the lips are writhed with laughter and
bleared are the blinded eyes;
And it wandereth hither and thither, and
searcheth through the grave
And departeth, leaving nothing, save the
dark, rolled wave on wave
O'er the golden head of Sigurd and the
edges of the sword,
And the world weighs heavy on Sigurd,
and the weary curse of the Hoard;
Him-seemed the grave grew straiter, and
his hope of life grew chill,
And his heart by the Worm was enfolded,
and the bonds of the Ancient Ill.

Then was Sigurd stirred by his glory, and
he strove with the swaddling of
Death;
He turned in the pit on the highway, and
the grave of the Glittering Heath;
He laughed and smote with the laughter
and thrust up over his head.
And smote the venom asunder and clave
the heart of Dread;
Then he leapt from the pit and the grave,
and the rushing river of blood,
And fulfilled with the joy of the War-God
on the face of earth he stood
With red sword high uplifted, with

wrathful glittering eyes;
And he laughed at the heavens above him
for he saw the sun arise,
And Sigurd gleamed on the desert, and
shone in the new-born light,
And the wind in his raiment wavered, and
all the world was bright.

But there was the ancient Fafnir, and the
Face of Terror lay
On the huddled folds of the Serpent, that
were black and ashen-grey
In the desert lit by the sun; and those
twain looked each on each,
And forth from the Face of Terror went a
sound of dreadful speech:

"Child, child, who art thou that hast
smitten? bright child, of whence is
thy birth?"

"I am called the Wild-thing Glorious, and
alone I wend on the earth."

"What master hath taught thee of murder?
—Thou hast wasted Fafnir's day."

"I, Sigurd, knew and desired, and the
bright sword learned the way."

"I am blind, O Strong Compeller, in the
bonds of Death and Hell.

But thee shall the rattling Gold and the
red rings bring unto bane."

"Yet the rings mine hand shall scatter, and
the earth shall gather again."

"Woe, woe! in the days passed over I bore
the Helm of Dread,
I reared the Face of Terror, and the
hoarded hate of the Dead:
I overcame and was mighty; I was wise
and cherished my heart
In the waste where no man wandered, and
the high house builded apart:
Till I met thine hand, O Sigurd, and thy
might ordained from of old;
And I fought and fell in the morning, and I
die far off from the Gold."

Then all sank into silence, and the Son of
Sigmund stood
On the torn and furrowed desert by the
pool of Fafnir's blood,
And the Serpent lay before him, dead,
chilly, dull, and grey;
And over the Glittering Heath fair shone
the sun and the day,
And a light wind followed the sun and
breathed o'er the fateful place,
As fresh as it furrows the sea-plain or
bows the acres' face.

Sigurd slayeth Regin the Master of Masters on the

Glittering Heath.

There standeth Sigurd the Volsung, and
leaneth on his sword,
And beside him now is Greyfell and looks
on his golden lord,
And the world is awake and living; and
whither now shall they wend,
Who have come to the Glittering Heath,
and wrought that deed to its end?
For hither comes Regin the Master from
the skirts of the field of death.

Afoot he went o'er the desert, and he came
unto Sigurd and stared
At the golden gear of the man, and the
Wrath yet bloody and bared,
And the light locks raised by the wind,
and the eyes beginning to smile,
And the lovely lips of the Volsung, and the
brow that knew no guile;
And he murmured under his breath while
his eyes grew white with wrath:

"O who art thou, and wherefore, and why
art thou in the path?"

Then he turned to the ash-grey Serpent,
and grovelled low on the ground,
And he drank of that pool of the blood
where the stones of the wild were
drowned,
And long he lapped as a dog; but when he
arose again,

Lo, a flock of the mountain-eagles that
drew to the feastful plain;
And he turned and looked on Sigurd, as
bright in the sun he stood,
A stripling fair and slender, and wiped the
Wrath of the blood.

Then he scowled and crouched and
darkened, and came to Sigurd and
spake:
"O child, thou hast slain my brother, and
the Wrath is alive and awake."

"Thou sayest sooth," said Sigurd, "thy deed
and mine is done:
But now our ways shall sunder, for here,
meseemeth, the sun
Hath but little of deeds to do, and no love
to win aback."

But Regin darkened before him, and
exceeding grim was he grown,
And he spake: "Thou hast slain my
brother, and wherewith wilt thou
atone?"

"Stand up, O Master," said Sigurd, "O
Singer of ancient days,
And take the wealth I have won thee, ere
we wend on the sundering ways.
I have toiled and thou hast desired, and

the Treasure is surely anear,
And thou hast wisdom to find it, and I
have slain thy fear."

But Regin crouched and darkened: "Thou
hast slain my brother," he said.

"Take thou the Gold," quoth Sigurd, "for
the ransom of my head!"

Then Regin crouched and darkened, and
over the earth he hung;
And he said: "Thou hast slain my brother,
and the Gods are yet but young."

And he spake: "Thou hast slain my
brother, and today shall thou be my
thrall:
Yea, a King shall be my cook-boy and this
heath my cooking-hall."

Then he crept to the ash-grey coils where
the life of his brother had lain,
And he drew a glaive from his side and
smote the smitten and slain,
And tore the heart from Fafnir, while the
eagles cried o'erhead,
And sharp and shrill was their voice o'er
the entrails of the dead.

Then Regin spake to Sigurd: "Of this
slaying wilt thou be free?
Then gather thou fire together and roast
the heart for me,

That I may eat it and live, and be thy
master and more;
For therein was might and wisdom, and
the grudged and hoarded lore:—
—Or else, depart on thy ways afraid from
the Glittering Heath."

Then he fell abackward and slept, nor set
his sword in the sheath.

But Sigurd took the Heart, and wood on
the waste he found,
The wood that grew and died, as it crept
on the niggard ground,
And grew and died again, and lay like
whitened bones;
And the ernes cried over his head, as he
builded his hearth of stones,
And kindled the fire for cooking, and sat
and sang o'er the roast
The song of his fathers of old, and the
Wolflings' gathering host:
So there on the Glittering Heath rose up
the little flame,
And the dry sticks crackled amidst it, and
alow the eagles came,
And seven they were by tale, and they
pitched all round about
The cooking-fire of Sigurd, and sent their
song-speech out:
But nought he knoweth its wisdom, or the
word that they would speak:
And hot grew the Heart of Fafnir and sang
amid the reek.

Then Sigurd looketh on Regin, and he
deemeth it overlong
That he dighteth the dear-bought morsel,
and the might for the Master of
wrong,
So he reacheth his hand to the roast to see
if the cooking be o'er;
But the blood and the fat seethed from it
and scalded his finger sore,
And he set his hand to his mouth to
quench the fleshly smart,
And he tasted the flesh of the Serpent and
the blood of Fafnir's Heart:
Then there came a change upon him, for
the speech of fowl he knew,
And wise in the ways of the beast-kind as
the Dwarfs of old he grew;
And he knitted his brows and hearkened,
and wrath in his heart arose
For he felt beset of evil in a world of many
foes.
But the hilts of the Wrath he handled, and
Regin's heart he saw,
And how that the Foe of the Gods the net
of death would draw;
And his bright eyes flashed and sparkled,
and his mouth grew set and stern
As he hearkened the voice of the eagles,
and their song began to learn.

And six of the eagles cried to Sigurd not to tarry before the feast, and they urged him to kill Regin, who had planned Fafnir's death that he alone might live and fashion the world after his evil will.

And the seventh: "Arise, O Sigurd, lest the
hour be overlate!

For the sun in the mid-noon shineth, and
swift is the hand of Fate:
Arise! lest the world run backward and
the blind heart have its will,
And once again be tangled the sundered
good and ill;
Lest love and hatred perish, lest the world
forget its tale,
And the Gods sit deedless, dreaming, in
the high-walled heavenly vale."

Then swift ariseth Sigurd, and the Wrath
in his hand is bare,
And he looketh, and Regin sleepeth, and
his eyes wide-open glare;
But his lips smile false in his dreaming,
and his hand is on the sword;
For he dreams himself the Master and the
new world's fashioning-lord,
And his dream hath forgotten Sigurd, and
the King's life lies in the pit;
He is nought; Death gnaweth upon him,
while the Dwarfs in mastery sit.

But lo, how the eyes of Sigurd the heart of
the guileful behold,
And great is Allfather Odin, and upriseth
the Curse of the Gold,
And the Branstock bloometh to heaven
from the ancient wondrous root;
The summer hath shone on its blossoms,
and Sigurd's Wrath is the fruit.

Then his second stroke struck Sigurd, for

the Wrath flashed thin and white,
And 'twixt head and trunk of Regin fierce
ran the fateful light;
And there lay brother by brother a faded
thing and wan.
But Sigurd cried in the desert: "So far have
I wended on!
Dead are the foes of God-home that would
blend the good and the ill;
And the World shall yet be famous, and
the Gods shall have their will.
Nor shall I be dead and forgotten, while
the earth grows worse and worse,
With the blind heart king o'er the people,
and binding curse with curse."

How Sigurd took to him the Treasure of the Elf Andvari.

So Sigurd ate of the heart of Fafnir, and as he ate the longing to be gone to mighty deeds grew great, and he leapt on Greyfell and sought the home of the Dweller amid the Gold on the edge of the heath. He strode through the doorway, and before him lay golden armour, golden coins, and golden sands from rivers that none but the Dwarfs could mine. But more wonderful than all other treasures were the Helm of Aweing, and the Hauberk all of gold, while on top of the midmost heap, gleaming like the brightest star in the sky, lay the ring of Andvari.

Sigurd put on the helm and the hauberk, and dragged out gold wherewith he loaded Greyfell till the cloud-grey horse shone, while the eagles ever bade him bring forth the treasure, and let the gold shine in the open. And as the stars paled and the dawn grew clearer, Sigurd and Greyfell passed

swiftly and lightly towards the west.

How Sigurd awoke Brynhild upon Hindfell.

By long roads rideth Sigurd amidst that
world of stone,
And somewhat south he turneth; for he
would not be alone,
But longs for the dwellings of man-folk,
and the kingly people's speech,
And the days of the glee and the joyance,
where men laugh each to each.
But still the desert endureth, and afar
must Greyfell fare
From the wrack of the Glittering Heath,
and Fafnir's golden lair.
Long Sigurd rideth the waste, when, lo, on
a morning of day
From out of the tangled crag-walls, amidst
the cloud-land grey
Comes up a mighty mountain, and it is as
though there burns
A torch amidst of its cloud-wreath; so
thither Sigurd turns,
For he deems indeed from its topmost to
look on the best of the earth;
And Greyfell neigheth beneath him, and
his heart is full of mirth.

Night falls, but yet rides Sigurd, and hath
no thought of rest,
For he longs to climb that rock-world and
behold the earth at its best;

But now mid the maze of the foot-hills he seeth the light no more,
And the stars are lovely and gleaming on the lightless heavenly floor.
So up and up he wendeth till the night is wearing thin;
And he rideth a rift of the mountain, and all is dark therein,
Till the stars are dimmed by dawning and the wakening world is cold;
Then afar in the upper rock-wall a breach doth he behold,
And a flood of light poured inward the doubtful dawning blinds:
So swift he rideth thither and the mouth of the breach he finds,
And sitteth awhile on Greyfell on the marvellous thing to gaze:
For lo, the side of Hindfell enwrapped by the fervent blaze,
And nought 'twixt earth and heaven save a world of flickering flame,
And a hurrying shifting tangle, where the dark rents went and came.

Great groweth the heart of Sigurd with uttermost desire,
And he crieth kind to Greyfell, and they hasten up, and nigher,
Till he draweth rein in the dawning on the face of Hindfell's steep:
But who shall heed the dawning where the tongues of that wildfire leap?
For they weave a wavering wall, that driveth over the heaven
The wind that is born within it; nor ever

aside is it driven
By the mightiest wind of the waste, and
the rain-flood amidst it is nought;
And no wayfarer's door and no window
the hand of its builder hath
wrought.
But thereon is the Volsung smiling as its
breath uplifteth his hair,
And his eyes shine bright with its image,
and his mail gleams white and fair,
And his war-helm pictures the heavens
and the waning stars behind:
But his neck is Greyfell stretching to snuff
at the flame-wall blind,
And his cloudy flank upheaveth, and
tinkleth the knitted mail,
And the gold of the uttermost waters is
waxen wan and pale.

Now Sigurd turns in his saddle, and the
hilt of the Wrath he shifts,
And draws a girth the tighter; then the
gathered reins he lifts,
And crieth aloud to Greyfell, and rides at
the wildfire's heart;
But the white wall wavers before him and
the flame-flood rusheth apart,
And high o'er his head it riseth, and wide
and wild is its roar
As it beareth the mighty tidings to the
very heavenly floor:
But he rideth through its roaring as the
warrior rides the rye,
When it bows with the wind of the
summer and the hid spears draw
anigh.

The white flame licks his raiment and
sweeps through Greyfell's mane,
And bathes both hands of Sigurd and the
hilts of Fafnir's bane,
And winds about his war-helm and
mingles with his hair,
But nought his raiment dusketh or dims
his glittering gear;
Then it fails and fades and darkens till all
seems left behind,
And dawn and the blaze is swallowed in
mid-mirk stark and blind.

But forth a little further and a little further
on
And all is calm about him, and he sees the
scorched earth wan
Beneath a glimmering twilight, and he
turns his conquering eyes,
And a ring of pale slaked ashes on the side
of Hindfell lies;
And the world of the waste is beyond it;
and all is hushed and grey,
And the new-risen moon is a-paleing, and
the stars grow faint with day.

Then Sigurd looked before him and a
Shield-burg there he saw,
A wall of the tiles of Odin wrought clear
without a flaw,
The gold by the silver gleaming, and the
ruddy by the white;
And the blazonings of their glory were
done upon them bright.
As of dear things wrought for the war-
lords new come to Odin's hall.
Piled high aloft to the heavens uprose that

battle-wall,
And far o'er the topmost shield-rim for a banner of fame there hung
A glorious golden buckler; and against the staff it rung
As the earliest wind of dawning uprose on Hindfell's face
And the light from the yellow east beamed soft on the shielded place.

But the Wrath cried out in answer as Sigurd leapt adown
To the wasted soil of the desert by that rampart of renown;
He looked but little beneath it, and the dwelling of God it seemed,
As against its gleaming silence the eager Sigurd gleamed:
He draweth not sword from scabbard, as the wall he wendeth around,
And it is but the wind and Sigurd that wakeneth any sound:
But, lo, to the gate he cometh, and the doors are open wide,
And no warder the way withstandeth, and no earls by the threshold abide.
So he stands awhile and marvels; then the baleful light of the Wrath
Gleams bare in his ready hand as he wendeth the inward path:
For he doubteth some guile of the Gods, or perchance some Dwarf-king's snare,
Or a mock of the Giant people that shall fade in the morning air:
But he getteth him in and gazeth; and a wall doth he behold,

And the ruddy set by the white, and the
silver by the gold;
But within the garth that it girdeth no
work of man is set,
But the utmost head of Hindfell ariseth
higher yet;
And below in the very midmost is a Giant-
fashioned mound,
Piled high as the rims of the Shield-burg
above the level ground;
And there, on that mound of the Giants,
o'er the wilderness forlorn,
A pale grey image lieth, and gleameth in
the morn.

So there was Sigurd alone; and he went
from the shielded door,
And aloft in the desert of wonder the Light
of the Branstock he bore;
And he set his face to the earth-mound,
and beheld the image wan,
And the dawn was growing about it; and,
lo, the shape of a man
Set forth to the eyeless desert on the
tower-top of the world,
High over the cloud-wrought castle
whence the windy bolts are hurled.

Now over the body he standeth, and seeth
it shapen fair,
And clad from head to foot-sole in pale
grey-glittering gear,
In a hauberk wrought as straitly as though
to the flesh it were grown:

But a great helm hideth the head and is
girt with a glittering crown.

So thereby he stoopeth and kneeleth, for
he deems it were good indeed
If the breath of life abide there and the
speech to help at need;
And as sweet as the summer wind from a
garden under the sun
Cometh forth on the topmost Hindfell the
breath of that sleeping-one.
Then he saith he will look on the face, if it
bear him love or hate,
Or the bonds for his life's constraining, or
the sundering doom of fate.
So he draweth the helm from the head,
and, lo, the brow snow-white,
And the smooth unfurrowed cheeks, and
the wise lips breathing light;
And the face of a woman it is, and the
fairest that ever was born,
Shown forth to the empty heavens and the
desert world forlorn:
But he looketh, and loveth her sore, and
he longeth her spirit to move,
And awaken her heart to the world, that
she may behold him and love.
And he toucheth her breast and her hands,
and he loveth her passing sore.
And he saith: "Awake! I am Sigurd;" but
she moveth never the more.
Then he looked on his bare bright blade,
and he said: "Thou—what wilt thou
do?
For indeed as I came by the war-garth thy
voice of desire I knew."

Bright burnt the pale blue edges for the
sunrise drew anear,
And the rims of the Shield-burg glittered,
and the east was exceeding clear:
So the eager edges he setteth to the
Dwarf-wrought battle-coat
Where the hammered ring-knit collar
constraineth the woman's throat;
But the sharp Wrath biteth and rendeth,
and before it fail the rings,
And, lo, the gleam of the linen, and the
light of golden things:
Then he driveth the blue steel onward,
and through the skirt, and out,
Till nought but the rippling linen is
wrapping her about;
Then he deems her breath comes quicker
and her breast begins to heave,
So he turns about the War-Flame and
rends down either sleeve,
Till her arms lie white in her raiment, and
a river of sun-bright hair
Flows free o'er bosom and shoulder and
floods the desert bare.

Then a flush cometh over her visage and a
sigh up-heaveth her breast,
And her eyelids quiver and open, and she
wakeneth into rest;
Wide-eyed on the dawning she gazeth, too
glad to change or smile,
And but little moveth her body, nor
speaketh she yet for a while;
And yet kneels Sigurd moveless her
wakening speech to heed,
While soft the waves of the daylight o'er

the starless heavens speed,
And the gleaming rims of the Shield-burg
yet bright and brighter grow,
And the thin moon hangeth her horns
dead-white in the golden glow.

Then she turned and gazed on Sigurd, and
her eyes met the Volsung's eyes.
And mighty and measureless now did the
tide of his love arise,
For their longing had met and mingled,
and he knew of her heart that she
loved,
As she spake unto nothing but him and
her lips with the speech-flood
moved:

"O, what is the thing so mighty that my
weary sleep hath torn,
And rent the fallow bondage, and the wan
woe over-worn?"

He said: "The hand of Sigurd and the
Sword of Sigmund's son,
And the heart that the Volsungs fashioned
this deed for thee have done."
But she said: "Where then is Odin that laid
me here alow?
Long lasteth the grief of the world, and
manfolk's tangled woe!"

"He dwelleth above," said Sigurd, "but I on
the earth abide,
And I came from the Glittering Heath the
waves of thy fire to ride."

Then Sigurd looketh upon her, and the
words from his heart arise:
"Thou art the fairest of earth, and the
wisest of the wise;
O who art thou that lovest? I am Sigurd,
e'en as I told;
I have slain the Foe of the Gods, and
gotten the Ancient Gold;
And great were the gain of thy love, and
the gift of mine earthly days,
If we twain should never sunder as we
wend on the changing ways.
O who art thou that lovest, thou fairest of
all things born?
And what meaneth thy sleep and thy
slumber in the wilderness forlorn?"

Then the maiden told him that she had been the handmaid of the All-father, but that she grew too proud, and Odin had sent her to Hindfell, where the sleep thorn pierced her that she might sleep till she found the fearless heart she would wed. Such a one had she found now, and many were the words of prophetic wisdom and warning that fell from her lips on the ears of Sigurd.

But many though they were they were not enough for him, who prayed her to speak with him more of Wisdom.

So together they sat on the side of Hindfell and talked of all that is and can be, and then together they climbed the mountain, till beneath them they saw the kingdoms of the earth stretching far away, and Brynhild bade him look down on her home,

saying:

"Yet I bid thee look on the land 'twixt the
wood and the silver sea
In the bight of the swirling river, and the
house that cherished me!
There dwelleth mine earthly sister and the
king that she hath wed;
There morn by morn aforetime I woke on
the golden bed;
There eve by eve I tarried mid the speech
and the lays of kings;
There noon by noon I wandered and
plucked the blossoming things;
The little land of Lymdale by the swirling
river's side,
Where Brynhild once was I called in the
days ere my father died;
The little land of Lymdale 'twixt the
woodland and the sea,
Where on thee mine eyes shall brighten
and thine eyes shall beam on me."

"I shall seek thee there," said Sigurd,
"when the day-spring is begun,
Ere we wend the world together in the
season of the sun."

"I shall bide thee there," said Brynhild, "till
the fulness of the days,
And the time for the glory appointed, and
the springing-tide of praise."

From his hand then draweth Sigurd
Andvari's ancient Gold;
There is nought but the sky above them as
the ring together they hold,

The shapen ancient token, that hath no
change nor end,
No change, and no beginning, no flaw for
God to mend:
Then Sigurd cries: "O Brynhild, now
hearken while I swear,
That the sun shall die in the heavens and
the day no more be fair,
If I seek not love in Lymdale and the
house that fostered thee,
And the land where thou awakedst 'twixt
the woodland and the sea!"

And she cried: "O Sigurd, Sigurd, now
hearken while I swear
That the day shall die for ever and the sun
to blackness wear,
Ere I forget thee, Sigurd, as I lie 'twixt
wood and sea
In the little land of Lymdale and the house
that fostered me!"

Then he set the ring on her finger and
once, if ne'er again,
They kissed and clung together, and their
hearts were full and fain.

BOOK III.

BRYNHILD.

Of Sigurd's riding to the Niblungs.

Now Brynhild and Sigurd left Hindfell, and Brynhild went to dwell in her sister's house, but Sigurd abode not long in the land of Lymdale, for his love urged him to great adventures wherein he might win glory befitting the man who should wed so noble a woman as Brynhild.

So it befell one day in summer that he dight himself in the Helm of Aweing and the Mail-coat all of gold, and girded the Wrath to his side to ride forth again. And on his saddle he bound the red rings of Fafnir's Treasure.

Then he kissed the ancient King Heimir, and hailed the folk of the land who came to give him god-speed.

And he gathered the reins together, and
set his face to the road,
And the glad steed neighed beneath him
as they fared from the King's abode.
And out past the dewy closes; but the
shouts went up to the sky,
Though some for very sorrow forbore the
farewell cry,
Nor was any man but heavy that the
godlike guest should go;
And they craved for that glad heart
guileless, and that face without a
foe.

But forth by dale and lealand doth the Son
of Sigmund wend,
Till far away lies Lymdale and the folk of
the forest's end;
And he rides a heath unpeopled and holds
the westward way,
Till a long way off before him come up the
mountains grey;
Grey, huge beyond all telling, and the host
of the heaped clouds,
The black and the white together, on that
rock-wall's coping crowds.

So up and down he rideth, till at even of
the day
A hill's brow he o'ertoppeth that had hid
the mountains grey;
Huge, blacker they showed than
aforetime, white hung the cloud-
flecks there,
But red was the cloudy crown, for the sun
was sinking fair:
A wide plain lay beneath him, and a river
through it wound
Betwixt the lea and the acres, and the
misty orchard ground;
But forth from the feet of the mountains a
ridgèd hill there ran
That upreared at its hithermost ending a
builded burg of man;
And Sigurd deemed in his heart as he
looked on the burg from afar,

That the high Gods scarce might win it, if
thereon they fell with war;
So many and great were the walls, so bore
the towers on high
The threat of guarded battle, and the tale
of victory.

For as waves on the iron river of the days
whereof nothing is told
Stood up the many towers, so stark and
sharp and cold;
But dark-red and worn and ancient as the
midmost mountain-sides
Is the wall that goeth about them; and its
mighty compass hides
Full many a dwelling of man whence the
reek now goeth aloft,
And the voice of the house-abiders, the
sharp sounds blent with the soft:
But one house in the midst is unhidden
and high up o'er the wall it goes;
Aloft in the wind of the mountains its
golden roof-ridge glows,
And down mid its buttressed feet is the
wind's voice never still;
And the day and the night pass o'er it and
it changes to their will,
And whiles is it glassy and dark, and
whiles is it white and dead,
And whiles is it grey as the sea-mead, and
whiles is it angry red;
And it shimmers under the sunshine and
grows black to the threat of the
storm,

And dusk its gold roof glimmers when the
rain-clouds over it swarm,
And bright in the first of the morning its
flame doth it uplift,
When the light clouds rend before it and
along its furrows drift.

Then Sigurd's heart was glad as he beheld the city, and after a while he came to a gate-way set in the northern wall, and the gate was long and dark as a sea-cave. But no man stayed him as he rode through the dusk to the inner court-yard, and saw the lofty roof of the hall before him, cold now and grey like a very cloud, for the sun was fully set. But in the towers watch-men were calling one to another. To them he cried, saying:—

"Ho, men of this mighty burg, to what folk
of the world am I come?
And who is the King of battles who dwells
in this lordly home?
Or perchance are ye of the Elf-kin? are ye
guest-fain, kind at the board,
Or murder-churls and destroyers to gain
and die by the sword?"
Then the spears in the forecourt glittered
and the swords shone over the wall,
But the song of smitten harp-strings came
faint from the cloudy hall.
And he hearkened a voice and a crying:
"The house of Giuki the King,
And the Burg of the Niblung people and
the heart of their warfaring."
There were many men about him, and the
wind in the wall-nook sang,
And the spears of the Niblungs glittered,
and the swords in the forecourt

rang.
But they looked on his face in the even,
and they hushed their voices and
gazed,
For fear and great desire the hearts of men
amazed.

Now cometh an earl to King Giuki as he
sits in godlike wise
With his sons, the Kings of battle, and his
wife of the glittering eyes,
And the King cries out at his coming to
tell why the watch-horns blew;
But the earl saith: "Lord of the people,
choose now what thou wilt do;
For here is a strange new-comer, and he
saith, to thee alone
Will he tell of his name and his kindred,
and the deeds that his hand hath
done."

Then uprose the King of the Niblungs, and
was clad in purple and pall,
And his sheathed sword lay in his hand, as
he gat him adown the hall,
And abroad through the Niblung doorway;
and a mighty man he was,
And wise and ancient of days: so there by
the earls doth he pass,
And beholdeth the King on the war-steed
and looketh up in his face:
But Sigurd smileth upon him in the
Niblungs' fencèd place,
As the King saith: "Gold-bestrider, who

into our garth wouldst ride,
Wilt thou tell thy name to a King, who biddeth thee here abide
And have all good at our hands? for unto the Niblungs' home
And the heart of a war-fain people from the weary road are ye come;
And I am Giuki the King: so now if thou nam'st thee a God,
Look not to see me tremble; for I know of such that have trod
Unfeared in the Burg of the Niblungs; nor worser, nor better at all
May fare the folk of the Gods than the Kings in Giuki's hall;
So I bid thee abide in my house, and when many days are o'er,
Thou shalt tell us at last of thine errand, if thou bear us peace or war."

Then all rejoiced at his word till the swords on the bucklers rang,
And adown from the red-gold Treasure the Son of Sigmund sprang,
And he took the hand of Giuki, and kissed him soft and sweet,
And spake: "Hail, ancient of days! for thou biddest me things most meet,
And thou knowest the good from the evil: few days are over and gone
Since my father was old in the world ere the deed of my making was won;
But Sigmund the Volsung he was, full ripe of years and of fame;
And I, who have never beheld him, am Sigurd called of name;

Too young in the world am I waxen that a
tale thereof should be told,
And yet have I slain the Serpent, and
gotten the Ancient Gold,
And broken the bonds of the weary, and
ridden the Wavering Fire.
But short is mine errand to tell, and the
end of my desire:
For peace I bear unto thee, and to all the
kings of the earth,
Who bear the sword aright, and are
crowned with the crown of worth;
But unpeace to the lords of evil, and the
battle and the death;
And the edge of the sword to the traitor,
and the flame to the slanderous
breath:
And I would that the loving were loved,
and I would that the weary should
sleep,
And that man should hearken to man, and
that he that soweth should reap.
Now wide in the world would I fare, to
seek the dwellings of Kings,
For with them would I do and undo, and
be heart of their warfarings;
So I thank thee, lord, for thy bidding, and
here in thine house will I bide,
And learn of thine ancient wisdom till
forth to the field we ride."

Glad then was the murmur of folk, for the
tidings had gone forth,
And its breath had been borne to the
Niblungs, and the tale of Sigurd's
worth.

But the King said: "Welcome, Sigurd, full
fair of deed and of word!
And here mayst thou win thee fellows for
the days of the peace and the
sword;
For not lone in the world have I lived, but
sons from my loins have sprung,
Whose deeds with the rhyme are mingled,
and their names with the people's
tongue."

Then he took his hand in his hand, and
into the hall they passed,
And great shouts of salutation to the
cloudy roof were cast;
And they rang from the glassy pillars, and
the Gods on the hangings stirred,
And afar the clustering eagles on the
golden roof-ridge heard,
And cried out on the Sword of the
Branstock as they cried in the other
days:
Then the harps rang out in the hall, and
men sang in Sigurd's praise

But now on the daïs he meeteth the kin of
Giuki the wise:
Lo, here is the crownèd Grimhild, the
queen of the glittering eyes;
Lo, here is the goodly Gunnar with the
face of a king's desire;
Lo, here is Hogni that holdeth the wisdom
tried in the fire;
Lo, here is Guttorm the youngest, who

longs for the meeting swords;
Lo, here, as a rose in the oak-boughs, amid
the Niblung lords
Is the Maid of the Niblungs standing, the
white-armed Giuki's child;
And all these looked long on Sigurd and
their hearts upon him smiled.

Then all gave him greeting as one who should be their fellow in mighty deeds, and the fair-armed Gudrun, Giuki's daughter, brought him a cup of welcome, and that night the Niblungs feasted in gladness of heart.

Of Sigurd's warfaring in the company of the Niblungs, and of his great fame and glory.

So Sigurd abode with the Niblungs all through summer and harvest time till with the stark midwinter came tidings of war. Then the earls of Giuki donned dusky hauberks and led forth their bands from the fortress, and the fair face and golden gear of Sigurd shone among those swart-haired warriors.

They fell on the cities of the plains, but none might resist the valour of Sigurd, and the Niblungs turned in triumph from the war, bringing rich spoil. So all that winter Sigurd fared to war with them and grew greater in glory and more beloved of all men, but ever the thoughts of his heart turned to Lymdale and to Brynhild who awaited him there.

Now sheathed is the Wrath of Sigurd; for
as wax withstands the flame,
So the Kings of the land withstood him

and the glory of his fame.
And before the grass is growing, or the
kine have fared from the stall,
The song of the fair-speech-masters goes
up in the Niblung hall,
And they sing of the golden Sigurd and
the face without a foe,
And the lowly man exalted and the mighty
brought alow:
And they say, when the sun of summer
shall come aback to the land,
It shall shine on the fields of the tiller that
fears no heavy hand;
That the sheaf shall be for the plougher,
and the loaf for him that sowed,
Through every furrowed acre where the
son of Sigmund rode.

Full dear was Sigurd the Volsung to all
men most and least,
And now, as the spring drew onward,
'twas deemed a goodly feast
For the acre-biders' children by the
Niblung Burg to wait,
If perchance the Son of Sigmund should
ride abroad by the gate:
For whosoever feared him, no little-one,
forsooth,
Would shrink from the shining eyes and
the hand that clave out truth
From the heart of the wrack and the
battle: it was then, as his gold gear
burned
O'er the balks of the bridge and the river,
that oft the mother turned,
And spake to the laughing baby: "O little

son, and dear,
When I from the world am departed, and
whiles a-nights ye hear
The best of man-folk longing for the least
of Sigurd's days,
Thou shalt hearken to their story, till they
tell forth all his praise,
And become beloved and a wonder, as
thou sayest when all is sung,
'And I too once beheld him in the days
when I was young.'"

Yea, they sing the song of Sigurd and the
face without a foe,
And they sing of the prison's rending and
the tyrant laid alow,
And the golden thieves' abasement, and
the stilling of the churl,
And the mocking of the dastard where the
chasing edges whirl;
And they sing of the outland maidens that
thronged round Sigurd's hand,
And sung in the streets of the foemen of
the war-delivered land;
And they tell how the ships of the
merchants come free and go at
their will,
And how wives in peace and safety may
crop the vine-clad hill;
How the maiden sits in her bower, and the
weaver sings at his loom,
And forget the kings of grasping and the
greedy days of gloom;
For by sea and hill and township hath the

Son of Sigmund been,
And looked on the folk unheeded, and the lowly people seen.

But he stood in the sight of the people, and sweet he was to see,
And no foe and no betrayer, and no envier now hath he:
But Gunnar the bright in the battle deems him his earthly friend,
And Hogni is fain of his fellow, howso the day's work end,
And Guttorm the young is joyous of the help and gifts he hath;
And all these would shine beside him in the glory of his path;
There is none to hate or hinder, or mar the golden day,
And the light of love flows plenteous, as the sun-beams hide the way.

Of the Cup of evil drink that Grimhild the Wise-wife gave to Sigurd.

Now Gudrun the daughter of Giuki beheld Sigurd's glory and knew the kindness of his heart, and set her love on him, not knowing that all his thoughts were given to Brynhild. So Sigurd, seeing her sad and in no wise guessing the cause of her grief, strove to comfort her with kindly words, but her mood was still unchanged.

Then Grimhild the Queen, who was a witch-wife and

a woman of crafty mind, marked the love of Gudrun for Sigurd, and marked moreover how his power and honour in the land would soon be greater than that of her own sons. Therefore she cast about for some shift that might bind Sigurd to serve with the Niblungs all his life-days.

Now it befell one night that Sigurd had returned from warring and sat on the high-seat to sup with the Niblung kings. His heart was merry with victory and ever he thought of Hindfell and of Lymdale and the love of Brynhild. The people waxed joyful, and the hangings whereon glowed figures of the gods were stirred with their song and shouting till Giuki called on Sigurd to take the harp and sing of deeds agone. Then all men hearkened, hushed and happy, while Sigurd struck the strings and sang of his mighty kin, of Volsung, of Signy, and of Sigmund, their deeds and noble deaths. At last the tale was ended and he fell silent thinking still of Brynhild.

Now came Grimhild bearing him a cup of wine and speaking fair words of praise, but in the wine she had mingled a fatal witch-drink. So she stood by Sigurd and said:—

"There is none of the kings of kingdoms
that may match thy goodlihead:
Lo now, thou hast sung of thy fathers; but
men shall sing of thee,
And therewith shall our house be
remembered, and great shall our
glory be.
I beseech thee hearken a little to a faithful
word of mine,
When thou of this cup hast drunken; for
my love is blent with the wine."

He laughed and took the cup: But therein
with the blood of the earth
Earth's hidden might was mingled, and
deeds of the cold sea's birth,
And things that the high Gods turn from,
and a tangle of strange love,
Deep guile and strong compelling, that
whoso drank thereof
Should remember not his longing, should
cast his love away,
Remembering dead desire but as night
remembereth day.

So Sigurd looked on the horn, and he saw
how fair it was scored
With the cunning of the Dwarf-kind and
the masters of the sword;
And he drank and smiled on Grimhild
above the beaker's rim,
And she looked and laughed at his
laughter; and the soul was changed
in him.
Men gazed and their hearts sank in them,
and they knew not why it was,
Why the fair-lit hall was darkling, nor
what had come to pass:
For they saw the sorrow of Sigurd, who
had seen but his deeds erewhile,
And the face of the mighty darkened, who
had known but the light of its
smile.

But Grimhild looked and was merry: and
she deemed her life was great,
And her hand a wonder of wonders to
withstand the deeds of Fate:
For she saw by the face of Sigurd and the

token of his eyes
That her will had abased the valiant, and filled the faithful with lies.

But the heart was changed in Sigurd; as though it ne'er had been
His love of Brynhild perished as he gazed on the Niblung Queen:
Brynhild's belovèd body was e'en as a wasted hearth,
No more for bale or blessing, for plenty or for dearth.
—O ye that shall look hereafter, when the day of Sigurd is done,
And the last of his deeds is accomplished, and his eyes are shut in the sun,
When ye look and long for Sigurd, and the image of Sigurd behold,
And his white sword still as the moon, and his strong hand heavy and cold,
Then perchance shall ye think of this even, then perchance shall ye wonder and cry,
"Twice over, King, are we smitten, and twice have we seen thee die."

Men say that a little after the evil of that night
All waste is the burg of Brynhild, and there springeth a marvellous light
On the desert hard by Lymdale, and few

men know for why;
But there are, who say that a wildfire
thence roareth up to the sky
Round a glorious golden dwelling,
wherein there sitteth a Queen
In remembrance of the wakening, and the
slumber that hath been;
Wherein a Maid there sitteth, who knows
not hope nor rest
For remembrance of the Mighty, and the
Best come forth from the Best.

Now after Sigurd took the witch-drink came a great hush upon the feast-hall for a space. But Grimhild was fain of that hour and cried to the scalds for music, and they hastened to strike the harp, but no joy mingled with the sounds and no man was moved to singing.

No word spake Sigurd till the feast was over; then he strode out alone from the hall and the folk fell back before him. So he took a steed and all that night he rode alone in the deedless dark, and all the morrow, very heavy at heart yet knowing no cause for grief, and remembering all things save Brynhild.

At last he came again at sunset to the Niblung gates, and there came forth Giuki and Grimhild and the Niblung brethren with fair words of greeting, but in the doorway Gudrun stood and wept. So Sigurd entered with them, yet he knew that a flood of sorrow had come on his life-days and that no more might he feel the joy he had known aforetime in the Niblung hall. Howbeit, when he looked on the people and saw them in fear at his trouble, the kindness of his heart was kindled, and thrusting the heavy sorrow aside, he lifted his head and spake wise

words of good cheer so that the folk looking on him were comforted.

Of the Wedding of Sigurd the Volsung.

But Gudrun knew Sigurd's heart and was sorrowful because of his grief and her great love for him, and when Grimhild bade her carry him wine, she arose and took the cup but could find no word to speak for anguish. And Sigurd looking on her face saw there a kindness and a sorrow like his own, and seeing it he knew that she loved him. Then pity and love for her rose in his heart and comforted him, and he took the cup from her and spake, saying:—

"Here are glad men about us, and a joyous
folk of war,
And they that have loved thee for long,
and they that have cherished mine
heart;
But we twain alone are woeful, as sad folk
sitting apart.
Ah, if I thy soul might gladden! if thy lips
might give me peace!
Then belike were we gladdest of all; for I
love thee more than these.
The cup of goodwill that thou bearest, and
the greeting thou wouldst say,
Turn these to the cup of thy love, and the
words of the troth-plighting day;
The love that endureth for ever, and the
never-dying troth,
To face the Norns' undoing, and the Gods
amid their wrath."

And his clear voice saith:
"O Gudrun, now
hearken while I
swear
That the sun shall die for ever and the day
no more be fair,
Ere I forget thy pity and thine inmost
heart of love!
Yea, though the Kings be mighty, and the
Gods be great above,
I will wade the flood and the fire, and the
waste of war forlorn,
To look on the Niblung dwelling, and the
house where thou wert born."

Strange seemed the words to Sigurd that
his gathering love compelled,
And sweet and strange desire o'er his
tangled trouble welled.

But bright flashed the eyes of Gudrun, and
she said: "King, as for me,
If thou sawest the heart in my bosom,
what oath might better thee?
Yet my words thy words shall cherish, as
thy lips my lips have done.
—Herewith I swear, O Sigurd, that the
earth shall hate the sun,
And the year desire but darkness, and the
blossoms shrink from day,
Ere my love shall fail, belovèd, or my
longing pass away!"

So they twain went hand in hand to stand before Giuki and Grimhild and the swart-haired Niblung

brethren, and all these were glad-hearted when they marked their joy and goodlihead. Then Sigurd spake noble words of thanks to Giuki for all past kindness, and bade Giuki call him son because he had that day bidden Gudrun to wife, and he sware also to toil for her exalting and for the weal of all the Niblung kin. Thereto Giuki answered glad-hearted, "Hail, Sigurd, son of mine eld!" and called upon Grimhild the Queen to bless him.

Thus was Sigurd troth-plight to the white-armed Gudrun, and all men were fain of their love and spake nought but praise of him.

Hark now, on the morrow morning how
the blast of the mighty horn
From the builded Burg of the Niblungs
goes over the acres shorn,
And the roads are gay with the riders, and
the bull in the stall is left,
And the plough is alone in the furrow, and
the wedge in the hole half-cleft;
And late shall the ewes be folded, and the
kine come home to the pail,
And late shall the fires be litten in the
outmost treeless dale:
For men fare to the gate of Giuki and the
ancient cloudy hall,
And therein are the earls assembled and
the kings wear purple and pall,
And the flowers are spread beneath them,
and the bench-cloths beaten with
gold;
And the walls are strange and wondrous
with the noble stories told:
For new-hung is the ancient dwelling with
the golden spoils of the south,

And men seem merry for ever, and the
praise is in each man's mouth,
And the name of Sigurd the Volsung, the
King and the Serpent's Bane,
Who exalteth the high this morning and
blesseth the masters of gain:
For men drink the bridal of Sigurd and the
white-armed Niblung maid,
And the best with the best shall be
mingled, and the gold with the gold
o'erlaid.

So, fair in the hall is the feasting and
men's hearts are uplifted on high,
And they deem that the best of their life-
days are surely drawing anigh,
As now, one after other, uprise the scalds
renowned,
And their well-belovèd voices awake the
hoped-for sound,
In the midmost of the high-tide, and the
joy of feasting lords.
Then cometh a hush and a waiting, and
the light of many swords
Flows into the hall of Giuki by the
doorway of the King,
And amid those flames of battle the war-
clad warriors bring
The Cup of daring Promise and the
hallowed Boar of Sôn,
And men's hearts grow big with longing
and great is the hope-tide grown;
For bright the Son of Sigmund ariseth by
the board
And unwinds the knitted peace-strings
that hamper Regin's Sword:

Then fierce is the light on the high-seat as
men set down the Cup
Anigh the hand of Sigurd, and the edges
blue rise up,
And fall on the hallowed Wood-beast: as a
trump of the woeful war
Rings the voice of the mighty Volsung as
he speaks the words of yore:

"By the Earth that groweth and giveth,
and by all the Earth's increase
That is spent for Gods and man-folk; by
the sun that shines on these;
By the Salt-Sea-Flood that beareth the life
and death of men;
By the Heavens and Stars that change not,
though earth die out again;
By the wild things of the mountain, and
the houseless waste and lone;
By the prey of the Goths in the thicket and
the holy Beast of Sôn,
I hallow me to Odin for a leader of his
host,
To do the deeds of the Highest, and never
count the cost:
And I swear, that whatso great-one shall
show the day and the deed,
I shall ask not why nor wherefore, but the
sword's desire shall speed:
And I swear to seek no quarrel, nor to
swerve aside for aught,
Though the right and the left be blooming,
and the straight way wend to
nought:
And I swear to abide and hearken the
prayer of any thrall,

Though the war-torch be on the threshold
and the foemen's feet in the hall:
And I swear to sit on my throne in the
guise of the kings of the earth,
Though the anguish past amending, and
the unheard woe have birth:
And I swear to wend in my sorrow that
none shall curse mine eyes
For the scowl that quelleth beseeching,
and the hate that scorneth the wise.
So help me Earth and Heavens, and the
Under-sky and Seas,
And the Stars in their ordered houses, and
the Norns that order these!"

And he drank of the Cup of the Promise,
and fair as a star he shone,
And all men rejoiced and wondered, and
deemed Earth's glory won.

Then came the girded maidens, and the
slim earls' daughters poured,
And uprose the dark-haired Gunnar and
bare was the Niblung sword;
Blue it gleamed in the hand of the folk-
king as he laid it low on the Beast,
And took oath as the Goths of aforetime in
the hush of the people's feast:
"I will work for the craving of Kings, and
accomplish the will of the great,
Nor ask what God withstandeth, nor
hearken the tales of fate;
When a King my life hath exalted, and
wrought for my hope and my gain,
For every deed he hath done me, thereto
shall I fashion twain.
I shall bear forth the fame of the Niblungs

through all that hindereth;
In my life shall I win great glory, and be
merry in my death."

So sweareth the lovely war-king and
drinketh of the Cup,
And the joy of the people waxeth and
their glad cry goeth up.
But again came the girded maidens: earls'
daughters pour the wine,
And bare is the blade of Hogni in the
feast-hall over the Swine;
Then he cries o'er the hallowed Wood-
beast: "Earth, hearken, how I swear,
To beseech no man for his helping, and to
vex no God with prayer;
And to seek out the will of the Norns, and
look in the eyes of the curse;
And to laugh while the love aboundeth,
lest the glad world grow into
worse;
Then if in the murder I laugh not, O Earth,
remember my name,
And oft tell it aloud to the people for the
Niblungs' fated shame!"

Then he drank of the Cup of the Promise,
and all men hearkened and deemed
That his speech was great and valiant, and
as one of the wise he seemed.

Then the linen-folded maidens of the earl-
folk lift the gold,
But the earls look each on the other, and
Guttorm's place behold,
And empty it lieth before them; for the
child hath wearied of peace,

And he sits by the oars in the East-seas,
and winneth fame's increase.
Nor then, nor ever after, o'er the Holy
Beast he spake,
When mighty hearts were exalted for the
golden Sigurd's sake.

Sigurd rideth with the Niblungs, and wooeth Brynhild for King Gunnar.

Now it fell on a day of the spring-tide that
followed on these things,
That Sigurd fares to the meadows with
Gunnar and Hogni the Kings;
For afar is Guttorm the youngest, and he
sails the Eastern Seas,
And fares with war-shield hoisted to win
him fame's increase.

There stay those Kings of the people alone
in weed of war,
And they cut a strip of the greensward on
the meadow's daisied floor,
And loosen it clean in the midst, while its
ends in the earth abide;
Then they heave its midmost aloft, and set
on either side
An ancient spear of battle writ round with
words of worth;
And these are the posts of the door, whose
threshold is of the earth,
And the skin of the earth is its lintel: but

with war-glaives gleaming bare
The Niblung Kings and Sigurd beneath the earth-yoke fare;
Then each an arm-vein openeth, and their blended blood falls down
On Earth the fruitful Mother where they rent her turfy gown:
And then, when the blood of the Volsungs hath run with the Niblung blood,
They kneel with their hands upon it and swear the brotherhood:
Each man at his brother's bidding to come with the blade in his hand,
Though the fire and the flood should sunder, and the very Gods withstand:
Each man to love and cherish his brother's hope and will;
Each man to avenge his brother when the Norns his fate fulfill:
And now are they foster-brethren, and in such wise have they sworn
As the God-born Goths of aforetime, when the world was newly born.
But among the folk of the Niblungs goes forth the tale of the same,
And men deem the tidings a glory and the garland of their fame.

So is Sigurd yet with the Niblungs, and he loveth Gudrun his wife,
And wendeth afield with the brethren to the days of the dooming of life;
And nought his glory waneth, nor falleth the flood of praise:
To every man he hearkeneth, nor

gainsayeth any grace,
And glad is the poor in the Doom-ring
when he seeth his face mid the
Kings,
For the tangle straighteneth before him,
and the maze of crookèd things.
But the smile is departed from him, and
the laugh of Sigurd the young,
And of few words now is he waxen, and
his songs are seldom sung.
Howbeit of all the sad-faced was Sigurd
loved the best;
And men say: Is the king's heart mighty
beyond all hope of rest?
Lo, how he beareth the people! how heavy
their woes are grown!
So oft were a God mid the Goth-folk, if he
dwelt in the world alone.

Now Giuki the king was long grown old, and he died and was buried beneath a great earth-mound high on the mountains.

So there lieth Giuki the King, mid steel
and the glimmer of gold,
As the sound of the feastful Niblungs
round his misty house is rolled:
But Gunnar is King of the people, and the
chief of the Niblung land;
A man beloved for his mercy, and his
might and his open hand;
A glorious king in the battle, a hearkener
at the doom,
A singer to sing the sun up from the heart
of the midnight gloom.

On a day sit the Kings in the high-seat

when Grimhild saith to her son:
"O Gunnar, King belovèd, a fair life hast
thou won;
On the flood, in the field hast thou
wrought, and hung the chambers
with gold;
Far abroad mid many a people are the
tidings of thee told:
Now do a deed for thy mother and the
hallowed Niblung hearth,
Lest the house of the mighty perish, and
our tale grow wan with dearth.
If thou do the deed that I bid thee, and
wed a wife of the Kings,
No less shalt thou cleave the war-helms
and scatter the ruddy rings."

He said: "Meseemeth, mother, thou
speakest not in haste,
But hast sought and found beforehand,
lest thy fair words fall to waste."

She said: "Thou sayest the sooth; I have
found the thing I sought:
A Maid for thee is shapen, and a Queen
for thee is wrought:
In the waste land hard by Lymdale a
marvellous hall is built,
With its roof of the red gold beaten, and
its wall-stones over-gilt:
Afar o'er the heath men see it, but no man
draweth nigher,
For the garth that goeth about it is nought
but the roaring fire,
A white wall waving aloft; and no window
nor wicket is there,
Whereby the shielded earl-folk or the sons

of the merchants may fare:
But few things from me are hidden, and I know in that hall of gold
Sits Brynhild, white as a wild-swan where the foamless seas are rolled;
And the daughter of Kings of the world, and the sister of Queens is she,
And wise, and Odin's Chooser, and the Breath of Victory:
But for this cause sitteth she thus in the ring of the Wavering Flame,
That no son of the Kings will she wed save the mightiest master of fame,
And the man who knoweth not fear, and the man foredoomed of fate
To ride through her Wavering Fire to the door of her golden gate:
And for him she sitteth and waiteth, and him shall she cherish and love,
Though the Kings of the world should withstand it, and the Gods that sit above.
Speak thou, O mighty Gunnar!—nay rather, Sigurd my son,
Say who but the lord of the Niblungs should wed with this glorious one?"

Long Sigurd gazeth upon her, and slow he sayeth again:
"I know thy will, my mother; of all the sons of men,
Of all the Kings unwedded, and the kindred of the great,
It is meet that my brother Gunnar should ride to her golden gate."

In the May-morn riseth Gunnar with fair face and gleaming eyes,
And he calleth on Sigurd his brother, and he calleth on Hogni the wise:
"Today shall we fare to the wooing, for so doth our mother bid;
We shall go to gaze on marvels, and things from the King-folk hid."

So they do on the best of their war-gear, and their steeds are dight for the road,
And forth to the sun neigheth Greyfell as he neighed 'neath the Golden Load:
But or ever they leap to the saddle, while yet in the door they stand,
Thereto cometh Grimhild the wise-wife, and on each head layeth her hand,
As she saith: "Be mighty and wise, as the kings that came before!
For they knew of the ways of the Gods, and the craft of the Gods they bore:
And they knew how the shapes of man-folk are the very images
Of the hearts that abide within them, and they knew of the shaping of these.
Be wise and mighty, O Kings, and look in mine heart and behold
The craft that prevaileth o'er semblance, and the treasured wisdom of old!
I hallow you thus for the day, and I hallow you thus for the night,
And I hallow you thus for the dawning with my fathers' hidden might.
Go now, for ye bear my will while I sit in

the hall and spin;
And tonight shall be the weaving, and
tomorn the web shall ye win."

So they leap to the saddles aloft, and they
ride and speak no word,
But the hills and the dales are awakened
by the clink of the sheathèd sword:
None looks in the face of the other, but
the earth and the heavens gaze,
And behold those kings of battle ride
down the dusty ways.

So they come to the Waste of Lymdale
when the afternoon is begun,
And afar they see the flame-blink on the
grey sky under the sun:
And they spur and speak no word, and no
man to his fellow will turn;
But they see the hills draw upward and
the earth beginning to burn:
And they ride, and the eve is coming, and
the sun hangs low o'er the earth,
And the red flame roars up to it from the
midst of the desert's dearth.
None turns or speaks to his brother, but
the Wrath gleams bare and red,
And blood-red is the Helm of Aweing on
the golden Sigurd's head,
And bare is the blade of Gunnar, and the
first of the three he rides,
And the wavering wall is before him and
the golden sun it hides.

Then the heart of a king's son failed not,
but he tossed his sword on high
And laughed as he spurred for the fire,

and cried the Niblung cry;
But the mare's son saw and imagined, and
the battle-eager steed,
That so oft had pierced the spear-hedge
and never failed at need,
Shrank back, and shrieked in his terror,
and spite of spur and rein
Fled fast as the foals unbitted on Odin's
pasturing plain;
Wide then he wheeled with Gunnar, but
with hand and knee he dealt,
And the voice of a lord belovèd, till the
steed his master felt,
And bore him back to the brethren; by
Greyfell Sigurd stood,
And stared at the heart of the fire, and his
helm was red as blood;
But Hogni sat in his saddle, and watched
the flames up-roll;
And he said: "Thy steed has failed thee
that was once the noblest foal
In the pastures of King Giuki; but since
thine heart fails not,
And thou wouldst not get thee backward
and say, The fire was hot,
And the voices pent within it were singing
nought but death,
Let Sigurd lend thee his steed that wore
the Glittering Heath,
And carried the Bed of the Serpent, and
the ancient ruddy rings.
So perchance may the mocks be lesser
when men tell of the Niblung
Kings."

Then Sigurd looked on the twain, and he

saw their swart hair wave
In the wind of the waste and the flame-
blast, and no answer awhile he
gave.
But at last he spake: "O brother, on
Greyfell shalt thou ride,
And do on the Helm of Aweing and gird
the Wrath to thy side,
And cover thy breast with the war-coat
that is throughly woven of gold,
That hath not its like in the heavens nor
has earth of its fellow told:
For this is the raiment of Kings when they
ride the Flickering Fire,
And so sink the flames before them and
the might of their desire."

Then Hogni laughed in his heart, and he
said: "This changing were well
If so might the deed be accomplished; but
perchance there is more to tell:
Thou shalt take the war-steed, Gunnar,
and enough or nought it shall be:
But the coal-blue gear of the Niblungs the
golden hall shall see."
Then Sigurd looked on the speaker, as one
who would answer again,
But his words died out on the waste and
the fire-blast made them vain.
Then he casteth the reins to his brother,
and Gunnar praiseth his gift,
And springeth aloft to the saddle as the
fair sun fails from the lift;
And Sigurd looks on the burden that
Greyfell doth uprear,
The huge king towering upward in the

dusky Niblung gear:
There sits the eager Gunnar, and his heart
desires the deed,
And of nought he recketh and thinketh,
but a fame-stirred warrior's need;
But Greyfell trembleth nothing and nought
of the fire doth reck:
Then the spurs in his flank are smitten,
and the reins lie loose on his neck,
And the sharp cry springeth from Gunnar
—no handbreadth stirred the beast;
The dusk drew on and over and the light
of the fire increased,
And still as a shard on the mountain in the
sandy dale alone
Was the shape of the cloudy Greyfell, nor
moved he more than the stone;
But right through the heart of the fire for
ever Sigurd stared,
As he stood in the gold red-litten with the
Wrath's thin edges bared.

No word for a while spake any, till Gunnar
leaped to the earth,
And the anger wrought within him, and
the fierce words came to birth:
"Who mocketh the King of the Niblungs in
the desert land forlorn?
Is it thou, O Sigurd the Stranger? is it
thou, O younger-born?
Dost thou laugh in the hall, O Mother?
dost thou spin, and laugh at the
tale
That has drawn thy son and thine eldest to
the sword and the blaze of the
bale?

Or thou, O God of the Goths, wilt thou
hide and laugh thy fill,
While the hands of the foster-brethren the
blood of brothers spill?"

But the awful voice of Sigurd across the
wild went forth:
"How changed are the words of Gunnar!
where wend his ways of worth?
I mock thee not in the desert, as I mocked
thee not in the mead,
When I swore beneath the turf-yoke to
help thy fondest need:
Nay, strengthen thine heart for the work,
for the gift that thy manhood
awaits;
For I give thee a gift, O Niblung, that shall
overload the Fates,
And how may a King sustain it? but
forbear with the dark to strive;
For thy mother spinneth and worketh, and
her craft is awake and alive."

Then Hogni spake from the saddle: "The
time, and the time is come
To gather the might of our mother, and of
her that spinneth at home.
Forbear all words, O Gunnar, and anigh to
Sigurd stand,
And face to face behold him, and take his
hand in thine hand:
Then be thy will as his will, that his heart
may mingle with thine,
And the love that he sware 'neath the
earth-yoke with thine hope may
intertwine."

Then the wrath from the Niblung slippeth
and the shame that anger hath
bred,
And the heavy wings of the dreamtide flit
over Gunnar's head:
But he doth by his brother's bidding, and
Sigurd's hand he takes,
And he looks in the eyes of the Volsung,
though scarce in the desert he
wakes.
There Hogni sits in the saddle aloof from
the King's desire,
And little his lips are moving, as he stares
on the rolling fire,
And mutters the spells of his mother, and
the words she bade him say:
But the craft of the kings of aforetime on
those Kings of the battle lay;
Dark night was spread behind them, and
the fire flared up before,
And unheard was the wind of the
wasteland mid the white flame's
wavering roar.

Long Sigurd gazeth on Gunnar, till he
sees, as through a cloud,
The long black locks of the Niblung, and
the King's face set and proud:
Then the face is alone on the dark, and the
dusky Niblung mail
Is nought but the night before him: then
whiles will the visage fail,
And grow again as he gazeth, black hair
and gleaming eyes,
And fade again into nothing, as for more
of vision he tries:

Then all is nought but the night, yea the
waste of an emptier thing,
And the fire-wall Sigurd forgetteth, nor
feeleth the hand of the King:
Nay, what is it now he remembereth? it is
nought that aforetime he knew,
And no world is there left him to live in,
and no deed to rejoice in or rue;
But frail and alone he fareth, and as one in
the sphere-stream's drift,
By the starless empty places that lie
beyond the lift:
Then at last is he stayed in his drifting,
and he saith, It is blind and dark;
Yet he feeleth the earth at his feet, and
there cometh a change and a spark,
And away in an instant of time is the mirk
of the dreamland rolled,
And there is the fire-lit midnight, and
before him an image of gold,
A man in the raiment of Gods, nor
fashioned worser than they:
Full sad he gazeth on Sigurd from the
great wide eyes and grey;
And the Helm that Aweth the people is set
on the golden hair,
And the Mail of Gold enwraps him, and
the Wrath in his hand is bare.

Then Sigurd looks on his arm and his
hand in his brother's hand,
And thereon is the dark grey mail-gear
well forged in the southern land;
Then he looks on the sword that he
beareth, and, lo, the eager blade
That leaps in the hand of Gunnar when

the kings are waxen afraid;
And he turns his face o'er his shoulder,
and the raven-locks hang down
From the dark-blue helm of the Dwarf-
folk, and the rings of the Niblung
crown.

Then a red flush riseth against him in the
face ne'er seen before,
Save dimly in the mirror or the burnished
targe of war,
And the foster-brethren sunder, and the
clasped hands fall apart;
But a change cometh over Sigurd, and the
fierce pride leaps in his heart;
He knoweth the soul of Gunnar, and the
shaping of his mind;
He seeketh the words of Sigurd, and
Gunnar's voice doth he find,
As he cries: "I know thy bidding; let the
world be lief or loth,
The child is unborn that shall hearken
how Sigurd rued his oath!
Well fare thou brother Gunnar! what deed
shall I do this eve
That I shall never repent of, that thine
heart shall never grieve?
What deed shall I do this even that none
else may bring to the birth,
Nay, not the King of the Niblungs, and the
lord of the best of the earth?"

The flames rolled up to the heavens, and
the stars behind were bright,
Dark Hogni sat on his war-steed, and
stared out into the night,
And there stood Gunnar the King in

Sigurd's semblance wrapped,
—As Sigurd walking in slumber, for in
Grimhild's guile was he lapped,
That his heart forgat his glory, and the
ways of Odin's lords,
And the thought was frozen within him,
and the might of spoken words.

But Sigurd leapeth on Greyfell, and the
sword in his hand is bare,
And the gold spurs flame on his heels, and
the fire-blast lifteth his hair;
Forth Greyfell bounds rejoicing, and they
see the grey wax red,
As unheard the war-gear clasheth, and the
flames meet over his head,
Yet a while they see him riding, as
through the rye men ride,
When the word goes forth in the summer
of the kings by the ocean-side;
But the fires were slaked before him and
the wild-fire burned no more
Than the ford of the summer waters when
the rainy time is o'er.

Not once turned Sigurd aback, nor looked
o'er the ashy ring,
To the midnight wilderness drear and the
spell-drenched Niblung King:
But he stayed and looked before him, and
lo, a house high-built
With its roof of the red gold beaten, and
its wall-stones over-gilt:
So he leapt adown from Greyfell, and
came to that fair abode,
And dark in the gear of the Niblungs
through the gleaming door he

strode:
All light within was that dwelling, and a
marvellous hall it was,
But of gold were its hangings woven, and
its pillars gleaming as glass,
And Sigurd said in his heart, it was
wrought erewhile for a God:
But he looked athwart and endlong as
alone its floor he trod,
And lo, on the height of the daïs is
upreared a graven throne,
And thereon a woman sitting in the
golden place alone;
Her face is fair and awful, and a gold
crown girdeth her head;
And a sword of the kings she beareth, and
her sun-bright hair is shed
O'er the laps of the snow-white linen that
ripples adown to her feet:
As a swan on the billow unbroken ere the
firth and the ocean meet,
On the dark-blue cloths she sitteth, in the
height of the golden place,
Nor breaketh the hush of the hall, though
her eyes be set on his face.

Now he sees this is even the woman of
whom the tale hath been told,
E'en she that was wrought for the
Niblungs, the bride ordained from
of old,
And hushed in the hall he standeth, and a
long while looks in her eyes,
And the word he hath shapen for Gunnar
to his lips may never arise.

The man in Gunnar's semblance looked

long and knew no deed;
And she looked, and her eyes were
dreadful, and none would help her
need.
Then the image of Gunnar trembled, and
the flesh of the War-King shrank;
For he heard her voice on the silence, and
his heart of her anguish drank:

"King, King, who art thou that comest,
thou lord of the cloudy gear?
What deed for the weary-hearted shall thy
strange hands fashion here?"

The speech of her lips pierced through
him like the point of the bitter
sword,
And he deemed that death were better
than another spoken word;
But he clencheth his hand on the war-
blade, and setteth his face as the
brass,
And the voice of his brother Gunnar from
out his lips doth pass:
"When thou lookest on me, O Goddess,
thou seest Gunnar the King,
The King and the lord of the Niblungs, and
the chief of their warfaring.
But art thou indeed that Brynhild of whom
is the rumour and fame,
That she bideth the coming of kings to
ride her Wavering Flame,
Lest she wed the little-hearted, and the
world grow evil and vile?
For if thou be none other I will speak
again in a while."

She said: "Art thou Gunnar the Stranger! O
art thou the man that I see?
Yea, verily I am Brynhild; what other is
like unto me?
O men of the Earth behold me! hast thou
seen, O labouring Earth,
Such sorrow as my sorrow, or such evil as
my birth?"

Then spake the Wildfire's Trampler that
Gunnar's image bore:
"O Brynhild, mighty of women, be thou
glorious evermore!
Thou seest Gunnar the Niblung, as he sits
mid the Niblung lords,
And rides with the gods of battle in the
fore-front of the swords."

Hard rang his voice in the hall, and a
while she spake no word,
And there stood the Image of Gunnar, and
leaned on his bright blue sword:
But at last she cried from the high-seat: "If
I yet am alive and awake,
I know no words for the speaking, nor
what answer I may make."
She ceased and he answered nothing; and
a hush on the hall there lay
And the moon slipped over the windows
as he clomb the heavenly way;
And no whit stirred the raiment of
Brynhild: till she hearkened the
Wooer's voice,
As he said: "Thou art none of the women

that swear and forswear and
rejoice,
Forgetting the sorrow of kings and the
Gods and the labouring earth.
Thou shall wed with King Gunnar the
Niblung and increase his worth
with thy worth."

So spake he in semblance of Gunnar, and
from off his hand he drew
A ring of the spoils of the Southland, a
marvel seen but of few,
And he set the ring on her finger, and she
turned to her lord and spake:
"I thank thee, King, for thy goodwill, and
thy pledge of love I take.
Depart with my troth to thy people: but
ere full ten days are o'er
I shall come to the Sons of the Niblungs,
and then shall we part no more
Till the day of the change of our life-days,
when Odin and Freyia shall call.
Lo, here, my gift of the morning! 'twas my
dearest treasure of all;
But thou art become its master, and for
thee was it fore-ordained,
Since thou art the man of mine oath and
the best that the earth hath gained."

And lo, 'twas the Grief of Andvari, and the
lack that made him loth,
The last of the God-folk's ransom, the Ring
of Hindfell's oath;
Now on Sigurd's hand it shineth, and long

he looketh thereon,
But it gave him back no memories of the
days that were bygone.

So forth from the hall goes the Wooer, and
slow and slow he goes,
As a conquered king from his city fares
forth to meet his foes;
And he taketh the reins of Greyfell, nor
yet will back him there,
But afoot through the cold slaked ashes of
yester-eve doth fare,
With his eyes cast down to the earth; till
he heareth the wind, and a cry,
And raiseth a face brow-knitted and
beholdeth men anigh,
And beholdeth Hogni the King set grey on
his coal-black steed,
And beholdeth the image of Sigurd, the
King in the golden weed:
Then he stayeth and stareth astonished
and setteth his hand to his sword;
Till Hogni cries from his saddle, and his
word is a kindly word:

"Hail, brother, the King of the people!
hail, helper of my kin!
Again from the death and the trouble
great gifts hast thou set thee to win
For thy friends and the Niblung children,
and hast crowned thine earthly
fame,
And increased thine exceeding glory and
the sound of thy lovèd name."

Nought Sigurd spake in answer but looked
straight forth with a frown,
And stretched out his hand to Gunnar, as
one that claimeth his own.
Then no word speaketh Gunnar, but
taketh his hand in his hand,
And they look in the eyes of each other,
and a while in the desert they stand
Till the might of Grimhild prevaileth, and
the twain are as yester-morn;
But sad was the golden Sigurd, though his
eyes knew nought of scorn;
And he spake:
"It is finished, O Gunnar! and I
will that our brotherhood
May endure through the good and the evil
as it sprang in the days of the good:
But I bid thee look to the ending, that the
deed I did yest'reve
Bear nought for me to repent of, for thine
heart of hearts to grieve.
Thou art troth-plight, O King of the
Niblungs, to Brynhild Queen of the
earth,
She hath sworn thine heart to cherish and
increase thy worth with her worth:
She shall come to the house of Gunnar ere
ten days are past and o'er;
And thenceforth the life of Brynhild shall
part from thy life no more,
Till the doom of our kind shall speed you,
and Odin and Freyia shall call,
And ye bide the Day of the Battle, and the
uttermost changing of all."

The praise and thanks they gave him! the

words of love they spake!
The tale that the world should hear of,
deeds done for Sigurd's sake!
They were lovely might you hear them:
but they lack; for in very deed
Their sound was clean forgotten in the day
of Sigurd's need.

So that night in the hall of the ancient
they hold high-tide again,
And the Gods on the Southland hangings
smile out full fair and fain,
And the song goes up of Sigurd, and the
praise of his fame fulfilled,
But his speech in the dead sleep lieth, and
the words of his wisdom are
chilled:
And men say, the King is careful, for he
thinks of the people's weal,
And his heart is afraid for our trouble, lest
the Gods our joyance steal.

But that night, when the feast was over, to
Gudrun Sigurd came,
And she noted the ring on his finger, and
she knew it was nowise the same
As the ring he was wont to carry; so she
bade him tell thereof:
Then he turned unto her kindly, and his
words were words of love;
Nor his life nor his death he heeded, but
told her last night's tale:
Yea, he drew forth the sword for his
slaying, and whetted the edges of

bale;
For he took that Gold of Andvari, that
Curse of the uttermost land,
And he spake as a king that loveth, and set
it on her hand;
But her heart was exceeding joyous, as he
kissed her sweet and soft,
And bade her bear it for ever, that she
might remember him oft
When his hand from the world was
departed and he sat in Odin's home.

How Brynhild was wedded to Gunnar the Niblung.

So ten days wore over, and on the morrow-morn the folk were all astir in the Niblung house, till the watchers on the towers cried to them tidings of a goodly company drawing nigh upon the road. Then the Niblungs got them to horse in glittering-gay raiment and went forth to meet the people of Brynhild.

First rode bands of maidens arrayed in fine linen and blue-broidered cloaks, and after them came a golden wain with horses of snowy white and bench-cloths of blue, and therein sat Brynhild alone, clad in swan-white raiment and crowned with gold. Then they hailed her sweet and goodly, and so she entered the darksome gate-way and came within the Niblung Burg.

So fair in the sun of the forecourt doth
Brynhild's wain shine bright,
And the huge hall riseth before her, and
the ernes cry out from its height,
And there by the door of the Niblungs she

sees huge warriors stand,
Dark-clad, by the shoulders greater than
the best of any land,
And she knoweth the chiefs of the
Niblungs, the dreaded dukes of
war:
But one in cloudy raiment stands a very
midst the door,
And ruddy and bright is his visage, and his
black locks wave in the wind,
And she knoweth the King of the Niblungs
and the man she came to find:
Then nought she lingered nor loitered, but
stepped to the earth adown
With right-hand reached to the War-God,
the wearer of the crown;
And she said:
"I behold thee, Gunnar, the King
of War that rode
Through the waves of the Flickering Fire
to the door of mine abode,

"And for this I needs must deem thee the
best of all men born,
The highest-hearted, the greatest, the
staunchest of thy love:
And that such the world yet holdeth, my
heart is fain thereof:
And for thee I deem was I fashioned, and
for thee the oath I swore
In the days of my glory and wisdom, ere
the days of youth were o'er.

"May the fire ne'er stay thy glory, nor the
ocean-flood thy fame!
Through ages of all ages may the wide
world praise thy name!
Yea, oft may the word be spoken when
low we lie at rest;
'It befell in the days of Gunnar, the
happiest and the best!'
All this may the high Gods give thee, and
thereto a gift I give,
The body of Queen Brynhild so long as
both we live."

With unmoved face, unfaltering, the
blessing-words she said,
But the joy sprang up in Gunnar and
increased his goodlihead,
And he cast his arms about her and kissed
her on the mouth,
And he said:
"The gift is greater than all
treasure of the south;
As glad as my heart this moment, so glad
may be thy life,
And the world be never weary of the joy
of Gunnar's wife!"

She spake no word, and smiled not, but
she held his hand henceforth.
And he said; "Now take the greetings of
my men, the most of worth."

Then she turned her face to the war-
dukes, and hearkened to their
praise,

And she spake in few words sweetly, and
blessed their coming days.
Then again spake Gunnar and said: "Lo,
Hogni my brother is this;
But Guttorm is far on the East-seas, and
seeketh the warrior's bliss;
A third there is of my brethren, and my
house holds none so great;
In the hall by the side of my sister thy face
doth he await."

Then Brynhild gave fair greeting to Hogni, but anon she turned and questioned Gunnar of his words concerning that brother who awaited her in the hall. "I deemed the sons of Giuki had been but three," said Brynhild. "This fourth, this hall-abider the mighty,—is he akin to thee?"

And Gunnar answered:
"He is nought of our
blood,
But the Gods have sent him to usward to
work us measureless good:
It is even Sigurd the Volsung, the best
man ever born,
The man that the Gods withstand not, my
friend, and my brother sworn."

She heard the name, and she changed not,
but her feet went forth as he led,
And under the cloudy roof-tree Queen
Brynhild bowed her head.
Then, were there a man so ancient as had
lived beyond his peers
On the earth, that beareth all things, a
twice-told tale of years,
He had heard no sound so mighty as the

shout that shook the wall
When Brynhild's feet unhearkened first
trod the Niblung hall.
No whit the clamour stirred her; but her
godlike eyes she raised
And betwixt the hedge of the earl-folk on
the golden high-seat gazed,
And the man that sat by Gudrun: but e'en
as the rainless cloud
Ere the first of the tempest ariseth the
latter sun doth shroud,
And men look round and shudder, so
Grimhild came between
The silent golden Sigurd and the eyes of
the mighty Queen,
And again heard Brynhild greeting, and
again she spake and said:

"O Mother of the Niblungs, such hap be on
thine head,
As thy love for me, the stranger, was past
the pain of words!
Mayst thou see thy son's sons glorious in
the meeting of the swords!
Mayst thou sleep and doubt thee nothing
of the fortunes of thy race!
Mayst thou hear folk call yon high-seat
the earth's most happy place!"

Then the Wise-wife hushed before her,
and a little fell aside,
And nought from the eyes of Brynhild the
high-seat now did hide;
And the face so long desired, unchanged
from time agone,
In the house of the Cloudy People from
the Niblung high-seat shone:

She stood with her hand in Gunnar's, and
all about and around
Were the unfamiliar faces, and the folk
that day had found;
But her heart ran back through the years,
and yet her lips did move
With the words she spake on Hindfell,
when they plighted troth of love.

Lo, Sigurd fair on the high-seat by the
white-armed Gudrun's side,
In the midst of the Cloudy People, in the
dwelling of their pride!
His face is exceeding glorious and awful to
behold;
For of all his sorrow he knoweth and his
hope smit dead and cold:
The will of the Norns is accomplished,
and, lo, they wend on their ways,
And leave the mighty Sigurd to deal with
the latter days:
The Gods look down from heaven, and the
lonely King they see,
And sorrow over his sorrow, and rejoice in
his majesty.
For the will of the Norns is accomplished,
and outworn is Grimhild's spell,
And nought now shall blind or help him,
and the tale shall be to tell:
He hath seen the face of Brynhild, and he
knows why she hath come,
And that his is the hand that hath drawn
her to the Cloudy People's home:
He knows of the net of the days, and the
deeds that the Gods have bid,
And no whit of the sorrow that shall be

from his wakened soul is hid:
And his glory his heart restraineth, and
restraineth the hand of the strong
From the hope of the fools of desire and
the wrong that amendeth wrong.

And Brynhild's face drew near him with
eyes grown stern and strange.

Now she stands on the floor of the high-
seat, and for e'en so little a space
As men may note delaying, she looketh on
Sigurd's face,
Ere she saith:
"I have greeted many in the
Niblungs' house today,
And for thee is the last of my greetings ere
the feast shall wear away:
Hail, Sigurd, son of the Volsungs! hail,
lord of Odin's storm!
Hail, rider of the wasteland and slayer of
the Worm!
If aught thy soul shall desire while yet
thou livest on earth,
I pray that thou mayst win it, nor forget
its might and worth."

All grief, sharp scorn, sore longing, stark
death in her voice he knew,
But gone forth is the doom of the Norns,
and what shall he answer thereto,

While the death that amendeth lingers?
and they twain shall dwell for awhile
In the Niblung house together by the hearth that forged the guile.

So he spake as a King of the people in whom all fear is dead,
And his anguish no man noted, as the greeting-words he said:
"Hail, fairest of all things fashioned! hail, thou desire of eyes!
Hail, chooser of the mightiest, and teacher of the wise!
Hail, wife of my brother Gunnar! in might may thy days endure,
And in peace without a trouble that the world's weal may be sure!"

But the song sprang up in the hall, and the eagles cried from above
And forth to the freshness of May went the joyance of the feast:
And Sigurd sat with the Niblungs, and gave ear to most and to least.
And showed no sign to the people of the grief that on him lay;
Nor seemeth he worser to any than he was on the yesterday.

Of the Contention betwixt the Queens.

So now must Sigurd and Brynhild abide together in the Burg of the Niblungs, yet each must bear the burden of sorrow alone. Brynhild held close converse with Gudrun, and behaved humbly towards her lest strife should arise between them. But Gudrun, filled with pride that she was the wife of so great a man as Sigurd, deemed it a little matter that all others should give her honour, and knowing how Sigurd had ridden the fire, she cherished great scorn of Gunnar and Brynhild in her heart, and her pride waxed daily greater.

Of the heart-wise Hogni men tell how he grew wiser day by day and more learned in the craft of his mother Grimhild.

As for Gunnar, he lived with Brynhild in great honour and praise from all men, but the thought of how Sigurd had ridden the fire in his semblance lay heavy upon him. He brooded thereon in bitterness and envy, and the lie shadowed his life-days so that he had but small joy in his wife.

And Grimhild, marking his heavy mood, wrought upon him with cunning words and he gave ear to her. For ever she spake of kings' supplanters who bear away the praise from their lords after great deeds are done, and often her talk was of the mighty power that he holdeth who knoweth the shame of a king. So Gunnar hearkened and ill thoughts grew within him.

> But fair-faced, calm as a God who hath
> none to call his foes,
> Betwixt the Kings and the people the
> golden Sigurd goes;

No knowledge of man he lacketh, and the
lore he gained of old
From the ancient heart of the Serpent and
the Wallower on the Gold
Springs fresh in the soul of Sigurd; the
heart of Hogni he sees,
And the heart of his brother Gunnar, and
he grieveth sore for these.

It was most in these latter days that his
fame went far abroad,
The helper, the overcomer, the righteous
sundering sword;
The loveliest King of the King-folk, the
man of sweetest speech,
Whose ear is dull to no man that his
helping shall beseech;
The eye-bright seer of all things, that
wasteth every wrong,
The straightener of the crooked, the
hammer of the strong:
Lo, such was the Son of Sigmund in the
days whereof I tell,
The dread of the doom and the battle; and
all children loved him well.

Now Gudrun's scorn of Brynhild waxed greater as she thought on the knowledge that she held, and it needed but a little that she should speak out the whole tale.

Such was her mind when it befell her to go with Brynhild to bathe in the Niblung river. There it chanced that they fell to talk of their husbands, and

Gudrun named Sigurd the best of the world. Thereat Brynhild, stung by her love for Sigurd and the memory of his broken troth,—for so she deemed it,—cried out, saying: "Thy lord is but Gunnar's serving man to do his bidding, but my mate is the King of King-folk, who rode the Wavering Fire and hath dared very death to win me."

Then Gudrun held out her hand and a golden gleam shone on her finger, at the sight whereof Brynhild waxed wan as a dead woman. "Lo," said Gudrun, "I had Andvari's ring of Sigurd, and indeed thou sayest truly, that he did Gunnar's bidding, for he took the King's semblance and hid his own shape in Gunnar's. Thus he wooed the bride for Gunnar and for Gunnar rode the fire, and now by this token mayest thou know whether thy husband is truly the best of Kings." And Brynhild spake no word in answer, but clad herself in haste and fled from the river, and Gudrun followed her in triumph of heart.

Yet as the day wore on she repented of her words and feared the deeds that Brynhild might do, and at even she sought her alone and craved pardon. Then spake Brynhild the Queen: "I repent me of my bitter words this day, yet one thing I beseech thee,—do thou say that thou hadst the ring of Gunnar and not of Sigurd, lest I be shamed before all men." "What?" said Gudrun; "hast thou heard that the wives of the Niblungs lie? Nay, Sigurd it was who set this ring on my finger and therewith he told me the shame of my brother Gunnar,—how his glory was turned to a scoff."

And Brynhild seeing that the tale of the deceiving wrought against her might not be hidden, lifted her voice and cursed the house of the Niblungs wherein

she had suffered such woe. So the queens parted in great wrath and bitterness.

Of the exceeding great grief and mourning of Brynhild.

Now on the morrow it was known that Brynhild was sick, nor would she reveal the cause to any. Then Gunnar besought her to be comforted and to show what ailed her, but for a long while he might win no word in answer. Thereat the evil thoughts that Grimhild had sown in his heart grew strong, and he cried in bitter anger: "Lo, Brynhild, I deem thou art sick for love of my foe, the supplanter of Kings, he who hath shone like a serpent this long while past amidst the honour of our kin."

Then at last was Brynhild moved to look on him, and she besought him, saying: "Swear to me, Gunnar, that I may live, and say that thou gavest Andvari's ring to Gudrun—thou, and not thy captain of war." Thereby Gunnar understood that all his falsehood was known to her, so that never again might they two have any joy together. He had no answering word, but turned from her and departed, for bitter shame was come on him and hatred of Sigurd burnt in his soul like fire.

Then as evening drew on, boding of evil fell on Gudrun, and she sought her brothers that they might plead with Brynhild to pardon her and forget her bitter taunts.

But Gunnar she found seated alone arrayed in his war-gear and on his knees lay his sword, neither would he hear any word of further pleading with Brynhild.

Then sought she Hogni, and behold, he was in the like guise, and sat as one that waits for a foe. So she sped to Sigurd, but chill fear fell on her beholding him, for he was dight in the Helm of Aweing and his golden hauberk, and the Wrath lay on his knees, neither would he then speak to Brynhild.

So that heavy night passed away and there was but little sleep in the abode of the Niblungs. And with the dawn Sigurd arose and sought Brynhild's chamber where she lay as one dead. Like a pillar of light he stood in the sunshine and the Wrath rattled by his side. And Brynhild looked on him and said: "Art thou come to behold me? Thou—the mightiest and the worst of my betrayers." Then for very grief the breast of Sigurd heaved so that the rings of his byrny burst asunder and he cried: "O live, Brynhild beloved! For hereafter shalt thou know of the snare and the lie that entrapped us and the measureless grief of my soul." "It is o'erlate," said Brynhild, "for I may live no longer and the gods have forgotten the earth." And in such despair must he leave her.

Of the slaying of Sigurd the Volsung.

Then at high noon Brynhild sent for Gunnar and sought to whet him to the slaying of Sigurd, for to such hatred was her love turned.

"I look upon thee," said Brynhild, "I know
thy race and thy name,
Yet meseems the deed thou sparest, to
amend thine evil and shame."

"Nought, nought," he said, "may amend it,
save the hungry eyeless sword,

And the war without hope or honour, and
the strife without reward."

"Thou hast spoken the word," said
Brynhild, "if the word is enough, it
is well.
Let us eat and drink and be merry, that all
men of our words may tell!"

"O all-wise woman," said Gunnar, "what
deed lieth under the tongue?
What day for the dearth of the people,
when the seed of thy sowing hath
sprung?"

She said: "Our garment is Shame, and
nought the web shall rend,
Save the day without repentance, and the
deed that nought may amend."

"Speak, mighty of women," said Gunnar,
"and cry out the name and the deed
That the ends of the Earth may hearken,
and the Niblungs' grievous Need."
"To slay," she said, "is the deed, to slay a
King ere the morn,
And the name is Sigurd the Volsung, my
love and thy brother sworn."

She turned and departed from him, and he
knew not whither she went;
But he took his sword from the girdle and
the peace-strings round it rent,
And into the house he gat him, and the
sunlit fair abode,
But his heart in the mid-mirk waded, as
through the halls he strode,

Till he came to a chamber apart; and
Grimhild his mother was there,
And there was his brother Hogni in the
cloudy Niblung gear:
Him-seemed there was silence between
them as of them that have spoken,
and wait
Till the words of their mouths be
accomplished by slow unholpen
Fate:
But they turned to the door, and beheld
him, and he took his sheathèd
sword
And cast it adown betwixt them, and it
clashed half bare on the board,
And Grimhild spake as it clattered: "For
whom are the peace-strings rent?
For whom is the blood-point whetted and
the edge of thine intent?"
He said: "For the heart of Sigurd; and thus
all is rent away
Betwixt this word and his slaying, save a
little hour of day."

Again spake Grimhild the wise-wife:
"Where then is Guttorm the brave?
For he blent not his blood with the
Volsung's, nor his oath to Sigurd
gave,
Nor called on Earth to witness, nor went
beneath the yoke;
And now is he Sigurd's foeman; and who
may curse his stroke?"

Then Hogni laughed and answered: "His
feet on the threshold stand:
Forged is thy sword, O Mother, and its
hilts are come to hand.

"Ho, Guttorm, enter, and hearken to the
counsel of the wise!"
Then in through the door strode Guttorm
fair-clad in hunter's guise,
With no steel save his wood-knife girded;
but his war-fain eyes stared wild,
As he spake: "What words are ye hiding
from the youngest Niblung child?
What work is to win, my brethren, that ye
sit in warrior's weed,
And tell me nought of the glory, and cover
up the deed?"

Then uprose Grimhild the wise-wife, and
took the cup again;
Night-long had she brewed that witch-
drink and laboured not in vain.
For therein was the creeping venom, and
hearts of things that prey
On the hidden lives of ocean, and never
look on day;
And the heart of the ravening wood-wolf
and the hunger-blinded beast
And the spent slaked heart of the wild-fire
the guileful cup increased:
But huge words of ancient evil about its
rim were scored,
The curse and the eyeless craving of the
first that fashioned sword.

So the cup in her hand was gleaming, as
she turned unto Guttorm and spake:
"Be merry, King of the War-fain! we hold
counsel for thy sake:
The work is a God's son's slaying, and
thine is the hand that shall smite,
That thy name may be set in, glory and
thy deeds live on in light."

Forth flashed the flame from his eyen, and
he cried: "Where then is the foe,
This dread of mine house and my
brethren, that my hand may lay
him alow?"

"Drink, son," she said, "and be merry! and
I shall tell his name,
Whose death shall crown thy life-days,
and increase thy fame with his
fame."

He drinketh and craveth for battle, and his
hand for a sword doth seek,
And he looketh about on his brethren, but
his lips no word may speak;
They speak the name, and he hears not,
and again he drinks of the cup
And knows not friend nor kindred, and the
wrath in his heart wells up,
That no God may bear unmingled, and he
cries a wordless cry,
As the last of the day is departing and the
dusk time drawing anigh.

Then Grimhild goes from the chamber,
and bringeth his harness of war,
And therewith they array his body, and he

drinketh the cup once more,
And his heart is set on the murder, and
now may he understand
What soul is dight for the slaying, and
what quarry is for his hand.
For again they tell him of Sigurd, and the
man he remembereth,
And praiseth his mighty name and his
deeds that laughed on death.

Now dusk and dark draw over, and
through the glimmering house
They go to the place of the Niblungs, the
high hall and glorious;
For hard by is the chamber of Sigurd:
there dight in their harness of war
In their thrones sit Gunnar and Hogni, but
Guttorm stands on the floor
With his blue blade naked before them:
the torches flare from the wall
And the woven God-folk waver, but the
hush is deep in the hall,
And those Niblung faces change not,
though the slow moon slips from
her height
And earth is acold ere dawning, and new
winds shake the night.

Now it was in the earliest dawn-dusk that
Guttorm stirred in his place,
And the mail-rings tinkled upon him, as
he turned his helm-hid face,
And went forth from the hall and the
high-seat; but the Kings sat still in
their pride
And hearkened the clash of his going and
heeded how it died.

Slow, all alone goeth Guttorm to Sigurd's
chamber door,
And all is open before him, and the white
moon lies on the floor
And the bed where Sigurd lieth with
Gudrun on his breast,
And light comes her breath from her
bosom in the joy of infinite rest.
Then Guttorm stands on the threshold,
and his heart of the murder is fain,
And he thinks of the deeds of Sigurd, and
praiseth his greatness and gain;
Bright blue is his blade in the moonlight—
but lo, how Sigurd lies,
As the carven dead that die not, with fair
wide-open eyes;
And their glory gleameth on Guttorm, and
the hate in his heart is chilled,
And he shrinketh aback from the
threshold and knoweth not what he
willed.

Thereon he turned him again to the hall, and the Kings beheld his unstained sword in the torch-light, but they cast him never a word. Then shame and wrath urged him and he wended the second time to Sigurd's chamber, but yet again the dread eyes of the Volsung were open and he fled from their light to his biding brethren.

Now dieth moon and candle, and though
the day be nigh
The roof of the hall fair-builded seems far
aloof as the sky,
But a glimmer grows on the pavement and
the ernes on the roof-ridge stir:
Then the brethren hist and hearken, for a

sound of feet they hear,
And into the hall of the Niblungs a white
thing cometh apace:
But the sword of Guttorm upriseth, and he
wendeth from his place,
And the clash of steel goes with him; yet
loud as it may sound
Still more they hear those footsteps light-
falling on the ground,
And the hearts of the Niblungs waver, and
their pride is smitten acold,
For they look on that latest comer, and
Brynhild they behold:
But she sits by their side in silence, and
heeds them nothing more
Than the grey soft-footed morning heeds
yester-even's war.

But Guttorm clashed in the cloisters and
through the silence strode
And scarce on the threshold of Sigurd a
little while abode;
There the moon from the floor hath
departed and heaven without is
grey,
And afar in the eastern quarter faint
glimmer streaks of day.
Close over the head of Sigurd the Wrath
gleams wan and bare,
And the Niblung woman stirreth, and her
brow is knit with fear;
But the King's closed eyes are hidden,
loose lie his empty hands,
There is nought 'twixt the sword of the
slayer and the Wonder of all Lands.
Then Guttorm laughed in his war-rage,

and his sword leapt up on high,
As he sprang to the bed from the threshold
and cried a wordless cry,
And with all the might of the Niblungs
through Sigurd's body thrust,
And turned and fled from the chamber,
and fell amid the dust,
Within the door and without it, the slayer
slain by the slain;
For the cast of the sword of Sigurd had
smitten his body atwain
While yet his cry of onset through the
echoing chambers went.

Woe's me! how the house of the Niblungs
by another cry was rent,
The wakening wail of Gudrun, as she
shrank in the river of blood
From the breast of the mighty Sigurd: he
heard it and understood,
And rose up on the sword of Guttorm, and
turned from the country of death,
And spake words of loving-kindness as he
strove for life and breath:

"Wail not, O child of the Niblungs! I am
smitten, but thou shall live,
In remembrance of our glory, mid the gifts
the Gods shall give!"

She stayed her cry to hearken, and her
heart well nigh stood still:
But he spake: "Mourn not, O Gudrun, this
stroke is the last of ill;
Fear leaveth the House of the Niblungs on
this breaking of the morn;
Mayst thou live, O woman belovèd,

unforsaken, unforlorn!"

Then he sank aback on the sword, and
down to his lips she bent
If some sound therefrom she might
hearken; for his breath was well-
nigh spent:
"It is Brynhild's deed," he murmured, "and
the woman that loves me well;
Nought now is left to repent of, and the
tale abides to tell.
I have done many deeds in my life-days,
and all these, and my love, they lie
In the hollow hand of Odin till the day of
the world go by.
I have done and I may not undo, I have
given and I take not again:
Art thou other than I, Allfather, wilt thou
gather my glory in vain?"

There was silence then in the chamber, as
the dawn spread wide and grey,
And hushed was the hall of the Niblungs
at the entering-in of day.
Long Gudrun hung o'er the Volsung and
waited the coming word;
Then she stretched out her hand to Sigurd
and touched her love and her lord,
And the broad day fell on his visage, and
she knew she was there alone,
And her heart was wrung with anguish
and she uttered a weary moan:
Then Brynhild laughed in the hall, and the
first of men's voices was that
Since when on yester-even the kings in the
high-seat had sat.

In the house rose rumour and stir, and
men stood up in the morn,
And their hearts with doubt were shaken,
as if with the Uttermost Horn:
The cry and the calling spread, and shields
clashed down from the wall,
And swords in the chamber glittered, and
men ran apace to the hall.
Nor knew what man to question, nor who
had tidings to give,
Nor what were the days thenceforward
wherein the folk should live.
But ever the word is amongst them that
Sigurd the Volsung is slain,
And the spears in the hall were tossing as
the rye in the windy plain.
But they look aloft to the high-seat and
they see the gleam of the gold:
And Gunnar the King of battle, and Hogni
wise and cold,
And Brynhild the wonder of women; and
her face is deadly pale,
And the Kings are clad in their war-gear,
and bared are the edges of bale.
Then cold fear falleth upon them, but the
noise and the clamour abate,
And they look on the war-wise Gunnar
and awhile for his word they wait;
But e'en as he riseth above them, doth a
shriek through the tumult ring;

"Awake, O House of the Niblungs, for slain
is Sigurd the King!"

Then nothing faltered Gunnar, but he

stood o'er the Niblung folk,
And over the hall woe-stricken the words
of pride he spoke:

"Mourn now, O Niblung people, for gone
is Sigurd our guest,
And Guttorm the King is departed, and
this is our day of unrest;
But all this of the Norns was fore-ordered,
and herein is Odin's hand;
Cast down are the mighty of men-folk, but
the Niblung house shall stand:
Mourn then today and tomorrow, but the
third day waken and live,
For the Gods died not this morning, and
great gifts they have to give."

He spake and awhile was silence, and then
did the cry outbreak,
And many there were of the Earl-folk that
wept for Sigurd's sake;
And they wept for their little children, and
they wept for those unborn,
Who should know the earth without him
and the world of his worth forlorn.

So rent is the joy of the Niblungs; and
their simple days and fain
From that ancient house are departed, and
who shall buy them again?
For he, the redeemer, the helper, the
crown of all their worth,
They looked upon him and wondered,
they loved, and they thrust him

forth.

Of the mighty Grief of Gudrun over Sigurd dead.

But as for the grief of Gudrun over Sigurd no man may tell it. Long she lay on his body and spent herself in weeping, but at last she arose and cursed Brynhild and Gunnar and all the Niblung house, saying:

"O hearken, hearken Gunnar! May the
dear Gold drag thee adown,
And Greyfell's ruddy Burden, and the
Treasure of renown,
And the rings that ye swore the oath on!
yea, if all avengers die,
May Earth, that ye bade remember, on the
blood of Sigurd cry!
Be this land as waste as the troth-plight
that the lips of fools have sworn!
May it rain through this broken hall-roof,
and snow on the hearth forlorn!
And may no man draw anigh it to tell of
the ruin and the wrack!
Yea, may I be a mock for the idle if my
feet come ever aback,
If my heart think kind of the chambers, if
mine eyes shall yearn to behold
The fair-built house of my fathers, the
house beloved of old!"

And therewith Gudrun fled forever from the Burg of the Niblungs, and none dared hinder or follow her, and none knew whither she turned for refuge.

Of the passing away of Brynhild.

Once more on the morrow-morning fair
shineth the glorious sun,
And the Niblung children labour on a
deed that shall be done.
For out in the people's meadows they raise
a bale on high,
The oak and the ash together, and thereon
shall the Mighty lie;
Nor gold nor steel shall be lacking, nor
savour of sweet spice,
Nor cloths in the Southlands woven, nor
webs of untold price;
The work grows, toil is as nothing; long
blasts of the mighty horn
From the topmost tower out-wailing o'er
the woeful world are borne.

But Brynhild cried to her maidens: "Now
open ark and chest,
And draw forth queenly raiment of the
loveliest and the best,
Red rings that the Dwarf-lords fashioned,
fair cloths that queens have sewed,
To array the bride for the mighty, and the
traveller for the road."

They wept as they wrought her bidding
and did on her goodliest gear;
But she laughed mid the dainty linen, and
the gold-rings fashioned fair:
She arose from the bed of the Niblungs,
and her face no more was wan;

As a star in the dawn-tide heavens, mid
the dusky house she shone:
And they that stood about her, their hearts
were raised aloft
Amid their fear and wonder: then she
spake them kind and soft:

"Now give me the sword, O maidens,
wherewith I sheared the wind
When the Kings of Earth were gathered to
know the Chooser's mind."

All sheathed the maidens brought it, and
feared the hidden blade,
But the naked blue-white edges across her
knees she laid,
And spake: "The heaped-up riches, the
gear my fathers left,
All dear-bought woven wonders, all rings
from battle reft,
All goods of men desired, now strew them
on the floor,
And so share among you, maidens, the
gifts of Brynhild's store."

Then upright by the bed of the Niblungs
for a moment doth she stand,
And the blade flasheth bright in the
chamber, but no more they hinder
her hand
Than if a God were smiting to rend the
world in two:
Then dulled are the glittering edges, and
the bitter point cleaves through

The breast of the all-wise Brynhild, and
her feet from the pavement fail,
And the sigh of her heart is hearkened mid
the hush of the maidens' wail.
Chill, deep is the fear upon them, but they
bring her aback to the bed,
And her hand is yet on the hilts, and
sidelong droopeth her head.

Then there cometh a cry from
withoutward, and Gunnar's
hurrying feet
Are swift on the kingly threshold, and
Brynhild's blood they meet.
Low down o'er the bed he hangeth and
hearkeneth for her word,
And her heavy lids are opened to look on
the Niblung lord,
And she saith:
"I pray thee a prayer, the last
word in the world I speak,
That ye bear me forth to Sigurd, and the
hand my hand would seek;
The bale for the dead is builded, it is
wrought full wide on the plain,
It is raised for Earth's best Helper, and
thereon is room for twain:
Ye have hung the shields about it, and the
Southland hangings spread,
There lay me adown by Sigurd and my
head beside his head."

Then they took the body of Brynhild in
the raiment that she wore,

And out through the gate of the Niblungs
the holy corpse they bore,
And thence forth to the mead of the
people, and the high-built shielded
bale;
Then afresh in the open meadows breaks
forth the women's wail
When they see the bed of Sigurd and the
glittering of his gear;
And fresh is the wail of the people as
Brynhild draweth anear,
And the tidings go before her that for
twain the bale is built,
That for twain is the oak-wood shielded
and the pleasant odours spilt.

There is peace on the bale of Sigurd, and
the Gods look down from on high,
And they see the lids of the Volsung close
shut against the sky,
As he lies with his shield beside him in the
Hauberk all of gold,
That has not its like in the heavens, nor
has earth of its fellow told;
And forth from the Helm of Aweing are
the sunbeams flashing wide,
And the sheathed Wrath of Sigurd lies still
by his mighty side.
Then cometh an elder of days, a man of
the ancient times,
Who is long past sorrow and joy, and the
steep of the bale he climbs;
And he kneeleth down by Sigurd, and
bareth the Wrath to the sun
That the beams are gathered about it, and
from hilt to blood-point run,

And wide o'er the plain of the Niblungs
doth the Light of the Branstock
glare,
Till the wondering mountain-shepherds on
that star of noontide stare,
And fear for many an evil; but the ancient
man stands still
With the war-flame on his shoulder, nor
thinks of good or of ill,
Till the feet of Brynhild's bearers on the
topmost bale are laid,
And her bed is dight by Sigurd's; then he
sinks the pale white blade
And lays it 'twixt the sleepers, and leaves
them there alone—
He, the last that shall ever behold them,—
and his days are well nigh done.

Then is silence over the plain; in the noon
shine the torches pale
As the best of the Niblung Earl-folk bear
fire to the builded bale:
Then a wind in the west ariseth, and the
white flames leap on high,
And with one voice crieth the people a
great and mighty cry,
And men cast up hands to the Heavens,
and pray without a word,
As they that have seen God's visage, and
the voice of the Father have heard.

They are gone—the lovely, the mighty,
the hope of the ancient Earth:
It shall labour and bear the burden as
before that day of their birth.

Ye have heard of Sigurd aforetime, how
the foes of God he slew;
How forth from the darksome desert the
Gold of the Waters he drew;
How he wakened Love on the Mountain,
and wakened Brynhild the Bright,
And dwelt upon Earth for a season and
shone in all men's sight.
Ye have heard of the Cloudy People, and
the dimming of the day,
And the latter world's confusion, and
Sigurd gone away.

THE END

GLOSSARY

ABBREVIATIONS:—*n.*, noun; *v.*, verb; *cf.*, compare; *e.g.*, for example; *p.t.*, past tense; *p.p.* past participle.

Abasement, casting down, defeat.

Acre-biders, peaceful workers in the fields as distinguished from warriors who left their homes to go to war.

Amber, a yellow substance found on the shores of the Baltic Sea and used from very early days as an

ornament. The "southern men," or traders from the shores of the Mediterranean, came north to buy it.

Ark, a box for treasures.

Atwain, in two pieces, *e.g.* "The sword ... had smitten his body atwain."

Avail, *n.* power; *v.* to have power, to succeed.

Bale, disaster, destruction, death; a great pile of wood for burning.

Balks, pieces of timber used to make a bridge.

Bane, destruction or a cause of destruction; often used to mean an enemy or slayer, *e.g.* Sigurd's sword is called "Fafnir's bane," and in the old saga Sigurd himself had the title Fafnir's-Bane.

Barter, to give in exchange for something else.

Bast, wrappings made of the soft inner bark of trees.

Bath of the swan, the sea.

Battle-acre, field of battle.

Beaker, a drinking cup.

Befall, happen.

Begrudge, to feel unwillingness in giving, to be displeased at another's success. Loki is called the World's Begrudger, because he liked to cause failure and unhappiness, and hated success in others.

Bench-cloths, coverings for seats.

Bent, a piece of high ground.

Betide, *p.t.* betided; *p.p.* betid; to happen, come to pass, *e.g.* "What hath betid?"

Bickering, stormy, struggling.

Bide or *abide*, *p.t.* abode; *p.p.* abode; to remain, dwell

Bight, a bend or curve in a coast or river bank.

Bill, an axe with a long handle.

Blazoning, painting, especially the painting of coats of arms or of records of valiant deeds.

Boar of Sôn. It was customary when making any solemn vows to lay the hand or sword on a sacred boar called the Boar of Sôn or the Boar of Atonement. The ceremony seems to have been also accompanied by drinking a draught, called in this poem the Cup of Daring Promise, in honour of one of the gods.

Boding, a misgiving, a feeling that evil is to come.

Bole, a tree-trunk.

Bows the acre's face, bends the growing grain in a harvest-field.

Brand, a sword.

Bucklers, shields.

Burg, a town, a fortress.

Byrny, a coat of armour for back and breast, made of linked iron rings.

Carles, peasants; a contemptuous word used for a man who is not a warrior.

Change his life, die and pass from the life on earth to that in Valhalla or Niflheim.

Chooser. One of the titles of Brynhild, as she was one of the Valkyries or maidens whom Odin sent into battles to single out for death the men he had chosen to be slain. Victory-Wafter is another title of Brynhild, since she brought victory to those for whom it was appointed and death to others.

Churl, a grudging, ungracious man.

Clave, *p.p.* of cleave, to pierce, hew, cut through.

Cloisters, a roofed passage running round a court-yard and open on the side towards the court-yard.

Close, a field.

Cloud-wreath, the cloud that often gathers about the top of a high mountain.

Compass, to contrive, accomplish.

Constrain, to force, to control and guide.

Coping, the topmost row of bricks in a wall, the top of a wall.

Craft, skill, knowledge of some particular art, a trade or occupation, *e.g.* song-craft.

Cull, to choose, pick out.

Cup of Daring Promise, see *Boar of Sôn*.

Daïs, a raised part of the floor at one end of a banquet hall, where the principal persons sat.

Dastard, a coward.

Dawn-dusk, the twilight at dawn before the sun is fully risen.

Day of the Battle, Ragnarok, when the spirits of dead warriors should join in the battle of the gods. "*Day of Doom*" has the same meaning.

Dearth, want, famine, scarcity.

Deft, skilful, *e.g.* deft in every cunning.

Dight, made ready, prepared, *e.g.* war-dight, prepared for war.

Dole, *n.* a gift dealt out as charity; *v.* to measure out in small portions, *e.g.* I doled out wisdom to thee.

Doom, *n.* a sentence, verdict, *e.g.* give righteous doom; *v.* to condemn, to sentence. *Doom-ring*, a circle of stones or hazel poles where kings heard complaints from their people and gave judgment.

Do on, put on; often shortened into "don"; *cf.* doff, which is shortened from do off.

Door-wards, porters, door-keepers.

Dragons, the war-ships of the northern nations, which often had their prows carved into a dragon's head.

Dwindle, to grow less.

Edges of bale, the sword edges, which bring bale or destruction.

Egg, to urge on, to persuade to some deed, *e.g.* "Too much thou eggest me."

Eld, old age.

Endlong, length-ways, along. *Endlong* and *athwart*, along and across.

Erewhile, some time ago, formerly.

Erne, an eagle.

Eyen, eyes; old plural of eye.

Fain, glad, willing, full of desire. Sometimes used as an adverb meaning "willingly," *e.g.* "They fain would go aland."

Fair-speech-masters, men skilled in poetry. There were professional singers and poets called skalds among the northern people, and the power to make verses and to sing was cultivated among the mass of the people and was fairly common.

Fallow, lying quiet, inactive, not bearing crops. The expression, "fallow bondage," means a bondage of sleep and idleness.

Fare, to travel. Sometimes when joined to adverbs it means to prosper, *e.g.* to fare ill, to fare well, how does he fare?

Fashion, to make, to arrange. Regin hoped to be the world's "fashioning lord," that is, the supreme king and orderer of all things.

Fell-abiding folk, men who worked at home instead of going out to battle.

Flame-blink, the flash of light from the fire round Brynhild's home.

Flaw, defect, fault, *e.g.* "the hauberk ... clean wrought without a flaw;" "the ring ... that hath ... no flaw for

God to mend." If used of rain, it means a slight shower, *e.g.* "a flaw of summer rain,"

Fleck, spot, mark.

Foam-bow, the small rainbow seen in the spray from a waterfall.

Foil, *n.* defeat, failure; *v.* to defeat, to baffle.

Fold, a place for shutting up sheep. It is often used meaning any dwelling-place, *e.g.* Fafnir's abode is called "the lone destroyer's fold."

Folk, people. It is often joined with other words, *e.g.* man-folk, Goth-folk. *Folk of the-war-wands forgers*, are the race of dwarfs who had great skill in the making of weapons.

Fond, used in Old English to mean "foolish," or sometimes only to give emphasis, as in the expression "thy fondest need," meaning "thy greatest need."

Foot-hills, the lower hills round the base of a very high mountain.

Fore-ordained, settled by the will of the gods in early times.

Foster, to rear, to bring up a child, to care for, to shelter, *e.g.* "Now would I foster Sigurd;" "the house that fostered me."

Franklin, a well-to-do farmer, one who is not merely a hired servant.

Freyia, the wife of Odin and chief of the goddesses.

Gainsay, to resist, to refuse a request.

Gaping Gap, a name given to the state of things that existed before the world was made. There was supposed to have been an empty space till Odin created the world of gods and men.

Garner, to gather up, to store up; sometimes, to reap.

Garth, an enclosure, a place from which things may be garnered, *e.g.* "within the garth that it (the wall) girdeth."

Gear, a word used with many meanings, as, dress, arms, possessions, anything that a person has or uses, *e.g.* war-gear, all a man's armour and weapons; mail-gear, a man's armour.

Gird, to tie round, to be all round, *e.g.* "The Wrath to his side is girded;" "a wall doth he behold ... but within the garth that it girdeth no work of man is set."

Glaive, a sword.

God-home, Asgard.

Gold-bestrider, the name given to Sigurd by Giuki because he rode with the treasure of gold upon his saddle. To bestride is to stand over anything with one foot on each side.

Good-heart, kindly strength.

Goodlihead, a word of praise which is generally used to mean bodily beauty, but sometimes to mean beauty of character.

Grovel, to crouch low on the ground.

Guest-fain, hospitable, ready to welcome guests.

Guile, cunning, cleverness used for an evil purpose.

Guise, appearance, kind, dress, *e.g.* "such was the guise of his raiment;" "fair-clad in hunter's guise."

Halers of the hawsers, pullers of the ropes, *i.e.* seamen.

Hallow, to set apart for a solemn purpose, to make holy, *e.g.* I hallow me to Odin for a leader of his host.

Hangings, tapestry, woven stuff on which pictures or figures of gods and heroes were embroidered, used to decorate the walls of houses, *e.g.* "The walls were strange and wondrous with noble stories told;" "the gods on the hangings stirred."

Harness, armour.

Hauberk, a breast-plate.

Heave, to rise and fall, sometimes merely to rise, *e.g.* "The doom ... heaves up dim through the gloom."

High-seat, the daïs or chief seat where the master of a house and his principal guests sat.

High-tide, time of festival.

Hindfell, the word means "deer-mountain," since "fell" means any hill, and "hind" is the word we still use for a deer.

Hireling, a servant.

Hist, to give attention, to listen.

Hithermost, nearest.

Hoard, a store. Generally used of a treasure which the owner keeps selfishly, *e.g.* Fafnir's wisdom is

called "grudged and hoarded wisdom," and his gold the "heavy hoard."

Hœnir, one of Odin's sons; a wise and blameless god who, the others believed, would return to reign over a new heaven and a new earth when Ragnarok was past.

Holt, a woodland.

Hoppled, fettered.

Horse-fed, cropped by horses.

Horse-herd, keeper of horses. "Herd" means any keeper of animals, and is generally joined with other words, *e.g.* shepherd, swine-herd.

Huddled, twisted together in a small space.

Intent, intention, purpose. In the passage, "For whom is the blood-point whetted and the edge of thine intent?" the meaning is, "Against whom is thy sword sharpened, and against whom is thy purpose so keen?"

Kin, family, relations. *Kin of the Wolf*, Loki and his children, one of whom was a monstrous wolf which was to fight against the gods at Ragnarok.

Kine, cattle.

Kirtle, a long cloak.

Lack, loss, *e.g.* "He knew there was ruin and lack."

"The lack that made him loth" is used to describe the ring of Andvari which he was unwilling to give up with the rest of his treasure to Loki. *v.* "To be without," or, "to be found wanting."

Lay, a song.

Lea, a meadow.

Leeches, doctors.

Lief, willing.

Lift, the arch of the sky overhead, the highest part of the sky.

Linden, the lime-tree.

Linked mail, armour made of rings linked together.

Lintel, the top of a doorway.

List, to wish, to choose.

Litten, lighted up; *cf.* red-litten, torch-litten.

Long-ships, ships of war.

Lore, learning, knowledge.

Loth, unwilling, grieved.

Mar, to spoil, disfigure.

Mark, boundary, borderland.

Masters of God-home, the gods of Asgard against whom the giants and all foul monsters were constantly at war.

Mattock, a pick-axe.

Mead, a meadow.

Mew, a sea-gull.

Mid-mirk, thick darkness. *Mirk*, darkness.

Midward, prime, best days.

Midworld, the earth; the home of men as distinguished from Asgard, the home of the gods, and Niflheim, the home of the dead.

Minish, to grow less.

Moon-wake, the long straight path of light made by the moon on water.

Murder-churls, fierce and suspicious men ready to slay a guest.

Mute, dumb, silent.

Nether, lower.

Niggard, grudging, miserly, unproductive, *e.g.* the Glittering Heath is called "niggard ground."

Norns, the three maidens who decided the fates of gods and men. Their names were Urd, Verdandi and Skuld, or Past, Present, and Future, and they were more powerful than the gods themselves, *e.g.* "Gone, forth is the will of the Norns, that abideth ever the same."

Odin's door, a warrior's shield.

Odin's Hall, Valhalla, to which went the souls of warriors slain in battle.

Pall, a cloak of state; most commonly used in the expression "purple and pall."

Passing, very; used to give emphasis, *e.g.* "He loveth her passing sore," where both words are simply emphatic.

Peace-strings, the strings which tied a sword into its sheath when it was not in use.

Peers, equals in age and rank.

People's Praise. Odin, chief of the gods. "The death of the People's Praise" is Ragnarok, the time when Odin and all his fellow gods were to be destroyed.

Purblind, dim-sighted. The syllable "pur" is a form of the word pure, and gives emphasis to blind.

Purple, cloth dyed with a purple dye made from the murex, a shell-fish found in the Mediterranean. The secret of making it was known only to the "southern men" or Phoenician traders of Tyre and Sidon.

Quarry, game, prey, the animal chased by a hunter.

Quell, to stop, make to cease.

Quicken, to rouse, bring to life.

Ravening, devouring, eager for prey; often used of wild animals.

Reck, to notice, care about.

Reek, smoke rising from a fire, or spray and mist

from a waterfall, *e.g.* "the reek of the falling flood;" "the heart of Fafnir ... sang among the reek."

Renown, fame, honour.

Rock-wall, mountain cliff.

Roof-tree, the topmost beam which forms the ridge of a roof.

Rue, to regret, to find a cause of woe.

Rumour, report, gossiping tale.

Rune, letter. The letters used in old Icelandic and similar languages are called runic characters. When written letters were first known in the north of Europe they were supposed to have magic powers, and gradually the word "rune" came to mean any spell, or even any wisdom which was beyond the ordinary knowledge of men.

Ruth, pity, regret, *e.g.* "Ruth arose in his heart;" "I have hearkened not nor heeded the words of thy fear and thy ruth."

Salutation, greeting.

Sate, satisfy to the full.

Scalds, the poets who recited poems or stories at feasts.

Scoff, an object of mockery.

Scored, carved, marked by lines cut deeply into a surface.

Sea-beast's tooth, the tusks of the walrus.

Sea-mead, the wide surface of the sea. The word means sea-meadow.

Seethe, to bubble and move like boiling water.

Semblance, an appearance, outward show where there is no reality.

Serry, to crowd closely together.

Shards, broken fragments, *e.g.* "the shards of a glaive of battle."

Shield-burg, a fortress built of shields. Burg means either a town, a castle, or a fortress.

Shield-wall, the defence made by fighting men holding their shields close together as they stand at bay.

Shift, *n.* a trick, cunning plan, *e.g.* "my cunning shifts;" *v.* to contrive, be able, *e.g.* "the man whose heart and hand may shift, To pluck it from the oak-wood."

Shimmer, to gleam and change colour as the light alters.

Skerry, a rocky island near the coast.

Slaked, cooled, put out; used of anything that has been burning and is now grown cold.

Sleight, cunning, trickery. Loki is called "the Master of Sleight" because of his skill in deceit.

Sleipnir, Odin's horse. It was grey, had eight feet, and could carry him over sea and land, and could also fly through the air.

Slot, the track left by a wild animal.

Sloth, idleness.

Smithy, to do the work of a smith, forge weapons.

Sooth, truth.

Sore, very much. It is generally used about things which are evil or painful, but sometimes only to give emphasis, *e.g.* "amber that the southern men love sore."

Spear-hedge, the bristling spears of an army in battle; *cf.* battle-wood, spear-wood.

Spell-drenched, stupefied or overwhelmed by magic.

Sphere-stream, the space beyond the air of this world, in which the planets or spheres move on their courses.

Stark, stiff, hard, severe.

Staunch, steadfast, unchanging.

Stead, *n.* a place; it is often joined to other words, *e.g.* hall-stead, a hall or the place where a hall has been, as in the sentence, "I went to the pillared hall-stead;" *v. stead or bestead*, to serve, to aid, *e.g.* "to stead me in the fight."

Steadfast, unchanging, faithful, unmoved.

Stithy, a blacksmith's forge.

Strait, narrow, cramped.

Stripling, a young man just grown up; *cf.* youngling.

Sunder, to separate, *e.g.* "We wend on the sundering ways."

Sun-dog, a bright spot like a faint image of the sun,

seen near it in cloudy weather.

Swaddling, anything that wraps or enfolds, *e.g.* the coils of Fafnir passing over Sigurd in the pit are called "the swaddling of death."

Swart-haired, dark-haired.

Swathe, the long line of mown corn behind a reaper; *cf.* "swathes of the sword," *i.e.* heaps of dead in battle.

Targe, a shield.

Tarry, to wait, to linger, *e.g.* "Tarry till I say a word."

Thrall, a slave, "*short-lived thralls of the gods*," mortal men, not dwarfs or giants.

Tide, time, *e.g.* "the tide when my father fell;" "the night-tide."

Tiles of Odin, war shields, so called because Odin was god of war.

Tiller, the handle of the rudder which steers a ship.

Toils, snares, fetters.

To-morn, tomorrow morning.

Train, to entice, bring by trickery.

Tree-hole, tree-trunk.

Troth, a promise, generally a promise of marriage.

Troth-plight, promised in marriage.

Trow, to believe.

Twi-bill, an axe with a double-edged blade. It was the weapon which Odin carried when he appeared to men.

Unbitted, never taught to obey the bit, not broken in.

Unholpen, unhelped. Holpen is the old form of the *p.p.* helped.

Unstable, changeable, not lasting.

Uttermost horn, the signal for Ragnarok. It was believed that Heimdall, one of the gods who guarded a bridge called Bifrost between Asgard and the earth, would blow a blast on his horn which would be the sign for the beginning of the great battle between the gods and the powers of evil.

Venom, poison.

Wall-nook, an opening or bend in a wall.

Wallow, to roll about upon the ground, *e.g.* "Fafnir, the wallower on the gold."

Wan, pale, pinched with suffering.

Wane, to fade away, grow dim.

Warding-walls, guarding-walls. "*Warding walls of death*," man's armour that keeps death from him.

Wards, keepers, *e.g.* door-wards; *cf.* warden. Fafnir is called "the gold-warden."

War-wand, a sword.

Wary, careful, ever on the watch.

Waste, to destroy, to sweep away, *e.g.* Sigurd is said to "waste every wrong."

Waxen, grown, become.

Weal, happiness, good-fortune.

Wedge-array, an arrangement of fighting men in which they stood close together in the form of a triangle.

Weed, dress.

Well up, to rise as a spring bubbles out of the ground; used of feelings with the meaning "to arise and grow strong," *e.g.* "Wrath in his heart wells up."

Welter, the toss and ripple of the sea-waves.

Wend, to go.

Whetted, stirred up, made sharp or eager, *e.g.* "the whetted Wrath."

Whileome, in the past, once upon a time.

Whiles, from time to time.

Whit, a very small particle, a trifle, *e.g.* never a whit, no whit.

Wight, a man, a creature, *e.g.* sea-wights, great sea-monsters.

Wise, way, manner, after the fashion of.

Witch-wife, witch. Wife here means woman.

Wold, a hill; often used to mean open country.

Wood-craft, knowledge of the woods and of all

creatures in them, *e.g.* "His wood-craft waxed so great, that he seemed the king of the creatures."

Wot, to know.

Wrack, strife, destruction, ruins. *Wrack of a mighty battle*, the dead left on the field.

Wrights, workmen, makers.

Writhen, bent, twisted out of shape, *e.g.* "Writhen and foul were the hands that made it glorious."

Written spear, a spear carved with letters or words.

Yearn, to long, to feel tenderness towards, *e.g.* "My heart to him doth yearn."

Yore, long ago; generally used in the expression "of yore," formerly, once upon a time.

LONGMANS' CLASS-BOOKS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Each Volume contains an Introduction and Notes.

Alcott's Little Women.

Allen's Heroes of Indian History and Stories of their Times. With Maps and Illustrations.

Anderson's English Letters selected for Reading in Schools.

Arnold's Sohrab and Rustum, and Balder Dead.

Ballantyne's The Coral Island. (Abridged).

Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

Cook's (Captain) Voyages.

Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. (Abridged). With Illustrations.

Dickens' A Christmas Carol.

Dickens, Selections from. With Illustrations.

Doyle's Micah Clarke. (Abridged). With 20 Illustrations.

Doyle's The Refugees. (Abridged). With Illustrations.

Doyle's The White Company. (Abridged). With 12 Illustrations.

Fronde's Short Studies on Great Subjects. Selections. With Illustrations.

Haggard's Eric Bright eyes. (Abridged).

Haggard's Lysbeth. (Abridged).

Hawthorne's A Wonder Book.

Hawthorne's Tanglewood Tales.

Hughes' Tom Brown's School Days. (Abridged) With Frontispiece.

Jefferies (Richard), Selections from.

Kingsley's The Heroes. With Illustrations.

Kingsley's Hereward the Wake. (Abridged).

Kingsley's Westward Ho!

Lambs' Tales from Shakespeare. (Abridged.)

Lang's Tales of the Greek Seas. With Illustrations.

Lang's Tales of Troy. With Illustrations and a Map.

Macaulay's History of England. Chap I.

Macaulay's History of England. Chap III.

Macaulay's History of England, Selections from.

Macaulay's Lays of Ancient Rome, &c.

Marryat's Settlers in Canada.

Milton's Paradise Lost. Books I, II, III, IV, and V.

Milton's Comus, Il Penseroso, L'Allegro and Lycidas.

Morris's Atalanta's Race, and The Proud King.

Morris's The Man Born to be King.

Morris's The Story of the Glittering Plain.

Morris's The Story of Sigurd the Volsung.

Newman, Literary Selections from.

Reade's The Cloister and the Hearth.

Ruskin's King of the Golden River.

Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel.

Scott's Marmion.

Scott's The Lady of the Lake.

Scott's The Talisman. (Abridged).

Scott's A Legend of Montrose. (Abridged).

Scott's Ivanhoe. (Abridged).

Scott's Quentin Durward. (Abridged).

Southey's The Life of Nelson.

Stevenson's Book of Selections.

Stevenson's A Child's Garden of Verse. With a Portrait.

Tales of King Arthur and the Round Table. With Illustrations.

Thackeray, Selections from.

Thornton's Selection of Poetry.

Weyman's The House of the Wolf.

Zimmern's Gods and Heroes of the North. With Illustrations.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without

charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project

Gutenberg™ License included
with this eBook or online at
www.gutenberg.org. If you are
not located in the United States,
you will have to check the laws
of the country where you are
located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work,

or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project

Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability

to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR

IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free

distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41

Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the

solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.