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SCANDINAVIAN INFLUENCES IN THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

BY

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PREFACE

Every student of English literature in the eighteenth century understands, of course, how conspicuous a part was played by Macpherson's Ossianic fragments, Evans's *Welsh Bards*, and Percy's *Reliques* in the so-called Romantic Revival; but not every one has appreciated the fact that this enthusiasm over Gaelic, Welsh, and English mediæval poetry was accompanied by a widespread interest in the literature of the Scandinavian North. The credit of first pointing out specifically the significance of the Norse element in the Romantic Revival belongs, I believe, to Professor Phelps, whose *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement* appeared at Boston in 1893, though Mr. Frederick Metcalfe had called attention in 1880 (*The Englishman and the Scandinavian*) to a very few English men of letters of the eighteenth century who interested themselves in Norse literature, and in 1891 Jon Stefansson contributed to the *Nordisk Tidskrift för Vetenskap, Konst och Industri* an article on *Oldnordisk Indvirkning på Engelsk Literatur i det Attende og Nittende Århundrede* (based in good part upon Southey's review of Sayers's *Poetical Works*, *Quarterly Review*, January, 1827), which devotes half a dozen pages to the matter.

The subject was first examined in detail, however, by Professor Kittredge (*Gray's Knowledge of Old Norse*, appended to the *Introduction* to Phelps's *Selections from the Poetry and Prose of Thomas Gray*, Boston, 1894), who clearly indicated the lines on which further research must be conducted. At Professor Kittredge's suggestion and under his direction I undertook the following investigation,

which was submitted in 1897, in a modified form, to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University in fulfilment of a requirement made of candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. These pages represent the results of a systematic examination of a considerable body of English literature of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries, undertaken for the purpose of determining as accurately as possible, first, the sources of information with regard to Scandinavian literature and mythology accessible to Englishmen of that time and the extent to which they were actually studied ; secondly, the character of the translations and imitations of Scandinavian literature made by English men of letters ; thirdly, the spirit in which these adaptations were received by English readers. These results make no pretension to completeness. Anybody who takes the trouble to look over the indexes to the critical reviews of the eighteenth century will realize how much of the literature of that time has perished, or at least is no longer accessible. My conclusions, therefore, are necessarily only approximate, but the evidence I have been able to collect makes it clear, I believe, that Northern influences were a much more important factor in the English Romantic movement than students of romanticism have hitherto suspected.

Since the completion of this dissertation in its original form, three or four books have been published to which I have acknowledged indebtedness at appropriate places in the following pages. In 1897 there appeared at Halle a monograph entitled *William Taylor von Norwich, Eine Studie über den Einfluss der neueren Deutschen Litteratur in England*, by Georg Herzfeld, with an appendix, *Bemerkungen über die Nordischen Stoffe in der Englischen Poesie des vorigen Jahrhunderts*, to which I owe, among other things, the reference to Stefansson's article mentioned above. Mr. D. C. Tovey's edition of *Gray's English Poems* (Cambridge, 1898) contributes further evidence of Scott's interest in Norse literature. Professor Beers's *History of English*

Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1899) adds some items to Professor Phelps's treatment of Norse influences. *The Influence of Old Norse Literature upon English Literature*, by Conrad Hjalmar Nordby (Columbia University Press, 1901) reviews briefly some of the authors discussed in my dissertation, but the greater part of his monograph concerns itself with a later period.

I wish to record here my grateful appreciation of various services rendered me by Professor Leo Wiener, Professor A. E. Hancock, Professor William Lyon Phelps, and Mr. William Coolidge Lane. To Professor Sheldon, Professor Robinson, and Professor Kittredge, of Harvard University, who have been kind enough to read this entire volume in proof, I am indebted for a great many valuable suggestions and corrections. To Professor Kittredge in particular I am under obligations for which I cannot possibly make adequate acknowledgment. Almost every page owes something to the care with which he has supervised the writing and printing of this book. How great an advantage this help has been to me every student of English will instantly appreciate.

F. E. F.

Cambridge, Massachusetts,
July 3, 1903.

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SCANDINAVIAN INFLUENCES IN THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

WHEN Thomas Gray published *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin*, in 1768, he felt obliged to append to the text certain explanations which implied that cultivated Englishmen of his time could hardly be expected to understand simple allusions to the elements of Scandinavian mythology. Half a century later, on the other hand, an English poet who looked to the Norse Eddas or sagas for his inspiration could be sure that a good share of his readers, though they might feel on rather less familiar terms with the deities of Valhalla than with those of Olympus, would at any rate find allusions to Odin, Thor, Freyr, or Loki perfectly intelligible.[1] An attempt is made in the following pages to trace the steps by which various adventures of the old Scandinavian gods and sundry exploits of the Norse vikings, for a long time known in England only to a few painful antiquaries, gradually became more or less familiar to the English people at large.

We must begin with these antiquaries; and first, the reader should know something of the sources from which they extracted their information with regard to Norse literature, history, mythology, and archæology. Without attempting to cover anything like the whole field,

[1] As early as 1801, in fact, we find William Richardson referring to "the religious opinions entertained by the ancient Scandinavians" as "now very generally known" (*The Advertisement*, dated Sept. 1, 1801, to *The Maid of Lochlin*, in *Poems and Plays by W. Richardson*, Edinburgh, 1805, II, 109).

then, I shall undertake to give the briefest possible account of some of the more important of these sources.[1]

"Until the latter end of the sixteenth century," wrote Grenville Pigott,[2] "all knowledge of the religion of heathen Scandinavia, possessed by other nations, was confined to what could be gleaned from the works of Paulus Diaconus, Adam of Bremen, and Saxo Grammaticus. The first was a Lombard of the latter end of the eighth century; the second a canon of Bremen, who wrote in the eleventh, and the last the secretary[3] of Bishop Absalom in the twelfth." Pigott's list might be eked out by the addition of Cæsar, Tacitus, Jornandes, and a few other writers whose names appear occasionally in the marginalia of ancient books on the subject; but the total contribution of these writers, with the exception of Saxo, is very meagre and very vague.

The *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus, finished early in the thirteenth century, is a mine of information for Septentrionalists.[4] Saxo was not a discriminating historian; but it is his very lack of discrimination that gives value to his work, for he gathered together, largely in all probability from oral recitation, a great

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[1] For further information see Möbius, *Catalogus Librorum Islandicorum et Norvegicorum Ætatis Mediæ*, Lipsiæ, 1856; Nyerup and Kraft, *Dansk-Norsk Litteraturlexicon*, Copenhagen, 1818; Hansen, *Illustreret Dansk Litteratur Historie*, the second edition of which is now in the process of publication; H. Jæger, *Illustreret Norsk Literaturhistorie*, Christiania, 1896; Schück and Warburg, *Illustrerad Svensk Litteraturhistoria*, Stockholm, 1895–1897; Bruun, *Bibliotheca Danica*, Copenhagen, 1872–1896; Paul, *Grundriss der Germ. Phil.*, 2 Aufl.; Horn, *Hist. of the Lit. of the Scandinavian North*, translated by R. B. Anderson, Chicago, 1895; Vigfusson and Powell, *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, Oxford, 1883. A helpful *Chronologie der Ausgaben Nordischer Sagen u. Gedichte*, compiled by Rasmus Nyerup, is printed in the second volume of Gräter's *Bragur*, Leipzig, 1792, pp. 354–379.

[2] *A Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, London, 1839, p. xxxix.

[3] A doubtful conjecture. See Elton and Powell, p. xiii.

[4] This work was first printed at Paris, 1514. The Danish scholar Stephan Stephanius published *Breves Emendationes et Notæ in Sax. Gram.* in 1627, and in 1644 a new edition of the *Historia* which is constantly cited by early English antiquaries. Müller and Velschow brought out an edition at Copenhagen in 1839–1858, and Alfred Holder at Strassburg in 1886. Books i–ix were translated into English and edited by Elton and Powell for the Folk-Lore Society, London, in 1894. The introduction to this volume contains extended information about Saxo's life and work.

mass of most interesting legendary matter, some of which was worked up independently in Norse sagas put into writing years afterward.

After the middle of the sixteenth century, books of the character we are considering become more numerous. The *Historia Gothorum* of Joannes Magnus, Archbishop of Upsala, and the *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* of his brother and successor, Olaus Magnus, appeared at Rome in the years 1554 and 1555 respectively. These books, which are of much the same general character, repeat some of Saxo's legends and add others from various sources. They are constantly quoted by later writers, and Olaus was translated into English in 1658.

In 1593 appeared the *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia* of the learned Icelander, Arngrim Jonsson, published for the purpose of contradicting certain wide-spread and ridiculous stories about various marvels to be seen in Iceland. This book, as well as the same writer's *Crymogæa, sive rerum Islandicarum libri tres* (Hamburg, 1609), and his *Specimen Islandiæ Historicum* (Amsterdam, 1643), became known all over Europe. The *Brevis Commentarius* was reprinted, with an English translation, in Hakluyt's *Collection of Early Voyages* (London, 1599).

The works on runic inscriptions and ancient Northern monuments written by Ole Worm, a famous Danish antiquary (b. 1588, d. 1654), have for two centuries been read with great interest in England and elsewhere. The best known of Worm's writings may be found bound together in a single volume formerly belonging to the elder and the younger Grundtvig, and now owned by Harvard University. The first of the tracts in this volume is entitled ᚱᚢᚾᛅ *seu Danica Literatura Antiquissima, vulgò Gothica dicta* (Copenhagen, 1651).[1] This

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[1] First printed in 1636. Professor Kittredge (Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlviii) cites Pope's use of "Wormius" as "a name for the typical mousing antiquary (*Dunciad*, iii, 188)" together with his "disclaiming note." With this may be compared the following lines from the *Poetical Part of a Music Speech at Cambridge*, 1730, by Dr. John Taylor, printed in Nichols's *Anecdotes*, IV, 531:

> I see the Classes into Side-boards flung,
> And musty Codes transform'd to modern Song;
> The solemn Wax in gilded sconces glare,
> Where poring Wormius dangled once in air.

See also Sir Joseph Ayloff's list of "the most proper Books to be read by a young Student in our English Antiquities," printed in Nichols's *Anecdotes*,

treats of monuments, inscriptions, and the general subject of runes; it is provided with an Appendix by Thorlak Skulason, containing, among other things, the famous *Epicedium* of Ragnar Loðbrok, in runes, with an interlinear Latin translation by Magnus Olafsson. The second tract is a *Specimen Lexici Runici* (Copenhagen, 1650), in runes (with transliteration) and Latin. Then follows *Danicorum Monumentorum libri sex* (Copenhagen, 1643), containing illustrated descriptions of runic monuments, with explanations of their inscriptions. The last tract is entitled *Fasti Danici universam tempora computandi rationem antiqvitus in Dania et vicinis regionibus observatam libris tribus exhibentes* (Copenhagen, 1633). It contains illustrations and explanations of a number of curious runic calendars.

The Prose Edda of Snorri Sturluson was first printed in 1665 by Peder Resen, — better known by the Latinized form of his name, Resenius, — later president of the University of Copenhagen.[1] In this year appeared likewise the first printed edition of the *Vǫluspá*,[2] also edited by Resenius; the Latin translation in this volume was by Stefan Olafsson, and it contained notes by Guðmund Andersen, whose *Lexicon Islandicum* Resenius edited in 1683. In 1673 Resenius brought out a new edition of the *Vǫluspá*, in which the number of strophes was increased from fifty-nine to sixty-four. This time Andersen furnished the Latin translation. In 1665, once more, Resen published the first printed edition of the *Hávamál*.[3]

VIII, 486 f., and mentioned by Professor Kittredge, l.c. Sir Thomas Browne cites "the learned physician Wormius" near the end of the second chapter of his *Urn Burial*, 1658.

[1] *Edda Islandorum An. Chr.* M.CC.XV *Islandice conscripta per Snorronem Sturlæ Islandiæ Nomophylacem, nunc primum Islandice Danice et Latine ex Antiquis Codicibus Mss. Bibliothecæ Regis et aliorum in lucem prodit opera et studio Petri Johannis Resenii*, I.V.D. *Juris ac Ethices Professoris publ. et Consulis Havniensis . . . Havniæ . . .* M.DC.LX.V.

[2] *Philosophia Antiquissima Norvego-Danica, dicta Woluspa, quæ est pars Eddæ Sæmundi, Eddâ Snorronis non brevi antiquioris, Islandicè & Latinè publici juris primùm facta à Petro Joh. Resenio, Havniæ*, 1665.

[3] *Ethica Odini, pars Eddæ Sæmundi vocata Haavamaal, unà cum ejusdem appendice, appellato Runa Capitule, . . . Islandice & Latine . . . per Petrum Joh. Resenium, Havniæ*, 1665.

Andersen provided the notes. Resenius's editions of the Prose Edda, the *Vǫluspá*, and the *Hávamál* are frequently bound up in one volume. For a long time these texts were available in no other editions; consequently Resenius is frequently cited by antiquaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The second edition of the Prose Edda was published in 1746 by J. Göransson.[1] According to Möbius this contained only the *Gylfaginning*, the first tract of Snorri's Edda. Percy appended it to his *Northern Antiquities* in 1770.[2] Göransson also edited a Swedish version of the *Vǫluspá* in 1750.

The name of Olaus Verelius, a Swedish antiquary, occurs frequently in books of the sort we are considering. When Verelius died in 1682 he was librarian of the university at Upsala. He was best known, perhaps, by his edition of the *Hervarar Saga* (Upsala, 1672) and his *Index Linguæ veteris Scytho-Scandicæ sive Gothicæ* (Upsala, 1691), though he published many other works on history and archæology.

Another Swedish scholar, Olof Rudbeck, published at Upsala in 1675–1702 a work in four volumes which attracted considerable attention throughout Europe, *Atlantica eller Manhem*, in which he tried to identify Sweden with Plato's Atlantis, and to show that it had been the seat of the Garden of Eden and the cradle of the human race. In spite of its vagaries, the book exhibited a vast amount of learning and was widely read. Even scholars who disagreed with its conclusions looked upon it as a standard authority on Scandinavian antiquities.

One of the most important books we have to consider is the work of a Danish physician, Thomas Bartholin, second of the name, a member of a remarkable family, several of whom were eminent in

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[1] *De yfverborna Atlingars eller Sviogötars ok Nordmänners Edda . . . Hyperboreorum Atlantiorum, seu, Suiogotorum et Nordmannorum Edda, hoc est, Atavia ceu Fons Gentilis illorum et Theologiæ et Philosophiæ : jam demum versione Svionica donata, accedente Latina . . .*, Upsala, 1746.

[2] Rask was the third editor of Snorri's Edda : his edition appeared in 1818. Egilsson edited the work in 1848–1849, and the Arna-Magnæan commission in 1848–1852–1880–1887. The *Hávamál* was not edited again until 1818, when Rask and Afzelius brought out their edition of the Poetic Edda.

the practice of medicine.[1] Bartholin's *Antiquitatum Danicarum de Causis Contemptæ a Danis adhuc gentilibus Mortis libri tres* appeared at Copenhagen in 1689. The work is a scholarly attempt to account for the indifference toward death displayed by the old Norsemen. In the course of his treatise Bartholin makes a great number of extracts from Norse poems and sagas, many of them never before printed. The book was indispensable to any Englishman of the eighteenth century who had the least curiosity with regard to Norse literature, and we shall find it cited very often in the following pages.[2]

One of the most famous archæologists of his time was the Icelander Thormod Torfason, usually cited as Torfæus, who was employed by Frederick III of Denmark to collect and translate old Norse manuscripts. Later he became royal historiographer of Norway, where his best-known works were written: *De Rebus Gestis Færeyensium* (Copenhagen, 1695); *Historia Orcadum* (Copenhagen, 1697); *Historia Vinlandiæ* (Copenhagen, 1705); *Historia Rerum Norvegicarum*, 4 vols. (Copenhagen, 1711).

A learned Swede, Johan Peringskjöld, had the honor of publishing the first complete edition of Snorri's *Heimskringla*, in 1697–1700, at Stockholm. This was in Norse, Swedish, and Latin.[3] Other

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[1] Albert Bartholin (1620–1663) was the author of a work called *De Scriptis Danorum*, published posthumously at Copenhagen in 1666 by his brother, the elder Thomas Bartholin, and reprinted in Johannes Möller's *Bibliotheca Septentrionis Eruditi*, Leipzig, 1699.

[2] Professor Kittredge calls my attention to the fact that Montesquieu cites Bartholin in *L'Esprit des Lois*, liv. xxiv, ch. 19, a book much read by Englishmen. It is odd to find the name Bartholin turning up in *Tristram Shandy* (II, xix): "As for that certain, very thin, subtle and very fragrant juice which Coglionissimo Borri, the great Milaneze physician affirms, in a letter to Bartholine, to have discovered . . . " This Bartholin, however, was the elder Thomas, grandfather of the author of the *Antiquitates Danicæ*. The letter in question was one of two addressed to the elder Thomas Bartholin by Giuseppe Francesco Borri, a medical charlatan of the seventeenth century: *Epistolæ duæ ad Th. Bartholinum de ortu cerebri et usu medico; necnon de artificio oculorum humores restituendi*, Copenhagen, 1669. See J. C. Adelung, *Gesch. der menschlichen Narrheit*, Leipzig, 1785, I, 77 ff.

[3] Another edition well known in the eighteenth century was that of Schöning and Thorlacius, 3 vols., Copenhagen, 1777–1783, afterwards extended by the addition of three more volumes, 1813–1826.

works of Peringskjöld's that deserve mention are his edition (1700–1705) of the *Scondia Illustrata* of the celebrated Swedish poet and historian, Johan Messenius; his *Historia Hialmari Regis Biarmlandiæ atque Thulemarkiæ* (1700); and his *Monumenta Sveo-Gothorum* (1710–1719).

The *Antiquitates selectæ Septentrionales et Celticæ* (Hannover, 1720), by Johann Georg Keysler, had a wide circulation in Europe.[1] A volume of *Travels* by the same author was translated into English (2d ed., 1756–1757).

Eric Julius Biörner's *Nordiska Kæmpa Dater* (Stockholm, 1737) is another important book.[2] This contained Norse, Swedish, and Latin versions of no less than fifteen ancient manuscripts, among them Hrolf Kraki's saga, the *Friðþjófs Saga* and the saga of Ragnar Loðbrok.

Some of the historical works of Eric Pontoppidan, a Norwegian theologian, were known in England, particularly his *Gesta et Vestigia Danorum extra Daniam* (3 vols., Leipzig and Copenhagen, 1740–1741). Another book by this author, printed at Copenhagen in 1752–1754, was translated into English by A. Linde and published at London in 1755 under the title *The Natural History of Norway*.[3]

Of the other historians and antiquaries of less importance whose works are cited in the margins of old books on Scandinavian subjects, it may be worth while to mention Johan Isaksen Pontanus, whose *Rerum Danicarum Historia* appeared at Amsterdam in 1631; Philipp Cluver, a native of Dantzic, whose *Germaniæ Antiquæ libri tres* came out in 1616; and Marc Boxhorn, a Dutch scholar, author of a *Historia Universalis* which appeared at Leyden in 1650 and was reprinted with additions by Otto Mencke at Leipzig in 1675.[4]

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[1] For a discussion of Keysler see Batka, *Euphorion*, Bd. III, Zweites Ergänzungsheft, pp. 6 ff.

[2] Professor Kittredge points out that this is the "book on the 'exploits des rois et des héros du Nord'" cited by Mallet and mentioned by Phelps, *English Romantic Movement*, p. 162, n.

[3] See Büsching's *New System of Geography*, London, 1762, I, ix.

[4] Treatises on the general subject of mythology sometimes furnished scraps of information about the Scandinavian gods. Among these were Schedius's famous dissertation *De Dis Germanis*, Amsterdam, 1648, which was known by Englishmen

In England, as I have said, until well after the middle of the eighteenth century these erudite works were hardly known, even by name, except to a few antiquaries and the limited number of readers for whom they wrote. Some of these English scholars, however, were men of enough note in their day to deserve attention here. One of the earliest was Richard Rowland or Rowlands, better known as Richard Verstegan or Verstegen, whose *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence in Antiquities concerning the most noble and renowned English Nation* appeared at Antwerp in 1605 and afterwards in various editions at London. Since this seems to have been the first serious attempt upon the part of any Englishman to investigate Germanic origins, the author's reasons for publishing his book, as set forth in the preface, are worth quoting. "The thing that first moued mee to take some paines in this studie," he says, "was, the verie naturall affection which generally is in all men to here of the worthinesse of their Ancestors, which they should indeed be as desirous to imitate, as delighted to vnderstand. Secondarily was I hereunto moued; by seeing how diuers of diuers nations

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of no greater pretension to scholarship than Dr. Frank Sayers; G. J. Voss's *De Theologia Gentili et Physiologia Christiana*, new ed., Amsterdam, 1668 (see pp. 138–144); *Matthæi Brouërii de Niedek . . . de Populorum Veterum ac Recentiorum Adorationibus Dissertatio*, Amsterdam, 1713 (see p. 76); J. G. Frick's *De Druidis Occidentalium Populorum Philosophis*, Ulm, 1731 (see pp. 44, 45, and cf. Gray's *Works*, ed. Gosse, II. 293 f.); Banier's *Mythology and Fables of the Ancients, Translated from the original French*, London, 1739–1740 (see II, 316).

Odin's repute as a magician brought his name, and the names of some of his associates, into several of the learned lucubrations on magic and demonology written in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. See, for example, Johann Wier, *De Præstigiis Dæmonum*, Basel, 1583 (lib. i, col. 34; lib. iii, col. 338); Jean Bodin, *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, Paris, 1587 (pp. 101 *recto*, 109 *verso*, 247 *recto*); Francisco Torreblanca, *Dæmonologia*, Moguntiæ, 1623; Gottfr. Chr. Rothius, *De Imagunculis Germanorum Magicis quas Alrunas vocant Commentatio*, Helmstadii, 1737 (Hickes and Wanley are cited on p. 71); Const. Fr. De Cauz, *De Cultibus Magicis*, Vindobonæ, 1767 (pp. 4, 14, 61, 104, 151). In this connection may be mentioned, too, a passage in Cockayne's *Leechdoms*, London, 1866, III, 34, "ða genam Woden VIIII. wuldortanas, sloh ða ða næddran ðæt heo on VIIII. to fleah" (see Chadwick, *The Cult of Odin*, London, 1899, p. 29). Johann Schilter's *Glossarium ad Scriptores Linguæ Francicæ et Alemannicæ Veteris*, Ulm, 1728, and Wachter's *Glossarium Germanicum*, Leipzig, 1737, explain words like *alruna* and *Woden*, and make some allusions to the Scandinavian deities.

did labour to reuiue the old honour and glorie of their owne beginnings and ancestors, and how in so doing they shewed themselues the most kind louers of their naturall friends and countriemen: observing there withall how diuerse of our English writers haue beene as laborious and serious in their discourses of the Antiquitie of the Brittans as if they properly appertained vnto Englishmen, which in no wise they doe or can doe, for that their offsprings and descents are wholly different. . . . Whereby and through the lacke of due distinction betweene the two nations . . . our true originall and honorable Antiquitie lieth inuolued and obscured, and wee remaining ignorant of our owne true ancestors, vnderstand our descent otherwise then it is, deeming it enough for vs to heare that *Eneas* and his Troians the supposed ancestors of King *Brute* and his Brittans are largely discoursed of." [1]

With this end in view Verstegan proceeds to discourse "Of the originall of Nations, and conseqvently of that nation, from which Englishmen are vndoubtedly descended" (i.e. of the "Germane race," which he traces back to the confusion of tongues at the building of the tower of Babel), and "Of the antient manner of liuing of our Saxon Ancestors. Of the Idolls they adored while they were Pagans: and how they grew to bee of greatest name and habitation of any other people of *Germanie*" (in which chapter we learn among other things of "The Idoll Tuysco," "The Idoll Woden," who is pictured in full mediæval armor, "The Idoll Thor," and "The Idoll Friga"). Other chapters tell of the migration of the Saxons into England, of the Danish and Norman invasions, and the last presents "an explanation of sundrie our most ancient Saxon words."

Henry Spelman, author of a *Glossarium Archaiologicum*, the first part of which appeared in 1626, and the second, edited by Dugdale, in 1664, is of interest to us because of his acquaintance with Ole Worm and, through Worm, with Arngrim Jonsson. In the course of their correspondence Worm consulted Spelman with regard to various archæological matters and sent him a copy of his book on runes.[2]

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[1] Ed. London, 1628.

[2] See *Olai Wormii et ad eum Doctorum Virorum Epistolæ . . .*, Havniæ, 1751, 2 vols., I, 423–457. In a letter written in May, 1638 (I, 447), Worm announces

Hickes's friend, William Nicolson, successively Bishop of Carlisle and of Derry, and Archbishop of Cashel, was sent, we are told,[1] in 1678 "by Sir Joseph Williamson, then Secretary of State, to Leipsic, in order to get acquaintance with the High Dutch and other Septentrional languages." In 1680 he "published an account of the state of the kingdoms of Poland, Denmark, and Norway, as also of Iceland, in the first volume of the English Atlas." In 1705 he wrote to Humphrey Wanley: "Next to what concerns the preservation of our Established Religion and Government, peace here and salvation hereafter, I know nothing that hath greater share in my thoughts and desires than the promotion of Septentrional Learning."[2] Dr. Nicolson's immediate interest was in Anglo-Saxon antiquities, but his correspondence shows that he was familiar to some extent with Old Norse, and that he was in communication with various Scandinavian antiquaries, among them a member of the Worm family,[3] and Johan Peringskjöld.

Francis Junius (François Du Jon), though a German by birth, may not improperly be considered here. In the course of his investigations of Anglo-Saxon and Gothic literature he became interested in Norse. To Junius's edition of the Anglo-Saxon and Gothic gospels, published at Dort in 1665, are appended specimens of various alphabets, among them an *Alphabetum Runicum*, printed from movable type, in connection with which he reproduces a Rune-song[4] borrowed

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that he has sent fifty copies of his *Literatura Runica* to Spelman's bookseller, for which he desires English books in exchange. Some account of this correspondence is given in Frederick Metcalfe's *The Englishman and the Scandinavian*, London, 1880, pp. 4–13.

[1] See the *Brief Memoirs* prefixed to *Letters on Various Subjects . . . to and from William Nicolson, D.D.*, edited by John Nichols, 2 vols., London, 1809.

[2] *Letters*, II, 650. Cf. I, 59, 63, 102, 159, 255; II, 534.

[3] Professor Cook conjectures, plausibly, that the "Mr. Worms" mentioned in the *Letters*, I, 59, is Christian Worm, whom he calls the nephew of Ole Worm (*Publ. of the Mod. Lang. Assoc.*, XVII, 368 f.). Christian Worm, however, appears to have been the grandson of the famous antiquary. See Nyerup and Kraft, and cf. the preface to Ole Worm's correspondence, p. 3. Nicolson has considerable to say about Scandinavian antiquities in his *English Historical Library* (ed. of 1736, pp. 50 ff.) and his *Irish Historical Library* (ed. of 1736, pp. vi f., x f.).

[4] Pp. 23 ff. Vigfusson and Powell print this song from Worm's text, with corrections, in *C.P.B.*, II, 369 f.

from the nineteenth chapter of Worm's *Literatura Runica*, which he prints a couplet at a time, first in runes, then in a Roman transliteration, then in a Latin translation with occasional comments. The song begins (I omit the runes) :

Fie veldur fraenda rógi.
Faedist ulfur i skógi.

Sensus est; Divitiæ inter consanguineos lites pariunt. Nutritur in sylvis lupus.

In the course of his book Junius cites, besides Worm, Runolphus Jonas (Runolf Jonsson).[1]

This appendix is of peculiar interest from the fact that the runic type used in it was brought to England by Junius. I quote from Edward Rowe Mores, *A Dissertation upon English Typographical Founders and Founderies*, 1778[2]: "We . . . come now to the *Septentrional* [languages], the restorer (if not more than the restorer) of the knowledge of which in *Engl.* was *Mr Francis Junius*. . . . In the y. 1654 *Mr Junius* being then at *Amsterdam* procured a set of '*Saxonic* types to be cut matriculated and cast . . .' as he says in a letter to *Mr Selden*, a copy of which may be seen in the preface to *Dr Hickes's Thesaurus*. These types *Mr Junius* brought with him into *Engl.* and with them types for the *Gothic*, *Runic*, *Danish*, *Islandic*, *Greek*, *Roman*, *Italic*, and *Eng.* . . . all cast to a *pica* body that they might stand together. but he brought the letter only without punches or matrices,[3] and in the y. 1677. gave them with a fount of *Eng. Swedish* to the *Univ.* of *Oxford* where they now are."

[1] See below, p. 14.

[2] P. 15. I am indebted to Professor Leo Wiener for calling my attention to this passage, and to this whole matter of runic type. The Boston Public Library owns a copy of Mores's rare book. For information with regard to the author, see Nichols's *Anecdotes*, V, 389.

[3] On p. 45 Mores seems to say that there were punches and matrices. T. B. Reed, *A History of the Old English Letter Foundries*, London, 1887, says (p. 150) that these punches and matrices are still preserved at Oxford. They were lost for a time, and he tells (p. 151) how they were recovered. The circumstances, he says, are "thus humorously narrated in a letter from Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Tanner, dated All Souls College, Aug. 10, 1697, and addressed to Dr. Charlett [printed in Nichols's *Anecdotes*, IV, 146]: 'Mr. Thwaites and John Hall took the courage last week to go to Dr. Hyde about Junius' matrices and punchions, which he gave

This same font of runic type was afterwards used in the *Oratio Dominica* of 1700,[1] in Christopher Rawlinson's edition of Alfred's Boethius (Oxford, 1698), and in Hickes's *Thesaurus*. Junius, no doubt, had the type cast with the idea of using it in the great etymological dictionary which he projected.[2]

Robert Sheringham's *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio* (Cambridge, 1670) is a book similar to Verstegan's, though it treats the subject in much greater detail. Sheringham quotes the Prose

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with his books to the University. These, nobody knew where they were, till Mr. Wanley discovered some of them in a hole in Dr. Hyde's study. But, upon Mr. Hall's asking, Dr. Hyde knew nothing of them; but at last told him he thought he had some punchions about his study, but did not know how they come there; and presently produces a small box-full, and taking out one, he pores upon it, and at last wisely tells them that these could not be what they looked after, for they were Ethiopic: but Mr. Thwaites desiring a sight of them, found that which he looked on to be Gothic and Runic punchions, which they took away with them, and a whole oyster-barrel full of old Greek letter, which they discovered in another hole.'"

The "Mr. Thwaites" mentioned above was Edward Thwaites, who was then teaching Anglo-Saxon at Queen's College, Oxford, "at this time a nest of Saxonists" (Nichols, *Anecdotes*, IV, 141). Brome called Thwaites "the best Septentrionalist, next the Dean [Hickes] of his age" (Nichols, IV, 148). He assisted Hickes in the preparation of his *Thesaurus* and afterwards edited a *Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica*, Oxford, 1711, based on Hickes.

About the time Junius presented his type to the university, Bishop Fell gave the same institution "a noble collection of letter . . . together with the punches and matrices with which they were cast" (Mores, p. 34), which, according to Mores, contained a font of runic, though Reed, who makes an inventory of Fell's gift (pp. 72, 148), mentions no runic. Mores says (p. 75) that James's foundry possessed an incomplete font of runic type, which presently disappeared. For some time, then, the font given by Junius to the University of Oxford appears to have been the only available one in England.

[1] John Chamberlayne printed the runic version in his *Oratio Dominica*, Amsterdam, 1715, p. 54, from copperplate, not from movable type. Chamberlayne cites Worm and Hickes in his preface (p. 35). A *Dissertatio Philologica* by Leibnitz appended to this book discusses the "runic" among other languages.

[2] Lye's edition of Junius's *Etymologicum Anglicanum*, Oxford, 1743, contains a number of words printed in a runic type which may have been Junius's, for the impressions appear to be identical with those in the book of Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels. Lye was afterwards employed by Percy to collate his Norse translations, made through the Latin, with the original texts.

Edda, Snorri's "Chronicon Norwegicum," Stephanius, Worm, Messenius, and a number of other antiquaries, and prints some specimens of Norse poetry in clumsy wooden type with Latin translations. The book is frequently cited by later writers.

Of less importance is Daniel Langhorne's *Elenchus Antiquitatum Albionensium, Britannorum, Scotorum, Danorum, Anglosaxonum* . . . (London, 1673). This author cites Sheringham, Saxo, Arngrim Jonsson, Snorri, and other well-known authorities.

In 1676 there appeared in London, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata; or The Antiquities of Antient Britain, By Aylett Sammes.*[1] The book contains (pp. 435 ff.) a most amusing chapter on *Woden*, "a happy and glorious Warriour," who, among other accomplishments, "had a way to call up the Ghosts of deceased Persons, and at his pleasure shut them up in Hills and Rocks, whence he was called . . . *Lord of the Hobgoblins.*" The author cites Snorri, Worm, "Sir Henry Spelman in his Epistle to Wormius," Messenius, and other similar authorities. He prints the Norse runic alphabet from wooden types, quotes the Prose Edda's account of Odin's expedition out of Asia in Norse and "Rossenius his translation," and makes an extract from the *Hávamál*, which he does not mention by name.[2]

Dr. George Hickes, Dean of Worcester and later titular Bishop of Thetford, published the first fruits of his extensive philological

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[1] Anthony à Wood is inclined (*Fasti Oxonienses*, II, 363) to assign the authorship of this work to Robert Aylett, author of a book of verse entitled *Divine and Moral Speculations*, 1654. "An account of this book [i.e. *Brit. Ant.*]," says Wood, "is in the *Philosophical Transactions*, numb. 124. p. 596, wherein though the author of them Mr. Oldenburg doth stile Mr. Sams the learned and curious undertaker of that great work, yet the common report then was, that not he, but his quondam uncle was the author; and to confirm it, was his great ignorance in matters and books of antiquity. I was several times in his company when he spent some weeks this year in Oxon, and found him to be an impertinent, grining and pedantical coxcomb, and so ignorant of authors, that he never heard before I mentioned it to him, of the great antiquary John Leland, or of his printed or manuscript works, nor anything of Baleus, nor could he give any account of authors that are quoted in the said *Britannia antiqua illustrata*, &c. He died in the year 1679 or thereabouts, perhaps in the Inner Temple where he had a chamber, but where buried I know not, nor is it material to be informed." Myles Davies, however, is of the opinion (*Athenæ Britannicæ*, II, 135) that Sammes "is wretchedly abus'd by the *Oxford* Antiquarian."

[2] See further, pp. 62 ff. below.

studies, his *Institutiones Grammaticæ Anglo-Saxonicæ et Mæso-Gothicæ*, at Oxford in 1689. Bound with it was the first Icelandic grammar ever compiled, Runolf Jonsson's,[1] the first edition of which had been published at Copenhagen in 1651. These works were both reprinted, the Anglo-Saxon grammar being greatly extended, in Hickes's monumental *Linguarum Vett. Septentrionalium Thesaurus* (3 vols., folio, Oxford, 1703–1705), a more elaborate and far more scholarly attempt to explain the languages and literatures of the North than any which had yet appeared in England. Hickes pleads in his preface for the study of Norse, and makes frequent citations of Norse literature. One Norse poem, sometimes called *The Waking of Angantyr*, he printed entire from the *Hervarar Saga*, with an English translation.[2] Another interesting tract in the *Thesaurus* is Humphrey Wanley's catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, with Peringskjöld's appendix containing a list of Norse manuscripts preserved in Stockholm.

Mention has already been made of the fact that Hickes used Junius's runic type in this work. In this connection Mores has the following passage :[3]

> The study of [the Septentrional languages] after the death of *Mr Junius* was cultivated with greater ardour through the means and by the labour of *Dr Hickes*, who having received the tincture from *Dr Mareschal* Rect. of *Linc. coll.* of which coll. *Dr Hickes* was fellow, was excited by *Bish. Fell* to the publication of the *Institutiones Gramm. Anglo-Sax.* [etc.] . . . but the Doctor after the Revolution entered into the inmost recesses of the *Borealian* languages, instigated thereunto principally by *Dr Kennet*, that *Dr Hickes's* mind and pen might be diverted from the politics of the time. *Dr Hickes* was a Nonjuror, *Dr Kennet* a Whig, afterwards bishop of Peterb.[4] the *Thesaurus* . . . was epitomiz'd by *Mr Wotton* in a *Conspectus*

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[1] *Recentissima antiquissimæ linguæ Septentrionalis Incunabula, id est Grammaticæ Islandicæ Rudimenta per Runolphum Jonam* [Runolf Jonsson] *Islandum*, Oxoniæ, 1688.

[2] See below, pp. 46 f.

[3] *Dissertation*, pp. 26 f.

[4] The author of the biography of Dr. White Kennet, which appeared in London in 1730, tells us that "he had a noble *Library*." We learn (p. 12) that "having contracted an intimate Acquaintance with Dr. *Hicks*," Kennet "receiv'd him

brevis translated into *Engl.* by *Mr Shelton* for his own improvement, and published to shew that one of his Majesty's justices of the peace may have sense and a taste for learning. further use of the publication we know not: for those who seek after this or any other sort of knowledge will have recourse to the originals.[1]

Hickes's *Thesaurus* became widely known and greatly respected by European scholars. Charles Pougens, author of an *Essai sur les Antiquités du Nord* (Paris, 2d ed., 1799), says of it, for example :[2] "Après l'étude des anciennes langues du Nord, et une lecture approfondie du petit nombre d'écrivains originaux qui nous restent sur l'histoire de cette partie du globe, l'ouvrage qu'il importe le plus de consulter, est sans contredit celui du savant Anglois Hickesius. De tels hommes sont les modèles des gens de lettres de toutes les nations." It would be easy to quote other appreciations no less complimentary.

The early English chroniclers and historians commonly named Odin as one of the ancestors of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and

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freely into his Vicarage-House" at Amersden, "and, finding that by his Condition of Suffering for the cause of King *James*, his Head and Thoughts were too much determin'd to Politicks; by which he wou'd be apt to disturb the World, and expose himself," this canny Whig parson, "to divert him from that Mischief (as well as for other Reasons) desir'd his Instruction in the *Saxon* and *Septentrional* Tongues, and particularly the Derivation of our oldest *English* Words from the *Gothick* and other *Norman* dialects. While Dr. *Hicks* was thus pleas'd and amus'd by the Country Vicar, it gave this latter an Opportunity to intreat the Doctor to look more upon those Studies, to review his *Saxon* and *Islandic* Grammar.... It was upon this frequent Discourse and Importunity of Mr. *Kennet*, that Dr. *Hicks* then and there laid the Foundation of that noble Work ... *Antiqua Literatura Septentrionalis.*" Kennet and Hickes afterward had a falling out in consequence of a dispute over religious matters. Kennet cites Worm and other Northern antiquaries in his *Parochial Antiquities* (ed. 1818, I, 49) and includes some Norse words in the glossary to that work.

[1] Compare Ritson's *Observations on the Three First Volumes of* [Warton's] *History of English Poetry in a Familiar Letter to the Author*, London, 1782, p. 3, n.: "I have likewise some little reason to suppose, though I do not think worth my while to prove, that you owe more obligation to Sheltons translation of Wottons View of Dr. Hickeses Thesaurus, than to the Thesaurus itsself." William Wotton's abridgment appeared in 1708, Maurice Shelton's translation in 1735.

[2] P. 22.

sometimes they made allusion to other Germanic deities — in explaining the origin of the names of the days of the week, for example. Thus Bede (d. 735), in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, says that Hengist and Horsa "erant autem filii Uictgilsi, cuius pater Uitta, cuius pater Uecta, cuius pater Uoden, de cuius stirpe multarum prouinciarum regium genus originem duxit."[1] The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle has several records of a like character.[2]

In the eighth (?) century Nennius, *Historia Britonum*, derives the kings of Northumbria, East Anglia, Mercia, Deira, and Kent from Odin.[3] Odin himself is traced back to "Geta, qui fuit, ut aiunt, filius Dei. Non ipse est Deus Deorum, Amen, Deus exercituum, sed unus est ab idolis eorum quæ ipsi colebant," he adds quaintly.[4]

In the tenth century we find Asser, in his *Annales Rerum Gestarum Ælfredi Magni, ann.* 849, tracing Alfred's ancestry through Woden to Geat, "quem Getam jamdudum pagani pro Deo venerabantur: cuius Sedulius poeta mentionem facit in Paschali metrico carmine."[5] In a like manner Æthelwerd's Chronicle makes Æthelbyrht a descendant of "Wothen."[6]

Other chroniclers of the twelfth century give similar information with regard to various Anglo-Saxon rulers: Florence of Worcester,[7] Simeon of Durham,[8] William of Malmesbury,[9] Henry of Huntingdon,[10] and Geffrei Gaimar.[11]

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[1] Lib. i, cap. 15, ed. Plummer, Oxford, 1896.

[2] For example, under the years 547, 597, 755, 855 (where the ancestry of Æthelwulf is traced to Woden, who is said to have descended from Geat, who in turn was a descendant of Sceaf, son of Noah), and 449 ("Fram þam Wodne awoc eall ure cyne-cynn and suðan-hymbra eac").

[3] §§ 57 ff.

[4] § 31.

[5] On the authenticity of this work, see Plummer, *Life and Times of Alfred the Great*, Oxford, 1902, pp. 14 ff.

[6] Lib. ii, cap. 2 (cf. also cap. 3).

[7] Sub ann. 450, 547, 849.

[8] Sub ann. 849, *Opera*, Rolls Series, II, 69.

[9] *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, Savile's ed., London, 1596, p. 3 *verso*.

[10] Savile's ed., London, 1596, p. 178.

[11] *L'Estorie des Engles*, vv. 841 f.

In the thirteenth century we have Layamon putting these lines into the mouth of Hengist:

> We habbeð godes gode:
> Þe we luuieð an ure mode.
> Þa we habbeð hope to:
> & heoreð heom mid[1] mihte.
> Þe an hæhte Phebus:
> Þe oðer Saturn*us*.
> Þe þridde hæhte Wode*n*
> Þ*æt* is an weoli godd.[2]

In the fourteenth century we find "Matthew of Westminster"[3] and Ralph Higden[4] following the lead of the earlier annalists.

In the fifteenth century John Hardyng in his Chronicle[5] writes of Hengist's followers:

> Peynemis they were, and trowyd of Mercury,
> And on Venus theyr goddes of Payanie.
>
> That Mercurie Woden, in their language,
> Was called so by his propre name,
> For whome they honoured of olde [usage],
> The fourth daye in euery weke at hame,
> [And so of Mercury geuing it a name;]
> And of Wodē called it Wednisdaye,
> Of olde custome as they haue vsed alwaye.

Four writers of the sixteenth century may be mentioned in this connection. Robert Fabyan's Chronicle[6] traces the "God named Woden" whom "ye Saxons . . . worshipped at that dayes" back to "Geta, yt was the sone of Minos, yt is next in honour to Pluto, god of hell, & chefe iudge of his infernall iurisdiccion. Therefore," adds the chronicler, humorously, —

> "Therefore ye Welshe men here after nurture lere[7]
> And dispyse not Saxons that ben to God so nere."

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[1] The text has "mid mid."

[2] *Brut*, ed. Madden, vv. 13,897 ff. Hengist also mentions Frea. The substance of this passage is to be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Hist. Regum Britanniæ*, vi, 10.

[3] *Flores Historiarum*, ed. London, 1567, fol. 209.

[4] *Polychronicon*, lib. v, cap. 1.

[5] Ed. London, 1812, p. 109.

[6] Ed. London, 1811, pp. 60, 127.

[7] The text has "lerne."

Richard Grafton's Chronicle[1] and Raphael Holinshed's *Historie of England*[2] bear further witness to the distinguished ancestry of the Saxon rulers. Camden's *Britannia* mentions[3] *wiccingi* — "*Wiccinga* enim Saxonica lingua, teste Alfrico, Piratam denotat" — and *Thur.* Camden gets his information with regard to the Danes from Dudo of S. Quentin, whose book he says he has seen in the library of the learned John Stowe in London.[4]

Of the historians writing in the seventeenth century, John Speed cites in his *History of Great Britain* (London, 1611), Verstegan, Adam of Bremen, Dudo, and other authorities on Danish antiquities; Edmund Howes repeats, in his *Continuation of Stowe's Chronicle* (London, 1615), some of the Saxon genealogies; Milton writes in his *History of England*[5] of "*Hengist* and *Horsa* descended in the fourth degree from *Woden;* of whom, deify'd for the fame of his acts, most Kings of those Nations derive thir pedigree," and James Tyrrell discusses in his *General History of England* (London, 1697), the migration of Odin,[6] the Eddas, and the Saxon genealogies, on the authority of Saxo, Sheringham, Cluverius, Verstegan, Jornandes, Hickes, Arngrim Jonsson, and Worm.

With mention of William Guthrie, whose *General History of England* appeared at London in 1744, and who drew his information with regard to Scandinavian mythology from many of Tyrrell's sources, we may discontinue the list. Most of the later English historians make some mention of the heathen gods worshiped by the Saxons and the Danes, though of course they discredit the reputed pedigree of the Saxon kings.[7]

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[1] Ed. London, 1809, I, 75.

[2] Ed. London, 1574, pp. 195 f.

[3] Ed. London, 1600, p. 108.

[4] Dudo or Dudon of S. Quentin wrote his *De Moribus et Actis Primorum Normanniæ Ducum libri tres* in the beginning of the eleventh century. The work was published by Duchesne at Paris in 1619. The passage that Camden quotes may be found in Migne, CXLI, cols. 620, 621. Dudo was one of the sources used by Saxo.

[5] Bk. iii, *Works*, ed. Mitford, V, 112.

[6] See below, pp. 190 ff.

[7] Nyerup mentions (*Bragur*, II, 365 f.) an early Oxford edition of the account of the settlement of Iceland written by Ari Thorgilsson — "Ari the Wise": *Æ*

A few Englishmen of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries showed their interest in the Scandinavian North by composing, translating, or reprinting accounts of the physical characteristics of that region, or of the manners, customs, and interests of its inhabitants. Samuel Purchas, for example, quotes in *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (London, 1613), Arngrim Jonsson's *Crymogæa*, Blefken's *Islandia*, and Olaus Magnus. In *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London, 1619–25),[1] he prints in English *Dithmar Blefkens his Voyages, and Historie of Island and Groenland*[2] and *Extracts of Arngrim Ionas an Islander, his Chrymogæa or Historie of Island.*[3] Purchas also calls attention to Jonsson's "Booke of *Island*, which M. *Hak*[*luyt*]. translated and set forth in the first Tome of his Voyages."[4] The *Extracts* treat of "Odinus" and "his notable knowledge in Deuillish Magicke; whereby like another Mahomet, hee affected a Diuinitie after his death," of "the first Inhabitants of the Northerne World, supposed to be Giants expelled from Canaan," and other interesting topics.

In 1644 Isaac de la Peyrère, a French scholar afterwards attached to the household of the Prince de Condé, accompanied the French ambassador De la Thuillerie to Copenhagen, and from thence made excursions to Iceland and Greenland. His *Relation de l'Islande*, first published at Paris in 1663, was several times reprinted. In 1704 it was turned into English for Churchill's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, where it appears in the second volume, followed by the same author's *Account of Greenland*. La Peyrère quotes Arngrim Jonsson and Saxo, and has a good deal to say about his conversations with

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Multiscii Schedæ de Islandia. Accedit Commentarius & Dissertatio de Aræ Multiscii Vita & Scriptis, Oxoniæ . . , MDCCXVI. An even earlier attempt seems to have been made in 1696 or 1697 to reprint this work at Oxford. See *Bragur*, II, 362. For an account of Ari, see Anderson's Horn, pp. 46–49.

[1] The Third Part, 1625, bk. iii, chap. xxii.

[2] Blefken was a German traveller who made a voyage to the far North in 1563 and published an account of it at Leyden in 1607. Arngrim Jonsson criticised the book severely in his *Anatome Blefkeniana quâ D. Blefkenii viscera magis præcipua in libello de Islandia, convulsa, per manifestam exenterationem retexuntur . .* , Holum, 1612.

[3] In chap. xxiii.

[4] I.e. the *Brevis Commentarius*. See above, p. 3.

"Dr. Wormius." On the subject of Icelandic literature he makes this interesting assertion:

> The *Islanders* were so famous for their Poetry among the Neighboring Nations, that it was generally believed that there was a certain kind of Magick hidden in their Verses, whereby they could Summon the Dæmons from the Infernal Regions, and change the Influence of the Planets. Their Poets are Born, and not made such; for the most Ingenious Person among them, cannot Write a Verse without his Natural Genius prompts him to it; the Rules of their Poetry being most strict and severe; whereas such as are Endowed with this Qualification by Nature, write them with such Facility, that they can Speak scarce any thing but in Metre. They are commonly seized with this Poetical Frenzy in the New-Moon; when their Faces appear dreadful, with a pale Countenance, and hollow Eyes; not unlike as the Sybil of *Cumæ* is described by *Vergil:* At that time it is very dangerous to Converse with these furious Fellows, the Wound given by a Mad-Dog being scarce more dangerous than their venomous Satyrs.[1]

He also gives a brief account of Norse mythology, as it was explained to him by "Dr. Wormius" from "a very Antient Copy" of the Edda.

Even more famous was the *Voyage des Pais Septentrionaux* (Paris, 1671), written by Pierre Martin de la Martinière, a French surgeon who took part in an expedition sent by Frederick III of Denmark to the Northern countries in 1653. Several editions of this work were printed in French, and it was translated into German and English. The first English version, *A New Voyage into the Northern Countries*, was published at London in 1674. Another English version, abridged, may be found in *The World Displayed* (London, 1761),[2] and a third in William Mavor's *Historical Account of the Most Celebrated Voyages, Travels*, etc. (London, 1797).[3]

Among the superstitions mentioned by La Martinière and the other voyagers is the belief of the Icelanders that Hecla was a kind of Hell or Purgatory, and that the peculiar sound given out by the flux of the ice floes along the coast was the cry of lost souls in torment.[4]

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[1] Churchill, II, 437. [2] XX, 103 ff. [3] XI, 3 ff.

[4] For a study of this superstition, see Konrad Maurer, *Die Hölle auf Island*, in *Zeitsch. des Ver. für Volksk.*, IV, 256 ff. Saxo appears to have first mentioned this belief in his preface (Müller and Velschow. I, 15). Olaus Magnus published

This picturesque idea was certain to appeal to the English imagination, and that it did so appeal as early as 1647 we have evidence in the sixty-eighth stanza of Henry More's *The Præexistency of the Soul:*

> In Artick Climes, an Isle that Thule hight
> Famous for snowy monts, whose hoary head's
> Sure signe of cold, yet from their fiery feet
> They strike out burning stones with thunders dread,
> And all the Land with smoak, and ashes spread:
> Here wandring Ghosts themselves have often shown,
> As if it were the region of the dead,
> And men departed met with whom they've known,
> In seemly sort shake hands, and ancient friendship own.[1]

Johan Scheffer's famous book of travels in Lapland, entitled *Lapponia* (published at Frankfurt in 1673, and translated into English in 1674 and again in 1704), has an account of Thor, described as having

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in 1539 a map of the North with a commentary printed in one corner. A little spot on the northern coast of Iceland he explains as "Glacies miserabilem humane vocis gemitum indicans fidem facit ibi hominum animas tormentari" (see O. Brenner's edition of this map in *Christiania Videnskabs-Selskabs Forhandlinger*, 1886, p. 6; also printed separately). In his *Hist. de Gent. Sept.*, 1555, lib. ii, cap. 3, Olaus Magnus says of Hecla: "Ibique locus esse creditur pœnæ expiationisque sordidarum animarum." See, however, Arngrim Jonsson on this subject, in *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, chap. xxiii. I am indebted to Professor Kittredge for references to this whole matter.

[1] Grosart's ed., Chertsey Worthies' Library, 1878, p. 125. Cf. Campbell's *Death-Boat of Heligoland* (*Poetical Works*, Boston, 1854, p. 284):

> "We are dead — we are bound from our graves in the west,
> First to Hecla, and then to ——" Unmeet was the rest
> For man's ear.

Another allusion to Hecla, which has no bearing on this superstition, is quoted from *The Paradise of Daintie Devises*, a miscellany published at the end of the sixteenth century, by Percy in the *Reliques*, 1765, II, 170, as an example of bathos:

> Thule, the period of cosmographie,
> Doth vaunt of Hecla, whose sulphurious fire
> Doth melt the frozen clime, and thaw the skie,
> Trinacrian Ætnas flames ascend not hier:
> These things seeme wondrous, yet more I,
> Whose hart with feare doth freeze, with love doth fry.

been worshiped by the ancient Lapps, which is often quoted by later writers. Scheffer's picture of the idol Thor [1] was also widely copied.[2]

Meagre allusions to Woden and Thor, with citations of Scheffer or Resenius or Bartholin or Worm, are frequently found in various sorts of early dictionaries which circulated in England. Edward Phillips, Milton's nephew, briefly explains "Woden," "Thor," and "Friga" in his *New World of English Words* (London, 1658). Louys Moréry's *Grand Dictionaire Historique* (9th ed., Amsterdam, 1702), translated into English by Jeremy Collier (2d ed., 1701), has articles on "Odin," "Thor," and "Island" derived from La Peyrère, Scheffer, and Bartholin. Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* (3d ed., Rotterdam, 1720), several times translated into English, draws upon Resenius, Scheffer, and Arngrim Jonsson. A *Dictionary of All Religions* attributed to Defoe (2d ed., London, 1724) explains "Odid," "Ascardie," "Vall-kell," and "Thor." The compilation of *Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World*, translated from the French of J. F. Bernard and illustrated by Bernard Picart (7 vols. in 6, London, 1733–1739), contains (Vol. IV) an extended account of Iceland and of Icelandic literature and mythology, which appears to be derived largely from La Peyrère. Thomas Broughton's *Historical Dictionary of All Religions* (London, 1742) contains a brief explanation of some of the

[1] P. 105, Latin ed.

[2] A book by Lucas Jacobson Debes, a Danish clergyman, is worth mentioning. It was originally published in Danish at Copenhagen, and later Englished under the title *Færoæ, & Færoa Reserata : that is a Description of the Islands and Inhabitants of Færæ . . . Englished by J[ohn]. S[terpin]*., London, 1676. On p. 337 the author writes of "a very antient Spiritual Psalm, which they in their antient language, call *Kiomer*. . . . It seems to have been made in *Island*, there being many words of that language in it." On pp. 337 f., "This I must blame in our people of Feroe, that almost all of them know the most part of the old Gyants Ballads; not only those that are Printed in the Danish Book of Ballads [*Kæmpe-Viser*], but also many more of the Champions of *Norway*, that may be are forgotten elsewhere, here in fresh Memory, being usually Sung in their Dances." On pp. 190 and 211 he cites Snorri Sturluson. — For a bibliography of early travels in the North, see the catalogue of books on "Lapland and the Scandinavian Countries," in Robert Kerr's *General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels*, Edinburgh, 1811–1824, XVIII, 552 ff.; also the more extended list in Sir Richard F. Burton's *Ultima Thule*, London, 1875, I, 240 ff.

Norse deities, derived from Bartholin, Sheringham, and Scheffer. Nathaniel Bailey's English Dictionary (London, 1721) and Buys's English and Dutch Dictionary (Amsterdam, 1768–1769) contain slight accounts of Woden and Thor.

Edward Stillingfleet includes in his *Defence of the Discourse concerning the Idolatry Practised in the Church of Rome* (1676) a chapter "On Idolatry in the Northern Parts,"[1] in which he cites "the *Gothick Antiquities* which have been lately published," — perhaps Rudbeck, or possibly Resenius. In another work by this author, *Origines Britannicæ* (London, 1685), are citations of Rudbeck, Scheffer, Snorri, and Saxo. Lord Herbert of Cherbury's *De Religione Gentilium*, published posthumously at Amsterdam in 1663,[2] and John Beaumont's *Historical, Physiological and Theological Treatise of Spirits*, etc. (London, 1705)[3] contain allusions to Scandinavian gods.

So much for the early English antiquaries and other specialists whose writings were concerned directly or indirectly with Scandinavian subjects. In the polite literature of England previous to the seventh decade of the eighteenth century, references to Scandinavian mythology seem to have been few and far between. Any thorough and detailed study of this period lies beyond the limit of the present investigation; but though persistent search would doubtless add a number of items to the tale of allusions of this sort which have come to my notice, the list could hardly be very long or very important.

Saxo Grammaticus relates, in his fifth book, the story of two friends, Asmundus and Asuitus, who were so much attached to each other that when the latter died of an illness, the former, bound by an oath, insisted on being buried alive with the dead body of his comrade. After staying in the tomb for some days, Asmundus was inadvertently released by some marauding Swedes, who broke open the barrow in search of treasure. Asmundus was such a fearful-looking object that his rescuers scattered in every direction:

Quippe Asmundus tetro oris habitu ac veluti funebri quodam tabo obsitus videbatur. Qui fugientes revocare conatus, vociferari cœpit, falso eos

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[1] *Works*, London, 1709, V, 333. Dr. Johnson cites Stillingfleet on Thor in the first edition of his Dictionary, London, 1755, s.v. *Thursday*.

[2] See p. 44.

[3] See pp. 279, 284.

formidare vivum. Quem videns Ericus, præcipue cruentati oris ejus imaginem mirabatur. In vultu siquidem profluus emicabat sanguis. Quippe Asuitus, noctibus redivivus, crebra colluctatione lævam illi aurem abruperat, fœdumque indigestæ ac crudæ cicatricis spectaculum apparebat.[1]

The story is also told in Norse in *Egils Saga ok Ásmundar*,[2] and in Latin by Torfæus.[3]

Professor Kittredge points out to me that this gruesome tale was evidently known in England by the latter part of the sixteenth century. Nash relates it in *Pierce Penilesse*, 1592: "There is a wonderfull accident set downe in the Danish historie of *Asuitus* and *Asmundus*,"[4] etc. Henry More repeats the legend in his poem on the *Præexistency of the Soul*, 1647, stanzas 59-62.[5] More's version begins:

> Hereto belongs that story of the spright
> Of fell Asuitus noted far and wide,
> And of his faithfull comrade Asmund hight;
> Twixt whom this law was made, as Danish Records write:
>
> Which of them two the other did survive
> Must be intomb'd with 's fellow in one grave.
> Dead *Asuit* therefore with his friend alive
> His dog and horse all in one mighty Cave
> Be shut together, yet this care they have,
> That faithfull Asmund, be not lost for meat:
> Wherefore he was well stor'd his life to save
> And liv'd sometime in that infernall seat,
> Till *Errick* King of Sweads the door did open break.[6]

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[1] Ed. Müller and Velschow, I, 245. Saxo's account is abridged in English by William Herbert in his notes to *Helga*. *Works*, 1842, I, 127.

[2] See Asmundarson's *Fornaldarsögur Norðrlanda*, Reykjavik, 1889, III, 285.

[3] *Historia Rerum Norvegicarum*, Copenhagen, 1711, I, 309.

[4] *Works*, ed. Grosart, Huth Library, II, 119.

[5] Ed. Grosart, pp. 124-125.

[6] Attention is called to the fact that the story of Hamlet, which was not only available in an English prose narrative but was also acted on the English stage some years before Shakspere wrote his tragedy, is found in the third and fourth books of Saxo's history. Saxo is believed, however, not to have been the direct source of any of these Elizabethan versions. See Furness, *Variorum Hamlet*,

Henry Burnell printed at Dublin in 1641 *Landgartha, A Tragie-Comedy, as it was presented in the new Theatre in Dublin with good applause, being an ancient story. Written by H. B.* Among the characters are *Reyner King of Denmark* and *Landgartha, a Norwegian Lady.* There appear to be no allusions to Norse deities, but one of the Danes, Rolfo, swears, incongruously, "By Jove, sir."

Dryden's *King Arthur, or the British Worthy*, 1691, has a scene[1] which "represents a Place of Heathen Worship; the three Saxon Gods, Woden, Thor and Freya placed on Pedestals. An Altar." In the course of the scene sacrificial rites are performed which are accompanied by a hymn to Odin.

In his *Prince Arthur, An Heroick Poem in Ten Books* (3d ed., London, 1696, 1st, 1695), Sir Richard Blackmore makes Lucifer

> On *Fiæl* Light,
> Of *Lapland Alpes*, chief for amazing Height;
> Where *Thor* resides, who heretofore by Lot,
> The Sovereign Rule o'er Winds and Tempests got.[2]

This Thor, thus transformed into a kind of Æolus, is several times mentioned. On one occasion, when it becomes expedient to incite the Saxon king, Octa, against the Britons, "*Lucifer* does *Odin*'s Shape assume,"[3] the essential feature of his disguise being a suit of mediæval armor.

Thomas Tickell's poem *On the Prospect of Peace*, 1713, has the line,

> With runic lays Smolensko's forests ring.[4]

Pope's *Temple of Fame*, 1715, contains the following passage:

> Of Gothic structure was the Northern side,
> O'erwrought with ornaments of barb'rous pride.
> There huge Colosses rose, with trophies crown'd
> And Runic characters were grav'd around.
> There sate Zamolxis with erected eyes,
> And Odin here in mimic trances dies.

Vol. II; John Corbin, *The Elizabethan Hamlet*, London, 1895; Elton and Powell, translation of Saxo, Appendix II; Israel Gollancz, *Hamlet in Iceland*, London, 1898, *Introduction*.

[1] Ed. 1762, VI, 344.

[2] P. 6. The first edition of this work was published in 1695.

[3] P. 131.

[4] Sanford and Walsh's *British Poets*, XVII, 18. See Sir Samuel Garth's allusion (1699) to "Runic rhymes," below, p. 226 n.

A footnote by the author explains that "Odin, or Woden, was the great Legislator and hero of the Goths. They tell us of him, that being subject to fits, he persuaded his followers, that during those trances he received inspirations, from whence he dictated his laws: he is said to have been the inventor of the Runic characters." [1]

Samuel Boyse, author of *The Vision of Patience*, ca. 1740, an elegy in the Spenserian stanza on "A Young Gentleman unfortunately lost in the Northern Ocean," introduces a company of Faroese youth who

> Sing the funeral dirge in Runic rhyme
> Allotted to the sage, or warrior dead.[2]

Gilbert West writes in his *Institution of the Order of the Garter*, 1742, of

> The Law of Freedom which to Britain's shore
> From Saxon Elva's many-headed flood,
> The valiant sons of Odin with them bore.[3]

William Mason in his *Musæus*, written in 1744 and published in 1747, represents Milton, in the character of Thyrsis, as saying to Pope,

> Rhyme, erst the minstrel rude,
> Rhyme, erst the minstrel of primæval Night,
> And Chaos, Anarch old: She near their throne
> Oft taught the rattling elements to chime
> With tenfold din; till late to earth upborn
> On strident plume, what time fair Poesie
> Emerg'd from Gothic cloud, and faintly shot
> Rekindling gleams of lustre. Her the fiend
> Opprest; forcing to utter uncouth dirge,
> Runic, or Leonine.[4]

Dr. John Armstrong's *Taste*, 1753, contains this passage:

> But he, enfranchis'd from his tutor's care,
> Who places Butler near Cervantes' chair,

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[1] Globe ed., p. 116.

[2] Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, 1790, XI, 59.

[3] Southey, *Specimens of the Later English Poets*, London, 1807, II, 244.

[4] *Works*, 1811, I, 9 f.

> Or with Erasmus can admit to vie
> Brown of Squab-hall, *of merry memory;*
> Will die a Goth, and nod at Woden's feast,
> Th' eternal Winter long, on Greg'ry's breast.
> Long may he swill, this patriarch of the dull,
> The drowsy mum — But touch not Maro's skull![1]

A footnote to these lines explains the allusion "to the Gothic heaven, Woden's Hall; where the happy are for ever employed in drinking beer, mum, and other comfortable liquors, out of the skulls of those whom they had slain in battle."

Collins, in his *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland* (written 1749, published 1788), congratulates John Home on returning to a country where

> At ev'ry pause, before thy mind possest,
> Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around,
> With uncouth lyres, in many-colour'd vest,
> Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crown'd.[2]

Joseph Spence, in an *Epistle on the Royal Nuptials Addressed to the Queen* (written, presumably, about 1761), apostrophizes the "Saxonian plains" in the following strain:

> Forth from you
> Issued our sires, old Woden's high-born sons;
> Great Woden deem'd a god, with uncouth rites
> By his rude offspring worshipp'd.[3]

The data noted in the preceding pages enable us to sum up in a single sentence the status of Scandinavian literature and archæology in England at the middle of the eighteenth century. Opportunities were at hand, and fairly accessible, for the scholar who wished to make a special study of these "Gothic" matters, but the great mass of the English people knew little and cared little about them.

Not long after the middle of the century, however, we have unmistakable evidence that English writers and English readers were

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[1] Vv. 36 ff. *Miscellanies by John Armstrong, M.D.* (2 vols., London, 1770), I, 129.

[2] *Poems*, ed. Bronson, Athenæum Press Series, Boston, 1898, p. 68.

[3] *Poetical Calendar*, 1763, IV, 94.

beginning to interest themselves in various sorts of hitherto despised vernacular mediæval literature. These "romantic" tendencies to revert to the Middle Ages have been so often explained[1] and are so generally understood that it is sufficient to remind the reader that by 1760 people were losing their heads over James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland;* that by 1764 Evan Evans had completed and published *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards*, and that by 1765 a steadily growing popular interest in old English ballads had culminated in Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The early lays of the Scandinavian North are surely of quite as much intrinsic interest as those of Scotland, Wales, or England. With this appetite for outlandish literature once aroused in England, then, and with Worm, Resenius, Bartholin, and Mallet (about whom more presently) available to English scholars, it was to be expected that to these English renderings from Gaelic and British bards somebody should add, sooner or later, specimens of the composition of the Norse skalds.[2] As a matter of fact, "runic poetry" did not have to wait long for such a champion.

[1] See, for example, Phelps, *English Romantic Movement*, particularly chaps. vi–ix; Beers, *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, New York, 1899, chap. vi.

[2] It should be noted that some of the critical writings that were influential in shaping the Romantic movement tended indirectly to encourage an interest in Norse literature. Goldsmith's *Polite Learning in Europe*, published in 1759, called attention to the Edda and mentioned two or three of the Northern antiquaries. Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Faery Queen*, 1754, makes half a dozen allusions to Scandinavian mythology, usually with a citation of Hickes. Richard Hurd's dialogue, *On the Age of Queen Elizabeth*, 1759, and the same author's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, 1762, though not dealing specifically with Scandinavian literature, would foster a taste for it.

CHAPTER II

PERCY, GRAY, AND BRUCE

The earliest work in the English language intended primarily to arouse popular interest in Norse literature appears to have been a little meagre book whose title-page reads: *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry Translated from the Islandic Language.* [Six lines of runes on copperplate and a motto from Lucan.] *London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, in Pall-mall* MD CC LXIII. A note upon the reverse of the title-page runs as follows: "N.B. This little tract was drawn up for the press in the year 1761: but publication has been delayed by an accident."

Although the editor is mentioned by name nowhere in the book, he was presently known to be Thomas Percy, famous later as the compiler of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.* Percy's *Preface* is, significantly, an apology for thrusting upon the attention of cultivated Englishmen specimens of the literary efforts of a people "generally known under no other character than that of a hardy and unpolished race, who subdued all the southern nations by dint of courage and of numbers," and who, though they established a "generous plan of government, . . . raised the fabric upon the ruins of literature and the fine arts." But there is "one feature of their character," our editor protests, "of a more amiable cast; which, tho' not so generally known, no less belongs to them: and that is, an amazing fondness for poetry." He goes on to say something about the characteristics of the poetry produced by "the ancient inhabitants of Sweden, Denmark and Norway," and of the language in which it was written. With the debate over the authenticity of Macpherson's Ossianic fragments in mind, Percy had printed at the end of his volume the Norse texts from which his translations were indirectly derived. For the insertion of these texts he finds it necessary to make a special apology in his *Preface.* He has printed them, he explains, as vouchers for the authenticity of his version, since "the books whence they are extracted are very scarce." He hopes, too, that they may be "peculiarly acceptable to such curious persons, as study

the ancient languages of the north. To these gentlemen," he continues, "this small publication is inscribed. One of the most learned and most eminent among them [the Reverend Edward Lye] has honoured it so far as to compare the versions everywhere with the originals." He concludes with an appeal to the lay reader: "That the study of ancient northern literature hath its important uses has often been evinced by able writers [he cites Dr. Hickes in a footnote]: and that it is not dry or unamusive this little work it is hoped will demonstrate. Its aim at least is to shew, that if those kind of studies are not always employed on works of taste or classic elegance, they serve at least to unlock the treasures of native genius; they present us with frequent sallies of bold imagination, and constantly afford matter for philosophical reflection by showing the workings of the human mind in its almost original state of nature."

All this is somewhat faint-hearted, but we may be tolerably certain that Percy would have lacked the courage of even these convictions had he not found an incentive to publication in the popular enthusiasm over Macpherson's Ossianic fragments. "It would be as vain to deny as it is perhaps impolitic to mention," he confesses, in the *Preface*, "that this attempt is owing to the success of the Erse fragments."[1]

The immediate source of Percy's interest in Norse poetry is revealed by a footnote which cites "a very elegant *French* book lately published in *Denmark* and often quoted in the following pages, intitled *L'introduction a l'histoire de Dannemarc par le Chev. Mallet, 4to.* Which contains a most curious and entertaining account of the ancient manners, customs, religion and mythology of the northern nations; besides many striking specimens of their composition. A

[1] These were published in 1760. "It is by no means for the interest of this little work," Percy goes on, "to have it brought into a comparison with those beautiful pieces, after which it must appear to the greatest disadvantage. And yet till the Translator of those poems thinks proper to produce his originals, it is impossible to say whether they do not owe their superiority, if not their whole existence entirely to himself. The Editor of these pieces had no such boundless field for licence. Every poem here produced has been already published accompanied with a Latin or Swedish version, by which every deviation would at once be detected."

translation of this work," adds the editor, "is in great forwardness, and will speedily be published."[1] The first volume of Mallet's book had appeared at Copenhagen in 1755; the second, which contained copious translations from Snorri's Prose Edda and portions of three of Percy's five pieces, in 1756.[2]

Professor Phelps hardly exaggerates the importance of Mallet's *Introduction* when he traces back to it "all subsequent Norse study and all the revival of the Norse element in English literature."[3] Grenville Pigott credits Mallet with being "the first author who gave to [Northern mythology] a popular dress,"[4] and we have plenty of contemporary evidence that the book was widely read.[5]

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[1] This translation, by Percy himself, was published in two volumes, anonymously, in 1770, under the title *Northern Antiquities* (see below, pp. 39 f.). Mallet is cited frequently in Percy's *Reliques*. See Mallet's letters to Percy in Nichols's *Illustrations*, VIII, 170 ff.

[2] For some account of this book and its author, see Phelps, *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, Boston, 1893, pp. 139–141; Kittredge's note in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlii; Vigfusson and Powell's *C.P.B.*, I, xcv.

[3] *Romantic Movement*, p. 141.

[4] *A Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, London, 1839, p. xli.

[5] Vigfusson thinks that it "had an influence quite out of proportion to its merits" (*C.P.B.*, I, xcv). The second volume was reviewed by Goldsmith in the *Monthly Review* for April, 1757 (*Works*, Bohn ed., 1885, IV, 233). The editor of the Bohn edition of Goldsmith notes (IV, 238, n.) that this review was probably Mallet's introduction, as a student of Scandinavian literature, to England. The review was, however, little more than an abstract of certain parts of the book. Walpole wrote to George Montagu, Feb. 19, 1765 (*Letters*, ed. Cunningham, 1857, IV, 326 f.): "I have been a perfect hermit this fortnight, and buried in Runic poetry and Danish wars. In short I have been deep in a late history of Denmark, written by one Mallet, a Frenchman, a sensible man, but I cannot say he has the art of making a very tiresome subject agreeable. There are six volumes, and I am stuck fast in the fourth." Walpole must have been reading the complete *Histoire de Dannemarc*, 6 vols., Geneva, 1763, to which the volumes I have mentioned formed the *Introduction*. A second edition of the entire work was printed at Geneva in 5 vols., 1771–1777, and a third at the same place in 9 vols., 1787–1788. In Gibbon's *Miscellaneous Works* (London, 1814, III, 231–238) is printed "An Examination of Mallet's *Introduction to the History of Denmark* with *a Translation of the Edda*, the sacred book of the ancient Celts" (the term "Celts" should be noted), in which Gibbon concludes Mallet to be "a man of sense and candour," though he finds that part of the book beyond the *Introduction* "treated dryly and without taste." Gray mentions Mallet's book to Mason in his letters of

It should be observed that Percy makes no pretence to a knowledge of the Norse tongue. The alleged literal prose translations which comprise his *Five Pieces* were made, he tells us, not directly from the Norse, but from certain Latin, Swedish, and French versions of the originals. For their absolute correctness, the Rev. Edward Lye's collation is Percy's only guarantee. Each of the pieces is preceded by an *Introduction* and accompanied by footnotes. Percy's titles and his account of his sources are as follows:

1. *The Incantation of Hervor*, "extracted" from the *Hervarar Saga*, ed. Verelius, Upsala, 1672. "This Piece is published," says the editor, "from the translation of Dr. Hickes, with some considerable emendations."

2. *The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog*, "translated from the Islandic original published by Olaus Wormius in his *Literatura Runica*, *Hafniæ*, 4to. 1631" (an error for 1636).[1]

3. *The Ransome of Egill the Scald.* This is also from Worm.

4. *The Funeral Song of Hacon.* "The Islandic original of this poem," says the editor, "is preserved in Snorro Sturleson's *Hist. Regum Septentrionalium.*" It appears that Percy used Peringskjöld's edition of Snorri (Stockholm, 1697) in Norse, Swedish, and Latin, for he observes (p. 61)

Jan. 13, 1758 (*Works*, ed. Gosse, II, 352), and Oct. 5, 1766 (id., III, 252). Grainger refers to "Mallet's lately imported books" in a letter to Percy dated April 6, 1764 (see Nichols's *Illustrations*, VII, 287, and cf. p. 719). It is interesting to find "Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*" cited frequently in the footnotes to Charlotte Brooke's *Reliques of Irish Poetry*, Dublin, 1789. Miss Brooke quotes (p. 96) a line of the *Incantation of Hervor* from Percy's *Five Pieces*, and mentions (p. 139) "Torf. Bartholin," apparently confusing two well-known antiquaries. A curious witness to the interest which Mallet's book aroused is to be found in a volume of *Political Miscellanies* bound in with a copy of *The Rolliad* and some other pieces (London, 1795) belonging to the Harvard University Library. Among these *Miscellanies* are some so-called *Foreign Epigrams* reflecting upon the Rev. Dr. Prettyman. At the end of No. xii, which purports to be "in the language of Terra Incognita," the editor asserts that he has contracted with "the celebrated Caslon" for the casting of some runic characters in order that he may print an epigram contributed by *Mons. Maillet.* The book long continued to be an authority on Scandinavian subjects, particularly Scandinavian literature, and a very large proportion of the translators mentioned in the following pages cite it, usually in Percy's translation.

[1] This ode had been translated in part by Mallet in the second volume of his *Introduction*, pp. 228 ff.

that he has followed Peringskjöld's Latin, "except in some few places" in which he preferred either Bartholin's or Mallet's rendering.

5. *The Complaint of Harold.* "The original of this fragment," we are told, "is printed in Bartholin's excellent treatise . . . where it is accompanied with a literal Latin version, which we have chiefly followed, except in one or two passages, where the preference seemed due to the French translation of the Chevalier Mallet."

As for the translations themselves, they were all in prose, inaccurate, and jejune to the verge of grotesqueness.[1] The reviews handled the *Five Pieces* rather gingerly. The *Critical Review* of April, 1763, simply gave a summary of their contents, with extracts. The *Monthly Review* of the same date essayed something like a critical estimate. On the whole, the reviewer disapproves: he likes Ossian better; he has read Bartholin, and thinks Percy's selections might have been more judicious. He concludes: "The pieces before us tho' known to some few of the learned, are rare and singular enough to excite the curiosity of the English reader, if it be not already sufficiently gratified with specimens of this kind of poetry." We must assume that "this kind of poetry" was meant to include the Ossianic fragments, with which Percy's pieces would naturally be compared, for "the curiosity of the English reader" with regard to Norse literature had up to this time had almost nothing to feed on.

We have no reason for believing that the *Five Pieces* awakened much immediate interest; but in the course of a few years two other books were published which called attention very generally to Percy's translations.

About the winter of 1760 or the spring of 1761[2] Thomas Gray seems to have been busy with a project for writing a History of English Poetry. An outline or general scheme of the work has been preserved,[3] the beginning of which is interesting for our purposes: "Introduction. On the Poetry of the Gallic or Celtic nations, as far back as it can be traced. On that of the Goths, its

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[1] Specimens are given on pp. 48, 68, 79 f., 85, 89 f., below.

[2] Gosse, *Life of Gray*, pp. 151 f.; Gray's *Works*, ed. Gosse, I, 324.

[3] Gray communicated it in 1770 to Thomas Warton. See Gray's *Works*, ed. Gosse, III, 365 ff.

introduction into these islands by the Saxons and Danes, and its duration. On the origin of rhyme among the Franks, the Saxons and Provençaux." In connection with this *Introduction*, Gray found it necessary to make some study of Scandinavian poetry. To about this period, probably,[1] belong his little treatises on metre. In one of these, *Observations on the Pseudo Rhythmus*, he quotes from Hickes and Worm with regard to Scandinavian verse, and points out that the *Ransom of Egill*, six lines of which he quotes from the original in Worm, is in rhyme.[2]

In the year 1761,[3] the same year, curiously enough, in which Percy's *Five Pieces* was "drawn up for the press,"[4] Gray adapted from the Latin of Torfæus and Bartholin two Norse "odes" to serve as specimens for his History. Abandoning the idea of a History, he seems to have allowed the two odes to lie idle in his portfolio until 1767, when he found occasion to use them. The letter which he wrote Dec. 24, 1767, to James Beattie, in which he announced his intention of substituting for *The Long Story*, in Dodsley's forthcoming edition of Gray's poems, "two pieces of old Norwegian poetry in which there was a wild spirit that struck me," is well known,[5] as is also Gray's letter of Feb. 25, 1768, to Walpole, in which he alludes depreciatingly to his Norse and Welsh odes as "two ounces of stuff."[6]

Dodsley's new edition of Gray appeared in London, with its additions, in 1768.[7] *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* are

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[1] *Works*, ed. Gosse, I, 324.

[2] *Works*, ed. Gosse, I, 362, n. 2. See Professor Kittredge in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlvii. Percy also calls attention to this peculiarity in the *Preface* to his *Five Pieces*.

[3] The date is noted on the original MS. in the possession of Pembroke College (Gray's *Works*, ed. Gosse, I, 52, 60). Walpole had seen the odes by May 5, 1761. See his letter of that date to Montagu, quoted by Professor Kittredge in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlvi, n. 3.

[4] See above, p. 29.

[5] *Works*, ed. Gosse, III, 285 ff.

[6] *Works*, ed. Gosse, III, 308.

[7] Gray prefixed to the Norse pieces an *Advertisement* in which he explained why he had written them, and took occasion, at the same time, to pay a graceful compliment to Warton, whose *History of English Poetry* was then under way (see Phelps's *Gray*, p. 44). Dodsley published a duplicate edition the same year in

too familiar to need description or quotation. For a minute discussion of Gray's relation to his sources, Torfæus and Bartholin, the reader is referred to Professor Kittredge's note on *Gray's Knowledge of Old Norse* in Phelps's *Gray*. The evidence there collected makes it clear that Mr. Gosse has no ground for asserting[1] that Gray had "mastered" Old Norse; indeed it has not yet been proved that he could read the language at all. It seems altogether probable that, like Percy, Gray was dependent upon other people's translations of Norse literature; and it is not unlikely that the immediate source of Gray's interest in Norse poetry, as of Percy's, was Mallet's *Introduction*, a book which he mentions more than once in his letters.[2]

London, and Foulis (whom Gray mentions in the letter to Beattie cited above) brought out another edition in Glasgow. For still other editions of 1768, see the bibliography in Phelps's *Gray*, pp. xxxv f.

[1] *Life of Gray*, p. 159.

[2] *Works*, ed. Gosse, II, 352, 362. Cf. Phelps, *Romantic Movement*, p. 140. The belief that Gray must have been a master of Old Norse appears to die hard. Mr. D. C. Tovey, editor of the Pitt Press edition of *Gray's English Poems*, Cambridge, 1898, cites (p. 241, n.) Gray's note correcting Torfæus's rendering, *telam Darradi*, of the phrase *vefr Darradar* in the Norse original of *The Fatal Sisters*. This is Gray's note: "So Thormodus interprets it, as though Darradar were the name of the Person who saw this vision, but in reality it signifies a *Range of Spears* from *Daur*, Hasta, and *Radir*, Ordo." Mr. Tovey protests (p. 239) that Professor Kittredge and Professor Phelps leave this note untouched. "Gray there corrects Torfæus," observes Mr. Tovey, "from whom he extracted the Latin, but Torfæus only repeats Bartholin, and Bartholin owes his obligation to the learned Arni Magnússon with respect to the Latin versions (Phelps's *Gray*, Appendix, xliii, n. 4). From this it would seem that Gray not only consulted the originals, but had an opinion of his own as to their meaning and claimed the right to differ from a recognized authority on the subject." As a matter of fact, Gray's note, as Professor Kittredge has pointed out to the present writer, is really *translated from Bartholin*, p. 624. On the same page of Bartholin are the lines from Egil's *Head-ransom* about which Mr. Tovey says (p. 241, n. 2) the Rev. W. C. Green has told him. Mr. Nordby (*The Influence of Old Norse Literature*, etc., p. 5) cannot understand "even after reading Professor Kittredge's essay, . . . how Gray could catch the metrical lilt of the Old Norse with only a Latin version to transliterate the parallel Icelandic." He therefore suspects "that Gray's knowledge was fuller than Professor Kittredge will allow." No English reader, however, with Gray's sensitiveness to rhythm could fail to acquire the measure of appreciation of "the metrical lilt of Old Norse" indicated by Gray's verses, even though he might be entirely ignorant of the correct pronunciation or of the meaning of Old Norse. The

The *London Magazine* (March, 1768) found in the new volume "little, if anything, more than a new edition of those very entertaining productions with which the elegant Mr. Gray has already obliged the world, and which are so well known to all the readers of taste in this country." The *Monthly Review* (May, 1768) threw cold water on Gray's innovations: "All that we find new in this collection is, the Fatal Sisters, an ode, the Descent of Odin, an ode, and the Triumphs of Owen, a fragment. These turn chiefly on the dark *diableries* of the Gothic times; and if to be mysterious and to be sublime be the same thing," the reviewer concludes, lucidly, "these deep-wrought performances must undoubtedly be deemed so. For our parts, we shall ever regret the departure of Mr. Gray's muse from that elegantly moral simplicity she assumed in the Country Churchyard." The *Critical Review* (May, 1768) was more appreciative:

> In each [i.e. the *Sisters*, the *Descent*, and the *Triumphs*] the poetry is glowing and animated: but the two former, which are employed upon subjects of incantation, are stamped with the most evident marks of a vigorous imagination, occupied by the notions of gloomy superstition. The imagery is everywhere strongly conceived and strongly expressed, abounding with those terrible graces of which Aristotle tells us Æschylus was so fully possessed.

The reviewer concludes by quoting *The Fatal Sisters* entire.

At least one of Gray's readers gave immediate and conclusive proof of his interest in the Norse odes. On Dec. 16, 1768, Henry

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Harvard University Library has one of fourteen copies of the catalogue of Gray's library printed in London in 1851. It appears that the only book Gray owned of special interest to us was Wotton's not very valuable *Conspectus Brevis* of Hickes. If, like most of Gray's books, this copy contains marginal notes, something might be learned from an examination of it. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader, however, that Gray's researches were not confined to his own private collection of books — less than a hundred and fifty titles. Gray lived at London, we are told, two years in order to enjoy the advantages of the British Museum, and spent the last three years of his life at the University of Cambridge as Professor of Modern History and Languages. The catalogue of his library records several MS. volumes of notes on his reading and antiquarian investigations.

Mackenzie wrote from Edinburgh to James Elphinston, at Kensington, a letter from which the following is an extract:[1]

Gray's Fatal Sisters, one of his new publications; in the late edition of his works, I dare say you have seen. A gentleman observed to me that the appearance of the gigantic deities there mentioned, of which Mr. *Gray* had only given us some account in prose,[2] might afford a good subject for poetical description; and desired I would supply that want, by way of introduction. In pursuance of his suggestion, I wrote these stanzas. They are mere description; and therefore have, at best, but a secondary degree of merit.[3]

The poem opens:

'T was in Eirins' fatal day,
Led by Woden's secret hand,
Where the dancing waves of Mey
Speed the current to the land.

Red his eye, that watched the book,
Sealed with many a hero's blood,
With bristling locks, and haggard look,
The hoary prophet gazed the flood.

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[1] See the *Forty Years' Correspondence of James Elphinston* (6 vols., London, 1791), I, 167 ff. Elphinston spells phonetically, after a mode which he aptly termed "Propriety ascertained in her Picture," but his orthography, or heterography, has been here normalized for purposes of quotation. The Henry Mackenzie in question is the well-known author of *The Man of Feeling*.

[2] "On Christmas-day, (the day of the battle), a Native of *Caithness* in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful Song; which when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped Six to the North and as many to the South." — From Gray's *Preface* to *The Fatal Sisters*.

[3] Elphinston prints the verses in his *Forty Years' Correspondence*, VI, 199. They are reprinted in *The Works of Henry Mackenzie, Esq.* (8 vols., Edinburgh, 1808), VIII, 63–67, with an introductory note explaining the circumstances that led to their composition.

The wind sweeps in from the north, clouds gather, lightnings flash, and the thunder rumbles. Presently "the giant maids appear" and are addressed by the hoary prophet:

"Fatal Sisters! speed your way,
Give your foamy coursers rein;
Pass the dancing waves of Mey,
Pass the murmur of the main."

The Sisters find their way, amid screaming vultures and various convulsions of nature, to the loom:

"See, the loom is ready laid,
O'er it see the sisters bent;
Seats, that bear each wondrous maid,
Each the rock an earthquake rent.

"Hark! beneath the trembling ground,
(From Hela's dark domain it rose,)
Deeply pealed a solemn sound!—
Hark! for Hilda catched the close!—

"'Ours,' she cried, and waved her hand,
'Ours, to join the magic throng;
Sisters! such our queen's command,
Ours to swell the magic song.

"'Now the storm begins to low'r,'" &c.
(As in Mr. Gray's Ode).

There are eighteen stanzas in all. Elphinston expressed his approval guardedly. "Your letter charmed me much; the verses could hardly more," he wrote to Mackenzie, May 8, 1769.[1] "They are native, strong, sweet, Grayish; yet, nor in *Gray*, nor in *Mackenzie*, can I admit (though neither first claims the indulgence) a mixture of Trochaics and Iambics," a criticism which is not more singular than many another we shall have occasion to quote.

The importance of Gray's two odes in popularizing the themes of Norse literature can hardly be overestimated. By 1768 cultivated

[1] *Forty Years' Correspondence*, I, 171.

Englishmen had shown a very general interest in the revival of mediævalism that lent character to the so-called Romantic movement in England. Macpherson's Ossianic fragments, Evans's *Specimens of the Antient Welsh Bards*, and Percy's *Five Pieces* had all appeared; Mallet's *Introduction* was still read and was in process of translation into English. Now neither Mallet's nor Percy's bare pseudo-literal prose versions of the poetry of the Norsemen could compete, as literary performances, with the ornate productions of Macpherson and Evans; but *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* were not of merely archæological interest: they were notable contributions to English literature. Gray's fine lines appealed to emotions which Percy's ragged prose could not stir; they became widely and favorably known,[1] and flattering citations of them were for a long time invariably tagged to English allusions to Norse literature:

"What can exceed the thrilling horror of Gray's celebrated odes from the Norse," wrote Dr. Nathan Drake in 1800, with his customary prodigality of fine phrase, "which first opened to English poetry a mine of the most wild yet terrific mythology! Since their appearance the fictions of the *Edda* have been seized upon with more freedom and avidity."[2]

An additional stimulus was given the awakening interest in the literature of the Eddas by the second of the two publications mentioned above.[3] In 1770 appeared in London an anonymous translation (by Percy), in two volumes, of Mallet's *Introduction*, with a

[1] Perhaps not immediately. Beattie writes to Sir William Forbes, for instance, May 4, 1770 (Beattie's *Letters*, London, 1820, I, 81): "Of all the English poets of this age, Mr. Gray is most admired, and, I think, with justice; yet there are, comparatively speaking, but a few who know anything of his, but his 'Churchyard Elegy,' which is by no means the best of his works." In the same year that this letter was written, however, appeared Percy's *Northern Antiquities*, — the English version of Mallet's book. This, and other works to be mentioned later, took such a hold upon public attention, that there was for some time, as we shall see, a steadily growing interest in Norse literature. During this time *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* are frequently mentioned, always with the highest approbation. The citations (which might be greatly multiplied) collected in Appendix B, below, will give the reader some idea of the popularity of these pieces. Warton's unaccountable blunder in attributing to Gray a translation of the *Dialogue at the Tomb of Angantyr* has been pointed out by Professor Kittredge (Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlix). [2] *Literary Hours*, II, 73. [3] See p. 33.

considerable amount of new critical apparatus, under the title *Northern Antiquities*. Mallet had printed near the end of his second volume extracts from three of the poems represented in the *Five Pieces*, viz.: *Regner Lodbrog*, *Harald*, and *Hacon*. These appeared likewise in the *Northern Antiquities*, but in a new English translation. "An ingenious Friend having translated from the French this part of M. Mallet's Book," explains Percy,[1] "I have got leave to insert his Version." He refers the reader, however, to the *Five Pieces* (without giving any hint as to its editor): "There the Odes here abridged may be seen at large, confronted with the Icelandic Originals, and accompanied with two other ancient Pieces of Northern Poetry." A supplement to the second volume contained Göransson's Latin version of the *Gylfaginning*.[2]

The *Monthly Review* (August, 1770), obviously bent upon discouraging all attempts to popularize "Runic poetry," commented as follows: "In the 2d vol. we are presented with a translation of the *Edda*, or Runic mythology, at large. But it has been so apparently accommodated by the writer to the Christian system; and where it differs from that, is so filled with childish fancies, that we can make no extract from it. . . . As for the specimens of the ancient poetry of the North, they are but trifling. We find in them neither the spirit nor imagination, which are so visible in the translations that Mr. Macpherson has given us from the Erse." The *London Magazine*, however, after giving a preliminary notice of the work in September, 1770, which spoke of the book as a "very entertaining" performance, printed a series of extracts from it which ran from October through December.

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[1] II, 227, n.

[2] About 1804 a new edition of *Northern Antiquities* was projected. For correspondence relating to this matter, see Appendix A, below. The new edition finally appeared, again anonymously, in 1809 at Edinburgh. To the second volume was appended — at the end of Göransson — a reprint of the *Five Pieces*, with some slight alterations in the *Introduction*, and the Norse and English texts printed in parallel columns. The work was edited for a third time with extensive alterations and additions by I. A. Blackwell for *Bohn's Antiquarian Library*, London, 1847. To this edition was appended Scott's *Abstract of the Eyrbiggia-Saga*.

Further evidence of comparatively early interest in Northern literature is found in a small volume of *Poems on Several Occasions, by Michael Bruce*, edited by John Logan in 1770. Among these poems are two *Danish Odes*, which must have been written, if Bruce was their author, before the publication of Gray's Norse pieces, for Bruce died on the 5th of July, 1767.[1] But there is some doubt as to whether Bruce really was their author. In Logan's *Preface* to his edition of Bruce occurs this paragraph[2]: "To make up a miscellany, some pieces, wrote by different authors are inserted, all of them original, and none of them destitute of merit. The reader of taste will easily distinguish them from those of Mr. Bruce, without their being particularized by any mark." This remarkable bit of editorial ingenuousness of course throws discredit on the entire collection, since none of Bruce's poems had ever before appeared in print. The matter is further complicated by the fact that the very first piece in Logan's edition of his own poems, published in 1781, is an *Ode to the Cuckoo*, which appears among Bruce's *Poems*, 1770.[3] In view of this circumstance, several other pieces in the volume of 1770 have been attributed, apparently on doubtful evidence, to Logan, among them the *Danish Odes*.[4] In November, 1784, the *London Magazine* printed one of the odes, "The great, the glorious deed is done," without signature. Drake, in his essay *On the Life*,

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[1] Grosart, *Works of Michael Bruce*, Edinburgh, 1865, p. 46.

[2] Grosart, p. 56.

[3] "There is no 'Preface' [in the volume of 1781], and not a single 'Note' or 'Explanation.' . . . From the date of publication of Bruce's 'Poems' up to the publication of this volume, Logan never had hinted his own claim to the 'Ode.'" Grosart, pp. 61 f.

[4] Chalmers prints the odes, for example, among Logan's poems (*British Poets*, XVIII, 68 f.). The Rev. Thomas Robertson, one of Logan's executors, definitely attributes the odes to Logan in a letter to Dr. Anderson written Sept. 19, 1795 (see David Laing, *Ode to the Cuckoo . . . with Remarks on its Authorship*, Edinburgh, 1873). The anonymous author of a sketch of Logan's life printed in *Poems . . . by the Rev. John Logan*, London, 1825, says, on the other hand (p. xi), apropos of the controversy: "The only pieces, which Logan himself ever acknowledged in his conversations with the compiler of this biographical sketch were, The Story of Levina, the Ode to Paoli, and the Cuckoo." The *Danish Odes* are not included in this collection. Cf. Grosart, pp. 51–114.

Writings and Genius of Michael Bruce,[1] does not question their attribution to Bruce. "They are evidently built," he says, "on the model of Gray's celebrated Norse Lyrics, and, like them, glow with enthusiasm, and display some striking features of the wild mythology of the North." Yet Drake must have known that if Bruce was the author of these poems, they could not have been modelled after Gray's Norse odes, except in the unlikely event that Gray showed them in manuscript to Bruce, as he did to Walpole.[2] We may perhaps accept Drake's proposition that the *Danish Odes* glow with enthusiasm, but they will hardly seem so wild and rakish to the modern reader as they undoubtedly did to their author. One of them consists of eight stanzas, of which the first four are fairly representative:[3]

The great, the glorious deed is done!
The foe is fled! the field is won!
Prepare the feast, the heroes call;
Let joy, let triumph fill the hall!

The raven claps his sable wings;
The Bard his chosen timbrel brings;
Six virgins round, a select choir,
Sing to the music of his lyre.

With mighty ale the goblet crown;
With mighty ale your sorrows drown;
To-day, to mirth and joy we yield;
To-morrow, face the bloody field.

From danger's front, at battle's eve,
Sweet comes the banquet to the brave;
Joy shines with genial beam on all,
The joy that dwells in Odin's hall.

Of the other, which consists of six stanzas, three will suffice:

In deeds of arms our fathers rise
Illustrious in their offspring's eyes:

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[1] *Literary Hours*, Vol. III, London, 1804.

[2] It should be noted, however, that the *Danish Odes* were not printed until after the publication of Gray's Norse pieces.

[3] Both poems are printed entire by Grosart, pp. 207–209.

They fearless rush'd through Ocean's storms,
And dar'd grim Death in all its forms;
Each youth assum'd the sword and shield,
And grew a hero in the field.

Shall we degenerate from our race,
Inglorious, in the mountain chase?
Arm, arm in fallen Hubba's right;
Place your forefathers in your sight;
To fame, to glory fight your way,
And teach the nations to obey.

Assume the oars,[1] unbind the sails;
Send, Odin! send propitious gales.
At Loda's stone, we will adore
Thy name with songs, upon the shore;
And, full of thee, undaunted dare
The foe, and dart the bolts of war.

I have said that the publication of Gray's Norse odes and of the *Northern Antiquities* called attention very generally to Percy's *Five Pieces;* this assertion remains to be proved. From now on — that is, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth, the limit of my investigations — English translations, imitations, and adaptations of episodes from the Eddas and the Norse sagas become fairly common. An examination of this mass of material shows that though it is drawn from a variety of sources and covers a tolerably wide range of Northern literature, certain themes recur with marked frequency. To be more specific, experiments in verse, or in quasi-poetic prose, based upon four particular Norse poems, turn up again and again in the works of minor English poets and essayists of this period, and in the columns of the various English periodicals. These four poems, significantly enough, are among the five selected by Percy for translation in his *Five Pieces*, where they appear respectively as *The Incantation of Hervor*, *The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog*, *The Complaint of Harold*,

[1] Lowell, *Essay on Dryden* (*Works*, Riverside ed., 1892, III, 184), cites as an instance of the evil effects of Latinizing, "Mr. Bruce, in a Danish war-song, calling on the vikings to 'assume their oars.'"

and *The Funeral Song of Hacon.* The last three, it will be remembered, had already been in part translated into French by Mallet in the second volume of his *Introduction.*

It seems best to begin our discussion of the miscellaneous mass of translations and imitations before us, by considering the various English renderings of these four poems; accordingly I shall take them up in the order indicated above and consider each set of versions chronologically. At the end of this book will be found a table indicating clearly the place of each separate version in these and other groups of translations to be considered later, in a simple chronological arrangement of the whole mass. The reader is asked to orient himself from time to time by referring to this table.

CHAPTER III

LATER VERSIONS OF PERCY'S *FIVE PIECES*

I. The Incantation of Hervor

The original of the poem called by Percy *The Incantation of Hervor* is to be found in the *Hervarar Saga ok Heiðreks Konungs*, first edited in 1672 at Upsala by Olaus Verelius, who accompanied the Norse text with a Latin translation. This saga relates the story of the magic sword Tyrfing.[1] The Norse hero Svafrlami, having

[1] Scott tells the story of this sword in the dissertation *On the Fairies of Popular Superstition*, the material for which was largely collected by Dr. John Leyden (see Scott's *Memoir of Leyden*, also the *Supplementary Memoir* by Robert White, both in *Poems and Ballads by Dr. John Leyden*, Kelso, 1858, pp. 29, 108), prefixed to the *Tale of Tamlane* in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in 1802 (see Scott's *Poetical Works*, Edinburgh, 1833–1834, II, 256 f.). Scott also refers to the sword, and cites Bartholin, in a note to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, canto vi, stanza xxii. William Herbert gives the story in his notes to *The Combat of Hialmar and Oddur* (*Works*, London, 1842, I, 269 f.). Vigfusson summarizes the legend in his introduction to *Hialmar's Death-Song and The Waking of Angantheow* (*C.P.B.*, I, 159 f.).

Thomas Warton alludes to "the sword *Tirfing*, in the scaldic dialogue between Hervor and Angantyr" in his *Observations on the Faery Queen*, 1754, with a citation of Verelius and of Hickes (see the 2d ed., 1762, I, 64). Mason introduces

caught the dwarfs Dyrin and Dvalin outside their stony lairs, refuses to release them until they promise to forge him a sword that shall never miss its stroke or rust, that shall cleave iron and stone, and give victory to the wielder. The dwarfs shape the sword, but, with the malignancy of their kind, attach to it a curse which is bound to bring disaster upon whoever shall wield it. In the course of time the sword descends to Svafurlami's grandson, Angantyr. Angantyr dies on the field of battle with the baleful weapon in his grasp, and it is buried with him.

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this sword in his *Caractacus*, 1759, a dramatic poem dealing with the relations between the Britons and the Romans in the time of the emperor Claudius. In the course of the action Caractacus is received into the Druidical order, and as a part of the ceremony a chorus of Druids presents him with a sword (see Mason's *Poems*, London, 1764, p. 257):

> CARACTACUS!
> Behold this sword: The sword of old BELINUS,
> Stain'd with the blood of giants, and its name
> TRIFINGUS.

A note (p. 316) explains *Trifingus* as "The name of the inchanted sword in the Hervarer Saga."

Gray, who saw Mason's drama in manuscript, censures the author, in a letter dated Jan. 13, 1758 (*Works*, ed. Gosse, II, 350 f.), for this blundering confusion of Druidical with Norse mythology: "I have never read Keysler's book, nor you neither, I believe; if you had taken that pains, I am persuaded you would have seen that his Celtic and his septentrional antiquities are two things entirely distinct. There are, indeed, some learned persons who have taken pains to confound what Cæsar and Tacitus have taken pains to separate, the old Druidical or Celtic belief, and that of the old Germans, but nobody has been so learned as to mix the Celtic religion with that of the Goths. Woden himself is supposed not to have been older than Julius Cæsar; but let him have lived when he pleases, it is certain that neither he nor his Valhalla were heard of till many ages after." The book by Keysler here referred to is not his *Travels through Germany*, etc., as Mr. Gosse suggests (p. 351, n.), but his *Antiquitates*. See Kittredge in Phelps's *Gray*, pp. xlv and xlvi; also above, p. 7.

The Sword, Tyrfing is the title of an adaptation by William Taylor of Norwich from Gräter's *Tyrfing*, a German version of the *Hervarar Saga* (in *Bragur, ein Litterarisches Magazin der Deutschen und Nordischen Vorzeit*, Leipzig, 1791–1802, I, 161 ff., II, 103 ff., a work mentioned now and then by contemporary English writers), printed in his *Tales of Yore*, 1810. Taylor afterwards abridged his translation and published it in the first volume of his *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (ed. 1828, I, 32–77).

Angantyr leaves a daughter, Hervor, who grows up in ignorance of the circumstances of her father's death. By the time Hervor reaches maturity she has developed into a kind of Amazon. Learning the story of the magic sword, the girl determines to present herself at her father's tomb and demand of him Tyrfing, rightfully hers by inheritance. The very splendid poem called by Percy *The Incantation of Hervor* relates what follows. Angantyr is aroused by a spell from his sleep of death, and Hervor demands the sword. For a long time the old hero, mindful of the curse attached to the weapon, refuses to give it to her, but at last Hervor's threats and curses prove too much for him and he yields.

1. *a*. The earliest English translation of the dialogue between Hervor and Angantyr appears to be that printed by Dr. George Hickes in his great *Linguarum Vett. Septentrionalium Thesaurus* (Oxford, 1703–1705), I, 193 ff., as a part of the twenty-third chapter of the *Grammatica Anglo-Saxonica et Mœso-Gothica*. This grammar was first published in 1689, in connection with Runolf Jonsson's Icelandic Grammar and Wanley's *Catalogue* of Northern manuscripts. This first edition of the Anglo-Saxon and Gothic Grammar contained eighteen chapters. In the second edition of the grammar, however (i.e. the edition printed in the *Thesaurus*), Hickes inserted at the end of the eighteenth chapter the following note: "Hic gradum sistet Tyro in Anglo-Saxonicis; etenim quæ sequuntur non in usum novitiorum scripta sunt; sed iis destinata, qui in hac lingua mediocrem saltem peritiam sunt consecuti." Then he proceeds to extend the work to twenty-four chapters. The twenty-third, *De Poetica Anglo-Saxonum*, contains some specimens of Anglo-Saxon verse. One of these, the Finnsburg fragment (*Thesaurus*, I, 192 f.), is followed by this remark: "Metro haud multum dissimili carmina sua scripsit, *Scaldus* ille, auctor libri, cui titulus Hervarer Saga, (quem edidit cl. *Olaus Verelius*) ut constat ex dialogo illo inter *Hervaram* & *Angantyri* patris sui manes, à quo ad tumulum stans, ut *Tirfingum* gladium cum eo sepultum daret, rogat."

Then comes the Norse text of the *Incantation*, interlarded with an English prose translation in black-letter, which begins as follows:

Hervor. — Awake Angantyr, Hervor the only daughter of thee and Suafu doth awaken thee. Give me out of the tombe, the hardned sword,

which the dwarfs made for Suafurlama. Hervardur, Hiorvardur, Hrani, and Angantyr, with helmet, and coat of mail, and a sharp sword. with sheild and accoutrements, and bloody spear, I wake you all, under the roots of trees. Are the sons of Andgrym, who delighted in mischeif, now become dust and ashes. can none of Eyvors sons now speak with me, out of the habitations of the dead! Harvardur, Hiorvardur! so may you all be within your ribs, as a thing that is hanged up to putrifie among insects, unlesse you deliver me the sword which the dwarfs made . . . and the glorious belt.

ANGANTYR. — Daughter Hervor, full of spells to raise the dead, why dost thou call so? wilt thou run on to thy own mischief? thu art mad, and out of thy senses, who art desperatly resolved to waken dead men. I was not buried either by father or other friends. Two which lived after mẽ got Tirfing, one of whome is now possessor thereof.

HERVOR. — Thou dost not tell the truth: so let Odin hide thee in the tombe, as thu hast Tirfing by thee. Art thu unwilling, Angantyr, to give an inheritance to thy only child?[1]

b. Hickes's rendering, accompanied by the Norse, was printed word for word in the 1716 edition of Dryden's *Miscellany Poems*,[2] preceded, queerly enough, by the passage in Hickes that linked the

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[1] This is about a third of Hickes's translation, — enough to indicate its general character. In other parts of the *Thesaurus* Hickes quotes, in the Norse, with Latin translations, scraps from several of the metrical portions of the *Hervarar Saga*. On p. 101 of Vol. I, for example, he quotes a bit from chap. vi; on p. 102, from chap. v; on p. 104, from chaps. vii, xvii, and xix; on p. 108, from chap. v; on p. 109, from chap. xi; on p. 114, from chap. xix. These citations are usually for the purpose of calling attention to Norse parallels to certain Anglo-Saxon words or phrases. Other Norse works from which Hickes quotes are the *Vǫluspá* (see I, *Dedication;* also pp. 16, 103, 109, 111, 113, 114, 217); *Ólafs Saga Tryggvasonar* (*Preface*, pp. xviii f.); Peringskjöld's ed. of the *Heimskringla* (*Preface* to Anglo-Saxon Grammar, p. 9); Resenius's ed. of the Prose Edda (p. 110 and elsewhere); Resenius's ed. of the *Hávamál* (p. 121).

[2] VI, 387 ff. This sixth volume was first published, according to Malone, in 1708 (see his ed. of Dryden, London, 1800, III, 25, n.). The edition of 1716 contained, Malone says, several omissions and additions. Whether the dialogue under discussion appeared in the 1708 edition or not, I am unable to say. Vigfusson (*C.P.B.*, I, xcv), apparently forgetting Hickes, tells us that this version in the *Miscellany Poems* was "possibly the first English rendering of any Old Norse poem." Literally interpreted, Vigfusson's observation may be correct, for I know of no older English rendering of any complete Old Norse poem than Hickes's version of this dialogue.

dialogue between Angantyr and Hervor with the Finnsburg fragment: "Metro haud multum dissimili carmina sua scripsit *Scaldus* ille," etc. This reprint was arranged to look like verse:

> *Hervor.* Awake Angantyr, Hervor the only daughter
> Of thee and Suafu doth awaken thee.
> Give me out of the tombe, the hardned Sword,
> Which the dwarfs made for Suafurlama, etc.

No mention is made of the translator.[1]

2. Percy, as we have seen, included "the translation of Dr. Hickes, with some considerable emendations" among his *Five Pieces*. His emendations are not so considerable after all. He fills one short gap in Hickes's translation, and alters a word here and there. Where Hickes reads, for example, "So let Odin hide thee in the tombe, as thu hast Tirfing by thee," Percy has, "So let Odin preserve thee safe in the tomb, as thou hast not Tirfing by thee."[2] A brief *Introduction* tells the story of the sword and indicates the

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[1] Professor Kittredge calls attention to the significance of Hickes's translation in his note on *Gray's Knowledge of Old Norse*, p. xlviii f.: "This translation by Hickes," he says, "has never received from students of Romanticism the attention which it deserves. Buried in the great *Thesaurus* it would not have merited much at their hands but for two facts: (1) it was extracted therefrom and printed . . . in the *Miscellany Poems* 'published by Mr. Dryden' . . ; (2) it was adopted (with due credit) by Percy for his *Runic Poetry*." The force of this observation is illustrated by Mr. Frederick Metcalfe's *The Englishman and the Scandinavian*, London, 1880. Mr. Metcalfe devotes pp. 16 and 17 of his book to a discussion of Hickes and his *Thesaurus*. On pp. 226 and 227 he says something in a single paragraph about eighteenth-century translations from Norse into English. The only translators he mentions are Percy (he cites only *Northern Antiquities*, ignoring the *Five Pieces* altogether), Gray, Johnstone (whose name he misspells), and Walter Scott. On pp. 391–393 of his book, Mr. Metcalfe translates the dialogue between Hervor (whom he calls "Herward") and Angantyr, but not a word does he say anywhere of Hickes's or of any other version of the poem. Mr. T. S. Perry (*English Literature in the Eighteenth Century*), New York, 1883, makes the following note (p. 395): "Gray is often mentioned as the first of English poets to return to old Norse themes (thus Gosse, *Gray*, English Men of Letters Series, p. 163). But see Dryden's *Miscellany Poems*, VI, 387 (ed. 1716), for a translation from the Hervarer Saga." See also below, p. 67, n. 1.

[2] "So lati As thig Heilan i haugi Sem thu hafir eigi Tirfing med thier." Percy's text.

sources of the translation. There are also, by way of annotation, half a dozen illustrative extracts translated from Verelius, Hickes, Bartholin, and the *Heimskringla*.

3. William Bagshaw Stevens includes among his *Poems, Consisting of Indian Odes and Miscellaneous Pieces* (Oxford, 1775), a piece called *Hervor and Angantyr. An Ode, Imitated from an antient scald, author of a book, intitled Hervarer Saga, Published by Olaus Verelius.* A brief *Argument* is given; then, by way of a motto, a scrap of something purporting to be the beginning of the poem in Norse:

Waknadu Angantyr,
Wekur thig Hervor, &c.

Then comes Stevens's translation, of which I reproduce only the opening lines:

HERVOR.

Awake! my Father, from the Dead;
From thy dark and dreary Bed
Awake!—It is thy Child that cries,
SVAFUS Daughter bids thee rise;
Bids thee from thy Tomb of Hell,
(Answering to my mutter'd Spell)
Bids thee from thy hallow'd Side
Give that Sword the Warriour's Pride,
Whose hardiest Strength and keenest Pow'r,
Forg'd by Dwarfish Hands of yore,
Gave an Empire firm and free,
To thy Fathers and to Thee:
By my Helmet's sable Crest,
  Mailed Coat of martial wear;
By my Sword, in Sharpness drest,
  Fiery Shield, and bloody Spear;
From all, 'neath ev'ry Root comprest,
HERVOR breaks your Iron-Rest.

A garbled version of one of Hickes's notes, duly but clumsily credited, explains the allusion to "dwarfish hands."[1]

[1] Stevens's book was barely noticed by the *Monthly Review* of September, 1775, and again cited in a review, by the same periodical, of Mathias's *Runic Odes* in

4. In 1781 Thomas James Mathias, best known as the author of *The Pursuits of Literature* and the editor of Gray, published a volume of *Runic Odes imitated from the Norse Tongue in the manner of Mr. Gray*.[1] Among these odes is one entitled *Dialogue at the Tomb of Argantyr*. Mathias introduces the poem by a very brief *Argument*, and indicates his source by printing in full, at the end of the volume, Hickes's prose version, duly credited.[2]

Mathias's poem begins:

HERVOR.

Thy daughter calls; Argantyr, break
The bonds of death; she calls, awake:
Reach me forth the temper'd blade,
Beneath thy dusty pillow laid;
Which once a scepter'd warrior bore,
Forg'd by dwarfs in years of yore.
Where are the sons of Angrim fled?
Mingled with the valiant dead.

December, 1781, where Stevens's name is misspelled and the above translation is spoken of as "well executed." Sir Egerton Brydges, who was Stevens's pupil at Repton School, says (*Autobiography*, London, 1834, I, 55 f.) that his old master was "a man of some genius, and a poet, above mediocrity; but a little too labored. He was a friend of Miss Seward, and caught something of her fondness for big words and glitter." It is to be noted that Miss Seward later tried her hand at this same dialogue (see below, pp. 53 ff.). Stevens also translated the *Epicedium* of Ragnar Loðbrok. See below, pp. 69 f.

[1] A new edition of this book came out in London in 1790. This is very likely the edition referred to by Mathias in his letter of July 20, 1795, to Bishop Percy. "You lead me to hope," he writes, "that I shall not intrude too much on your time, by desiring your acceptance of a new edition of some Runic Odes which I published some years ago" (Nichols's *Illust.*, VIII, 313). In 1791 the odes were printed in Bell's *Fugitive Poetry* (XIII, 121–137, 169–176), with introductory matter and notes. In 1798 they were again printed in a volume whose title-page reads: *Odes, English and Latin. By Thomas James Mathias. Reprinted 1798. Not Published.* The odes were printed yet again in New York in 1806, in a book called *The Garland of Flowers*. In the course of these several editions various changes were made in the text, but for the sake of uniformity I shall, where nothing is said to the contrary, cite the first edition.

[2] Also printed by Bell, p. 175. The frontispiece to Bell's volume represents Angantyr in the act of handing the sword to his daughter. The artist is Burney (not Wright of the "fire-tipt pencil": see below, p. 53), and the engraver Grignion.

From under twisted roots of oak
Blasted by the thunder's stroke,
Arise, arise, ye men of blood,
Ye who prepar'd the Vulture's food;
Give me the sword, and studded belt;
Armies whole their force have felt:
Or grant my pray'r, or mould'ring rot,
Your name, your deeds alike forgot.
Argantyr, rouse thee from thy rest;
'T is an only child's request." [1]

5. The next version of this Angantyr legend we have to consider came out in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1790, under the signature, "W. Williams, Pembroke, July 27." Williams's effort bears a remarkable title: *The* HERVARER SAGA, *a Gothic Ode. From the Septentrionalium Thesaurus of Dr.* HICKES. This poem, which is in twenty-five four-line stanzas, opens as follows:

HERVOR.

Angantyr, wake at Hervor's word
Thy child and Suafu's; honour'd shade!
Give from the tomb the temper'd sword,
By Elves for Suafurlama made.

Hervardur, Hiovardur, hail!
Come Hrani, and Angantyr dire!
With helmet, and with coat of mail,
Sword, shield, and spear; all war's attire.

Beneath the roots of shady trees,
I wake you all within the tomb!
Are Andgrim's sons, whom fight could please,
Mere dust and ashes now become?

Can none of Eyvor's martial heirs
Pay kind attention to my cries?
Can sepulchres admit no prayers?
Hervadur, Hiovardur, rise!

[1] Besides this *Dialogue*, Mathias's book contained three other Norse odes. For an account of these, with some contemporary estimates of Mathias's work, see below, pp. 96 ff.

Or ever, in this dreary shade,
With pismires[1] putrifying lie;
Or quick the sword by Goblins made,
And belt magnificent, supply.[2]

6. In 1792 the Rev. Richard Polwhele edited, for a literary society to which he belonged, two volumes of *Poems, chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall* (Bath, 1792). In the first volume[3] is a poem signed *K*, entitled, *The Incantation of Herva. From the* [*Northern Mythology*]. A footnote to the title refers the reader to *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*. The poem begins:

HERVA.

AWAKE, ANGANTYR! — wandering wild,
Thine, and Sufa's only child,
HERVA bids uplift thy head
From the slumbers of the dead.
From the tomb thy aid afford;
Give, oh! give the harden'd sword
Which to SUFURLAMA brave
The spirits of the mountain gave.

HERVARDYR! HIOR! RANI! hear!
Where with shield, and bloody spear,
With helmet, mail, and falchion keen,
You lie by human eyes unseen.
Where the trees o'ershade the ground,
Where they spread their roots around,
With ANGANTYR heed my call,
From sleep, from sleep, I rouse you all.

Polwhele's collection contained other poems also on Scandinavian subjects, two of them by this same *K*.[4]

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[1] The Norse word is *maura* in Hickes's text, and he has the following note upon it (*Thesaurus*, I, 193): "MAUR, *formica;* species metonymice pro genere . . . *Angl.* boreales: PISMOOR, *formica*." This explains Williams's elegant rendering. Hickes translates the word "insects."

[2] Williams's translation seems to have attracted little attention. For Miss Seward's comment upon it, see below, p. 56.

[3] Pp. 114–120.

[4] They are considered below, pp. 74 f., 113, 126 ff. *K* is classed in the *Advertisement* to the book among the signatures for which "the Editor is not at

7. The next version of this dialogue to engage our attention was published in 1796, at London, in a volume called *Llangollen Vale, with Other Poems: by Anna Seward.* On the 17th of June, 1788, Miss Seward wrote from Litchfield to Court Dewes, Esq., as follows:[1] "Amidst a scantiness of leisure, which recent indisposition has still farther abridged, I have lately amused myself with building more than 200 rhymes, upon a gothic foundation, which it amazes me that Gray did not take, in addition to his Runic Odes; since, however inferior my superstructure to the similar ones of his, the basis appears to me far more sublime than even the descent of Odin; and it presents the finest possible moment to Mr. Wright's fire-tipt pencil."

On the 9th of November of the same year Miss Seward wrote as follows to the poet Hayley:[2]

> Last summer I met with a subject for a Runic ode, that appeared to me very sublime, and though it had been put into verse a few years since, by a very charming poet, a friend of mine, whose name is Mathias, yet I thought not with all the effect of which, by expansion, the subject appeared to be capable. It struck me as presenting a prodigiously fine instant to the fire-tipt pencil of Wright. He thinks it does, for I sent him a copy of my poem, and he writes to me as intending to go to work with it. Though I sicken at the idea of publishing, and have no thoughts of so great a daring at present, yet I should be glad my Runic poem had the advantage of your correcting eye, since it may possibly one day see the light. . . . When you return to the sylvan cell, and have leisure to explore a funeral forest at midnight, with an Amazonian nymph, opening her father's tomb by magic spells, and forcing from thence an enchanted sword, which ascends in a pillar of fire from the withered hands of the warrior's corse, my muse may trip to Eastham . . . and lead you thither.

Two or three months later Miss Seward again wrote to Hayley:[3] "Inclosed you will find a transcript of my Runic dialogue. The imperfect rhymes will I fear offend you, and yet I confess myself incorrigible on that head. . . ."

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liberty to mention any name. The diffidence of the writers," he says, "imposes on him this restraint." All of the pieces are signed with initials merely, but some of these the editor interprets. "The greater part of these poems," he informs us, "was never before printed."

[1] See Miss Seward's *Letters Written between the Years 1784 and 1807* (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1811), II, 137. [2] *Letters*, II, 193. [3] *Letters*, II, 221.

The poem did not get printed, as we have seen, until 1796. I have not been able to obtain a copy of this volume of 1796, but the dialogue was reprinted in Scott's edition of Miss Seward's *Poetical Works* in 1810,[1] under the title *Herva at the Tomb of Argantyr. A Runic Dialogue.* A footnote to the title gives Hickes's version, "to gratify the reader's curiosity; also to show that it is used only as an outline, and that the following Poem is a bold Paraphrase, not a Translation. The expressions in Dr. Hicks' prose," continues the bold paraphraser, "have a vulgar familiarity, injurious to the sublimity of the original conception. A close translation, in English verse, will be found in a valuable collection of Runic Odes, by the ingenious and learned Mr. Mathias. After his example, some slight changes have been made in the names, for their better accommodation to the verse."

Miss Seward's elaborated, devulgarized, and sublimified version of the dialogue begins in this wise:

Argantyr, Wake! to thee I call,
Hear from thy dark sepulchral hall!
'Mid the forest's inmost gloom,
Thy daughter, circling thrice thy tomb,
With mystic rites of thrilling power
Disturbs thee at this midnight hour!
I, thy Sauferlama's child,
Of my filial right beguil'd,
Now adjure thee to resign
The charmed Sword by birth-right mine!
When the Dwarf on Eyvor's plain,
Dim glided by thy marriage-train,
In jewel'd belt of gorgeous pride,
To thy pale and trembling bride,
Gave he not, in whisper deep,
That dread companion of thy sleep? —
Fall'n before its edge thy foes,
Idly does it now repose
In the dark tomb with thee? — awake!
Spells thy sullen slumber break!

[1] *The Poetical Works of Anna Seward . . . Edited by Walter Scott, Esq.* (3 vols., Edinburgh, 1810), III, 90 ff.

Now their stern command fulfill! —
Warrior, art thou silent still? —
Or are my gross senses found
Deaf to the low sepulchral sound? —
Hervardor, Hiarvardor, — hear!
Hrani, mid thy slumber drear!

Llangollen Vale with Other Poems, the volume of 1796, was immediately successful,[1] and *Herva at the Tomb of Argantyr* came in for its share of special attention. The *Analytical Review* (April, 1796) printed an extract from *Herva* with this comment: "The sublime terrour of the scene and the action is throughout well supported by the animated language of poetry. The piece displays great powers of fancy, and will entitle the writer to no mean place among lyric poets." The *Critical Review* (June, 1796) took exception to her liberties with the text:

Miss Seward makes Hialmor, whose bane the weapon is pronounced to be, the future *son* of Herva: but it should rather seem he was the chief enemy she meant to destroy, — and that the warrior her father, who had endeavored to deter her from the enterprise by false and evasive pretences, at length, finding her determined spirit, tells her the truth, and announces the conquest of her enemies.[2]

Miss Seward herself seems to have been particularly interested in the fate of her "Runic" poem. On the 9th of May, 1796, she wrote

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[1] Like all her other writings. When we remember the enthusiasm with which Scott describes Miss Seward as a lady of sixty (*Preface* to the 1810 ed. of her collected works) and recall the charm of the portrait prefixed to the first volume of her correspondence, we can understand why. Such a personality disarmed criticism: her literary ventures were bound to succeed. Conclusive evidence of her popularity, if such evidence be needed, may be found in a delicious bit of feminine malice preserved in the *Memoirs, Anecdotes, Facts and Opinions of Lætitia-Matilda Hawkins*, London, 1824, I, 360, apropos of Miss Seward's paraphrases of Horace, made, like her "Runic" paraphrases, from English translations of the original. "She succeeded," writes Miss Hawkins, "as she usually did, to her *own* satisfaction."

[2] Hjalmar had been already destroyed by Angantyr (see below, p. 115). Miss Seward makes "Hydreck" (Heiðrekr) Herva's son, too. "Hydreck" is to slay his brother "Hiaralmo" if she gets the sword.

to Thomas Park :[1] "Mr. White brought me the Analytic Review, the Monthly Mirror, and the European Magazine because they are favorable to my late work. . . The Runic poem seems the favourite with the Analytic Reviewer. . . The Monthly Mirror, though it talks a little idly about my Runic poem, praises it. . ." On the 16th of August, 1797, she wrote to Mrs. Childers :[2] "The wild and sombre darings of the Runic poem, Herva, have, of all that collection, met the highest praise from my lyric friends of the other sex. Mr. Whalley[3] of Bath, author of that beautiful touching domestic epic poem, Edwy and Edilda, asserts that my Herva excels Gray's descent of Odin in sublimity."

Another letter, to Miss Ponsonby, Aug. 7, 1796,[4] contains interesting comments on two earlier translators of the dialogue : "You have taken an infinite deal of obliging trouble, in transcribing for me Mr. Williams's translation of the Runic poem, which I paraphrased in my late publication. . . . The poetry of the translation does not please me. The expressions of Dr. Hicks's prose-translation are miserably below the ideas, and entirely inadequate to their grandeur. No version, close as this, could possess either impressive solemnity or poetic elevation."

Finally, I cannot resist quoting a flattering tribute in verse from one David Samwell of London, which was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for February, 1797:

To Miss Seward, on her Runic Poem.

Sweet Muse of Eyam! thy excursive mind,
By judgement temper'd, and by taste refin'd,
Might well have scorn'd the Runic path to tread
Where *Hickes* oppos'd impenetrable lead;
But like the Sage, who, in auspicious hour,
Of transmutation found the wond'rous pow'r,
Thy happy genius, luminous and bold,
With magic fire hath turn'd his lead to gold.

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[1] *Letters*, IV, 203 ff.

[2] *Letters*, IV, 382.

[3] The Rev. T. S. Whalley. See Miss Seward's *Letters*, V, 213.

[4] *Letters*, IV, 237 f.

8. The latest translation of the dialogue I have to note was made by Matthew Gregory Lewis, and published in his *Tales of Wonder* in 1801.[1] Lewis prints a short introductory note indicating his source : "The original is to be found in Hick's [*sic*] *Thesau. Ling. Septen.* I have taken great liberties with it, and the catastrophe is my own invention. Several versions of this Poem have already appeared, particularly one by Miss Seward." Lewis's galloping version of Hervor's opening speech starts off as follows :

HERVOR.

ANGANTYR, awake ! awake !
Hervor bids thy slumber's [*sic*] fly !
Magic thunders round thee break,
Angantyr, reply ! reply !

Reach me, warrior, from thy grave
Schwafurlama's [!] magic blade ;
Fatal weapon, dreaded glaive,
By the dwarfs at midnight made.

Hervardur, obey my charms,
Hanri too, and Angantyr :
Hither, clad in bloody arms,
Haste with helmet, sword, and spear !

Hasten, heroes, hasten all ;
Sadly pace the spell-bound sod ;
Dread my anger, hear my call,
Tremble at the charmer's rod !

Are the sons of Angrym's race,
They whose breasts with glory burn'd,
All deprived of manhood's grace,
All to dust and ashes turn'd ?

Where the blasted yew-tree grows,
Where the bones of heroes lie,
What, will none his grave unclose,
None to Hervor's voice reply ?

[1] I, 34–44.

The catastrophe, Lewis's "own invention," is interesting. In the original poem, Hervor, after attaining the object of her quest, turns away quietly with a parting salutation to the dead. But in Lewis's version the curse attached to the sword manifests itself in a most peculiar and violent manner the moment Hervor receives the weapon from the hands of her father:

HERVOR.

Rest in peace, lamented shade!
Be thy slumbers soft and sweet,
While obtain'd the wondrous blade,
Home I bend my gladsome feet.

But from out the gory steel
Streams of fire their radiance dart!
Mercy! mercy! oh! I feel
Burning pangs invade my heart!

Flames amid my ringlets play,
Blazing torrents dim my sight!
Fatal weapon, hence away!
Woe be to thy blasting might!

She calls upon her father for aid, which he refuses, and the poem ends thus:

HERVOR.

Curses! curses! oh! what pain!
How my melting eye-balls glow!
Curses! curses! through each vein
How do boiling torrents flow!

Scorching flames my heart devour!
Nought can cool them but the grave!
Hela! I obey thy power,
Hela! take thy willing slave.[1]

[1] The reader may be interested in knowing how these pyrotechnics affected Miss Seward. On the 5th of January, 1801, she wrote to Thomas Park (*Letters*, V, 342), apropos of the *Tales of Wonder*, "[Monk Lewis's] Tomb of Angantyr, as he calls it, is a miserable business. He must be a supreme coxcomb on that single testimony."

II. The Dying Ode of Ragnar Loðbrok

The second of Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*, that is, *The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog*, dealt with a subject that became perhaps even more popular[1] than *The Incantation of Hervor*. Saxo Grammaticus gives up practically the whole of the ninth book of his great history to an account of Regnerus Lothbrog, a viking king of Denmark in the ninth century. The nickname "Lothbrog," or *Loðbrók*, which means "Shaggy Breech,"[2] was given Regnerus, or Ragnar, to use the Norse form of his name, in consequence of a youthful adventure. In order to win his bride Thora,[3] he was obliged to slay two dragons who were devastating the country of Herodd, king of the Swedes, Thora's father. By way of protection against the fangs of the reptiles, Ragnar wrapped his thighs in pieces of a hairy mantle. At the close of Ragnar's fight with the dragons, Herodd, who had discreetly retired during the combat, approached the young man and looked him over. "Cujus cultum rex curiosius contemplatus, quum hirtum atque hispidum animadvertisset, præcipue tamen occiduæ vestis horrorem maximeque incomptam braccarum speciem eludens, Lothbrog eum per ludibrium agnominavit."[4]

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[1] Müller and Velschow say, in a note to their edition of Saxo (II, 259): "Hoc quidem carmen, ab Olao Wormio in Litteratura Danica antiquissima, Hafniæ 1636 in fol. typis evulgatum, deinde sæpius recusum, et in omnes fere linguas Europæ translatum est, ut memorabile canæ antiquitatis monumentum." This was in 1858. Carl Christian Rafn printed in his edition of this ode (*Krakas Maal eller Kvad om Kong Ragnar Lodbroks Krigsbedrifter*, etc., Copenhagen, 1826, pp. 75–88) a long list of early editions and translations into various tongues. The only English translations he notes are Percy's, the version in *Northern Antiquities*, Downman's, Johnstone's, and Herbert's. He also mentions Henderson's reprint of Johnstone. At the end of the book the twenty-fifth stanza is given a musical setting composed for it by John Olafson in Paris, 1780.

[2] "Old Norse Lód-brokr . . . the epithet for a hawk." Elton and Powell's *Saxo*, p. 366, n.

[3] His second bride, according to Saxo, who says he had already abandoned one wife, Lathgertha (see Müller and Velschow, I, 442 f.). Thora is usually spoken of as his first wife (see e.g. *C.P.B.*, II, 339). He married a third woman, Aslaug, who survived him. Thora is the name of one of the characters in Hole's *Arthur*.

[4] Müller and Velschow, I, 444.

But we are chiefly concerned with Ragnar's tragic end. Ella, King of Northumberland, having interfered with Ragnar's Irish subjects, the Danish king proceeded to invade Ella's territories with a hostile army. Ella, however, got the better of Ragnar and threw him into prison.

Comprehensus enim atque in carcerem conjectus noxios artus colubris consumendos advertit, atque ex viscerum suorum fibris tristem viperis alimoniam præbuit. Cujus adeso jecinore, cum cor ipsum funesti carnificis loco coluber obsideret, omnem operum suorum cursum animosa voce recensuit, superiori rerum contextui hanc adjiciens clausulam: Si suculæ verris supplicium scirent, haud dubio, irruptis haris, afflictum absolvere properarent. Quo dicto Hella adhuc nonnullos filiorum ejus vivere interpretatus, quiescere carnifices amoverique viperas jubet. Cumque satellites peragendæ jussionis gratia accurrissent, Regnerus imperium regis funere suo præcesserat.[1]

According to one tradition, just before the serpents stung him to death Ragnar chanted a swan song which has come down to us in twenty-nine stanzas, known as the *Loðbrókarkviða*, or the *Krákumál*.[2]

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[1] Müller and Velschow, I, 460 f. This story of Ragnar's death is told also in *Saga Ragnars Konungs Loðbrókar* (Rafn's *Fornaldar Sögur Norðrlanda*, Copenhagen, 1829, I, 280 ff.) and elsewhere (see *C.P.B.*, II, 339). Ragnar's sons avenged the death of their father by cutting a "bloody eagle" upon Ella's back: "Interea Sivardus ac Biörnus cum quadringentarum navium classe supervenientes bellum regi manifesta provocatione significant. Idque statuto tempore executi, comprehensi ipsius dorsum plaga aquilam figurante affici jubent, sævissimum hostem atrocissimi alitis signo profligare gaudentes." Müller and Velschow, I, 463. Cf. p. 130, below.

[2] "*Krákumál* er upaatvivlelig saa kaldet af *Kráka*, det Navn Ragnars Dronning Asløg bar, medens hun levede paa Spangarejde (jfr. *Ragnars Saga Loðbrókar*)." Rafn, *Krakas Maal*, p. 70. With regard to the source of the poem Rafn quotes Finn Magnusen (*Forklaring af nogle Steder af Ossian, Skand. Lit. Selsk. Skr.* for 1813, p. 324): "Den var efter Suhms Beretning, der vistnok har den störste Sandsynlighed for sig, skjönt jeg ikke kjender dens Kilde, forfattet af Brage den Gamle efter Begjering af Ragnars Enke Asløg eller Kraka, for at ophidse hans Sönner til at hævne hans grusomme Mord" (ib.). According to Vigfusson this song is found appended to the *Ragnars Saga* in a fourteenth-century vellum MS. now in the Royal Library at Copenhagen (No. 1824). We have also Magnus Olafsson's copy of another MS. version now lost, as printed by Worm (see *C.P.B.*, II, 339). Rafn printed the song at the end of his text of the *Ragnars Saga* (*Fornaldar Sögur*, I, 300 ff.) besides editing it separately. Vigfusson prints the poem with an introduction and an English translation in the *C.P.B.*, II, 339–345.

In this death song Ragnar recounts some of the most notable of his deeds, and expresses his joy at the thought of the welcome from Odin that awaits him. Every stanza except the last begins with the refrain, "Hioggo ver með hiörvi," "We hewed with the sword."[1]

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[1] Mention should be made of a legend, current in the Middle Ages, which makes Ragnar indirectly accountable for the death of the Saxon King Edmund. The story is told in the *Flores Historiarum* (Rolls Series, I, 434 f.), in the *Chronica Majora* of Matthew of Paris (R.S., I, 393 ff.), in the chronicle of John of Bromton (Twysden's ed., col. 804) and by some later historians. The editor of the *Chron. Maj.* thinks the legend probably originated in some *Vita* or *Passio S. Eadmundi*. I append an abstract of the version of the legend given by John Speed, *The History of Great Britaine*, London, 1611, p. 388: "A certaine *Danish* Nobleman of the roiall lineage named Lothbroke [that is Leather-briche], Father to this *Inguar* & *Hubba*, being vpon the shore, his Hawke in flying, the game fell into the Sea, which to recouer, hee entred a little Schiffe or Cock-boat, nothing foreseeing the danger that immediately did ensue: for a sodaine tempest arising, carried the boat into the deepe, and droue him vpon the coast of *Norffolke*, where hee came to land at the Port called *Rodham*, and was no sooner seene, but hee was taken for a spie; and presently sent to *Edmund*, King then of that prouince, who in his answeres sufficiently cleared that suspition, when also declaring his birth & misfortune, he was honourably entertained in the Court of the *East-Angles:* whom the King much esteemed for his other good parts; but for his dexterity and expertnesse in hawking, held him in a speciall regard; insomuch that the Kings Falconer named *Bericke*, conceiued both such secret enuie and deadly hatred thereat, that hauing him alone in a wood, he cowardly murthered him, & hid his dead body in a Bush." Lothbroke's dog found the body of his master, King Edmund's attention was called to the matter, Bericke was convicted of the murder and "put into *Lothbrokes* boat, and that without either tackle or Oare, as he therein arriued, and so left to the seas mercy to be saued by destiny, or swallowed vp by iust desert. But behold the euent; the Boat returned to the same place, and vpon the same coast arriued from whence it had beene driuen, even in *Denmarke*, where *Bericke* being known, and hands laid on him, to free himselfe from the punishment of his butcherly fact, he added treason to murther, laying it to the charge of innocent King *Edmund*." By way of revenge, Inguar and Hubba invaded England, laid waste Norfolk, and demanded that Edmund become their vassal. The king refused to "subject himselfe to a Heathen and Pagan Duke . . . and for that hee would not deny Christ, and his Christian faith, was bound to a tree or Stake, and with their arrowes so shot to death: whose body was afterward there buried, and thereupon tooke the name of *S. Edmunds-bury*. . . ." Speed takes his account from *Flores Historiarum*. Thomas Carte, in his *General History of England*, London, 1747, remarks (I, 297) that this story "seems to be one of those romantic and fabulous relations, with which in those days they usually

Ragnar's Death Song appears to have been first printed[1] by Ole Worm in his *Literatura Runica*, 1636. In the reprint of this work in Worm's *Danica Literatura Antiquissima* (Copenhagen, 1651) the Death Song is given in runic characters with an interlinear Latin translation, under the title *Epicedium Regneri Lodbrog.*[2] Robert Sheringham, *De Anglorum Gentis Origine* (Cambridge, 1670), quotes on p. 322 eight, and on p. 358 six, lines of Worm's runic version of this song with the Latin translation.[3]

1. These two passages appear in English in Aylett Sammes's *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* (London, 1676), p. 436. Sammes is writing of "Woden" and the joys of Valhalla, where dead heroes "drink Ale with him, and his Companions, in the Skulls of their Enemies.[4] To this end," he goes on, "they imagined a certain

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interlarded the legends of murdered princes." J. P. Andrews cites the story in his *History of Great Britain*, London, 1794, I, 14 n. For further allusions to this legend see Müller and Velschow's *Saxo*, II, 271. See also below, p. 78, n.

[1] Olaus Magnus, *Hist. de Gent. Sept.*, Rome, 1555, lib. v, cap. 17, pp. 182 f. (*De Regnero Pilosa Bracha Dicto*), has an account of Ragnar's contest with the dragons, illustrated with a very amusing woodcut. The same adventure is related by Joannes Magnus in his *Historia Gothorum*, Rome, 1554, lib. xvii, cap. 5, p. 546.

[2] Pp. 182–207.

[3] The Latin is really that of Magnus Olafsson.

[4] Sammes's assertion, on the authority of Worm's Latin, that the *einherjar* drink ale with Odin from the skulls of their enemies, is interesting. The Norse lines corresponding to the last half of his paraphrase, run as follows (Vigfusson's text, *C.P.B.*, II, 344):

> Drekkom bíór at bragði or biúg-viðom hausa
> (sýtira drengr við dauða) dýrs at Fiolniss húsom,

translated by Vigfusson: "We shall soon be quaffing ale out of the crooked skull-boughs [horns] in the splendid house of Woden. The brave man does not quail before death." "The funny mistake," observes Vigfusson in the *Introduction* to the poem (p. 340), "which led Bishop Percy and his copiers down to this very day to entertain the belief that 'the Heroes hoped in Odin's hall to drink beer out of the skulls of their slain foes,' has its origin in a misinterpretation of the phrase 'biug-viðum hausa' . . . by Ole Worm, who says: 'Sperabant Heroes se in aula Othini bibituros ex craniis eorum quos occiderant' [Worm, *Literatura Runica*, p. 203]."

Rafn has a long note on this line (*Krakas Maal*, pp. 144 ff.). He points out that Svend Sølvesen, as early as 1769, rendered *hjugvið hausa* by *Hoveders Krum-træer* (*Drikkehorn*). Gunnar Paulsen, in his notes on the *Egils Saga*, 1780,

Goddess called Dyser, employed by *Woden*, to convey the Souls of the Valiant into his drunken Paradice. And methinks I see the *Danish* king Lothbrock, in his Fur-Leather Breeches (for so his name importeth) in as good Verses as Ale could inspire, hugging himself with the hopes of Full-pots in the world to come." Then follow six lines of Worm's runes, duly credited[1] (the same six that Sheringham prints on p. 358 of his book, though Sammes does not say so), with an amusing English paraphrase:

> We have stood true to *Snick* and *Snee*,
> And now I laugh to think
> In *Wodens* Hall there Benches be,
> Where we may sit and drink.
> There we shall Tope our bellies-full
> Of Nappy-Ale in full-brim'd Skull.[2]

"And as if he were impatient," Sammes continues, "till he arrived at this Immortal drinking, where like a Good-fellow, he doubts not but to bear up for the first place, hear what breathings and pantings he hath after it, and how his bowels yearn to be at it." Then come the eight lines of runes printed by Sheringham on p. 322,[3] again without mention of Sheringham. These runes are paraphrased as follows:

> Methinks I long to end,
> I hear the *Dyser* call;
> Which Woden here doth send
> To bring me to his Hall.

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remarks that "*hausa bjugviðir* i Krákumál betyder Hoveders Krumtræer og dette igjen Horn." Finn Magnusen makes the same observation in his essay on Ossian. Rafn's note is reproduced in part by Pigott, *A Manual of Scandinavian Mythology*, London, 1839, p. 66, n.

[1] Sammes credits merely "Wormius," but it is clear that he is translating from Sheringham's book, for Sheringham had made a slight correction of Worm's runes, which Sammes copies, and an alteration in his Latin which Sammes observes in his translation.

[2] Sammes's lines are reprinted by Samuel Hibberts, *Description of the Shetland Islands*, Edinburgh, 1822, p. 98.

[3] Thomas Broughton quotes these eight lines, with due credit, from Sheringham in his *Dictionary of All Religions*, London, 1742, Vol. I, Appendix, p. 592, article *Dyser*.

With *Asians*[1] there in highest Seat,
I merrily will quaff,
Past-hours I care not to repeat,
But when I die I 'le laugh.

2. Sir William Temple may have had Sheringham before him[2] when he wrote his essay *Of Heroick Virtue*.[3] He cites the "Epicedium of Regner Ladbrog . . . which He composed in the Runick Language, about eight hundred years ago, after He was mortally stung by a Serpent, and before the Venom seized upon His Vitals.[4] The whole Sonnet," he observes, "is recited by Olaus Wormius in his *Literatura Runica* (who has very much deserved from the Commonwealth of Learning) and is very well worth reading, by any that love Poetry; and to consider the several stamps of that Coyn, according to several Ages and Climats. But that which is extraordinary in it, is, that such an alacrity or pleasure in dying, was never expressed in any other Writing, nor imagined among any other People." He then quotes in Latin the two scraps selected by Sheringham and again by Sammes. To the first of these, however, he adds four lines to complete the stanza, and he follows Worm's Latin without adopting Sheringham's alteration. He continues, "I am deceived, if in this Sonnet, and a following Ode of Scallogrim[5] (which was likewise made by him after he was condemned to die, and deserved his pardon for a Reward) there be not a vein truly Poetical, and in its kind Pindarick, taking it with the allowance of the different Climats, Fashions, Opinions, and Languages of such distant Countries."[6]

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[1] Sammes's "Asians" is interesting in view of the old theory which connected *Ass* (Norse for "god") with *Asia*. See, for example, Hickes, I, 193, and Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, p. 446, n.

[2] Cf. below, n. 6.

[3] *Miscellanea. The Second Part. In Four Essays. . . . By Sir William Temple, Baronet. The Third Edition, Corrected and Augmented by the Author*, London, 1692, Essay iii, Sect. iv.

[4] P. 239.

[5] Worm's translation of the *Ransom of Egill* follows the *Ragnar Lodbrog* in the *Literatura Runica*.

[6] Temple makes other allusions to Scandinavian literature. In the same essay (pp. 231–238) he discusses the migration of Odin, quoting "ex Edda" and "ex Snorrone." The excerpt from the Edda is taken from Sheringham's version

3. Temple's citation of Worm attracted the attention, among other people, of the Rev. Thomas Warton, father of Joseph and Thomas Warton. In the volume of *Poems on Several Occasions. By the Reverend Thomas Warton, Batchelor of Divinity, Late Vicar of Basingstoke in Hampshire, and sometime Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford*, published in 1748 by Joseph Warton, are two Runic Odes (pp. 157–159). The first bears this title, *A Runic Ode: Taken from the Second volume of Sir Wm. Temple's Miscellanies.* A brief *Argument* attributing the ode to "Regner Ladbrog" precedes the poem, which runs as follows:

I

Yes — 't is decreed my Sword no more
Shall smoke and blush with hostile Gore;
To my great Father's Feasts I go,
Where luscious Wines for ever flow,
Which from the hollow Sculls we drain
Of Kings in furious Combat slain.

II

Death, to the Brave a blest Resort,
Brings us to awful *Odin's* Court;
Where with old Warriors mix'd we dwell,
Recount our Wounds, our Triumphs tell;
Me, will they own as bold a Guest
As e'er in Battle bar'd my Breast.[1]

(p. 235 f.) of Resenius, the wording of which differs slightly from the original. The substance of Temple's excerpt from Snorri is given by Sheringham on p. 237; cf. Kittredge in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlviii, n. In 1750 Joh. Chr. Schmidt translated into German Temple's citations from the Norse in a letter to Gleim (see Batka, *Euphorion*, III, Ergänzungsheft II, pp. 23 ff., 61 f.).

[1] Joseph Warton, in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, 1756, quotes the Latin version of these "two stanzas of an old Runic *ode* preserved by Olaus Wormius, containing the dying words of Ludbrog," which he says are "cited in Dr. Hickes's valuable Thesaurus." He has just been quoting Temple in another connection, however. "These stanzas," he says, "breathe the true spirit of a barbarous old warrior." See the 5th ed., I, 357 f., and cf. 353 f. I am indebted to Professor Beers's *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* for this reference.

The second ode is entitled merely *Another, on the Same Subject.*[1]

> At length appears the wish'd-for Night,
> When my glad Soul shall take her Flight;
> Tremble my Limbs, my Eye-balls start,
> The Venom's busy at my Heart.
> Hark! how the solemn Sisters call,
> And point aloft to *Odin's* Hall!
> I come, I come, prepare full Bowls,
> Fit Banquet for heroic Souls:
> What 's Life? — I scorn this idle Breath,
> I smile in the embrace of Death![2]

[1] Reprinted by Professor Phelps in his *English Romantic Movement*, p. 142.

[2] Another of Warton's Odes deserves mention. On p. 139 of Warton's book is *An American Love-Ode. Taken from the Second Volume of* MONTAGNE'S ESSAYS, beginning

> Stay, stay, thou lovely, fearful Snake
> Nor hide thee in yon darksome Brake.

The passage in Montaigne here referred to may be found in the essay *Des Cannibales* (see *Essais*, liv. i, ch. 30, 4th ed., London, 1739, II, 65, where there is a marginal title, — *Chansons amoureuses d'un Sauvage d'Amerique*). Professor Kittredge suggests to me that this ode is of interest in connection with one of the footnotes Gray made for his *Progress of Poesy* (written in 1754; first printed, 1757). The note alludes to the "extensive influence of poetic Genius over the remotest and most uncivilized nations," and cites "the Erse, Norwegian, and Welch Fragments, the Lapland and American songs" (see Phelps's *Gray*, p. 29). By Lapland songs Gray undoubtedly meant the numerous translations, made in his day and after, from certain specimens of Lappish lyric poetry printed in John Scheffer's *Lapponia* (Frankfurt, 1673; Oxford, 1674). Warton's *American Love-Ode* is apparently one of Gray's "American songs." It is a curious fact that American songs are again mentioned in connection with Lapland songs by Herder, *Volkslieder*, Leipzig, 1778–1779, II, 304. Herder cites Kleist's *Lied der Cannibalen*, a German version of Montaigne's *chanson*, beginning, "Verweile, schöne Schlange." Montaigne's "original Caribbean song" is translated into English, by the way, by Ritson, in his *Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song* (in his *Select Collection of English Songs*, London. 1783, I, ii).

Another sort of "American song," the popularity of which in the eighteenth century appears to be traceable to Carver's *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America*, London, 1778, is the dying speech of an Indian brave, whom his enemies are torturing at the stake. See *The Dying Indian: An Ode*, by Thomas Gisborne (*Walks in a Forest and Other Poems*, 8th ed., London, 1813, pp. 209–219), and *The Death-Song of a Cherokee Indian*, attributed to Philip Freneau (see J. L.

4. The next translation of this ode that I have noted appeared in Hugh Blair's *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (London, 1763), pp. 5–11. Blair prints the whole of Worm's Latin version of the ode, and translates into English prose some of the more striking stanzas. His version begins: "We have fought with our swords. — I was young, when, towards the east, in the bay of Oreon, we made torrents of blood flow, to gorge the ravenous beast of prey, and the yellow-footed bird. There resounded the hard steel upon the lofty helmets of men. The whole ocean was one wound. The crow waded in the blood of the slain. When we had numbered twenty years, we lifted our spears on high, and everywhere spread our renown." It should be noted that this *Dissertation* appeared the same year that Percy's *Five Pieces* were published.[1]

Onderdonk, *History of American Verse*, Chicago, 1901, pp. 80 f.). The situation at once suggests Ragnar Loðbrok, and in fact the comparison was sometimes made. James Johnstone, for example, remarks, apropos of Ragnar (*Lodbrokar-Quida*, p. 94): "During the rude periods of society, the safety, both of nations and of individuals, depends upon making themselves objects of terror. Hence, while the captive *Indian* mitigates his torments by the recollection of his exploits, he tramples, as it were, on the cruelty of his enemies, by recapitulating the multitude of their relations who have perished by the sword. The *Lodbrokar-Quida* shews, that a similarity of manners prevailed in the north." Again, the *Critical Review* (April, 1799) remarks in its review of Gisborne's *Poems*, 1798: "The Dying Indian is not an ode equal to its subject: the language has not the savage fierceness and strength by which it should be characterized. We remembered the Death Song of Regner Lodbrog, and felt the imbecility of this." For similar comparisons, see Joseph Cottle's *Alfred*, 1800, p. 34, n., Hole's *Arthur*, 1789, p. 205, n., and Herbert's note on *The Dying Song of Asbiorn* (*Works*, 1842, I, 254).

Mention should be made, in this connection, of Southey's five *Songs of the American Indians* (written in 1799), Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming* (published in 1809), and Grainger's *Bryan and Pereene* (printed in Percy's *Reliques*, London, 1765). Professor Sheldon calls my attention to the fact that Montaigne prints just before the *chanson amoureuse* alluded to above, a part of a song said to have been composed by an American savage in derision of his captors, who are about to put him to death. He boasts of having fed on the flesh of their forefathers (cf. the quotation from Johnstone, above).

[1] Blair cites Saxo, and speaks with great respect of Worm and of Hickes. He reminds the reader (pp. 5 f.) that "an extract, which Dr. Hicks has given from the work of one of the Danish Scalders, entitled, Hervarer Saga, containing an evocation from the dead, may be found in the 6th volume of Miscellany Poems, published by Mr. Dryden."

5. Percy, in his *Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog* (*Five Pieces*), makes direct use of Worm. By way of *Argument*, he quotes a paragraph from Mallet, and he also reproduces some of Mallet's comments upon the poem. Percy's version begins: "We fought with swords: . . . when in Gothland I slew an enormous serpent: my reward was the beauteous Thora. Thence I was deemed a man: they called me Lodbrog from that slaughter. . . . I thrust the monster through with my spear, with the steel productive of splendid rewards."

6. In Mallet's version of the ode[1] only ten stanzas out of the original twenty-nine appear. These were translated in the *Northern Antiquities*, 1770, by another hand than Percy's.[2] Percy, however, supplies in a footnote four of the missing stanzas, reproducing in them, with one or two very slight modifications, the version that had appeared in the *Five Pieces*. Mallet's extract begins with the second stanza. This is rendered in the *Northern Antiquities:* "We fought with swords, when in my early youth, I went towards the east to prepare a bloody prey for the ravenous wolves: 'ample food for the yellow-footed eagle.' The whole ocean seemed as one wound: the ravens waded in the blood of the slain."[3]

7. Henry Home has a good deal to say about Scandinavian literature in the chapter on Manners in his *Sketches of the History of Man*,[4] first published in 1774. He remarks:[5] "The ancient poems of Scandinavia contain the warmest expressions of love and regard for the female sex. In an ode of King Regner Lodbrog, a very ancient poem, we find the following sentiments, 'We fought with swords upon a promontory of England, when I saw ten thousand of my foes rolling in the dust. A dew of blood distilled from our swords: the arrows, that flew in search of the helmets, hissed through the air. The pleasure of that day was like clasping a fair virgin in

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[1] *Monumens de la Myth.*, etc. (the second volume of the *Introduction*), pp. 152 ff.

[2] See above, pp. 39 f.

[3] Percy's version of this second stanza (*Five Pieces*) is as follows: "We fought with swords: I was very young, when towards the East, in the straights of Eirar, we gained rivers of blood for the ravenous wolf: ample food for the yellow-footed fowl. There the hard iron sung upon the lofty helmets. The whole ocean was one wound. The raven waded in the blood of the slain."

[4] 2d ed., Edinburgh, 1778, I, 314 ff. [5] P. 477.

my arms.' Again, 'A young man should march early to the conflict of arms: in which consists the glory of the warrior. He who aspires to the love of a mistress, ought to be dauntless in the clash of swords.'" Home does not mention his authority; his translation does not correspond exactly with any of those we have examined, but there were opportunities enough, as we have seen, for Home to get at the Latin.[1]

8. Among the Miscellaneous Poems included in the *Poems Consisting of Indian Odes and Miscellaneous Pieces* of William Bagshaw Stevens (Oxford, 1775)[2] are two "imitations" of the twenty-fifth and twenty-ninth stanzas, respectively, of the "Song or Epicedium of Rednor Ladbrog" (the author blazons his ingenious distortion of Ragnar's name in full capitals), which turn out to be the same passages translated by Temple.[3] An introductory note substantially reproduces Temple's comments on the ode, though it is credited to *Ive's Voyages*. Stevens's rather feeble imitations, which he accompanies with Worm's Latin, are as follows:

STANZA 25.

We have dar'd, and we have fought,
All our bearded Prophets taught;
And see my Father's Seats! prepare
T' enjoy the pleasing Fruits of War;
Tho' Death stand hov'ring by the while
This shall give the constant Smile.
We have drunk and we have quaff'd
From hollow Skulls the joyous Draught:
And shall your Warriour wish to fly,
Or meet his Fate with tearful Eye?
To ODIN'S lofty Dome I go,
Nor is my Song the Song of Woe.

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[1] He refers to Ragnar again on pp. 465 and 474. Elsewhere he cites Adam of Bremen, Saxo, Biörner, Olaus and Joannes Magnus, and Resenius's Edda. For his citation of the ode of Harold the Valiant, see below, p. 80.

[2] See above, p. 49.

[3] See above, p. 64.

STANZA 29.

No more these empty Strains, no more —
For see yon Dysæ beck me o'er!
They come, 't was ODIN bade them come,
And hail me to a happier Home;
Where, with my Friends, who nobly died,
Slain in Battle by my Side,
On loftiest Seat, for ever gay,
I 'll drink the smiling Hours away;
The Hours of Life are now no more,
With Joy I seek that happier Shore.

9. William Alexander, M.D., author of a *History of Women from the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time* (2 vols., London, 1779), like Henry Home, finds in Ragnar's ode a significant illustration of the attitude of the vikings toward women. He remarks that no Scandinavian girl of true mettle would accept the attentions of any man who had not shown a man's valor in feats of arms. "On these accounts," he observes, "we frequently find a lover accosting the object of his passion by a minute and circumstantial detail of all his exploits, and all his accomplishments. King Regner Lodbrog, in a beautiful ode composed by himself in memory of the deeds of his former days, gives a strong proof of this." Alexander then, without mentioning his source, quotes three stanzas from the version of Ragnar's ode printed in *Northern Antiquities*, and goes on to speak of Harold the Valiant.[1]

10. In 1781 appeared *The Death Song of Ragnar Lodbrach, or Ladbrog, King of Denmark, Translated from the Latin of Olaus Wormius, by Hugh Downman, M.D.* I have not seen this book,

[1] Alexander also quotes, without credit, several other passages from translations in *Northern Antiquities*, — among them portions of the *Hávamál*, and Biörner's account of the Swedish kings Charles and Grymr (I, 57 ff., II, 159). On pp. 57 ff. of Vol. II he tells the stories of Heida and of the enchantress Thorbiorga, again without mentioning his source. Both these narratives are given by Bartholin, who translated the first (p. 691) from the saga of Erik the Red, the second (p. 688) from *Qrvarodds Saga*. Allusions are made to these episodes in Robert Henry's *History of Great Britain* (4th ed., London, 1805), IV, 331 f., and by Scott, note to *The Pirate*, chap. xxi.

but the *Death Song* was reprinted by Thomas Evans in his *Old Ballads* (London, 1784),[1] with Downman's *Introduction* and notes.[2] The *Introduction* gives some account of the historical Ragnar, and furnishes one or two critical comments on the poem.[3] The opening lines of Downman's version are as follows:

With our sword's resistless might,
We have thinn'd the ranks of fight.
In early life, his volum'd train
The crested serpent roll'd in vain.
Thora's charms, the matchless prize;
Gothland saw my fame arise.
Thronging crowds the monster scan,
Shouts applausive hail me Man.
All his fierceness prompt to try,
The shaggy vestment cloath'd my thigh;
Soon transpierced, in death he lay,
My falchion smote for splendid pay.

Still a youth, we steer our course,
T'ward the morning's distant source;
Through the vast Oreonic flood
Torrents run of crimson blood.
The yellow-footed bird we feast,
Plenty fills the ravenous beast.
Our steel-struck helms sublime resound,
The sea is all one bleeding wound.
Our foes lie weltering on the shore,
Deep the raven wades in gore.[4]

Downman's book received some attention from the reviewers. The *Monthly Review* (June, 1782) says that Worm's text of the

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[1] III, 108–123.

[2] And again, with some alterations, in *Poems, by Hugh Downman, M.D., The Second Edition, altered and corrected, with several additions*, Exeter, 1790, pp. 144–163, where, according to a contemporary review, it constituted one of the "additions." My quotation is from Evans's version.

[3] The translator cites Worm and Blair.

[4] One long footnote explains the origin of Ragnar's nickname, alludes to Olaus Magnus's account of the adventure, and cites as parallels the legend of St. George and the Dragon, and that of the infant Hercules strangling the serpents in his cradle.

poem was "first taken notice amongst us by Sir Wm. Temple." "The translation . . ," the reviewer continues, "is nervous and spirited, and if it should fatigue by the repetition of the same sentiments, and that want of varied images which is so generally complained of in the poems of the illiterate bards of the North, the fault is to be charged to the account of the original."

The *Critical Review* (October, 1782) observes that "Dr. Downman has translated this curious fragment of antiquity with a degree of energy which deserves applause." The same periodical again took account of this poem in its review of the 1790 edition of Downman's *Poems*. The estimate the reviewer there makes of it is not altogether unsympathetic, though it shows a curious remoteness from what we may be permitted to call Ragnar Loðbrok's point of view. The poem is, we are told, "a singular and striking monument of the martial and poetic spirit that prevailed among the ancient Scandinavians. The flame of original genius, a wild and savage dignity, pervades the whole performance. The ideas, however, are almost uniformly terrible and horrid: we are often struck with the sublime, but never with the beautiful or pathetic."[1]

11. One of the most widely circulated of the English versions of Ragnar's song was Johnstone's *Lodbrokar-Quida*[2] (1782). As the title-page indicates, this was a much more ambitious edition of the song than any we have yet considered. The first thing in the book, after the *Dedication*, is the poem, — the queer Norse text on the left-hand pages, and the English version on the right. The translation begins as follows:

Chorus.

We hew'd with our Swords!

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[1] Drake (*Literary Hours*, III, 317 ff., 400) quotes a number of Downman's stanzas. He also quotes (pp. 400 ff.) from "*Ragnara Lodbrogs Saga, c. 5 ap. Bioneri Hist.*, Stockholm, 1737" (i.e. Biörner's *Nordiska Kampa Dater*).

[2] *Lodbrokar-Quida; or the Death-Song of Lodbroc; now first correctly printed from various manuscripts, with a free English translation. To which are added, the various readings; a literal Latin version; an Islando-Latino glossary; and explanatory notes. By the Rev. James Johnstone A.M. Chaplain to His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary at the Court of Denmark. Printed for the Author MDCCLXXXII.*

Lodbroc.

1. When first we landed on the GOTHIC shore, vengeance soon o'ertook the wily dragon miner of the ground — 't was then I won my THORA. Men call'd me LOD-BROC, from what time I slew the snaky dweller of the heath. At that assault, my point, inlaid with burnish'd gold, transfix'd the circling monster of the earth.

We hew'd with our Swords!

2. Blooming was my youth when east at EYRA's straits opposing bands we gash'd for the insulting wolves, and golden-footed king of birds — there, while our temper'd steel sung on the high-seam'd helm, they found a rich repast. Gore distain'd the deep. The raven waded through the blood of the slain.

At the end of the poem the editor provides a table of variant readings in the Norse, which a modern editor would be moved to extend considerably. The Latin prose version, which comes next, is apparently Johnstone's own: it differs from any other with which I have compared it. The *Glossarium* (Norse-Latin) is arranged according to strophes, the same word rarely being given twice. Both text and glossary, the editor says, were prepared for the press by "a very learned native of *Iceland*." The "Notes for the English Reader" contain some entertaining critical remarks. Johnstone thinks it likely that the poem was actually the work of Ragnar, though he doubts if it has retained its original form. He cites Saxo, Snorri, and the Elder Edda, but he mentions no English translations.

Though privately printed, this book of Johnstone's was generally known to scholars. William Herbert wrote of it:[1]

Mr. Johnstone has had the merit of publishing the original text of that ode more accurately, than Worm or Biörner, with an English and Latin prose version, in which he has rectified many of Dr. Percy's errors, though his style is very indifferent: for instance, the last line "Lægiandi skall eg deyia" (which is simply, *smiling shall I die*) he has translated, "The smiles of death compose my placid countenance."[2]

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[1] *Works*, 1842, I, 281 f.

[2] As a matter of fact, Johnstone has "visage." Herbert goes on to point out a blunder made by all the translators from Worm down, in the twentieth stanza, where the author says the sport of battle "was not like kissing a young widow in

12. Among the Scandinavian Odes in *Poems by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall* was one by the editor, Richard Polwhele, entitled *Part of the Epicedium of Regner Lodbrog, Translated.*[1] The immediate source is not indicated. It is worth noting, however, that the same volume contains[2] an *Epistle* by Polwhele *to H. Downman, M.D. of Exeter, written during a Violent Illness, August 17, 1791.* Downman's *Death Song of Ragnar Lodbrach* appeared, it will be remembered, in 1781, and the *Epistle* indicates clearly enough that Polwhele and Downman were intimately acquainted.

Polwhele's paraphrase of Ragnar's ode bears little resemblance to the original text. It begins, crabbedly enough :

What 's surer to the warrior brave,
Than to meet death's grisly form —
Though he seem to mock the grave,
Firm amidst the battle's storm?

He alone in sorrow dies,
Who hath never felt a pang !
Lo, where pale the dastard flies,
Eagles stretch the bloody fang.

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the high seat" (varat sem unga ekkiu I öndveige kyssa). Worm, not understanding the force of the negative particle *-at*, translated: "Erat hoc veluti juvenem viduam In primariâ sede osculari," and, except Bartholin, all the others, even Johnstone, followed him. "What notion the learned translators entertained of kissing young widows," remarks Herbert jocosely, "I cannot pretend to say; but it is singular that they should have imagined Regner Lodbroc could have thought it like breaking heads with a broadsword." The *Monthly Review* (April, 1807) accepts the negative force of *-at*, but observes that in the comment here quoted, Herbert "displays less knowledge of antient northern manners than we should have supposed him to possess. We have no hesitation in stating our opinion that, in as far as the sentiment is concerned, that of the former editors is more conformable to the ideas of a Scandinavian hero, who delighted in nothing so much as the revelry of battle," — a pretty *petitio principii*. Friedrich David Gräter wrote of Johnstone in his *Nordische Blume*, Leipzig, 1789, p. xi: "Zum Verständniss des Regner-Lodbrok-Gesanges war ich so glücklich, die vortreflich bearbeitete, aber nur für seine Freunde bestimmte, kritische Ausgabe des englischen Gelehrten, Herrn Johnstone's zu erhalten." Johnstone's translation is also mentioned by Rafn (*Krakas Maal, passim*), by Thorkelin (*Nordymra*, London, 1788, p. 51), by Jerningham (*Rise and Progress of Scandinavian Poetry, Poems*, London, 1786, II, 96), and by Sharon Turner (*History of the Anglo-Saxons*, London, 1807, I, 218, n.). [1] II, 25–28. See above, p. 52. [2] Pp. 176–178.

Life its lingering light in vain
To the coward soul affords,
While he dreads the carnag'd plain,
Trembling at the sport of swords.

Fairly match'd to battle go:
This is glorious — this is great!
Striplings, deal the mutual blow,
Nor let man from man retreat.

There are twenty-one of these stanzas. The usual stress is laid on the joy of quaffing ale from "the Foeman's hollow skull," and proper consideration is given the "terrific Dysæ." The ending is in Monk Lewis's vein:

Now my bright career is run!
Quivers yet my vital fire!
Gasping — panting — lo! 't is done!
With a smile I shall expire!

13. James Pettit Andrews published, in his *History of Great Britain* (London, 1794),[1] a translation of a portion of Ragnar's ode. I reproduce the first and last of Andrews's four stanzas:

With glittering swords we urg'd the fray —
Ah! who can shun the destin'd day?
Could I have guess'd, (when heaps of slain,
Hurl'd by my fury, ting'd the main,)
That I should e'er be doomed to die
The sport of Ella's cruelty?
. . . . . .
With the dead — I pant to be —
See! the sisters beckon me!
Odin sends — I hail the call!
And thirst to view his lofty hall.
There midst heroes, glorious throng!
Flowing goblets I shall quaff.
Death arrests th' exulting song,
I die — and as I die — I laugh.

[1] I, 14, n. Andrews's translation was copied by the *Monthly Review* (August, 1794). I am indebted for this reference to Georg Herzfeld's monograph on William Taylor of Norwich, Halle, 1897, Appendix.

14. The Honorable and Very Reverend William Herbert, Dean of Manchester, made his translation of *The Dying Song of Regner Lodbrock* in 1804.[1] The opening stanzas run as follows:

1

We smote with swords; nor long, before
In arms I reach'd the Gothic shore,
To work the loathly serpent's death.
I slew the reptile of the heath;
My prize was Thora; from that fight
By warriors am I Lodbrock hight.
I pierced the monster's scaly side
With steel, the soldier's wealth and pride.

2

We smote with swords; in early youth
I fought by Eyra's billowy mouth.
Where high the echoing basnites rung
To the hard javelin's iron tongue,
The crop was glean'd by wolves that howl,
And many a golden-footed fowl.
Dark grew the ocean's swollen water;
The raven waded deep in slaughter.

Herbert's rendering of the Norse text is conscientious and intelligent, though frequently prosaic, and he had the good taste to omit eight of the original stanzas.[2]

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[1] It may be found in the first volume of his *Works*, London, 1842, pp. 287–296.

[2] Herbert's *Select Icelandic Poetry* is considered in detail below, pp. 160 ff. In order to show how generally known the story of Ragnar Loðbrok became, I have thought it worth while to note some of the frequent allusions to it in English writings of the latter part of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth centuries.

1770. An article in the *London Magazine* (October, 1770), on the *Extraordinary Heroism of the Antient Scandinavians*, alludes to Ragnar. He "cries out at the end of a stanza, 'the hours of my life are passed away, I shall die laughing.'" Percy's version (*Five Pieces*) ends, "The hours of my life are past away. I die laughing." — 1771. James Macpherson, in *An Introduction to the History of Great Britain*, London, 1771, p. 277, cites Ragnar as authority for his assertion that Odin's followers drank from the skulls of their enemies. — 1774. Warton cites the

III. The Complaint of Harold

A third poem among Percy's *Five Pieces* which proved very popular was that which Percy calls *The Complaint of Harold*. Percy's source, it will be remembered, was Bartholin, though he sometimes preferred Mallet's reading.[1]

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ode in his *History of English Poetry* (ed. Hazlitt, I, 117, n., 118, n.) as well known. — 1783. Ritson, *A Historical Essay on National Song* (in *A Select Collection of English Songs*, London, 1783, I, xli), mentions Ragnar's "Death-Song, which is still extant, and has frequently appeared in English." He cites *Five Pieces*, the odes of Thomas Warton, Sr., *Northern Antiquities*, and Downman. — 1785. Hayley has a note (*Poems and Plays*, 1785, IV, 3 f.) explaining "the Royal Captive" mentioned in his *Essay on Epic Poetry* (see below, p. 236). He cites *Five Pieces* and Bartholin. — 1788. In this year appeared Thorkelin's *Fragments of English and Irish History in the 9th & 10th Century*, printed in London. The first of the Fragments, *Nordymra*, tells one version of the story of Ragnar. Thorkelin prints the Norse text with a Latin translation, and an English translation by John Pinkerton. In one of his notes (p. 51) he mentions versions of the Death Song by Worm, Percy, the anonymous translator who aided Percy in *Northern Antiquities*, Johnstone, Mallet, and Denis ("Samlung von Lider Sineds des Barden. Wien, 1772"). — 1789. Richard Hole cites "Lodbroc's well-known ode" in a footnote to *Arthur*, London, 1789, p. 205. — 1797. For Southey on Ragnar, see below, p. 130. — 1799. Dr. John Leyden's *Ode on Scottish Scenery and Manners* (*Poems*, 1858, p. 291), written in 1799, has the lines,

> The martial youth secured by many a spell,
> Who long in fight the shaggy goat-skin wore,

"Alluding," says a footnote, "to the Gaelic legend of the Celtic Ladbrog." — 1799–1805. Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (ed. London, 1807, I, 218), has a chapter on "The Expeditions of Ragnar Lodbrog, and his Death in Northumbria," with quotations from Johnstone's *Lodbrokar-Quida*. — 1800. One of the characters in Joseph Cottle's *Alfred, an Epic Poem*, is Ivar, son of "Regner Lodbrog." — 1802. Scott cites "Regnar Lodbrog" in a note to *Kempion* (*Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, ed. 1802, II, 98). — 1806. Robert Jamieson, *Popular Ballads and Songs*, Edinburgh, 1806, alludes (II, 91) to a Danish version

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[1] Bartholin gives as his source (pp. 154 f.), the *Knytlinga Saga*, chaps. 21 and 101. The poem is printed, with an English translation, in the *C.P.B.*, II, 228 f. Herbert tells the story of Harold in a long note appended to his translation of the song (*Works*, 1842, I, 296–304): see pp. 82 f., below.

Harold was brother to Saint Olave, King of Norway. After the death of the latter in the battle of Sticklastad, in 1030, Harold fled to Jarisleif, King of Garðaríki in Russia, who received him kindly.

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of Ragnar's Death Song which is to be found in Syv's edition of the *Kæmpe-Viser*, Copenhagen, 1695, pp. 431 ff. — 1807. Under this date, Lord Byron wrote in a memorandum book: "*Iceland*, *Denmark*, *Norway*, were famous for their Skalds. Among these Lodburg was one of the most distinguished. His Death-Song breathes ferocious sentiments, but a glorious and impassioned strain of poetry" (Moore, *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, London, 1830, I, 100). — 1808. *Ancient Times, a Drama* (in *Queenhoo-Hall, A Romance*, etc., by Joseph Strutt, Edinburgh, 1808, IV, 97 ff.) contains allusions to Scandinavian history and mythology. Scene 2 of Act i is a Danish Camp. Godrun, the chief, addresses his followers (p. 106):

> "Ye sons of Lodbroc, from the sacred hill
> Embow'red with many a tree, beneath whose shade
> Your murdered father's breathless body lies,
> Nocturnal shrieks and frightful cries are heard,
> Exciting to revenge; the warrior's spirit,
> Besmeared with gore, arises to complain
> How slow the mighty flood of ruin flows."

Hubba replies:

> "Sleep, sleep in peace, my father; great revenge
> Shall calm thy troubled spirit. Edmund bled,
> To thee devoted; and our swords have laid
> His kingdom, all the wide East Angles, waste."

Hingar breaks in:

> "The gods themselves approved the tyrant's fall,
> Who murdered Lodbroc, and despised their power.
> Father of battles! mighty Odin! hear,
> And grant us vengeance full, as is our hate."

The allusion to the legend of Edmund and Loðbrok (see above, p. 61, n.) is interesting.

1814. Henry Weber has a curious note on p. 7 of his essay *On the Antient Teutonic Poetry and Romance*, in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, Edinburgh, 1814: "A long Anglo-Saxon poem on the expedition of Regner Lodbrog is preserved in the Museum, the publication of which would be a very desirable object. Professor Thorkelin had prepared a manuscript and translation for the press, and from his learning and zeal everything could be expected. But it is much to be feared, that, together with the other invaluable stores of his library, it was consumed during the bombardment of Copenhagen."

I know of no Anglo-Saxon version of the story of Ragnar. Thorkelin had already, in 1788, as I have pointed out, published one version of this story, which

In 1034 Harold went to Constantinople, where he entered the service of the empress Zoe. He made conquests for Zoe in Africa and Sicily and went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Hearing, on his return, that the Norwegian crown had fallen to Magnus, his nephew, he determined to go home. Zoe, who is supposed to have entertained a lawless passion for Harold, tried to hinder him by imprisonment on a false charge of theft. Harold effected his escape, however, and after storming the palace, left the city in 1044. On his way home he is said to have composed a song in sixteen stanzas, six of which survive, about his love for Ellisif, or Elizabeth, daughter of Jarisleif; and before returning to Norway he turned aside to Jarisleif's court, where he married Ellisif. In 1046 he made a treaty with Magnus, which provided that the crown of Norway should be divided equally between them.

1. Percy's translation of this song runs as follows (I give it entire):

My ship hath sailed round the isle of Sicily. Then were we all magnificent and splendid. My brown vessel, full of warriors, rapidly skimmed along the waves. Eager for the fight, I thought my sails would never slacken: And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

I fought in my youth with the inhabitants of Drontheim. They had troops superior in number. Dreadful was the conflict. Young, as I was, I left their young king dead in the fight. And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

One day we were but sixteen on ship-board: a tempest rose and swelled the ocean. The waves filled the loaded vessel: but we diligently cleared it. Thence I formed the brightest hopes. And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

I know how to perform eight exercises. I fight with courage. I keep a firm seat on horseback. I am skilled in swimming. I glide along the

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John Pinkerton put into English for him. This fragment, Thorkelin states in his preface (p. vii) was "published from a Manuscript which came into my Hands after the Death of Erland Olafson, Esq., Syslumadr, or a Justice of peace, for the county of Isafiord in Iceland." Could Weber have been thinking of the *Béowulf* edited by Thorkelin in 1815?

1818. The third book of Milman's *Samor, Lord of the Bright City*, 1818, describes Hengist's preparation for the invasion of Britain. One of his followers is named Lodbrog. Others are Argantyr and Arngrim. (See Milman's *Poetical Works*, 3 vols., London, 1840, II, 52 ff.)

ice on scates. I excell in darting the lance. I am dextrous at the oar. And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

What tender maid or widow can deny, that in the morning, when posted near the city in the south, we joined battle; can deny that I bravely wielded my arms; or that I left behind me lasting monuments of my valour. And yet a Russian maid disdains me.

I was born in the uplands of Norway, where the inhabitants handle so well the bow. Now I make my ships, the dread of peasants, rush among the rocks of the sea. Far from the abode of men, I have plowed the wide ocean with my vessels. And yet a Russian maid disdains me.[1]

2. This song was again translated, under the title *The Ode of Harald the Valiant*, for *Northern Antiquities* (1770).[2] The first stanza of this version runs:

My ships have made the tour of Sicily: then were we all magnificent and splendid. My brown vessel, full of mariners, rapidly rowed to the utmost of my wishes. Wholly taken up with war, I thought my course would never slacken, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.[3]

3. Henry Home observes, in his *Sketches of Man* (ed. 1778, I, 478 f.), that the close relation between "the ideas of love and of military prowess" exemplified in Ragnar's Death Song, "is still more conspicuous in an ode of Harald the Valiant," which he proceeds to translate, omitting the third stanza. His version, which appears to be garbled from *Northern Antiquities*, begins: "I have made the tour of Sicily. My brown vessel, full of mariners, made a swift progress. My course I thought would never slacken — and yet a Russian maiden scorns me."

4. The third volume of *Poems by William Mason, M.A., Now first Published* (York, 1797), contained a versified translation of the *Song of Harold the Valiant*.[4] A footnote to the title mentions as

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[1] Professor Kuno Francke calls my attention to the fact that an allusion to Harold's song which probably goes back to Percy's *Five Pieces*, is found in Klopstock's ode, *Braga* (1766), *Werke*, Leipzig, 1798, I, 233. See further, Batka, *Altnordische Stoffe u. Studien in Deutschland*, in *Euphorion*, VI, 75.

[2] II, 237 f.

[3] Dr. Alexander reprinted this translation, without credit, in his *History of Women*, 1779, II, 157 f., and Dr. Drake printed it again, also without credit, in his *Literary Hours*, 1804, III, 407 ff.

[4] Pp. 138–140.

Mason's sources Bartholin, Mallet, and Percy. Mason's version, it appears, "was versified with a view of being inserted in an Introduction to a projected Edition of an History of English Poetry . . . and was meant to be a specimen of the first Ballad (properly so called) now extant of northern origin."[1]

The first two of Mason's six stanzas run as follows:

I

My ships to far Sicilia's coast
  Have row'd their rapid way,
While in their van my well-man'd barque
  Spread wide her streamers gay.
Arm'd on the poop, myself a host,
  I seem'd in glory's orb to move—
Ah, Harold! check the empty boast,
  A Russian maiden scorns thy love.

II

To fight the foe, in early youth
  I march'd to Drontheim's field;
Numbers were theirs but valour ours,
  Which forc'd that foe to yield.
This right hand made their King a ghost:
  His youthful blood now stains the grove—
Ah, Harold! check the empty boast,
  A Russian maiden scorns thy love.

5. Two years later, in November, 1799, there appeared in the *Scots Magazine*: "*Ode of Herald the Valiant.* From an Icelandic Chronicle called Knytlinga Saga. By the author of the Vagabond, &c."[2] An

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[1] Mason refers the reader to his edition of Gray, in four volumes, York, 1778, where he mentions (pp. 143 f.) Gray's project of writing a *History of English Poetry* (see above, p. 33). "The materials which I collected for this purpose," says Mason, "are too inconsiderable to be mentioned." In Act ii, scene 1 of *Argentile and Curan, A Legendary Drama in Five Acts Written on the Old English Model About the Year 1766* (*Poems*, ed. 1797, III, 222), Mason places Harold's song in the mouth of Curan.

[2] I have not been able to identify this person.

Advertisement repeats substantially what Home said of Harold in his *Sketches of Man*. The translation is in six stanzas, the first of which I reproduce :

My ships in gallant trim and splendid,
Made the long Sicilian tour;
My vessel brown with storms contended,
Midst the raging waves secure.
Warlike prowess still adorns me,
Yet a Russian maiden scorns me.

6. *The Song of Harald the Hardy* was put into English by William Herbert in 1805.[1] "No relic of Icelandic poetry," says this translator, "has been so mangled and misconstrued by its learned translators, as the song of Harald. The Latin by Bartholinus, is partly erroneous ; it was, however, rendered into French uncorrected by Mallet, from whom the bishop of Dromore [2] drew his prose translation. The errors were naturally multiplied in the progress ; and at last, in the poetical translation by Mason (which he informs us was intended as a 'specimen of the first ballad, properly so called, now extant of the Northern tongue ;') not only the ideas of the original, but the historical facts alluded to in the poem, are so completely perverted, that very few vestiges of the Icelandic ballad are discernible in the English." [3]

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[1] *Works*, 1842, I, 296 ff. [2] Percy.

[3] Herbert's chief ground of complaint appears to be the line "Þó lætr Gerðr í Gǫrðum goll-hrings við mér skolla," rendered by Vigfusson (*C.P.B.*, II, 228), "Yet Gerd Gold-ring in Gard holds me in scorn," and commonly paraphrased, in the translations we have been considering, "and yet a Russian maiden scorns me," or "disdains me." Bartholin has "Attamen virgo Russica me respuit." Herbert, familiar enough with Norse to know that *lætr* may mean "permits," is "persuaded that the words [*lætr skolla*] mean *consents* or *suffers to kiss*"; consequently he renders the line in question, in a literal prose translation which he provides (pp. 302–304) in addition to his versified paraphrase, "Hence the maid of the gold ring in Russia consents to embrace me." I know of no authority for this interpretation of *skolla*. According to Cleasby-Vigfusson the word means originally "to hang over" or "dangle," and metaphorically, "to skulk away, keep aloof"; *lætr skolla* would mean, then, merely "keeps aloof from" (see examples in Cleasby-Vigfusson, p. 554, where this particular passage is rendered "turns a deaf ear to me"). Apropos of Herbert's emendation, the *Monthly Review* (April,

The first two stanzas of Herbert's metrical paraphrase are as follows:

My bark sail'd round Sicilia shore;
Then were we gallant, proud, and strong:
A youthful crew the wing'd stag bore,
And high in hope we skimm'd along.
My prowess, tried in martial field,
Like fruit to maiden fair shall yield!
With golden ring in Russia's land
To me the virgin plights her hand.

Fierce was the fight on Trondhiem's heath;
I saw her sons to battle move;
Though few, upon that field of death
Long, long, our desperate warriors strove.
Young from my king in battle slain
I parted on that bloody plain.
With golden ring in Russia's land
To me the virgin plights her hand.

7. In the third volume of the *Poetical Works of Anna Seward*, edited by Scott in 1810, is printed (p. 29) *Harold's Complaint. A Scandinavian Ode. From Dr. Alexander's History of Women.*[1] A footnote to the title informs us that the translation was made from Dr. Alexander's prose (which she reprints) in December, 1790. She cites also Mason's version, which she thinks "produces an

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1807) observed: "It is true that he has the concurrence of some scholars for this explanation: but none of them seem to have been aware that the insensibility of the northern damsel, to the deserts of a warrior, was affected from a desire that he might be induced to perform some brilliant action for her sake alone. We are informed by Pontoppidan that Frotho III of Denmark was at one time in an exactly similar predicament with Harold the Hardy. He wooed a Russian maiden, and urged the same qualifications in his favour: but the Russian maiden replied, 'you are not yet sufficiently celebrated.'" Some of Herbert's other emendations are queer. *Yggs*, the genitive form of one of the names of Odin, he thinks means "ninepins."

[1] Miss Seward's attention may also have been attracted to this poem by Home's *Sketches of Man*, a book which she knew (see her *Letters*, II, 66).

anti-climax, a defect from which the original is free." Miss Seward's paraphrase is in five stanzas, the first of which runs:

One day, while on the Ocean blue
The glittering sun-beams pour,
With vessel light, and scanty crew,
We gaily left the shore.
Black rose the storm, and in the hold
The frothing waters lay,
But toil their whelming force controul'd,
And clear'd them all away.
Then swift we flew before the wind,
And gain'd the distant isle;
The omen fair I hop'd to find
Of beauteous Aura's smile;
But yet, my toils, though fortune crown,
Has all I love forsworn me,
My constancy sustains her frown,
The Russian maiden scorns me.[1]

IV. The Funeral Song of Hacon

The fourth of Percy's Five Pieces, *The Funeral Song of Hacon*, seems to have received less attention than it deserved, — probably because, in spite of Percy's expository *Introduction*, few of his readers knew enough about Norse mythology to grasp the full significance of the situation described in the poem. Vigfusson[2] explains that Hakon the Good, King of Norway, fell in battle about the year 970. Some time afterward, Eyvind Skalda-spillir composed a dirge on this event, modelling it upon another celebrated dirge, *Eiríksmál*,[3] made by the wife of Erik Blood-axe upon the death of her lord. Eyvind's poem, the *Hákonarmál*, one of the finest of the early Norse compositions, may be found in the original, accompanied by an English

[1] Contemporary allusions to translations of this poem, or to its original, are not numerous. Ritson cites "a love-song by Harald the Valiant" in his *Historical Essay on National Song* (*Select Collection*, 1783, p. xli), and Warton alludes to the song in his *History of English Poetry*, ed. Hazlitt, I, 117, n.

[2] *C.P.B.*, I, 262.

[3] *C.P.B.*, I, 259 ff.

prose translation, in the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, I, 262 ff. The action is in two scenes: in the first, the *valkyrjur*[1] Gǫndul and Skǫgul are sent upon the field of battle by Odin to choose a warrior for Valhalla. They select King Hakon, and in a brief dialogue he learns his fate. The second scene is in Valhalla; Odin welcomes the king — who makes a remarkably dignified entrance — to the joys of the *einherjar*.

1. Percy's version of the *Hákonarmál* is about as feeble as he could well make it, as the following extracts will show:

. . . The swords waxed hot in the wounds distilling blood. The long shields inclined themselves over the lives of men. The deluge from the spears ran down the shore of Storda: there on that promontory fell the wounded bodies.

. . . . . .

Then sate the chiefs with their blunted swords; with broken and shattered shields; with their coats of mail pierced thro' with arrows. The host no longer thought of visiting the habitation of the gods.

When lo! Gondul leaned on her lance and thus bespake them, The assembly of the gods is going to be increased, for they invite Hacon with a mighty host to their banquet.

The king heard what the beautiful nymphs of war, sitting on their horses, spake. The nymphs seemed full of thought: they were covered with their helmets: they had their sheilds before them.

Hacon said, Why hast thou, O goddess, thus disposed of the battle? Were we not worthy to have obtained a more perfect victory? — Thou owest to us, retorted Scogul, that thou hast carried the field: that thy enemies have betaken themselves to flight.

Scogul the wealthy [!] spake thus; Now we must ride through the green worlds of the gods, to tell Odin that the all-powerful king is coming to his hall; that he is coming to visit him.

2. The version printed in *Northern Antiquities*[2] omits eight stanzas. Percy calls attention to the omission in a footnote to his *Five Pieces*, supplying from it one of the missing stanzas, and bids "the curious

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[1] The *Eiríksmál* and the *Hákonarmál* are of especial interest in that they contain the earliest allusions in Norse literature to the *valkyrjur* myth. See Wolfgang Golther, *Der Valkyrjenmythus*, München, 1888.

[2] II, 240–244.

Reader compare the two Versions." The translator badly confuses the poem. He begins: "The Goddesses of Destiny who preside over battles, come, sent forth by Odin. They go to chuse among the princes of the illustrious race of Yngvon, him, who is to perish and go to dwell in the palace of the Gods." Then, without any explanation except a row of asterisks, he makes a *saltus* to the following stanza: "Gondula, one of these Goddesses, leaned on the end of her lance and thus bespake her companions: the assembly of the Gods is going to be increased: the enemies of Hacon come to invite this prince with his numerous host, to enter the palace of Odin."[1]

The version just cited was reprinted by Warton in his *History of English Poetry*[2] with the following comment: "This ode was written so early as the year 960. There is a great variety and boldness in the transitions. An action is carried on by a set of the most awful ideal personages, finely imagined. . . . The panegyric is nobly conducted, and arises out of the sublimity of the fiction." Warton's implied admiration for the "boldness" of the transitions is a bit grotesque.[3]

3. Monk Lewis, too, tried his hand at this poem. His version appears in his *Tales of Wonder* (London, 1801), I, 45–50, under the title *King Hacho's Death Song. Runic.*[4] How well Lewis caught

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[1] Percy objects, in a footnote, to Mallet's perversion of the sense of the original in making Hakon's enemies invite him to Valhalla.

[2] I, 126, ed. Hazlitt.

[3] Drake (*Literary Hours*, III, 335 ff.) prints the *Northern Antiquities* version after subjecting it to a second process of condensation, and quotes Warton's approval of the "boldness in the transitions." Drake's mutilation of the poem (he even omits Percy's suggestive asterisks) leaves the reader little more than a skeleton of Eyvind's dirge. Drake, by the way, pronounces this Elogium of Hacon "the noblest production of the Bards of Scandinavia."

[4] The title is followed by a brief introductory note in which he informs us that his immediate source is "Mr. Herder's Collection," by which he means Herder's *Volkslieder*, Leipzig, 1778. In the first part of this work (pp. 166–174) may be found *König Hako's Todesgesang*. A note cites Bartholin and Mallet. The poem is immediately preceded by *Zaubergespräch Angantyrs und Hervors*, which, it will be remembered, Lewis also paraphrased. Herder's source is Hickes. "Fehler in dieser und andern Sprachen der Art," apologizes Herder, "wo sie vorkommen sollten, werden bessere Kenner verzeihen, da sie dem Uebersezer kein Jahrelanges Studium haben seyn können, und diese alten Stücke selbst für eingebohrne Gelehrte

the spirit of the original, the following specimen stanzas will show:

Gaundul and Skogul came from Thor,
To choose a king from out the war,
Who to Valhalla's joys should speed,
And drink with Odin beer and mead.

Of Ingwa's race the king renown'd,
Biarner's brother, soon they found,
As arm'd with helmet, sword and shield,
With eager step he sought the field,
Where clashing glaives and dying cries
Already told the combat's size.

The dialogue between Skogul and Hakon is one of the gems of Lewis's version:

. . . "Great is the feast of the gods to-day,"
Propp'd on her sword, did Gaundul say,
"Since to their table they invite
Hacho, and all his chiefs from flight!" . . .

The fated monarch hears too plain,
How speaks the chooser of the slain;
Too plain beholds his startled eye,
On their black coursers mounted high
The immortal maids, who near him stand,
Each propp'd on her resistless brand.

. . . "Goddess of Combat!" Hacho cries,
"Thus dost thou give the battle's prize?

Dunkelheiten haben." Herder also prints *Morgengesang im Kriege* (p. 175), *Lied des gefangenen Asbiorn Prude* (p. 242), *Das Hagelwetter* (p. 247), all three from Bartholin. They are also represented, Herder says, in the *Kæmpe-Viser*. In Part II he prints (p. 183) something from the *Vǫluspá* (Resenius); p. 197, *Das Grab der Prophetin* (Bartholin); p. 201, *Die Zauberkraft der Lieder* ("Sind die sogenannten Runa-Kapitule, das dritte Stück der ältern Edda": see Kittredge in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlii, n.); p. 210, *Die Todesgöttinnen* [see Bartholin, pp. 617 ff.]; p. 245, *Der verschmähete Jüngling* (i.e. the Song of Harold the Valiant, from Bartholin). On the early interest of the Germans in Norse literature, see Richard Batka, *Altnordische Stoffe und Studien in Deutschland*, in *Euphorion*, Bd. III, Zweites Ergänzungsheft (1896), pp. 1–70; Bd. VI (1899), pp. 67–83.

And do then victory's gods deny
To view my arms with friendly eye?" . . .
. . . "Chide not!" fierce Skogul thus replied,
"For conquest still shall grace thy side;
Thou shalt prevail, the foe shall yield,
And thine remain the bloody field." . . .

She said, and urged her coal-black steed
Swift to the hall of gods to speed;
And there to Odin's heroes tell
A king drew near with them to dwell.

4. William Herbert translated this song in 1803 under the title *The Death of Hacon, A.D. 963*,[1] with notes, some of which are of a philological character. Herbert's version is in twenty-two four-line stanzas, a few of which I reproduce:

Gondul and Skogul swiftly flew,
To chuse what king on battle-plain
Of Yngva's race to Odin's hall
Should go, and dwell with heroes slain.

Unmail'd beneath his banner bright
They saw Biorn's valiant brother stand;
The javelins flew; the foemen fell;
The storm of battle shook the land.
. . . . . .
Couching her lance quoth Gondul fair;
"The crew of heaven be now encreased;
Stout Hacon with his countless host
Is bidden hence to Odin's feast."

The monarch heard the fatal words,
The steel-clad maids of slaughter bore;
All thoughtful on their steeds they sate,
And held their glittering shields before.

"Why thus" (he said) "the war divide?
From heaven we merit victory!"
"Thy force" (quoth Skogul) "we upheld,
We bade thy mighty foemen fly."

[1] *Works*, 1842, I, 278–285.

"Fair sisters" (cried the virgin bright)
"Ride we to heaven's immortal domes!
Hear, Odin! Lo, to grace thy court
The king of men, the victor, comes!"[1]

V. The Ransome of Egill the Scald

The remaining selection in Percy's *Five Pieces* — *The Ransome of Egill the Scald* — was not again translated, so far as I have observed, by any English writer during the next half-century, even by Herbert.

The original of this poem is said to have been improvised, late in the tenth century, by Egil Skallagrimsson, while he was awaiting immediate execution at the hands of his enemy Erik Blood-axe, king of Norway.[2] Egil's poem, which is in praise of Erik, had the effect, according to the *Egils Saga*, of procuring its author's release; hence its title, *Hǫfuðlausn*, or *Head-ransom*.[3] Percy's rendering begins:

I came by sea from the west. I bring in my bosom the gift of Odin. Thus was my passage: I launched into the ocean in ships of Iceland: my mind is deep laden with the songs of the gods.

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[1] The *Hákonarmál* is less frequently alluded to in English literature than some of the other Norse poems that have been mentioned. Sharon Turner, in speaking of Hakon in his *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (ed. Paris, 1840, II, 181; the remark is not in the ed. of 1807) observes: "Eywind the Scald has honoured his memory with an ode which gives dignity to the character of Norwegian Poetry." The *Hákonarmál* may have suggested to Thomas Warton a name for the principal figure in the curious paper on Hacho, King of Lapland, which he contributed (Feb. 16, 1760) to No. 96 of the *Idler*, though there are other historical Hakons. The second volume of Mallet's *Introduction* had appeared, it will be remembered, in 1756 (see Drake's *Essays . . . Illustrative of the Rambler, Adventurer and Idler*, etc., London, 1810, II, 219).

[2] Drake displays his lack of a sense of humor in the following observation (*Lit. Hours*, III, 359) apropos of Scaldic improvisations: "Eyrind and Egill, likewise, two of the most ancient and celebrated Scalds, were accustomed to compose, in this extemporary manner, and, of the latter, an elegant ode is still extant, entitled *The Ransom of Egill*, and which was delivered in the unpremeditated style, and with the success it merited, before one of the kings of Norway." A footnote cites Torfæus. Drake mentions the *Ransom* again, p. 363.

[3] It is printed in *C.P.B.*, I, 266–271.

I offer my freight unto the king: I owe a poem for my ransome. I present to the English chief [1] the songs of Odin. Renown is imperfect without songs. My lays resound his praise; I intreat his silent attention; while he is the subject of my song.

Listen, O prince, that I may swell the strain. If I can obtain but silence, many men shall know the atchievements of the king. Odin hath seen where the dead bodies lie.

The clash of arms increased about the edges of the shield. The goddesses of war had required this of him. The king was impetuous: he was distinguished in the tumult: a torrent flowed from his sword: the storm of weapons furiously raged.

There are twenty-one stanza-paragraphs in all. The translation is as inaccurate as it is weak.

Now that we have finished considering the contents of Percy's *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry*, we are ready to turn our attention to the miscellaneous translations, imitations, and other writings bearing on our subject that were produced during the half-century succeeding the publication of Percy's book. These writings group themselves naturally into two classes: (1) works primarily of literary interest; (2) works primarily of scientific interest. In my next chapter I shall discuss the first of these classes.

CHAPTER IV

MISCELLANEOUS TRANSLATIONS AND IMITATIONS

The first volume of Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry*, which appeared in 1774, must have been of some service in popularizing Norse literature. Prefixed to this volume was a *Dissertation On the Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe*, a considerable portion of which [2] had to do with Scandinavian mythology and literature.

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[1] Percy explains that Erik was called "the English Chief, in compliment to his having gained some footing in the kingdom of Northumberland." The line in which the phrase occurs (printed by Vigfusson, "berr-ek Óðins miǫð á Engla biǫð") is correctly translated in the *Corpus:* "I bring the mead of Woden [i.e. Poetry] into England,"—another illustration of the value of the Rev. Edward Lye's services to Percy.

[2] Pp. 111–149 in Hazlitt's edition.

Warton discusses Odin's migration from Georgia (which he apparently accepts as an historical fact) and his introduction of runes into Scandinavia, mentions certain correspondences between Scandinavian and Oriental mythology, and finally arrives at a discussion of Norse poetry. He mentions particularly *Harold's Complaint*, the *Epicedium of Ragnar Lodbrok*, and the dying song of "Asbiorn Pruda, a Danish champion," who "described his past life in nine strophes, while his enemy Bruce, a giant, was tearing out his bowels." Warton translates a strophe or two:[1]

i. Tell my mother Suanhita in Denmark, that she will not this summer comb the hair of her son. I had promised her to return, but now my side shall feel the edge of the sword.

ii. It was far otherwise, when we sate at home in mirth, cheering ourselves with the drink of ale: and coming from Hordeland passed the gulf in our ships; when we quaffed mead, and conversed of liberty. Now I alone am fallen into the narrow prisons of the giants.[2]

Warton also reprints with some comment the version of the *Hákonarmál* which appeared in *Northern Antiquities*. Attention has already been called to his blundering attribution to Gray of a translation of the *Dialogue at the Tomb of Angantyr*.[3] The Dissertation ends with a discussion of ideas of chivalry as they existed in the North, and the elaboration of a theory of the indebtedness of the "Gothic scalds" to the "new and fruitful source of fiction, opened by the Arabians in Spain, and afterwards propagated by the crusades.[4]

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[1] P. 117, n., ed. Hazlitt.

[2] Warton's source (which he cites) is Bartholin, p. 158. Bartholin extracted the poem "*ex Orms Storolfsonar sagâ*." Wm. Herbert translated it, in 1803, under the title *The Dying Song of Asbiorn* (*Works*, 1842, I, 251–255), with notes. See below, p. 164. This song is also in the *Kæmpe-Viser*, ed. 1695, pp. 441 f.; in Herder's *Volkslieder*, ed. 1778, I, 242 ff., and in Sandvig's *Danske Sange*, Copenhagen, 1779, pp. 106 ff. Drake condenses Warton's account in *Lit. Hours*, III, 360.

[3] See p. 39, n., above.

[4] Warton's footnotes indicate wide reading on these subjects. Among other authors he cites Saxo, Bartholin, Worm, Keysler, Torfæus, Arngrim Jonsson, Rudbeck, Pontoppidan, Biörner, Verelius, Hickes, Snorri, Temple, and Mallet. The reader will, however, perhaps recall Ritson's charitable comment on Warton's notes (*Observations on the Three First Volumes of* [*Warton's*] *History of English Poetry in a Familiar Letter to the Author*, London, 1782, p. 3): "I shall pass by

The next bit of translation we have to consider was made by a writer whose fame, such as it was, was short-lived. Among the specimens of poems on Scandinavian subjects quoted by Dr. Drake in his *Literary Hours* is one[1] which he introduces in this fashion: "The passage next to be produced is taken from a small volume of poems by Mr. Penrose, which though lately little noticed possesses many claims to high distinction. This amiable man perished at an early age, the victim of disappointment and misfortune. The only tribute to his memory which I recollect, and which, though short, is truly pathetic, exists in four lines by the author of the Pursuits of Literature.

> "Have you not seen neglected Penrose bloom,
> Then sink unhonour'd in a village tomb?
> Content a curate's humble path he trod,
> Now, with the poor in spirit, rests with God.[2]

"From his admirable poem entitled 'The Carousal of Odin,' and composed in a vein of the most striking enthusiasm, I quote merely the commencement.[3]

> "Fill the honey'd bev'rage high,
> Fill the skulls, 't is Odin's cry:
> Heard ye not the powerful call,
> Thundering thro' the vaulted hall?
> 'Fill the meath, and spread the board,
> Vassals of the griesly Lord'—

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the two dissertations which precede your history without observation; not that I think them altogether just and proper, but because I find that a strict examination would require greater leisure, and more intense application, as well as a more frequent reference to the numerous and uncommon books there quoted (many of which I have, by the way, much reason to suspect you never consulted, nor even ever saw) than I am at present either willing or able to devote to it." See also above, p. 15, n.

[1] III, 305 ff., 342, 356.

[2] See Mathias's *Pursuits of Literature*, 5th ed., 1798, p. 16.

[3] The poem is printed entire in Evans's *Old Ballads*, ed. 1784, III, 147 ff.; in Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, ed. 1791, xiii, 138; in *English Minstrelsy*, Edinburgh, 1810, I, 157, and elsewhere.

"The portal hinges grate — they come —
The din of voices rocks the dome.
In stalk the various forms, and drest
In various armour, various vest,
With helm and morion, targe and shield,
Some quivering lances couch, some biting maces wield:
All march with haughty step, all proudly shake the crest.

"The feast begins, the skull goes round,
Laughter shouts — the shouts resound.
The gust of war subsides — E'en now
The grim chief curls his cheek, and smooths his rugged brow."

Drake showed good judgment in ending his quotation at this point: had he proceeded he would have obliged his readers to reflect upon the "claims to high distinction" exhibited by such lines as these:

"Shame to your placid front, ye Men of Death!"
Cries *Hilda* with disordered breath:
Hell ecchoes back her scoff of shame
To th' inactive rev'ling Champion's name.
"Call forth the Song," she scream'd; — the Minstrels came —
The theme was glorious War, the dear delight
Of shining best in field, and daring most in fight.

The poem becomes an obvious reminiscence of *Alexander's Feast.* It is curious to note that Penrose thinks of Odin's followers as arrayed in full mediæval armor:

"Joy to the Soul," the Harpers sung,
"When, th' embattled ranks among,
The steel-clad Knight, in vigour's bloom,
(Banners waving o'er his plume)
Foremost rides, the flower and boast
Of the bold determined host!"
With greedy ears the Guests each note devour'd,
Each struck his beaver down, and grasped his faithful sword.
The Fury mark'd th' auspicious deed,
And bad the Scalds proceed.

The Carousal of Odin was first published in *Flights of Fancy, by the Revd. Thomas Penrose* (London, 1775), and reprinted in *Poems*

by the same author (London, 1781).[1] Penrose does not indicate the immediate source of his inspiration. *The London Magazine* (July, 1775) printed an idiotic review of *Flights of Fancy:* "Our author's fancy hath chosen very melancholy subjects — as, *The Helmets* . . . The *bloody Carousal of Odin* — And *Madness.* They have great merit, and the spirit and style Shakesperian." The *Monthly Review* (August, 1775) alludes to the *Carousal* as "executed with great force and spirit."

Five years after the publication of Penrose's *Flights of Fancy* appeared James Johnstone's earliest work,[2] *Anecdotes of Olave the Black*, etc. (1780). The book is a sextodecimo[3] of only forty-eight pages, — a tiny volume for such an unwieldy title. Johnstone's preface explains that the *Anecdotes of Olave* are the work of "*Thordr* an *Islandic* writer of the 13th century." By what authority he ascribes this part of the *Flateyjarbók* to any specific author, I do not know. The manuscript itself was compiled, as Johnstone knew,[4] at the end of the fourteenth century by two Icelandic priests, Jon Þorðarson and Magnus Þorhallsson, from sources at present unknown.[5]

Johnstone's first fragment describes in Norse and English, certain adventures of Olave the Swarthy in Scotland and the Orkneys about the year 1230 A.D.[6] The narrative is accompanied with tolerably full notes.

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[1] Pp. 28–30. My quotations are from the first edition. James Pettit Andrews, author of a translation of the *Epicedium* of Ragnar Loðbrok, married Penrose's sister. He contributes a biographical sketch of Penrose to the volume of 1781.

[2] *Anecdotes of Olave the Black, King of Man, and The Hebridian Princes of the Somerled Family, to which are added XVIII. Eulogies on Haco King of Norway, by Snorro Sturlson Poet to that Monarch, Now first published in the Original Islandic from the Flateyan and Other Manuscripts; with a Literal Version, and Notes. By the Rev. James Johnstone . . . Printed for the Author,* [Copenhagen,] 1780.

[3] Mr. Thompson Cooper, in the *Dict. of Nat. Biog.*, says an octavo. The copies in the British Museum and in the Harvard University Library are each a 16mo.

[4] He knew by 1782, at any rate. See his *Haco's Expedition*, p. xiv.

[5] See Paul, *Grundr. der Germ. Phil.*, II, 1, 130; Vigfusson and Unger's ed. of the *Flateyjarbók*, Christiania, 1806, *Fortale*, III, pp. ii–vi; Horn-Anderson, *Hist. of the Lit. of the Scand. North*, Chicago, 1895, p. 60.

[6] See Vigfusson and Unger, III, 100 ff., *Hákonar Saga hins gamla.*

More interesting for our purposes are the English prose translations of *Poems by Snorro Sturlson, Scald or Bard to Haco IV., King of Norway, now first published from original Manuscripts in the King of Denmark's Library*, which fill the last fifteen pages of the little book. The nature of these bits of verse is indicated by Johnstone's titles, some of which are : *Description of a Norwegian battle; On King Haco's generosity in rewarding merit; On his patriotism; His bravery.* Some of these specimens are given for the purpose of illustrating peculiarities of Norse versification. Johnstone's preface explains some of the "Particularities of the Islandic Pronunciation" and apologizes for the roughness of the translation, which he says has been made as literal as possible "to shew the affinity of the English language with the most pure and original dialect of the Teutonic, and for the benefit of those who study Islandic." He acknowledges the aid of "a worthy, and ingenious native of ICELAND," whose "extreme delicacy, however, prevents the Editor from even having the satisfaction of mentioning his name."

The *Monthly Review*, in its notice of this book (August, 1781), reprinted a bit of Norse verse with Johnstone's translation. The reviewer observes that some of the poems by Snorri are in rhyme "and in the measure frequently fanciful and childish." But "the description of a Norwegian battle has something of the rapidity and wildness of the Galic bards."

The *Gentleman's Magazine* (November, 1781) was even less sympathetic :

> On the whole, as the work has not the elegance of a Homer or an Addison, and the translation, being literal, is necessarily uncouth, these battles, whatever the Danes may think of them, are much less interesting to an English reader than those of the frogs and mice, or of the cranes and pigmies. . . . The *Poems by Snorro Sturleson* . . . are all in the same predicament.

The reviewer reprints, however, Johnstone's English version of the little poem on Haco's patriotism.[1]

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[1] Johnstone's later publications, with the exception of his *Lodbrokar-Quida*, 1782, which we have already discussed, are of historical rather than literary interest ; consequently they will be considered in the next chapter.

In discussing the poem called *Dialogue at the Tomb of Argantyr*, printed in Mathias's *Runic Odes*,[1] 1781, I mentioned the fact that three other Norse odes are contained in the same book.[2] The first of these is *The Twilight of the Gods; or the Destruction of the World.* This ode describes the *Ragnarǫkr* — the destruction of the Powers, which, according to the Norse mythology, was to end the old order of things and mark the beginning of a Golden Age.[3] The following lines from the beginning will serve to indicate the style of Mathias's translation:

> From the chambers of the East,
> In robes of terror grimly drest,
> Ymir hath his course begun,
> Rival of th' unwearied Sun.
> Now, in many a glist'ring wreath,
> Above, around, and underneath,
> The serpent dread, of dateless birth,
> Girds the devoted globe of earth;
> And, as charm'd by pow'rful spell,
> Ocean heaves with furious swell.

The Renovation of the World, and Future Retribution, is, like the preceding, a fragment of the *Vǫluspá*.[4] There are nineteen stanzas, beginning:

> Now the spirit's plastic might,
> Brooding o'er the formless deep,
> O'er the dusk abysm of night,
> Bids creation cease to sleep!
>
> Instant from the riven main
> Starts the renovated earth;

[1] Mathias seems to have used the word "Runic" in an unusually elastic sense, for one of his odes was based on Ossianic, and another on Welsh materials.

[2] See p. 51, n., above.

[3] On p. 30 of the ed. of 1781 Mathias prints in full his source, — Bartholin's Latin version of a part of the *Vǫluspá* (Bartholin, pp. 590 ff.).

[4] Printed by Mathias on pp. 31 f., ed. of 1781 (from Bartholin, pp. 596 ff.). It is not improbable that this subject, as well as the *Twilight of the Gods*, was suggested to Mathias by the fragments from the *Vǫluspá* translated in the *Northern Antiquities*, II, 169–174.

Pine-clad mountain, shaded plain,
See, 't is Nature's second birth.
. . . . . .
Gods on Inda spread the board;
Such was the supreme decree:
Swell the strains in full accord,
Strains of holiest harmony!

"Pour the sparkling beverage high;
Be the song with horror fraught:
Lab'ring earth and ruin'd sky,
Fill the soul and fix the thought.

"Odin next inspire the verse,
Gor'd by the relentless fang;
Æther felt the conflict fierce,
Dying groan, and parting pang.

"Where is now his vaunted might?
Where the terror of his eye?
Fled for aye from scenes of light:
Pour the sparkling beverage high."

The poem goes on to say that years of plenty have succeeded years of sorrow; harvests wave unsown; the universe is ruled by Balder and Hoder — Justice reigns, Vice is prostrate.

The third of these pieces, *An Incantation, Founded on the Northern Mythology*, is apparently Mathias's own invention. I quote the first half:

Hear, ye Rulers of the North,
Spirits of exalted worth;
By the silence of the night,
By subtle magic's secret rite;
By Peolphan, murky King,
Master of th' enchanted ring;
By all and each of hell's grim host,
Howling demon, tortur'd ghost;
By each spell and potent word,
Burst from lips of Glauron's Lord:
By Coronzon's awful power;
By the dread and solemn hour,

When Gual fierce, and Damael strong,
Stride the blast that roars along;
Or in fell descending swoop,
Bid the furious spirit stoop
O'er desolation's gloomy plain,
Haunt of warriors, battle-slain,
Now the world in sleep is laid,
Thorbiorga[1] calls your aid.

Mathias's *Runic Odes* were discussed at considerable length by the leading reviews. The *Critical Review* (July, 1781) was satirical. The reviewer does not attempt to disguise his impatience with this latest phase of romanticism, — the prevalent craze for turning into English any sort of heathenish mediæval jargon. "To those who are deeply skilled in the *Norse* tongue," he writes, "those who prefer Ossian to Homer, and Teliessin to Milton, to those who love *Runic* odes because they are *Runic*, to all those who are fond of the marvellous, the romantic and the unintelligible, we recommend these poems, which, we doubt not, will give them the greatest pleasure, and afford the highest entertainment; at the same time we acknowledge ourselves totally incapable of relishing such sublime beauties." He then quotes an extract from *The Twilight of the Gods* in which occur these lines:

For battle Odin 'gins prepare:
Aloft in distant realms of air,
Mark the murd'rous monster stalk,
In printless majesty of walk.
Odin kens his well known tread;
The fatal sisters clip the thread:
To the mansion cold he creeps —
In vain the beauteous Lina weeps.

The reviewer comments, pertinently enough: "The *printless majesty of walk* appears, at least to a mere English ear, rather uncouth; but we do not understand *Norse*, from which it may, for aught we know, be a literal translation, as well as *creeping to the cold mansion*, which, we suppose is meant as a new phrase for *dying*.

[1] See above, p. 70, n.

"The first Ode ends thus,

> 'No more this *pensile mundane* ball
> Rolls thro' the wide aereal hall;
> Ingulphed sinks the vast machine.
> Who shall say, the things have been?
> For lo! the curtain close and murk
> Veils creation's ruin'd work.'

"Here the translator must again have recourse to the Norse tongue, and plead his strict attachment to, and close imitation of the original, as he will not otherwise reconcile us to his *pensile mundane* balls, and *murk* curtains." The reviewer gives a list of the other odes, in which the much suffering Angantyr is metamorphosed into "Argantur," and closes with a parting shot. These odes, he says, are "all written in the same strain. If any of our readers chuse such kind of 'Lenten entertainment,' let them sit down to it 'with what appetite they may.' For our own parts, with all due deference to *Norse* and *Welch* dainties, we must own a little plain solid English food is more suitable to our own palates."[1]

The *Gentleman's Magazine* (September, 1781) made a show of learning: "Mr. Mathias has merit," the reviewer admits, "though not so much as he has ascribed to himself, following Mr. Gray indeed, but not *passibus æquis*, it being pretty clear that no two pieces so literally

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[1] Some of the *Critical Review's* grape and canister took effect. In the ed. of 1790 the ode ends with "Who shall say, the things have been," and the concluding couplet of the 1781 version, with its "curtain close and murk" is omitted. Though the "printless majesty of walk" and "pensile mundane ball" are retained, the lines immediately following the first of these phrases are altered to:

> Odin fearless meets the shock,
> While Heav'n's high tow'rs around him rock;
> Though arm'd in panoply divine,
> He yields, and owns the fated sign;
> To the mansions drear he turns,
> In vain the beauteous Lina mourns.

This last change was doubtless made in deference to objections urged by the *Monthly Review* (see below, p. 100).

translated as are his *Descent of Odin* and *The Fatal Sisters* ever breathed such a genuine spirit of poetry.

> "'By no ignoble stroke they fall
> *And sink with joy to Hela's hall.*' . . .

"The last line agrees not with the Runic Theology. He who died in battle would not sink to *the hall of Hela*. The author uses the expression to signify the general place of the dead. [The reviewer quotes *Northern Antiquities* to the effect that Hela's hall 'was reserved for those who died of diseases or old age' and cites Bartholin.]. . . No one would *sink with joy* to such an habitation. *Valkalla*,[1] or the *hall of Odin*, was the living hope, the future habitation, of the warriors of the North." The reviewer further fortifies himself with a quotation from "King Lodbroy, in his *Cygnea Oratio*," which he takes from *Five Pieces*.[2]

The *Monthly Review*, not to be outdone in critical acumen by its rivals, found further fault (December, 1781):

Rather with a view to gratify curiosity, than from the expectation of communicating pleasure, has Mr. Mathias, we presume, printed his runic odes. The wild and monstrous system of northern mythology, though it may occasionally furnish a sublime or magnificent image, yet when considered as a subject for modern poetry, contains little that can be interesting. Should we be told that the translations of Mr. Gray are exceptions to this remark, we may ask what could not the genious of Gray have given animation to? We wish it not to be inferred, however, that we are dissatisfied with the attempts of Mr. Mathias; his translations being in general spirited and harmonious.

"In proof of this," the reviewer makes a long extract from *The Twilight of the Gods* which includes both of the passages which the *Critical Review* treated with so much levity. The present reviewer, however, objects only to the line "The fatal sisters clip the thread," —"a fiction," he points out, "that properly belongs to the Mythology

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[1] This misprint occurs in a footnote in the 1768 ed. of Gray's poems (see Phelps's *Gray*, pp. 45, 165).

[2] Mathias saw the point. His ed. of 1790 reads:

> If by Trifingus' stroke they fall,
> They sink with joy to Odin's hall.

of Greece." "In the last Ode, also," he concludes, ". . . is an impropriety of the same kind:

> "'While the midnight torches gleam
> Rivals of *pale Cynthia's Beam.*'"[1]

Futile as these reviews are, they at least indicate that, thanks to Percy and Gray, English readers were beginning to have some definite idea as to the sort of subject that might be consistently dealt with in a poem purporting to imitate the Norse manner. The citations of Percy's edition of Mallet, and of Bartholin, moreover, show something like a critical interest in Northern mythology, — an interest which we shall find growing constantly wider and more intelligent.

Two lyrical anthologies, of which passing mention should be made, come in at this point chronologically. In 1783 was published Joseph Ritson's *Select Collection of English Songs* in three volumes, in the first of which appeared the compiler's *Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song*, which I have several times cited. On pages xl–xlii there is some discussion of "the Scalds (polishers) or poets of Iceland," with mention of Ragnar Loðbrok and Harold the Valiant, and citation of Saxo, Torfæus, *Five Pieces*,

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[1] In the ed. of 1790 this couplet reads:

> Now while midnight torches gleam
> Rivals of the Moon's pale beam.

Citations of Mathias's *Runic Odes* are, as might be expected, uncommon. Anna Seward refers to them once or twice (see above, pp. 53 f.). In 1790 Dr. Sayers called attention, in a footnote to his *Moina*, to Mathias's "very pleasing Northern Incantation" (see Sayers's *Poetical Works*, London, 1830, p. 41, n.). Drake prints *The Renovation of the World* entire in his *Lit. Hours* (ed. of 1804, III, 487 ff.). Mathias calls attention to his own *Runic Odes* in a note to a passage in the *Pursuits of Literature* (published anonymously). See 5th ed., 1798, Dial. iv, pp. 248 f. The passage runs:

> The harp of Taliessin lies unstrung
> Close by the loom, where Death's dread sisters sung:
> Unfelt each charm of Odin's magick tree,
> With many an uncouth Runick phantasy.

This is Mathias's note: "Mr. Mathias . . . several years ago attempted to excite the curiosity of the publick to the remains of northern antiquity, by a lyrical imitation of some Runic fragments. I wish the example had been followed."

Northern Antiquities, Thomas Warton, Sr., and Downman. The next year, 1784, appeared the four-volume edition of Thomas Evans's *Old Ballads, Historical and Narrative, with some of modern date.*[1] The third volume of this collection included, as we have already noted,[2] Downman's *Ragnar Lodbrach* and Penrose's *Carousal of Odin*, both of which had previously appeared in different form.

The next work we have to consider is of considerable interest. In 1784 appeared *The Rise and Progress of Scandinavian Poetry, A Poem in Two Parts*, the writer of which, Edward Jerningham, was a well-known and not over-appreciated[3] London literary character, whose name had ornamented the title-pages of a surprising number of books of verse representing an activity of upwards of twenty years. Jerningham's attention seems to have been called to Norse literature by Percy's *Northern Antiquities*, which he cites in the *Advertisement* to his *Rise and Progress*.[4]

Part the First of Jerningham's poem tells, with some embellishment, the story of the creation according to the Edda, and explains the Scandinavian genius for poetry. It begins:[5]

> When urg'd by Destiny th' eventful year
> Sail'd thro' the portal of the northern sphere,
> Of SCANDINAVIA the rude Genius rose,
> His breast deep-lab'ring with creation's throes:
> Thrice o'er his head a pow'rful wand he whirl'd,
> Then call'd to life a new Poetic world.
>
> First thro' the yawning waves that roar'd around,
> Uprising slow from out the gulph profound,

[1] The first two volumes had already come out in an earlier edition, 1777.

[2] Pp. 71, 92, n. 3, above.

[3] See Mr. W. P. Courtney's article in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, and cf. Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, IX, 24, 216, 278, 294.

[4] Jerningham had had the curiosity to read Mallet in the original, however, for elsewhere he cites the sixth volume of Mallet's *History*, which had not been Englished. He also mentions Richardson's *Dissertation on Eastern Nations* (see below, p. 196) and Johnstone's *Lodbrokar-Quida*.

[5] My quotations are from the reprint of the *Rise and Progress* in Jerningham's *Poems*, 2 vols., London, 1786, II, 77–114.

Amidst the fury of the beating storm
The giant YMIR heav'd his horrid form.

Now on the stormy cloud the rainbow glows,
Where gay Diversity her colouring throws.
Beyond the sun the Pow'r now cast his eyes,
And bad the splendid city ASGARD rise;
Obedient to the loud creative call
She rises, circled with a crystal wall,
Her sapphire mansions crown'd with opal tow'rs,
O'er which the Pow'r a flood of radiance show'rs.

The Genius next shapes "the gods of Asgard" and the "dread Ash." Then in turn the Norns — "Three virgin forms in snowy vests array'd" — Valhalla, the "Valkeries," "the coward's dwelling place," and the "Raven-banner," which, "tho' . . . not mentioned in the Edda," a footnote explains, ". . . is of great antiquity," and "was supposed to be endued with some magical power, and to insure success."[1]

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[1] Richard Hole printed in his *Arthur*, 1789 (pp. 82 ff.), a long note on "the superstitious reverence in which [the raven] has been held by nations, in languages, manners, and situation widely different." Jerningham's queer description of the weaving of the Raven-banner (*Poems*, II, 89 f.) is worth quoting:

See on the horrid battle's bleeding plain
The raven-brood rejoicing o'er the slain!
Yet then in vain they gorge the grateful food,
Death smites them at the dire repast of blood;
When lo! their pinions to the wond'ring view
Combining, into one vast texture grew;
The gory heads conjoined in one dread fold,
Around the frame a grisly margin roll'd:
Now self-upborn the sable banner flings
Bold to the wind its wide-expanding wings;
Exalt, the Genius cries, thy plumes on high,
Wave thy dark signal to the warrior's eye;
Th' intrepid Youth beneath thy magic shade
Thro' slaughter'd heaps to victory shall wade.

The "raven" or "sable" banner of the Danes came to be one of the theatrical properties regularly employed by "runic" poets.

Next we have the creation of the Bards:

> Now from a rock on which the Genius stood,
> He mark'd below a slowly-waving wood,
> Then rais'd his awful voice — "Hail, hallow'd gloom,
> (Where Thought is rear'd and Fancy decks her plume)
> Who hold'st within thy vast sequester'd bow'r
> A numerous train, that wait the rip'ning hour:
> Resign thy charge, yield to demanding time,
> The living fathers of the Runic rhyme."
> Swift at his word the ancient sire survey'd,
> Tumultuous rushing from the solemn shade,
> Arm'd with the pow'rful harp, an ardent throng,
> The mighty founders of the northern song.

The Genius then addresses the "ardent throng" in a long harangue in which he exhorts them to "rouse the tyrant from his flatt'ring dream" by assailing his vices, to "engrave the sacred form of Truth" on the tender "bosom of the list'ning Youth," and to be "of prophecy the dreadful lords," whereupon

> The conscious SCALDS avow th' inspiring hour;
> And now dividing into many a band,
> Strew their wild poetry o'er all the land.

It is not worth while analyzing the somewhat amorphous *Second Part*, which is preceded by the following argument: "At the introduction of Christianity, the interposition of angels and the appearance of ghosts grew familiar to the SCANDINAVIAN poetry, which was afterwards enriched by allegories, and by the accession of new images, which flowed to it through various channels, particularly from the East. . . . When colleges were founded, and the general attention was directed to classical learning, the wild conceptions of the Scaldic minstrels gradually fell into disuse."

The dedication of the *Rise and Progress*, as reprinted in Jerningham's *Poems*, 1786, is to Horace Walpole. "I am ambitious of inscribing this Poem to you," says the author, "as a small return for

the warm commendation you bestowed upon it, when the Poem was first published." [1]

The reviews gave the book considerable space. The *London Magazine* (March, 1784) printed copious extracts, seasoned with a small amount of perfunctory criticism. The *Critical Review* (March, 1784) observed, "We look in vain for that energy of diction, and vivid spirit, which pervades Mr. Gray's imitations of the Runic bards." [2]

The observations of the *Monthly Review* (August, 1784) on Jerningham's poem are for our purposes of more than ordinary interest:

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[1] On Feb. 2, 1784, Walpole wrote to Mason (Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, VIII, 458): "Mr. Jerningham has just published a new poem on the doctrines of the Scandinavian Bards. It is far superior to his other works. The versification is good; very many expressions and lines beautiful, and the whole nervous and not like his uniform turtle ditties. It might have been thrown into a better plan; and it ends rather abruptly and tamely. He seems to have kept the 'Descent of Odin' in his eye, though he had not the art of conjuring up the most forceful feelings, as Gray has done, in a subject in which there is so much of the terrible. Though one has scarce any idea of what the whole is about, yet one is enwrapt by it." Walpole was epecially fond of *The Descent of Odin*. On the 20th of May, 1776, he wrote to Mason, apropos of a drawing the latter had made to illustrate Gray's *Fatal Sisters* (*Letters*, VI, 338 f.): "I thank you for [your drawing] and like it excessively. You have done full justice to Gray; I am sorry he cannot see it, for it is as fine as Mr. Bentley's drawings for the rest of his Odes. . . . I hope you will draw the 'Descent of Odin,' too, which I love as much as any of Gray's Works." As the reader will infer, of most of Jerningham's "turtle ditties" Walpole had but a small opinion. In February, 1791, he wrote to the Misses Berry (*Letters*, IX, 294), depreciating one of Jerningham's performances. "I wish him so well," says Walpole, "that I am sorry he should be so flattered, when, in truth, he has no genius. There is no novelty, no plan, and no suite in his poetry; though many of the lines are pretty." For Walpole's elaborate protestation against having one of Jerningham's poems dedicated to him, see the *Letters*, V, 464.

[2] The reviewer thinks that Jerningham should have begun his poem with a description of Chaos, which he might have taken from a "truly sublime" passage in the *Vǫluspá*, a bit of which the reviewer quotes: "In the day spring of the ages there was neither sea nor shore nor refreshing breezes. There was neither earth below, nor heaven above, to be distinguished. The whole was only one vast abyss, without herb and without seeds. The sun had then no palace: the stars knew not their dwelling places: the moon was ignorant of his power." Only the first half of this passage is to be found in Mallet, and the English is not Percy's. The reviewer must have made use of some other source, perhaps the edition of the *Vǫluspá* by Resenius.

The Scandinavian mythology seems little adapted to the purposes of modern poetry. The images that it exhibits are, for the most part, incomprehensibly wild and uncouth. It is true, there is in some of them a rude magnificence, a kind of savage sublimity, bespeaking a wonderful boldness of conception; at which, perhaps, a chastised and cultivated imagination never could have arrived. These, however, are but thinly scattered; the generality of them being a tissue of the most absurd and preposterous fictions. In speaking thus we are aware that men of great name might be quoted, whose opinions are diametrically opposite to ours. Be it so: we wish not to put them out of conceit with their Runic hobby-horse, even though it were the wolf Fenris, that is to break his chains at the general conflagration, and swallow the sun! Let it not, however, be supposed, from anything here said, that we have no relish for the remains of Runic poetry, or that we are wanting in due veneration for the Scandinavian mythology. . . . What we mean to suggest is, that the poet, who shall attempt to familiarize Scaldic ideas, and render them interesting to modern readers, surely engages in a most arduous undertaking.

In 1787 happened an event of the first importance to us — the publication at Copenhagen, by the Arna-Magnæan Commission, of the first volume of the Poetic Edda.[1] This volume contained (besides an Introduction, Notes, and a Glossary) a Life of Sæmund and the following thirteen poems in Norse and Latin:[2] (1) *Vafthrudnismal;* (2) *Grímnis-mál;* (3) *För Scirnis;* (4) *Harbarz Lióþ;* (5) *Hymis-qvida;* (6) *Ægis-drecka;* (7) *Þryms Qvida;* (8) *Hrafna-galdr Óþins;* (9) *Vegtams-qviþa;* (10) *Alvís-mál;* (11) *Fiöl-svinns Mál;* (12) *Hyndlvlióþ;* (13) (Appendix) *Sólar-lióþ.* For the first time these poems became accessible in a text that, bad as it was, could at least be read by any scholar.[3]

[1] *Edda Sæmundar hinns Fróda. Edda Rhythmica seu Antiqvior, vulgo Sæmundina dicta. Pars I. Odas mythologicas, a Resenio non editas, continens. Ex codice Bibliothecæ Regiæ Hafniensis pergameno, nec non diversis Legati Arna-Magnæani et aliorum membraneis chartaceisque melioris notæ manuscriptis. Cum interpretatione Latina, lectionibus variis, notis, glossario vocum et indice rerum.* Hafniæ, 1787. *Sumtibus Legati Magnæani et Gyldendalii.* Vol. II appeared in 1818; Vol. III in 1828.

[2] The spelling in this edition is inconsistent. I reproduce the titles actually used to introduce the text.

[3] All of them had by this time appeared in vernacular translations, but, so far as I know, only two of them, entire, in Latin: viz. the *Vegtamskviða*, printed in

The Copenhagen Edda received its share of attention in England. The *Gentleman's Magazine* (February, 1788) gave more than five columns to a review which speaks of the work as "long expected by the literati," gives a summary of its contents, regrets that the *Vǫluspá*, "the most important poem of all the old Edda, and containing the

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Latin by Bartholin (pp. 632–640, reprinted in Phelps's *Gray*, pp. 166 f.; see also Kittredge, id., pp. xlii f.), and Thorkelin's version of the *Vafþrúðnismál* mentioned below. On p. vii of their preface, the editors of the Copenhagen Edda make this acknowledgment: "Haud eqvidem dissimulandum, multos ante nos sospitalem & amicam Eddæ Rhythmicæ, in diem iterum emergenti, porrexisse manum; qvis enim nescit *Resenii*, *Göransonii*, *Malletii*, *Schimmelmanni*, *Sandvigii*, *Thorkelini* &c. merita, qvi aliqvot horum carminum in lingvam Latinam, Danicam, Svecicam, Gallicam, Germanicam suo qvisqve successu transtulerunt: qvis *Wormii*, *Stephanii*, *Bartholini*, *Mölleri*, *Rudbechii*, *Beronii*, *Keysleri* & aliorum in Eddam studia reticeat, qvi vel singularia ejusdem loca occasione data explanarunt, vel honorifica illius mentione orbi eam literato commendarunt?" This preface must be understood to answer for the later volumes of the Copenhagen edition, as well as for the first; for of the translators mentioned in it, Resenius had done into Latin, of the Eddic poems, only the *Vǫluspá* and the *Hávamál* (1665); the only poem translated by Göransson was the *Vǫluspá*, which he had turned into Swedish in 1750; Mallet did not get beyond these two pieces in his illustrations from the Poetic Edda (see Kittredge in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xlii, note); Jakob Schimmelmann published at Stettin in 1777 what he called *Die Isländische Edda*, in German, but his book, again, contained of the Poetic Edda only the two pieces just named. Now the *Vǫluspá* and the *Hávamál* did not appear in the Copenhagen Edda until the third volume, 1828, where they were bound up with the *Rigsmál*. Berthel Christian Sandvig, however, had printed in Danish all the poems in the first volume of the Copenhagen Edda, with some others in addition; these appeared in his *Forsög til en Oversættelse af Sæmunds Edda*, 2 Hefter, Copenhagen, 1783–1785. The *Vegthamsqvitha*, as he calls it, had previously appeared in his *Danske Sange* (Copenhagen, 1779, pp. 14–22), a book which also contained Danish versions of some other poems of interest to us, among them Ragnar Loðbrok's *Epicedium*, the Angantyr dialogue, the dying song of Asbjǫrn the Proud, King Hakon's Funeral Song, and the Song of Harold the Valiant. Grimur Jonsson Thorkelin, the only one remaining of the list of translators quoted above, had published in 1779 a Latin version of the *Vafþrúðnismál*. For further particulars with regard to these translations, see Möbius, *Catalogus Librorum Isl. et Norveg.*, Leipzig, 1856. The only other translations mentioned by Möbius of poems in the first volume of the Copenhagen Edda are three German versions of the *Vegtamskviða*: (1) C. F. H. Weisse's *Von den Barden nebst etlichen Bardenliedern aus dem Engl.*, Leipzig, 1770, is said to contain translations into German of Gray's *Fatal Sisters* and *Descent of Odin* (*Vegtamskviða*). Weisse's version of the *Descent of Odin*, I

sum of its mythology," should be omitted from this first volume, which "is unintelligible without the Voluspa," and finds the prefatory matter very defective, in that, among other things, "a formal comparison between the Rhythmic and Prosaic Edda ought to have been given, pointing out the particular passages of the former upon which each fable of the latter is founded, and the like."

The *Critical Review* (May, 1788) also laments the absence of the poems "formerly printed by Resenius." It is interesting to note that the reviewer alludes to Thorkelin's edition (1779) of the *Vafþrúðnismál*. On the whole, the reviewer concludes that the Edda "is a legacy which will be received with gratitude, by the admirers of northern literature, particularly the poets and philosophers."

The *Analytical Review* (November and December, 1788) gave the volume more space than any of the other periodicals, and printed extracts, in English, from *För Scirnis; or, the message of Skirner*, and *Hymis-Quida; or, a Song of Hymer*. The conclusion is of particular interest: "We shall conclude our extracts with the *Vegtams Quitha*, or as it is called by Mr. *Gray*, who imitated it in rhyme, the *Descent of Odin:* its own sublimity, and the celebrity of the imitation, must render its communication highly acceptable to every reader of taste, who is thus enabled to compare the rugged materials of the Skald, with the polished stanzas and arrangements of the poet. Mr. Gray, from choice or the want of a compleat copy has omitted the five first stanzas."[1] Then follows a translation of the missing stanzas, the first two of which run:

Deep to consult,
The gods all met;
To talk aloud,
The goddesses;
Debate the holy synod shook
On Ballder's late
Portentous dreams.

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gather from Denis, *Ossians und Sineds Lieder*, IV, 46, n., was in prose. For a discussion of Weisse's translation of *Ragnar Loðbrok*, see Batka, *Euphorion*, III, Zweites Ergänzungsheft, pp. 32 ff. (2) Herder translated the *Vegtamskviða* from Bartholin in his *Volkslieder*, ed. 1779, II, 197–200. (3) Michael Denis, *Ossians und Sineds Lieder*, Wien, 1784, IV, 46–51, has a German rendering, *Odins Helafahrt*, from Bartholin. The *Vorbericht* to this volume contains a long discussion of Norse literature.

[1] Cf. Kittredge, in Phelps's *Gray*, p. xliii.

By turbid slumbers tossed
The hero weened, he saw
Amid the gloom of night
His genius disappear:
The giants prostrate asked
The power of oracles,
If in the vision dim
A secret terrour lurked.

The first of the stanzas paraphrased by Gray is thus rendered by this reviewer:

Up rose Odin
The sire of men,
O'er Sleipner strait
His saddle threw:
The road he took
Of Niflheim dark,
And met the whelp
Of murky Hell.

The poem is given entire, with a few explanatory notes.

Dr. Drake begins the seventeenth essay in his *Mornings in Spring* with the following observation:[1]

Of the poem which forms the subject of this and the two following papers, the fate has been hitherto, in my opinion, peculiarly hard and unmerited, and furnishes, indeed, a remarkable instance of that caprice which occasionally infects the literary world. It is now thirty-seven years since the work to which I allude, the ARTHUR of *Mr. Hole*, issued from the press; and though it then attracted some notice, yet, as no second edition has since been called for, it cannot but be inferred that it has faded nearly, if not altogether, from the memory of the public.

Richard Hole's *Arthur, or the Northern Enchantment, A Poetical Romance in Seven Books*, appeared in 1789.[2] The author describes the poem, in his preface, as "an imitation of the old metrical

[1] 2 vols., London, 1828, II, 132.

[2] Extensive extracts from the poem are printed in the *Annual Register* for 1790, pp. 148–157 (second numbering). Drake gives a very elaborate analysis of it, with an account of the author, in his *Mornings in Spring*, II, 132–236.

Romance . . . with some of its harsher features softened and modified," consequently, he adds, "the incidents in this Poem are extravagant, and its heroes rather those of Ariosto than Homer." The plot turns on the contention between the Saxons and the Britons for the sovereignty of England. Arthur and Merlin are arrayed against Hengist and the "Northern Parcæ." Arthur and Hengist are rivals for the hand of Inogen, Merlin's daughter. Ultimately Arthur wins, Hengist is slain, and the "Parcæ" are banished to Hecla. The preface defends, by citations from Mallet and Olaus Magnus, the author's "mixture of Scandinavian manners with the ideal ones, as they are commonly imagined, of chivalry." Drake notes that Hole has deviated from his prototypes in that "whilst he has preserved the body and spirit of their fiction, he has clothed both in a classical garb, in the dress indeed of Homer and of Virgil, and has, consequently, given to his work a very anomalous aspect, being neither entitled, from the desultory nature of its fabric, to be considered as a classical epic, nor from the polish, concatenation, and uniform dignity of its style and versification, a gothic romance. It is, however," he goes on, "notwithstanding this incongruity, a most valuable and interesting production, both in substance and in form; and it has moreover the merit of being the first attempt, in modern times, to re-open that rich vein of wild narrative and fiction, which constituted the delight and the wealth of Ariosto and Spenser."[1]

The modern reader will find more difficulty in sharing Drake's enthusiasm over Hole's heroics than his appreciation of their incongruity. The author's notes show him to have been familiar with Bartholin, Mallet, and some other Northern antiquaries, however, and he tells us that his Celtic imagery is borrowed from Ossian; we have every indication that he wrought his poem with great care. As specimens of his style, I may select two passages. The first is a description of Valhalla from the fourth book. Urda, one of the "Parcæ," takes the form of Odin and urges the king of Denmark to march against his enemy:

> Awake, arise, and in your might confide!
> Rush on, and let destruction be your guide!

[1] *Mornings in Spring*, II, 147 f.

Think on your fathers' fame, your own renown,
My favour, who with joys perpetual crown
The chiefs, who boldly in the combat fall,
And guide their spirits to my lofty hall,
O'er-arch'd with golden shields, whose dazzling blaze
Exceeds the mid-day sun's unclouded rays.
There shall each hero share, a welcome guest,
The foaming goblet, and perpetual feast.
Again their souls with martial fire shall burn,
And host conflicting adverse host o'erturn:
While bright Valkeries, blue-eyed nymphs shall crown
With plausive smiles their actions of renown.
Be conquest yours, and fame's unfading wreath,
Or, more than victory, a glorious death![1]

The second passage constitutes the climax to the sixth book. Hengist and Valdemar have mortally wounded each other in battle. With his dying breath Hengist curses his impotent allies, the "Parcæ":

The combat 's o'er — the shrieks of death resound;
The tempest rolls away; and on the ground
Brave Valdemar lies breathless; by his side
Stern Hengist sinking, thus in fury cried.
"Such agonising pangs as these I feel,
Keen as the searchings of this deadly steel,
Ye hags of darkness, be it yours to know
In Nifleim's gloomy depth, th' abode of woe! —
Ha! it is thou, whose erring hand destroys
My life, and blasts my hope of promis'd joys?"
(For now the moon her splendid course resum'd,
And her bright train th' ethereal arch illum'd,)
"But 't is enough! thy death 's[2] thy folly's meed:
Not meanly foil'd, nor unreveng'd, I bleed.
High be my seat in Odin's lofty hall!
No warrior lives, to boast of Hengist's fall."
On Valdemar's deep wounds he bends his eyes
With joy malignant — grimly smiles and dies.[3]

The discussion of Hole's poem which appeared in the *Monthly Review* (September, 1790) is interesting in view of the remarks made

[1] Pp. 119 ff. [2] Hole has a comma after this word. [3] Pp. 203 f.

by the same journal about Jerningham's *Rise and Progress.*[1] In the present instance the reviewer begins by alluding to Homer's use of popular superstitions and to Roman imitations of his methods.

> But when the Muses began to be courted by our northern ancestors [he goes on to say], poetry was obliged to have recourse, for its machinery, to new superstitions, and to substitute Gothic demons in the place of Grecian deities. In this we are of opinion, that poetry sustained no loss. Nothing is, perhaps, more truly adapted to its genius, than the Gothic fictions and manners. . . . Had Homer flourished in the Gothic age, the supposition is not extravagant, that he might have produced a work superior to the Iliad itself, as he would certainly have found greater scope for his genius. In the refined gallantry and military fanaticism of this period, there was more of the tender as well as of the terrific; and more to engage the softer affections of the heart, as well as to harrow up the soul, than the civil and religious state of ancient Greece presented to his observation or to his fancy.

Then follow an analysis of the action, some critical observations, and extracts. This surprising change of creed on the part of a periodical which had hitherto systematically discouraged all efforts to popularize Norse literature, is explained by the fact that this review was in all probability written by Dr. Drake.[2]

In October of the year that *Arthur* was published, 1789, there appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* the following unsigned communication:

> Mr. Urban, A copy of the following poems was shewn me as having been written by Mr. Hole, author of "Arthur, or the Northern Enchantment"; and I trust he will not be displeased at their being preserved in your valuable Repository. The first is a free translation, or rather imitation, of a passage in Bartholine's Danicæ Antiquitates, lib. ii. cap. 2, taken by him from an old Gothic romance;[3] as is the second,[4] which, though an imperfect sketch, is strongly characteristic of that martial ardour which

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[1] See above, p. 106.

[2] The style suggests this; certain passages in *Mornings in Spring*, moreover, appear to be amplified from the article in the *Monthly Review*.

[3] See Bartholin, ed. 1689, pp. 279–280. Bartholin's source is the *Njáls Saga*, chap. 78.

[4] Bartholin, lib. ii, cap. 7, p. 381. From the *Hervarar Saga*, chap. 5.

animated the old Scandinavians, and which Mr. H. has drawn out to a much greater length in his poem.

The first of the two poems here referred to is *The Tomb of Gunnar*. I reproduce the first half:

"What mean those aweful sounds that rise
From the tomb where Gunnar lies?"
Exclaims the shepherd in affright;
As by the moon's uncertain light,
Athwart the solitary plain,
He homeward drives his fleecy train.
Sarpedine, Hogner, mark the tale;
Then fearless cross the dreary vale,
And stand the stately tomb beside;
While darkly-rolling vapours hide
In their dun veil night's glittering pride.
A moon-beam on the cave of death
Sudden glanc'd athwart the heath:
Its line of splendor, full oppos'd,
The deep recess to view disclos'd.
Fronting the beam, in arms array'd,
Majestic sate the hero's shade.
The cell four blazing tapers crown'd,
And pour'd a flood of light around.
With conscious joy his visage glows,
And smiles invest his aweful brows.
He wakes the loud-resounding song,
And echoing rocks the strain prolong.

The song urges the ghost's hearers to "conquest or death," and Sarpedine's rejoinder shows that it has the desired effect.

Hole's *Tomb of Gunnar* was reprinted, in a considerably different version, in 1792, together with some other pieces by the same author ("a mark of attention to the Editor," says the *Advertisement*, "which checked, in silent gratitude, every effort to acknowledge it") in *Poems Chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall*,[1] a book to which reference has already been made.[2]

[1] I, 78 f.

[2] See above, pp. 52, 74. Drake gave the poem high praise in his *Mornings in Spring* (II, 139). He thinks it entitled to "a rank, indeed, next, if not equal, to" the poems of Gray and Collins.

The *Fragment* following the *Tomb of Gunnar* in the *Gentleman's Magazine* runs as follows:

"See, brother, see, athwart the strand,
Twelve youths advance, a hostile band.
Ere evening spreads her vapours grey,
Must we the voice of Fate obey.
For us prepar'd is Odin's hall;
But they shall live, and boast our fall!"
"Mistaken youth!" Hialmur cries:
"Ere eve's grey shadows dim the skies,
Pierc'd with many a grievous wound,
Shall yonder warriors press the ground.
Inmates they of Odin's hall;
But we shall live, and boast their fall."

This fragment is of particular interest because it deals with an episode of the *Hervarar Saga*[1] earlier than that at the tomb of

[1] Chap. 5. According to the Norse text (quoted by Bartholin, p. 381) it is Hjalmar who weakens, and Odd who shows confidence. William Herbert, who translated the fifth chapter of the *Hervarar Saga* in 1803, under the title *The Combat of Hialmar and Oddur*, thus renders this dialogue (*Works*, London, 1842, I, 261 f.):

"Then sung Hialmar thus . . .

'From the ship with warlike stride
(Sight, which might the bold appal)
Haste to seize the hostile spoil
Twelve together, champions tall.
Warriors two at close of day
We shall sup in Odin's hall;
And those twelve victorious live,
Proudly live to boast our fall.'

Such words of despair had Hialmar never spoken in the hearing of man. Then Oddur sung thus:

'To thy words of omen foul,
Hero, I in answer say;
Champions twelve in Odin's hall
They shall sup at close of day;
We shall both victorious live
Home to wend in proud array.'"

Saxo Grammaticus has some account of this contest in the fifth book of his *History* (ed. Müller and Velschow, I, 250 ff.; Elton and Powell, pp. 204 f.).

Angantyr. It was in a contest with Hjalmar and his famous companion-in-arms, Odd (called Qrvar-Oddr — one of the principal characters in the *Qrvarodds Saga*), that Angantyr and his eleven brothers were slain. Odd alone survived the battle.

Hole's three pieces were not the only English poems on Scandinavian subjects published in the year 1789. Drake concludes his "poetical illustrations of the northern elysium," in the third volume of his *Literary Hours* (1804), with "part of a beautiful Ode by Mr. Sterling, entitled *The Scalder*." It is extracted, he says, "from a collection of poems, by this gentleman, published in 1789, a collection, I believe, little known, though certainly meriting considerable applause; if the lines which in the course of these papers I shall occasionally quote from it should induce any lover of poetry to procure the volume, he will, I have no doubt, be highly gratified in the perusal."[1]

The subject of Dr. Drake's somewhat perfunctory encomium is the Reverend Joseph Sterling, now remembered — if he is remembered at all — only as the author of a continuation of Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*.[2] The volume which Drake recommends is Sterling's *Poems* (London, 1789), which contained two *Odes from the Icelandic*. I have not been able to see or hear of a copy of this particular book, but the Norse poems were reprinted in a volume of *Odes* (London, 1794), a copy of which belonging to the British Museum has been examined for me. In this volume the two poems appear under the title *Odes from the Icelandic: with a Dissertation*[3] *and Notes*. One paragraph from the *Dissertation* reads: "The author of the following Odes has ventured upon a subject which, perhaps, may appear obscure and uninteresting to many; the late ingenious Mr. Gray has been his guide; and happy should he think himself, if, at an humble distance, he could pursue the steps of so great a master."

Sterling's sources, which he may or may not have consulted at first hand, are mentioned in the *Dissertation:* "The *Edda*," Bartholin, and "other northern writers."

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[1] Pp. 307 f.

[2] *Cambuscan, or the Squire's Tale Concluded by Mr. Sterling*, 1785.

[3] Of six pages.

The first of the Norse poems, *Scalder: An Ode*, is in seven stanzas, the first two of which I transcribe :

I

Illustrious chiefs, whose deathless fame
  The SCALDER'S song shall blazon wide:
In any prospect see ! they stream,
  Kings and heroes swell the tide:
A shining train (their tribute to receive)
From bright VALHALLA pours (the mansion of the brave).
  In long array the godlike forms appear,
(Their harness brightening in the western beam)
  They shake the glitt'ring sword, and pointed spear;
Their polish'd helms with dreadful splendour gleam:
On airy steeds the warriors rush along,
Swift as the lightnings flash, as wintry tempests strong.

II

  Now the rage of combat burns,
Haughty chiefs on chiefs lie slain;
  The battle glows and sinks by turns,
Death and carnage load the plain.
Pale fear, grim horror stalk around;
The blood of heroes dies the verdant ground.
  But at the brazen trumpet's shrilling call,
Quick into life the eager champions spring;
  With headlong speed they crowd the banner'd hall,
Where sits enthron'd in gold the sceptered king,
Immortal ODIN, sov'reign of the gods,
Who rays with glory's beams VALHALLA'S bright abodes.

Drake quotes nearly the whole of this ode, in a considerably altered version, in his *Literary Hours*.[1] Sterling's second Norse piece, *Twilight of the Gods. An Ode*, is in five stanzas, of which I reproduce the first. This subject, it will be remembered, had already been used by Mathias.[2]

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[1] III, 308, 309, 315, 367.

[2] See above, p. 96.

The dusky moon is streak'd with blood,
The demons of the tempest roar;
A deluge swells the mountain flood,
The clouds descend in streams of gore:
From the dark mansions of the north,
Now the GREAT WINTER rushes headlong forth.
His sacred beam the golden sun shall hide,
Nor spring nor summer shall enrich the plain;
No vales shall flourish in autumnal pride,
But winter drear shall hold unceasing reign,
Till the GREAT DRAGON terrible and strong,
Unwinds his sweepy folds, and shoots the seas along.[1]

The Critical Review (May, 1789) censured Sterling for dragging into his *Scalder* an allusion to "Flath Innis or the Celtic Elysium," and for making some reference, in this connection, to "chisel'd stone and Runic rhyme," which "might . . . have been omitted in a passage descriptive of Celtic opinions," an interesting comment in view of the confusion of Celtic with Scandinavian matters common at that time. The reviewer thinks that on the whole, "as these odes dwell chiefly on the wild fables which occur in the Gothic mythology, they will probably, from their unavoidable obscurity, not acquire the credit they deserve." The *Monthly Review* (November, 1790) concurred: "Most

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[1] Drake, who prints the poem entire (*Lit. Hours*, III, 477 ff.), says that it "is rather a copy from the Edda of Goranson than the Voluspa, and consequently is much more full and particular than if it had taken the latter solely for its guide; it is rich and musical in its versification, and possesses the genuine tone of lyric composition." It seems altogether likely that Sterling, as Drake suggests, had at hand Resenius's or Göransson's translation of the *Gylfaginning* (the first tract of the Prose Edda) as well as the *Vǫluspá*. Sterling, for example, makes the wolf Fenris "seize the orb of day." Nothing is said in the *Vǫluspá* or in Mathias's *Twilight of the Gods* with regard to the wolf's swallowing the sun, but Resenius (*Edda Islandorum*, ed. 1665, *Mythol. XLVIII, De Ragnarockro, seu Crepusculo Deorum*, — his pages are not numbered) has "lupus solem devorat," and Göransson, whose version of the *Gylfaginning* published as an Appendix to *Northern Antiquities* would certainly be accessible to Sterling, has (*Northern Antiquities*, II, 348) "Lupus solem devorabit." The matter is of no great importance, for in Resenius, at least, the Prose Edda and the *Vǫluspá* were very often (as in a volume owned by the Harvard University Library) bound up together.

readers are too much unacquainted with the mythology on which the odes are founded to relish their beauties."

The next work we have to consider was regarded, no longer ago than 1830, as a "European classic," and "an imperishable monument of British poetry."[1] *Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology, by F. Sayers, M.D.*, issued from the press about the middle of the year 1790, while Hole's *Arthur* was still fresh in the minds of English readers. This first edition of the *Dramatic Sketches* consisted of three pieces: *Moina, a Tragedy; Starno, a Tragedy;* and *The Descent of Frea, a Masque.* In a later edition was added *Oswald, a Monodrama.* These four poems are included among the *Poetical Works of the late F. Sayers, M.D.*, edited by William Taylor of Norwich (London, 1830), who tells us, in the biography prefixed to this volume, how the *Sketches* came to be written. Sayers seems deliberately to have taken counsel with himself as to the "form of exertion" with which he had best "pursue celebrity." "These meditations," says Taylor,[2] "terminated in the resolution to undertake lyric dramas. A perusal of the greek tragedians, which he went through with agitated feeling, determined the form of his outline; Percy's Northern Antiquities supplied the costume and the colouring; and at the beginning of 1790, had been produced the first Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology."

Moina, the earliest of these pieces in the order of composition, is for the most part, like all the *Sketches*, in ten-syllabled blank verse, with irregular metres for the choruses. The poem has to do with "the irruptions made by the Saxons into the North of Britain, previously to their conversion to Christianity."[3] The scene is a "Castle in the Possession of Harold," and the only characters are two Britons, — Moina, the heroine, by right of conquest become the wife of the Saxon Harold, and Carril, her lover, — and a chorus of Bards. Carril "arrives in disguise at the castle, urges [Moina's] flight, and flatters her with the equivocal prediction of a prophetess, that her husband is to fall in battle, and her sorrows are about to end. This indeed

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[1] William Taylor of Norwich, in Sayers's *Poetical Works*, 1830, pp. xlvi, xxxii.

[2] P. xxxii.

[3] Sayers's *Introduction*, p. 23. All my references are to Taylor's ed., 1830.

comes to pass. The corse of Harold is brought home for interment: Moina, according to the Gothic custom, is buried with him; and Carril in despair throws himself from a rock."[1]

It might be supposed that *Moina*, dealing as it does with Celts and Saxons, would be free from allusions to Scandinavian mythology, but there are a great many such allusions. Upon the first appearance of the heroine, for example, the chorus of Bards sings:[2]

> Hail to her whom Frea loves,
> Moina, hail!
> When first thine infant eyes beheld
> The beam of day,
> Frea, from Valhalla's groves,
> Mark'd thy birth in silent joy; etc.

References to Odin, the Fatal Sisters, and so on, are scattered indiscriminately through the piece.

In *Starno*, Sayers, as he announces in his *Introduction*, has confined himself "as much as possible to a delineation of Celtic mythology"; hence Odin is never once invoked, and there are no allusions to skulls brimmed with mead or to warriors who die laughing, — an omission which may have cost Sayers some self-denial, but at any rate showed that he could discriminate when he chose.

The *Descent of Frea* is an interesting poem. The *Introduction* tells of Balder's death and explains that "as [he] fell not in battle, his shade, in conformity to the tenets of the Gothic religion, was supposed to descend to the dwelling of Hela, the Goddess of the infernal realms. Great was the grief in Asgard on account of his death, and Frea, the Goddess of Beauty, peculiarly afflicted by the loss of her

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[1] Taylor, in Sayers's *Works*, p. xxxiii.

[2] Pp. 27 f. The word *Bards* troubled Sayers a little, for it prompted a note in which he explains that "they ought rather to be denominated the *Scalds*." The "poems of these men," he says, "were called Vyses." A second set of notes added in the fourth edition explains that "although the word *bard* . . . is undoubtedly *Celtic*," the author has "the less hesitated to substitute this term to [*sic*] the unfamiliar one *Scald*, because the Romans and Greeks, having adopted it into their respective languages, use it indiscriminately to express either a *Celtic* or a *Gothic* minstrel." Further notes cite Torfæus, Worm, Blair, and *Five Pieces*.

lover, resolved to undertake a journey to his gloomy habitation, from the hope of obtaining his release. This descent of Frea, and the success which attended it, are the subjects of the following Masque."

The "Persons of the Masque" are nine of the principal Scandinavian deities. The scene of the first act is "the Infernal Regions"; that of the second, "Valhalla." I quote a few stanzas from Frea's plea to Hela, written in the metre of Gray's *Elegy*,[1] and curiously reminiscent, in spite of its subject, of pseudo-classicism:

Deep in thy misty caverns Balder lies;
Alas! how wither'd by the touch of woe!
Dim is the lustre of his fading eyes,
And sullen sadness dwells upon his brow.

Quick thro' his frame divine chill languors shoot,
The boasted roses of his cheek are pale,
The soothing tongue of eloquence is mute,
O let his tears, his ceaseless groans avail!

Come, gentle pity, come, unwonted guest,
And speed thy hasty flight to Hela's cave,
Soul-softening spirit, hover o'er her breast,
And teach her yielding heart to feel and save.

And canst thou, Hela, see with ruthless look,
The fairest form that wails along thy shore? —
Tear the black leaf from Fate's unerring book,
The grief-worn Balder to my arms restore.[2]

Taylor has explained for us the immediate source of Sayers's *Descent of Frea*. In 1773 the Danish poet, Johannes Ewald, published his *Balders Død*. "Of this mythologic drama," says Taylor, "I had brought home a German translation, the substance of which I communicated to Dr. Sayers, and we construed together several of the critical scenes. This Danish play suggested the Descent of Frea,

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[1] "Milton and Gray," says Taylor in his biography of Sayers (Sayers's *Works*, p. xxiv), "remained the favourite poets with him; he had pocket-editions of them, and kept them at his fingers ends."

[2] Pp. 124 f.

which might be considered in some degree as a second part, or continuation thereof."[1] "The Descent of Frea remains," says Taylor succinctly, "with the single exception perhaps of Milton's Comus, the finest Masque extant in the English language." The "perhaps" is a gracious concession.

The remaining contribution to *Dramatic Sketches, — Oswald, a Monodrama,*— represents the soliloquy of "a Gothic Chieftain" who, "oppressed at once by old age and a painful disease, exerts his remaining strength to die in a manner which was esteemed highly honourable by his countrymen, and was also believed to entitle him to a seat in Valhalla"[2] — that is, by stabbing himself. Here is his dying rhapsody:

> Yes, friendly steel, thy searching point is moist
> With Oswald's blood.
> [*After a pause.*
> — What glorious visions rise!
> I see the festive gods at Odin's board!
> I hear the splendid warrior's gladsome din.
> Yon golden seat is vacant — 't is for me —
> I come, I come, the gloom of death has wrapt
> My eyes in mist. — Hark, hark! — the notes of joy
> Die on my ear — and now a louder peal
> Bursts on my fluttering soul —
> [*He dies.*

The *Dramatic Sketches* are accompanied by any number of learned or quasi-learned notes which cite, — besides the authors already mentioned, — Olaus Magnus, Mathias, Hickes, Saxo, Keysler, Sammes, Schedius, Bartholin, *Edda Sæmundar*, *Edda Resenii*, Verstegan, Gräter,

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[1] Sayers's *Poetical Works*, p. xl. "*The Death of Balder* will not long, I hope," Taylor adds, "remain unknown to British literature; it has been rendered into English verse from the original Danish by Mr. G. Borrow, of Norwich, who at twenty years of age, translated, with facility and elegance twenty different languages." Professor Knapp, *Life, Writings, and Correspondence of George Borrow*, London, 1899, II, 365, notes *The Death of Balder* as printed for the first time at Norwich in 1892. The Supplement to the Catalogue of Printed Books in the British Museum, however, records an edition bearing the date 1889.

[2] *Introduction*, p. 66.

and Percy. A *Preface* explains the author's motives in publishing the poems:

Among the variety of Mythological systems [it begins] which have contributed, at different periods, to decorate the poetry of England, it is much to be lamented that we should discover only the faintest traces of the splendid and sublime religion of our Northern ancestors. Mr. Gray is the only one among our more celebrated poets who has deigned to notice the sacred fables of the Goths: he has selected from them skilfully, though sparingly; and even the small portion of them, which he has chosen to introduce into his writings, has well repaid his attention by giving to some of his more popular performances both grandeur and novelty. It is certain, however, that the most magnificent features of Scandinavian superstition have hitherto been chiefly concealed in the Eddas and Sagas of the North, or have appeared only in the tragedies of Klopstock and a few other pieces, little known, except among the Germans and Danes,[1] to whom they owe their existence. This being the case, I am tempted to publish the following Sketches, with a view of giving some slight idea of the neglected beauties of the Gothic religion, and of recommending a freer introduction of its imagery into the poetry of the English nation.

In the fourth edition, however, 1807, a significant footnote is appended to this passage: "Although the above assertions, which I have permitted to remain, as pointing out the motives for the original publication of this work, were, I believe, at the time they were written (in 1789), nearly accurate; yet it will not be improper to observe, that they do not equally apply at the *present day*, when the knowledge of the Gothic Mythology, and the use of it in poetical compositions, have been much promoted by the productions of several living authors of great merit."

"By the English public in general," says Taylor,[2] "the Dramatic Sketches were received with gratitude and admiration, not with eagerness and enthusiasm. The mythology was at that period too

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[1] For a valuable discussion of the Germans here alluded to, the reader is referred again to Richard Batka's papers in the *Euphorion* (see above, p. 87, n). For the Danes, see Anderson's translation of Horn's *Hist. of the Lit. of the Scand. North*, Chicago, 1895, Part II, especially chaps. iii–vi.

[2] Sayers's *Poetical Works*, p. xliv.

strange for popularity.[1] . . . In Germany, where the early religion of the north had been more studied and was better known, the instantaneous reception of these poems was loud and warm." Then follows a translation of a review of Sayers in the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung*, which prophesies that "posterity will bind the name of Sayers close to that of Gray, to whose muse his seems remarkably akin." "Two German translations of these poems speedily appeared," Taylor tells us, "the one in blank verse by F. D. Græter, to which good antiquarian notes were attached; and the other in rime by Dr. J. W. Neubeck. . . . The Dramatic Sketches had become an European classic even before they were recognized as a national one." [2]

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[1] It should be noted, however, that a second edition of the book was published in 1792, a third in 1803, and a fourth in 1807.

[2] On p. lviii Taylor prints a letter from Neubeck to Sayers, dated May 30, 1793, and "accompanied with a German copy of Dr. Neubeck's translation of the Dramatic Sketches, printed at Leipsic in 1793." The letter begins:

"Sir, There are in Germany at this time many who begin to relish the Mythology of our Northern ancestors. This being the case, those of my countrymen, who are sufficiently acquainted with the English Language, were much charmed with the spirit, judgment, and all those beauties of your learned Muse. Our best critics admire the novelty, simplicity, style and painting in the Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology. I have read these poems, which could not but give me great pleasure, and therefore I was tempted to translate them into German. I send you the book itself and wish that it may have your approbation."

Another letter from Neubeck to Sayers, dated Dec. 28, 1795 (pp. lix f.), shows that the correspondence was kept up. Neubeck thanks Sayers for sending him Mason's *Poems* and asks him for Jerningham's works and Akenside's *Hymn to the Naiads*. In return Neubeck sends his new book, *Die Gesundbrunnen*, and some of his poems.

Taylor also quotes (pp. lxxix f.) a letter to Sayers from Scott, dated June 20, 1807, in which Scott says: "I have been long an admirer of your runic rhymes. . . . We owe much to those who have united the patience of the antiquary, and the genius of the poet, in their researches into former times, and in this honoured list your name has long held a distinguished rank." Below this is printed a letter to Sayers from W. L. Bowles, dated Nov. 27, 1807. Bowles praises particularly the *Descent of Frea:* "The wildness of the circumstances and characters, the novelty and sublimity of the imagery, the rich and appropriate diction, and the unity and simplicity of the conduct, in my opinion place it far above anything in Gray." It should be said that these letters from Scott and Bowles were both sent in acknowledgment of copies of Sayers's book *ex dono auctoris*. See further, with regard to Bowles, pp. 149 f., below.

Some of the English reviews of the *Dramatic Sketches* are decidedly interesting: whether or not the general public had yet found itself able to cope with the difficulties of a "wild, yet terrific mythology," it is clear that since "Mr. Gray's muse" first departed "from that elegantly moral simplicity she assumed in the Country Church-yard," the professional critics had widened their intellectual horizon. Most of the reviewers of the last decade of the eighteenth century were able to discuss Norse literature and mythology with some degree of intelligence. The *Critical Review* (June, 1790) printed a lengthy and effusive appreciation, suspiciously suggestive of Dr. Drake:

> The religious system of the old Scandinavians . . . contains many images truly grand and sublime, such, as if skilfully introduced, might add many striking and unusual graces to modern poetry. The mythology of Greece and Rome is become trite and insipid . . . Neither in itself, indeed, is it to be compared with that of the North, in respect to gloomy grandeur and wild magnificence. . . . The beauties [of Northern mythology], however, have not been so much neglected as Dr. Sayers seems to apprehend, who compliments Gray at the expence of all his brethren. . . . Others also have been sensible of its charms,

particularly Mr. Hole and Mr. Sterling. The reviewer points out some inconsistencies in Sayers's treatment of Norse mythology, and ends by complimenting his "antiquarian knowledge" and "poetical abilities."

The *Monthly Review* (October, 1790) shakes its head over the "difficulties" of Dr. Sayers's undertaking, but credits him with "taste and energy" and concedes that his Runic poems "form a valuable addition to those with which Gray, Jerningham and Hole have already familiarized the English reader." Not to be taken in by the author's display of learning, the reviewer observes wisely that "Dr. S.'s knowledge of northern mythology seems rather derived from Mallet, than from the original sources: at least it does not appear that he is familiarly acquainted with the Scandinavian dialects; or that he has turned over, with anxious industry, the pages of Sæmund and Snorro, of Bartholinus and Resenius."

The *Analytical Review* (September, 1790) is a bit incoherent. The reviewer judiciously leaves his "extracts" pretty much to the "judgment" of the reader. He flounders about more or less in an

attempt to classify the *Sketches* and ends in this lucid fashion: "Dr. Sayers's Sketches having no originals to refer to, cannot be termed imitations or translations, at the same time the attempt to write in the ancient manner, and the mixture of antique and modern ideas will scarcely allow them that merit which distinguishes originality, in the true signification of the word. However, these sketches undoubtedly have considerable merit and many forcible images and poetic lines occur. — But we imagine that it would be an Herculean task to endeavor to introduce the Gothic mythology — nor is it, perhaps, possible for an author to write with the same degree of spirit and interest when he alludes to learned fictions, as he would, if he suffered his imagination to portray the tales which he lisped at school."

The *Gentleman's Magazine* (July, 1791) printed an anonymous *Sonnet, to the Author of Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology*, begging him to "resume"

> the harp, by Braga's finger strung
> With the smooth gold of his Iduna's hair,

and to "gird on" his

> crown of bardal oak once more,
> Nor leave it on the parching strand to dry.

Taylor prints this sonnet in the biographical sketch prefixed to his edition of Sayers's *Poetical Works*.[1] "As a manuscript copy, corrected by the author, occurs among the papers of Dr. Sayers," says Taylor, "I infer it to have been his intention that it should be preserved." Taylor does not mention the author, but alludes to him as "a contiguous observer"; so we are not to infer that Sayers wrote the sonnet himself. It appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* just before the publication of the second edition of the *Dramatic Sketches*.

Drake several times alludes to Sayers, and quotes freely from the *Sketches*.[2]

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[1] P. l.

[2] See *Literary Hours*, I, 145; II, 73; III, 322, 327 f., 352, 356, 387 f., 390 f., 429. Southey contributed an elaborate review of the 1823 edition of Sayers's *Collected Works* to the *Quarterly Review* (January, 1827; cf. Warter's *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, London, 1856, IV, 28), in which he writes appreciatively of the *Dramatic Sketches*. I am indebted for this reference to Stefansson's article in the *Nordisk Tidskrift för Vetenskap*, etc., for 1891, pp. 489 ff.

Polwhele's collection of *Poems Chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall* came out in 1792, the year in which Sayers published the second edition of his *Dramatic Sketches*. Three of the five poems contained in it dealing with Scandinavian subjects we have already considered: *K*'s *Incantation of Herva*, Polwhele's *Ragnar Lodbrog*, and Hole's *Tomb of Gunnar*.[1] The writer who signs himself *K* is responsible for two other pieces in the collection, also "from the Northern Mythology." One of these, *Gram and Gro*,[2] is adapted, the author says, from Saxo Grammaticus; the other, *Hother*,[3] from Olaus Magnus. The first tells the story of Gram, son of Skiold, and his wooing, in the disguise of a giant, of Gro, daughter of Sigtryg.[4] I transcribe a few of the opening lines:

> When GRAM in youthful ardour bold,
> By busy rumour had been told,
> A giant, with imperious pride,
> Claim'd SICTRUG'S daughter for his bride,
> With BESSUS eager for the fight,
> He mov'd t'ward *Gothland* in his might;
> His troops in savage spoils array'd
> To strike his foes with greater dread.
> Himself a rugged goat-skin wore,
> His hand a mace terrific bore;
> Or seeming furious to engage,
> Wielded as with giant rage.
> Thus arm'd, where through a wood she stray'd,
> They met by chance the royal maid:
> Trembling with fear her reins she shook,
> And thus in faultering accents spoke:

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[1] See above, pp. 52, 74 f., 113.

[2] I, 104–109. Cf. Saxo, bk. i, ed. Müller and Velschow, I, 26 ff.

[3] I, 110–113.

[4] "Joannes Magnus, Archbishop of Upsal, observes in his history of the Goths, that ravishing of women was of old no less frequent among the Scandinavians than among the Greeks. He relates that Gram, son to the King of Denmark, carried off the King of Sweden's daughter, whose beauty was celebrated in verses remembered even in his time." Home, *Sketches of Man*, 2d ed., 1778, I, 485. The passage alluded to is in the *Historia Gothorum* of Joannes Magnus, Rome, 1554, lib. ii, cap. 5, pp. 67 f.

GRO.

Methinks the giant I espy,
His darkening footsteps thwart my eye.
Or roves my sight in error wide?
For oft beneath some shaggy hide
The valiant warrior stalks unseen,
Veiling his form and comely mein.

A colloquy ensues between Gram and Bessus on the one side, who are boastful, and Gro on the other, who is defiant. Finally Gram throws off his disguise, and Gro, who up to this time has believed him to be a giant, yields herself to him.

Hother gives us the story told by Olaus Magnus of "Hotherus Rex" and his adventure at the shrine of certain oracular maidens,[1] who warn him against Balder and dismiss him with a suit of magic armor. The poem begins:

HOTHER left the sounding shore,
Through the woods he sought the boar.
O'er his head a tempest pass'd,
His companions shunn'd the blast.
Him a glittering cloud led on,
(HOTHER, valour's chosen son!)
'Till before his wond'ring eyes
He a lofty portal spies;
There the fatal sisters stand,
He accosts the virgin band;

Who are ye, whose floor I tread?
Wherefore am I hither led?

We o'er war and death preside;
We direct the battle's tide,
Closely hid from mortal view,
We protect the favour'd few;

[1] "Erant prætereà in Aquilonaribus terris nonnulla templa Dianæ, & Cereri consecrata, ædesque fatalium sororum absque humana ope præstigioso quodam artificio extructę: quas antiqui, super futuris liberorum euentibus Parcarum oracula consulturi, nuncupatis solenniter votis, precabundi accedere consueuerunt." Olaus Magnus, *De Gent. Sept.*, Rome, 1555, lib. iii, cap. 10, p. 110. Olaus gets the story from Saxo.

Whom we please success shall crown,
Dreadful is our angry frown.
We the warrior kill, or save,
We to conquest urge the brave.
Take these arms, for thee decreed,
Thou in battle shalt not bleed.
Thine the helm, and shield of proof
Forg'd beneath our magic roof.
But with BALDER shun the fight,
He shall ne'er confess thy might:
(BALDER, secret seed of heaven!)
Take the armour we have given.

Forth they rush on wings of wind,
Not a trace is left behind.

The second half of the poem tells of Hother's return to the fatal sisters, his surrender of the enchanted armor, and his subsequent encounter with "three fair virgins," who bestow upon him a girdle

Duly wove with magic might,
Powerful to prevail in fight,

by means of which Hother overcomes his enemies. The poem is conspicuous for its vagueness and its lack of unity.

In its review of Polwhele's book, the *Gentleman's Magazine* (August, 1792) gave particular attention to the Norse pieces:

The translations, from Saxo-Grammaticus, of Scandinavian poetry, are not devoid of spirit and sublimity. Some of the names are not, indeed, well calculated to excite any grand ideas, and might have been altered or softened without any impropriety. "Gram and Gro" is the title of the first poem; and the other names mentioned in it are Bessus and Tictrug.[1] The incantation of Herva, taken from one of the "Five Pieces of Runic Poetry" published some few years[2] since, strikes us as peculiarly excellent: it is characteristic, wild, and aweful.

In May, 1793, there appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* an anonymous *Runic Ode* bearing the title *The Haunting of*

[1] A misprint for "Sictrug."
[2] Twenty-nine!

Havardur. The poem fills a little more than a column of the magazine; it begins:

Son of Angrym, warrior bold,
Stay thy travel o'er the wold;
Stop, Havardur, stop thy steed,
Thy death, thy bloody death 's decreed.
She, Coronzon's lovely maid,
Whom thy wizard wiles betray'd,
Glides along the darken'd coast,
A frantic, pale, and shrouded, ghost.
Where the fisher dries his net,
Rebelling waves her body beat;
Seduc'd by thee, she toss'd her form
To the mad fury of the storm.

Know, thou feeble Child of Dust,
Odin 's brave, and Odin 's just;
From the Golden Hall I come
To pronounce thy fatal doom:
Never shalt thou pass the scull
Of rich Metheglin deep and full:
Late I left the giant throng
Yelling loud thy funeral song;
Drinking large, in wondrous dread,
Curses on thy guilty head.
Soon, with Lok, thy tortur'd soul
Must in boiling billows roll;
Till the God's eternal light
Bursts athwart thy gloom of night;
Till Surtur gallops from afar
To burn this breathing world of war.

This ode was reprinted in the *Annual Register* for 1793[1] under the signature "C. Lestley."

The next publication we have to consider is an important one: *Icelandic Poetry, or The Edda of Sæmund Translated into English Verse*, by A. S. Cottle, Bristol, 1797. This is a rhymed translation of the entire contents of the first volume of the Copenhagen Edda[2] with one

[1] Pp. 136–138.

[2] For the list, see p. 106, above.

exception: "The translator has omitted one ode in this series," the *Preface* explains,[1] "on account of its containing nothing of the Northern Mythology. It is filled with little else but the absurd superstitions of the Church of Rome." The omitted poem is *Sólarljóð*, printed at the end of the series in the Copenhagen Edda.

Cottle's translations are provided with the usual *Introduction* of thirty pages, in which some of the details of Norse mythology are explained and a few of the more accessible sources of information are pointed out. There is also an array of not very valuable notes. About the most interesting thing in the book, for our purposes, is an introductory poem, in blank verse, of twelve pages, *To A. S. Cottle, from Robert Southey*, professing interest in Cottle's subject. I quote a passage near the beginning:

> Thro' wildest scenes of strange sublimity,
> Building the Runic rhyme, thy Fancy roves;
> Niflhil's nine worlds, and Surtur's fiery plain,
> And where upon Creation's uttermost verge,
> The weary Dwarfs, that bear the weight of Heaven,
> Hope the long winter that no spring must cheer,
> And the last sound that from Heimdaller's trump
> Shall echo thro' all worlds, and sound the knell
> Of earth and heaven.
>
> A strange and savage faith
> Of mightiest power! it fram'd the unfeeling soul
> Stern to inflict and stubborn to endure,
> That laugh'd in death. When round the poison'd breast
> Of Regner clung the viper brood, and trail'd
> Their coiling length along his festering wounds,
> He, fearless in his faith, the death-song pour'd,
> And lived in his past fame; for sure he hoped
> Amid the Spirits of the mighty dead
> Soon to enjoy the fight. And when his sons
> Avenged their father's fate, and like the wings
> Of some huge eagle spread the severed ribs
> Of Ella, in the shield-roof'd hall they thought
> One day from Ella's skull to quaff the mead,
> Their valours guerdon.

[1] P. xxix.

Wild the Runic faith,
And wild the realms where Scandinavian Chiefs
And Scalds arose, and hence the Scalds' strong verse
Partook the savage wildness. And methinks
Amid such scenes as these, the Poet's soul
Might best attain full growth.

Southey makes some observations with regard to the composition of the book in a letter to William Taylor of Norwich, dated January 4, 1799.[1]

I should ascribe the review of Amos Cottle's "Edda" and the version of "Vafthoudmismal" in the Monthly Magazine[2] to you, if I thought you understood the Icelandic language. Is that the case? He was in a hurry, and wanted northern learning, but seemed to have no idea of knowing how or where to look for it. The "Edda" fell into his hands and delighted him. His brother, who knows no language but English, wanted to read it, and he had begun a prose translation, when I advised him to versify it: in the course of six weeks he had the book half printed. All this was not as it should have been. However his book will make the Runic tales more familiar, and may perhaps give a good direction to the genius of some young man, into whose hands it may fall.

It would be my intention, if I could speculate upon leisure some three years hence, to build up a Runic song,[3] but I must clear the ground first.

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[1] Printed in J. W. Robberds's *Memoir of the Life and Writings of the late William Taylor of Norwich*, London, 1843, I, 245 ff. [2] See below, pp. 137 f.

[3] The earliest hint of Southey's interest in Norse that I have been able to find, occurs in a letter written July 31, 1796, to Grosvenor Bedford (*Life and Correspondence of Robert Southey*, edited by Charles Cuthbert Southey, 2d ed., London, 1849, I, 286 ff.). In the course of this letter Southey says: "I want to write my tragedies of the Banditti —

Of Sebastian,
Of Iñez de Castro,
Of the revenge of Pedro.
My epic poem, in twenty books, of Madoc.
My novel, in three volumes, of Edmund Oliver.
My romance of ancient history of Alcas.
My Norwegian tale of —— Harfagne.
My Oriental poem of the Destruction of Dom Daniel.
And in case I adopt Rousseau's system —
My —— Pains of Imagination.

There, Grosvenor, all these I want to write!

Ototototoi!"

My head has at present the materials for three great works in it, each deserving a whole and undivided attention.

It is evident enough why Southey should wish to include a "Norwegian" among his "banditti." In the first place, the picturesqueness of the Norse system of mythology appealed to him. Thus he writes to Thomas Southey on the 11th of November, 1797 (*Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, edited by John Wood Warter, London, 1856, I, 46): "Amos Cottle's translation of the Edda is published and I have brought over a copy for you. You know it was my intention to write him some lines that might be prefixed, and perhaps sell some half-dozen copies among my friends: you will find them there. The book itself will not interest you; it is only calculated for those who study mythology in general, the antiquities of the north, or who read to collect images for poetry: it happens to suit me in all these points."

In the second place, Southey had read Sayers's *Dramatic Sketches*. In the *General Preface* to his *Poetical Works*, dated May 10, 1837, Southey writes (*Poetical Works*, 10 vols., Boston, 1864, I, 5): "I read [Sayers's] 'Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology' when they were first published, and convinced myself, when I had acquired some skill in versification, that the kind of verse in which his choruses were composed was not less applicable to narration than to lyrical poetry. . . . This measure . . . seemed the most appropriate vehicle . . . [for] the Arabian romance [i.e. *Thalaba*]."

Again, he wrote to Taylor, Jan. 23, 1803 (Robberds's *Memoir*, I, 447): "It is now just ten years since I bought the 'Dramatic Sketches,' the first book I was ever master of money enough to order at a country bookseller's."

I have already called attention to Southey's review of Sayers in the *Quarterly Review* (January, 1827). In the biography prefixed to Sayers's *Poetical Works* Taylor tells (p. lxviii) of Southey's first meeting with Sayers. This account should be compared, however, with Southey's own story of the interview, printed in the *Preface* to his *Ballads and Metrical Tales* (*Poetical Works*, Boston, 1864, VI, 3 f.).

Southey's notion of some day writing a "Norwegian tale" (which, so far as I know, never took concrete form) gradually assumed ampler proportions. On July 27, 1801, Southey wrote to Taylor (Robberds's *Memoir*, I, 371): "I purpose metrical romances upon the basis of Hindoo, Persian and Runic mythology. The Persian seed is sown. Give me four years' life and I will complete all." Again in November of the same year (*Mem.*, I, 386) he wrote in the course of a defense of the supernatural as used by Milton and Klopstock: "Thus also in the romance of my future manufactory, Indra, Yamen, and the Sorgon spirits, the two families of light and darkness, the gods and heroes of Valhalla, these are to be the acting as well as the aiding personages of the tale." Again in January, 1803 (*Mem.*, I, 447), he assures Taylor, "The Runic mythology will come under my hands in its turn." Finally, in November, 1805, he writes to Taylor (*Mem.*, II, 111): "By the blessing of God, you will see my Hippogryff touch at Hindostan, fly back to

Taylor replied, January 28:[1]

You err not in ascribing to me both the reviewal of Cottle's "Edda," and the version of the Gothic cosmogony. My knowledge of the Icelandic is not, indeed, very profound, but I have gone through the grammar in Hickes's "Thesaurus." I possess many good vocabularies of the northern tongues, which all resemble the German and English, and, like the Dutch and Danish, are in a high degree intelligible to me. I had by me the German translation of Grüter,[2] and thought myself strong enough to venture on the sort of criticism I adopted. I hope he attributes to me no inurbanity, as I have given to his poetry at least *all* the praise which I think it deserves.

Taylor's review of Cottle appeared in the *Monthly Review* for December, 1798. Whether Cottle considered it inurbane or not, it could scarcely have been pleasant reading for him:

The Edda of Sæmund [writes the reviewer] was published at Copenhagen in 1787, accompanied with a very vicious Latin interpretation; and

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Scandinavia, and then carry me among the fire-worshippers of Istakhar: you will see him take a peep at the Jews, a flight to Japan, and an excursion among the saints and martyrs of Catholicism. Only let me live long enough and earn leisure enough, and I will do for each of these mythologies what I have done for the Mohammedan."

It is hardly necessary to say that Southey never carried out the Scandinavian part of this programme. Probably his nearest approach to the projected poem is the bit of work mentioned in a letter to Taylor written in 1807 (*Mem.*, II, 198–199): "Do you remember the story of Thorkill in Saxo Grammaticus? [book 8.] I translated it ten years ago, with the view of making something out of it." I cannot find that this translation was ever published.

In his *Book of the Church* (Boston, 1825, I, 65 ff.) Southey speaks of the office of the skald and takes occasion to make a brief summary of the essential principles of Norse mythology. Cf. also, in this connection, a letter written to Southey by Taylor, March 27, 1804 (*Mem.*, I, 493), in which he suggests Southey's making Edmund Ironside "the hero of an epopœa with Gothic and Christian mythology," and Southey's reply (*Mem.*, I, 499), in which he discourages this method of exploiting "the triumph of Christianity over the religion of the Edda."

[1] *Memoir*, I, 249.

[2] A misprint for Gräter. Gräter's *Nordische Blume*, Leipzig, 1789, contained, among other tracts, *Regner Lodbroks Todesgesang*, a treatise *Ueber die Nornen*, and *Dialogen und Erzählungen aus der älteren Edda*. Several volumes of Gräter's *Bragur* had also been published, in which were German renderings of the *Þrymskviða*, the *Vegtamskviða*, and other Norse pieces.

with visionary mythological notes which . . . are every way unworthy of a philosophical antiquary. On this interpretation, Mr. Cottle uniformly relies for his construction of the text; and to these notes he is commonly indebted for his attempts at illustration. He has indeed occasionally profited by Percy's well-edited translation of Mallet's Northern Antiquities: but with the greater part of what else has been written on this topic, he seems scarcely at all acquainted. He will appear, therefore, to those who have cultivated these inquiries, to be somewhat *behind-hand* with his subject.

Taylor then goes over the *Introduction*, which he regards as a pretty superficial piece of work, and proceeds to quote the twenty-six stanzas making up what Cottle calls *The Song of the Ravens* (*Hrafnagaldr Óðins*), omitting the notes, "not being thoroughly satisfied of their soundness." "To these lines," he concludes, "we have nothing to object, but their frequent disagreement with the Icelandic text: the translation of a translation, however elegant, is at best but the shadow of a shade."

William Herbert shared Taylor's opinion of Cottle's work. He remarks in his Notes to the *Song of Thrym:*[1]

> Mr. Cottle has published, what he calls a translation of this ode, but it bears little resemblance to the original. Translations made, like Dr. Percy's, by a person quite unacquainted with the Icelandic language, through the medium of a Latin prose version, cannot be expected to represent the style and spirit of the originals: but Mr. C. has not even taken the trouble of understanding the Latin. . . . [He] has confounded the nominative, genitive, accusative, and vocative cases, apparently ignorant of the Latin grammar. In the thirteenth stanza he has represented Freyia as consenting to go instead of refusing, which destroys the sense of all that follows.

The *Critical Review* (January, 1798) had a good word to say of Cottle's version of the *Vegtamskviða:* "The well-known descent of Odin is included in the song of the Traveller; and this is the only fragment of the series which had previously appeared in our language. Popular as Gray's version is, we think the translator has done wisely in inserting one of his own; the loose and rapid versification which he has adopted, is best calculated to represent the original; and with this the polished style of Gray would ill have accorded."

[1] Written in 1803. See Herbert's *Works*, 1842, I, 179.

The only specimens of Cottle's translations I care to give are some verses from the poem just mentioned, the *Song of the Traveller, or the Descent of Odin*, which the reader may be interested in comparing with Gray's poem:[1]

VI

Then, uprising from his place,
Odin — friend of human race,
Strait caprison'd[2] his steed —
Sleipner of etherial breed.
As down to Hela's realms he drew,
Thick the shades of darkness grew:
The Dog of Hell, with ceaseless bay,
Pursu'd the trav'ller on his way.

VII

Rous'd from his feast of death, with gore,
His shaggy limbs were crimson'd o'er:
Still round his fangs the fibres hung,
Quiv'ring on his frothy tongue.
He bark'd! and thro' the void profound,
Hell re-echo'd to the sound.

VIII

With dauntless soul the hero rode;
Safe he reach'd the dire abode;
Now the sacred portals prest;
Trembling earth the God confest!
Towards the east then bent his way,
Where low beneath the sorceress lay.

IX

With magic rites the concave rung;
Necromantic airs he sung;
Hyperborean climates view'd;
Runic rhymes around he strew'd;
Deep the incantation wrought;
Then the maid sepulchral sought.
From the hollow tomb beneath,
Volva's voice was heard to breathe!

[1] Cottle, by the way, makes no mention of Gray.

[2] *Sic.*

VOLVA.

What mortal he who dares invade
The dwelling where my bones are laid?
The snows of ages long I 've worn;
Long the driving tempest borne;
Long the rains have drench'd my head;
Long I 've moulder'd with the dead.

ODIN.

Vegtam is the invader's name,
Sprung from sires of warlike fame.
Mortal truths will he reveal;
Thou no work of fate conceal.
Tell me for what hero's shade,
Yon seat with costliest care array'd.
Destin'd for whom, that radiant bed,
Rich with golden trappings spread.

Since Cottle's *Icelandic Poetry* was the first English translation of the only volume of the Copenhagen Edda that had then appeared, it naturally became well known to everybody who had any interest in Norse mythology. Drake quoted the book constantly in his *Literary Hours*, and it was for many years invariably cited by English writers on Scandinavian subjects.[1]

It will be remembered that in the letter quoted above,[2] where Southey charges William Taylor of Norwich with having reviewed Cottle's *Icelandic Poetry* for the *Monthly Review*, he alludes also to a "version of 'Vafthoudmismal'" which appeared about the same time in the *Monthly Magazine* and which he suspects Taylor to have written. Taylor, as we have seen, acknowledged the authorship of both the review and the poem, and made a tolerably specific assertion with regard to his acquaintance with the Norse language. Southey's

[1] One other performance of Cottle's should be mentioned, — a *Norwegian Ballad* translated in prose from *Le Nord Littéraire* and printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for January, 1800. It is a simple love story, the principal characters in which are a peasant girl, Annette, and a young Norwegian soldier named Thor.

[2] P. 131.

reservation — "if I thought you understood the Icelandic language" — indicates that up to this time Taylor had made little, if any, practical use of his knowledge of Scandinavian; and as a matter of fact these two performances are the earliest trace I have been able to find of his activity in this direction.

The "version of 'Vafthoudmismal'" is a paraphrase in Hiawatha-like metre of the *Vafþrúðnismál*, one of the poems printed in the 1787 volume of the Copenhagen Edda. Taylor's paraphrase appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* for December, 1798, under the grotesque title *The Meal of Vafthruthni*,[1] preceded by a short essay on *Runic Sagas*. The essay touches lightly upon the origin of runes and the probability of an historical Odin, and characterizes, briefly, the literature of the North. The sagas, he says, — using the term loosely for Norse literature in general, — "will acquire an increasing interest among all the descendants from the Gothic stock. They are supplying to new poets the outlines of an original mythology: and they will afford a favourite text for commentary to all the antiquaries who shall in future busy themselves with arctic paleosophy."

The *Vafþrúðnismál* is a trial of wisdom between Odin and the old giant Vafþruðnir. Odin asks the giant various questions with regard to more or less obscure matters of cosmogony, all of which the wise giant answers with provoking accuracy, until finally Odin, at his wit's end, takes unfair advantage of his opponent by demanding to know what he himself, Odin, had whispered in Balder's ear as Balder lay stretched upon the funeral pyre; whereupon Vafþruðnir confesses himself beaten. The poem opens with a dialogue between Odin and Frigg. I quote from Taylor's version:

> *Odin.* Friga, counsel thou thy lord,
> Whose unquiet bosom broods
> A journey to Vafthruni's hall,
> With the wise and crafty Jute
> To contend in Runic lore.
> *Friga.* Father of a hero-race,
> In the dwelling-place of Goths,

[1] Altered to *Lay of Vafthrudni* in the reprint in Taylor's *Historic Survey of German Poetry*, ed. 1828, I, 20 ff.

Let me counsel thee to stay;
For to none among the Jutes,
Is Vafthruni's wisdom given.
Odin. Far I 've wander'd, much sojourn'd,
In the kingdoms of the earth;
But Vafthruni's royal hall
I have still the wish to know.
Friga. Safe departure, safe return,
May the fatal sisters grant!
The father of the years that roll,
Shield my daring traveller's head!

Odin rose with speed, and went
To contend in Runic lore,
With the wise and crafty Jute.
To Vafthruni's royal hall
Came the mighty king of spells.

Odin. Hail Vafthruni, king of men,
To thy lofty hall I come,
Beckon'd by thy wisdom's fame.
Art thou, I aspire to learn,
First of Jutes in Runic lore?
Vafthruni. Who art thou? whose daring lip
Doubts Vafthruni's just renown?
Know that to thy parting step
Never shall these doors unfold,
If thy tongue excel not mine
In the strife of mystic lore.
Odin. Gangrath, monarch, is my name,
Needing hospitality,
To thy palace-gate I come;
Long and rugged is the way
Which my weary feet have trodden.
Vaf. Gangrath, on the stool beneath
Let thy loitering limbs repose:
Then begin our strife of speech,[1] etc.

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[1] There are several notes, one of which, supposed to justify Taylor's queer use of "Jute" and "Goth" (the Norse words are *jętunn*, 'giant,' and *goð*, 'god'), is worth quoting: "The Danish interpreters should not be always followed in the

Taylor's next venture in the runic field was a bit of foolery. On the 4th of March, 1799, he wrote to Southey, who was busy with his *Annual Anthology*, "Have you a mind for a piece of waggery at Bristol, to find up [*sic*] 'More Reliques of Rowley'? I have half a tragedy in stanzas, with northern mythology, chorusses, and the English mis-spelt, like Chatterton's 'Goddwyn': the title is 'Wortigerne'; the quality of the composition less insipid than the 'Harold and Tosti,' which you read."[1] Southey replied (March 12th), "I should much like more relics of Rowley, were it not that the language would preclude them, like other relics, from ever becoming popular. . . . I should like to see your play."[2]

On the 16th of February, 1800, when Southey was working on the second volume of his *Anthology*, Taylor offered to send him "two acts of 'Wortigerne,' after the manner of Chatterton; which, however, must be ushered into the world with some equivocal words of advertisement, as if it were a real Rowley or more Chattertoniana."[3] On March 1 Taylor wrote again: "This serves to accompany two acts of 'Wortigerne.' You will be able to judge if they are best produced in the 'Anthology' or in some other form and time. They might be announced as manuscripts transmitted to the editor of Chatterton's works,[4] which, however, the public will hardly consider as real reliques of Rowley; but which contain passages of sufficient poetical merit to justify the publication, even before the exact history of the manuscript is ascertained."[5] Southey replied that there was no room for the poem in the *Anthology*, but that with Taylor's

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use of the words *god* and *giant*. The Goths and the Jutes were contiguous nations, part of whom ultimately became stationary in Gothland and Jutland. From the name of the latter, by coalescence with the article, is formed the denomination Teutones, Deutch. . . . These two nations were early hostile: Lucian (in his letter to Philo on history-writing) alludes to some account of a war between the Goths and the Jutes: and the Edda abounds with traces of their habitual rivalry. Vafthruni was a king of the Jutes." Cf. p. 200, below.

[1] Robberds's *Memoir*, I, 260.

[2] Id., p. 262.

[3] Id., p. 333.

[4] *The Works of Thomas Chatterton*, edited by Robert Southey and Joseph Cottle, appeared in three volumes in 1803.

[5] *Memoir*, I, 338.

permission he would "annex it, with all due doubtfulness of prefatory scepticism" to the new edition of Chatterton, where it would give "additional value to the volumes."[1]

Taylor, fortunately, protested against this scheme, which, he said neatly, "would be editing too much in character," and proposed sending the poem to the *Monthly Magazine*, "with some equivocal introduction" to be written by Southey, and "a glossary of the few words not in Chatterton or Tyrwhitt's Chaucer." His letter contains a brief review of his own performance:

All the antiquarian parts, the pictures of manners and the mythological allusions, are written with knowledge of the subject; the poetry, like all other poetry, is only here and there good. The worst piece of trash is the ballad in the first act. It is very easy to write verses with a deal of *ees*, because we may mis-spell into rime what tongue or ear never mistook for jingle before. There is merit of the pathetic sort in the scene between Rowene and Hengist, and of the epic sort in the scene of Rowene and the Skalds, describing the battle. That is a good moment when Hengist, on discovering his guest, is "content his labouring breast unswoll." The warre-songs approach several times to fine poetry; but there still remains too much of them, although I omitted to write out fair a full third of what lies by me yrimedde carefullie.[2]

Southey respected Taylor's wishes, and the play appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* for January, 1801 (supplementary number), with the following "equivocal introduction":

MORE RELIQUES OF ROWLEY.

Rumours have long been circulated, that the new edition of Chatterton is to contain many hitherto unpublished Poems; but, as yet, no specimen has been laid before the public. We are happy in being permitted to insert the following Dramatic fragment: although we have many doubts, because we have no proofs, of its genuineness. Our readers will, however, derive pleasure from the perusal, and will probably agree with us, in thinking the ballad in the first act to be the most tedious, and the battle in the second act, to be the most brilliant part of the poem. That the Correspondent who transmitted it will continue his transcript we earnestly solicit, and request he will accompany the continuation with a glossary, and with a circumstantial history of its discovery.

[1] *Memoir*, I, 339 f. [2] Id., I, 345.

The text follows under the title *Wortigerne, A Playe.* The play opens with a dialogue between Hengist and Horsa, a few lines of which I reproduce:

Hengist. Mie brodherre seemeth you thisse Brydyan kinge
Not a vilde trecherre to wythhalde the londe
Wyche whyle hisse Pykishe foenwesen menacynge
Hisse promyse made the meede of oure bystonde?
Itte reweth me to have yrearde a honde
To save hisse cowarde liegemen fro mishappe.
Falle theie hynceforthe byfore the steelie bronde
Ov the bolde Pykkes: I joye gyf theie awhappe
Ne long mie vengeaunce sleepes in dulle unactions lappe.

Horsa. Inne trothe 't were betterre gyf yleng the coste
Oure speedie shyppes yette croisedde merrilie;
Daunger and toyle hadde lesse forworne our hoste
And richerre bootie inne the sacke shuld lie.
Aletubbes and corne and hammes yheped hie
Ere thisse hadde storde our winter-hame, I weene,
And Romayne gaudes devysedde daintilie
Ygladde oure wyves and daughterres wyth theire sheene,
The modherres honest pryde our darynge hadde bewreene.

These too had pleasaunce of tenerre ymet
Oure lustie younglynges on thun wittynge shore.
Hynse the coie mayde is fledde on warie fet.
Where the grimme nighbourhode of warre doth lowre,
The modherre pyghtes her in the hylsterde bowre,
Ne stondes she to the warryerres wishe confeste
Who claspes her hastie inne the daungerous howre
Fyndes in withstonden love a twyfolde zeste
Of rosier hewe the cheeke of wermer throbbe the breste.

Hengist. From Wortigerne hisse unryghte I ne brooke.
Watte saie ye, shuln we falle uponne these men
Nowe theie ygallde with fyghte doen lowlie looke,
For leech and frere bie tornes do wend theire ken,
And kneede theire fetherie beddes lyche nestlynge hen,
As gyf an achynge lymbe misseemde the grounde?

Horsa. Thie well are worthe itte; but the foen are ten
To one ayenst usse.
Hengist. Dearer evrie wounde
Whan is ywon the daie yatte in oure syde is founde.

Finally Hengist and Horsa decide to make an attempt to secure their "londe" by driving a bargain with Wortigerne. They promise to protect him against the encroachment of Arthur, of whom he is becoming jealous, if he will marry Rowene, Hengist's daughter. Wortigerne at first objects to putting away his British wife, but at last, under the double incentive of Rowene's charms and Hengist's threats, he yields. Here ends the "First Deede."

At the opening of the "Syconde Deede," it transpires that "shending Cluthaline," his wife, has proved too much for the fickle Wortigerne, who now bids the Saxons do their "wyrste." A herald arrives from the camp of Arthur and challenges Hengist to battle. Presently "Rowene bringeth beere" and the herald, smitten with her "hevenlie beautie," "throweth back his eventalle" and shows himself to be Arthur. Arthur confesses (to the reader) his passion for Rowene and departs, promising to care for her if Hengist is slain. Then comes a very bloody battle between the Saxons on the one hand, and Arthur and Wortigerne on the other. Now and then "the Skaldes sing." Here is a portion of one of their hymns:

Rerve the cuppes ov skulles ameyne,
Freer draughtes ov carnage spylle,
The bowles wyth bloodde of Brydyanes steyne,
Father Woden, drynke dhie fylle.

Walkyres ope dhie pallase-dore,
Sowghles ov strevers thider tronge.
Skaldes belowe their prayses yore;
Bragger, yond their prayse prolonge.

. . . . . .

Lette the Chrystyane goddes avaunce
Seylynge inne embattelde hostes,
Seynktes maie couche the airie launce,
Theires the feeble arme ov gostes.

Woden, snatche the charmed roode
Woden, Chrystyane banneres, Woden.
Father Woden, Chrystyane bloode,
Woden, Chrystyane vyctymmes, Woden.

Lette theire aungelles hove in are
Sweepe the skyen with swerdes ov flame,
Sone theie pale the ydel glare
Sone theie shrynke atte Wodens name.

After some vacillation, the battle finally turns against Wortigerne, and at this point the fragment ends.

In one of the letters to Southey quoted above, Taylor speaks of *Wortigerne* as "less insipid than the 'Harold and Tosti,'" which Southey has read. This letter is dated March 4, 1799, but *Harold and Tosti, a Tragedy in three Acts, with Chorus*, was not published until 1810, when it came out in the April, May, and June numbers of the *Monthly Magazine*. The "Persons of the Play" are Edward, King of England, afterwards the Confessor; Harold and Tosti, sons of Goodwin, late Earl of Kent; Editha, daughter of Tosti; Minstrels in the pay of Harold. The scene is "the vestibule to a long Gothic hall" in the castle of Harold in Monmouthshire. The plot is very simple. Harold intrigues with Edward to give over to the king's pleasure Editha, daughter of Harold's brother Tosti. Tosti accidentally discovers the plot and stabs his daughter. Allusions to Norse deities are frequent and ill-judged. Minstrels sing of "the Nornies," "pale Hela," "Frea," and "Balder's beauty." Edward, kneeling at the feet of Editha, exclaims:

O, had I Balder's form to throw before thee,
Or Braga's music lurking in my voice,
Or from his golden cup that Hermod pour'd
The honey of persuasion on my tongue.

"Valhalla's bowers," "Tuisko," "Young Heimdal," "the Vauns," "Hlyna," and "Surter" are alluded to in the course of the action. These Norse names are all explained in footnotes.[1]

[1] The editor of the *Memoir of William Taylor* finds fault with the liberties Taylor takes with historical characters, his "appeals and allusions to the Scandinavian deities, at a supposed period of action, at least four hundred and fifty

Later witnesses to Taylor's interest in Norse literature are his translation of Gräter's version of the *Hervarar Saga* for *Tales of Yore* (1810), and the earlier chapters of his *Historic Survey of German Poetry* (1828), in which he writes at some length of Scandinavian poetry and prints a number of his own translations, among them one of a portion of the *Hávamál*.

We may turn now to Dr. Nathan Drake's *Literary Hours*, so frequently cited in the foregoing pages. The first volume came out at Sudbury in 1798. In 1800 appeared a second edition, corrected, and expanded to two volumes. In 1804 a third volume was added and the first two volumes were again revised and enlarged. The place of publication was shifted from Sudbury to London. In 1820 a fourth edition of the entire work appeared, also in three volumes. My references are all to the edition of 1804.

None of the essays in the first volume deals directly with Scandinavian literature, but some of them treat of subjects which might very well be illustrated by selections from the Edda; for example, *On Gothic Superstition*, *On Objects of Terror*, *On the Government of the Imagination*, and as a matter of fact the Edda is occasionally cited. In writing of *Gothic Superstition*, for instance, the author observes:

> Some attempts . . . have been lately made to revive the Scandinavian or Islandic Mythology, and the sublime effusions of Gray and Sayers have thrown a magic lustre round the daring creations of the Edda. That they will ever become popular must, I should imagine, be a matter of considerable doubt, but these authors have written for the few, for the lovers of genuine poetry, and with their suffrage they will certainly be contented.[1]

In the essay on *Lyric Poetry* in his second volume, Drake alludes[2] to the significance for lyricists of the "Gothic and Celtic superstition," and mentions in this connection, Gray, Hole, and Sayers. It is in the third volume, however, that the series of essays on *Scandinavian Mythology* and kindred subjects occurs from which I have

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years after the general adoption of Christianity in England," and his ineffective management of the choruses. Robberds thinks the play probably "the production of an earlier period and unformed taste," sent to the *Monthly Magazine* "with that carelessness of revision which anonymous publication is too apt to favour." See Robberds's *Memoir*, II, 303 ff. [1] P. 145. [2] P. 73.

quoted so often. Drake's acquaintance with eighteenth-century English translations from the Norse appears to have been more thorough than that of any other Englishman of his time, — and probably of any since his time, not excepting even Herbert; yet a comparison of the passage I am about to quote with the Chronological Table at the end of this volume, will show that a number of significant pieces of verse apparently escaped his attention. The second paragraph of the first essay on *Scandinavian Mythology* runs as follows:

> Modern poetry, however, seems to have drawn few embellishments from this ample store-house of imagery; from Dryden to Gray rare are the features which bear any resemblance to the sublime paintings of scaldic fancy. To the latter, it must be allowed, we are indebted for the introduction into lyric poetry of some very splendid and terrific strokes, the immediate offspring of the Edda, and his imitations from the Norwegian, in words that breathe and burn, place before our eyes two of its noblest fictions; but this fortunate commencement has not hitherto stimulated many to pursue a similar path. Two or three odes by *Penrose*, *Sterling* and *Bruce*, the Arthur of *Hole* and the Sketches of *Sayers*, a few imitations by *Mathias*, and the translations of *Percy*, *Downman* and *Cottle* form, I believe, nearly a complete list of our attempts to introduce the Scandinavian mythology.[1]

Drake made no pretense of learning. "The poet," he says, ". . . who wishes to avail himself of the treasures of this rich, and, hitherto, but little explored mine of fiction, must have recourse to the original writers. He must appeal to the Edda and Voluspa, he must study the works of Bartholinus, Wormius, Verelius, Keysler, and Mallet, and enter deeply into the minutiæ, the bearings and tendency of every part of the system. The *purport* of these Essays is merely to *awaken his attention* to the subject, and to enable the *lovers* of poetry, *without further research or trouble*, to *relish* and *understand* the splendid creations, which, in the hands of the genuine bard, this neglected mythology may give birth to."[2]

Drake has been quoted frequently enough in these pages for the reader to form an idea of the character and value of his literary

[1] III, 274 f. [2] III, 495.

judgments; but in spite of his prolixity, his doubtful standard of literary excellence, and the occasional grotesqueness of his style, his book is entertaining, even in our day. One cannot help admiring the honest enthusiasm of the man, and everybody who cares for Norse literature for its own sake is bound to respect Drake's efforts toward making it popular in his time. Drake's weaknesses as a critic were apparent to the people for whom he wrote. "Could he divest himself of too exclusive an admiration for the terrible and gigantic," said the *Monthly Review* (July, 1799) on the appearance of the first volume of *Literary Hours*, "we should seldom be induced to dissent from his conclusions. The mouldering cloyster, the gloomy cell, the awe-stricken votary of superstition, and the midnight-spectre, are the objects which his imagination delights to contemplate."

The next work that claims our attention is Joseph Cottle's epic poem in twenty-four books, *Alfred*, first published in 1800.[1] We have to do only with the first book of this tedious epic. The scene of the book is laid in Denmark, where Ivar, son of Ragnar Loðbrok, is represented as about to invade England. These are the opening lines:

> ALFRED victorious o'er the Danes, I sing.
>
> Prepared to seek again the British shore,
> Within his Father's hall Ivar now sat,
> Musing on future spoils. Around him throng'd
> His wrathful Sisters, rousing up his heart
> To vengeance 'gainst the race who slew their Sire.
> At Regner's name, Ivar uprose, his eye
> Beam'd fearful indignation, when he cried,
>
> "Death to our Foes! my spirit thirsts to see
> The blood of Saxons flowing ocean-like,
> Before my greedy eyes, whilst ever round
> Some mangled corse, writhing in agony,
> Shall add new transport to my bounding heart.
> Odin, immortal chief! I hear thy call,

[1] 2d ed., 1804. My references are to the "First American, from the last English edition," Newburyport, 1814, 2 vols.

And like thee, forth I go, to scorn the looks,
And scatter wide the bones, and heap the skulls
Of vanquish'd enemies. Death! view in me
Thy proudest Champion, soon ordain'd to swell
Slaughter's rank pile, and for the ravenous wolves
Provide new banquets! By the rapturous hope
Of one day joining the celestial throng
Amid Valhalla, hearing as I stalk,
From each brave Warrior, gratulations loud:—
By that proud confidence, here do I swear
To scorn all mercy!"

By advice of his sisters, Ivar visits a sorceress before leaving Denmark. Ivar's interview with this sorceress is obviously a reminiscence of the *Vegtamskviða*:[1]

"Around I gaz'd, in dread perplexity,
Then, sudden, look'd aghast! A Coffin, black,
Slow rising from the yawning sepulchre,
My sight arrested. As I earnest view'd
I saw the Sorceress! In her narrow bed
Senseless she lay, oppress'd with death-like sleep!
All sounds were hush'd. A stillness reign'd, as tho'
Nature herself had paus'd. I toward her mov'd
With spell to break her slumber, when, I saw—
Her Winding-sheet was snow, her Coffin stone.
I would have spoken, but, when I beheld
Her still and livid visage, and her eye
That through the thin, thin eye-lid half appear'd,
Back I recoil'd, unconscious, yet again,
Drew nigh her coffin, and in tremulous tones
Chaunted the runic song.

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[1] Cottle alludes to the *Vegtamskviða* in a note, p. 46. Herbert also draws upon this poem for an effective passage near the beginning of the second canto of his *Helga;* so does Thelwall for an episode in *The Fairy of the Lake*, and Drummond for an incident in the third book of his *Odin*. See below, pp. 160, 151, and 176. Cottle's first book is liberally provided with footnotes which repeat the stock explanations of allusions to Odin, Ragnar, Valhalla, and the like.

> Slowly the Witch
> Her form uprais'd, stiff with the cavern's damp
> Half red, half blue, whilst venom'd drops distill'd
> Upon her bare head, from the craggy roof,
> Where countless reptiles hung, and things unknown
> Forming one mass of life, which, as it moved,
> Rapid or slow, gave back the cauldron's light
> In ghastly radiance. The Sorceress spake,
> Rolling her troubled eyes. "I hear the call.
> What mortal dares disturb my long repose,
> And tread these mansions?" when, she cast her eye,
> Her black and shining eye stern in my face,
> And cried, 'Who *art* thou?'"

The sorceress warns Ivar that he will fall at the hands of the Saxons, but nevertheless he persists, his three sisters weave for him the Raven-banner, and he sets sail.

Cottle explains (in his *Preface*) his object in providing his poem with this singularly irrelevant opening:

> My deviation in the first book, from the rules which I had prescribed to myself, arose from the peculiar scope to the imagination which the wildness of the Gothic superstitions afforded. But although this book, in many respects, is of an opposite character to the rest, yet, the accurate observer will find in it, certain links and ramifications which intimately connect it with the remainder of the work.

In the *Preface* to his second edition, Cottle admits that his "first book, by some, has been deemed inconsistent with the rest, and an excrescence which should be sacrificed to the unity of design." He retains the book, however, substantially unaltered, and only regrets that the scheme of his epic prevents him from extending "the Scandinavian Mythology . . . systematically through the whole poem." An example of the sort of criticism he refers to is the following extract from the review of the book which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* for July, 1801 (supplementary number):

> Mr. Cottle, in a future edition of his Poem, will, doubtless, avail himself of those critical remarks which it hath called forth: he will probably alter

or entirely expunge, the first and the twenty-third books,[1] where the introduction of supernatural machinery creates an inconsistency in the conduct of the Poem which had better be avoided.

In spite of its insufferable tumidity, Cottle's *Alfred* became popular enough to warrant several reprints. The reader may be interested in Southey's comment on the poem. On the 26th of November, 1800, he wrote to Taylor from Lisbon: "From England nothing has reached me but the unhappy 'Alfred' of poor Cottle. I laboured hard and honestly to suppress its birth, and am thrown into a cold sweat by recollecting it."[2]

The second volume of William Lisle Bowles's *Poems*, 1801, contained a *Hymn to Woden* of which the *Critical Review* remarked (August, 1801), coupling it with another poem, "Gillmer and the Hymn to Woden are such odes as might have been expected of a boy of promise."[3] The *Hymn* consists of fifty or sixty lines, and begins:

> God of battle, hear our pray'r!
> By the lifted falchion's glare!
> By th' uncouth fane sublime,
> Mark'd with many a Runic rhyme;
> By the "weird Sisters" dread,
> That posting through the battle red
> Chuse the slain, and with them go
> To Valhalla's halls below,
> Where the phantom-chiefs prolong
> Their echoing feast, a giant throng;
> And their dreadful bev'rage drain
> From the skulls of warriors slain.
> God of battle, hear our pray'r!
> And may we thy banquet share!

[1] The twenty-third book relates Alfred's vision of his guardian angel.

[2] *Mem. of William Taylor*, I, 363. The reader will recall Byron's note in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (*Works*, ed. Coleridge and Prothero, *Poetry*, I, 328 f.): "Mr. Cottle, Amos, Joseph, I don't know which, but one or both, once sellers of books they did not write, and now writers of books that do not sell, have published a pair of Epics — *Alfred* (poor Alfred! Pye has been at him too!) — *Alfred* and the Fall of Cambria." Pye did not meddle with Norse mythology.

[3] I do not know whether or not the *Hymn* actually was a juvenile performance. My quotations are from *The Poetical Works of Milman, Bowles, Wilson, and Barry Cornwall*, Paris, 1829, pp. 136 f.

A note explains the "weird sisters" to be "Valkyriae, or Chusers of the Slain," and refers the reader to Gray's *Fatal Sisters*. Other notes explain Woden and Valhalla, and cite the *Grímnismál* (translated in the first volume of the Copenhagen Edda) and the *Eulogium of Hacon* in *Northern Antiquities*.

In another poem, *St. Michael's Mount*, first published in 1798, Bowles writes, apparently of the Britons:

> E'en now, impatient for the promised war
> They rear their axes huge, and shouting, cry to Thor!
> The sounds of conflict cease — at dead of night
> A voice is heard, "Prepare the Druid rite."[1]

Mention should be made of another work which was first published in 1801, though I have seen only a later edition. In the second volume of *Poems and Plays, by William Richardson, A.M., Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow*, a new edition, Edinburgh, 1805, is printed,[2] — *The Maid of Lochlin, a Lyrical Drama*, in five acts. The characters are: Starno, King of Lochlin; Fingal, King of Morven; High Priest of Odin; Ullin, a Bard; Messenger; Priests, Bards, etc.; Queen of Lochlin; Agandecca. The plot need not concern us: the important thing to notice is that we have a High Priest of Odin associated with Celts. "The subject," says Richardson in his *Advertisement*, "is taken from the poem of Fingal, attributed to Ossian." He continues:

> The idea of employing the northern mythology was suggested by a perusal of Mallet's History of Denmark, and the powerful imitations by Mr. Gray of the Scandinavian poetry. The same mythology has since that time been successfully employed in the runic odes of Mr. Mathias, and the dramatic sketches of Dr. Sayer [*sic*]. But though the religious opinions entertained by the ancient Scandinavians be now very generally known, especially by the translation of the introduction to Mallet's history, yet the author apprehends that his readers may not be dissatisfied with being reminded of some of the chief particulars mentioned or alluded to in the following poem.

Then follows a brief account of Odin, Thor, Balder, etc.

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[1] Id., p. 134. In a note Bowles quotes from the *Gylfaginning*, then accessible in the editions of Resenius and Göransson.

[2] Pp. 107–209.

In the course of the play Agandecca, the Celtic heroine, is credited with having the blood of Odin in her veins; the Bards sing of Frea, Braga, and Balder; and Starno, the king, invokes Scandinavian gods. The second act takes place in "the Temple of Odin."

Another interesting drama published this same year is John Thelwall's *The Fairy of the Lake*,[1] a kind of opera in three acts, the plot of which recalls Taylor's *Wortigerne*. Rowena, a sorceress, daughter of Hengist and wife of Vortigern, is in love with Arthur. Arthur loves Guenever, daughter of Vortigern, for whom her father has conceived an incestuous passion. The play deals with Rowena's attempts by magic to undo Guenever and to obtain Arthur's affections; it ends with her overthrow and the union and coronation of Arthur and Guenever. Arthur is aided by a fairy "Lady of the Lake"; Rowena, by Hela and her demons. We have a descent to the abode of Hela, who is invoked by Rowena "arrayed in her Pall and snaky Tiara; Edelthred and others attending; their hair dishevelled, and intermixed with Ivy, Hemlock, Nightshade, etc. A *Female Child* accompanies them, bearing the Pictured Drum and Double Hammer, with a rosary of Brazen Rings, and images of serpents, frogs, toads, and other obscene reptiles, used in the mysteries of Northern Magic." These stage directions must have been difficult to observe: "[Hela's] throne is guarded by THE GIANTS OF FROST, a race of deformed and enormous monsters, whose heads reaching the top of the stage, are involved in clouds and vapours. Their hair and beards formed of icicles: their Garments of Snow: their complexions livid, and their forms mishapen. Meteors play around their heads; and snow and hailstones issue from their mouths and nostrils. A throng of shuddering spectres around; some sauntering about; others root-bound; and all covered with snow and icicles."[2] In the course of this scene, which

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[1] Printed in *Poems Chiefly Written in Retirement*, by John Thelwall, Hereford, 1801. My attention was first called to this book by the Appendix to Georg Herzfeld's monograph on William Taylor of Norwich, Halle, 1897.

[2] P. 26. The play calls for various other uncanny creatures, among them "Demons of the Noon," and elaborate scenic changes that recall the Elizabethan masque. At the beginning of the second act, which takes place at "Lynn Savadan; or Langorse Pool; by Moonlight," there is a dance of the fairies and "THE LADY OF THE LAKE rises on a Throne of Spars and Coral, in a car, or water

probably owes its inspiration to Gray's *Descent of Odin*, occurs the following remarkable chorus of baffled phantoms:

Chorus. Fell enchantress! hold! forbear!
1. *Phantom.* 'T is in vain. We beat the air.
2. *Ph.* Phantom'd Terrors glare in vain.
3. *Ph.* Nature's laws no more restrain.
All three. Desperate Magic bursts the chain.
Cho. Hertha groans in terrene thunder:
Ribs of rock are burst assunder.

chariot, drawn by Swans." She sings a song clearly suggested by Milton's *Comus:*

Enough, ye elves and fairies! — ye who ride
The lunar beam, or on the surface skim,
Buoyant, of lake and rill, or thro mid air
Bestride the gossamer; and ye who lurk
Beneath my bordering flow'rets, or the leaves
Of pensile shrubs, that from Savadan's marge
Inhale their freshness. Well have ye perform'd
Your modest functions, from the irriguous haunts,
Chacing the Sterrile Fiend, and all the rout
That hurt with aguish spells, that neither blight,
Canker, nor smut, thro all my favourite bowers.
Insect nor worm appears, of power to mar
The buds of vernal promise, etc.

Again, the song sung by Taliessin at Arthur's coronation in homage to the Lady of the Lake is in the metre of the Spirit's song to Sabrina in *Comus*, and apparently suggested by it (p. 91):

May those fountains, Lady kind!
Still their wonted channels find,
Nor ever water-nymph neglect
The silent tribute of respect,
But, thro many a secret vein,
Still the purer essence strain,
And thy mystic urn supply;
Never turbid, never dry, etc.

In the second act the Lady disperses Rowena and her noon-day demons and relieves Arthur from a magic spell in a scene which once more seems borrowed from *Comus*.

The significance of this association of Norse mythological characters with motives suggested by Milton will not escape the student of the English Romantic movement. See the chapter on *The Influence of Milton* in Phelps's *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement.*

1. *Ph.* Sulphur! 2. *Ph.* Nitre! 3. *Ph.* Miner's damp,
Fatal to the vital lamp—
All. Thro the cavern'd entrails fume:
2. *Ph.* And the Wolf-like Serpent's spume.
Chorus. Midgard's Serpent, fierce and dread,
Lifts his all-devouring head.
1. *Ph.* Fiercely writhes his scaly zone.
2. *Ph.* Nature trembles on her throne.
Cho. Gods and Hela join the groan.
1. *Ph.* Hark! the Hell-dog's tripple growl!
2. *Ph.* Rafaen's scream! 3. *Ph.* And Fenrir's howl!
Cho. Thrilling shriek! and deaf'ning growl!
1. *Ph.* Fell enchantress! 2. *Ph.* On she goes—
3. *Ph.* Eager of impending woes.
All. To the nine-fold realm she goes!

In Hela's cave "are seen THE FATAL SISTERS at their Loom. Sculls are fixed to the beams instead of weights; the chamber is lighted by a Lamp and a blazing Cauldron. RAFAEN, i.e. the Raven of Schulda hovers over their heads." The three sisters, Urd, Verandi, and Schulda, sing a trio which begins:

Weave The Webb — the webb of Fate!
Ply it early — ply it late!
Fates of falling empires weave!
Woes that suffering mortals grieve!
Spindles turn; the shuttle throw;
Treacherous joys, and lasting woe,
In the fatal texture grow.
Weave The Woof — the woof of Fate!
Ply it early — ply it late!

In spite of the humorous character of several episodes in the poems of the Elder Edda, English imitators and adapters of those poems have usually refrained from treating their material in a broadly comic spirit, — fortunately, we may conclude, if Thelwall's play is any criterion, for *The Fairy of the Lake* has two comic characters. "Incubus," the first of these, is described as "a meagre spectre, with a blue and frosty countenance, sunken eyes, frozen locks and beard, and garments covered with icicles." He speaks in prose, after a

fashion illustrated by the following passage. Agga, one of Rowena's attendants, has summoned Incubus:

Agga. . . . Did you not your mistress hear?

Incub. Hear? O yes; there 's no fear of that, I assure you. When 't is a woman we serve, our orders are sure to be sufficiently audible! The frosts of Hela cannot plug up one's ears against the *clear* tones of the feminine organ. But pr'ythee now, leave off your rhyming and your incantations, and blow my fingers for me a little. — It is half a century since I have been able to breathe any thing but sleet and hailstones upon them myself.

Agga. Really I have no warm breath to spare upon so cold a subject.

Incub. Why I suppose, indeed, I am not very engaging. Some thousand years hence, when ice-creams are predestined to become an article of luxury, some lady of honour, may chance to take a liking to a joint or two, by way of stomachic: But at present, I believe, there is no great danger of my being devour'd by the fair sex.

Agga. Not if they are of my taste, at least.

The other comic character is Tristram, who is introduced "drunk, with a cag." This empty keg he stands up before him and dubs "the round table." He calls upon his guardian angels for something to drink and a cask rises out of the ground. "The prayers of the drunken shall be heard," he observes, profanely, "for they pray in the Spirit." Incubus proves to be inside the cask, and the scene that follows recalls the Caliban-Stephano scene in *The Tempest.*

At the opening of the third act Tristram is talking with some of Vortigern's servants about "Valhalla, Woden and his Monoheroes":

Trist. . . . But as for those Monoheroes, I have a song about them: and, if the harpers and trumpeters will bear me out with an accompaniment, I care not if I sing it to you.

> O! your joys of Valhalla to me they are all mere Greek, Sirs,
> Where you fight till you are kill'd —

[Kill'd? — well: and what of that? If it were but once, and away, one would not mind it — (*&c. &c. ad libitum*). But there — why]

> There you 're kill'd and kill'd again, every day of the Week, Sirs!
> And after that, you get so drunk that you scarcely can speak, Sirs,
> And these are the joys of Valhalla!

There are five stanzas of this stuff, in each of which are inserted hints for extemporaneous "patter," as in the stanza quoted.

Thelwall's grotesque drama is accompanied by six pages of "Notes and illustrations of Northern Mythology &c.," in which are citations of *Five Pieces*, Mallet, Cottle's Edda, Sayers, Verstegan, and others, but curiously enough there is no mention of Gray.[1]

It is interesting to note that James Macpherson, the translator of Ossian, was sufficiently attracted by Norse literature to attempt a *Fragment of a Northern Tale Translated from the Norse*,[2] beginning:

> Where fair-hair'd HAROLD o'er SCANDINIA reign'd,
> And held with justice, what his valour gain'd,
> SEVO, in snow, his rugged forehead rears.

This *Fragment* is little more than a description of Fionia, daughter of Sigurd. It breaks off in the midst of a sentence.

Among the original pieces of verse contributed to the April number of the *Scots Magazine*, 1803, was *An Extract from a Gothic Poem*, signed "A," and preceded by this introductory note: "The following is a specimen of an attempt to suit the style of Scandinavian poetry to a subject, which will exhibit the influence of the northern mythology on human characters of an elevated cast." Then came the title, *Battle of Largs*, *Canto 1st*, and the text, which begins:

> "Alarum'd by the thunder drum,
> At war, and woe to work we come."
> The Weird Sisters inciting, said,
> And nature shook like one afraid;
> While wrapt in night's black cloke, the sky
> Frown'd down on every praying eye,
> Mocking their holy supplication,
> With the rude tempest's declamation.
> Loud from a tomb-surrounded tower,
> The dark unclaim'd mysterious hour,
> Time's solemn centinel had hail'd,
> And deeper shades of gloom prevail'd.
> "Hark! a wretch his vengeance gorges —
> That 's the signal for our orgies;

[1] Thelwall's *Specimens of the Hope of Albion; or Edwy of Northumbria, an Epic Poem*, in the same volume, contains allusions to Woden, Valhalla, "the dread Valkyrie," Thor, and other mythological personages.

[2] Printed in his *Poetical Works*, Edinburgh, 1802, pp. 101–103.

Haste while perturb'd murder wrestles,
With his victim, 'range the vessels;
And swift the potent secrets mix,
Which the grim fire's tongue quickly licks."
With screams convulsing all the air,
Tossing their fell fangs, lean and bare,
The three eternal Sisters spoke—
Fierce through the murky witched smoke,
The drugged caldron muttering glar'd;
And with it's red lugubrious light,
Enhanc'd the horror of the night,
While populous grew the gloom, and lengthening groans were heard.
When the foul perfume of the spell,
Had pierc'd the stench obscene of hell,
And Lok's enormous nostrils pleased;
This stern request the Sisters raised.

This request, which Lok grants, is that the high-minded

Norweyan Haco young and bold,
Sublim'd with tales of chiefs of old,

may be corrupted

Till deeds of fraud and acts of force,
Deform his soul with foul remorse.

Haco is put under a spell.

To tell how deep, how dark, how dire,
The witchrie wax'd, would crimes inspire,
And bloat and soil the listeners soul
With thoughts and themes profane and foul.

The young king becomes unaccountably moody and irritable, and much to the wonderment of his Earls, devotes all his energies to fitting "his banner'd strength for broils." Here the fragment ends.

In January, 1804, however, we have a second installment, headed *An Extract from a Gothic Poem. A Norwegian Feast in the Thirteenth Century. Battle of Largs. Canto II.* The signature, as before,

is simply "A." This second fragment is very brief. It introduces us to a Norse banquet where

> The torches glare, the warriors gleam;
> And foaming ale, in ample horns,
> The shining oaken board adorns.

Presently "Sweet Orzincrantz, a youthful bard," appears and sings to the banqueters.

> He sung of Odin's mystic birth,
> His union with prolific earth;
> Their amorous indolence and love,
> In blest Valhalla's ashen grove.
> Shaking the harp's resounding frame,
> He thunders of his warlike fame;
> Describes his 'scapes, his matchless toil,
> Now issuing from his native soil,
> He leaves the sullen Scythian wastes,
> Through various Muscovy he hastes;
> And leads his gallant, hardy train,
> Dauntless by fire, wood, river, plain
> As from the desert gloom of space,
> A comet runs its gorgeous race.

Sweet Orzincrantz's hearers shortly fall asleep over his recital of the adventures of their ancestor, and the fragment comes to an end. The connection between Canto I and Canto II and the nature of Hakon's secret are left to the reader's conjecture, for the *Scots Magazine* printed no further installments of the poem. From the title it would seem that the author had intended to write of the expedition of Hakon IV, king of Norway, against Scotland in the year 1263, and of his defeat and death at the battle of Largs, the particulars of which had been published in 1782, by the Rev. James Johnstone, in his *Norwegian Account of Haco's Expedition against Scotland*.[1]

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[1] See below, pp. 203 f. The reader will recall Scott's *Marmion*, canto iii, vv. 352 ff.:

> For Norse and Danish galleys plied
> Their oars within the Firth of Clyde
> There floated Haco's banner trim
> Above Norweyan warriors grim.

The authorship of these two fragments is explained in the following passages from the *Autobiography of John Galt*.[1] Galt has been speaking of the fearful thunderstorm which scattered the crowds the night on which the preliminary treaty which led to the peace of Amiens was promulgated in London. Galt was at that time engaged in reading Gray's poems, and the affair so excited his imagination that he "sat down full of poetic rapture" and composed an ode in six stanzas, which begins

> Rejoice, rejoice! the witching works,
> The hour of horror hastens on,
> Death in the pledged goblet lurks, —
> The isle of honour is undone!

It was in 1802 that he became especially interested in Gray. "About this time," he goes on, "I had several works in hand, and was over head and ears in the depths of Gothic antiquities, some how prompted by Pinkerton's Dissertation[2] and Mallet's Researches. . . . [After] my antiquarian pursuits were abandoned, I betook me to the composition of a poem, imitating the style of the Edda. To this work I gave two hours every Sunday evening. . . . Two parts of it were sent to the [Edinburgh] Magazine,[3] in April 1803 and January 1804. . . . I resolved to publish my Gothic poem of 'the Battle of Largs' from sheer want of something else to do. Specimens may be seen, shockingly printed, in the Scot's Magazine for April, 1803, and January, 1804; notwithstanding friend Park's opinion of it, they, however, display considerable power and originality."[4]

And again the passage in which Alexander III of Scotland forces the "elfin warrior" to disclose the future:

> Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
> Where still gigantic bones remain,
> Memorial of the Danish war;
> Himself he saw amid the field
> On high his brandished war-axe wield
> And strike proud Haco from his car (vv. 472 ff.).

See also Burns's *Caledonia*, stanza v.

[1] In two volumes, London, 1833. [2] See below, pp. 196 ff.

[3] "The *Edinburgh Magazine* was united in 1804 with the old *Scots Magazine*." Scott's *Memoir of Leyden*, in *Poems and Ballads by Dr. John Leyden*, Kelso, 1858, p. 31, n. [4] *Autobiography*, I, 50–79.

Galt prints several extracts from James Park's letters to him with regard to the poem, and records the fact that "he thought it only poetical in passages, and that the freedom of [Galt's] prose style shewed more ability."[1] The poem was actually published late in 1804 or early in 1805, but Galt immediately suppressed it, — "I do not recollect by what motive," he says.[2]

Among the *Poems*, by George Richards, M.A., published in two volumes in 1804, is a tragedy modelled after Æschylus, called *Odin*. I have not been able to procure a copy of this play,[3] but I find contemporary mention of it in some of the reviews. It seems that the tragedy is supposed to take place in southern Europe, just before Odin's reputed departure for the North with his followers. "The discomfiture of a horde of mountaineers," observes the *Monthly Review* (June, 1805), curtly, "whose history is dark and remote, and who are *supposed* to have retreated to Scandinavia, is little calculated to rouze the feelings, or to take a strong hold of the sympathies of modern readers." This reviewer goes on to censure Richards for having Balder dispatched "by the Roman sword" instead of by Holder, for representing Odin and Woden as distinct personages and Gondula as "one of the destinies," and finally for using a Grecian model, which imposes upon the actors "refined sentiments and polished language" and a certain amount of "high-flown lyric morality," which he regards as out of character.

The *Annual Review* for 1804[4] points out that "there is an anachronism in making the followers of Odin *knights*" and quotes disapprovingly from the author's introduction: "This drama is intended as an imitation of the manner of Æschylus. To this cause, it is hoped, will be attributed whatever want of interest may be found to arise from the severe simplicity of the fable or from the romantic and even supernatural cast of the actions, the characters, the sentiments, and the imagery."

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[1] Id., I, 78.

[2] Id., I, 79.

[3] My attention was called to it by Georg Herzfeld's *William Taylor von Norwich*, Halle, 1897, *Anhang*.

[4] Vol. III, Part II, pp. 585 f.

We come now to the work of a writer who, taking into account the range, variety, and faithfulness of his translations from the Norse, his ability — in spite of occasional vagaries — to make use of the original texts, and his general knowledge of Scandinavian literature, stands head and shoulders above anybody we have yet considered. In 1804 appeared the First Part, and in 1806 the Second Part, of The Honourable and Very Reverend William Herbert's *Select Icelandic Poetry*. These pieces were reprinted, with some corrections and additions, in the first volume of Herbert's *Works* (London, 1842, 3 vols.), under the general title, *Horæ Scandicæ, or Works relating to Old Scandinavian Literature*. They are usually dated, and furnished with elaborate notes citing their sources, explaining historical, mythological, and literary allusions in the text, commenting critically upon other translations, and discussing points of philology. I append a very brief account of each of the poems, following the order of the edition of 1842, to which my references apply.

1. *Hedin*, 1820, in sixty-nine eight-line stanzas, — founded upon the story of Hedin (Heðinn) son of Hiorvard (Hjǫrvarðr), and Hildur (Hildr) daughter of Hogni (Hǫgni), told "in Professor Suhm's Historie af Danmark."[1]

2. *Helga*, 1815 (when it appeared as a separate volume), in seven cantos, 2992 eight-syllabled verses, rhyming in couplets. This again is an original poem based in part on the *Hervarar Saga*. Among the familiar names that occur are Ingva, Asbiorn, Angantyr, Hialmar, and Orvarod. The notes cite Gray's translation of the *Vegtamskviða*, and render into English small portions of the *Hávamál*, the *Hákonarmál*, the *Vafþrúðnismál*, the *Grímnismál*, and the *Vǫluspá*.

3. *The Song of Vala*, in twenty-five four-line stanzas, "written with an idea of inserting it in the second Canto of *Helga*." "Many parts of it," writes Herbert, "are freely imitated from a curious old poem called Völospá hin skemre, or the ancient Prophecy of Vala, which forms a part of the unpublished Edda."[2] By a slip of the pen

[1] Herbert refers to "tom. i. p. 168." The account comes originally from Saxo, bk. v. (ed. Müller and Velschow, pp. 238 ff.).

[2] *Vǫluspá hin skamma*, or "The Short Vǫluspá," is not preserved, but certain stanzas perhaps form a part of the *Hyndluljóð* (see Bugge's Edda, pp. 158–159,

Herbert here confuses the *Vǫluspá* proper with the *Short* (or, as he calls it, the *Shorter*) *Vǫluspá*. His poem is based on the *Vǫluspá* proper.

4. *Brynhilda*, undated, tells in 204 anapæstic tetrameter verses the familiar story, found in the *Vǫlsunga Saga*, of Brynhild, Gunnar, Sigurd, and the magic fire. The notes call attention to the epitome of the *Nibelungenlied* published by Weber and Jamieson in their *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (Edinburgh and London, 1814).

5. *Sir Ebba*, 1803, a ballad of twenty-six stanzas "translated from an old Danish song printed in *Suhms Nye Samlinger til de Danske Historie*." This translation first appeared in Herbert's *Translations from the German, Danish*, etc.[1]

At this point in the edition of 1842 begin the translations revised from the volumes of *Select Icelandic Poetry* published in 1804–1806, under the special heading, *Select Icelandic Poetry, translated from the originals, with notes; revised, with three additional pieces from Sæmund's Edda*, and a dedication, dated 1803, in Danish verse, "Til Herr Carsten Anker, Directör for det Danske Asiatiske Compagnie i Kiöbenhavn." An interesting *Preface* dated "1803–6–40" gives some account of Iceland and of Icelandic literature. Then follow the translations in this order:

6. *The Song of Thrym, or the Recovery of the Hammer*, "from the old Icelandic in Sæmund's Edda," — i.e. the *Þrymskviða*, — in eight-syllabled couplets, beginning:

> Wroth waxed Thor, when his sleep was done
> And he found his trusty hammer gone.

7. *Vegtam's Song; or, the Descent of Odin*, 1803. Herbert translated only the stanzas at the beginning, omitted by Gray. "An imitation of the whole ode," says Herbert, "has been published by Mr. Cottle . . . but [he] has taken such liberties with the Icelandic

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note on stanza 29; Mogk, Paul u. Braune's *Beiträge*, VII, 214; *C.P.B.*, I, 225 ff.; II, 629 f., 652). The *Hyndluljóð* was printed in the Copenhagen Edda of 1787. The *Vǫluspá* proper, however, on which Herbert's song is really based, was not printed in the Copenhagen Edda until 1828. Resenius and Göransson had already edited it, so that it was not properly "unpublished."

[1] See below, p. 166. The original may be found in Grundtvig, *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, No. 194 C (*Herr Ebbes Døttre*), IV, 126 f.

poetry and mythology, which in some places he has purposely amplified, and in others misunderstood, that, if he had published his work as original, he could scarcely have been accused of plagiarism."[1] Herbert also observes that "Gray's Fatal Sisters is very inferior to his Descent of Odin, and in some places he has lost much of the strength and spirit of the original." Herbert's lines run (somewhat laboriously) as follows:

The Gods did all to council crowd,
The Goddesses talk'd fast and loud;
And this the theme of their debate,
If Balder's dreams were big with fate.
Heavy the hero slept and deep,
Joy seem'd to vanish in his sleep;
To mystic shrines the giants press,
And ask, if this bodes new distress.
The shrines have said, that Uller's friend
The loveliest, to death must tend:
Frigga and Suafner grieving hear,
And Gods debate with anxious fear;
They send, and sue all things to seal
The peace with oaths for Balder's weal:
All nature swore to hold from strife;
Frigga took pledges for his life.
Yet did the Lord of slaughter fear,
The sprites of joy must disappear;
He call'd the Gods, and counsel sought;
But each proposed a different thought.
Uprose the sire of men at length,
And saddled straight grey Sleipner's strength.
&c. &c. &c.

See Gray's poems.

From a literary point of view this bit of translation is not so successful as some other things that might be quoted from Herbert, but these lines are as consistent as could reasonably be expected with Herbert's *Preface:*[2]

"The following poems are closely translated, and unadorned; with a few exceptions they are rendered line for line; and (I believe) as

[1] P. 193. [2] P. 166.

literally, as the difference of language and metrical rules would permit. . . . The only merit, I have aimed at, is that of accuracy; if I have judged wrong, I can only say in my defence, that it would have been much easier to adorn them, than to copy faithfully."

8. *Skirnir's Expedition*, 1805. The *Skírnismál*, or *Skírnis fǫr*, from the Poetic Edda.

> Skirnir, arise! and swiftly run,
> Where lonely sits our pensive son!

9. *Third Song of Sigurd*, 1839. This is the so-called *Sigurðarkviða hin Skamma* from the Poetic Edda. This and Nos. 11 and 12, below, are the "three additional pieces" mentioned in the subtitle.

> Of yore from old Volsunger sprung
> To Giuka's court came Sigurd young.

10. *Brynhilda's Ride to Hell*, 1805. "From the old Icelandic in Sæmund's Edda, MS." This is the *Helreið Brynhildar*, — not printed in the Copenhagen Edda until the issue of the second volume in 1818. Herbert consulted the MS. in the British Museum. He translates the short prose introduction to the poem, "After the death of Brynhilda two funeral piles were constructed; one for Sigurd, and that was burnt first;" etc. His verse begins:

> Hence avaunt! nor dare invade
> This pillar'd mansion's rocky shade!

11. *The Song of Attila*, 1839. The *Atlakviða in Grœnlenzka*, of which this is a translation, was printed in the second volume of the Copenhagen Edda, 1818.

> To Gunnar king Attila sent of yore
> A cunning wight to ride.

12. *Volunder's Song*, 1840 (the *Vǫlundarkviða*), printed in the second volume of the Copenhagen Edda, which Herbert cites in his notes. The verse, which follows his translation of the brief prose introduction, begins:

> Maids from the South thro' Mirkwood flew
> To dree their fates; (young Alvitur was one).

13. *The Battle of Hafur's Bay, A.D. 885.* "From the old Icelandic by Hornklof, printed in Heimskringla," 1803.[1] The notes give a somewhat extended account of the *Heimskringla.* The poem is in five stanzas, of which I reproduce the first:

Loud in Hafur's echoing bay
Heard ye the battle fiercely bray,
'Twixt Kiotva rich, and Harald bold!
Eastward sail the ships of war;
The graven bucklers gleam afar,
And monsterous heads adorn the prows of gold.

14. *The Dying Song of Asbiorn. In Orms Storolfsonar Saga.* "From the old Icelandic printed in Bartholinus," 1803.[2] There are seven stanzas, of which the first runs:

Know, gentle mother, know,
In Denmark's vallies, Svanvhide fair,
When summer sweets return,
Thou wilt not comb my flowing hair!
O whilom had I fondly vow'd
To hie me to my native land!
Now must my panting side be torn
By my keen foe's relentless brand.[3]

15. *Gunlaug and Rafen.* "From the Solarliod in Sæmund's Edda, Stanza tenth &c.," 1803. The *Sólarljóð* was the piece omitted by Cottle from his translation of the Edda.[4] The first of the five stanzas is this:

The rich delights of love
To many fatal prove;
From women oft does sorrow spring:
Much evil do they bear,
Though fashion'd purely fair
And chaste by heaven's almighty King.

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[1] The song is attributed to Hornklofi in the *Heimskringla* (see Jonsson's ed., I, 124–125).

[2] See *Þáttr Orms Storólfssonar*, cap 7 (*Fornmanna Sögur*, III, 218 ff.; *Flateyjarbók*, II, 528).

[3] See above, p. 91.

[4] See above, p. 130. Herbert has substituted Gunnlaugr and Rafn (from *Gunnlaugs Saga Ormstungu*) for the Sváfaðr and Skartheðinn of the *Sólarljóð* (see Bugge's Edda, p. 359). He justifies the substitution in a note.

16. *The Combat of Hialmar and Oddur with Angantyr and his Eleven Brothers*, "From . . . the fifth chapter of *Hervarar Saga*, Verel. edit.," 1803.[1] Herbert translates the prose as well as the verse. The first bit of verse begins:

> Fiercely from the vessel come
> Champions twelve, a fearful sight.

17. *The Sixteenth Chapter of Sogu Thattur af Alfe Konge og Reckum hanns, containing the song of Hroke the Black*, "From . . . Biörner's Nordiska Kämpa datter," 1803.[2] The verse begins:

> By Hamund's son now be it told,
> That two we were in battle bold.

18. *The Death of Hacon, A.D. 963.* "From the old Icelandic, by Evind Skaldaspiller," 1803. We have already considered this.[3]

19. *The Commencement of Biarkamal.* "A fragment printed in Heimskringla, in Bartholinus . . . and in Stephanius's notes on Saxo Grammaticus," 1803.[4]

> The day has dawn'd; the plumed helms sound;
> 'T is time to tread the battle's ground.[5]

20. *The Dying Song of Regner Lodbrock*, 1804, we have already considered.[6]

21. *The Song of Harald the Hardy*, 1805, we have likewise considered.[7]

22. *The Lamentation of Starkader.* . . . From Bartholin[8] and Biörner, 1803. There are seven four-line stanzas, beginning:

> That chief I follow'd, whom I knew
> Mightiest in battle's strife;
> Those were the happiest fairest days
> Of all my varied life.

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[1] See above, pp. 114 f.

[2] See *Saga af Hálfi ok Hálfsrekkum*, cap. 16 (Rafn, *Fornaldar Sögur*, II, 51 ff.; Bugge, *Norrøne Skrifter af Sagnhistorisk Indhold*, pp. 31 ff.).

[3] See above, pp. 88 f.

[4] The first two stanzas of *Bjarkamál in fornu* (*C.P.B.*, I, 188 f.; Wisén, *Carmina Norrœna*, I, 1).

[5] This was the closing selection in the volume of 1804, which contained, of the pieces listed above, Nos. 6 and 7, and 14 to 19, inclusive.

[6] See above, p. 76.

[7] See above, pp. 82 f.

[8] Pp. 391 ff. See *Gautreks Saga*, cap. 7 (Rafn, *Fornaldar Sögur*, III, 35–36).

23. *Grymur and Hialmar.* "Translated from a part of the *Rimur af Karl og Grym Suia kongum, og af Hialmar Hareks suni a Biarmalande*, which was published by Biörner with a very loose translation," 1805.

> Grymur stands on Gothic land;
> Wolves shall lick the bloody strand,
> If the sturdy warriors fight
> Proudly for the virgin bright.

Simultaneously with the two parts of his *Select Icelandic Poetry*, Herbert published *Translations from the German, Danish, etc., to which is added Miscellaneous Poetry*, also in two parts (London, 1804–1806). The *Monthly Magazine* (Supplement to Part II, 1804), after a brief and not very valuable comment upon the *Icelandic Poetry*, alludes to the *Translations*, which are "executed with spirit," as the work of "a gentleman of the same name, Herbert." The *Poetical Register* for 1804,[1] after speaking kindly of the *Icelandic Poetry*, conjectures that the *Translations from the German, Danish, &c.* "will be more generally interesting than the Select Icelandic Poetry, as they are on subjects more consonant with modern feelings."

The *Icelandic Poetry*, together with the *Translations*,[2] was reviewed

[1] 2d ed., London, 1806, pp. 505 f.

[2] Scott's review is headed *Miscellaneous Poetry. By the Honourable W. Herbert. 2 vol. 8vo. Longman & Co. 1804.* "These little volumes," he says, "contain a variety of translations from the Norse, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, &c. with a few original pieces. Those by which we have been most interested, are contained under the title of 'Select Icelandic Poetry' . . . These translations form the *first* part of the first volume, and the *second* part of the second; a confused and capricious arrangement, which we wish had been avoided." The article in the *Monthly Review* is headed "*Miscellaneous Poetry;* — and *Select Icelandic Poetry*, translated from the Originals; with Notes. By the Hon. W. Herbert. 2 vols. Crown 8vo." The *Poetical Register* reviews "*Select Icelandic Poetry*, translated from the Originals; with Notes. Part I 8vo. pp. 128." Also a separate title, "Translations from the German, Danish &c., to which is added Miscellaneous Poetry. 8vo. pp. 84." In the *Monthly Magazine* the title is also *Select Icelandic Poetry*. The *Catalogue of Printed Books* in the British Museum records: (1) *Select Icelandic poetry, translated from the originals; with notes. 2 pt.* London, 1804–06. 8°; (2) *Translations from the German, Danish, etc. To which is added miscellaneous poetry* (Translations from the Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.), *2 pt.* London, 1804–06. 8°; (3) [Another copy] *Miscellaneous*

at great length in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1806, by Scott.[1] He says of the translations from the Norse:

They are, to a certain degree, a novelty in our literature; for although translations of many of these very pieces have been made by poets of different degrees of merit, from Gray to Amos Cottle, yet it has happened rather perversely, that not one of these translators understood the original Icelandic, but contented themselves with executing their imitations from the Latin version, and thus presenting their readers with the shadow of a shade. We can only estimate the injustice which the old Scalds sustained in this operation, by considering what sort of translation could be made of any Greek poet from the Latin version. Mr Herbert has stepped forward to rescue these ancient poets from this ignominious treatment; and his intimate acquaintance with the languages of the North is satisfactorily displayed in an introductory address to the Hon. C. Anker . . . as well as by many learned criticisms scattered through the work. We do not pretend any great knowledge of the Norse; but we have so far "traced the Runic rhyme," as to be sensible how much more easy it is to give a just translation of that poetry into English than into Latin; and, consequently, how much is lost by the unnecessary intermediate transfusion.

Scott goes on to speak of the blunders of previous translators pointed out by Herbert, and to quote from Herbert's verse. The ballad *Sir Ebba* interests him so much that he transcribes it entire, with the hope that "Mr Herbert will not confine his future researches to the Icelandic poetry, but will extend them to the popular poetry of Scandinavia, which we cannot help thinking is the real source of many of the tales of our minstrels."

The long review of Herbert in the *Monthly Review* (April, 1807) was from a no less competent hand. The reviewer regrets the superficiality of Herbert's modest attempt, in his preface, to account for the sudden fall of Iceland from the "proud distinction" she boasted

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poetry, 2 vol. London, 1806. 8° [a duplicate of the preceding with a different title page]. The Harvard University Library contains a volume in which three tracts by Herbert are bound together: (1) *Ossian Darthula, Græce Reddita*, etc., London, 1801; (2) *Select Icelandic Poetry. . . . Part First*, London, 1804; (3) *Translations from the German, Danish, &c. To which is added Miscellaneous Poetry*, London, 1804. These various combinations of Herbert's tracts are very confusing. It is difficult to make out precisely what was contained in the volume reviewed by Scott.

[1] See Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, Edinburgh, 1839, III, 2.

during the middle ages. "We could have wished," he says, "that less consequence had been attributed to the wicked eruptions of Mount Hecla, and to the not less cruel accumulation of ice in the polar regions. We trust that the work on Icelandic literature, which Mr. Herbert holds out to our expectations, will afford our philosophers information somewhat more satisfactory. His accomplishments as a linguist, and his acquaintance with Danes of rank and learning, are advantages which few enjoy who might in other respects be more competent to such an undertaking." The reviewer credits Herbert with having made "a distinction . . . which is not, we believe, generally known in England, and which must have puzzled most of the thinking heads to whom the poetry of Iceland seemed worthy of their consideration," namely, the distinction between the poetry of the Edda and that of the skalds, "the production of distinct æras," not, as those who "have felt themselves much at a loss to discover by what strange combination of circumstances the two species could have been produced and relished by the same race," have imagined, the work of contemporaries.

> Mr. Herbert's volumes [the reviewer points out] refer to the first of these classes; and although we might wish for more ample, we cannot require more satisfactory evidence of the poetical powers of this extraordinary race of savages. We must, however, warn our readers not to expect in these specimens much variety of superb imagery, for that a ship will always be the Dragon of the Deep, and a Rainbow the Bridge of the Gods; nor to indulge the hope that they will discover, in the literal translations of the present editor, that splendour and pomp in which the Scandic rhimes have been arrayed by the gorgeous imagination of Gray.

Then follow extracts from the poems, with critical comments, and citations of Suhm, Bartholin, Adam of Bremen, Debes's *Færoæ et Færoa Reserata*, Saxo, Scheffer, Fabricius, and less recondite authors. The reviewer finds Herbert occasionally hypercritical[1] and sometimes inaccurate. "When the editor is more deeply read in our writers of antiquity," he observes, "he will correct some errors into which he has fallen in employing their phraseology: he always gives *I am hight* for *I hight;* and we believe that he is singular in his use of the word *wighty*."

[1] See above, pp. 74, n., 82 f., n. 3.

All things considered, this review was, in spite of some fatuities, one of the most able performances of the kind we have yet examined.[1]

Herbert's *Icelandic Poetry* became pretty generally known.[2] Byron gave Herbert a couplet in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809):

> Herbert shall wield Thor's hammer, and sometimes
> In gratitude thou 'lt praise his rugged rhymes.[3]

Henry Weber frequently mentions Herbert with approval in his part of *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (Edinburgh and London, 1814). Herbert is also occasionally cited by later writers, — by Mrs. Hemans, for example, who calls attention to his *Helga* in an introductory note to her *Valkyriur Song*, published in 1826.[4]

We are reminded by Mr. Sidney Colvin,[5] that it was Herbert's translation from the Icelandic that suggested to Walter Savage Landor the addition of "a tale in eight-syllable rhyme called *Gunlaug and Helga*" to a volume of verse of his own composition, which "appeared in 1804 or 1805, while Robert Landor was still at Oxford,

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[1] William Taylor of Norwich contributed a long review of the *Icelandic Poetry* to the *Annual Review* for 1805 (pp. 558–563; see *Mem. of Taylor*, II, 160, n.), in which he says of Herbert: "For the outlandish half of his task, he is qualified in a rare and superior manner. His acquirements are not confined to the Scandinavian dialects: he has studied books as well as words: his reading embraces the whole range of original writers on northern paleosophy, the sagas of the skald, the chronicles of the historian, and the speculations of the antiquary." Taylor, nevertheless, "with diffidence" questions Herbert's interpretation of the text now and then. He expresses himself as on the whole "satisfied," from a literary point of view, with Herbert's "method of translation."

[2] For the discomfiture it occasioned Bishop Percy and Dr. Anderson, see Appendix A, below.

[3] Vv. 510–511, *Works*, ed. Coleridge and Prothero, *Poetry*, I, 336. In a note Byron explains that one of Herbert's principal pieces is a *Song on the Recovery of Thor's Hammer*. "The translation," says Byron, "is a pleasant chaunt in the vulgar tongue, and endeth thus:

> 'Instead of money and rings, I wot,
> The hammer's bruises were her lot.
> Thus Odin's son his hammer got.'"

In the edition of 1842 Herbert altered the last line to read, "Thus Odin's son recovered his hammer," with the explanation, "Prose in the original."

[4] *Works*, Edinburgh and London, 1854, IV, 88.

[5] *Life of Landor*, London, 1881, p. 38.

and by him, if by no one else, was dutifully reviewed in a periodical of his own creation, the *Oxford Review*." John Forster quotes[1] an interesting passage in regard to this matter from one of Robert Landor's letters:

Even the first edition of *Gebir* was followed speedily by little unbound publications of which I cannot remember correctly either the order or the titles. The *Phocæans*, the commencement of an epic poem, various Latin verses, and English verses, filling no more than a few pages, a little volume of Icelandic poems, suggested by Mr. Herbert's success. . . . My first article was on Walter's Iceland tale of *Gunlaug and Helga*, — very confident in its patronage indeed! Walter was delighted; and both of us laughed at the imposture. The *Oxford Review* broke down after the first three or four numbers.

"The best of those little 'Icelandic' poems being accessible still in the printed works," remarks Forster, "nothing more need be said of it here, except that it appears to have been suggested to Landor by a letter from Birch, his favorite and friend at Rugby." This letter, dated April, 1805, tells Landor, says Forster, of the "publication by Mr. William Herbert of translations of Icelandic sonnets [!] and of some original pieces that he thinks would interest him by the accurate information contained in the notes and by the spirit of the poetry. . . . Exactly fifty-seven years had passed after this," he continues, "when Landor, writing to Mr. Lytton of Birch himself and of their school-fellow the translator of Dante [Cary], adds in the very next sentence: 'We have another admirable translator in William Herbert. I owe my *Gunlaug* to his stories from the Icelandic. How incomparably better this northern poetry than that of the Troubadours! The Icelandic seems to be a softer language than theirs.'"[2]

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[1] *Walter Savage Landor. A Biography*, Boston, 1869, pp. 111 f. I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr. A. E. Hancock.

[2] In February, 1811, Landor wrote to Southey: "The Romans are the most anti-picturesque and anti-poetical people in the universe. No good poem ever was or ever will be written about them. The North opens the most stupendous region to genius. What a people were the Icelanders! what divine poets! Even in the clumsy version of William Herbert they strike my imagination and heart differently from others. Except Pindar's, no other odes are so high-toned. I have before me, only in the translation of Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*, the ode of Regnor Lodbrog, the corrections of which I remember. What a vile jargon is

It is a pity that only one of Landor's translations from the Norse (*Gunlaug*) has been preserved.[1] It is based on the *Gunnlaugs Saga Ormstungu*, an abstract of which is printed by Herbert in the notes to his *Gunlaug and Rafen*, 1803; but Landor made over the plot and added some new characters. Since the poem is easily accessible I quote but a few of the opening lines:

> Sophia, pity Gunlaug's fate.
> Perfidious friendship, worse than hate,
> And love, whose smiles are often vain,
> Whose frowns are never, proved his bane.
> For war his rising spirit sigh'd
> In unknown realms o'er ocean wide.
> "O father, father! let me go,
> I burn to meet my country's foe."
> "A blessing, Gunlaug, on thy head!"
> Illugi, his fond father said.
> "Go when invader comes to spoil
> Our verdant Iceland's native soil:
> But wait with patient zeal till then,
> And learn the deeds of mightier men."

Thorkell and Rafen figure in the poem, and "Ormur the friend of Asbiorn." We even get an allusion to the incidents of the *Hervarar Saga*, for Helga reminds Gunlaug of the famous combat between Hialmar and Angantyr:

> In Samsa brave Hialmar lies,
> Nor Inga's daughter closed his eyes.
> By sixteen wounds of raging fire
> The enchanted sword of Angantyre,
> Withering, laid waste his fruitless bloom,
> And housed the hero in the tomb.

The reader will remember that Amos Cottle omitted one "ode" from his translation of the first volume of the Copenhagen Edda,

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the French! 'Nous nous sommes battu à coups d'épées'!! There is one passage I delight in. 'Ah, if my sons knew the sufferings of their father &c. &c. — *for I gave a mother to my children from whom they inherit a valiant heart.*' Few poets could have expressed this natural and noble sentiment" (Forster, p. 179).

[1] *The Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor*, ed. Forster, London, 1874–1876, VIII, 26–38.

because it was "filled with little else but the absurd superstitions of the Church of Rome."[1] Cottle's scruples were not shared by the Rev. James Beresford,[2] for in 1805 the *Sólarljóð* was published at London under the following title: *The Song of the Sun. A Poem of the Eleventh Century; from the more ancient Icelandic collection called the Edda. Imitated by the Rev. James Beresford, A.M., Fellow of Merton College, Oxford. With a Preface, Notes, and short Account of the Author.*[3]

The *Sólarljóð*, or Song of the Sun, is a contribution to mediæval vision-literature probably as old as the eleventh century.[4] A father tells his son of a vision in which he beheld the ten torments of hell and the six joys of heaven. Among the sinners suffering torment are men who would not receive the last office of the Church, and men who refused to keep holy days — hence Cottle's sneer.

Beresford translates the song in eighty tiresome quatrains, the first of which is

> The Man of blood, long time, with ruffian hand,
> The children of the earth had robb'd and slain:
> From out that pass where he in ambush lay,
> No wight that enter'd e'er return'd again!

At the end the editor prints something that purports to be the original Norse, and the Latin version given in the Copenhagen Edda, — the version which he follows. Three stanzas are unintelligible to him; these he omits. A preface explains the source of the poem. Many Northern and a few English writers, says the editor, have found in the Edda "matter of very laborious discussion," but the present editor frankly disclaims all pretension to philological learning: "On the *words* of my original I have, unavoidably, refrained from all comment whatsoever; and this, for the mortifying reason, that, in my total ignorance of the Icelandic language, I have been necessitated to depend upon the verbal, bald, and not always grammatical translation in Latin, which accompanies it in the edition which I have mentioned."

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[1] See above, p. 130.

[2] The author of *Miseries of Human Life*.

[3] I.e. Sæmund.

[4] The original text is printed with an English translation in *C.P.B.*, I, 202–211.

The *Monthly Review* (December, 1805) was not greatly impressed by Beresford's performance: "As a curiosity this poem may be intitled to some attention; but it is ushered in with too much parade: and its editor and translator appreciates it far beyond its intrinsic value." William Taylor of Norwich, writing in the *Annual Review* for 1805,[1] was kinder: "Mr. Beresford has executed a meritorious task with considerable elegance: he does not possess the learning of Herbert in the northern languages: but he displays the reading, the taste, and accomplishment, of an educated and travelled man." [2]

The *Monthly Magazine* did not flatter Beresford:[3] "Among the poems of an inferior class we rank the *Suicide Prostitute*, *Modern Paris*, Mr. Beresford's *Song of the Sun*, and Mr. Walker's *Raphael, or the Pupil of Nature*."

The *Eclectic Review* (January, 1806) was severe: "As the Editor confesses his total ignorance of the Icelandic tongue, and professedly 'imitates' only the dull, 'bald,' and even 'ungrammatical Latin translation,' which we suppose he found in the Copenhagen edition; how can he expatiate so positively, on the beauties and perfections of his original? How does he know it possesses these qualities?" The reviewer quotes two of Beresford's stanzas, together with the Norse and Latin versions of the Copenhagen Edda, to show the impossibility of transplanting such "tender, sensitive plants" into a language of

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[1] Pp. 563 ff. Cf. *Memoir of Taylor*, II, 160, n.

[2] Taylor invites "the readers of Dante to compare this northern skald with the Italian poet." "There is so much analogy in the plan of their compositions," he says, "that we are persuaded some monkish legend will yet be discovered, of which both the writers had availed themselves. If the northern rhymer has too much abridged, the southern has too much expanded his theme; so that one may be allowed to hesitate which guide to prefer into the infernal regions. If Sæmund has nothing very striking to exhibit, Dante is so talkative a showman, that he makes even of a striking a tedious exhibition. We believe, however, that he has so much more force, fancy, and invention than his Icelandish competitor, that readers and critics will on the whole prefer his hell, and inscribe over it,

Per *mé* si va nella città dolente:
Per *mé* si va nell' eterno dolore:
Per *mé* si va tra la perduta gente.

"But we do not quit all hope, that those who enter on such perusals may yet find a superior guide."

[3] Supplement, 1805.

"different idiom and construction" and yet preserving "their native fragrance, tints, and lustre." He finds Beresford's notes meagre and deficient in "delicacy of imagination." He complains of the style: "*Dragons of hope, Maids of death* and much more equally unintelligible, may be referred, to be as charitable as we can, to the class of sublime nonsense. The piece, considered as a whole," the reviewer concludes, "presents horror without grandeur, and morality without object and without order; characteristic enough of a barbarous age. There is, also, as the editor himself confesses, *a strange and absurd mixture of profane fables with Christian certainties.* A mixture which our readers will not expect us to commend."

In 1806 Thomas Love Peacock published a poem called *Fiolfar, King of Norway*.[1] The hero rescues the captive Nitalpha from Yrrodore, King of Lochlin, and marries her. In the midst of the action we have a battle during which

> To the hall of VALHALLA, where monarchs repose,
> The full-swelling war-song symphoniously rose,

and

> Rejoicing, the VALKYRÆ strode through the plain,
> And guided the death-blow, and singled the slain.

Hilda and Mista, Odin, Balder, Thor, "Nilfhil," Hela, "Fenris," Lok, and other familiar names occur frequently, and the piece is fringed with footnotes of the usual character. It opens as follows:

> In the dark-rolling waves at the verge of the west
> The steeds of DELLINGER had hasten'd to rest,
> While HRIMFAX advanc'd through the star-spangled plain,
> And shook the thick dews from his grey-flowing mane;
> The moon with pale lustre was shining on high,
> And meteors shot red down the paths of the sky.
> By the shore of the ocean FIOLFAR reclin'd,
> Where through the rock-fissures loud-murmur'd the wind,
> For sweet to his ear was the deep-dashing flow
> Of the foam-cover'd billows that thunder'd below.

Of Strutt's *Queenhoo-Hall* (1808) mention has already been made.[2] The next work deserving attention is John Fitchett's *Alfred*. Drake

[1] See Peacock's *Works*, ed. Cole, London, 1875, III. 29–36. [2] See above, p. 78, n.

remarks, in his *Mornings in Spring*,[1] after quoting a passage from Hole's *Arthur*: "With this animated representation of Odin may I be permitted to compare two descriptions of the same deity from the unpublished Epic of *Alfred*, by Mr. Fitchett . . . , which may be said to have incorporated, with great vigour of imagination, the entire system of Scandinavian mythology." I subjoin the second of these "two descriptions," from Fitchett's ninth book:

> From Valhalla's courts,
> Conspicuous, arm'd in steel, with clashing noise,
> The god of war came striding over clouds,
> A pillar huge of fire; likest a storm
> O'ershadowing heaven, pregnant with sulph'rous flame.
> His golden shield beam'd like the setting sun;
> His dreadful sword was in his hand; his look
> Might wither armies; and upon his crest
> Death sat, too terrible to view.[2]

It would be interesting to continue our investigations further, but it has seemed advisable to end our detailed study of Scandinavian influences with the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Of Scott's early interest in Norse, something has already been said, and that interest was unflagging, as various portions of his works show.[3]

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[1] London, 1828, II, 190 ff.

[2] In *Shakspeare and his Times*, London, 1817, II, 549, n., Drake says that ten books of Fitchett's epic are before him printed. I have not seen the book. Mr. C. W. Sutton says of it (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*): "It was printed at Warrington for private circulation at intervals between 1808 and 1834 in five quarto volumes. . . . [Fitchett] did not live to finish it. He left money for printing a new edition, and the work of supervising it was undertaken by his pupil, clerk, and friend Robert Roscoe, . . . who completed the task by adding 2585 lines, the entire work containing more than 131,000 lines and forming probably the longest poem in any language." This prodigious epic was published by Pickering in 1841–1842 in six octavo volumes.

[3] For example, the *Border Ballads*, 1802; *The Bard's Incantation*, written in 1804, published in 1810; *Rokeby* (canto iv), published in 1812; the *Abstract of the Eyrbiggia-Saga*, dated October, 1813, contributed to Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations*, 1814; *Harold the Dauntless*, published in 1817 but "begun long before" (see Lockhart, ed. 1839, V, 146, 181); the *Essay on Chivalry*, written in 1814, printed in 1818; the *Essay on Romance*, written in 1823; various reviews, among

Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, 1814, contained not only Scott's *Abstract of the Eyrbiggia-Saga*, but Norse and English texts of the *Grotta-Søngr*,[1] Norse and Latin texts of the *Rigspula* or *Rigsmál*,[2] dissertations on *The History of Teutonic Poetry and Romance* and *The Teutonic Cyclus of Romance* by Weber, and an *Introduction* by Jamieson to his collection of *Popular Heroic and Romantic Ballads translated from the Northern Languages* (which forms the second part of the book).

In 1817 Sir William Drummond published the first part — never resumed — in four books, of a Miltonic blank verse poem *Odin*, in which Pharnaces, son of Mithridates, rebels against Rome and leads his "Asian" followers from Pontus to Scandinavia, where he is hailed as the god Odin. In the third book, in a passage which recalls Gray, Odin descends to the dwelling of Hela and awakens Vola.[3]

Milman's *Samor, Lord of the Bright City*, published in 1818, contains a number of allusions to Scandinavian mythology. Similar allusions are found in the curious romance called *The Lord of the Maelstrom*, embodied in *Tales of the Wild and the Wonderful* (London, 1825); in Anne Radcliffe's *Salisbury Plains;*[4] in Mrs. Hemans's *Valkyriur Song* and *Sword of the Tomb*, published in her *Lays of Many Lands* (1826);[5] and in Mrs. Rose D'Aguilar Lawrence's translations from Oehlenschläger and Müller.[6] This list might be almost indefinitely extended; but by the year 1810 or thereabouts, a more or less

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them that of Herbert in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1806, and that of Hoffman in the *Foreign Quarterly* for July, 1827; the text and notes of some of his novels, as *The Pirate*, *The Antiquary*, *Ivanhoe* (Ulrica's death song, chap. xxxi); the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (canto vi). For further evidence, see Lockhart's *Scott* (ed. of 1839), I, 207, 235, 239, 260, 274; II, 68, 253.

[1] See Bugge's Edda, pp. 324 ff.; *C.P.B.*, I, 184 ff.

[2] Bugge, pp. 141 ff.; *C.P.B.*, I, 234 ff.

[3] The poem was reviewed by William Taylor of Norwich in the *Monthly Review* for January, 1819.

[4] See her *Gaston de Blondeville*, etc., London, 1826, IV, 113 ff.

[5] See *The Works of Mrs. Hemans*, in 7 vols., Edinburgh and London, 1844, I, 81; IV, 82–91. See also I, 117, for an account of a plan for a *Norwegian Legend* found after her death.

[6] See Mrs. Lawrence's *Last Autumn at a Favourite Residence, with Other Poems*, 2d ed., Liverpool, 1829, pp. 38, 51.

superficial knowledge of Norse literature had become pretty well diffused in England, and its bearing on the general tendency in English literature known as the Romantic movement was pretty well determined. Some minor matters yet remain to be disposed of, however, before we leave this chapter. These may be conveniently considered under four heads.

I. English Translations and Imitations of Danish Ballads

"The oldest collection of popular ballads from the Middle Ages"[1] is a compilation of Danish ballads made by Anders Sörensen Vedel, the translator of Saxo Grammaticus, *100 udvalgte Danske Viser* (Ribe, 1591). This collection was greatly enlarged by another Danish scholar, the famous Peder Syv, and published under the title *Et Hundrede udvalde Danske Viser, forögede med det andet Hundrede*, at Copenhagen in 1695, a book which formed the basis of several later collections.[2] These early collections, generally cited as the *Danske Kæmpe-Viser*, became very well known in Europe. Few Englishmen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could read Danish, but some, like Monk Lewis, became acquainted with German translations of these ballads, and they were now and then turned into English.

Danish lyrics of a later date and of a more sophisticated character found English translators, as well as these early popular ballads. The *Scots Magazine* for June, 1799, printed a *Song Translated from the Danish*, borrowed "from Poems by Alexander Baillie, lately published,"[3] which may or may not have passed through an intermediary German version. The song is in four stanzas, the first of which runs:

Doris, dear, angelic creature,
Fairest of the gentle fair;
Excellence of human nature,
Hear a lover's tender pray'r.

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[1] Anderson's Horn, p. 172.

[2] See Prior's *Ancient Danish Ballads*, 3 vols., London and Edinburgh, 1860, *Introduction;* also Weber and Jamieson, pp. 242 ff.

[3] Doubtless Baillie's *Miscellaneous Poems*, Edinburgh, 1799.

Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, London, 1801, contained a few Danish ballads. Of the first of these, *Elver's Hoh*,[1] Lewis says: "The original is to be found in the *Kiampe Viiser*, Copenhagen, 1739. My version of this Ballad (as also of most of the Danish Ballads in this collection) was made from a German translation to be found in Herder's *Volkslieder.*" Lewis's other Danish ballads are *The Erl-King's Daughter*[2] and *The Water-King*.[3] This last ballad had already appeared anonymously in the *Scots Magazine* for March, 1797. Besides these was a "German" ballad, *Sir Hengist*,[4] in which there are allusions to Odin and to Hela; and also an original ballad by Mickle, *The Sorceress, or Wolfwold and Ulla*,[5] based upon a supposed incident in the invasion of Northumbria by the Danes.

In 1806 Robert Jamieson published his *Popular Ballads and Songs* (Edinburgh, 2 vols.). Among these were some Danish ballads. In a note to the first, *The Mer-man and Marstig's Daughter*,[6] which he tells us is from the "Kæmpe Viser. ed. 1695," he remarks: "I have shewn no ambition to rival Mr. Lewis. The branch of the Tree of Knowledge, with which that gentleman has presented his readers, bears *aurea, non sua, poma*. It is my purpose to offer it to my countrymen as nearly as possible in the exact state in which it grew amid the rocks of Norway, and in the vallies of Jutland. I have . . . merely adapted their dialect to the usage of the day. This seems to be the proper manner of Albinizing Scandinavian poetry. Let Regner Lodbrog still drink his *ale, to sweel his halse, out of a harn-shell;* for a goblet of cut glass would be out of character in so robust a hand. So scrupulous have I been in faithfully rendering these pieces, that I have commonly preserved most of the original words, with only a slight alteration of the orthography, and sometimes of the

[1] I, 31 ff. This is Vedel's *Elver Hoy* (Part II, No. 9, ed. 1695, pp. 170 f.), No. 46 B in Grundtvig's *Danmarks Gamle Folkeviser*, II, 107 f.

[2] I, 53 ff. From Herder, *Volkslieder*, II (1779), 158 ff. The original is Syv's No. 87 (ed. 1695, pp. 748 f.), which is Grundtvig's version B of *Elveskud* (No. 47, II, 114 f.; see Child, *Ballads*, I, 387).

[3] I, 56 ff. Also from Herder, II, 155 ff. (*Der Wassermann*): Syv, No. 91 (ed. 1695, pp. 759 f.; ed. 1787, pp. 709 f.); Grundtvig, No. 39 B, II, 62.

[4] I, 17. "I forget where I met with the original," says Lewis.

[5] I, 226 ff.

[6] I, 208 ff. (the same ballad on which Lewis's *Water-King* is founded).

arrangement; so that my version may be nearly as intelligible to a Dane or Swede, as to a Scotsman." Here is the opening stanza of *The Mer-man* in Jamieson's Albinized version:

> Now rede me, dear mither, a sonsy rede;
> A sonsy rede swythe rede to me,
> How Marstig's daughter I may fa'
> My love and lemman gay to be.

Other ballads from the *Kæmpe-Viser* are *Sir Oluf and the Elf-King's Daughter*,[1] *Elfer Hill*,[2] *Skiœn Anna* (*Fair Annie*),[3] and *Rosmer Hafmand, or the Mer-man Rosmer*.[4]

In the second volume of Jamieson's *Ballads*[5] is printed a long letter from the author, dated "Riga, Dec. 31, Old Style, A.D. 1805–6," addressed to "the friend to whose charge Mr. Jamieson committed the charge of this publication." In this letter Jamieson writes at length of the importance to the student of English poetry, of Scandinavian popular ballads uncorrupted by "the baneful spirit of Germanizing affectation," and then goes on to discuss "scaldic poetry" in general. Apropos of this subject, he makes an interesting observation with regard to the *Kæmpe-Viser*. The value of such "scaldic poems" as have been preserved to us "has been enhanced," he says, "no less by their singularity than by their sublimity; and their antiquity, and the strongly-marked features which they present of the times that produced them, give them an interest with us, which compositions more resembling our own, although of equal intrinsic merit, would fail to excite. This is one reason why the fragments preserved by Sœmund, Bartholin, and Oluf Orm, and in the Sagas, have obtained so much notice from the historian and antiquary; while the much more extensive, and no less curious and valuable collection of Söffrensön,[6] which has been before the public ever since the year

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[1] I, 219 ff. This is Syv's No. 87 (see p. 178, n. 2, above).

[2] I, 225 ff. Already translated by Lewis (see p. 178, n. 1, above).

[3] II, 99 ff. Syv's No. 17, ed. 1695, pp. 484 ff.; Grundtvig, No. 258 F, V, 30 ff. See Child's *Ballads*, II, 63 ff. Cf. Jamieson's *Lady Jane*, II, 73 ff.

[4] II, 202 ff. Vedel's ii, 6 (*Rosmer Hafmand*), pp. 161 ff. in Syv's ed. of 1695; Grundtvig, No. 41 A, II, 82 f.

[5] Pp. 84–98.

[6] I.e. of Anders Sörensen Vedel.

1591, has hardly ever, so far as I know, been once adverted to by any writer of our country."

Among the *Popular Heroic and Romantic Ballads* contributed by Jamieson to the second part of Weber and Jamieson's *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, were the following from the *Kæmpe-Viser*: *Stark Tiderich and Olger Danske*,[1] *Lady Grimild's Wrack*,[2] *The Ettin Langshanks*,[3] *Hero Hogen and the Queen of Danmarck*,[4] *Sir Guncelin*,[5] *Ribolt and Guldborg*,[6] *Young Child Dyring*,[7] *Ingefred and Gudrune*,[8] *Sir Stig and Lady Torelild*,[9] *Child Axelvold*,[10] *The King's Daughter of Engelland*,[11] *The Wassal Dance*,[12] *Oluf Pant*,[13] the *Second* and *Third* ballads of *Rosmer Hafmand or the Mer-man Rosmer*,[14] *Sir Lava and Sir John*,[15] and *Wit at Need*.[16] There are also two versions of *Fair Midel* (one[17] from Gräter's *Bragur* and one from the Swedish), with a translation of Syv's No. 28 given by way of illustration.[18]

The reader is reminded that George Borrow translated many of his *Romantic Ballads* (London, 1826) from the *Kæmpe-Viser*, and others from Oehlenschläger, who did a great deal toward making Danish ballads and Scandinavian literature in general popular in England in the first half of the nineteenth century.[19]

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[1] Pp. 268 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 17). The German translation by Gräter in *Bragur* is also cited.

[2] Pp. 280 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 5).

[3] Pp. 297 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 7).

[4] Pp. 306 ff. (Syv, No. 25, ed. 1695, pp. 543 f.).

[5] Pp. 311 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 16).

[6] Pp. 324 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 82).

[7] Pp. 335 ff. (Syv, No. 77, ed. 1695, pp. 718 ff.; cf. Grundtvig, No. 181).

[8] Pp. 340 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 274).

[9] Pp. 344 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 84).

[10] Pp. 361 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 293).

[11] Pp. 384 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 294).

[12] Pp. 389 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 129).

[13] Pp. 393 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 315).

[14] Pp. 411 ff. Other versions of the ballad translated in his *Popular Ballads*, II, 202 ff. (see Grundtvig, II, 72).

[15] Pp. 420 ff. (Syv, No. 64, ed. 1695, pp. 669 ff.).

[16] Pp. 424 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 304).

[17] Pp. 368 ff. (Grundtvig, No. 268 Y).

[18] Pp. 382 f. (Grundtvig, No. 265).

[19] See Anderson's Horn, pp. 228–241.

II. English Reviews of Foreign Publications concerned with Norse Literature

Islands Landnamabok, Versione Latina (Copenhagen, 1774), was reviewed in the *Monthly Review*, Appendix for 1775. "The book itself," says the reviewer, "its antiquity excepted, appears to us of no importance. . . . We can say very little in praise of the poetry which is here and there intermixed." Of this poetry the reviewer transcribes eight lines in Norse, which, with the aid of his Latin translation, he does into English as follows:

> I alone am to inhabit the tomb,
> Within the boat there is a useless servant;
> And the room within the boat is too narrow.
> A warrior should have a better place;
> For I can govern a boat myself.
> *Men* will long remember this,
> If the complaint is not removed.

Kristni-Saga, sive Historia Religionis Christianæ in Islandiam introductæ . . . cum Interpretatione Latina (Copenhagen, 1773), was reviewed in the same number of the *Monthly*.

> The work itself [says the critic], interesting as it may appear to those who are curious in northern antiquities, has, in our opinion, very little value. . . . It abounds with fictitious miracles, which no man of sense can believe. . . . Without offending truth or charity, we should readily pronounce these *Berseki* to have been gross imposters. . . . The most valuable and useful part of the book is the little dictionary, which contains the Icelandic words that occur in the *Christni-saga* and in the life of the Bishop Isleif.[1] Those who are fond of researches concerning Northern languages, will here find an ample field for amusement and learned inquiry; and on this account the work merits our recommendation.

Haldan Einari: Sciagraphia Historiæ Litterariæ Islandicæ (Copenhagen, 1777) was briefly noticed in the *Monthly Review* for December, 1778. The reviewer cites "Johnsen in his Ecclesiastical History of Iceland" and "Harboe in his Danish Library." Langebek's

[1] This was appended to the saga.

Scriptores Rerum Danicarum Medii Ævi (Copenhagen, 1772–1783)[1] was noticed in the *Monthly Review*, Appendix for 1786.

Thorkelin's edition, with a Latin translation, of the *Eyrbyggja Saga* (Copenhagen, 1787) received mention in the *Analytical Review* for August, 1788. The first three volumes of Schöning's edition of Snorri's *Heimskringla*,[2] met with tardy recognition in the *Analytical Review* for October, 1788.

In the Appendix to the *Monthly Review* for 1801 [3] is a review of a work by Joseph Cherade Montbron called "*Les Scandinaves; &c.* i.e. The Scandinavians, a Poem, translated from the Sueo-Gothic; and followed by Observations respecting the Manners and the Religion of the antient barbarous Nations of Europe. 2 Vols. Paris, 1801." It appears that "the composition before us is in prose: but it is called a poem because, it is said, the original is in verse." The author "states that he has translated it from the Latin version of Resenius: but he has given no particulars concerning the probable date of its composition." The reviewer believes that the work is based on historical information alone. It is full of studied allusions; there is nothing "accidentally referring to any thing which has escaped the notice of history." The reviewer notes that "the marvellous agency of the poem is excluded by the French translator, from an opinion that none but the gods of Olympus are worthy to be the gods of poetry." The same work was reviewed by the *Critical Review* (Appendix, 1801). The reviewer observes that "amidst many works of ancient northern lore" which have fallen into his hands, is nothing that could have been the original of Montbron's French. He is "convinced that the pretended translator is in fact the author," for he finds some blunders in archæology and philology. "The whole," he says, "seems an imitation of Ossian, with a mixture of Scandinavian mythology. . . . The poem we may safely recommend to perusal," he concludes, "as possessing many marks of genius and imagination; and a translation would probably be an acceptable present to the public." Four pages of extracts follow, which are translated into English.[4]

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[1] I.e. the first five volumes. Vol. VI was published in 1786; Vol. VII in 1792; Vol. VIII in 1834.

[2] Vol. I, 1777; II, 1778; III, 1783.

[3] Vol. XXXV.

[4] I have not seen Montbron's work.

III. Minor Works on Subjects suggested by Scandinavian Literature

To Nos. 186 and 187 of *The Rambler* (Dec. 28 and 31, 1751) Dr. Johnson contributed *Anningait and Ajut, a Greenland History.* This was a simple romance, the scene of which was laid in Greenland. Anningait is represented in the course of the story as singing an ode in praise of Ajut, in which "he protested that she was beautiful as the vernal willow, and fragrant as the thyme upon the mountains; that her fingers were white as the teeth of the morse, and her smile grateful as the dissolution of the ice." In the course of his informal introduction Johnson observes, "Lapland and Iceland have their historians, their critics, and their poets; and Love, that extends his dominions where-ever humanity can be found, perhaps exerts the same power in the Greenlander's hut, as in the palaces of eastern monarchs."

In May, 1761, the *Monthly Review* noticed *Anningait and Ajutt: a Greenland Tale. Inscribed to Samuel Johnson, A.M.*[1] *Taken from the*

[1] Boswell mentions the dedication of this poem to Johnson (*Life of Johnson*, ed. Hill, New York, 1891, IV, 485). He has also left some record of Johnson's interest in Iceland: "Francis Barber, describing Johnson's friends in 1752, says: —'There was a talk of his going to Iceland with Mr. Diamond, which would probably have happened had he lived.' . . . Johnson, in a letter to the wife of the poet Smart, says, 'we have often talked of a voyage to Iceland.' . . . Mrs. Thrale wrote to him when he was in the Hebrides in 1773: 'Well! 't is better to talk of Iceland. Gregory challenges you for an Iceland expedition; but I trust there is no need; I suppose good eyes might reach it from some of the places you have been in'" (id., III, 515; cf. I, 281, and IV, 414). Johnson read *The Natural History of Iceland*, translated from the Danish of Niels Horrebow (id., III, 316 f.).

A scrap of a conversation in which Johnson, Percy, and Boswell took part in 1778 is worth recording. Johnson and Percy disagreed about the value of Thomas Pennant's *Tour in Scotland.* Johnson, who had praised Pennant, lost his temper; but on Percy's immediate offer of reconciliation Johnson exclaimed: "'My dear Sir, I am willing you shall *hang* Pennant.' Percy. (resuming the former subject) 'Pennant complains that the helmet is not hung out to invite to the hall of hospitality. Now I never heard that it was a custom to hang out a *helmet*.' Johnson. 'Hang him up, hang him up.' Boswell. (humouring the joke) 'Hang out his skull instead of a helmet, and you may drink ale out of it in your hall of Odin, as he is your enemy; that will be truly ancient. *There* will be *Northern Antiquities*'" (id., III, 310 f.).

Fourth Volume of his Rambler. Versified by a LADY. The poem may be found in Vol. VII[1] of *The Poetical Calendar* (12 vols., London, 1763), where the author is said to be Mrs. Penny.

Among the poems of Dr. John Leyden is a *Greenland Elegy, a Father on the Death of his Son.*[2]

The *Critical Review* for July, 1756, printed an article on *The State of Poetry in Greenland*, with a "fragment of a *Greenland* song, made in the year 1729, on the anniversary of the late king *Christian* the IVth, then prince royal: The burthen of every stanza is

Amna, aja, aja; aja aja; aja aja; hei.
Kongingoromamet, amna aja &c.
He will be king
Anguneog tokkopet, amna aja &c.
After the death of his father,
Tipeit sokigogut, amna aja &c.
We rejoice as yet,
Attatut asseigalloarpatit, amna aja &c.
Because that we love him, like his father,"

and so on. The *Scots Magazine* also printed, in April, 1804, a short article *On the Poetry of the Greenlanders*, in which the same song is reproduced in a slightly different translation.

The *Poetical Sketches* published by William Blake in 1783 contained a ballad entitled *Gwin, King of Norway.*[3]

The Vision; a Poem on the Union of Russia and Prussia against Poland; with other Pieces, the Effusions of a Young Mind (London, 1797), seems to have contained some Scandinavian material, though I have not been able to identify the book. The *Critical Review* (August, 1798) makes this objection: "In a note to the Runic poem, the author confounds the Goths with the Celts; an errour which, we hoped, had been completely exploded in this country."

In 1798 Benjamin Thompson, Jr., published *Ildegerte, Queen of Norway. From the German of Augustus Von Kotzebue, 2 vols.* The

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[1] Pp. 81 ff.

[2] *The Poetical Remains of the late Dr. John Leyden*, edited by James Morton, London, 1819, p. 192.

[3] See Blake's *Works*, ed. Ellis and Yeats, III, 30.

Critical Review said of it (August, 1799): "The dramatic celebrity of Kotzebue will doubtless recommend this piece to the notice of the English reader: it is a romance illustrative of the chivalrous bravery of the northern nations, and interspersed with the doctrines of the runic mythology."

Among the poems of Peter Bayley, Jr. (London, 1803), is one called *The Norwegian Hunter*, from which the *Monthly Review* for October, 1803, prints an extract.

Anne Bannerman prints in her *Poems, New Edition*[1] (Edinburgh, 1807), a sonnet called *The Norwegian*.

Finally we may mention *Rudigar the Dane, a Legendary Tale*, by Eaglesfield Smith, 1809, of which the *Monthly Review* (December, 1809) says tartly: "A horrible story! . . . Repetition is not only the soul of poetry, but the flesh and blood of ballad writing; and therefore we have here the following stanza, slightly altered, over and over again:

O list ye rovers of the North
That stem the boisterous wave, —
O listen to a minstrel's song,
Lord Rudigar the brave!

"Any Lord 'Rudigar the Dane' may listen, if he pleases, since we are at strife with him and his nation, but we hope that our friends will be better employed."[2]

IV. Scattered Allusions to Scandinavian Literature and Mythology

1772

Full forty thousand Saxon spears
Came glittering down the hill,
And with their shouts and clang of arms
The distant valleys fill.

[1] P. 97.

[2] In November, 1794, the *Critical Review* had a brief notice of a novel in three volumes, called *The Weird Sisters*. The only Scandinavian element in the story, however, appears to be the title, of which the reviewer gives this curious explanation: "The heroines of this novel receive not their appellation from any supernatural endowments, but from the beauty of their persons."

Old Offa, drest in Odin's garb,
  Assumed the hoary god;
And Hengist, like the warlike Thor,
  Before the horsemen rode.

From William Julius Mickle's ballad, *Hengist and May*, first printed in Pearch's Collection, 1772 (ed. of 1783, III, 17); reprinted in Evans's *Old Ballads*, 1777, II, 180 ff.

1772

Say, who is he, aloft in Air,
  Sublime upon his iron Car,
Who bids the trembling World prepare
  For Hardihood, and Deeds of War?—
Stern *Odin:* At his bold Command,
O'er *Albion's* wave-encircled Land,
  From snow-clad *Scarsfield* issuing forth,
  Flies the dread *Spirit of the North.*

From the *Ode on British Freedom* in S. Whyte's *Shamrock,* Dublin, 1772, pp. 210 f. A footnote explains *Odin.*

1773

In Gorges Edmond Howard's *The Siege of Tamor, a Tragedy,* Dublin, 1773, Turgesius, King of Denmark, calls on

Eternal Woden! mighty God of battles!
Whom on the cloudy top of Torneo's hill
In thunder oft we 've heard.

Act i, scene 3, 3d ed., London, 1773.

1773

Deep in the frozen regions of the North,
A Goddess violated brought thee forth,
Immortal Liberty, whose look sublime
Hath blanch'd the tyrant's cheek in ev'ry varying clime;
What time the iron-hearted Gaul
With frantic Superstition for his guide,

Arm'd with the dagger and the pall,
The sons of Woden to the field defy'd:
The ruthless hag, by Weser's flood,
In Heaven's name urg'd the infernal blow;
And red the stream began to flow:
"The vanquish'd were baptiz'd with blood."

Smollett's *Ode to Independence*, in Bell's *Fugitive Poetry*, 1790, XII, 103.

1776

My KENDRED'S thousand beauties to behold,
Might draw down Woden from his throne of gold.

Hagley, a Descriptive Poem, in *Poems, Epistolary, Lyric, and Elegiacal . . . by the Rev. Thomas Maurice, A.M.*, London, 1800, p. 187. First published at Oxford, 1776.

1777

Herrewald, borne on Sarim's spreddyng plaine,
Where Thor's fam'd temple manie ages stoode;
Where Druids, auncient preests dyd ryghtes ordaine,
And in the middle 'shed the victym's bloude;
Where auncient bardi dyd their verses synge,
Of Cæsar conquer'd and his mighty hoste.

From Chatterton's *Battle of Hastings*, Chalmers, XV, 431. Chatterton refers to Stonehenge. In a footnote the editor points out the confusion of "Celtic and Teutonic divinities."

Ca. 1778

Then mark me, Dane! Though thou art sprung
From heroes more than human, — Odin's race,
Who stretch'd the spear of conquest o'er the world.

John Home's *Alfred*, a play. Written about 1778. See Home's *Works*, Edinburgh, 1822, II, 335.

1782

Pour'd from the Northern hive with impious rage,
Dire on our coast he saw the nations swarm;
Saw *Odin's* power to CHRIST'S pure banner yield
And *Scandinavia* own great ALFRED'S arm.

The Rapt Bard, printed anonymously in the *London Magazine*, December, 1782. Reprinted in *Poems by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall*, 1792, I, 33, where it appears that the author is Edward Drewe, of Exeter.

1782

> And those gods of thine,
> Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine,
> Fell broken and defaced at their own door,
> As Dagon in Philistia long before.

Cowper's *Expostulation*. See his *Works*, Pickering's Aldine ed., I, 85.

1786

> O'ershadowing Scotia's desert coast,
> The Sisters sail in dusky state,
> And, wrapt in clouds, in tempests tost,
> Weave the airy web of Fate.

Rogers's *Ode to Superstition*. See his *Complete Poetical Works*, Boston, 1854, p. 216 f.[1]

1788

> In that bright hall, where Odin's Gothic throne
> With the broad blaze of brandish'd falchions shone.

Thomas Warton's *Ode on His Majesty's Birth-Day, June 4, 1788*. In Anderson's Collection, XI, 1095; Chalmers's, XVIII, 116.

1788

> Yes ANNA! I will hasten forth
> To the bleak regions of the North,
> Where *Erickson*, immortal Lord!
> Pour'd on the Dane his vengeful sword;
> Or where wide o'er the barb'rous plain,
> *Fierce Rurick* held his ancient reign.

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[1] A note to "Sisters" reads, "The Fates of the northern mythology. — *See Mallet's Antiquities.*" Rogers knew all Gray's poems by heart. See Clayden's *Early Life of Samuel Rogers*, London, 1887, p. 57; also Rogers's *Table Talk*, New York, 1856, p. 35. Clayden points out that some passages in this particular poem were "evidently inspired by Gray's *Bard*" (*Early Life*, p. 70).

Della Crusca (Robert Merry), *To Anna Matilda*, in *Poetry of the World*, London, 1788, I, 103; also in *The British Album*, Boston, 1793, p. 90.

1789

Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore.

Burns's *Caledonia*. *Works* (ed. J. Currie, 4 vols., London, 1803), IV, 352.

1789

Soon shall the Moor, so Fate has said,
Avenge the violated Maid,
And wrest Iberia's throne from Odin's race divine.

An Imitation of an Ode by Luis de Leon in *Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems by the late Thomas Russell*, Oxford, 1789, p. 36.

Ca. 1800

Sometimes, more sternly moved, I would relate
How vanquished Mithridates northward passed,
And, hidden in the cloud of years, became
Odin, the Father of a race by whom
Perished the Roman Empire.[1]

Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Bk. i, vv. 186 ff.

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[1] Professor Knight observes in a note to this passage (*Poetical Works of Wordsworth*, 1896, III, 137): "I cannot trace the legend of Mithridates becoming Odin. Probably Wordsworth means that he would invent, rather than 'relate' the story." There is a tradition that while Pompey was absent in Syria, about the year 64 B.C., Mithridates conceived an extensive scheme for the invasion of Italy, and asked aid of the barbarous "Scythians" in his vicinity, of whom Odin was the reputed leader (see Justin, *Historiae Philippicae*, xxxviii, 3; Appian, Μιθριδάτειος, §§ 13, 15, 69; Théodore Reinach, *Mithridate Eupator*, Paris, 1890, pp. 402 ff; and cf. Nathan Drake, *Literary Hours*, III, 278). The names of Mithridates and Odin have been traditionally associated, then, and there are certain similarities in the fates of these two great captains, assuming for the moment the historical truth of the legend of Odin's migration: each was compelled to flee before the Roman army, and each committed suicide. Sir William Drummond, as we have seen (p. 176, above) identifies Odin for the purposes of his epic poem with the son of Mithridates. "I have thought it no very heinous violation of probability," he says in his *Notice to Readers*, "to suppose, that the Asiatic invader of Scandinavia, whom tradition represents as having been originally the ally of Mithridates, might have been no

1805

For if he knew
The fame of his high ancestry, deriv'd
From Odin. . . .

William Richardson's *Noble Hermit*, in *Poems and Plays*, Edinburgh, 1805, I, 105.

1805

Poor Bards! you are ill-used, even after death, by those who have lived on your brains. And now, having scooped out those brains, they drink out of them like Vandals out of the skulls of the starved and slain, sewed up by the Gothic Ganymede, Alexander Chalmers.

Campbell to Scott, Oct. 2, 1805. *Life and Letters of Thomas Campbell* (ed. Beattie, 3 vols., London, 1849), II, 66.[1]

CHAPTER V

HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC WORKS RELATING TO THE SCANDINAVIAN NORTH

I. Odin as an Historical Personage

One phase of eighteenth-century scholarship which associates itself readily with certain aspects of the Romantic movement in literature, is a widespread curiosity, languid at first but presently growing keener, with regard to the interrelations of primitive European races and the origins of modern European nations. A vital

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other than his son Pharnaces." Wordsworth might very easily go a step farther and identify Odin, for the purposes of poetry, with Mithridates himself. Drummond's *Odin* was published in 1817; *The Prelude*, in 1850.

[1] Campbell apparently at one time had some thought of making translations from the Norse. He wrote to Miss Mayow, Jan. 23, 1806 (id., II, 79): "I am extremely obliged to Mr. Wolff for his hint respecting the *Edda*. I am, however, at present in no state to turn my attention to any avocation so important. The moment my mind is discharged of many anxieties and employments, which at present fill it up to the brim, I shall consider myself very fortunate if Mr. Wolff will continue his goodness, and let me ask him for pilotage and direction, in the choice of proper matter for translation."

element in the discussions to which this speculation gave rise was the mediæval tradition, traceable to monastic sources, of the migration of a savage chieftain, Odin, Oden, Odhen, or Woden (the name is variously spelled), with a horde of barbaric followers, from some district in Asia to the Scandinavian North. As early as the seventh century we find certain monkish chroniclers — in the first instance, I believe, the unknown writer who goes by the name *Fredegarius* — assigning to Germanic races a kinship with the Romans, a common descent from Trojan ancestry. This tradition was fostered in the next century by the author of the *Gesta Regum Francorum*, and later by the Saxon Widukind, Dudo of S. Quentin, and Wace.[1]

The most elaborate development of this legend, however, appeared in certain Norse documents, particularly the *Heimskringla* and the Prose Edda, whose accounts of Odin's fortunes are essentially the same, though they differ in some details. It appears from the Introduction to the Prose Edda, that certain descendants of Jupiter settled in a district in Asia Minor near the centre of the earth called Turcia or Tyrklandia, where was established the city of Troy, of which Priam became king. Troy was eventually overthrown by the Greeks, and many of its citizens were driven into exile. From one community of these refugees sprang the Roman race, and from another there descended, through Thor (Priam's grandson) and his wife Sif, a Northern prophetess, in the twentieth generation, Odin, a valiant soldier, a wise statesman, and something of a magician, who was still in possession of some portion of the patriarchal domain of Tyrklandia. During his reign the Romans, now become a mighty nation, began to invade Asia Minor with hostile armies. Alarmed by this invasion, and learning by his magic arts that fame awaited him in the North, Odin abandoned his Asiatic possessions and with the greater part of his people worked his way northward as far as what is now Scandinavia. The inhabitants of this region welcomed

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[1] An admirable account of various early versions of the myth of the Germanic migration is given by Viktor Rydberg in his *Teutonic Mythology*, translated from the Swedish by R. B. Anderson, London, 1891, *Introduction*, § 2, *Mediæval Migration Sagas*. Cf. Ebert, *Allgem. Gesch. der Literatur des Mittelalters*, 2d ed., 1889, I, 607, n. 1; Paul's *Grundriss*, 2d ed., III, 671.

him eagerly, because wherever he halted the crops were good. He built a city in Sweden called Sigtuna, which was a copy of Troy. His followers intermarried with the natives and became the ruling race.

The *Ynglinga Saga* (in the *Heimskringla*) asserts that Odin dwelt originally in Asgard, the chief city of Asaland or Asaheim, a district separated by a mountain range from Tyrklandia, where he also had possessions.[1] He is represented as leaving home for the reason given in the Prose Edda, and as making his way northward. He achieved great fame in the North as a sorcerer and as the inventor of poetry, and after his death he was worshiped as a god.[2]

These interesting myths were first made generally known to Europeans by the publication of Resenius's Prose Edda (1665), and Peringskjöld's *Heimskringla* (1697). Saxo Grammaticus has, to be sure, a good deal to say about Odin's life in Byzantium on the Bosporus (the Asgard of the Norse sagas), and he asserts that Odin's fame reached the far North, where he was worshiped as a god; but he makes no mention of any wholesale immigration of Asians into Scandinavia, nor does he say that Odin ever ruled there. The story of the migration was accepted, however, by Torfæus and other Scandinavian historians, who tried to establish a date for it, and the upshot of the matter was that Odin came to be generally accepted as a genuine historical personage who had actually conducted a horde of Asiatic savages into Scandinavia, and round whom had gradually accumulated, as in the case, let us say, of King Arthur, a mass of impossible traditions crediting him with supernatural endowments. Sheringham believed this; so did the artless Sammes, and so did Sir William Temple. Various hypotheses were

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[1] Rydberg apparently assumes a migration from Tyrklandia to Asaland for the sake of reconciling the *Heimskringla* narrative with that of the Prose Edda and giving continuity to the account as a whole. The Chevalier Ihre tried to explain the contradiction between the two narratives by asserting that Snorri meant the same thing by Asgard and Troy. See Von Troil's *Letters on Iceland*, London, 1780, p. 308, and cf. Rydberg, pp. 28 f.

[2] Some idea of Odin's prestige in the North may be acquired from the seventh chapter of the *Ynglinga Saga*, *De Othini Artibus*, accessible to eighteenth-century scholars in the Latin translation in Schöning's edition (Copenhagen, 1777), I, 11 f. See also the tenth chapter, *Mors Othini*.

invented to account for numerous inconsistencies in the several Odin legends; it became customary to assume two and even three historical Odins, who were supposed to have become more or less confused with each other and with the god of the same name.[1]

These legends of a northward migration, it should be remembered, appear to have originated in the mediæval monasteries. Popular tradition, on the contrary, represented the Scandinavians as descended from the culture-hero Scef or Sceaf (or, according to *Béowulf*, from Scyld Scefing), who sailed in a magic boat to the shores of Scandia. Adherents to this tradition assumed, then, that the Scandinavians, in common with the other Teutonic races,[2] had

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[1] Thus Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua*, p. 448: "*Suenonius*, in his Notes to *Saxo Grammaticus*, supposeth that there were three different *Wodens;* The first and ancientest was called the *Asian*, and in distinction *Odin hin Gamble*, that is, *Woden the Elder*, He was the Son of *Saturn*. The second was *Upsalensis*, and among the *Swedes* had a splendid Temple, shining with Gold, built to his Honour; He is also called an *Asian*, but was a *Scythian* born, these two, *Suenonius* thinks, are confounded in History. The third was called *Mithoden*, that is, the *middle Odin*, of whom *Saxo Grammaticus* makes mention, he, whilst the other *Woden* was abroad in the World took occasion to feign himself a God, but at the others return, trusting more to his Heels than his Cheating tricks, he fled into *Phœonia*, where hoping to hide himself he was slain by the Rabble. Whether there be any truth in this Conjecture we cannot determine, certainly the History of *Hengist* and *Horsa* would require some such salvo, who (according to *Bede* and *Malmsbury*) derived themselves in the third degree from *Woden*, which if true, necessarily implies there was one WODEN at least, if not two, later in time than him we have hitherto spoken of, to which opinion *Verstegan* inclineth."

Ten Brink, *Gesch. der engl. Lit.*, Berlin, 1877, I, 186, asserted that in the twelfth century Odin was popularly confused with Robin Hood. He had in mind, perhaps, an article on *Wodan* by Kuhn (Haupt's *Zeitschrift*, V, 472–494), in which an attempt is made to connect with *Woden* the name *hooden*, alleged to have been applied to the wooden hobbyhorse used in certain Christmas or May games in which a character representing Robin Hood frequently took part. Professor Child points out in his introduction to *A Gest of Robyn Hode* (*English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, III, 47 f.) the fallacy in Kuhn's reasoning and the errors in his data.

[2] Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, pp. 65 ff., finds that the popular traditions of the East Goths, West Goths, Langobardians, Gepidæ, Burgundians, Herulians, Franks, Saxons, Swabians, and Alamannians "are unanimous in pointing to the North as the Teutonic cradle." Tacitus, the oldest authority of all, confirms this (*Germ.*, ii, iii, xliv).

their origin in the North, and that they moved southward before the Roman Empire began to break up. This legend of a southward migration had come, however, to be overshadowed by the later legend of a northward migration.

Belief in the existence of one or more historical Odins still survived in the eighteenth century. J. B. Des Roches, for example, appears to endorse, in his *Histoire de Dannemarc* (Amsterdam, 1730),[1] the version of Snorri's account of Odin's migration given by Torfæus.[2]

Meanwhile, the question as to the ethnological identity of Odin's "Scythians" had begun to perplex archæologists. In 1758 appeared anonymously at Oxford a work entitled *Some Enquiries Concerning the First Inhabitants, Language, Religion, Learning and Letters of Europe*, written by Francis Wise, a member of the London Society of Antiquaries, which coped feebly with this problem. Mount Ararat, Wise concludes, was situated in Scythia; consequently there language had its origin, and thence it spread into eastern Europe. "Some think," he says,[3] "that . . . the Goths at first came from Scandinavia, and sent out their colonies southward. Others say that the Goths and Getes were the same people. And some think the word Goth equivalent to Scyth, or Scythian. We have not time to dispute about the word." These three theories, he tells us, are supported respectively by Jornandes, by Sheringham, and by Isidor. Of one thing he is certain — that the Gothic language "can be no dialect of the Celtic."[4] He accepts the theory of Odin's migration northward, and explains that Odin "was after death reverenced as the chief deity of the Goths: his inferiour captains were likewise deified under the name of *Asæ* or *Asiatics*, to distinguish them from the Europeans; and their language, or at least their Poetry, was called *Asa-Mal*, or *Asiatic Speech*." Wise's book was perfunctorily reviewed by Goldsmith[5] in the *Monthly Review* for December, 1758.

[1] Reviewed in *Historia Litteraria*, II, 142 ff., London, 1731, the source of my information.

[2] Torfæus, *Hist. Rer. Norveg.*, Copenhagen, 1711, Pars I, lib. iii, cap. 15.

[3] P. 83.

[4] In confirmation of his opinion he cites John Toland's *History of the Druids* (see Toland's *Miscellaneous Works*, London, 1747, I, 7).

[5] See Goldsmith's *Works*, Bohn ed., IV, 304 ff.

Gibbon was inclined, in his *Examination of Mallet's Introduction* (1764),[1] to accept the tradition of an historical Odin, though he says he cannot find that Odin himself ever pretended to be a god. In his *Decline and Fall* (1776) he concludes that "this wonderful expedition of Odin, which, by deducing the enmity of the Goths and Romans from so memorable a cause, might supply the noble groundwork of an Epic Poem, cannot safely be regarded as authentic history," though it does not appear that he positively discredits the existence of an historical Odin, a "Mahomet of the North."[2]

Both John Macpherson, in his *Critical Dissertations on the . . . Caledonians* (1768), and James Macpherson, in his *Introduction to the History of Great Britain* (1771),[3] ignore the historical Odin, though the former derives the Scandinavians from "the Tartar race," which must have emigrated from Asia,[4] and the latter writes[5] of the "Sarmatæ of Scandinavia," whom he makes equivalent to the Goths and Vandals. Both writers carefully distinguish the Scandinavian Germans from the Celts, whom John Macpherson derives from "a colony from the lesser Asia,"[6] and James Macpherson makes equivalent to the Scythians.[7] Mallet believed the legend of Odin's migration, and Percy, in his translation of Mallet, does not discredit it. Percy takes pains, however, to correct Mallet's confusion of the Celtic and the Germanic races.[8] Warton appears to accept Odin's migration as an

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[1] *Miscellaneous Works*, London, 1814, III, 231 ff.

[2] See the tenth chapter and the notes thereto, 2d ed., London, 1776, I, xxxvi, 246.

[3] This is the work which John Pinkerton says "might be pronounced the most false and dishonest book ever written, were it not the most foolish and ignorant." *Origin and Progress of the Scythians*, p. 99, n.

[4] Pp. 21 f. [5] P. 13. [6] P. 22.

[7] P. 6. John Macpherson gives some information, derived chiefly from Torfæus, about the Scandinavian skalds in his fourteenth dissertation (*Of the Bards*). James Macpherson tells (p. 278) of the Odinic cult among the Anglo-Saxons, and describes the *Irminsul*.

[8] Mallet refused to yield the point. The reviewer of his *Histoire des Suisses*, Geneva, 1803, points out in the Appendix to the *Monthly Review* for 1803, that Mallet "still adheres to the error which pervaded his *Histoire de Dannemarc*, and into which he was led by following Cluverius and Pelloutier; viz. that of regarding the Celts and Goths as originally the same people. This mistake," observes the reviewer, "was fully exposed by the very learned and able translator of the Introduction to the above-mentioned History."

historical fact in his *History of English Poetry* (1774),[1] but John Richardson, in his *Dissertation on the Languages, Literature and Manners of the Eastern Nations* (1777), regards it as "a mere Scaldic fable, invented to trace the origin of *Gothic* and *Roman* enmity."[2]

According to Richardson, "the great *officina gentium*, whence such myriads of barbarians have at different periods poured into the more cultivated regions of the earth, appears, with every probability, to have been Tartary," and the Tartars are the same as the Scythians.

Vicesimus Knox notes in his *Conjectures on the Difference between Oriental and Septentrional Poetry* (*Essays, Moral and Literary*, 4th ed., London, 1784, II, 331) that certain resemblances between "the Gothic and Oriental poetry" have been accounted for "with great probability" by an hypothesis that "in an emigration of the Asiatics into Scandinavia, the Eastern people brought with them their national spirit of poetry, and communicated it to the tribes with whom they united."

The first attempt to deal with this subject scientifically, and upon a really extensive scale, seems to have been made by John Pinkerton in his *Dissertation on the Origin and Progress of the Scythians or Goths. Being an Introduction to the Ancient and Modern History of Europe* (London, 1787). In his *Preface*, Pinkerton enlarges upon the "virtues" which "prevailed among the whole Goths, from the extremity of Scandinavia to the Vandals in Africa," and deplores "our ignorance, who are at present but slowly eloping from barbarism," in that "the name of Goth, the sacred name of our fathers, is an object of detestation!" After showing that the *Scythæ*, *Getæ*, and *Gothi* are the same people,[3] he proceeds to discuss the question whether these Scythians migrated from Scandinavia southward, or from Asia northward.[4] He begins by distinguishing four ancient European races: (1) the *Celts*, "the most ancient inhabitants that can be traced," of whom the Irish and Welsh are survivors; (2) "the

[1] Ed. Hazlitt, 1871, I, 111 f. Warton makes use of this theory to explain the introduction into Europe of romantic fiction. See Richardson's comment (*Eastern Nations*, p. xliv).

[2] See the version prefixed to Richardson's *Dictionary*, London, 1806, p. xlv.

[3] Pp. 5 ff.

[4] Pp. 15 ff.

Iberi of Spain and Aquitania, who were Mauri and had past from Africa," few in number and nearly all destroyed by the Sarmatæ and Scythæ; (3) the *Sarmatæ* (Slavonic), "originally possessors of south-west Tartary, but expelled by the Tartars"; (4) the *Scythians*, who originated in Persia and spread "almost over all Europe," and from whom are descended the Scandinavians and the Germans. Pelloutier,[1] says Pinkerton, confused the Celts and the Scythians; James Macpherson, the Sarmatæ and the Scythians; and Gibbon, Richardson, and others, the Tartars and the Scythians.

Our sole authority for believing that the Scythians originated in Scandinavia Pinkerton discovers to be Jornandes, who was "blindly followed" by some later writers in the "dark ages." The "Danish and Norwegian, and Swedish, antiquaries" used to accept the authority of Jornandes, "but of late their whole ancient Eddas, Sagas, Chronicles &c. shewing, on the contrary, that the Goths came to Scandinavia, not many centuries before Christ, but mentioning no prior egression from it, their natural good sense has led them to pass these ideas."[2]

"That the Scythians originated from Asia can be proved by many authorities," says Pinkerton,[3] "even the least of them superior to that of Jornandes." Among these authorities he mentions Trogus Pompeius, Epiphanius, Eusebius, Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus. Pinkerton's conclusion, therefore, is that it is an "Historic Truth, that the Scythians, otherwise called Goths, came from present Persia into Europe by a North West progress: and that Scandinavia, instead of being the country whence they sprung, must in fact have been almost the last that received them."

Pinkerton devotes the Second Part of his *Dissertation* to an attempt to prove that the Germanic races were neither Celts nor Sarmatæ, but Scythians. He uses three "grand arguments," the first from language, in which he cites Ulfilas, and Wachter's and Ihre's Glossaries; the second from the testimony of ancient writers, including Herodotus, Xenophon, and Aristotle; the third from similarity of manners, as evinced by the testimony of Herodotus,

[1] *Histoire des Celtes*, La Haye, 1750, 2 vols.; Paris, 1770, 8 vols.
[2] Pp. 107 f. [3] P. 24.

Tacitus, Cæsar, and others. He ends by asserting his belief that the "German Scythians, who peopled Scandinavia, were the Peukini and Sitones, two divisions of the Basternæ."[1] Naturally, then, the Odin migration legend falls into discredit. "Odin," he declares, "was merely the name of a deity, or rather an epithet, and they who speak gravely of him as an hero are deceived. It was Odin, Mars, literally war, that opened their progress into the wilds of Scandinavia."[2]

Pinkerton's book attracted considerable attention, and it is invariably cited in later allusions to the subject of which it treats.[3] The work was reviewed in the *Critical Review* for September, and the *Monthly Review* for October, 1787. John Galt got hold of the book some years later, and soon found himself "over head and ears in the depths of Gothic antiquities."[4]

The questions discussed by Pinkerton continued to be debated. In Smollett's edition of Rapin (London, 1789)[5] Odin was treated as an historical person. In the essay on *Runic Sagas* printed in the *Monthly Magazine* for December, 1798, William Taylor of Norwich observes that "Schöning and Suhm[6] incline to distinguish between Woden the god of war, and Odin chief of the Asæ; and suppose the apotheosis of the former to have long preceded that of the latter, who perhaps was merely the conductor of the first colony of Goths which ventured to forsake the southern shores of the Baltic and to take up its abode in Scandinavia." In the same article Taylor observes that

[1] P. 176. [2] P. 134.

[3] Pinkerton seems to have read very industriously in the preparation of his *Dissertation*. One who is interested in his sources, or who wishes to follow out in detail the obsolete arguments which served as ammunition in eighteenth-century debates over the origin of the Scandinavians, would do well to consult the extensive Bibliography on pp. xvii–xx of the book.

[4] *Autobiography*, London, 1833, I, 56. [5] I, 144.

[6] Gerhard Schöning was a celebrated Norwegian scholar (b. 1722, d. 1780), best known for his edition of the *Heimskringla* and for his History of Norway, the first volume of which appeared in 1771, and the third, under the supervision of his friend Suhm, in 1781. Peter Friderik Suhm (b. 1728 at Copenhagen, d. 1798) was famous as a scholar and as the patron of scholars. His great *Historie af Danmark* began publication in 1782; the final volume was brought out by Nyerup in 1812.

"Herodotus mentions (Melpomene LXXXI.) an immense brewing-copper, in high estimation among the Scythians, the acquisition of which by Thor, appears to be celebrated in the Hymis-Quida. The identity of the elder Anacharsis, and of Odin," Taylor conjectures,[1] "may one day not seem indefensible." He points out that Gräter, "struck with a resemblance between the cosmogony of the Edda and that of Melissus of Samos, as described by Diogenes Laertius, has attempted to prove from a passage in the Ægisdrecka (Str. 24.) that Odin visited the island of Samos (Sams-egio), and derived his doctrines from this Grecian philosopher, who flourished in the eighty-fourth Olympiad." In his review of Cottle's *Icelandic Poetry*, contributed to the corresponding issue of the *Monthly Review*, Taylor censures Cottle for his evasive treatment of the migration question and takes occasion to sum up the evidence on that point.

Sharon Turner, in his *History of the Anglo-Saxons*,[2] first published 1799–1805, thinks Odin's migration not improbable. "We may consider Woden, or Odin, to have really lived and reigned in the north," he says, "and may place his real chronology as not earlier than 200 nor later than 300 years of the Christian era."[3]

In 1799 appeared at Paris a book that occasioned some criticism in England, Charles Pougens's *Essai sur les Antiquités du Nord*. The *Critical Review* (Appendix, Vol. XXVI, 1799) was particularly severe. The book was "in an unscientific form" and "not well digested." "The crudeness of this attempt," says the reviewer, "may be pardoned, when we consider that it is one of the first that have been

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[1] Sir William Jones, in an address delivered before the Calcutta Asiatic Society, Feb. 2, 1786, identifies Odin with Buddha: "The *Scythian* and *Hyperborean* doctrines and mythology may also be traced in every part of these eastern regions; nor can we doubt that *Wod*, or *Oden*, whose religion, as the northern historians admit, was introduced into *Scandinavia* by a foreign race, was the same with *Buddh*, whose rites were probably imported into *India* nearly at the same time, though received much later by the *Chinese*, who soften his name into FO'." *Asiatic Researches*, reprint of 1801, I, 425.

[2] This work contains what appears to be the earliest English translation of the entire *Vǫluspá*. The translator speaks of the poem as "very little known in Europe." See the sixth edition, London, 1836, I, 240 ff. The translation does not appear in the second edition, 1807.

[3] Bk. iii, chap. iii.

made in France to introduce some knowledge of the Northern languages. Mallet had long before clothed the northern antiquities in a French dress; but the *treasure* of Hickes, and other stores of Scandinavian philology, remained guarded, as by a dragon, from French intrusion."[1] Pougens appears to have been guilty of all the ethnological sins in the calendar, from accepting the legend of the historical Odin, to confusing the Celts with the Goths. "That the Celtic, Irish, Welsh and Armoric tongues, are radically different from the Gothic divisions of German, Scandinavian, English &c.," says the *Critical Review*, "is now so universally understood, that to prove it would be a mere waste of time and labour."

In the *Monthly Magazine* for September, 1800, appeared a communication from London, signed "A. Y." which contained some startling ethnological conjectures. The writer suggests (after noting that Mallet fails to explore "the root of the allegory" in the Edda) that "by the giants, who act so conspicuous a part in this poem, we are to understand the Celtic natives of the North; and by the Gods, their Scythian invaders."

> Every one knows [he continues] the artifice of the Scythian chief in assuming the name of *Odin*, which, before his arrival in the North, was appropriated to the designation of the Supreme Being. . . . That it was not only Odin himself, who adopted the policy of personating a divine character, but that his example was followed by his companions, appears evident from the name by which we still distinguish our Northern ancestors. It is strange that it should have escaped all our etymologists, at least as far as my information extends, that the word by which all the Teutonic languages express the divine being, which we write *God*, the Germans *Gott*, and which in the old Gothic is spelled *Goth*, was the origin of the name by which the Eastern settlers in Scandinavia were distinguished from the original inhabitants.[2] We find in several other antient fables the conflicts of the Scythians

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[1] William Taylor wrote to Southey, Aug. 16, 1799: "Have you seen Pougens on Northern Antiquities? Dr. Griffiths . . . has been soliciting me to overlook it, which I have declined. I expect nothing very good on this subject from Paris, yet I should like to know if it be worth buying" (*Memoir of William Taylor*, I, 291). The *Monthly Review*, of which Griffiths was publisher, noticed the book in the Appendix to Vol. XXIX, 1799.

[2] Cf. pp. 138 f., n., above. Another interesting attempt at etymologizing appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* for October, 1800, in a communication signed "Meirion."

and Celtes apparently represented by battles of gods and giants. This is the most probable interpretation of the fables of Jupiter's war with the Titans, and of many of the exploits of Hercules (which we know to have been a common name for adventurers who conducted emigrations from Asia into the south of Europe), as his battle with the giant Albion the son of Neptune. The whole of the intercourse between the gods and the giants in the Edda is an intercourse of hostilities. . . . M. Mallet himself shews clearly that the dwarfs spoken of in the Edda, were intended to allegorize the Laplanders. What is more likely therefore, than that the Celtes, who exhibited such a contrast to them in stature and strength, and whom all writers agree in celebrating for the size and robustness of their bodies, should be distinguished as giants.

In 1805 a M. Rozen contributed to the *Magasin Encyclopédique*[1] an article on the *Littérature du Nord* which defended the tradition of Odin's migration, and which was read in England.[2]

In January, 1806, the *Monthly Review* noticed a work called *A Vindication of the Celts, from Ancient Authorities; with Observations on Mr. Pinkerton's Hypothesis concerning the Origin of European Nations*, etc. The reviewer characterizes Pinkerton's theories as "whimsical and extravagant paradoxes"; he is "surprized that any man of competent information should deem them worthy of serious animadversion."[3]

"*Woden*," says the writer, "is a mythological personage among the Welsh. They generally call the galaxy CAER GWDION, or the *rampart of Goodion;* and this name under many forms of construction becomes *Wdion;* as *i Wdion* (to Goodion) and the like. It is a singular fact likewise . . . that a word of the form of *Gwdion* in the Welsh would become *Fion* in the Irish. . . . Here we recognise the celebrated FION of the Irish, moulded into FIN, by Mr. Macpherson, representing the GOODION of the *Cymry*, and the WODEN of the northern nations." The Abbé de la Rue derived *goblin* (*goubelin*) from *God Oudin* (see Pinkerton's *Literary Correspondence*, II, 244).

[1] III, 356 ff.

[2] See Sayers, *Poetical Works*, p. 129, n.; Pinkerton's *Correspondence*, II, 415.

[3] From an article in the *Monthly Magazine* for May, 1806, entitled *Settlement of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain*, "extracted and translated from a History of Denmark written in the Danish language," we learn some novel particulars regarding the Saxon Odin. "His proper name was Hugleik; but he is also known by that of Angul, because he governed the Angles. He was the son of Oluf, king of Leire, who descended from Odin by Skjold. Hugleik had a sister married to Dan, king of Scanen, from which country the Danish name and nation originally sprung. This Dan dethroned the father of Hugleik" and gave Hugleik Anglia, which he

With all this disagreement of doctors, it is hardly to be wondered at that people who tried to make literary use of the Scandinavian mythology should have confused it more or less with Celtic mythology, or that reviewers and critics should have been constantly pointing out errors of this sort. Gray's letter of Jan. 13, 1758,[1] to Mason, chiding him for confusing the two systems in *Caractacus*, is well known. It is odd that Dr. Sayers should have taken occasion in his *Disquisitions Metaphysical and Literary* (London, 1793)[2] to censure Gray for a similar inconsistency. Sayers points out that the lines in Gray's *Bard* in which the words "Weave the warp and weave the woof" occur, "allude to a part of *Gothic* mythology which a *Welsh* or *Celtic* bard could scarcely be acquainted with and certainly did not believe," in that "they give to the ghosts of the bards the employment of the fates, they direct these ghosts to weave a winding sheet, whereas the web of life was what the fates always wove." Sayers clearly overreaches himself, and when he goes on to comment on the "characters of hell" one is obliged to suspect that the distinctions between the two systems of mythology were not altogether clear in his own mind.[3]

Gibbon wrote of the Edda in 1764 as "the sacred book of the ancient Celts."[4] The *Monthly Review* for August, 1775, in noticing Mason's edition of Gray, uses the expression "Celtic mythology" for Norse mythology. Chatterton made Druids priests of Thor.[5] The *Critical Review* for March, 1784, has "Celtic poetry" for Scandinavian. The same journal censured Sterling, however, in May, 1789, for introducing Celtic mythology into his *Scalder*, where "Gothic theology" would have been appropriate. Again, in its review of

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had subdued. Hugleik established the Odinian doctrine among the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons. Hengst and Hors were descended from this Saxon Odin.

[1] *Works*, ed. Gosse, II, 351 f.

[2] Pp. 31 f.

[3] "They order," he says, "the bards to leave room to trace the characters of hell: if the poet means by characters of hell 'bitter runes' as the Goths called them, setting out wrong indeed, he proceeds rightly; if by the characters are meant the dispositions of hell how can guilt, horror, pain, &c. be wrought in a loom?" Gray would have enjoyed reading this criticism.

[4] *Miscellaneous Works*, III, 231.

[5] See above, p. 187.

Hole's *Arthur* (August, 1789) and of Sayers's *Dramatic Sketches* (June, 1790), the *Critical Review* distinguishes the religious system of the Celts from that of the "Goths." In December, 1794, it objects that Andrews makes Odin a Celtic deity in his *History of Great Britain*, and in August, 1798, points out that the author of *The Vision* "confounds the Goths with the Celts; an error which, we hoped, had been completely exploded in this country."

In October, 1790, the *Monthly Review* complimented Sayers on distinguishing between Celtic and Scandinavian mythology. John Leyden, in a footnote to his *Ode on Scottish Scenery and Manners* (1799),[1] cites "the Gaelic legend of the Celtic Ladbrog." In 1801 William Richardson confused the Celts with the Scandinavians in his *Maid of Lochlin*. In July, 1805, the writer of an article, *On Story Telling*, in *The Literary Magazine and American Register* (Philadelphia) alluded to Thor and Lok as "the Alcides and the Mercury of the Celts."[2]

As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, then, the theory of an authentic migration of "Scythians" from southern Asia into Scandinavia under the guidance of an historical Odin still found occasional defenders. Moreover, any educated man, apparently, was likely to overlook the fundamental distinction, familiar long before the end of the century to every schoolboy, between the Druidical rites of the ancient Britons and the worship of Odin and of Thor practised by our Scandinavian ancestors.

II. English Translations from the Norse, primarily of Historical Interest

The interest which Englishmen of the eighteenth century were beginning to feel in the relations between the Scandinavian and other European countries, was stimulated near the end of the century by the translation into English of a few Norse documents of some historical importance. The first of these which we need to consider was made by James Johnstone in 1782, the year in which his *Lodbrokar-Quida* appeared. The title-page reads as follows: *The*

[1] *Poems*, Kelso, 1858, p. 291. [2] IV, 19.

Norwegian account of Haco's Expedition against Scotland; A.D. MCCLXIII. now first published, in the original Islandic, from the Flateyan and Frisian MSS. with a literal English Version and Notes. By the Rev. James Johnstone, A.M. . . . [Copenhagen,] *Printed for the Author*, 1782.

This narrative of Hakon's expedition is made up of excerpts from the *Saga Hákonar Hákonarsonar*.[1] Johnstone's preface explains that "the editor, from some particular advantages he enjoyed, was encouraged to collect such inedited fragments as might elucidate antient history. He, lately, published '*Anecdotes* of *Olave* the *Black*, King of *Man*'; and now lays before the learned the *Norwegian* account of *Haco's* celebrated expedition against *Scotland*. It was the editor's intention to have given a succinct detail of the descents made by the northern nations upon the *British* isles, but an encrease of materials induced him to reserve that subject for a future work." The subject of the narrative is the expedition of Hakon IV against Alexander III of Scotland, undertaken in consequence of a quarrel over the possession of the Hebrides. According to the Scottish accounts (generally accepted, I believe, as correct in this particular), Hakon suffered defeat at the Battle of Largs;[2] but according to the version translated by Johnstone, Hakon was victorious.[3]

The "future work" promised by Johnstone appeared in 1786 under the title: *Antiquitates Celto-Scandicæ; sive Series Rerum Gestarum inter Nationes Britannicarum Insularum et Gentes Septentrionales. Ex Snorrone; Land-nama-boc; Egilli Scallagrimi-saga; Niála-saga; O. Tryggvasonar-saga; Orkneyinga-saga; Hriggiar-stikki; Knytlinga-saga; Speculo regali &c. Compilavit Jacobus Johnstone, A.M.* Havniæ, 1786. The nature of the book is sufficiently indicated by the title-page. There is no preface and there are few notes. The editor explains in his dedication to the Marquis of Carmarthen that,

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[1] See *Fornmanna Sögur*, Copenhagen, 1835, X, 4 ff.

[2] It will be remembered that *The Battle of Largs* was the subject of a suppressed poem by John Galt. See above, pp. 155 ff.

[3] Cf. a review of Barry's *Orkney Islands* in the *Edinburgh Review*, April, 1806; also John Macpherson's *Critical Dissertations on the Caledonians*, London, 1768, pp. 291 f. Torfæus, *Hist. Rer. Norv.*, Pars IV, ed. 1711, pp. 290 ff., follows the *Saga Hákonar Hákonarsonar*.

finding some "few moments" of his time unoccupied by his duties as minister to Denmark, he has amused himself by reading certain Icelandic authors, from whom he has made this "chronological series of extracts intimately connected with the history of the British Isles." One of the interesting things about the book is the introduction in the midst of a long extract "Ex Niala Saga" of the original of Gray's *Fatal Sisters* in Norse and Latin.[1] The work was reviewed in connection with Johnstone's *Antiquitates Celto-Normannicæ*[2] by the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1786.[3]

In 1788 there was published in London a book entitled *Fragments of English and Irish History in the Ninth and Tenth Century. In Two Parts. Translated from the original Icelandic, and Illustrated with some notes, by Grimr Johnson Thorkelin, LL.D.* Thorkelin was an eminent Danish scholar, Regius Professor of Antiquity in the University of Copenhagen and member of various learned societies, who was sent to England in 1786[4] by the Danish government, "to

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[1] Pp. 124–127.

[2] A book that does not particularly concern us, published the same year as the *Antiquitates Celto-Scandicæ* and often bound up with it. A manuscript note in a copy of the magazine of this date belonging to Harvard College attributes the review to Richard Gough.

[3] Johnstone was one of Pinkerton's friends. A letter (dated March 30, 1786) from the former to the latter may be found in Pinkerton's *Correspondence*, I, 118 f. On June 24, 1799, J. C. Walker wrote to Pinkerton (Nichols's *Illustrations*, VII, 751): "I this day saw in the possession of Valance, a bookseller here, a large collection of books which belonged to the late Rev. James Johnstone, editor and translator of several curious Northern tracts. If you are still an admirer of the literature of the North, I shall be happy in purchasing for you any books in that way in poor Johnstone's collection you may point out. The sooner you acquaint me with your wishes on this subject the better, lest some of the lovers of Northern literature in this city should get the start of us. I shall not disclose this literary secret to any of my friends here till I hear from you. I found Valance in the very act of unpacking the books."

[4] Both Richard Gough, who, according to Nichols (*Illustrations*, VIII, 139, n.), contributed the sketch of Thorkelin printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, 1803, and the anonymous correspondent who, in the same month, furnished some particulars of Thorkelin's life for the *Monthly Magazine*, say 1787; but in Pinkerton's *Correspondence*, I, 139, is printed a short letter from Thorkelin to Pinkerton dated London, Sept. 2, 1786, and in the Preface to the *Fragments*

make such observations on the arts and manufactures as might tend to further their progress in Denmark."[1] While in England, Thorkelin made the acquaintance of the most distinguished English antiquaries and performed some valuable services to English scholarship. The eighth, ninth, and tenth volumes of *Archæologia*, for example, the organ of the London Society of Antiquaries, record gifts to the Society from "Mr. Professor Thorkelin" of a number of books, among them "Four Books of Icelandick Antiquities: intituled, Orkneyinga Saga, . . . Sagan of Gunnlaugi Ormstungu . . ., Hervarar Saga, . . . Kristini-Saga," the 2d and 3d vols. of "Snorrius' Historia Regum Norvegicorum," and Rowe Mores's Commentary on Ælfric.[2] During his stay in England, Thorkelin published four books.[3] He returned to Denmark in 1792.

Thorkelin says Pinkerton's translation of *Nordymra* was "written shortly after my arrival in England in the year 1786."

[1] [Richard Gough,] *Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1803.

[2] Thorkelin's benefactions were extended to the Scottish Society of Antiquaries. On the 15th of June, 1784, the Earl of Buchan wrote to John Nichols (Nichols's *Illustrations*, VI, 504): "[The Scottish Society of Antiquaries] have received lately from Mr. Thorkelin, Secretary of the Royal Society of the Danish Antiquaries, some very curious books relating to Danish and Icelandic antiquities, and expect the great publication of the Edda in August next. Mr. Johnstone, Chaplain of our Embassy, promises copies of several MSS. relating to Scotch connections with Norway and Denmark, and a copy of Coryneus, by the next ships. We are very lame in books relating to Northern antiquities; and our public libraries in Scotland do not buy many books in our line, which makes it of great consequence to us to receive communications of that sort." It may be worth mentioning that the copy of Thorkelin's *Fragments* in the Harvard University Library was presented to the college in 1789 by the author, through Thomas Brand Hollis.

[3] 1. A tract on the Slave Trade, 1788 (noticed in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1788). 2. *Fragments of English and Irish History*, 1788. 3. Edward Rowe Mores's Commentary on Ælfric, 1789 (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1789). 4. *A Sketch of the Character of H.R.H. the Prince of Denmark: to which is added, a short Review of the present state of Literature and the Polite Arts in that Country*, 1791 (reviewed in the *Literary Magazine*, VI, 624). For a list of the numerous works published by Thorkelin in Denmark, see Nyerup and Kraft's *Dansk-Norsk Litteratur Lexicon*. One of the best known of these is his edition of *Béowulf*, with a Latin translation, Copenhagen, 1815, of which a reviewer in the *Monthly Review* (Appendix, 1816) was moved to write: "We exhort both the poet and the antiquary to examine this curious production. On the manners and spirit

The *Fragments of English and Irish History* comprise a Norse version of Ragnar Loðbrok's adventures in England and the avenging of his death by his sons,[1] an English translation by John Pinkerton, a Latin translation by the editor, and notes; also, *A Voyage to Ireland undertaken from Iceland in the Tenth Century*, "taken from a history called 'Laxdæla,'" in Norse and English; in the third place, *Two Short Accounts of Discoveries made by the Icelandic Navigators in the Ninth century*, from the *Eyrbyggja Saga* and "the Book called *Landnama*," in Norse and English; and finally, *A Collection of Records concerning the Orkney Islands*, mostly in Latin, "published from a manuscript on paper in my own collection" from originals which "had belonged to the cathedral of Thrundhem, and were lost in the dreadful fire which happened at Copenhagen in 1728, and proved highly fatal to the Northern literature."[2] Thorkelin's prestige won for the *Fragments* respectful attention in England, and the book must be regarded as an important factor in strengthening the relations between English and Scandinavian scholars.[3]

One other translation deserves mention in this connection, — John Pinkerton's Latin version of "that curious piece of northern history, the Life of St. Magnus, Earl of Orkney, 1103 . . . printed at the

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of the Gothic north it throws a new and appropriate light: it is the most brilliant corruscation of the boreal dawn of literature; and it may no doubt be applied to the discovery of historical truth, as well as to the decoration of the skies of fiction."

[1] "From a Manuscript," says the editor, "which came into my Hands after the Death of Erland Olafson, Esq., Syslumadr, or a Justice of peace, for the county of Isafiord in Iceland." He points out that his narrative bears a general resemblance to a fragment printed in the second volume of Langebek's *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum*, and to a "life of Ragnar Lodbrok" included in Biörner's *Kæmpedater*, though it is "superior with respect to a greater variety of ancient customs and manners" (*Preface*, pp. vii f.). Thorkelin calls his text *Nordymra sive Historia Rerum in Northumbria a Danis Norvegisque Gestarum, Seculis IX. X. et XI. Pars I.*

[2] *Preface*, p. xi.

[3] The anonymous author of the sketch of Thorkelin's life contributed to the *Monthly Magazine* for August, 1803, prints a letter written by Thorkelin, June 6, 1789, containing a literal English translation of a brief Icelandic poem in which "the brave Thorgrime taking leave of his beloved Ingard, recommended himself to her affectionate remembrance."

end of the Orkneyinga Saga, or History of the Orkneys, published by Jonæus, Hafniæ, 1780, 4to."[1] This appeared in Pinkerton's *Vitæ Sanctorum Scotiæ* (1789).[2]

III. Accounts of Voyages and Travels in the North

A limited amount of more or less superficial information with regard to Scandinavian literature and mythology was available to Englishmen of the period we are reviewing in various books of travel in Northern countries, and even accounts of the natural resources of those regions. These books probably aroused no great degree of curiosity about the Eddas and sagas, or Odin and his cult, yet for the sake of completeness we will consider briefly a few representative works of this character, restricting ourselves to such as have to do with Iceland.[3]

[1] Pinkerton's *Prospectus*, issued about 1785 (see his *Literary Correspondence*, I, 167 ff.).

[2] The Life of S. Magnus may be found in W. M. Metcalfe's revised and enlarged edition of this work, Paisley, 1889, II, 213 f. Jonsson's edition of the *Orkneyinga Saga* attracted the attention of other British scholars besides Pinkerton. See a letter from the Earl of Buchan to John Nichols, Sept. 22, 1785, in Nichols's *Illustrations*, VI, 511.

[3] For a fuller list, particularly with reference to other Scandinavian countries, see the General Index to the *Monthly Review*, s.v. *History*.

In 1768 English society was thrown into commotion by the arrival in London of the King of Denmark with his suite. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for August, September, and October of that year is filled with accounts of the various fêtes and other celebrations held in honor of the event. The number for September contains a double-page illustration of "the Barges conducting his Danish Majesty from Whitehall to the Temple." Echoes of the festivities appear in Walpole's *Letters* (ed. Cunningham, V, 118 ff.). "The idle," he says, "talk of nothing but the King of Denmark." On the 7th of September Gray wrote to Mason (*Correspondence of Gray and Mason*, London, 1853, p. 424): "I fear the King of Denmark could not stay till your hair was dressed. He is a genteel lively figure, not made by nature for a fool; but surrounded by a pack of knaves, whose interest it is to make him one if they can. He has overset poor Dr. Marriot's head here, who raves of nothing else from morning till night." The king's visit naturally aroused interest in Danish affairs, and the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1768, notices the publication of *An Account of Denmark Ancient and Modern* which "seems to be a superficial, injudicious, hasty production founded upon the

Any account of Iceland given by a foreigner was likely to be meagre and untrustworthy. Johann Anderson's *Nachrichten von Island*, for example, published at Hamburg in 1746, and later translated into Danish, was so misleading that the Danish government sent Neils Horrebow, an astronomer, to Iceland to correct Anderson's blunders. Horrebow's book appeared at Copenhagen in 1752, and was translated into English[1] (London, 1758) under the title *The Natural History of Iceland . . . Interspersed with an Account of the Island by Mr. Anderson.* Horrebow's method was to follow Anderson, "article by article, declaring what is false in each, relating what is true and matter of fact, and introducing a variety of new things, of which he has taken no manner of notice."[2] The English translator of Von Troil says[3] that "from a too great desire to please his employers," Horrebow "fell into the opposite error" to Anderson's, for he "paints all his objects with a glow of colouring, that does not exactly correspond with the truth." The English translation of Horrebow was reviewed at great length in the *Monthly Review*, March, 1758. It is cited by Southey,[4] Percy,[5] and various other writers.

Yves de Kerguelen Trémarec published in Paris, in 1771, a *Relation d'un Voyage Dans la Mer du Nord . . . Fait en 1767 & 1768*, in which we are told[6] that "en l'année 1000 les Islandois étoient plongés dans les ténebres de l'idolâtrie. Ils adoroient *Jupiter* sous le nom de *Thor*, & *Mercure* sous le nom d'*Odin:* ils ne reconnoissoient que ces deux divinités."

Jonathan Carver's *New Universal Traveller* (London, 1779) pads its meagre account of Iceland[7] with the old legend about Hecla, which the natives believe "to be the receptacle of the damned, who

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hope that the King of Denmark's being now in England will render any book about Denmark popular," — an interesting instance of something very like Yankee thrift.

[1] A German translation appeared at Copenhagen in 1753 and a French translation at Paris in 1764.

[2] *Preface* to the English translation, p. vii. It is Horrebow's book that contains the famous chapter (LXXII) *Concerning Snakes.* See Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, ed. Hill, III, 316 f.

[3] *Introduction* to *Letters*, pp. vii ff. See below, pp. 210 f.

[4] *Letters*, London, 1856, II, 242.

[5] *Northern Antiquities*, I, 15, n. [6] P. 61. [7] P. 249.

they suppose are alternately tortured with heat and cold, between the flames of Hecla and the floats of ice near the adjacent shore." Other purely perfunctory articles on Iceland are to be found in Büsching's *New System of Geography* (London, 1762),[1] The *History of the Voyages and Discoveries made in the North, Translated from the German of John Reinhold Forster* (London, 1786),[2] and William Guthrie's *New Geographical, Historical and Commercial Grammar* (16th ed., London, 1796).[3]

Of more interest are the chapter on the University of Copenhagen in William Coxe's *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark* (3 vols., London, 1784),[4] which cites Worm, Pontoppidan, Langebek,[5] Schöning, and Suhm, and gives some information about ancient Iceland, and Olafsen and Povelsen's *Travels in Iceland performed by order of his Danish Majesty* (London, 1805), translated from the Danish, which goes into some detail with regard to the literature and superstitions of the Icelanders, though the book concerns itself chiefly with natural history.

Far more important for our purposes, however, than any of the foregoing, are Von Troil's *Letters on Iceland*.[6] Von Troil's letters

[1] In 6 vols. See I, 222.

[2] Pp. 618 f. The German edition was published the same year, and a French translation appeared in Paris in 1788. The English version was reviewed in the Appendix, Vol. LXXVI, and the October number of the *Monthly Review* for 1787.

[3] The editor of this work observes, for instance (p. 69): "It is said that poetry formerly flourished very much in Iceland; and we are informed that Egil Scallagrimson, Kormack Ormundson, Glum Geirson and Thorleif Jarlaa, were celebrated as great poets."

[4] III, 373 ff.

[5] Jacob Langebek's great *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum Medii Ævi* (in 8 folio volumes, Copenhagen, 1772–1834) was well known in England. The first five volumes were reviewed in the *Monthly Review, Appendix*, 1786.

[6] *Letters on Iceland: Containing Observations on the Civil, Literary, Ecclesiastical and Natural History; Antiquities, Volcanoes, Basaltes, Hot Springs; Customs, Dress, Manners of the Inhabitants &c. &c. made, During a Voyage undertaken in the Year 1772, by Joseph Banks, Esq. F. R. S. assisted by Dr. Solander, F. R. S. Dr. J. Lind, F. R. S. Dr. Uno Von Troil, and several other Literary and Ingenious Gentlemen. Written by Uno Von Troil, D.D. First Chaplain to his Swedish Majesty, Almoner of the Swedish Orders of Knighthood, and Member of the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm. To which are added the Letters of Dr. Ihre and Dr. Bach to the Author, concerning the Edda and the Elephantiasis of Iceland: also Professor*

were first printed in Swedish at Upsala, in 1777, in which form they were reviewed in the *Monthly Review* (*Appendix on Foreign Literature*, 1778). One of them had previously appeared in an Upsala newspaper in 1773. In 1779 they were published in a German translation, with additions, at Upsala and Leipzig. The English translation of 1780 was reviewed in great detail by the *Monthly Review* for September, 1780, and reprinted in the first volume of John Pinkerton's *General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1808).

The *Introduction* to this book contains "a very curious and complete catalogue" (one hundred and twenty titles) of "all the publications that have appeared, to treat either at large of Iceland, or examine some of its particular objects." The fourteenth letter, which the reviewer in 1780 found "particularly curious and instructive," treats "Of the Icelandic Literature"; the sixteenth, "Of the Remains of Antiquity in Iceland"; the seventeenth, "Of the Icelandic Poetry"; the twenty-third is the Chevalier Ihre's[1] letter to Von Troil "Concerning the Edda," a discussion of an ancient manuscript.[2]

Bergman's Curious Observations and Chemical Examination of the Lava and other Substances produced on the Island. With a new Map of the Island, and a Representation of the remarkable Boiling Fountain called by the Inhabitants GEYSER. London, MDCCLXXX.

[1] Johan Ihre (b. 1707, d. 1780) succeeded to the professorship held by Scheffer at the University in Upsala. His first letter on the Edda (not the one printed by Von Troil) appeared at Upsala in 1772. His *Glossarium Suio-gothicum* (1769) was well known, and his treatise *De Runarum Patria* (1770) is cited as late as 1824 in a *Dissertation on a Runic Ring* read that year before the London Society of Antiquaries by Francis Douce (see *Archæologia*, XXI, 129, n.).

[2] Horace Walpole knew Von Troil's volume. In a letter to Mason written April 25, 1780, he makes fun of an illustration (pp. 201 f.) of the skaldic kenning: "I will transcribe a Riddle, not with all its mysteries, for then it would be inexplicable. The ghosts of Odin and Gray must pardon my speaking so irreverently of what they alone could expound. This fragment I believe genuine, for the editor has not made it dance to Macpherson's hornpipe, nor pretends that there are clergymen living in the Highlands who have been able to say it by heart for these thousand years. This is an Icelandic stanza, the English of which, says Dr. Uno Von Troil, is, 'I hang the round beaten gaping snake on the end of the bridge of the mountain bird at the gallows of Odin's shield.' The sense of this nonsense is, a Mr. Ihre affirms, 'I put a ring on my finger.' I do not lessen the enigma by giving you the solution, for now you are to make out *how* that can be.

Sir George Steuart Mackenzie's *Travels in the Island of Iceland, during the Summer of the Year MDCCCX* (Edinburgh, 1811; 2d ed., 1812) was another important book. The beginning of Mackenzie's *Preface* is significant:

> The Island of Iceland is but little distant from that of Britain: it has long been known to contain many extraordinary natural phenomena; and yet very few have been induced to visit it, either from private curiosity, or from the more general views of science. The first British travellers who attempted to explore the country, probably thought their observations too uninteresting to be communicated to the public; and even the Letters of Von Troil, who accompanied them, though in many respects valuable, were, perhaps, chiefly so, by awakening the curiosity of science to that neglected, but remarkable country.

Mackenzie's book contains chapters on Agriculture, Commerce, Government, Zoölogy, Botany, Mineralogy, and other matters of interest to scientists, but there are also a *Preliminary Dissertation on the History and Literature of Iceland*,[1] a chapter on the *Present State of Education and Literature*,[2] and an Appendix on *Miscellaneous Articles connected with History and Literature*,[3] all by Henry Holland, M.D. Dr. Holland's learned footnotes show him to have been well read in this subject. Mackenzie's book was reviewed in the *Monthly Review* for June, 1812.

Finally, we have William Jackson Hooker's *Journal of a Tour in Iceland in the Summer of 1809* (London, 1811; 2d ed., 1813), a book inspired by Von Troil's Letters. In his sketch of Icelandic mythology Hooker makes free use of the *Northern Antiquities;* he quotes from Gray's *Descent of Odin*, and cites Percy's *Five Pieces* and Dr. Holland's Dissertation in Mackenzie's *Travels*. Hooker's *Journal* was reviewed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1813.

If you can, you deserve to be poet laureate of Hecla" (Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, VII, 358). Southey also read Von Troil; see *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, London, 1856, II, 242 f., where he also cites Horrebow, Olafsen and Povelsen, and Molesworth.

[1] Pp. 3–70.

[2] Pp. 309–335.

[3] This contains, among other things, a translation into modern Icelandic of a part of Pope's *Essay on Man*.

IV. Scandinavian History

It is not worth while even to mention the tolerably large number of works dealing with the history of the Scandinavian countries published during the period we are considering, but the three or four such books most frequently cited (setting aside Mallet) in the latter half of the eighteenth century deserve at least to be named.

Vertot's *Histoire des Révolutions de Suède*, which was first published at Paris in 1695 and ran through five editions, was still read late in the eighteenth century.[1]

John Egede, who established the Danish missions in Greenland, wrote in Danish, in 1729, a history of Greenland which went through several editions and was translated into German, French, Dutch, and (1745) English. The book is cited by Percy,[2] Dr. Holland,[3] and other English writers. Another history of Greenland, written by David Cranz in German and published at Barby in 1765, was translated into English in 1767, and reviewed in the *Critical Review* for January of that year. The book is mentioned by Southey,[4] Home,[5] and Coleridge.[6]

Robert Molesworth, English envoy to the Danish court in the reign of William III, wrote, shortly after his return to England, an *Account of Denmark as it was in the year 1692*, which passed through three editions in the year of publication (1694), and was translated into other languages. The book was a sweeping denunciation of the Danish system of government and public instruction, and it occasioned a good deal of controversy. Two refutations of Molesworth appeared in English in this same year (1694), — one by Dr. William King (entitled *Animadversions on a Pretended Account of Denmark*,

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[1] See Walpole's *Letters*, ed. Cunningham, II, 9; IV, 107; IX, 232; also Edw. Jerningham's *Poems*, 7th ed., Philadelphia, n.d., p. 33.

[2] *Northern Antiquities*, I, 273 f.

[3] Mackenzie's *Travels*, p. 43.

[4] *Life and Correspondence*, II, 346.

[5] *Sketches of Man*, I, 477; IV, 196.

[6] *The Destiny of Nations*, in *Poetical and Dramatic Works*, London, 1880, I, 195, n.

etc.),[1] the other, by "J. C.," entitled *Denmark Vindicated. Being an Answer to a late Treatise called An Account of Denmark*, etc. King's book shows familiarity with the names, at any rate, of Scandinavian antiquaries. Among the "historians" of Denmark he mentions[2] Wormius, Petrus Resenius, and "the lately deceased young gentleman, Thomas Bartholinus."

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

THE reader of the foregoing pages can hardly fail to be impressed by the fact that whatever the English people at large came to know in the eighteenth century about Odin and Valhalla and the Eddas and the sagas was almost entirely due to the efforts of writers who could read Norse literature only in translation. Up to the nineteenth century no Englishman, indeed, with the possible exception of Hickes, seems to have had a thorough acquaintance with the Old Norse language. In an age when it was thought necessary to argue for the importance to English scholarship of a knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, it is scarcely to be expected that much enthusiasm would be shown for the study of the remoter Germanic languages.[3]

Sir Henry Spelman may have had some acquaintance with Norse. Francis Junius certainly had. William Nicolson confesses in a letter to Thomas Tanner, apropos of a controversy with "Mr. Worms,"[4]

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[1] Reprinted in *The Original Works of William King*, edited by John Nichols, London, 1776, I, 35 f.

[2] P. 125.

[3] Hickes defends the study of Anglo-Saxon in the preface to his Anglo-Saxon grammar; so does Elizabeth Elstob in *The Rudiments of Grammar for the English-Saxon tongue, first given in English; with an Apology for the study of Northern Antiquities*, London, 1715. In a letter to Joseph Ames, George Ballard writes (June 29, 1737) of the value of Anglo-Saxon and complains of the bigotry of those who decry it (see Nichols's *Illustrations*, IV, 211; and cf. his *Anecdotes*, IV, 123).

[4] See *Letters on Various Subjects . . . to and from William Nicolson*, London, 1809, I, 59, and cf. p. 10, above.

that he has "little skill . . . in the Islandic," although he is "very confident" that Worm "less understood what he quotes from Snorro" than either Bartholin or himself. "The words *seinar bokar*," Nicolson adds with some assurance, "which he lays a stress upon as if they were plural, are certainly of the singular number." Edward Lye, we know, was able to collate Percy's translations of *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* with the Norse originals, but he allowed several gross errors made by the compiler of Percy's Latin sources to pass uncorrected. Edward Thwaites could read Anglo-Saxon, and had a hand in compiling Hickes's *Thesaurus*, but I know of no positive evidence that he could make use of Norse texts. The Elstobs undoubtedly knew something of Norse. Elizabeth Elstob wrote of her brother, "Nor was he ignorant of the Oriental languages, as well as the Septentrional."[1] Norse would be the likeliest Northern language, after Anglo-Saxon, to satisfy the tastes of William Elstob.[2] We have pretty good evidence that Dr. White Kennet studied Norse under Hickes. Whether specialists like William Clarke, author of a work on *The Connexion of the Roman, Saxon and English Coins* (London, 1767), who wrote to Bowyer criticising Hickes's treatment of Scandinavian, Saxon, and Welsh legal usages,[3] would take the trouble to investigate original documents is a matter of doubt. The Rev. Thomas Dunham Whitaker, editor of *Piers Plowman* (1813) had, according to Nichols,[4] "an intimate acquaintance with the Anglo-Saxon and Gothic dialects on which our own is chiefly founded." "Gothic" is as likely to mean "Norse," in this connection, as anything else.[5]

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[1] Nichols's *Illustrations*, IV, 212; cf. his *Anecdotes*, IV, 115.

[2] Nichols notes (*Anecdotes*, IV, 113) that "among Ballard's MS. Letters [in the Bodleian], Vol. XIII, No. 29, is a letter to Dr. Arthur Charlett from Mr. Elstob, dated Aug. 26, 1700, containing some Runic, Saxon, and Latin Poetry, 'in obitum serenissimi Principis Wilhelmi Ducis Glocestrensis.'"

[3] See Nichols's *Anecdotes*, II, 111 ff.

[4] *Illustrations*, IV, 872.

[5] The relations between the various Germanic languages were of course ill understood at this period. The *Critical Review* for February, 1763, calls Norse "the original Gothic language." Johnstone, in his preface to *Olave* (1780), writes of Norse as "the most pure and original dialect of the Teutonic." Attention has already been called to the constant confusion of the terms "Gothic" and "Celtic."

Just how many English antiquaries were able to stumble through a page of easy Norse prose with the help of Hickes's edition of Jonsson's Icelandic grammar and vocabulary, is a matter of conjecture, but it is to be suspected that the number was not large. Anything like a thoroughly serviceable knowledge of Norse must have been rare. On the 23d of May, 1737, George Ballard wrote to Joseph Ames about a gold ring found near Harwood in Yorkshire, inscribed with runes. These may have been Anglo-Saxon, or they may have been Norse; at all events, Ballard, who knew a good deal of Anglo-Saxon for his generation,[1] was unable to decipher them. "I can meet with no one," he says, "that has skill enough in that obsolete language to explain the Inscription; but in London, I suppose, you will meet with several that are thoroughly skilled in the Northern languages that can explain it."[2] As late as 1786 Johnstone wrote to Pinkerton,[3] "I am told a Baron Ferguson, in Cowal, is possessed of some charters which nobody can read: they are most certainly of the Norwegian princes. I have seen some hundreds of them; and they are generally in Icelandic." Johnstone, who could read Norse, did some service for his countrymen by attaching a Norse-Latin glossary to his *Lodbrokar-Quida* and by giving directions in his *Olave* for the pronunciation of Norse.

Sir Herbert Croft made a pilgrimage to Germany in 1796 for an interesting reason. "After editing," he says,[4] "some years ago, King Alfred's Will in the Anglo-Saxon language, I determined on what I had through so many years wished for an opportunity of doing; I resolved with Skinner, Junius, Hickes and Johnson [Johnstone?] in my hands, to make a patient pilgrimage to this our parent country; and to ascend the ancient stream of the Elbe, for the purpose of visiting the fountain-head of the English tongue." One result of this visit was the publication in 1796 of *A Letter from Germany to the Princess Royal of England, on the English and German Languages. With a Table of the different Northern Languages, and of different periods of the German.* Whether Sir Herbert understood

[1] See Nichols's *Anecdotes*, II, 466 f.

[2] Nichols's *Illustrations*, IV, 210.

[3] Pinkerton's *Literary Correspondence*, I, 120.

[4] Nichols's *Illustrations*, V, 205.

Norse or not, I do not know; but he showed enough interest in Scandinavia to move the king of Sweden to present him in 1798 with a gold medal.[1]

Sir William Jones includes *Runic* among the eight languages intelligible to him "with a dictionary."[2] Of William Taylor's and Sir Walter Scott's knowledge of Norse I have already spoken.[3]

It is not likely that John Pinkerton knew Norse. Thorkelin wrote to him from Copenhagen, Aug. 29, 1791: "I wish you could read Danish, and satisfy your generous heart with the writings of Count Cristian Reventlow and Messrs. Colbiornsen in the cause of liberty." If Pinkerton had known the rudiments of Norse it is more than likely that he would have picked up a reading knowledge of Danish while Thorkelin was with him in England. Pinkerton's interest in Scandinavian antiquities procured for him, through Thorkelin, membership in the Royal Icelandic Society of Sciences and the Royal Norwegian Society of Sciences. Thorkelin sent Pinkerton a number of Norse books, but they all seem to have been equipped with Latin translations.

William Herbert appears to have been almost the first Englishman to possess a critical knowledge of Norse, and even he assumed a more minute acquaintance with the language than he really had.

While Coleridge was in Germany he showed some interest in Germanic philology. On the 6th of May, 1799, he wrote to Thomas Poole from Göttingen:[4] "The learned Orientalist Tychsen has given me instruction in the Gothic and Theotuscan languages, which I can now read pretty well; and hope in the course of a

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[1] This medal is pictured in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXI, 497.

[2] *Poems*, London, 1807, I, 182.

[3] "My knowledge of the Icelandic is not, indeed, very profound, but I have gone through the grammar in Hickes's 'Thesaurus.' I possess many good vocabularies of the northern tongues, which all resemble the German and English, and, like the Dutch and Danish, are in a high degree intelligible to me" (Taylor to Southey, *Memoir of Taylor*, I, 249 f.). "We do not pretend any great knowledge of the Norse; but we have so far 'traced the Runic rhyme' as to be sensible how much more easy it is to give a just translation of that poetry into English than into Latin" (Scott's review of Herbert, *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1806).

[4] *Letters*, London, 1895, I, 298 f.

year to be thoroughly acquainted with all the languages of the North, both German and Celtic."

It appears from De Quincey's *Autobiography*[1] that he could read Danish, though I have no assurance that he knew Old Norse.

There is little positive evidence, then, as to the acquaintance of Englishmen with the Norse language before William Herbert's time. But though facilities for acquiring such an acquaintance were not particularly good, there is no reason why any English antiquary who seriously wished to acquire a reading knowledge of Norse prose, at least, should have been balked. Even James Beresford, who confessed in the preface to his *Song of the Sun* that he understood nothing whatever of Norse, felt justified in writing of the Latin prose version of the *Sólarljóð* from which he translated: "This version so far as I am able to guess by the remarkable affinity between our own language and the Icelandic, which is one of it's numerous parents, appears to be as nearly literal as is consistent with perspicuity." The truth is that English scholars seem to have been shamefully lax in promoting a study of Scandinavian languages, literature, and antiquities in England.[2] Francis Wise, in his treatise

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[1] *Works*, ed. Masson, Edinburgh, 1889–1890, I, 314.

[2] The somewhat feeble efforts of the London Society of Antiquaries in this direction should not go unchronicled. In the first volume of the *Archæologia* is an address by Samuel Gale on "the antient Danish Horn kept in the Cathedral Church of York," in which there are references to Keysler and Verelius. Samuel Pegge has something to say in the second volume (p. 125) about Thor's Hammer. In the same volume are allusions by Colebrooke and Pownall to the historical Odin, with citations of Worm, Saxo, and Peringskjöld (pp. 112, 264). In the third volume, Daines Barrington quotes Biörner (p. 74), and Pegge cites Worm and Hickes in connection with his discussion of *The Horn as a Charter* (p. 12). In the fifth, Drake alludes to the Edda in his remarks on the *Origin of the English Language* (pp. 384, 385). In the sixth is a record of the presentation to the society of four volumes in Norse and Latin by J. H. Schlegen of Copenhagen: namely, "*Sagan al Gunlaugi Armstungu*," *Hungurvaka*, *Orkneyinga Saga*, and *Kristni Saga* (p. 401). In the seventh, Pegge makes frequent citations of Worm in his article on the *Arbour-Laws* (pp. 131 ff.), and Thomas Pownall, in his *Observations on the Dunalk Ship Temple*, speaks of the "Vickingers" or "Vickanders" (p. 151) and alludes to the Norse custom of ship burial, with a citation of Göransson's Edda. In the eighth are citations of Worm, Mallet, Hickes, and Bartholin by Pegge and Ledwich (pp. 58 f., 187 f.). In the ninth, Pownall quotes "Perinschoild" in the course of his

Concerning the First Inhabitants . . . of Europe (Oxford, 1758), writes of Hickes's *Thesaurus* as "a work held in the highest esteem by every nation in Europe, except That to which it has done so much honour."[1] William Taylor[2] contrasts the cool reception of Sayers's *Dramatic Sketches of Northern Mythology* in England with the immediate popularity of the book in Germany, "where the early religion of the north had been more studied and was better known." Little pains seem to have been taken to collect and none to edit or translate the works of Worm, Verelius, Resenius, Bartholin, and the other Scandinavian antiquaries so often mentioned in these pages. These books are invariably spoken of as "scarce" or "rare." Percy observes in his preface that all his sources for the *Five Pieces* (except, of course, Mallet) are "very scarce." In Mallet's *Introduction* to the second volume of *Northern Antiquities*, as translated by Percy, we are told[3] that Resenius's Edda "is grown very scarce; but few impressions were worked off, at first, and the greatest part of them were consumed in the fire which, in the year 1728, destroyed a part of Copenhagen." The same author speaks of Göransson's edition as "little known out of Sweden." Mason observes in his note on Gray's *Fatal Sisters* that Torfæus and Bartholin "are not common." Jamieson remarks in *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*[4] that the *Kæmpe-Viser* "seems to be known in this country only by name." The scarcity of books of this sort is further hinted at in Walker's anxiety that John Pinkerton should get the start of other "lovers of Northern literature" who might have an eye on Johnstone's library,

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Observations on the Origin of Gothic Architecture (p. 114), and the Rev. Wm. Drake mentions Torfæus (p. 343) and the Edda (p. 353) in his *Observations on the Derivation of the English Language*. And so on in later numbers. The range of these allusions is not wide, however, and they never show any minute knowledge of even the literature of the subject in hand.

[1] P. 126, n.

[2] Sayers's *Poetical Works*, pp. xliv f.

[3] P. xxxiii.

[4] P. 244. Mention should be made of the service rendered by this book in calling the attention of Englishmen to the relations between Old Norse and Middle High German literature. "The subject is comparatively so new," says Weber, p. 38, "and the means of complete investigation so difficult of access, that we must content ourselves chiefly with hypothetical conclusions."

just put on the market.[1] It is strange that a field of investigation in which so little had been accomplished,[2] a field of such extraordinary intrinsic interest and of such vital importance to students of the language and literature of England, should have had so little attraction for English scholars that they could permit a Frenchman to take the first steps toward elucidating and popularizing this material. It is little to the credit of English scholarship that professed antiquaries should have done far less toward making Worm and Resenius and Bartholin known to English people generally, and even to their own fraternity, than the poets and essayists of the time.[3]

With these poets and essayists, therefore, we have been chiefly concerned. We have examined their work in considerable detail, and it now remains for us to summarize our results and draw some rather obvious conclusions. It is hardly necessary to go over again the ground covered by Professor Phelps in his *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement*, and by Professor Beers in his *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, in explaining the relation between the "runic" movement and the other literary activities that sprang from a reawakened interest in the Middle Ages which

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[1] See above, p. 205, n. 3. The library of Richard Gough, bequeathed to the University of Oxford, contained some books on Northern literature. They were catalogued in 1814 by Dr. Bandinel, Keeper of the Bodleian Library (see Nichols's *Illustrations*, VI, 475).

[2] Mallet complains (Percy's translation, II, xxxiii) that "the EDDA hath been quoted by and known to a very small number of the learned. The edition of Resenius, which doubtless supposes much knowledge and application in the Editor, presents itself under a very unengaging form; we there neither meet with observations on the parallel opinions of other Celtic, or Gothic, people, nor any lights thrown on the customs illuded to. Nothing but a patriotic zeal for the Antiquities of the North can carry one through it."

[3] As a commentary on this indifference I may quote a sporadic instance of something like popular curiosity concerning Scandinavian antiquities in 1784. In May of that year a correspondent signing himself "H. L. M." sent to the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* a communication in which he asks "to be informed, where the most complete system of Celtic mythology exists; in what language, and whether any part has ever been made public by means of the press, in English, Latin, Italian or French." The writer adds that he is "not ignorant that a Celtic system exists in Swedish," and that he has seen "a learned treatise on Runic Mythology in the Danish tongue."

proved to be one of the most conspicuous characteristics of the Romantic Revival in England. No reader of Thomas Warton's *Observations on the Faery Queen* (1754) or of Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1756–1782), to go no further, can fail to see that a more auspicious time could not have been chosen by Macpherson for the publication of his Ossianic *Fragments* than the year 1760 or thereabouts. It was the success of these *Fragments*, we are frankly told, that encouraged Percy to turn to account the opportune publication of Mallet's *Introduction a l'histoire de Dannemarc* (1755–1756) in the compilation of *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (published in 1763, but ready for the press in 1761), the first deliberate attempt made by any Englishman to popularize Norse literature. And Percy made his experiment with misgivings enough. He fears that even the admirers of Ossian may consider runic poetry unworthy of their attention, for he is confident that his rude translations must suffer in comparison with the "beautiful pieces" paraphrased by Macpherson. The most he can say for his venture is that, even if his originals are not "works of taste or classic elegance," they at any rate "present us with frequent sallies of bold imagination and constantly afford matter for philosophical reflection by showing the workings of the human mind in its almost original state of nature."

The very year in which Percy was hesitatingly compiling his illustrations of the vagaries of the barbaric mind, a far greater artist than Percy, Thomas Gray, who had also become interested in Mallet and Mallet's sources, was translating two pieces of Norse poetry for insertion in a projected *History of English Poetry*, where they were to serve as "specimens of the Style that reigned in ancient times among the neighboring nations." The *History*, as we have seen, was abandoned, and the two translations were allowed to remain in manuscript until 1768, when they were inserted, as a kind of stopgap (to take the place of the discarded *Long Story*), in a new edition of Gray's poems. Meanwhile popular interest in mediæval literature had been further stimulated by the publication of more Ossianic poems in 1762 and 1763, of Evans's *Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards* and Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* in 1764, and of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765, not to mention

critical essays like Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) and Blair's *Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian* (1763).

Gray's Norse odes naturally attracted more attention than had Percy's *Five Pieces*, and when, two years later, the latter's translation of Mallet appeared, the younger generation of English poets began to awaken to the fact that Norse literature abounded in material admirably adapted to the purposes of romanticism. For the production of a certain kind of sensational effect, some sort of supernatural "machinery" was felt to be essential, but the Olympian hierarchy had so long served another purpose in English literature that the nymphs and goddesses of Homer and Virgil had lost their power to thrill. Here was a brand-new system of mythology, however, quite free from association with pseudo-classic odes and pastorals, and remarkably well calculated to appeal to the more violent and morbid emotions. Such a system could hardly fail to find favor with a class of readers who encouraged Odes to Solitude and Superstition, and poetical essays on Melancholy and Madness. "Cupid and the Muses," wrote Southey in 1827, "will keep their place in verse as long as there are rhymers in the world; but the other heathen gods and goddesses were grown stale: angels and demons had been found poor substitutes by those who tried to introduce them; and the existing race of poets seemed very well disposed to transfer their devotion to the gods and heroes of Valhalla." [1]

So the Norse mythology was taken up by hands less skilful than Gray's. The selections included in Percy's *Five Pieces* became favorite subjects for experiment, and additional material was afforded by Mallet. "Runic odes," composed in a more or less unhappy imitation of Gray's manner, began to creep into the magazines and the various collections of fugitive verse. The infection spread until it became fairly epidemic and a subject for satirical comment. "To those who prefer Ossian to Homer, and Teliessin to Milton,"

[1] Review of Sayers, *Quarterly Review*, pp. 204 f. Cf. Southey on Cottle's translation of the Edda (see above, p. 132, n.): "The book . . . is only calculated for those who study mythology in general, the antiquities of the north, or who read to collect images for poetry." Cf. also Taylor's observation that the sagas "are supplying to new poets the outlines of an original mythology" (see above, p. 137).

observes a reviewer of Mathias's *Runic Odes*,[1] "to those who love *Runic* odes because they are *Runic*, to all those who are fond of the marvellous, the romantic and the unintelligible, we recommend these pieces." One of the reviewers of Jerningham's *Rise and Progress of Scandinavian Poetry* alludes contemptuously to the "Runic hobby horse."[2] The anonymous author of a satire on *The Art of Writing Legendary Tales*, which appeared in the *European Magazine* for February, 1807, strikes the same vein:

> Should the dull tone of Elegy-pomp ever tease you,
> Try the new Runic verse, and that surely will please you.
> Tag, rag, bobtail's, the spell, and then, e'en in a glance,
> The witch will transport you from Lapland to France.[3]

It must be confessed that this raillery was in some measure justified. Much of the runic verse was grotesque enough. The authors of these pieces could hardly be expected to enter fully into the spirit

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[1] In the *Critical Review*, July,.1781.

[2] *Monthly Review*, August, 1784.

[3] Lloyd and Coleman's *Ode to Obscurity*, a parody of Gray, satirizes the prevailing taste for bizarre poetry:

> The shallow Fop in antic vest,
> Tir'd of the beaten road,
> Proud to be singularly drest,
> Changes, with every changing moon, the mode.
> Say, shall not then the heav'n-born Muses too
> Variety pursue?
> Shall not applauding critics hail the vogue?
> Whether the Muse the stile of Cambria's sons
> Or the rude gabble of the Huns,
> Or the broader dialect
> Of Caledonia she affect,
> Or take, Hibernia, thy still ranker brogue?

The Poetical Works of Robert Lloyd, 2 vols., London, 1774, I, 121.

Cf. also Lloyd's verses *On Rhyme* (II, 110):

> As when the measur'd couplets curse,
> The manacles of Gothic verse,
> While the trim bard in *easy* strains,
> Talks much of *fetters*, *clogs*, and *chains;*
> His only aim that you should think,
> How charmingly he makes them clink.

of a literature which they knew only in meagre and inaccurate translations. They understood vaguely about Odin, Thor, pale Hela, the Valkyrjur, and heroic old Norsemen who could "die laughing," but few of them had more than a confused notion of the legends of the Eddas. Frequently these shadowy personalities were introduced merely for the purpose of giving color to a bit of commonplace rant that had nothing whatever to do with Eddic tradition. The form of the verse became from the start conventional. The Norse texts and their Latin translations were usually printed in short lines, grouped in strophes. The fashion set by Gray of imitating this effect by the employment of a measure allowing four regular beats to the line was almost universally followed. Further concessions to Gothicism seemed to a good many of these imitators uncalled for. Pseudo-classical phrases stuck in their diction like burrs. The author of *Gram and Gro*, for example, used precisely the same language he would have employed in turning Latin hexameters into nice eighteenth-century couplets. Note the concluding lines of the poem:

> He said, and stripp'd off his disguise,
> His native beauty met her eyes,
> She saw the change, dismiss'd her pain,
> And own'd her former terrors vain.

It may be necessary to explain that "He said" introduces a sentence —*Dixit*, of course. Could anything be more remote from the spirit of Eddic poetry? Or take this passage, from the same author's *Hother*:

> Issuing forth at early dawn,
> Three fair virgins skim the lawn;
> From the adverse tents they bear
> Cates delicious, regal fare.[1]

The same disregard for consistency led to the introduction of classical allusions into runic poetry and to the personification of abstractions like Fate and Terror, after the approved pseudo-classical fashion. Hole was censured by Drake for clothing his *Arthur* "in a classical garb, in the dress indeed of Homer and of

[1] Cf. above, pp. 127 f.

Virgil," and consequently giving his work "a very anomalous aspect."[1] In like manner one of the reviewers of Richards's *Odin*, which was modelled on the tragedies of Æschylus, asks pertinently, "Can we attribute to the speakers the refined sentiments and polished language of a modern scholar, without a gross violation of probability? Or can we suppose the most cultivated among them to be competent to the high-flown lyric morality and the allegorical abstractions of the choral interludes, without betraying our ignorance of human nature?"[2] An earlier review in the same journal objected to Mathias's "The fatal sisters clip the thread," and to his allusion to "pale Cynthia's beam."[3] Bruce introduces an Hebraic element into one of his *Danish Odes*, "the Bard his chosen timbrel brings."[4]

It was a common thing, too, as we have seen repeatedly, for the romanticists to confuse the new lessons they were learning and to intermix Ossianic or Welsh material with their Scandinavian lore. Penrose even allowed himself to be contaminated by the mediæval romances of chivalry. The Norse heroes in *The Carousal of Odin* are "steel-clad knights" who wear "beavers" and "gauntlets," couch "quivering lances," and fight to the sound of bugles and trumpets.[5]

In spite of these absurdities, however, it must be admitted that the verses of these poetasters who employed the new mythology are on the whole much more vital than those of the minor poets of the old school. Noisy and melodramatic as they not infrequently are, the best of them have a kind of masculine vigor which shows, at any rate, that their authors had red blood in their veins. This is the most that can be said in their favor. Their Pegasus is a sorry beast, but he gallops madly; he does not amble.

The reception given by the British public to the first attempts at runic versifying shows how sharply the lines were being drawn between the adherents of the old and the new school. If the poems were praised, the praise was sure to be hysterical. Favorable reviewers did little more than rhapsodize on the "wild horror" and

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[1] See above, p. 110.

[2] *Monthly Review*, June, 1805.

[3] See above, pp. 100 f.

[4] See above, p. 42.

[5] See above, p. 93.

"terrific sublimity" of the imagery. Readers who were not in sympathy with the Romantic movement, on the other hand, were bound to find in this imagery nothing but "childish fancies" or a "tissue of absurd and preposterous fictions." Friends and foes were alike intemperate in their criticism. The most serious obstacle to the popularity of runic poetry was the obscurity of the allusions. The imagery of the classical poets had been for generations familiar to every English schoolboy, but Germanic mythology was the province of the antiquary.[1] Scandinavian literature was generally looked upon as merely an embodiment of the inarticulate and savage emotions of a barbarous race. It might have an archæological interest to the specialist, but it certainly found no place in the studies of the ordinary liberally educated Englishman. Few people combined, like Gray, the instincts of the antiquary with those of the man of letters. When Gray printed his odes on *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* in 1757, his readers complained that they could not understand his allusions, so that in the reprint of 1768 he felt obliged, much to his disgust, to furnish a considerable body of notes, and, profiting by this experience, he at the same time annotated his Norse odes. Most readers rebel at lyric poetry that has to be fringed with footnotes. Explanations of some sort were an absolutely essential accompaniment to runic odes, however, so that unless the odist were a writer, like Gray, of extraordinary brilliancy, who could hold the reader by the very strength and sinew of his genius, the runic piece would very likely often be passed by unread.

[1] "The misfortune has been that [the Icelanders'] compositions have fallen into the hands of none but professed antiquarians: and these have only selected such poems for publication as confirmed some fact in history, or served to throw light on the antiquities of their country" (Percy, *Preface* to *Five Pieces*). See the allusion to "poring Wormius" (above, p 3, n.), and compare the following lines from Garth's *Dispensary*, 1699 (canto iv, ll. 127 ff.). The author is satirizing a dull physician who fills his office with musty and rubbishy books:

> Abandon'd authors here a refuge meet,
> And from the world to dust and worms retreat.
> Here dregs and sediment of auctions reign,
> Refuse of fairs, and gleanings of Duck-lane.
> And up these walls much Gothic lumber climbs
> With Swiss philosophy, and Runic rhymes.

But in spite of this difficulty the interest in Scandinavian literature aroused by Percy and Gray persisted and strengthened. Reasons for this persistence are not hard to find. For one thing, the appeals to the imagination made by the various other phases of the Romantic movement broadened the sympathies of English readers. Then Norse literature is in itself full of interest to anybody who can once become even slightly grounded in it. The hardy virtues of our Scandinavian ancestors, their contempt for danger and death, their restless, adventurous, warlike spirit,—these qualities must stir every Englishman who realizes that Scandinavian blood flows in his veins. The imitators of Gray's Norse odes were undoubtedly kindled into a considerable degree of enthusiasm by the story of Ragnar Loðbrok and by the *Funeral Song* of Hakon, and it is conceivable that they felt something of Richard Verstegan's pride in "the old honour and glorie of their owne beginnings and ancestors." Enthusiasm of this nature is easily communicated. Before long the reviewers began to cite Worm and Bartholin. No one could take up Thomas Bartholin's book without becoming absorbed in his tales of wild adventure and savage heroism. Bartholin began to be read and quoted by essayists and men of letters generally.[1]

Again, the reverence in which women were held by the Germanic races attracted the attention of sociological investigators like Dr. William Alexander and Henry Home. Odin's reputation as a magician and as the inventor of runes gave him a special interest. The alleged migration of the Norsemen from western Asia had an important bearing on philological and ethnological questions raised by scholars like John Pinkerton, John Richardson, and Sir William Jones. And, finally, the interest in German literature awakened by Monk Lewis, William Taylor of Norwich, and others, contributed

[1] See, for example, the essay on the *Extraordinary Heroism of the Antient Scandinavians* in the *London Magazine* for October, 1770. Cf. Taylor's remarks in his review of Herbert (*Annual Review*, 1805, pp. 562 f.): "A cultivation of these [Scandinavian] studies will be found to contribute to higher interests than those of archæologic curiosity; and to prepare the bonds of commercial and civil friendship between the nations who once bowed to the name of Odin, and who still partake the Gothic tongue. The investigation of septentrional antiquities ought not to repose wholly on continental industry."

indirectly to the popularization of Norse themes; for in Germany the literature of the North had been studied much more generally than in England, and as Klopstock and Kotzebue and Herder became known to English readers, the Scandinavian legends on which they sometimes employed their pens grew more familiar.

Meanwhile, a marked improvement was taking place in the English reviews. The book notices of these periodicals down to the last quarter, roughly speaking, of the eighteenth century, are made up of non-committal extracts and scraps of futile appreciation, or of equally futile and dogmatic censure. About the time that William Taylor appeared in the field, however, these reviews began to amount to something. So far as our special subject is concerned, this improvement in criticism was not at once accompanied, to be sure, by any marked improvement in the quality of the work criticised. Some slight gain may be noted: the pseudo-classical sediment diminishes; there is less of stupid adherence to a small stock of conventional images and metaphors; and there are fewer errors of taste; but much of this literature is still disorganized and inconsistent. The reviews of these pieces, though, are not infrequently entertaining and even illuminating. This quickening of a critical interest in Norse literature became especially noticeable at about the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Herbert, Jamieson, Scott, and Leyden took a scholar's, and Nathan Drake an enthusiastic layman's, interest in making the Eddas and sagas more generally appreciated.

The impetus given by these men to Scandinavian studies has never died out, though the limits of our investigation will not permit us to trace the development of these studies among English men of letters from the age of William Herbert to that of William Morris. As we look over the "runic odes" that we have been considering, they seem for the most part poor enough, — as meretricious in their way as Macpherson's Ossianic paraphrases, and wrought with far less skill. But they served to establish and perpetuate a tradition which later and more brilliant poets and essayists, aided by the resources of modern scholarship, have frequently employed with telling effect. For this reason, if for no other, they justify, it is hoped, the present attempt to rescue them from oblivion.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

[When nothing is said to the contrary, these dates represent what are believed to be first editions.]

1208 *ca.* Saxo Grammaticus finished his *Historia Danica* (Elton and Powell, p. xv).

1514. Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica* (published).

1554. Joannes Magnus, *Historia Gothorum.*

1555. Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus.*

1591. Vedel, *Danske Viser.*

1592. Nash, *Piers Penilesse.*

1593. Arngrim Jonsson, *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia.*

1599. Hakluyt, *Voyages.*

1605. Verstegan, *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence.*

1609. Arngrim Jonsson, *Crymogæa.*

1613. *Purchas his Pilgrimage.*

1619–25. *Purchas his Pilgrimes.*

1636. Worm, *Literatura Runica.*

1644. Stephanius, *Saxo.*

1647. Henry More, *The Præexistency of the Soul.*

1651. Runolf Jonsson, Icelandic grammar.

1658. Olaus Magnus in English.

1663. De la Peyrère, *Relation de l'Islande.*

1665. Resenius, Prose Edda, *Hávamál, Vǫluspá.*

1670. Sheringham, *De Anglorum Gentis Origine.*

1671. De la Martinière, *Voyage des Pais Septentrionaux.*

1672. Verelius, *Hervarar Saga.*

1673. Scheffer, *Lapponia.*

1674. Scheffer in English.

1674. De la Martinière in English.

1675–1702. Rudbeck, *Atlantica.*

1676. Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua.*

1676. Stillingfleet, *Defence.*

1689. Hickes, Anglo-Saxon and Mœso-Gothic grammar.

1689. Thomas Bartholin, *Antiquitates Danicæ.*

1691. Verelius, *Index Linguæ Veteris Scytho-Scandicæ.*

1692. Temple, *Miscellanea*, Part II, 3d ed.

1695. Blackmore, *Prince Arthur.*

1695. Syv, *Danske Viser.*

1697–1700. Peringskjöld, *Heimskringla.*

1697. Torfæus (Torfason), *Historia Orcadum.*

1703–1705. Hickes, *Thesaurus.*

1704. De la Peyrère in English.

1716. *Miscellany Poems* (known as Dryden's), 2d ed.

1720. Keysler, *Antiquitates.*

1737. Biörner, *Nordiska Kæmpa Dater.*
1746. Göransson, *Gylfaginning.*
1748. T. Warton, Sr., *Poems* (*Ragnar Loðbrok*).
1750. Göransson, *Vǫluspá.*
1754. T. Warton, Jr., *Observations on the Faery Queen.*
1755. Mallet, *Introduction*, Part I.
1756. Mallet, *Introduction*, Part II.
1756. J. Warton, *Essay on Pope*, Vol. I.
1757. Goldsmith, Review of Mallet.
1758. Wise, *Some Enquiries.*
1759. Goldsmith, *Polite Learning.*
1759. Hurd, *On the Age of Queen Elizabeth.*
1760. Macpherson, *Fragments.*
1761. Gray composed his Norse odes (published 1768).
1761. Percy's *Five Pieces* ready for the press (published 1763).
1762. Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance.*
1762. Macpherson, *Fingal.*
1763. Macpherson, *Temora.*
1763. Blair, *Critical Dissertation.*
1763. Percy, *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry.*
1764. E. Evans, *Specimens of the Welsh Bards.*
1764. Walpole, *Castle of Otranto.*
1764. Gibbon, *Examination of Mallet's Introduction.*
1765. Percy, *Reliques.*
1768. Gray, *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin.*
1768. H. Mackenzie, Introduction to Gray's *Fatal Sisters.*
1770. *Heroism of the Antient Scandinavians* (*London Magazine*).
1770. Bruce, *Danish Odes.*
1770. Percy, *Northern Antiquities.*
1774. Home, *Sketches of Man.*
1774. T. Warton, Jr., *History of English Poetry*, Vol. I.
1775. Stevens, *Hervor and Angantyr* and *Song of Rednor Ladbrog.*
1775. Penrose, *Flights of Fancy.*
1779. W. Alexander, *History of Women.*
1780. Johnstone, *Anecdotes of Olave the Black.*
1780. Von Troil, *Letters.*
1781. Mathias, *Runic Odes* (reprinted 1790,'91,'98, 1806).
1781. Downman, *Ragnar Lodbrach.*
1782. Johnstone, *Lodbrokar-Quida.*
1782. Johnstone, *Haco's Expedition.*
1783. Ritson, *Select Collection of English Songs.*
1784. T. Evans, *Old Ballads.*
1784. Bruce, *Danish Ode* (*London Magazine*).
1784. Jerningham, *The Rise and Progress of Scandinavian Poetry.*
1785. Hayley, *Essay on Epic Poetry.*
1786. Johnstone, *Antiquitates Celto-Scandicæ.*
1787. Copenhagen Edda, Vol. I.
1787. Pinkerton, *Dissertation on the Scythians.*
1788. Anna Seward wrote *Herva at the Tomb of Argantyr* (published 1796).

1788. Thorkelin, *Fragments.*
1789. Pinkerton, *Vitæ Sanctorum Scotiæ.*
1789. Hole, *Arthur.*
1789. Hole, *Gunnar* and *Hialmur.*
1789. Sterling, *Odes from the Icelandic.*
1790. Sayers, *Dramatic Sketches* (2d ed., 1792).
1790. Williams, *The Hervarer Saga.*
1790. Anna Seward wrote *Harold's Complaint* (published 1810).
1792. *Poems, Chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall.*
1793. Lestley, *Haunting of Havardur.*
1794. Andrews, *History of Great Britain* (*Ragnar Lodbrok*).
1796. Anna Seward, *Herva at the Tomb of Argantyr.*
1797. A. S. Cottle, *Icelandic Poetry.*
1797. Mason, *Song of Harold the Valiant.*
1798. Taylor, *The Meal of Vafthruthni.*
1798. Drake, *Literary Hours* (2d ed., 1800; 3d, 1804).
1799. *Herald the Valiant* (*Scots Magazine*).
1799–1805. Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons.*
1800. Taylor wrote *Wortigerne* (published 1801).
1800. J. Cottle, *Alfred.*
1801. Bowles, *Hymn to Woden.*
1801. Lewis, *Tales of Wonder.*
1801. Montbron, *Les Scandinaves*, reviewed.
1801. W. Richardson, *Maid of Lochlin.*
1801. Thelwall, *Fairy of the Lake.*
1802. Macpherson, *Fragment of a Northern Tale.*
1802. Scott, *Border Minstrelsy.*
1803–1804. Galt, *Battle of Largs.*
1804. Third edition of Drake's *Literary Hours* (new volume).
1804. Herbert, *Icelandic Poetry*, Part I.
1804. Boyd, *Witch of Lapland.*
1804. Richards, *Odin.*
1805. Landor, *Gunlaug and Helga.*
1805. Barry, *History of the Orkney Islands.*
1805. Beresford, *Song of the Sun.*
1806. Herbert, *Icelandic Poetry*, Part II.
1806. Peacock, *Fiolfar.*
1806. Scott, review of Herbert in *Edinburgh Review.*
1806. Jamieson, *Popular Ballads.*
1808. Strutt, *Ancient Times.*
1808. Reprint of Von Troil's *Letters* in Pinkerton's *Voyages.*
1808–1842. Fitchett, *Alfred.*
1810. Anna Seward, *Poetical Works*, edited by Scott.
1810. Taylor, *Harold and Tosti.*
1810. Taylor, *Tales of Yore.*
1811. Sir G. S. Mackenzie, *Travels in Iceland.*
1814. Weber and Jamieson, *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities.*

APPENDIX A

THE following particulars with regard to the new edition of Percy's *Northern Antiquities*, projected about 1804, may be of interest (see p. 40, n. 2, above).

In this year the First Part of Herbert's *Select Icelandic Poetry* came out with some strictures on Percy's translations. On the 26th of July, 1804, Dr. Robert Anderson wrote to Percy (see Nichols, *Illustrations*, VII, 127 ff.), "chiefly to communicate to your Lordship some passages from 'Herbert's select Icelandic Poetry' . . . which concern you." Anderson quotes Herbert, who says, "Translations made, like Dr. Percy's, by a person quite unacquainted with the Icelandic language, through the medium of a Latin prose version, cannot be expected to represent the style and spirit of the originals" (see Herbert's *Works*, 1842, I, 179. This remark was made apropos of Cottle's translation, in 1797, of the first volume of the Copenhagen Edda). He also quotes from Herbert's notes to his *Death of Hacon* (*Works*, I, 281 f.): "An English prose translation from the Latin version of Peringskiöld has been published by Dr. Percy in his Runic poetry, which is not quite so inaccurate, as the rest of that book: his translation of Regner Lodbroc's ode teems with errors [some of which Herbert points out in a footnote], and indeed scarce a line of it is properly interpreted. Mr. Johnstone . . . has rectified many of Dr. Percy's errors . . . ," and so on through Herbert's remarks about "kissing a young widow" (see above, p. 73, n. 2). Anderson concludes by observing that he calls his correspondent's attention to these criticisms in view of "a design of reprinting the Runic Poetry in the new edition of the 'Northern Antiquities.'"

Percy's reply, dated Aug. 16, 1804 (Nichols, *Illustrations*, VII, 130), is interesting: ". . . For my own part I had ceased to think of them both [i.e. *Five Pieces* and *Northern Antiquities*]; but if you wish to revive the latter, I cannot help thinking the former will tend to illustrate the subject, notwithstanding the severe criticism of Mr. Herbert, whose book I have never seen. . . . Notwithstanding that he condemns, in the gross, translations like mine, made through the medium of a Latin version, yet I humbly conceive an English reader will form thereby as good a notion of

the peculiar images and general subject of the original, as from his own paraphrase (for it can be no other) in English verse ; but in my translation I had an advantage, which Mr. Herbert seems to have overlooked, in having it compared with the original by the great master of Northern literature, the Rev. Edw. Lye, author of the Anglo-Saxon Lexicon, 2 vols. fol. and of the other learned works which I have mentioned in my preface. And if here or there a passage escaped his vigilance, or were [*sic*] mistranslated by following two such respectable authorities as Wormius and Peringskiold, those two great northern luminaries, it will surely be very pardonable, considering the difficulty of the undertaking. However, to form a truer judgment of the subject, you would do well to compare my version of the 'Ode on the Death of King Ragner Lodbrog,' with that of Dr. Blair in his Dissertation on Ossian's poetry." In a postscript Percy adds that Blair, "having Wormius' book before him, in which is printed the original of Egil the Scald, a poem altogether in rhymes, and those very nicely formed, as you will see by page 92 of my book, . . . has hastily pronounced that the termination of rhymes was utterly unknown to the ancient Islandic poets ; and herein he has been followed by Dr. Robert Henry in his History of England and I suppose by other compilers, which will give the more importance to a republication of my juvenile attempt, wherein that point is sufficiently ascertained." (The first edition of the fourth volume of Robert Henry's *History of Great Britain* — the volume treating of the Anglo-Saxons and the Danes — was published in 1781. By the time the work reached a fourth edition (1805), the error to which Percy refers had been corrected. See Vol. IV, 4th ed., p. 177. In a footnote Henry cites *Northern Antiquities*. There are also allusions to Worm, Bartholin, and other antiquaries, and some scraps of Norse literature are quoted in English, generally translated from Bartholin.)

Anderson wrote to Percy again on the 15th of September, 1804 (Nichols, VII, 132), reporting that he had re-read the *Five Pieces* and favored reprinting them at the end of the *Northern Antiquities*, a better place for them, he thinks, than the fourth volume of the *Reliques*, where Percy seems to have had some thought of placing them. He regards Herbert's criticisms as "petulant," but thinks Percy should take some notice of them. "Even the remarks in your letter to me," he adds grotesquely, "might easily be extended to an ample and satisfactory vindication of the general fidelity of your version."

In May, 1805, Percy writes to Anderson (Nichols, VII, 152) : "For the new edition of the 'Northern Antiquities' I will send you very soon what few corrections and improvements I have to offer ; and pray mention if you

think any alterations ought to be made in the specimens of Runic poetry; for the petty, captious strictures, which you quoted in a former letter, I do not think worth notice, as I was supported in my version of the disputed passages by the greatest Northern antiquaries."

Anderson replies on the 13th of June, 1805, that it is intended to bring out the new edition of the *Northern Antiquities* about the beginning of the following year. He suggests some alterations in the notes and preface to the *Five Pieces*. "The strictures of Herbert," he remarks, "for the reasons you mention, are not worth notice." Dr. Leyden, he says, has suggested that Walter Scott be made editor of the new edition of the *Antiquities*, but Longman prefers Percy. "I . . . went to the length of saying," proceeds Anderson, "that the 'Border Ballads' were not entitled to be placed on the same shelf with the 'Reliques.' This opinion, I understand, has been reported to Mr. Scott, and has produced a jealousy of your pretensions, and a coldness towards me."

In his next letter, Sept. 3, 1805 (Nichols, VII, 157), Anderson reports that he has tried in vain to procure Johnstone's *Lodbrokar-Quida*, about which Percy had inquired. The book, it will be remembered, had been mentioned by Herbert in his strictures on Percy.

Again in December, 1805, March, June, and December, 1806, and July, 1807, Anderson makes various references to the proposed new edition of the *Antiquities* (see Nichols, VII, 160, 163, 171, 172, 183). In January, 1808, Percy asks plaintively, "Is it . . . desired that the new edition of the Northern Antiquities should be undertaken? On the above, or any other subject, the Bishop will be glad to hear from Dr. Anderson," who, it seems, had become dilatory in his correspondence (Nichols, VII, 186).

In May, 1808, Anderson replies that the work is delayed in consequence of an advance in the price of printing paper. A few days later Percy writes that Anderson may, if he pleases, proceed with the work if he thinks it "will answer under the enormous increase of the price of paper, or leave it to sleep for another half century" (Nichols, VII, 188, 190).

The edition finally appeared in 1809 (see p. 40, n. 2, above).

APPENDIX B

THE following citations (which might be greatly extended) will give some idea of the popularity of Gray's *Fatal Sisters* and *Descent of Odin*.

1771. *The Fatal Sisters* was reprinted in the *London Magazine* for January, 1771, p. 51.

1781. In this year James Mathias published his *Runic Odes imitated from the Norse tongue in the manner of Mr. Gray*. (See above, pp. 50 f., 96 ff.)

1782. Joseph Warton mentions Gray's two poems in the fourth edition of his *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, I, 422, n.

1783. Ritson, in his *Historical Essay on National Song* (*Select Collection of English Songs*, 3 vols, London, 1783, I, xli), cites *The Descent of Odin*, "a very ancient ode, beautifully translated by mr. Gray."

1783. Gray's two Norse odes were reprinted in Pearch's Additions to Dodsley, III, 124, 128.

1785. Epistle III of Hayley's *Essay on Epic Poetry* (*Poems and Plays*, London, 1785, III, 51–53) begins with a "Sketch of the Northern and the Provençal Poetry." At the outset he praises Mason for his services to the memory of Gray, then proceeds in this interesting fashion:

> Thy modest GRAY, solicitous to pierce
> The dark and distant source of modern Verse,
> By strings untried first taught his English Lyre
> To reach the Gothic Harp's terrific fire:
> The North's wild spectres own his potent hand,
> And Hell's nine portals at his voice expand;
> With new existence by his Verse endued,
> See Gothic Fable wakes her shadowy brood,
> Which, in the Runic rhymes of many a *Scald*,
> With pleasing dread our Northern sires appall'd.

Then follows a eulogy of the scalds, with a tribute to Ragnar Loðbrok:

> In tort'ring death the Royal Captive sang
> And smiles of triumph hid his mortal pang.

(See above, p. 77.) He refers in a footnote to the version of Loðbrok's *Epicedium* printed in Percy's *Five Pieces*.

1788. William Whitehead wrote in the introductory note to his *Battle of Argoed Llwyfain* (*Poems*, York, 1788, III, 84): "I think no critic will deal candidly, who, in estimating the poetical merit of this piece in general, shall compare it with those imitations which Mr. Gray made of the *Scaldic* odes. The wild mythology of the EDDA, to which they perpetually allude, gives them a charm peculiar to themselves, and sets them above what he himself has produced from *Cambro-British* Originals."

1789. Joseph Sterling (*Poems*, 1789) acknowledges that in his two *Icelandic Odes*, "the sublime Mr. Gray has been his guide" (*Monthly Review*, November, 1790. Cf. p. 115, above).

1790. For Dr. Sayers's tribute to Gray, see above, p. 122.

1792. Lockhart mentions (*Life of Scott*, Edinburgh, 1839, I, 272 f.) finding among Scott's effects a notebook inscribed "Walter Scott, 1792," containing *The Descent of Odin* in Norse, Latin, and Gray's English. "The historical account appended . . . was I doubt not," says Lockhart, "read before one or other of his debating societies."

When Scott was in the Orkneys in 1814, he made the following interesting note in his diary on the 14th of August (Lockhart, *Life*, IV, 254 f.): "On Duncansby-head appear some remarkable rocks, like towers, called the Stacks of Duncansby. Near this shore runs the remarkable breaking tide called the *Merry Men of Mey*, whence Mackenzie takes the scenery of a poem —

> 'Where the dancing Men of Mey
> Speed the current to the land.'

[See above, p. 37, where the reading differs slightly, and cf. Stevenson's tale, *The Merry Men*.] Here, according to his locality, the Caithness man witnessed the vision [see above, p. 37, n. 2], in which was introduced the song translated by Gray, under the title of the Fatal Sisters. On this subject Mr. Baikie told me the following remarkable circumstance: — A clergyman told him, that while some remnants of the Norse were yet spoken in North Ronaldsha, he carried thither the translation of Mr. Gray, then newly published, and read it to some of the old people as referring to the ancient history of their islands. But so soon as he had proceeded a little way, they exclaimed they knew it very well in the original, and had often sung it to himself, when he asked them for an old Norse song; they called it *The Enchantress*."

Scott repeats this information, Mr. Tovey points out, in a note to *The Pirate*, chap. ii. Mr. Tovey suggests that Scott may have borrowed from Mason's *Gray*, or from sources there quoted, the description of Norna of

the Fitful-head in *The Pirate*, chap. v. Mr. Tovey also calls for a comparison of *The Fatal Sisters* with the *Song of Harold Harfager* in *The Pirate*, chap. xv, and observes that in the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (canto vi, stanza xxii) Scott cites Gray's *Fatal Sisters* in a note, and that in chap. xxx of *The Antiquary* he confuses this poem with Gray's *Bard* (see *Gray's English Poems*, Pitt Press ed., pp. 212, 252, 255).

1795. According to the Rev. James Morton, editor of *The Poetical Remains of the late Dr. John Leyden*, London, 1819, p. xvi, Leyden contributed to the *Edinburgh Magazine* for September, 1795, "the second part of 'the Descent of Odin' from the Norse tongue, omitted by Gray when he translated the former part." Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, ed. 1839, II, 54, says, apropos of Scott's first interview with Leyden, in 1800, "Scott . . . found, when introduced, the person whose initials, affixed to a series of pieces in verse, chiefly translations from Greek, Latin, and the northern languages, scattered during the last 3 or 4 years over the pages of the Edinburgh Magazine, had often much excited his curiosity." I regret that I have been unable to find a file of the *Edinburgh Magazine*.

1798. Nathan Drake, in the first edition of his *Literary Hours*, praises Gray's Norse odes (see 3d ed., London, 1804, I, 145).

1800. Anna Seward, in a letter to Thomas Park, Sept. 25, 1800, reckons Gray's *Descent of Odin* a part of "our noblest poetry" (Miss Seward's *Letters*, Edinburgh, 1811, V, 319).

1801. M. G. Lewis printed both of Gray's Norse odes in his *Tales of Wonder*, II, 347–357.

1801. William Richardson (*Poems and Plays*, a new edition, Edinburgh, 1805, II, 108) explains in the preface (1801) to his *Maid of Lochlin*, a play which contains one scene representing a temple of Odin, "The idea of employing the northern mythology was suggested by a perusal of Mallet's History of Denmark and the powerful imitations by Mr. Gray of the Scandinavian poetry."

1801. W. L. Bowles cites Gray's *Fatal Sisters* in a note to his *Hymn to Woden* (*Poems*, 1801, Vol. II).

1804. Boyd's *Witch of Lapland* is, he says, "partly an imitation of Gray's Descent of Odin." Boyd's poem may be found in the *Poetical Register* for 1804, p. 246; the *European Magazine*, March, 1804, p. 223; the *Annual Register* for 1804, p. 905; the *Gentleman's Magazine*, April, 1804, p. 352.

1804. Herbert cites Gray in the first part of his *Select Icelandic Poetry*, pp. 45 ff. The author of the criticism of this book which appeared in the *Monthly Review* for April, 1807, finds that "the literal translations" of

Herbert lack "that splendour and pomp in which the Scandic rhimes have been arrayed by the gorgeous imagination of Gray."

1804. George Huddesford printed in *The Wiccamical Chaplet*, London, 1804, p. 191, the following *Fragment, On the Death of Gray:*

> Well was he skill'd in old Poetic Lore—
> Not such alone as Greece or Latium sung—
> He dar'd thro' Gothic Darkness to explore;
> And strike the Lyre the Runic Bards had strung.
>
> Heard ye that sound!—Alas! who has not heard?
> The magic Voice still vibrates in my ear,
> What time great Odin's sable Form appear'd,
> And Hela's Confines trembled at his Spear.

1805. The Norse text of *The Fatal Sisters*, with a Latin translation from the *Orcades* of Torfæus, is published in Appendix xi to the Rev. George Barry's *History of the Orkney Islands* (2d ed., London, 1808, pp. 483–486; 1st ed., Edinburgh and London, 1805). Gray's translation is cited in a footnote. Barry also reprints from Percy's *Northern Antiquities* the Lord's Prayer in "Norn or Norse, as Spoken formerly by the natives of Orkney."

1807. Turner (*History of the Anglo-Saxons*, 2d ed., I, 421, n.) alludes to "the Scaldic ode, which Gray has so vigorously translated in his Fatal Sisters."

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