

THE SAGA HOARD

Volume I

**Collecting Together
English Translations
of the
Icelandic Sagas**

**This Volume
is Dedicated
to Our
Gods and Goddesses**

Various English translations of the Icelandic Sagas are widely available in a digital format from a number of sources on the internet. There are also various collections available in book form.

Our goal with this collection was to present as many Icelandic Sagas as possible, at an affordable price. This is the first volume in a planned three-volume set of Icelandic Sagas.

The Saga Hoard - Volume 1 is part of the Temple library Collection. Any profits made from this book, will go directly to our fund to build a Hof and Hall in the Heartland of the United States.

While the contents of this book are in the public domain, the design and format of this book are copyright © 2010 by Mark Stinson. All rights reserved.

Published by Jotun's Bane Kindred
Temple of Our Heathen Gods
P.O. Box 463
Liberty, MO 64069
mark@heathengods.com

<http://www.heathengods.com>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Story of the Banded Men or Bandamanna Saga Translated by William Morris and Eirikr Magnusson [1891]	2
The Story of Burnt Njal or Njal's Saga Translated by George Webbe Dasent [1861]	27
Egil's Saga Translated by Rev. W. C. Green [1893]	294
The Saga of Erik the Red Translated by Rev. J. Sephton [1880]	441
The Saga of the Ere-Dwellers or Eyrbyggja Saga Translated by William Morris and Eirikr Magnusson [1892]	459
The Saga of Thronð of Gate or Færeyinga Saga Translated by F. York Powell [1896]	540
The Saga of Gisli the Outlaw Translated by George Webbe Dasent [1866]	591
Grettir's Saga or The Saga of Grettir the Strong Translated by G. H. Hight [1914]	645

INTRODUCTION

The Icelandic Sagas are histories written in prose, describing life and events that took place during the Icelandic Commonwealth period, around the 10th and 11th centuries. They are stories of families, adventures, feuding, deal-making, political maneuvers, wars, treasure amassed, great journeys, genealogy, tribute given, kings, freemen, history, and myth. They are stories of the Norse and Celtic settlers and their descendants in Iceland during what is sometimes called the Saga Age.

It is believed that the Sagas were written down in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and that at least some of them originated in the oral storytelling tradition. Their authors remain unknown, but the Sagas are recognized and respected as some of the best of world literature.

What is amazing about the Icelandic Sagas, is the wealth of information included in them and the storytelling with which it is presented. Though written hundreds of years ago, they are still enormously compelling to the modern reader. Their style is crisp and quick, and there is action, emotion, and humor to keep one entertained.

The stories describe actions and conversations among the characters, but at no point are we told directly what a character is thinking. But while reading of their deeds and words, we develop a sense of their psychology and their thoughts.

The Icelandic Sagas are more than just great literature about an entertaining subject matter. For Asatruars and Heathens, there is indispensable knowledge to be gained here. These tales give us a window into the world of our heathen ancestors. What did they value? How did they resolve conflicts and disputes? How did they uphold their responsibilities to their families and their friends? How did they approach life itself and their places within the community? How did they view and honor their Gods and Ancestors? What sort of men and women were they? While these great stories were compiled and written down by Christians after the conversion, they preserve in their tales of our pagan ancestors much that we should know.

Some Sagas have been lost to history. We read of their existence or see reference to these lost Sagas in other works, and it is impossible to not feel the tragic loss. But a large body of work has been preserved, and it forms an amazing resource and foundation for our reconstruction of the heathenry of our Ancestors, in our modern times.

Contained in this volume are nearly 800 pages of Icelandic Sagas. Read, learn, and enjoy these tales of our Ancestors.

Mark Ludwig Stinson
August 24, 2010

THE STORY OF THE BANDED MEN

Chapter 1 Of Ufeig and Odd His son

A man named Ufeig dwelt westaway in Midfirth, at a stead called Reeks: he was the son of Skidi, and his mother was called Gunnlaug, whose mother was Jarngerd, daughter of Ufeig Jarngerdson, of the Skards in the north country. Ufeig was wedded to a woman called Thorgerdi daughter of Vali; she came of great kin, and was a stirring woman. Ufeig was a wise man, and full of good counsel; he was great-hearted in all wise, but unhandy at money-getting; great and wide lands he had, but was scant of chattels; he spared not to give his meat to any, yet mostly was it got by borrowing what was needed for the household; he was thingman of Styrmir of Asgeir's-water, who was then held for the greatest chief west away there.'

Ufeig had a son by his wife named Odd, a goodly man, and of fair mien from his youth up, but small love he had from his father; he was but a sorry handy-craftsman. One named Vali also grew up in Ufeig's house; he was a goodly man, and a well-loved.

So Odd grew up in his father's house till he was twelve winters old, and mostly Ufeig had little to do with him, and loved him little; but the report of men ran that none of that country was of better conditions than Odd. On a time fell Odd to talk with his father, and craved of him help in money: "For I would depart hence: things have come to this," said he, "that of thee get I little honour, and to thee give I little help."

Ufeig answers: "I will not lay down for thee less than thou deservest; and I will go as close as I can to that, and then thou wilt know what avail it will be to thee."

Odd said that that would be but little to lean upon, and thus their speech had end. But the next day Odd takes a line down from the wall, and a set of fishing gear, and twelve ells of wadmal, and so goes his ways with no farewell to any. He fared out to Waterness, and fell into the company of fishermen, and craved of them such outfit as he needed most, either to borrow or to buy on credit; so that when they knew he was of good kin, and whereas he himself was a lad well-liked, they risked trusting him; so he bought all on credit, and abode there certain seasons a-fishing; and it is told that their luck was ever at its best with whom was Odd.

So he was there three winters and three summers, and was by then gotten so far, that he had paid back all that he had borrowed, and had gained for himself a good trading penny withal. He never went to see his father, and either of them went on as if he were nought akin to the other: he was well liked of his fellows.

So as it fell out he took to carrying goods north to the Strands, and bought himself the use of a keel, and so gathered goods : so his wealth increased speedily, till he owned the keel himself, and plied therewith between Midfirth and the Strands for certain summers, and now began to grow rich. At last he waxed weary of this work, and bought a share in a ship and fared abroad, and is now trading awhile, and still he did well therein, and flourished, and now hath won both wealth and the good report of men.

This business he followed till he owned a ship of burden and the more part of its lading, and still he went a-trading, and became a man of great wealth and good renown: oft was he with lords and men of dignity in the Outlands, and was well accounted of wheresoever he was. Now he became so rich that he had two ships of burden a-trading, and as folk tell, no chapman of his day was so wealthy as Odd, and in his seafaring was luckier than other men. He never laid his ship northward of Eyiafirth or westward of Ramfirth.

Chapter 2

Of Uspak's Coming to Odd

The tale tells that on a certain summer Odd brought his ship to Boardere in Ramfirth with intent to abide there through the winter: there was he bidden of his friends to settle at home in the land, and he did according to their desire, and bought land at Mel in Midfirth: there he set up a great household, and became bounteous in his housekeeping, which, as folk say, was deemed of no less worth than his seafaring aforesaid; neither was any man so renowned as was Odd in all the north country. He did better with his wealth than most men; a liberal man to such as had need and were anigh him; yet did he nought for the comfort of his father: his ship he laid up in Ramfirth.

Men say for sure that no man of Iceland was ever so wealthy as was Odd; yea, that he had no less than any three of the richest; in every wise was his wealth huge; in gold and in silver, in land and in live-stock. Vali his kinsman abode with him, whether he were at home or abroad. So Odd abides at his house in all this honour aforesaid.

There was a man named Glum, who dwelt at Skridinsenni, betwixt Bitra and Kollafirth: his wife's name was Thordis; she was the daughter of Asmund, the Long-hoary, father of Grettir the Strong: their son was Uspak, a man great of growth and strong, ill to deal with, and masterful; in his early days he began to go a-ferrying wares between the Strands and the north-country; he was a well-grown man, and soon became mighty of body. One summer he came to Midfirth and sold his take there; and on a day he gets him a horse, and rides up to Mel and there meets Odd; they greeted each other and asked for the common tidings, and Uspak said: "So goes it, Odd, that folk speak well of thy ways, and thou art much praised of men, and all deem themselves well-housed who are with thee ; such luck am I hoping for, for I would dwell with thee."

Odd answered: "But thou art not much praised of men, nor art thou well-beloved: men deem that there is guile under thy brow, even as it was with thy kin before thee."

Answereth Uspak: "Prove it by trial, and take it not on hearsay of others; for few are better spoken of than their deserts: nor am I asking for a gift; I would have house-room of thee, but I will keep myself; so try how thou wilt like it." Odd answers: "Mighty are thy kin, and hard to reach if ye take it into your heads to turn on me; but whereas thou art earnest with me to take thee in, I will risk it for the space of one winter."

So Uspak took that with thanks, and went in the harvest-tide to Mel with his goods, and soon became friendly with Odd : he was of good avail about the stead, doing as much work as any two others, and Odd liked him well.

So wears the time, and in spring Odd bids him abide there, saying that he deemed it better so: Uspak was fully willing, and so he takes to overlooking the house, and things go on exceeding well, and folk make much to do about how well the man goes on; and he was in good favour with folk.

So standeth that house fair flourishing, and no man's fortune was deemed more worth than Odd's: one thing only seemed lacking for the fulfilment of his honour, a priesthood to wit: but in those days it was the custom for men to set up a new priesthood, or to buy one, and even so did Odd now: he speedily gathered thingmen to him, for all were fain of him. So are things quiet awhile.

Chapter 3

Of Uspak's Dealing with Odd

Odd took Uspak to his heart, and let him pretty much rule over the household; he worked both hard and much, and was useful about the house.

So wears the winter, and Odd liked Uspak even better than before, because he took yet more things in hand. In harvest-tide he fetched in the sheep from the mountains, and they were well brought in, with none missing.

So weareth winter into spring, and then Odd gives out that he is going abroad in the summer, and says that his kinsman Vali shall take the household to him ; but Vali answers: "So falls it, kinsman, that I am not used to this, and I were liefer to deal with the money and the wares."

Now Odd turns to Uspak, and bids him take over to him the household. Uspak answers: u That would be over-much for me, how well soever things go, now thou hast to do therewith." Odd urges the matter, and Uspak excuses himself, as sorely as he desired to take it; so at last it came to this, that he bade Odd have his way, if he would promise him his help and furtherance. Odd says that he shall so deal with his possessions that he may wax the better man thereby, and be more highly favoured, and that he had put it to the proof that no man either could or would watch better over his wealth. Uspak bids him now to do according to his will, and so the talk ended.

Now Odd arrayed his ship, and let bear his wares thereto, and this was heard of, and in divers wise talked over.

Odd had no need to be long in getting ready. Vali went with him; and so when they were fully dight men lead him to ship. Uspak followed him the furthest, and

they had many things to talk of: so when they were but a little way from the ship Odd said: "Now is there yet one thing which has not been settled."

"What is that?" said Uspak. "We have not seen to my priesthood," said Odd, "and I will that thou take it over."

"This is out of all reason," saith Uspak. "I am unmeet for this: already have I taken more things on my hands than I am like to handle or turn out well; there is no man so fit as is thy father; he is the greatest of lawmen, and exceeding wise." Odd says that into his hands he would not give it; "and I will have thee to take it," says he.

Uspak excused himself, and yet was fain to have it: then says Odd that he will be wroth if he take it not; wherefore at their parting Uspak took the priesthood.

So Odd fares abroad, and full happy was his voyage even as his wont was.

Uspak fares home, and this matter is talked of in diverse wise; and folk think that Odd hath given much power into the hands of this man.

Uspak rides to the Thing next summer with a company of men, and does well and helpfully there, and turns all due matters well out of hand whereto he was by law bound, and rides thence with honour. He sustained his men in doughty wise; nowhere letting their part be borne down, nor were they downtrodden: he was kind and easy to all the neighbours, and there was no less plenty or hospitality at the stead than had been heretofore; nor was good housekeeping lacking thereto: and all went well. So weareth summer: Uspak rideth to the Leet and halloweth it; and when harvest comes, he fares to the fells when men go after their wethers, and they were brought in well, for the searching was careful, and no sheep were missing, either of Odd's or any other man's.

Chapter 4

Of Dissension Between Uspak and Odd

It fell out that harvest that Uspak came north to Swalastead in Willowdale, where dwelt a woman called Swala, who gave him good entertainment; she was a fair woman and a young: she talked to Uspak, bidding him look to her matters; "for I have heard that thou art the best of husbandmen."

He took it well, and they talked much together, and either was well pleased with other, and they beheld each other blithely.

So their talk came to this, that he asked who had most to say in the giving of her in marriage. "Of such as are of any account," said she, "none is higher to me than Thorarin the Sage, the Long-dale-folk's priest."

So Uspak rode to Thorarin, and was straightway greeted of him well, in a way; and there he set forth his errand, and wooed him Swala. Thorarin answers: "I cannot say I am eager for alliance with thee: folk talk in diverse wise about thy dealings. I can see that it is no good to beat about the bush with such men as thou; either must I break up her household, and have her hither; or else must

ye do as ye will. I will have nought to do with it; nor will I deem myself as consenting to the match."

So thereon Uspak rides his ways, and comes to Swalastead, and tells Swala how matters stood : so they take their own counsel, and she betroths herself to him, and fares home with him to Mel; but they owned the house at Swalastead, and got men to take heed to it. So abideth Uspak at Mel, sus-taining the bounteousness of the house; yet was he deemed a masterful man..

So weareth winter, and in spring came Odd into Ramfirth, once again full of wealth and good report of men: he came home to Mel, and looked over his possessions, and deems that they have been well heeded, and speaks well of that; and so wears on the summer.

But on a time Odd falls to talk with Uspak, saying that it were well for him to take his priesthood again. "Yea," said Uspak, "that was even the thing I was most unwilling to take up, and the most unfit to deal with; I am all ready to give it up; but I deem that men are mostly wont to do that at the Leets or the Things." Odd answereth: " So it may well be." Now neareth summer on to the Leet; and on the morning thereof when Odd awakes, he looks about, and findeth few men in the hall, and he has slept fast and long: so he sprang up and found that the men are clean gone from the hall, and deemed it marvellous, but said but little. So he arrayed him, and certain men with him, and rode away to the Leet; but when they came there, they found many men, but these well nigh ready to depart; and the Leet was hallowed. Odd changed countenance, and deemed this impudence marvellous.

Men ride home, and a few days wear away thence; but on a day as Odd sat at table with Uspak over against him, even as he least looked for it Odd sprang from the board, and at Uspak with axe raised aloft, and bade him give up his priesthood now.

Uspak answers: "No need of carrying the matter on with all this violence : thou mayest have the priesthood whenso thou wilt. I wotted not that thou wert so eager to have it" Therewith he stretches out his hand, and gives Odd the priesthood.

Now were things quiet awhile; but henceforth Odd and Uspak had little to do with each other; and Uspak was somewhat cross-grained of temper; and it is deemed that he was minded to have kept the priesthood from Odd, if he had not been cowed out of it when he could not get off.

Now Uspak did nought to help the housekeeping, and Odd never called upon him for any work, and neither spake to other.

So on a day Uspak gat him gone, and Odd made as if he knew it not, and in such wise they parted that no greeting passed between them. Uspak went to his house at Swalastead, but Odd made as if nought had happed, and so all is quiet a space.

Chapter 5 Of the Slaying of Vali

The tale tells that in harvest-tide men fare up into the fells, and all changed was Odd's ingathering from what had been; for at this autumn folding he missed forty of his wethers, and they the best of his flock. They were searched for wide over fell and heath, and were not found: men deemed this wondrous, for Odd was accounted luckier With his sheep than others so hard men drave the search that other countries as well as the home country were searched, and nothing done; and at last the matter dropped, but there was diverse talk as to how it came about.

Odd was sorry of cheer that winter season; so Vali his kinsman asked why he was nought glad : "What! dost thou take the losing of thy sheep so much to heart ? thou art not much of a man if such things grieve thee."

Odd answers: "I sorrow not for my wethers; but this I deem a worse matter, that I wot not who has stolen them." Vali answers: "Thinkest thou then that so it verily is; and whither, dost thou turn to most then?"

Saith Odd: "It is not to be hidden that I deem Uspak hath stolen them." Vali answers: "Far away then is your friendship fled from the time when thou settedst him over all thy goods.",. Odd said that that had been the greatest folly, and that things had gone better than might have been looked for. Vali said: " Many talked thereof as of a wondrous thing; but now. I will that thou lay not this so hastily to his charge; for there is a risk of rumour getting about, that it seems lightly spoken: now shall we make a bargain together that I will certify thee of the truth, but thou shalt let me deal therein as I will."

So they struck that bargain, and Vali went his ways with goods of his: he rides out to Waterdale and Longdale selling his goods, and was friendly and easy to deal with. So he goes his ways till he comes to Swalastead, and there has good entertainment, and all joyous was Uspak. But on the morrow Vali arrays him to depart, and Uspak led him from the garth, and asked many things of Odd, and Vali spake well of his doings. Uspak made much of him, saying that he was a bounteous man: "But came not some loss upon him last harvest?" Vali said that so it was.

"What is the guess about those missing sheep, such a lucky sheep-owner as Odd has been heretofore? " said Uspak. Vali answers: "The guessing is not all one way; but some deem it to have been the work of men."

Uspak says : "That is well to be deemed; and yet such tricks are but for few."

"Yea surely," saith Vali. Said Uspak : "Has Odd any guess about it?" "He saith but little thereof," said Vali, "but among other folk is there all the more talk how it was done." " As may well be," said Uspak.

"So it goes," said Vali, "after all we two have said, that some men say it is not unlike that thou must have had a hand in it; for they put it to-gether that ye parted in anger, and that the sheep were missing not long after."

Uspak answers: "I could not have thought that thou wouldst say such things; and but we were such friends as we be, I would avenge it sorely."

Says Vali: "There is no need to hide the thing, or to be so mad wroth : I have been looking over thy matters here; and thou mayest not put it from thee; for I can see that thou hast much more of stores than are like to be well gotten."

Uspak answered : "It will not be so proven: but what will our foes' words be, if our friends speak in this wise?"

Vali said: "This is not spoken unto thee in enmity, seeing that I speak to thy hearing alone; for now if thou wilt do after my will, and confess the matter, it shall fall but lightly on thee; for I shall find a way thereto: I have sold my wares wide about the country, and I will say that thou hast taken the money over, and bought therewith flesh-meat and other things: no man will misdoubt this, and I will so bring it about that thou shalt have no shame hereof, if thou wilt do after my counsel." Uspak said that he would not confess to it." Then will things go a worser road," said Vali; "but it is thine own doing."

Therewith they parted, and Vali fared home. Odd asked him if he had found out aught about the missing sheep, and Vali let out but little thereover.

Quoth Odd: "No need to hide now that Uspak has stolen them; for thou wouldst fain excuse him if thou mightest."

So wore the winter quietly: but when it was spring, and the Days of Summoning were come, Odd went his ways with twenty men, till he came anigh the garth of Swalastead; then said Vali to Odd: "Bait your horses here awhile, and I will ride to the house and see Uspak, if peradventure he be willing to make atonement, and then the case need go no further."

So did they, and Vali rides up to the house; there was no one without, and the door was open, so Vali went in: it was dark in the house, and all unwares of him a man leaps up from the bench and smites him between the shoulders, so that he falls straightway. Then cried Vali: "Save thyself, wretched man! Odd is hard by the garth, and is minded to slay thee: send thy wife to meet him, and let her say that we are at one, and that thou hast confessed to the matter; but that I have gone to call in moneys of mine out in the Dales."

Said Uspak: "This is one of the worst of deeds; I had minded it for Odd, and not for thee."

So Swala meets Odd, and tells him that they are at one again, Vali and Uspak; "and Vali bade thee turn back."

Odd believed it, and turned back and rode home.

Vali lost his life there, and his corpse was brought to Mel.

Odd thought the tidings great and evil; he gat shame thereof, and folk deemed it a miserable hap.

Uspak vanished away so that men knew nought what was become of him.

Chapter 6

Odd Sets on Foot a Case Against Uspak

Here tells the tale that Odd set on foot this case at the Thing, and summoned the neighbours from home; but as it happed, one of those summoned died, whereon Odd summoned another in his place. Men fare to the Thing, and all is quiet till the courts are set: and when the courts were opened Odd put forth the case for the slaying, and all went smoothly till the defence was called.

Now hard by the courts sat two chieftains, Styr-mir and Thorarin, with their companies; and Styr-mir spake to Thorarin, and said : "Now are they crying on the defence in the blood-suit; wilt thou answer aught in the case?"

"Nay," said Thorarin, "I will not meddle herein, for meseems need enough drives Odd to take up the case and follow the blood-suit after such a man as Vali, when the man accused is belike the very worst of men."

"Yea," said Styrmir, "the man is not a good man verily, but thou art somewhat bound to him."

"I heed that nought" said Thorarin.

Styrmir said: "It is to be looked at in this wise also, that thou wilt have trouble with him after he is made guilty; only so much the more, and the harder to deal with : and it seemeth to me a thing to be seen to: so let us seek some rede, for we both of us see a flaw in the case."

"I have seen that for this long while," says Thorarin, " but it seemed to me unmeet to hamper the case."

Styrmir answers: "It toucheth thee the closest though, and folk will call it unmanly in thee if the case goeth forward now, when a defence from thee is urgent; and, sooth to say, it were well if Odd knew that there are others of account besides himself; he treadeth us all under foot, us and our thingmen so that he alone is told of: and it would be no harm if he found out what a wizard at law he is."

"Thou shalt have thy way," said Thorarin, "and I will help thee herein ; but I like not the look of it, and evil will come of it moreover."

"I will not turn from it for that cause," said Styrmir; and he springs up and goes to the court, and asks what is doing about the cases of men. So they told him, and he said: "So is it, Odd, that there is a flaw found in thy case, and thou hast set it afoot wrongly, whereas thou hast summoned thy ten witnesses from the country-side at home, which is against the law, for thou shouldst have done it at the Thing; now do thou one of two things: either go from the court with matters as they are, or stay, and we will put forth the defence."

Odd held his peace, and turned the matter over, and saw that it was but sooth ; so he goes from the court with his company, and home to his booth.

But as he came into the booth-lane there came a man to meet him : a man well-stricken in years, and clad in a black sleeve-cloak ready to drop to pieces, with but one sleeve on, and that cast aback behind: he had a pike-staff in his hand,

and a slouched hat upon his head; he peered about from under it, and walked somewhat bent, smiting the staff down upon the ground; and lo! there was come old Ufeig, Odd's father.

Now Ufeig spake: "Early away from the courts then," says he. "It is not in one thing only that thou art happy; for everything thou dealest with runs swift and smooth off the reel. Well, so Uspak is found guilty then?" "Nay," said Odd, "he is not."

Ufeig said: "It is unmeet for a great man to mock an old carle like me ! Why is he not found guilty then? was he wrongfully accused?" "Nay, he did the deed sure enough," said Odd. "How then?" said Ufeig, "I thought the charge would stick to him: was he not Vali's banesman?"

"No one had a word to say against it," said Odd.

"Then why is he not found guilty?" said Ufeig.

"There was a flaw found in the case, and it came to nought," said Odd.

Says Ufeig : "How might there be a flaw in the case of a rich man like thee?"

"They said it was wrongly set on foot at home," says Odd.

"Nay, it could not be with thee in the case," said Ufeig; "yet it may be thou art better at getting money, and wandering about, than at pushing a law-suit. After all, though, I scarce think thou art telling me the truth."

Odd answers: "I care not whether thou believest me or not."

"Well, it may be," said Ufeig; "sooth to say, however, I knew when thou wentest from home that the case was wrongly set on foot; but thou deemedst thyself enough by thyself, and wouldst ask of no man: and now thou must be enough for thyself in this matter also ; but thou wilt get out of it well enough ; as it behoveth thee specially to do, who deemest all men dirt beside thee."

Odd answers : "One thing is sure, that I shall get no help of thee."

Said Ufeig: "If thou gettest any help in thy case it will be mine: how much wouldst thou spare thy money if any were to set thy case right for thee?"

Odd answers: "I would not spare money to him who would take up the case."

Said Ufeig: "Then let a heavyish purse drop . into the hand of this old carle; for folk's eyes are apt at squinting toward money." So Odd gave him a great purse, and Ufeig asked: "Was the defence put into court or not?" "No," said Odd, "we went away from the court first."

Ufeig answers : "The only good thing which thou hast done is that which thou hast done unwittingly." So they parted, and Odd went home to his booth.

Chapter 7

Of the Guiles of Old Ufeig

Now must it be told how master Ufeig goeth up by the meads unto the courts; he comes to the courts of the North-landers, and asks how go folk's cases: they told him that some were now doomed, and others at point to be summed up. Says he: "And how is it with the case of Odd my son : is it ended now peradventure? "

"Ended it is as much as ever it will be," said they,

Ufeig said; "Is Uspak found guilty, then?" "Nay" said they, "he is not."

"What brought that about?" saith Ufeig.

"There was a flaw found in the case," say they; "it was wrongly set afoot."

"Yea," said Ufeig, "will ye give me leave to go into the court?"

They said yea thereto; so he went into the Doom-ring and sat down ; then said he: "Whether is the case of Odd son doomed?"

"Doomed it is as much as it ever will be," said they.

"How cometh that?" said Ufeig. "Is Uspak wrongfully accused? Slew he not Vali sackless? or could, it be that the case was not deemed urgent?"

They said: "There was a flaw in the case, and it came to nought." "What was the flaw?" said he. They told him. "Yea, forsooth," said he, "and deem ye that there is any right and justice in giving heed to such things of little worth, and to let the worst of men, a thief and a man-slayer, get off scot-free? Is it not taking a heavy weight upon you to doom him sackless who is fully worthy of death, and thus to give judgment contrary .to right?" They said that they did not deem it right, but that in suchwise it was laid down for them.

"Yea, indeed," said Ufeig; "did ye swear the oath?"

"Full surely did we," say they.

"So it must have been," said he; "and in what words will ye have sworn? Was it not in this wise, that ye would judge according to what seemed truest to you, and most according to the law? Even so must ye have sworn." They said that so it was.

Then said Ufeig: "And what may be more according to truth than to doom the worst of men to be guilty, worthy of death, and to be deprived of all aid: a man proven guilty of theft, and who moreover hath slain a sackless man, even Vali. But as to the third of those things wherewith your oath has to do, that indeed may be deemed somewhat uncertain. Yet think for yourselves which is more of worth, those two words which deal with right and truth, or the third which dealeth with but quibbles of law; and then will it surely seem to you as it verily is, and ye shall surely wot, that ye will have the more to answer for, if ye let one go free who is worthy of death, when ye have sworn an oath that ye would judge according to what ye know to be the right: and now look to it that it will

weigh heavy on you else, and that ye will scarce escape answering to a hard matter."

Now whiles would Ufeig let the purse sink down from under his cloak, and whiles would he draw it up, and he found that they all kept casting an eye to the purse.

Then he spake to them: "It were better rede to judge according to right and troth, even as ye have sworn, and to have in return the thanks and love of all wise and upright men."

Therewith he took the purse and poured out the silver, and told it over before them : "Now will I show my friendliness toward you," said he, "and how I am thinking more of you than of myself herein ; and this I do because some of you are my friends, and some my kinsmen, and all of you moreover in such a case, that need is ye look to yourselves: to every man who sitteth in the court will I give an ounce of silver, and half a mark to him that sums up the case: and thus ye will both have gotten money, and put from you a matter heavy to answer to; and moreover, which is most of all, ye will have kept your oath inviolate."

They thought over the matter, and seemed to find truth in his words, and they had aforetime deemed themselves hard bestead in the matter of the straining of their oath: so they took the choice that Ufeig bade them. Then was Odd sent for, and he came by then the chieftains were gone home to the booths. So the case was set forth, and Uspak was made guilty, and witnesses named for the full filling of the doom; and therewith go men home to their own booths. .

Nought was heard hereof that night, but on the morrow up standeth Odd on the Hill of Laws, and saith in a loud voice: "Here in the Court of the Northlanders was a man found guilty of the slaying of Vali: Uspak is his name, and these are the tokens to know the guilty one by: He is great of growth, and a manly enough fellow. Dark brown is his hair, his cheekbones big, his brow swart; great-handed is he, thick-legged, and all his fashion is out of measure big, and his aspect most rascally." Now are men much astonished; many had heard nought thereof before, and men deem that Odd has handled his case, strongly and luckily, such a plight as it was gotten into.

Chapter 8 Of the Banded Men

Now is it told that Styrmir and Thorarin had speech together, and Styrmir said : "Great mocking and shame have we gotten from this case."

Thorarin said: "It was but what we might have looked for: but wise men must have been busy herein."

"Yea," said Styrmir; "seest thou any way now to set matters right?"

"I know not if it may be speedily done," said Thorarin.

"Well, what is best then?" said Styrmir.

Thorarin answers : "If the charge might be laid on them that money was brought into court, that would stick."

"Yea, yea," said Styrmir. Then they went their ways home to their booths.

Now they call together to council their friends and men allied to them; and thither came, first Hermund Illugison, secondly Gellir Thordson, thirdly Egil Skulison, fourthly Jarnskeggi Einar-son, fifthly Skeggbroddi Biarnson, sixthly Thor-geir Haldorason, and Styrmir and Thorarin withal. So these eight fall a-talking together, and Styrmir and Thorarin set forth the story of the case, and where it stood now, and what a booty would be Odd's wealth, whereby all their fortunes would be plenteously amended: so they determine to band together, and all to push the case to the awarding of outlawry or self-doom, and hereto they bind themselves by oath ; and they deem that this may not be overthrown, and that none may have heart or wisdom to rise up against it. With such talk they part, and men ride home from the Thing, and at first this is kept privy.

Odd was well pleased with his journey to the Thing, and the father and son are more at one now than heretofore: so Odd abideth in peace these seasons.

But in spring-tide he met his father, and Ufeig asked for tidings; but Odd said he had heard nought, and asked in turn what was toward; Ufeig says that Styrmir and Thorarin have gathered folk and are going to Mel a-summoning: Odd asks wherefore, and Ufeig tells him all their intent. Odd answers : "It seemeth to me no such heavy matter." Ufeig says : "Well, maybe it will not be beyond thy strength."

So weareth time to the summoning-days, and then come Thorarin and Styrmir to Mel with many men; and Odd also had a great company there. They put forth their case then, and summoned Odd to the Althing, for that he had caused money to be borne into the courts unlawfully: nought else betid to tell of there, and they rode away with their company. Yet again it befell that the father and son met, and talked together, and Ufeig asked if it still seemed a thing of nought; and Odd answers : "Nay, I deem it no such heavy matter." "Otherwise it seemeth to me," saith Ufeig; "knowest thou clearly to what pass things are come?"

Odd said he knew of what had come to pass,

Ufeig said : "More will come of it, meseemeth, because six other chieftains of the greatest have joined themselves to them."

"Great strength they seem to need against me," quoth Odd.

Said Ufeig : "What will thy rede be now?"

"What," said Odd, "save to ride to the Thing and seek aid."

Ufeig answers : "It seemeth to me nought hopeful, in such a plight as things now are, to stake our honour on having the greater number of folk."

"What is to be done then?" said Odd.

Ufeig says : "My rede it is that thou array thy ship while the Thing is toward, and be ready with all thy loose goods, and have them aboard by then men ride from

the Thing. And now which of thy money deemest thou gone a worsor road, that which these shall take from thee, or that which I shall have?"

"Well, that is something saved out of the fire that cometh to thee," saith Odd; and therewith he giveth his father a heavy purse of silver, and they part. Odd arrays his ship, and gets men thereto: and so weareth time toward the Thing. But these plots went on privily, so that few heard thereof.

Chapter 9 Of Ufeig and the Banded Men

Now ride the chieftains to the Thing, and many are with them: goodman Ufeig was of Styrmir's company. The Banded Men bespoke a meeting of them on Bluewood-heath, and these met there, Egfl, Styrmir, Hermund, and Thorarin ; and now they ride all in a company down to the Thing-mead. But these ride from the east, Skeggbroddi and Thorgeir Haldorason of Bathdale; and from the north Jarnskeggi; and they meet by Reydarmuli, and all the companies of them together ride down into the Meads, and so to the Thing.

There turns all the talk on Odd's case, and alt men deem there will be none to answer it, thinking that few dare it, and none may carry it through in the teeth of such great men as there are against him; but their own case they deemed fair enough, and more than enough they bragged about it; and no man had a word to say against them.

Odd charged no man about his case: he dight his ship for sea in Ramfirth so soon as men were gone to the Thing.

On a day went master Ufeig from his booth : he was full of trouble, seeing no man to help him, and thinking his case heavy to push : scarce could he see any way for him alone to deal with such great men ; and in the case was no defence; he went all bent at the knees, and wandered stumbling among the booths. Thus fared he a long while, but came at the last to the booth of Egil Skulison ; and men were come thither to talk with Egil, so Ufeig hung about the booth doors, and waited till the men were gone away. Egil followed them out, and when he was going in again, Ufeig turned and met him, and greeted him, Egil looked on him, and asked him who he was: "Ufeig am I called," said he.

Egil said : "Art thou the father of Odd?"

He said that so it was. "Then wilt thou be a-talking of his case; but it will be waste of words, for the matter is too much done with for me to help thee aught; and other men than I have more to do with the case, Styrmir and Thorarin to wit; they take the more part of the ruling thereof, though we follow them forsooth."

Ufeig answered, and there came a word into his mouth:

Seemly was it
Of my son to think once;
Never fared I
Odd to further:

But little the fool looked
Into law-learning,
Though full enow
Of fee he gathered.

And again he sang :

Sport I hold it,
The old home-abider,
To speak a little
With the sage of men-folk;
Gainsay me not
A little speech now,
For worthy indeed
And wise thou art holden.

"Nay, I shall find other sport than talking of Odd's affairs; time was they were hopefuller than now, and thou wilt not gainsay me speech, for it now is the old carle's chiefest joy to talk with such men as thee, and so wear away a little time."

Egil answers : "I will not forbid thee speech." And they go in together, and sit down.

Then Ufeig takes up the word: "Art thou a householder, Egil?" Egil said that so it was.

"Ah, and thou dwellest at Burg?"

"So is it," said Egil.

Ufeig said: "What I hear told of thee is good, and much to my mind: for they say that thou grudgest meat to no man, and keepest good house, so that it fares not unlike with us twain ; either of us being men of good kin and good conditions, but not handy at money-getting; yea, and they say withal that thou art good at need to thy friends."

Egil answered: "It likes me well to be accounted of even as thou art; for I wot that thou art a wise man and of great kin."

Ufeig said: "Herein though are we unlike: thou art a great chieftain, and fearest nought for anything that may be in thy way, and wilt never shrink from holding thine own with whomsoever thou hast to do; whereas I am but a nobody: nevertheless my mind is as thy mind, and great pity it is of men who hold themselves so high, that they should lack money."

Egil answered : "Maybe that shall be changed shortly, and my fortune amended."

"How comes that?" said Ufeig.

"Why thus, meseems," said Egil, "that if we get hold of Odd's money, little shall we lack, for great things are told us of his wealth."

Ufeig answers: "Overmuch would not be said of it though he were called the richest man of Iceland. But thou wilt be wishful to know what thy share thereof will be; and indeed thou art in most sore need of the money."

"True," said Egil, "and thou art a good carle, and a wise, and wilt know clearly about Odd's money." He answered : "It is to be looked for that others should not know more thereof than I; and I can tell thee that it is more than the most that can be said of it; but I have been thinking what thy share thereof will be."

And therewith came a song into his mouth:

Eight great ones surely gripeth Gold greed and wrongful doing, Though words be not well fitting To us who once were wealthy. Yet, lords of loud shields clashing, I rede you leave your laughter O'er the deed ye deem a great one, Nor drag to light your shaming.

"Scarcely will that speedily be," says Egil, "yet art thou a good scald."

Said Ufeig: "I will not delay the showing thee what thy share of the good fortune will be : neither more nor less than the sixteenth part of the lands of Mel."

"Hearken to the fool," said Egil; "what? is not the money as much as is said, then? or how may that be?"

Ufeig answers: "Nay, there is money enough, yet meseemeth that is just what thou wilt get: have ye not determined that ye are to have half of Odd's wealth between you, and the men of the Quarter the other half? Wherefore I am reckoning that there will be the half of the lands of Mel to be shared between the eight Banded Men of you : for so will your intent have been, and so will ye have settled it, with whatsoever unexampled rashness ye have taken up the case. Or were ye perchance deeming that Odd my son would sit quietly at home awaiting your onset, when ye should be going north-away? Nay," said Ufeig, "ye shall not come upon Odd unready; and as good as he is at money-making, yet lacketh he not for cunning and shiftiness at need. And no less belike shall the keel beneath him drive through the Iceland main because ye call him guilty, as guilty he is not; for the case against him has been wrongfully taken up, and it shall fall on their heads who have meddled in it. Well, I deem he will be on the sea by now with all that he hath, saving the land at Mel, which he hath left behind for you ; and he had heard tell that it is no great way up from the sea to Burg if he should happen into Burgfirth.

"Well, the case will end as it began, and ye will have shame and dishonour of it, and most meetly too, for every man will blame you."

Said Egil: "I see it as clear as day, and how that there are two in the game. Verily, it was not to be looked for that we should catch Odd shiftless; and no great matter I deem it, for there are some in the case, the most pushing in it, whom I would be well content to see shamed,. Styrmir to wit, or Thorarin, or Hermund."

"Yea," said Ufeig, " it shall come to pass as is meet and right, that they shall have blame hereof of every man; but it misliketh me that thou shouldst come off ill, who art so much to my mind, and the very best of you Banded Men." Therewith he let a big purse of money sink down from under his cloak, and Egil's eyes turned towards it; Ufeig noted that, and drew it up again under his

cloak at his swiftest, and spake: "In such wise go matters, Egil, that I look for the thing to go just as I have told thee: but now will I doadeed in thine honour." And with that he unwinds the purse and pours out the silver into Egil's cloak-skirt, two hundreds of silver, the best that might be. "This shalt thou have of me if thou wilt be not against our case, and this is somewhat of an honour to thee."

Egil answers: "Meseemeth thou art no little rascal: it is not to be thought of, that I will break my oath."

Ufeig answers: "O, ye are not what ye deem yourselves : ye would be called chieftains, but have no shift to turn to when things are gotten crooked. Thou shalt do none of this; for I will hit upon a rede whereby thou shalt keep to thine oath."

"What is it?"said Egil.

Ufeig said: "Have ye not determined that ye will have either outlawry or self-doom in the case?"

Egil said that so it was.

"Well, it may be," said Ufeig, "that we, Odd's kindred, shall be allowed to choose which it shall be, and then it might be brought about that the giving of the award shall come to thee; and then would I have thee make it easy."

Egil answers: "Thou sayest sooth, and art a cunning carle, and a wise ; yet am I not quite ready hereto, having neither might nor men to withstand all these chieftains alone : for their enmity for this will fall on whomsoever riseth up against them."

Ufeig said: "How would it be were another in the matter with thee?"

"Things would go better then," said Egil.

Said Ufeig: "Whom wouldst thou choose of the Banded Men? think of them as if the whole company of them were in my hand."

"Two there are," said Egil; "Hermund is my nearest neighbour, but we are not of good accord; the other is Gellir, and him would I choose."

"That is a hard piece of work," said Ufeig, "for I wish all of them ill-luck from this case except thee alone: but he will be wise enough to see which is best to choose, to gain money and honour there with, or to lose the wealth, and win, the shame. So now wilt thou be in this matter, so as to lessen the award if it come to thee?"

"Well, I have a mind to it," said Egil.

"Then shall it be a settled matter between us", said Ufeig, "for I will come back hither to thee in an hour's space."

Chapter 10 Of Ufeig and His Talk with Gellir

So departed Ufeig from Egil, and went his ways: he went wandering among the booths, still somewhat dragging of gait, howbeit not so downcast of heart as tottering of foot, and nought so easily tripped in his case, as he is lame of foot. At last he cometh to the booth of Gellir Thordson and has him called out; he came forth, and greeted Ufeig first, for he was a lowly-mannered man, and asked what his errand was; Ufeig answers: "I was just wandering about here."

Gellir said: "Thou wilt be wanting to talk about Odd's case?" "Nay," says Ufeig, "I will not be talking of it: I wash my hands of it: other pastime, I would have than that."

Gellir said; "What wilt thou talk of then?"

Ufeig said: "I hear say that thou art a wise man, and good game I deem it to talk with wise men."

So they sit down together and fall to talk, and Ufeig asks: "Which of the young folk in the west country deemest thou like to turn out a great man?"

Gellir said there was good choice of such, and named the sons of Snorri the Priest and the Ere-men. "I hear tell" said Ufeig, "that so it is; and moreover I am now come to the right place to learn tidings, whereas I am now talking to a man both truthful and straightforward: but now which of the women west-away there are accounted the best matches?"

Gellir named the daughters of Snorri the Priest, and of Steinthor of Ere.

"So I hear tell," said Ufeig; "and yet, how comes it? hast thou ne'er a daughter?"

Gellir said yea, certes he had.

"How was it that thou namedst her not, then?" said Ufeig; "sure none shall be fairer than thy daughters, if likelihood shall rule: are they unwedded yet?"

"Yea," said he. "How comes that?" said Ufeig.

Says Gellir: "Because no one has come a-wooing as yet, who was both wealthy and a man of rule over folk, of great kin and of good conditions: for though I be not a wealthy man in money, yet am I hard to please because of my high blood and great honour. But come, let us talk the matter down to the bottom by question: what man of the north country is likely for a chieftain, thinkest thou?"

Ufeig answers: "There is good choice of men: first I account Einar Jarnskeggi's son, or Hall Styrmir's son; yea, and some there are who deem Odd my son like to be somewhat; and herewith am I come to the word he bade me give thee, that he would ally himself with thee, and wed Ragnheid thy daughter."

"Yea, yea," said Gellir; "time was when that would have won a good answer, but as things go now it must be put off, meseemeth."

"How so?" said Ufeig.

Said Gellir: "Well, as things go, thy son Odd rseemeth somewhat under a cloud."

Ufeig answered: "I tell thee of a sooth thou wilt never wed her better: none may gainsay it that he is as well of manners as the best, nor lacketh he either for wealth or good kin: thou moreover art pretty much of a lack-penny, and it might well be that thou shalt be strengthened in him, a man most great-hearted to his friends."

Gellir says: "The thing might be looked at, but for this suit that hangs over him."

Ufeig answers: "Speak not of that wretched matter, which is for nought but the shame and disgrace of all such as have meddled therein."

Gellir answers: "None the less it is to be looked for that it will go otherwise; so I will not assent to the match, though if the suit might be got rid of, I were full fain thereof."

Answereth Ufeig: "Belike, Gellir, ye shall all make your fortunes out of this, and I may as well tell thee what thy share shall be, for I know all about it: well, at the best ye eight Banded Men will have half of the lands of Mel between you: nor do I deem thy share then a good one; the gain of a little wealth to wit, and the loss therewith of good report and manliness; thou who wert called erewhile one of the best of men in the whole land."

Gellir asked how that might be, and Ufeig answered: "Meseemeth, forsooth, that Odd is now at sea with all he hath, save the land at Mel: it was not to be looked for that he would lie shiftless before you, and should let you pick and choose in all between you.

"Nay," quoth Ufeig, "rather said he that if he should come to Broadfirth he might happen on thy house, and then could he wive himself out of thy walls; and he said moreover that he had tinder enough to burn up thy house if he would: yea, or were he to be in Burgfirth, he hath heard tell that it is no great way up from the sea to Burg; or, quoth he, if he came into Eyiafirth he might stumble upon Jarnskeggi's stead; or in likewise should he come unto the Eastern-firths, he might come across Skeggbroddi's dwelling: nor maketh he much account of it if he never come back to Iceland again: but ye shall have out of all this a meet lot, shame to wit, and dishonour; and ill I deem it that a chieftain so good as thou should be so evilly bestead, and fain had I spared it thee."

Gellir answered: "Yea, it will be true enough belike; and I should heed it little though the getting of the money slipped through: for herein I let myself be drawn by my friends rather than that my heart was set on it."

Ufeig said: "So wilt thou look on it as soon as thou growest cool, that thou wilt deem it the more honourable part to wed thy daughter to Odd my son, even as I said at the first: lo! here is the money that he sent thee, saying that he himself will pay her dower, for he knoweth thee a poor man: two hundreds in silver, lo! and such silver as may scarce be gotten. Note now what a man offers thee this choice! to wed thy daughter, and he himself to pay her dower; and for thyself, it is most like he will never use thee miserly; while thy daughter hath gotten all good fortune."

Gellir answered: "This is a thing so great that it is hard to value; but for nought can I bring myself to betray those that trust me: yet see I that nought will come of it but mocking and scorn."

Then answered Ufeig: "Wondrous wise forsooth are ye great men! who asked of thee to betray them that trust in thee? or tread thine oath under foot? Nay but mayhappen the award shall come into thine hands, and then mayest thou make it little, and yet hold to thine oath."

Gellir said: "True is that, and thou art a shifty carle, and wondrous cunning: yet may I not alone fly in the face of all these men."

Ufeig said: "How would it be if I got another to be with thee? wouldst thou help the case then?"

"That will I" said Gellir, "if thou bring it about that I have a hand in the award."

Ufeig said: "Whom dost thou choose to be with thee?"

Gellir answers: "Egil will I choose; he is nighest allied to me."

"Folly," said Ufeig, "to choose him who is worst of all your company; I were loth indeed to give him any honour, and I wot not whether I will set my hand to it."

"Have thine own way then," said Gellir.

Ufeig said: "Wilt thou take up the case if I bring him into it with thee? for meseemeth he will have wits to know whether it is good to take honour or not"

"Seeing my good bargain," said Gellir, "I am minded to risk it."

Said Ufeig: "Then have Egil and I talked the matter over already, and he deemed it nought hard to handle, and is come into the case. So now shall I counsel thee what to do. The company of you Banded Men are ever wont to go to church together, nor will any man misdoubt it though thou and Egil talk what ye will as ye go to evensong."

So Gellir took the money, and all is settled between them.

Then Ufeig went his ways towards Egil's booth, going neither slowly nor swerving about, nor bowed down; and he telleth Egil how the matter standeth now, and that liketh him well.

So afterward in the evening men go to evensong, and Egil and Gellir talk the matter over, and settle all between them, and no man misdoubted of it any whit.

Chapter 11

Of the Award at the Thing

Now it is to be told that on the morrow men go to the Hill of Laws, and a great crowd is there; and Egil and Gellir gather their own friends together: Ufeig was of the company of Styrmir and Thorarin.

So when such as were looked for were come to the Hill of Laws, Ufeig craved silence and said : "Heretofore have I meddled not in this case of Odd my son; but now I wot that here are those men who have been busiest in pushing the case. Of this charge I first of all appeal Hermund: though forsooth the case hath been set on foot with more wrong and rashness than men have yet to tell of; and in likewise has been carried on, and in likewise maybe will end. But now I will ask this: Whether may the case be settled peacefully?"

Hermund answered: "We will take nought save selfdoom."

Said Ufeig : "It is a thing unheard of that one man in one case should give selfdoom to eight men; but that one should give it to one, that hath been heard of; but whereas this case hath been pushed in a more masterful way than any other, I will now crave that two of thy company be judges."

Hermund answered : "We will say yea to this, nor heed aught which twain shall adjudge."

"Then ye will not begrudge me this small honour," said Ufeig, "to choose the twain whom I will of you Banded Men?"

"Yea, yea, so let it be," said Hermund.

Then said Thorarin : "Say yea to such things only to-day as thou ruest not to-morrow."

"I will not call my words back," said Hermund.

Now Ufeig seeks for sureties, and they were not hard to find, for the money was deemed to be in a sure place.

Then men take hands, and they give hanel to the Banded Men of such fines as they whom Ufeig shall name may award, and the Banded Men hanel the voiding of the case. Now it is so determined that the Banded Men shall go out on to the fields with their company, and the folk of Egil and Gellir held together.

So they sat down in a ring in a certain place, and Ufeig goeth into the ring, and peereth round about, and lifteth his cloak-hood: he standeth with his belly somewhat thrust out, stroking his arms ; he peereth round about with his eyes, and then saith:

"There sittest thou, Styrmir, and men will deem it wondrous if I choose thee not for this case which is on my hands ; for I am of thy thingmen, and to thee should I look for helping, and many good gifts hast thou had of me, and rewarded everyone of them with ill. Methinks thou wert the first to shew thine enmity in this matter unto Odd my son, and it was thy doing chiefly that the case was set on foot. So thee will I set aside.

"There sittest thou, Thorarin ; nor may any lay to thy charge that thou lackest wit to deal with this case : yet hast thou brought unthrift on Odd in this case, and with Styrmir wert the first to set afoot the case. Therefore thee will I not choose.

"There sittest thou, Hermund, a great chieftain! and forsooth the case were meetly handled if thou hadst the handling of it: yet hast thou been the eagerest of men herein from the beginning, and clear as day it is that thou wouldst have our dishonour clear as day; nor hath -aught drawn thee hereto saving

shamelessness and greed; for nought lackest thou of wealth. So thee I set aside.

"There sittest thou, Jarnskeggi! and art nought lacking in pride to judge the case; and well enow: wouldst thou be pleased to be master herein; thou, who wert of such pride that thou lettest bear a banner before thee at the Vodla-thing, as before a king. Yet shalt thou not be king in this case; and thee do I set aside."

Now Ufeig casts his eyes about and says: "There sittest thou, Skeggbroddi! is it true that King Harald Sigurdson said when thou wert with him that he deemed thee the meetest for a king of all men out here?"

Broddi answered: "Oft would the King talk well to me, but it is not so sure that he meant all that he said."

Then said Ufeig: "Thou shalt be king over other matters than this case, and thee do I set aside.

"There sittest thou, Gellir," said Ufeig, "and nought hath drawn thee into this case save greediness of money only; but verily it is small blame to thee, so penniless as thou art, and so much as thou hast to do. And now, though ye be all worthy of ill, yet see I not but that some honour must be given to somebody; for now are but few left, and I am loth to choose from them whom I have set aside already; therefore thee I choose, because thou hast not heretofore been known for a wrongful man,

There sittest thou, Thorgeir Haldorason, and it is well known that no case ever fell to thy judging that was of any account; for nought canst thou mete out judgment, having no more wits thereto than an ox or an ass; and thee then I set aside."

Then Ufeig looked round about, and there came a stave into his mouth:

Evil it is

When eld falleth on us, Snatching away Wisdom and eyesight; From eight men of avail Might I have chosen, Now on hook hangeth Nought but the wolf's-tail.

"Yea," said he, "I fare as the wolves, who eat on till they come to the tail, unawares: I have had the choice of many chieftains, and now is he alone left whom all will think an evil choice; and true indeed it is that he is unjuster than any, and heedeth not one thing more than another whereby he getteth money, so only he get it at last: yet is it pity of him, though he hath not been nice aforetime, that he should have fallen into this, where-, into so many are fallen, who have heretofore been called righteous men, and yet now have cast aside manliness and uprightness to follow after wrongdoing and greed.

"Well, none could have it in their heads that I should ever choose him, from whom all men look for evil, for no man of your fellowship is wilier: yet so it has to be, for all the rest have been set aside."

Then said Egil, and smiled withal: "Now yet again shall it be, as oft afore, that honour befaller me, not because others will it: but now, Gellir, it behoveth us to stand up and go apart, and talk the matter over between us."

So did they, and went away thence, and sat down ; then said Gellir: "What shall we say about it?"

Egil said: "It is my rede that we award a little money fine. I know not what else may come of it, but of a sooth it will not be friendship for us."

"Will it not be full enough," said Gellir, "if we award thirteen ounces of evil silver? for most unrighteously was the case set afoot; and the worse they like it, the better it is : yet am I not fain to give out the award; for meseemeth we shall be evil looked on."

"Do which thou wilt," said Egil; "give out the award, or sit to outface the answers."

"Then I choose to give out the award," said Gellir.

And therewith they go to meet the Banded Men.

Then said Hermund: "Stand we up and hearken to the shaming."

Said Gellir: " Later on we shall wax no wiser, and it all comes to this, that we, Egil and I, award thirteen ounces of silver to us Banded Men."

Then said Hermund : "Heard I aright: saidst thou thirteen tens of silver ounces?"

Answereth Egil: "Wert thou then a-sitting on thine ear, Hermund, since thou stoodest up? Thirteen ounces good sooth, and that of such money as none but a wretch would take : paid shall it be in scrapings of shields and scraps of rings; yea, in all that is most worthless, and shall like you least."

Said Hermund : "Thou hast betrayed us, Egil." "Yea," said Egil, "dost thou deem thee betrayed?" "Betrayed I deem me, and thou it is hast betrayed itie," said Hermund.

Egil answered: "It likes me well to betray him who trusteth no man, nay, not even himself: me-seemeth my tongue may find a true tale thereof; for in the thickest of fogs thou didst hide away thy money, with the mind that if ever it came into thy heart to look for it, thou mightst not find it."

Said Hermund: "This is like the rest of thy lying, like as thou saidest in the winter-tide, Egil, when thou earnest to me at my bidding from thy wreck of a house at Burg in Yule-tide: and right glad wert thou thereat, as was like to be; and when Yule was spent, thou grewest sad, as was like to be, thinking it hard to have to go home to that misery: but I, when I saw that, bade thee abide still, thou and another with thee; and thou tookest that, and wert fain thereof: but in spring-tide after Easter, when thou wert come home to Burg, thou saidst that thirty ice-horses had died, and had all been eaten by us."

Egil answered: "I know not how over-much may be said about thy misery; otherwise I believe little or nothing was eaten of them : but all men wot that I and my men lack never for meat, how-beit that I find it not so easy to come by money: but such is the housekeeping at thy house, that thou needest say nought about it."

"I would well," said Hermund, "that we twain were not at the Thing another summer."

"Now will I say," said Egil, "what I never thought to say, and bid bless thine opening mouth! for it was foretold of me that I should die of old age, and all the better were I content if the trolls took thee first."

Then said Styrmir: "He sayeth soothest of thee, Egil, who sayeth worst, and calleth thee a cheat."

"Now we get on well," said Egil; "the more thou blamest me and the truer thou deemest it, the better it liketh me; for I have been told that when for your ale-joyance ye would play at the mating of men, thou wouldst pair thyself with me. Well, it is indeed true that thou hast certain wiles about thee whereof other men wot not; thou must know thine own heart best: but in one thing are we unlike: for either of us hath promised the other help at need, and I have given it when I might, and have in nought spared me, but thou rannest so soon as the blackshanks were aloft. True it is also that I have ever been unthriving in my house, yet grudge I meat to no man, while thou art a meat-begrudger; and for a token thereof hast a vessel called Meatluck, and no man who cometh into thy garth knoweth what is in him but thyself alone. Now it is but meet to me that my house should have hard times when lack is, but less than meet for a man to pinch his house when lack is not. Think now what man this is!"

Then Styrmir held his peace, and Thorarin stood up, but Egil said: "Hold thy peace, Thorarin, and sit down and lay not another word hereto! Else will I lay such a word on thee as thou hadst been better silent. I see nought to laugh at in it, though the lads laugh, that thou sittest pinched up with thy thighs glued together."

Thorarin said: "Wholesome rede will we hold to, whencesoever it cometh." And he sat down and held his peace.

Then spake Thorgeir; "All may see that this award is without reason and foolish, to award thirteen ounces of silver and no more in so great a case."

"But I had thought," said Egil, "that thou hadst seen reason enough in the award; and so wilt thou, if thou think about thyself therewith; for then wilt thou remember how at the Rangar-leet a certain cot-carle made thirteen stripes on thine head, and thou tookest therefor thirteen ewes with their sucklings: then meseems thou wilt deem the token good enow."

Thorgeir held his peace, and as for Jarnskeggi and Skegbroddi they would have no words with Egil.

Then said Ufeig: "Now shall I sing you a stave for the better memory of this Thing, and the ending of the case that hath here betid."

This grove of metal mostly Shall find its honour minished ; Glad give I forth such tidings, Of the strife 'twixt dwarf and giant. The land of hats of high ones Have I the unwealthy hoodwinked, And in the eyes of chieftains Cast I the dust of gold rings.

Egil answered : "Well mayest thou boast over it, for no one man hath so fearlessly flown in the face of so many great men."

Now after this men went home to their booths, and Gellir spake to Egil, saying: "I will that we hold us both together with our men." And they did so.

Much muttering of threats there was for the rest of the Thing, and the Banded Men were exceeding ill-content with this ending of the case. As for that money no man would have it, and it kicked about the meads there.

Now men ride home from the Thing.

Chapter 12

Of Odd's Voyage and His Wedding

Now that father and son meet, and Odd was now ready dight for sea. So Ufeig tells Odd that he has given the Banded Men self-doom.

"Most miserable man" said Odd, "to make such ending of the case!"

Saith Ufeig: "All is not lost yet, kinsman," and therewith he tells him of the whole process of the case, and how that he has wooed a wife for him. Odd thanks him well for his help, and deems he has pushed the case far beyond what he had thought might be; and now he says that Ufeig shall never lack money.

"Thou shalt depart now," said Ufeig, "as thou wert minded; but the wedding shall be holden at Mel in six weeks space." Thereafter departed the father and son in all love; but Odd put to sea, and the wind served him to Thorgeirs-firth, where there were lying certain chapmen; there the wind failed them, and they lay there some nights. Odd thought the wind long a-coming, so he went up on to a high fell, and thence saw that there was wind in another quarter outside: then he went back to his ship and bade flit her out of the firth; the Eastmen mocked them, saying that it was a long row to Norway; but Odd said: "How may we wot but that ye shall bide us here?"

So when they were come out of the firth straightway was the wind fair, and they struck not sail before they came to the Orkneys: there Odd bought malt and corn, and abode there awhile and arrayed his ship. But even so soon as he was ready came an east wind, and they sailed; weather full fair they had, and came to Thorgeirs-firth and found the chapmen still there. Then Odd sailed west along the land, and came to Midfirth when he had now been away seven weeks.

So was the bridal dight, and there lacked not for good cheer and plenteous: much folk came thither; there were Gellir and Egil, and many other great men.

The feast was holden well and gloriously, and men deemed no better wedding had been holden here in the land.

So when the feast was spent, then were men led out with great gifts, but most of wealth went to Gellir's share.

Then spake Gellir to Odd: "I would that Egil were well treated; for he is full worthy thereof."

"Meseemeth," said Odd, "that my father hath already done well by him."

"Yea, but do thou better that!" said Gellir.

So Gellir rode away, he and his. Egil also rideth away, and Odd bringeth him on his road, and thanketh him for his help : "I may not do so well by thee as should be," said he, "but I have let drive yesterday south to Burg sixty wethers and two oxen, and they will abide thee at home: nor will I ever treat thee but well whiles we both live."

So they parted, and Egil was right well pleased, and they bound fast their friendship. So fared Egil home to Burg.

Chapter 13 Of the Ending of Uspak

That same harvest gathereth Hermund folk, and fareth out to Hwammsleet, being minded for Burg to burn Egil in his house: but when they came out by Valfell, they heard as if a string twanged up in the fell, and thereon Hermund felt a sickness, and a smart under his arm, and they had to turn back, and the sickness waxed heavy upon him; and when they were come by Thorgaut-stead they had to lift him off, and then they fared to Sidamuli for a priest, but when he came Hermund was speechless; so the priest abode by him, and on a time as the priest looked on him there came a murmur on to his lips : " Two hundreds in the ghyll, two hundreds in the ghyll!"

And therewithal he gave up the ghost, and so ended his life-days, even as is here said.

Now abideth Odd at his house in great estate ; and his wife he loveth well.

All this while nought had been heard of Uspak: a man named Mar married Swala; he was the son of Hildi; he took up his abode at Swalastead; a brother he had named Bialfi, half-witted, but a strong man. There was one named Bergthor, who dwelt at Bodvarsknolls: he had summed up the case when Uspak was outlawed ; and so on an eve at Bodvarsknolls, when men were sitting by the fires, it fell out that one came and smote on the door and bade the master come out; but the master wotted that Uspak was come there, and said that he would nowise go out. Uspak egged him much thereto, but none the more would he go, and all others he forbade to stir abroad; so they two parted. But on the morrow when women came to the byre, lo! nine cows wounded to death. This was heard of far and wide.

Again, as time wore on, it befell that a man came to Swalastead, and into the hall wherein slept Mar: that man went up to the bed, and thrust Mar through with a sax. It was Uspak, and he sang:

Drew I new-grinded
Glaive from scabbard,
Against the maw
Of Mar I sped it,
So sore I grudged
That son of Hildi
The breast of Swala
Shapely fashioned.

Even therewith, as he turned toward the door, up sprang Bialfi, and thrust at him with a whittle.

Uspak went to a house called Burgknolls, and declared the slaying there; then he went his ways, and nought was heard of him for a while. The slaying of Mar was heard of far and wide, and deemed a dreadful hap. Then came this tidings, that the best stallions Odd owned, five together, were found dead, which deed folk laid on Uspak. But now a long while wore, and nought was heard of him; but in harvest, when men went after the wethers, they found a cave in certain rocks, and in the cave a dead man, beside whom stood a basin of blood as black as tar. This was Uspak, and folk deemed that the hurt Bialfi had given him must have grieved him, and that he had died from want of help: so ended his life-days. It is not told that there was any blood-suit for the slaying of Mar, or the slaying of Uspak.

Odd abode at Mel till his old age, and was deemed a most noble man; from him are come the Midfirthers, Snorri Kalfson, and many other great men.

Ever after endured the goodwill and kindly affection between the father and son. And here endeth this story.

THE STORY OF BURNT NJAL

Chapter 1 Of Fiddle Mord

There was a man named Mord whose surname was Fiddle; he was the son of Sigvat the Red, and he dwelt at the "Vale" in the Rangrivervales. He was a mighty chief, and a great taker up of suits, and so great a lawyer that no judgments were thought lawful unless he had a hand in them. He had an only daughter, named Unna. She was a fair, courteous and gifted woman, and that was thought the best match in all the Rangrivervales.

Now the story turns westward to the Broadfirth dales, where, at Hauskuldstede, in Laxriverdale, dwelt a man named Hauskuld, who was Dalakoll's son, and his mother's name was Thorgerda. He had a brother named Hrut, who dwelt at Hrutstede; he was of the same mother as Hauskuld, but his father's name was Heriolf. Hrut was handsome, tall and strong, well skilled in arms, and mild of temper; he was one of the wisest of men - stern towards his foes, but a good counsellor on great matters. It happened once that Hauskuld bade his friends to a feast, and his brother Hrut was there, and sat next him. Hauskuld had a daughter named Hallgerda, who was playing on the floor with some other girls. She was fair of face and tall of growth, and her hair was as soft as silk; it was so long, too, that it came down to her waist. Hauskuld called out to her, "Come hither to me, daughter". So she went up to him, and he took her by the chin, and kissed her; and after that she went away.

Then Hauskuld said to Hrut, "What dost thou think of this maiden? Is she not fair?" Hrut held his peace. Hauskuld said the same thing to him a second time, and then Hrut answered, "Fair enough is this maid, and many will smart for it, but this I know not, whence thief's eyes have come into our race". Then Hauskuld was wroth, and for a time the brothers saw little of each other.

Chapter 2

Hrut Woos Unna

It happened once that those brothers, Hauskuld and Hrut, rode to the Althing, and there was much people at it. Then Hauskuld said to Hrut, "One thing I wish, brother, and that is, that thou wouldst better thy lot and woo thyself a wife."

Hrut answered, "That has been long on my mind, though there always seemed to be two sides to the matter; but now I will do as thou wishest; whither shall we turn our eyes?"

Hauskuld answered, "Here now are many chiefs at the Thing, and there is plenty of choice, but I have already set my eyes on a spot where a match lies made to thy hand. The woman's name is Unna, and she is a daughter of Fiddle Mord one of the wisest of men. He is here at the Thing, and his daughter too, and thou mayest see her if it pleases thee."

Now the next day, when men were going to the High Court, they saw some well-dressed women standing outside the booths of the men from the Rangrivales, Then Hauskuld said to Hrut -

"Yonder now is Unna, of whom I spoke; what thinkest thou of her?"

"Well," answered Hrut; "but yet I do not know whether we should get on well together."

After that they went to the High Court, where Fiddle Mord was laying down the law as was his wont, and alter he had done he went home to his booth.

Then Hauskuld and Hrut rose, and went to Mord's booth. They went in and found Mord sitting in the innermost part of the booth, and they bade him "good day". He rose to meet them, and took Hauskuld by the hand and made him sit down by his side, and Hrut sat next to Hauskuld, So after they had talked much of this and that, at last Hauskuld said, "I have a bargain to speak to thee about; Hrut wishes to become thy son-in-law, and buy thy daughter, and I, for my part, will not be sparing in the mattes".

Mord answered, "I know that thou art a great chief, but thy brother is unknown to me".

"He is a better man than I," answered Hauskuld.

"Thou wilt need to lay down a large sum with him, for she is heir to all I leave behind me," said Mord.

"There is no need," said Hauskuld, "to wait long before thou hearest what I give my word he shall have. He shall have Kamness and Hrutstede, up as far as Thrandargil, and a trading-ship beside, now on her voyage."

Then said Hrut to Mord, "Bear in mind, now, husband, that my brother has praised me much more than I deserve for love's sake; but if after what thou hast heard, thou wilt make the match, I am willing to let thee lay down the terms thyself".

Mord answered, "I have thought over the terms; she shall have sixty hundreds down, and this sum shall be increased by a third more in thine house, but if ye two have heirs, ye shall go halves in the goods".

Then said Hrut, "I agree to these terms, and now let us take witness". After that they stood up and shook hands, and Mord betrothed his daughter Unna to Hrut, and the bridal feast was to be at Mord's house, half a month after Midsummer.

Now both sides ride home from the Thing, and Hauskuld and Hrut ride westward by Hallbjorn's beacon. Then Thioستolf, the son of Biorn Gullbera of Reykiardale, rode to meet them, and told them how a ship had come out from Norway to the White River, and how aboard of her was Auzur, Hrut's father's brother, and he wished Hrut to come to him as soon as ever he could. When Hrut heard this, he asked Hauskuld to go with him to the ship, so Hauskuld went with his brother, and when they reached the ship, Hrut gave his kinsman Auzur a kind and hearty welcome. Auzur asked them into his booth to drink, so their horses were unsaddled, and they went in and drank, and while they were drinking, Hrut said to Auzur, "Now, kinsman, thou must ride west with me, and stay with me this winter."

"That cannot be, kinsman, for I have to tell thee the death of thy brother Eyvind, and he has left thee his heir at the Gula Thing, and now thy foes will seize thy heritage, unless thou comest to claim it."

"What's to be done now, brother?" said Hrut to Hauskuld, "for this seems a hard matter, coming just as I have fixed my bridal day."

"Thou must ride south," said Hauskuld, "and see Mord, and ask him to change the bargain which ye two have made, and to let his daughter sit for thee three winters as thy betrothed, but I will ride home and bring down thy wares to the ship."

Then said Hrut, "My wish is that thou shouldst take meal and timber, and whatever else thou needest out of the lading". So Hrut had his horses brought out, and he rode south, while Hauskuld rode home west. Hrut came east to the Rangrivaes to Mord, and had a good welcome, and he told Mord all his business, and asked his advice what he should do.

"How much money is this heritage?" asked Mord, and Hrut said it would come to a hundred marks, if he got it all.

"Well," said Mord, "that is much when set against what I shall leave behind me, and thou shalt go for it, if thou wilt."

After that they broke their bargain, and Unna was to sit waiting for Hrut three years as his betrothed. Now Hrut rides back to the ship, and stays by her during

the summer, till she was ready to sail, and Hauskuld brought down all Hrut's wares and money to the ship, and Hrut placed all his other property in Hauskuld's hands to keep for him while he was away. Then Hauskuld rode home to his house, and a little while after they got a fair wind and sail away to sea. They were out three weeks, and the first land they made was Hern, near Bergen, and so sail eastward to the Bay.

Chapter 3

Hrut and Gunnhillda, Kings Mother

At that time Harold Grayfell reigned in Norway; he was the son of Eric Bloodaxe, who was the son of Harold Fairhair; his mother's name was Gunnhillda, a daughter of Auzur Toti, and they had their abode east, at the King's Crag. Now the news was spread, how a ship had come thither east into the Bay, and as soon as Gunnhillda heard of it, she asked what men from Iceland were aboard, and they told her Hrut was the man's name, Auzur's brother's son. Then Gunnhillda said, "I see plainly that he means to claim his heritage, but there is a man named Soti, who has laid his hands on it".

After that she called her waiting-man, whose name was Augmund, and said -

"I am going to send thee to the Bay to find out Auzur and Hint, and tell them that I ask them both to spend this winter with me. Say, too, that I will be their friend, and if Hrut will carry out my counsel, I will see after his suit, and anything else he takes in hand, and I will speak a good word, too, for him to the king."

After that he set off and found them; and as soon as they knew that he was Gunnhillda's servant, they gave him good welcome. He took them aside and told them his errand, and after that they talked over their plans by themselves. Then Auzur said to Hrut -

"Methinks, kinsman, here is little need for long talk, our plans are ready made for us; for I know Gunnhillda's temper; as soon as ever we say we will not go to her she will drive us out of the land, and take all our goods by force; but if we go to her, then she will do us such honour as she has promised."

Augmund went home, and when he saw Gunnhillda, he told her how his errand had ended, and that they would come, and Gunnhillda said -

"It is only what was to be looked for; for Hrut is said to be a wise and well-bred man; and now do thou keep a sharp look out, and tell me as soon as ever they come to the town."

Hrut and Auzur went east to the King's Crag, and when they reached the town, their kinsmen and friends went out to meet and welcome them. They asked, whether the king were in the town, and they told them he was. After that they met Augmund, and he brought them a greeting from Gunnhillda, saying, that she could not ask them to her house before they had seen the king, lest men should say, "I make too much of them". Still she would do all she could for them, and she went on, "tell Hrut to be outspoken before the king, and to ask to be made one of his body-guard"; "and here," said Augmund, "is a dress of honour

which she sends to thee, Hrut, and in it thou must go in before the king". After that he went away.

The next day Hrut said -

"Let us go before the king."

"That may well be," answered Auzur.

So they went, twelve of them together, and all of them friends or kinsmen, and came into the hall where the king sat over his drink. Hrut went first and bade the king "good day," and the king, looking steadfastly at the man who was well-dressed, asked him his name. So he told his name.

"Art thou an Icelander?" said the king.

He answered, "Yes".

"What drove thee hither to seek us?"

Then Hrut answered -

"To see your state, lord; and, besides, because I have a great matter of inheritance here in the land, and I shall have need of your help, if I am to get my rights."

The king said -

"I have given my word that every man shall have lawful justice here in Norway; but hast thou any other errand in seeking me?"

"Lord!" said Hrut, "I wish you to let me live in your court, and become one of your men."

At this the king holds his peace, but Gunnhillda said -

"It seems to me as if this man offered you the greatest honour, for me thinks if there were many such men in the body-guard, it would be well filled."

"Is he a wise man?" asked the king.

"He is both wise and willing," said she.

"Well," said the king, "methinks my mother wishes that thou shouldst have the rank for which thou askest, but for the sake of our honour and the custom of the land, come to me in half a month's time, and then thou shalt be made one of my body-guard. Meantime, my mother will take care of thee, but then come to me."

Then Gunnhillda said to Augmund -

"Follow them to my house, and treat them well."

So Augmund went out, and they went with him, and he brought them to a hall built of stone, which was hung with the most beautiful tapestry, and there too was Gunnhillda's high-seat.

Then Augmund said to Hrut -

"Now will be proved the truth of all that I said to thee from Gunnhillda. Here is her high-seat, and in it thou shalt sit, and this seat thou shalt hold, though she comes herself into the hall."

After that he made them good cheer, and they had sat down but a little while when Gunnhillda came in. Hrut wished to jump up and greet her.

"Keep thy seat!" she says, "and keep it too all the time thou art my guest."

Then she sat herself down by Hrut, and they fell to drink, and at even she said -

"Thou shalt be in the upper chamber with me to-night, and we two together."

"You shall have your way," he answers.

After that they went to sleep, and she locked the door inside. So they slept that night, and in the morning fell to drinking again. Thus they spent their life all that half-month, and Gunnhillda said to the men who were there -

"Ye shall lose nothing except your lives if you say to any one a word of how Hrut and I are going on."

[When the half-month was over] Hrut gave her a hundred ells of household woollen and twelve rough cloaks, and Gunnhillda thanked him for his gifts. Then Hrut thanked her and gave her a kiss and went away. She bade him "farewell". And next day he went before the king with thirty men after him and bade the king "good-day". The king said -

"Now, Hrut, thou wilt wish me to carry out towards thee what I promised."

So Hrut was made one of the king's body-guard, and he asked, "Where shall I sit?"

"My mother shall settle that," said the king.

Then she got him a seat in the highest room, and he spent the winter with the king in much honour.

Chapter 4 Of Hrut's Cruise

When the spring came he asked about Soti, and found out he had gone south to Denmark with the inheritance. Then Hrut went to Gunnhillda and tells her what Soti had been about. Gunnhillda said -

"I will give thee two long-ships, full manned, and along with them the bravest men. Wolf the Unwashed, our overseer of guests; but still go and see the king before thou settest off."

Hrut did so; and when he came before the king, then he told the king of Soti's doings, and how he had a mind to hold on after him.

The king said, "What strength has my mother handed over to thee?"

"Two long-ships and Wolf the Unwashed to lead the men," says Hrut.

"Well given," says the king. "Now I will give thee other two ships, and even then thou'lt need all the strength thou'st got."

After that he went down with Hrut to the ship, and said "fare thee well". Then Hrut sailed away south with his crews.

Chapter 5

Atli Arnvid Son's Slaying

There was a man named Atli, son of Arnvid, Earl of East Gothland. He had kept back the taxes from Hacon Athelstane's foster child, and both father and son had fled away from Jemtland to Gothland. After that, Atli held on with his followers out of the Mælar by Stock Sound, and so on towards Denmark, and now he lies out in Öresound. He is an outlaw both of the Dane-King and of the Swede-King. Hrut held on south to the Sound, and when he came into it he saw many ships in the Sound. Then Wolf said - "What's best to be done now, Icelander?"

"Hold on our course," says Hrut, "'for nothing venture, nothing have'. My ship and Auzur's shall go first, but thou shalt lay thy ship where thou likest."

"Seldom have I had others as a shield before me," says Wolf, and lays his galley side by side with Hrut's ship; and so they hold on through the Sound. Now those who are in the Sound see that ships are coming up to them, and they tell Atli.

He answered, "Then maybe there'll be gain to be got".

After that men took their stand on board each ship; "but my ship," says Atli, "shall be in the midst of the fleet".

Meantime Hrut's ships ran on, and as soon as either side could hear the other's hail, Atli stood up and said -

"Ye fare unwarily. Saw ye not that war-ships were in the Sound? But what's the name of your chief?"

Hrut tells his name.

"Whose man art thou?" says Atli.

"One of king Harold Grayfell's body-guard."

Atli said, "'Tis long since any love was lost between us, father and son, and your Norway kings".

"Worse luck for thee," says Hrut.

"Well," says Atli, "the upshot of our meeting will be, that thou shalt not be left alive to tell the tale;" and with that he caught up a spear and hurled it at Hrut's ship, and the man who stood before it got his death. After that the battle began, and they were slow in boarding Hrut's ship. Wolf, he went well forward, and with him it was now cut, now thrust. Atli's Bowman's name was Asof; he sprung up on Hrut's ship, and was four men's death before Hrut was ware of him; then he

turned against him, and when they met, Asolf thrust at and through Hrut's shield, but Hrut cut once at Asolf, and that was his death-blow. Wolf the Unwashed saw that stroke, and called out -

"Truth to say, Hrut, thou dealest big blows, but thou'st much to thank Gunnhillda for."

"Something tells me," says Hrut, "that thou speakest with a 'fey' mouth."

Now Atli sees a bare place for a weapon on Wolf, and shot a spear through him, and now the battle grows hot: Atli leaps up on Hrut's ship, and clears it fast round about, and now Auzur turns to meet him, and thrust at him, but fell down full length on his back, for another man thrust at him. Now Hrut turns to meet Atli: he cut at once at Hrut's shield, and clove it all in two, from top to point; just then Atli got a blow on his hand from a stone, and down fell his sword. Hrut caught up the sword, and cut his foot from under him. After that he dealt him his death-blow. There they took much goods, and brought away with them two ships which were best, and stayed there only a little while. But meantime Soti and his crew had sailed past them, and he held on his course back to Norway, and made the land at Limgard's side. There Soti went on shore, and there he met Augmund, Gunnhillda's page; he knew him at once, and asks -

"How long meanest thou to be here?"

"Three nights," says Soti.

"Whither away, then?" says Augmund.

"West, to England," says Soti, "and never to come back again to Norway while Gunnhillda's rule is in Norway."

Augmund went away, and goes and finds Gunnhillda, for she was a little way off at a feast, and Gudred, her son, with her. Augmund told Gunnhillda what Soti meant to do, and she begged Gudred to take his life. So Gudred set off at once, and came unawares on Soti, and made them lead up the country, and hang him there. But the goods he took, and brought them to his mother, and she got men to carry them all down to the King's Crag, and after that she went thither herself.

Hrut came back towards autumn, and had gotten great store of goods. He went at once to the king, and had a hearty welcome. He begged them to take whatever they pleased of his goods, and the king took a third. Gunnhillda told Hrut how she had got hold of the inheritance, and had Soti slain. He thanked her, and gave her half of all he had.

Chapter 6

Hrut Sails out to Iceland

Hrut stayed with the king that winter in good cheer, but when spring came he grew very silent. Gunnhillda finds that out, and said to him when they two were alone together -

"Art thou sick at heart?"

"So it is," said Hrut, "as the saying runs - 'Ill goes it with those who are born on a barren land'."

"Wilt thou to Iceland?" she asks.

"Yes," he answered.

"Hast thou a wife out there?" she asked; and he answers, "No".

"But I am sure that is true," she says; and so they ceased talking about the matter.

[Shortly after] Hrut went before the king and bade him "good day"; and the king said, "What dost thou want now, Hrut?"

"I am come to ask, lord, that you give me leave to go to Iceland."

"Will thine honour be greater there than here?" asks the king.

"No, it will not," said Hrut; "but every one must win the work that is set before him."

"It is pulling a rope against a strong man," said Gunnhillda, "so give him leave to go as best suits him."

There was a bad harvest that year in the land, yet Gunnhillda gave Hrut as much meal as he chose to have; and now he busks him to sail out to Iceland, and Auzur with him; and when they were all-boun, Hrut went to find the king and Gunnhillda. She led him aside to talk alone, and said to him -

"Here is a gold ring which I will give thee;" and with that she clasped it round his wrist.

"Many good gifts have I had from thee," said Hrut.

Then she put her hands round his neck and kissed him, and said -

"If I have as much power over thee as I think, I lay this spell on thee that thou mayest never have any pleasure in living with that woman on whom thy heart is set in Iceland, but with other women thou mayest get on well enough, and now it is like to go well with neither of us; - but thou hast not believed what I have been saying."

Hrut laughed when he heard that, and went away; after that he came before the king and thanked him; and the king spoke kindly to him, and bade him "farewell". Hrut went straight to his ship, and they had a fair wind all the way until they ran into Borgarfirth.

As soon as the ship was made fast to the land, Hrut rode west home, but Auzur stayed by the ship to unload her, and lay her up. Hrut rode straight to Hauskuldstede, and Hauskuld gave him a hearty welcome, and Hrut told him all about his travels. After that they sent men east across the rivers to tell Fiddle Mord to make ready for the bridal feast; but the two brothers rode to the ship, and on the way Hauskuld told Hrut how his money matters stood, and his goods had gained much since he was away. Then Hrut said -

"The reward is less worth than it ought to be, but I will give thee as much meal as thou needst for thy household next winter."

Then they drew the ship on land on rollers, and made her snug in her shed, but all the wares on board her they carried away into the Dales westward. Hrut stayed at home at Hrutstede till winter was six weeks off, and then the brothers made ready, and Auzur with them, to ride to Hrut's wedding. Sixty men ride with them, and they rode east till they came to Rangriver plains. There they found a crowd of guests, and the men took their seats on benches down the length of the hall, but the women were seated on the cross benches on the dais, and the bride was rather downcast. So they drank out the feast and it went off well. Mord pays down his daughter's portion, and she rides west with her husband and his train. So they ride till they reach home. Hrut gave over everything into her hands inside the house, and all were pleased at that; but for all that she and Hrut did not pull well together as man and wife, and so things went on till spring, and when spring came Hrut had a journey to make to the Westfirths, to get in the money for which he had sold his wares; but before he set off his wife says to him -

"Dost thou mean to be back before men ride to the Thing?"

"Why dost thou ask?" said Hrut.

"I will ride to the Thing," she said, "to meet my father."

"So it shall be," said he, "and I will ride to the Thing along with thee."

"Well and good," she says.

After that Hrut rode from home west to the Firths, got in all his money, and laid it out anew, and rode home again. When he came home he busked him to ride to the Thing, and made all his neighbours ride with him. His brother Hauskuld rode among the rest. Then Hrut said to his wife -

"If thou hast as much mind now to go to the Thing as thou saidst a while ago, busk thyself and ride along with me."

She was not slow in getting herself ready, and then they all rode to the Thing. Unna went to her father's booth, and he gave her a hearty welcome, but she seemed somewhat heavy-hearted, and when he saw that he said to her -

"I have seen thee with a merrier face. Hast thou anything on thy mind?"

She began to weep, and answered nothing. Then he said to her again, "Why dost thou ride to the Thing, if thou wilt not tell me thy secret? Dost thou dislike living away there in the west?"

Then she answered him -

"I would give all I own in the world that I had never gone thither."

"Well!" said Mord, "I'll soon get to the bottom of this." Then he sends men to fetch Hauskuld and Hrut, and they came straightway; and when they came in to see Mord, he rose up to meet them and gave them a hearty welcome, and asked them to sit down. Then they talked a long time in a friendly way, and at last Mord said to Hauskuld -

"Why does my daughter think so ill of life in the west yonder?"

"Let her speak out," said Hrut, "if she has anything to lay to my charge."

But she brought no charge against him. Then Hrut made them ask his neighbours and household how he treated her, and all bore him good witness, saying that she did just as she pleased in the house.

Then Mord said, "Home thou shalt go, and be content with thy lot; for all the witness goes better for him than for thee".

After that Hrut rode home from the Thing, and his wife with him, and all went smoothly between them that summer; but when spring came it was the old story over again, and things grew worse and worse as the spring went on. Hrut had again a journey to make west to the Firths, and gave out that he would not ride to the Althing, but Unna his wife said little about it. So Hrut went away west to the Firths.

Chapter 7

Unna Separates from Hrut

Now the time for the Thing was coming on, Unna spoke to Sigmund Auzur's son, and asked if he would ride to the Thing with her; he said he could not ride if his kinsman Hrut set his face against it.

"Well!" says she, "I spoke to thee because I have better right to ask this from thee than from any one else."

He answered, "I will make a bargain with thee: thou must promise to ride back west with me, and to have no underhand dealings against Hrut or myself".

So she promised that, and then they rode to the Thing. Her father Mord was at the Thing, and was very glad to see her, and asked her to stay in his booth while the Thing lasted, and she did so.

"Now," said Mord, "what hast thou to tell me of thy mate, Hrut?"

Then she sung him a song, in which she praised Hrut's liberality, but said he was not master of himself. She herself was ashamed to speak out.

Mord was silent a short time, and then said -

"Thou hast now that on thy mind I see, daughter, which thou dost not wish that any one should know save myself, and thou wilt trust to me rather than any one else to help thee out of thy trouble."

Then they went aside to talk, to a place where none could overhear what they said; and then Mord said to his daughter -

"Now tell me all that is between you two, and don't make more of the matter than it is worth."

"So it shall be," she answered, and sang two songs, in which she revealed the cause of their misunderstanding; and when Mord pressed her to speak out, she told him how she and Hrut could not live together, because he was spell-bound, and that she wished to leave him.

"Thou didst right to tell me all this," said Mord, "and now I will give thee a piece of advice, which will stand thee in good stead, if thou canst carry it out to the letter. First of all, thou must ride home from the Thing, and by that time thy husband will have come back, and will be glad to see thee; thou must be blithe and buxom to him, and he will think a good change has come over thee, and thou must show no signs of coldness or ill-temper, but when spring comes thou must sham sickness, and take to thy bed. Hrut will not lose time in guessing what thy sickness can be, nor will he scold thee at all, but he will rather beg every one to take all the care they can of thee. After that he will set off west to the Firths, and Sigmund with him, for he will have to flit all his goods home from the Firths west, and he will be away till the summer is far spent. But when men ride to the Thing, and after all have ridden from the Dales that mean to ride thither, then thou must rise from thy bed and summon men to go along with thee to the Thing; and when thou art all-boun, then shalt thou go to thy bed, and the men with thee who are to bear thee company, and thou shalt take witness before thy husband's bed, and declare thyself separated from him by such a lawful separation as may hold good according to the judgment of the Great Thing, and the laws of the land; and at the man's door [the main door of the house] thou shalt take the same witness. After that ride away, and ride over Laxriverdale Heath, and so on over Holtbeacon Heath; for they will look for thee by way of Hrutfirth. And so ride on till thou comest to me; then I will see after the matter. But into his hands thou shalt never come more."

Now she rides home from the Thing, and Hrut had come back before her, and made her hearty welcome. She answered him kindly, and was blithe and forbearing towards him. So they lived happily together that half-year; but when spring came she fell sick, and kept her bed. Hrut set off west to the Firths, and bade them tend her well before he went. Now, when the time for the Thing comes, she busked herself to ride away, and did in every way as had been laid down for her; and then she rides away to the Thing. The country folk looked for her, but could not find her. Mord made his daughter welcome, and asked her if she had followed his advice; and she says, "I have not broken one tittle of it".

Then she went to the Hill of Laws, and declared herself separated from Hrut; and men thought this strange news. Unna went home with her father, and never went west from that day forward.

Chapter 8

Mord Claims His Goods from Hrut

Hrut came home, and knit his brows when he heard his wife was gone, but yet kept his feelings well in hand, and stayed at home all that half-year, and spoke to no one on the matter. Next summer he rode to the Thing, with his brother Hauskuld, and they had a great following. But when he came to the Thing, he asked whether Fiddle Mord were at the Thing, and they told him he was; and all thought they would come to words at once about their matter, but it was not so. At last, one day when the brothers and others who were at the Thing went to the Hill of Laws, Mord took witness and declared that he had a money-suit against Hrut for his daughter's dower, and reckoned the amount at ninety

hundreds in goods, calling on Hrut at the same time to pay and hand it over to him, and asking for a fine of three marks. He laid the suit in the Quarter Court, into which it would come by law, and gave lawful notice, so that all who stood on the Hill of Laws might hear.

But when he had thus spoken, Hrut said -

"Thou hast undertaken this suit, which belongs to thy daughter, rather for the greed of gain and love of strife than in kindness and manliness. But I shall have something to say against it; for the goods which belong to me are not yet in thy hands. Now, what I have to say is this, and I say it out, so that all who hear me on this hill may bear witness: I challenge thee to fight on the island; there on one side shall be laid all thy daughter's dower, and on the other I will lay down goods worth as much, and whoever wins the day shall have both dower and goods; but if thou wilt not fight with me, then thou shalt give up all claim to these goods."

Then Mord held his peace, and took counsel with his friends about going to fight on the island, and Jorund the priest gave him an answer.

"There is no need for thee to come to ask us for counsel in this matter, for thou knowest if thou fightest with Hrut thou wilt lose both life and goods. He has a good cause, and is besides mighty in himself and one of the boldest of men."

Then Mord spoke out, that he would not fight with Hrut, and there arose a great shout and hooting on the hill, and Mord got the greatest shame by his suit.

After that men ride home from the Thing, and those brothers Hauskuld and Hrut ride west to Reykiardale, and turned in as guests at Lund, where Thiostolf, Biorn Gullbera's son, then dwelt. There had been much rain that day, and men got wet, so long-fires were made down the length of the hall. Thiostolf, the master of the house, sat between Hauskuld and Hrut, and two boys, of whom Thiostolf had the rearing, were playing on the floor, and a girl was playing with them. They were great chatterboxes, for they were too young to know better. So one of them said -

"Now, I will be Mord, and summon thee to lose thy wife because thou hast not been a good husband to her."

Then the other answered -

"I will be Hrut, and I call on thee to give up all claim to thy goods, if thou darest not to fight with me."

This they said several times, and all the household burst out laughing. Then Hauskuld got wroth, and struck the boy who called himself Mord with a switch, and the blow fell on his face, and graced the skin.

"Get out with thee," said Hauskuld to the boy, "and make no game of us;" but Hrut said, "Come hither to me," and the boy did so. Then Hrut drew a ring from his finger and gave it to him, and said -

"Go away, and try no man's temper henceforth."

Then the boy went away saying -

"Thy manliness I will bear in mind all my life."

From this matter Hrut got great praise, and after that they went home; and that was the end of Mord's and Hrut's quarrel.

Chapter 9

Thorwald Gets Hallgerda to Wife

Now, it must be told how Hallgerda, Hauskuld's daughter, grows up, and is the fairest of women to look on; she was tall of stature, too, and therefore she was called "Longcoat". She was fair-haired, and had so much of it that she could hide herself in it; but she was lavish and hard-hearted. Her foster-father's name was Thiostoff; he was a South islander by stock; he was a strong man, well skilled in arms, and had slain many men, and made no atonement in money for one of them. It was said, too, that his rearing had not bettered Hallgerda's temper.

There was a man named Thorwald; he was Oswif's son, and dwelt out on Middlefells strand, under the Fell. He was rich and well to do, and owned the islands called Bear-isles, which lie out in Broadfirth, whence he got meal and stock fish. This Thorwald was a strong and courteous man, though somewhat hasty in temper. Now, it fell out one day that Thorwald and his father were talking together of Thorwald's marrying, and where he had best look for a wife, and it soon came out that he thought there wasn't a match fit for him far or near.

"Well," said Oswif, "wilt thou ask for Hallgerda Longcoat, Hauskuld's daughter?"

"Yes! I will ask for her," said Thorwald.

"But that is not a match that will suit either of you," Oswif went on to say, "for she has a will of her own, and thou art stern-tempered and unyielding."

"For all that I will try my luck there," said Thorwald, "so it's no good trying to hinder me."

"Ay!" said Oswif, "and the risk is all thine own."

After that they set off on a wooing journey to Hauskuldstede, and had a hearty welcome. They were not long in telling Hauskuld their business, and began to woo; then Hauskuld answered -

"As for you, I know how you both stand in the world, but for my own part I will use no guile towards you. My daughter has a hard temper, but as to her looks and breeding you can both see for yourselves."

"Lay down the terms of the match," answered Thorwald, "for I will not let her temper stand in the way of our bargain."

Then they talked over the terms of the bargain, and Hauskuld never asked his daughter what she thought of it, for his heart was set on giving her away, and so they came to an understanding as to the terms of the match. After that Thorwald betrothed himself to Hallgerda, and rode away home when the matter was settled.

Chapter 10

Hallgerda's Wedding

Hauskuld told Hallgerda of the bargain he had made, and she said -

"Now that has been put to the proof which I have all along been afraid of, that thou lovest me not so much as thou art always saying, when thou hast not thought it worth while to tell me a word of all this matter. Besides, I do not think the match as good a one as thou hast always promised me."

So she went on, and let them know in every way that she thought she was thrown away.

Then Hauskuld said -

"I do not set so much store by thy pride as to let it stand in the way of my bargains; and my will, not thine, shall carry the day if we fell out on any point."

"The pride of all you kinsfolk is great," she said, "and so it is not wonderful if I have some of it."

With that she went away, and found her foster-father Thiostolf, and told him what was in store for her, and was very heavy-hearted. Then Thiostolf said -

"Be of good cheer, for thou wilt be married a second time, and then they will ask thee what thou thinkest of the match; for I will do in all things as thou wishest, except in what touches thy father or Hrut."

After that they spoke no more of the matter, and Hauskuld made ready the bridal feast, and rode off to ask men to it. So he came to Hrutstede and called Hrut out to speak with him. Hrut went out, and they began to talk, and Hauskuld told him the whole story of the bargain, and bade him to the feast, saying -

"I should be glad to know that thou dost not feel hurt though I did not tell thee when the bargain was being made."

"I should be better pleased," said Hrut, "to have nothing at all to do with it; for this match will bring luck neither to him nor to her; but still I will come to the feast if thou thinkest it will add any honour to thee."

"Of course I think so," said Hauskuld, and rode off home.

Oswif and Thorwald also asked men to come, so that no fewer than one hundred guests were asked.

There was a man named Swan, who dwelt in Bearfirth, which lies north from Steingrimsfirth. This Swan was a great wizard, and he was Hallgerda's mother's brother. He was quarrelsome, and hard to deal with, but Hallgerda asked him to the feast, and sends Thiostolf to him; so he went, and it soon got to friendship between him and Swan.

Now men come to the feast, and Hallgerda sat upon the cross-bench, and she was a very merry bride. Thiostolf was always talking to her, though he sometimes found time to speak to Swan, and men thought their talking strange.

The feast went off well, and Hauskuld paid down Hallgerda's portion with the greatest readiness. After he had done that, he said to Hrut -

"Shall I bring out any gifts beside?"

"The day will come," answered Hrut, "when thou wilt have to waste thy goods for Hallgerda's sake, so hold thy hand now."

Chapter 11

Thorwald's Slaying

Thorwald rode home from the bridal feast, and his wife with him, and Thioستolf, who rode by her horse's side, and still talked to her in a low voice. Oswif turned to his son and said -

"Art thou pleased with thy match? and how went it when ye talked together?"

"Well," said he, "she showed all kindness to me. Thou mightst see that by the way she laughs at every word I say."

"I don't think her laughter so hearty as thou dost," answered Oswif, "but this will be put to the proof by and by."

So they ride on till they come home, and at night she took her seat by her husband's side, and made room for Thioستolf next herself on the inside. Thioستolf and Thorwald had little to do with each other, and few words were thrown away between them that winter, and so time went on. Hallgerda was prodigal and grasping, and there was nothing that any of their neighbours had that she must not have too, and all that she had, no matter whether it were her own or belonged to others, she waited. But when the spring came there was a scarcity in the house, both of meal and stock fish, so Hallgerda went up to Thorwald and said -

"Thou must not be sitting indoors any longer, for we want for the house both meal and fish."

"Well," said Thorwald, "I did not lay in less for the house this year than I laid in before, and then it used to last till summer."

"What care I," said Hallgerda, "if thou and thy father have made your money by starving yourselves."

Then Thorwald got angry and gave her a blow on the face and drew blood, and went away and called his men and ran the skiff down to the shore. Then six of them jumped into her and rowed out to the Bear-isles, and began to load her with meal and fish.

Meantime it is said that Hallgerda sat out of doors heavy at heart. Thioستolf went up to her and saw the wound on her face, and said -

"Who has been playing thee this sorry trick?"

"My husband Thorwald," she said, "and thou stoodst aloof, though thou wouldst not if thou hadst cared at all for me."

"Because I knew nothing about it," said Thioستolf, "but I will avenge it."

Then he went away down to the shore and ran out a six-oared boat, and held in his hand a great axe that he had with a haft overlaid with iron. He steps into the boat and rows out to the Bear-isles, and when he got there all the men had rowed away but Thorwald and his followers, and he stayed by the skiff to load her, while they brought the goods down to him. So Thioستolf came up just then and jumped into the skiff and began to load with him, and after a while he said -

"Thou canst do but little at this work, and that little thou dost badly."

"Thinkest thou thou canst do it better?" said Thorwald.

"There's one thing to be done which I can do better than thou," said Thioستolf, and then he went on -

"The woman who is thy wife has made a bad match, and you shall not live much longer together."

Then Thorwald snatched up a fishing-knife that lay by him, and made a stab at Thioستolf; he had lifted his axe to his shoulder and dashed it down. It came on Thorwald's arm and crushed the wrist, but down fell the knife. Then Thioستolf lifted up his axe a second time and gave Thorwald a blow on the head, and he fell dead on the spot.

Chapter 12

Thioستolf's Flight

While this was going on, Thorwald's men came down with their load, but Thioستolf was not slow in his plans. He hewed with both hands at the gunwale of the skiff and cut it down about two planks; then he leapt into his boat, but the dark blue sea poured into the skiff, and down she went with all her freight. Down too sank Thorwald's body, so that his men could not see what had been done to him, but they knew well enough that he was dead, Thioستolf rowed away up the firth, but they shouted after him wishing him ill luck. He made them no answer, but rowed on till he got home, and ran the boat up on the beach, and went up to the house with his axe, all bloody as it was, on his shoulder. Hallgerda stood out of doors, and said -

"Thine axe is bloody; what hast thou done?"

"I have done now what will cause thee to be wedded a second time."

"Thou tellest me then that Thorwald is dead?" she said.

"So it is," said he, "and now look out for my safety."

"So I will," she said; "I will send thee north to Bearfirth, to Swanshol, and Swan, my kinsman, will receive thee with open arms. He is so mighty a man that no one will seek thee thither."

So he saddled a horse that she had, and jumped on his back, and rode off north to Bearfirth, to Swanshol, and Swan received him with open arms, and said -

"That's what I call a man who does not stick at trifles! And now I promise thee if they seek thee here, they shall get nothing but the greatest shame."

Now, the story goes back to Hallgerda, and how she behaved. She called on Liot the black, her kinsman, to go with her, and bade him saddle their horses, for she said - "I will ride home to my father".

While he made ready for their journey, she went to her chests and unlocked them, and called all the men of her house about her, and gave each of them some gift; but they all grieved at her going. Now she rides home to her father; and he received her well, for as yet he had not heard the news. But Hrut said to Hallgerda -

"Why did not Thorwald come with thee?" and she answered -

"He is dead."

Then Said Hauskuld -

"That was Thioستolf's doing?"

"It was," she said.

"Ah!" said Hauskuld, "Hrut was not for wrong when he told me that this bargain would draw mickle misfortune after it. But there's no good in troubling one's self about a thing that's done and gone."

Now the story must go back to Thorwald's mates, how there they ate, and how they begged the loan of a boat to get to the mainland. So a boat was lent them at once, and they rowed up the firth to Reykianess, and found Oswif, and told him these tidings.

He said, "Ill luck is the end of ill redes, and now I see how it has all gone. Hallgerda must have sent Thioستolf to Bearfirth, but she herself must have ridden home to her father. Let us now gather folk and follow him up thither north." So they did that, and went about asking for help, and got together many men. And then they all rode off to Steingrims river, and so on to Liotriverdale and Selriverdale, till they came to Bearfirth.

Now Swan began to speak, and gasped much. "Now Oswif's fetches are seeking us out." Then up sprung Thioستolf, but Swan said, "Go thou out with me, there won't be need of much". So they went out both of them, and Swan took a goatskin and wrapped it about his own head, and said, "Become mist and fog, become fright and wonder mickle to all those who seek thee".

Now, it must be told how Oswif, his friends, and his men are riding along the ridge; then came a great mist against them, and Oswif said, "This is Swan's doing; 'twere well if nothing worse followed". A little after a mighty darkness came before their eyes, so that they could see nothing, and then they fell off their horses' backs, and lost their horses, and dropped their weapons, and went over head and ears into bogs, and some went astray into the wood, till they were on the brink of bodily harm. Then Oswif said, "If I could only find my horse and weapons, then I'd turn back"; and he had scarce spoken these words than they saw somewhat, and found their horses and weapons. Then many still egged the others on to look after the chase once more; and so they did, and at once the same wonders befell them, and so they fared thrice. Then Oswif said,

"Though the course be not good, let us still turn back. Now, we will take counsel a second time, and what now pleases my mind best, is to go and find Hauskuld, and ask atonement for my son; for there's hope of honour where there's good store of it."

So they rode thence to the Broadfirth dales, and there is nothing to be told about them till they come to Hauskuldstede, and Hrut was there before them. Oswif called out Hauskuld and Hrut, and they both went out and bade him good-day. After that they began to talk. Hauskuld asked Oswif whence he came. He said he had set out to search for Thioستolf, but couldn't find him. Hauskuld said he must have gone north to Swanshol, "and thither it is not every man's lot to go to find him".

"Well," says Oswif, "I am come hither for this, to ask atonement for my son from thee."

Hauskuld answered - "I did not slay thy son, nor did I plot his death; still it may be forgiven thee to look for atonement somewhere".

"Nose is next of kin, brother, to eyes," said Hrut, "and it is needful to stop all evil tongues, and to make him atonement for his son, and so mend thy daughter's state, for that will only be the case when this suit is dropped, and the less that is said about it the better it will be."

Hauskuld said - "Wilt thou undertake the award?"

"That I will," says Hrut, "nor will I shield thee at all in my award; for if the truth must be told thy daughter planned his death."

Then Hrut held his peace some little while, and afterwards he stood up, and said to Oswif - "Take now my hand in handsel as a token that thou lettest the suit drop".

So Oswif stood up and said - "This is not an atonement on equal terms when thy brother utters the award, but still thou (speaking to Hrut) hast behaved so well about it that I trust thee thoroughly to make it" Then he stood up and took Hauskuld's hand, and came to an atonement in the matter, on the understanding that Hrut was to make up his mind and utter the award before Oswif went away. After that, Hrut made his award, and said - "For the slaying of Thorwald I award two hundred in silver" - that was then thought a good price for a man - "and thou shalt pay it down at once, brother, and pay it too with an open hand".

Hauskuld did so, and then Hrut said to Oswif - "I will give thee a good cloak which I brought with me from foreign lands".

He thanked him for his gift, and went home well pleased at the way in which things had gone.

After that Hauskuld and Hrut came to Oswif to share the goods, and they and Oswif came to a good agreement about that too, and they went home with their share of the goods, and Oswif is now out of our story. Hallgerda begged Hauskuld to let her come back home to him, and he gave her leave, and for a long time there was much talk about Thorwald's slaying. As for Hallgerda's goods they went on growing till they were worth a great sum.

Chapter 13

Glum's Wooing

Now three brothers are named in the story. One was called Thorarin, the second Ragi, and the third Glum. They were the sons of Olof the Halt, and were men of much worth and of great wealth in goods. Thorarin's surname was Ragi's brother; he had the Speakership of the Law after Rafn Heing's son. He was a very wise man, and lived at Varmalek, and he and Glum kept house together. Glum had been long abroad; he was a tall, strong, handsome man. Ragi their brother was a great man-slayer. Those brothers owned in the south Engey and Laugarness. One day the brothers Thorarin and Glum were talking together, and Thorarin asked Glum whether he meant to go abroad, as was his wont.

He answered - "I was rather thinking now of leaving off trading voyages".

"What hast thou then in thy mind? Wilt thou woo thee a wife?"

"That I will," says he, "if I could only get myself well matched."

Then Thorarin told off all the women who were unwedded in Borgarfirth, and asked him if he would have any of these - "Say the word, and I will ride with thee!"

But Glum answered - "I will have none of these".

"Say then the name of her thou wishest to have," says Thorarin.

Glum answered - "If thou must know, her name is Hallgerda, and she is Hauskuld's daughter away west in the dales".

"Well," says Thorarin, "'tis not with thee as the saw says, 'be warned by another's woe'; for she was wedded to a man, and she plotted his death."

Glum said - "May be such ill-luck will not befall her a second time, and sure I am she will not plot my death. But now, if thou wilt show me any honour, ride along with me to woo her."

Thorarin said - "There's no good striving against it, for what must be is sure to happen". Glum often talked the matter over with Thorarin, but he put it off a long time. At last it came about that they gathered men together and rode off ten in company, west to the dales, and came to Hauskuldstede. Hauskuld gave them a hearty welcome, and they stayed there that night. But early next morning, Hauskuld sends Hrut, and he came thither at once; and Hauskuld was out of doors when he rode into the "town". Then Hauskuld told Hrut what men had come thither.

"What may it be they want?" asked Hrut

"As yet," says Hauskuld, "they have not let out to me that they have any business."

"Still," says Hrut, "their business must be with thee. They will ask the hand of thy daughter, Hallgerda. If they do, what answer wilt thou make?"

"What dost thou advise me to say?" says Hauskuld.

"Thou shalt answer well," says Hrut; "but still make a clean breast of all the good and all the ill thou knowest of the woman."

But while the brothers were talking thus, out came the guests. Hauskuld greeted them well, and Hrut bade both Thorarin and his brothers good morning. After that they all began to talk, and Thorarin said -

"I am come hither, Hauskuld, with my brother Glum on this errand, to ask for Hallgerda thy daughter, at the hand of my brother Glum. Thou must know that he is a man of worth."

"I know well," says Hauskuld, "that ye are both of you powerful and worthy men; but I must tell you right out, that I chose a husband for her before, and that turned out most unluckily for us."

Thorarin answered - "We will not let that stand in the way of the bargain; for one oath shall not become all oaths, and this may prove to be a good match, though that turned out ill; besides Thioستolf had most hand in spoiling it".

Then Hrut spoke: "Now I will give you a bit of advice - this: if ye will not let all this that has already happened to Hallgerda stand in the way of the match, mind you do not let Thioستolf go south with her if the match comes off, and that he is never there longer than three nights at a time, unless Glum gives him leave, but fall an outlaw by Glum's hand without atonement if he stay there longer. Of course, it shall be in Glum's power to give him leave; but he will not if he takes my advice. And now this match, shall not be fulfilled, as the other was, without Hallgerda's knowledge. She shall now know the whole course of this bargain, and see Glum, and herself settle whether she will have him or not; and then she will not be able to lay the blame on others if it does not turn out well. And all this shall be without craft or guile."

Then Thorarin said - "Now, as always, it will prove best if thy advice be taken".

Then they sent for Hallgerda, and she came thither, and two women with her. She had on a cloak of rich blue wool, and under it a scarlet kirtle, and a silver girdle round her waist, but her hair came down on both sides of her bosom, and she had turned the locks up under her girdle. She sat down between Hrut and her father, and she greeted them all with kind words, and spoke well and boldly, and asked what was the news. After that she ceased speaking.

Then Glum said - "There has been some talk between thy father and my brother Thorarin and myself about a bargain. It was that I might get thee, Hallgerda, if it be thy will, as it is theirs; and now, if thou art a brave woman, thou wilt say right out whether the match is at all to thy mind; but if thou hast anything in thy heart against this bargain with us, then we will not say anything more about it."

Hallgerda said - "I know well that you are men of worth and might, ye brothers. I know too that now I shall be much better wedded than I was before; but what I want to know is, what you have said already about the match, and how far you

have given your words in the matter. But so far as I now see of thee, I think I might love thee well if we can but hit it off as to temper."

So Glum himself told her all about the bargain, and left nothing out, and then he asked Hauskuld and Hrut whether he had repeated it right. Hauskuld said he had; and then Hallgerda said - "Ye have dealt so well with me in this matter, my father and Hrut, that I will do what ye advise, and this bargain shall be struck as ye have settled it".

Then Hrut said - "Methinks it were best that Hauskuld and I should name witnesses, and that Hallgerda should betroth herself, if the Lawman thinks that right and lawful".

"Right and lawful it is," says Thorarin.

After that Hallgerda's goods were valued, and Glum was to lay down as much against them, and they were to go shares, half and half, in the whole. Then Glum bound himself to Hallgerda as his betrothed, and they rode away home south; but Hauskuld was to keep the wedding-feast at his house. And now all is quiet till men ride to the wedding.

Chapter 14

Glum's Wedding

Those brothers gathered together a great company, and they were all picked men. They rode west to the dales and came to Hauskuldstede, and there they found a great gathering to meet them. Hauskuld and Hrut, and their friends, filled one bench, and the bridegroom the other. Hallgerda sat upon the cross-bench on the dais, and behaved well. Thiostolf went about with his axe raised in air, and no one seemed to know that he was there, and so the wedding went off well. But when the feast was over, Hallgerda went away south with Glum and his brothers. So when they came south to Varmalek, Thorarin asked Hallgerda if she would undertake the housekeeping, "No, I will not," she said. Hallgerda kept her temper down that winter, and they liked her well enough. But when the spring came, the brothers talked about their property, and Thorarin said - "I will give up to you the house at Varmalek, for that is readiest to your hand, and I will go down south to Laugarness and live there, but Engey we will have both of us in common".

Glum was willing enough to do that. So Thorarin went down to the south of that district, and Glum and his wife stayed behind there, and lived in the house at Varmalek.

Now Hallgerda got a household about her; she was prodigal in giving, and grasping in getting. In the summer she gave birth to a girl. Glum asked her what name it was to have.

"She shall be called after my father's mother, and her name shall be Thorgerda," for she came down from Sigurd Fafnir's-bane on the father's side, according to the family pedigree.

So the maiden was sprinkled with water, and had this name given her, and there she grew up, and got like her mother in looks and feature. Glum and Hallgerda agreed well together, and so it went on for a while. About that time these tidings were heard from the north and Bearfirth, how Swan had rowed out to fish in the spring, and a great storm came down on him from the east, and how he was driven ashore at Fishless, and he and his men were there lost. But the fishermen who were at Kalback thought they saw Swan go into the fell at Kalbackshorn, and that he was greeted well; but some spoke against that story, and said there was nothing in it. But this all knew that he was never seen again either alive or dead. So when Hallgerda heard that, she thought she had a great loss in her mother's brother. Glum begged Thorarin to change lands with him, but he said he would not; "but," said he, "if I outlive you, I mean to have Varmalek to myself". When Glum told this to Hallgerda, she said, "Thorarin has indeed a right to expect this from us".

Chapter 15

Thiostolf Goes to Glum's House

Thiostolf had beaten one of Hauskuld's house-carles, so he drove him away. He took his horse and weapons, and said to Hauskuld -

"Now, I will go away and never come back."

"All will be glad at that," says Hauskuld.

Thiostolf rode till he came to Varmalek, and there he got a hearty welcome from Hallgerda, and not a bad one from Glum. He told Hallgerda how her father had driven him away, and begged her to give him her help and countenance. She answered him by telling him she could say nothing about his staying there before she had seen Glum about it.

"Does it go well between you?" he says.

"Yes," she says, "our love runs smooth enough."

After that she went to speak to Glum, and threw her arms round his neck and said -

"Wilt thou grant me a boon which I wish to ask of thee?"

"Grant it I will," he says, "if it be right and seemly; but what is it thou wishest to ask?"

"Well," she said, "Thiostolf has been driven away from the west, and what I want thee to do is to let him stay here; but I will not take it crossly if it is not to thy mind."

Glum said - "Now that thou behavest so well, I will grant thee thy boon; but I tell thee, if he takes to any ill he shall be sent off at once".

She goes then to Thiostolf and tells him, and he answered -

"Now, thou art still good, as I had hoped."

After that he was there, and kept himself down a little while, but then it was the old story, he seemed to spoil all the good he found; for he gave way to no one save to Hallgerda alone, but she never took his side in his brawls with others. Thorarin, Glum's brother, blamed him for letting him be there, and said ill luck would come of it, and all would happen as had happened before if he were there. Glum answered him well and kindly, but still kept on in his own way.

Chapter 16

Glum's Sheep Hunt

Now once on a time when autumn came, it happened that men had hard work to get their flocks home, and many of Glum's wethers were missing. Then Glum said to Thiostolf -

"Go thou up on the fell with my house-carles and see if ye cannot find out anything about the sheep."

"'Tis no business of mine," says Thiostolf, "to hunt up sheep, and this one thing is quite enough to hinder it. I won't walk in thy thralls' footsteps. But go thyself, and then I'll go with thee."

About this they had many words. The weather was good, and Hallgerda was sitting out of doors. Glum went up to her and said -

"Now Thiostolf and I have had a quarrel, and we shall not live much longer together." And so he told her all that they had been talking about.

Then Hallgerda spoke up for Thiostolf, and they had many words about him. At last Glum gave her a blow with his hand, and said -

"I will strive no longer with thee," and with that he went away.

Now she loved him much, and could not calm herself, but wept out loud. Thiostolf went up to her and said -

"This is sorry sport for thee, and so it must not be often again."

"Nay," she said, "but thou shalt not avenge this, nor meddle at all whatever passes between Glum and me."

He went off with a spiteful grin.

Chapter 17

Glum's Slaying

Now Glum called men to follow him, and Thiostolf got ready and went with them. So they went up South Reykiardale and then up along by Baugagil and so south to Crossfell. But some of his band he sent to the Sulafells, and they all found very many sheep. Some of them, too, went by way of Scoradale, and it came about at last that those twain, Glum and Thiostolf, were left alone

together. They went south from Crossfell and found there a flock of wild sheep, and they went from the south towards the fell, and tried to drive them down; but still the sheep got away from them up on the fell. Then each began to scold the other, and Thioستolf said at last that Glum had no strength save to tumble about in Hallgerda's arms.

Then Glum said -

"A man's foes are those of his own house.' Shall I take upbraiding from thee, runaway thrall as thou art?"

Thioستolf said -

"Thou shalt soon have to own that I am no thrall, for I will not yield an inch to thee."

Then Glum got angry, and cut at him with his hand-axe, but he threw his axe in the way, and the blow fell on the haft with a downward stroke and bit into it about the breadth of two fingers. Thioستolf cut at him at once with his axe, and smote him on the shoulder, and the stroke hewed asunder the shoulderbone and collarbone, and the wound bled inwards. Glum grasped at Thioستolf with his left hand so fast that he fell; but Glum could not hold him, for death came over him. Then Thioستolf covered his body with stones, and took off his gold ring. Then he went straight to Varmalek. Hallgerda was sitting out of doors, and saw that his axe was bloody. He said -

"I know not what thou wilt think of it, but I tell thee Glum is slain."

"That must be thy deed?" she says.

"So it is," he says.

She laughed and said -

"Thou dost not stand for nothing in this sport."

"What thinkest thou is best to be done now?" he asked.

"Go to Hrut, my father's brother," she said, "and let him see about thee."

"I do not know," says Thioستolf, "whether this is good advice; but still I will take thy counsel in this matter."

So he took his horse, and rode west to Hrutstede that night. He binds his horse at the back of the house, and then goes round to the door, and gives a great knock. After that he walks round the house, north about. It happened that Hrut was awake. He sprang up at once, and put on his jerkin and pulled on his shoes. Then he took up his sword, and wrapped a cloak about his left arm, up as far as the elbow. Men woke up just as he went out; there he saw a tall stout man at the back of the house, and knew it was Thioستolf. Hrut asked him what news.

"I tell thee Glum is slain," says Thioستolf.

"Who did the deed?" says Hrut.

"I slew him," says Thioستolf.

"Why rodest thou hither?" says Hrut.

"Hallgerda sent me to thee," says Thioستolf.

"Then she has no hand in this deed," says Hrut, and drew his sword. Thioستolf saw that, and would not be behind hand, so he cuts at Hrut at once. Hrut got out of the way of the stroke by a quick turn, and at the same time struck the back of the axe so smartly with a side-long blow of his left hand, that it flew out of Thioستolf's grasp. Then Hrut made a blow with the sword in his right hand at Thioستolf's leg, just above the knee, and cut it almost off so that it hung by a little piece, and sprang in upon him at the same time, and thrust him hard back. After that he smote him on the head, and dealt him his death-blow. Thioستolf fell down on his back at full length, and then out came Hrut's men, and saw the tokens of the deed. Hrut made them take Thioستolf away, and throw stones over his body, and then he went to find Hauskuld, and told him of Glum's slaying, and also of Thioستolf's. He thought it harm that Glum was dead and gone, but thanked him for killing Thioستolf. A little while after, Thorarin Ragi's brother hears of his brother Glum's death, then he rides with eleven men behind him west to Hauskuldstede, and Hauskuld welcomed him with both hands, and he is there the night. Hauskuld sent at once for Hrut to come to him, and he went at once, and next day they spoke much of the slaying of Glum, and Thorarin said - "Wilt thou make me any atonement for my brother, for I have had a great loss?"

Hauskuld answered - "I did not slay thy brother, nor did my daughter plot his death; but as soon as ever Hrut knew it he slew Thioستolf".

Then Thorarin held his peace, and thought the matter had taken a bad turn. But Hrut said - "Let us make his journey good; he has indeed had a heavy loss, and if we do that we shall be well spoken of. So let us give him gifts, and then he will be our friend ever afterwards."

So the end of it was that those brothers gave him gifts, and he rode back south. He and Hallgerda changed homesteads in the spring, and she went south to Laugarness and he to Varmalek. And now Thorarin is out of the story.

Chapter 18

Fiddle Mord's Death

Now it must be told how Fiddle Mord took a sickness and breathed his last; and that was thought great scathe. His daughter Unna took all the goods he left behind him. She was then still unmarried the second time. She was very lavish, and unthrifty of her property; so that her goods and ready money wasted away, and at last she had scarce anything left but land and stock.

Chapter 19

Gunnar Comes into the Story

There was a man whose name was Gunnar. He was one of Unna's kinsmen, and his mother's name was Rannveig. Gunnar's father was named Hamond. Gunnar Hamond's son dwelt at Lithend, in the Fleetlithe. He was a tall man in growth, and a strong man - best skilled in arms of all men. He could cut or thrust or shoot if he chose as well with his left as with his right hand, and he smote so swiftly with his sword, that three seemed to flash through the air at once. He was the best shot with the bow of all men, and never missed his mark. He could leap more than his own height, with all his war-gear, and as far backwards as forwards. He could swim like a seal, and there was no game in which it was any good for anyone to strive with him; and so it has been said that no man was his match. He was handsome of feature, and fair skinned. His nose was straight, and a little turned up at the end. He was blue-eyed and bright-eyed, and ruddy-cheeked. His hair thick, and of good hue, and hanging down in comely curls. The most courteous of men was he, of sturdy frame and strong will, bountiful and gentle, a fast friend, but hard to please when making them. He was wealthy in goods. His brother's name was Kolskegg; he was a tall strong man, a noble fellow, and undaunted in everything. Another brother's name was Hjort; he was then in his childhood. Orm Skogarnef was a base-born brother of Gunnar's; he does not come into this story. Arnguda was the name of Gunnar's sister. Hroar, the priest at Tongue, had her to wife.

Chapter 20

Of Njal and His Children

There was a man whose name was Njal. He was the son of Thorgeir Gelling, the son of Thorolf. Njal's mother's name was Asgerda. Njal dwelt at Bergthorsknoill in the land-isles; he had another homestead on Thorolfsfell. Njal was wealthy in goods, and handsome of face; no beard grew on his chin. He was so great a lawyer, that his match was not to be found. Wise too he was, and foreknowing and foresighted. Of good counsel, and ready to give it, and all that he advised men was sure to be the best for them to do. Gentle and generous, he unravelled every man's knotty points who came to see him about them. Bergthora was his wife's name; she was Skarphedinn's daughter, a very high-spirited, brave-hearted woman, but somewhat hard-tempered. They had six children, three daughters and three sons, and they all come afterwards into this story.

Chapter 21

Unna Goes to See Gunnar

Now it must be told how Unna had lost all her ready money. She made her way to Lithend, and Gunnar greeted his kinswoman well. She stayed there that

night, and the next morning they sat out of doors and talked. The end of their talk was that she told him how heavily she was pressed for money.

"This is a bad business," he said.

"What help wilt thou give me out of my distress?" she asked.

He answered - "Take as much money as thou needest from what I have out at interest".

"Nay," she said, "I will not waste thy goods."

"What then dost thou wish?"

"I wish thee to get back my goods out of Hrut's hands," she answered.

"That, methinks, is not likely," said he, "when thy father could not get them back, and yet he was a great lawyer, but I know little about law."

She answered - "Hrut pushed that matter through rather by boldness than by law; besides, my father was old, and that was why men thought it better not to drive things to the uttermost. And now there is none of my kinsmen to take this suit up if thou hast not daring enough."

"I have courage enough," he replied, "to get these goods back; but I do not know how to take the suit up."

"Well!" she answered, "go and see Njal of Bergthorskknoll, he will know how to give thee advice. Besides, he is a great friend of thine."

"'Tis like enough he will give me good advice, as he gives it to every one else," says Gunnar.

So the end of their talk was, that Gunnar undertook her cause, and gave her the money she needed for her housekeeping, and after that she went home.

Now Gunnar rides to see Njal, and he made him welcome, and they began to talk at once.

Then Gunnar said - "I am come to seek a bit of good advice from thee".

Njal replied - "Many of my friends are worthy of this, but still I think I would take more pains for none than for thee".

Gunnar said - "I wish to let thee know that I have undertaken to get Unna's goods back from Hrut".

"A very hard suit to undertake," said Njal, "and one very hazardous how it will go; but still I will get it up for thee in the way I think likeliest to succeed, and the end will be good if thou breakest none of the rules I lay down; if thou dost, thy life is in danger."

"Never fear; I will break none of them," said Gunnar.

Then Njal held his peace for a little while, and after that he spoke as follows: -

Chapter 22

Njal's Advice

"I have thought over the suit, and it will do so. Thou shalt ride from home with two men at thy back. Over all thou shalt have a great rough cloak, and under that, a russet kirtle of cheap stuff, and under all, thy good clothes. Thou must take a small axe in thy hand, and each of you must have two horses, one fat, the other lean. Thou shalt carry hardware and smith's work with thee hence, and ye must ride off early to-morrow morning, and when ye are come across Whitewater westwards, mind and slouch thy hat well over thy brows. Then men will ask who is this tall man, and thy mates shall say - 'Here is Huckster Hedinn the Big, a man from Eyjafirth, who is going about with smith's work for sale'. This Hedinn is ill-tempered and a chatterer - a fellow who thinks he alone knows everything. Very often he snatches back his wares, and flies at men if everything is not done as he wishes. So thou shalt ride west to Borgarfirth offering all sorts of wares for sale, and be sure often to cry off thy bargains, so that it will be noised abroad that Huckster Hedinn is the worst of men to deal with, and that no lies have been told of his bad behaviour. So thou shalt ride to Northwaterdale, and to Hrutfirth, and Laxriverdale, till thou comest to Hauskuldstede. There thou must stay a night, and sit in the lowest place, and hang thy head down. Hauskuld will tell them all not to meddle nor make with Huckster Hedinn, saying he is a rude unfriendly fellow. Next morning thou must be off early and go to the farm nearest Hrutstede. There thou must offer thy goods for sale, praising up all that is worst, and tinkering up the faults. The master of the house will pry about and find out the faults. Thou must snatch the wares away from him, and speak ill to him. He will say - 'Twas not to be hoped that thou wouldst behave well to him, when thou behavest ill to every one else. Then thou shalt fly at him, though it is not thy wont, but mind and spare thy strength, that thou mayest not be found out. Then a man will be sent to Hrutstede to tell Hrut he had best come and part you. He will come at once and ask thee to his house, and thou must accept his offer. Thou shalt greet Hrut, and he will answer well. A place will be given thee on the lower bench over against Hrut's high-seat. He will ask if thou art from the North, and thou shalt answer that thou art a man of Eyjafirth. He will go on to ask if there are very many famous men there. 'Shabby fellows enough and to spare,' thou must answer. 'Dost thou know Reykiardale and the parts about?' he will ask. To which thou must answer - 'I know all Iceland by heart'.

"Are there any stout champions left in Reykiardale?' he will ask. 'Thieves and scoundrels,' thou shalt answer. Then Hrut will smile and think it sport to listen. You two will go on to talk of the men in the Eastfirth Quarter, and thou must always find something to say against them. At last your talk will come to Rangrivale, and then thou must say, there is small choice of men left in those parts since Fiddle Mord died. At the same time sing some stave to please Hrut, for I know thou art a skald. Hrut will ask what makes thee say there is never a man to come in Mord's place; and then thou must answer, that he was so wise a man and so good a taker up of suits, that he never made a false step

in upholding his leadership. He will ask - 'Dost thou know how matters fared between me and him?'

"I know all about it,' thou must reply, 'he took thy wife from thee, and thou hadst not a word to say.'

"Then Hrut will ask - 'Dost thou not think it was some disgrace to him when he could not get back his goods, though he set the suit on foot?'

"I can answer thee that well enough,' thou must say, 'Thou challengedst him to single combat; but he was old, and so his friends advised him not to fight with thee, and then they let the suit fall to the ground.'

"True enough," Hrut will say. 'I said so, and that passed for law among foolish men; but the suit might have been taken up again at another Thing if he had the heart.'

"I know all that,' thou must say.

"Then he will ask - 'Dost thou know anything about law?'"

"Up in the North I am thought to know something about it,' thou shalt say. 'But still I should like thee to tell me how this suit should be taken up.'

"What suit dost thou mean?' he will ask.

"A suit,' thou must answer, 'which does not concern me. I want to know how a man must set to work who wishes to get back Unna's dower.'

"Then Hrut will say - 'In this suit I must be summoned so that I can hear the summons, or I must be summoned here in my lawful house'.

"Recite the summons, then,' thou must say, and I will say it after thee.'

"Then Hrut will summon himself; and mind and pay great heed to every word he says. After that Hrut will bid thee repeat the summons, and thou must do so, and say it all wrong, so that no more than every other word is right.

"Then Hrut will smile and not mistrust thee, but say that scarce a word is right. Thou must throw the blame on thy companions, and say they put thee out, and then thou must ask him to say the words first, word by word, and to let thee say the words after him. He will give thee leave, and summon himself in the suit, and thou shalt summon after him there and then, and this time say every word right. When it is done, ask Hrut if that were rightly summoned, and he will answer 'there is no flaw to be found in it'. Then thou shalt say in a loud voice, so that thy companions may hear -

"I summon thee in the suit which Unna Mord's daughter has made over to me with her plighted hand.'

"But when men are sound asleep, you shall rise and take your bridles and saddles, and tread softly, and go out of the house, and put your saddles on your fat horses in the fields, and so ride off on them, but leave the others behind you. You must ride up into the hills away from the home pastures and stay there three nights, for about so long will they seek you. After that ride home south, riding always by night and resting by day. As for us we will then ride this

summer to the Thing, and help thee in thy suit." So Gunnar thanked Njal, and first of all rode home.

Chapter 23

Huckster Hedinn

Gunnar rode from home two nights afterwards, and two men with him; they rode along until they got on Bluewoodheath, and then men on horseback met them and asked who that tall man might be of whom so little was seen. But his companions said it was Huckster Hedinn. Then the others said a worse was not to be looked for behind, when such a man as he went before. Hedinn at once made as though he would have set upon them, but yet each went their way. So Gunnar went on doing everything as Njal had laid it down for him, and when he came to Hauskuldstede he stayed there the night, and thence he went down the dale till he came to the next farm to Hrutstede. There he offered his wares for sale, and Hedinn fell at once upon the farmer. This was told to Hrut, and he sent for Hedinn, and Hedinn went at once to see Hrut, and had a good welcome. Hrut seated him over against himself, and their talk went pretty much as Njal had guessed; but when they came to talk of Rangriversvale, and Hrut asked about the men there, Gunnar sung this stave -

Men in sooth are slow to find, -
So the people speak by stealth,
Often this hath reached my ears, -
All through Rangar's rolling vales.
Still I trow that Fiddle Mord,
Tried his hand in fight of yore;
Sure was never gold-bestower,
Such a man for might and wit.

Then Hrut said, "Thou art a skald, Hedinn. But hast thou never heard how things went between me and Mord?" Then Hedinn sung another stave -

Once I ween I heard the rumour,
How the Lord of rings bereft thee;
From thine arms earth's offspring tearing,
Trickful he and trustful thou.
Then the men, the buckler-bearers,
Begged the mighty gold-begetter,
Sharp sword oft of old he reddened,
Not to stand in strife with thee.

So they went on, till Hrut, in answer told him how the suit must be taken up, and recited the summons. Hedinn repeated it all wrong, and Hrut burst out laughing, and had no mistrust. Then he said, Hrut must summon once more, and Hrut did so. Then Hedinn repeated the summons a second time, and this time right, and called his companions to witness how he summoned Hrut in a suit which Unna Mord's daughter had made over to him with her plighted hand. At night he went to sleep like other men, but as soon as ever Hrut was sound asleep, they took their clothes and arms, and went out and came to their horses, and rode off

across the river, and so up along the bank by Hiardarholt till the dale broke off among the hills, and so there they are upon the fells between Laxriverdale and Hawkdale, having got to a spot where no one could find them unless he had fallen on them by chance.

Hauskuld wakes up that night at Hauskuldstede, and roused all his household, "I will tell you my dream," he said. "I thought I saw a great bear go out of this house, and I knew at once this beast's match was not to be found; two cubs followed him, wishing well to the bear, and they all made for Hrutstede, and went into the house there. After that I woke. Now I wish to ask if any of you saw aught about yon tall man."

Then one man answered him - "I saw how a golden fringe and a bit of scarlet cloth peeped out at his arm, and on his right arm he had a ring of gold".

Hauskuld said - "This beast is no man's fetch, but Gunnar's of Lithend, and now methinks I see all about it. Up! let us ride to Hrutstede." And they did so. Hrut lay in his locked bed, and asks who have come there? Hauskuld tells who he is, and asked what guests might be there in the house.

"Only Huckster Hedinn is here," says Hrut.

"A broader man across the back, it will be, I fear," says Hauskuld, "I guess here must have been Gunnar of Lithend."

"Then there has been a pretty trial of cunning," says Hrut.

"What has happened?" says Hauskuld.

"I told him how to take up Unna's suit, and I summoned myself and he summoned after, and now he can use this first step in the suit, and it is right in law."

"There has, indeed, been a great falling off of wit on one side," said Hauskuld, "and Gunnar cannot have planned it all by himself; Njal must be at the bottom of this plot, for there is not his match for wit in all the land."

Now they look for Hedinn, but he is already off and away; after that they gathered folk, and looked for them three days, but could not find them. Gunnar rode south from the fell to Hawkdale and so east of Skard, and north to Holtbeaconheath, and so on until he got home.

Chapter 24

Gunnar and Hrut Strive at the Thing

Gunnar rode to the Althing, and Hrut and Hauskuld rode thither too with a very great company. Gunnar pursues his suit, and began by calling on his neighbours to bear witness, but Hrut and his brother had it in their minds to make an onslaught on him, but they mistrusted their strength.

Gunnar next went to the court of the men of Broadfirth, and bade Hrut listen to his oath and declaration of the cause of the suit, and to all the proofs which he was about to bring forward. After that he took his oath, and declared his case.

After that he brought forward his witnesses of the summons, along with his witnesses that the suit had been handed over to him. All this time Njal was not at the court. Now Gunnar pursued his suit till he called on the defendant to reply. Then Hrut took witness, and said the suit was naught, and that there was a flaw in the pleading; he declared that it had broken down because Gunnar had failed to call those three witnesses which ought to have been brought before the court. The first, that which was taken before the marriage-bed, the second, before the man's door, the third, at the Hill of Laws. By this time Njal was come to the court and said the suit and pleading might still he kept alive if they chose to strive in that way.

"No," says Gunnar, "I will not have that; I will do the same to Hrut as he did to Mord my kinsman; - or, are those brothers Hrut and Hauskuld so near that they may hear my voice?"

"Hear it we can," says Hrut. "What dost thou wish?"

Gunnar said - "Now all men here present be ear-witnesses, that I challenge thee Hrut to single combat, and we shall fight to-day on the holm, which is here in Axewater. But if thou wilt not fight with me, then pay up all the money this very day."

After that Gunnar sung a stave -

Yes, so must it be, this morning -
Now my mind is full of fire -
Hrut with me on yonder island
Raises roar of helm and shield.
All that hear my words bear witness,
Warriors grasping Woden's guard,
Unless the wealthy wight down payeth
Dower of wife with flowing veil.

After that Gunnar went away from the court with all his followers. Hrut and Hauskuld went home too, and the suit was never pursued nor defended from that day forth. Hrut said, as soon as he got inside the booth, "This has never happened to me before, that any man has offered me combat and I have shunned it".

"Then thou must mean to fight," says Hauskuld, "but that shall not be if I have my way; for thou comest no nearer to Gunnar than Mord would have come to thee, and we had better both of us pay up the money to Gunnar."

After that the brothers asked the householders of their own country what they would lay down, and they one and all said they would lay down as much as Hrut wished.

"Let us go then," says Hauskuld, "to Gunner's booth, and pay down the money out of hand." That was told to Gunnar, and he went out into the doorway of the booth, and Hauskuld said -

"Now it is thine to take the money."

Gunnar said -

"Pay it down, then, for I am ready to take it."

So they paid down the money truly out of hand, and then Hauskuld said - "Enjoy it now, as thou hast gotten it". Then Gunnar sang another stave -

Men who wield the blade of battle
Hoarded wealth may well enjoy,
Guileless gotten this at least,
Golden meed I fearless take;
But if we for woman's quarrel,
Warriors born to brandish sword,
Glut the wolf with manly gore,
Worse the lot of both would be.

Hrut answered - "Ill will be thy meed for this".

"Be that as it may," says Gunnar.

Then Hauskuld and his brother went home to their booth, and he had much upon his mind, and said to Hrut -

"Will this unfairness of Gunnar's never be avenged?"

"Not so," says Hrut; "'twill be avenged on him sure enough, but we shall have no share nor profit in that vengeance. And after all it is most likely that he will turn to our stock to seek for friends."

After that they left off speaking of the matter. Gunnar showed Njal the money, and he said - "The suit has gone off well".

"Ay," says Gunnar, "but it was all thy doing."

Now men rode home from the Thing, and Gunnar got very great honour from the suit. Gunnar handed over all the money to Unna, and would have none of it, but said he thought he ought to look for more help from her and her kin hereafter than from other men. She said, so it should be.

Chapter 25

Unna's Second Wedding

There was a man named Valgard, he kept house at Hof by Rangriver, he was the son of Jorund the Priest, and his brother was Wolf Aupriest. Those brothers. Wolf Aupriest, and Valgard the guileful, set off to woo Unna, and she gave herself away to Valgard without the advice of any of her kinsfolk. But Gunnar and Njal, and many others thought ill of that, for he was a cross-grained man and had few friends. They begot between them a son, whose name was Mord, and he is long in this story. When he was grown to man's estate, he worked ill to his kinsfolk, but worst of all to Gunnar. He was a crafty man in his temper, but spiteful in his counsels.

Now we will name Njal's sons. Skarphedinn was the eldest of them. He was a tall man in growth and strong withal; a good swordsman; he could swim like a seal, the swiftest-footed of men, and bold and dauntless; he had a great flow of words and quick utterance; a good skald too; but still for the most part he kept himself well in hand; his hair was dark brown, with crisp curly locks; he had

good eyes; his features were sharp, and his face ashen pale, his nose turned up and his front teeth stuck out, and his mouth was very ugly. Still he was the most soldier-like of men.

Grim was the name of Njal's second son. He was fair of face and wore his hair long. His hair was dark, and he was comelier to look on than Skarphedinn. A tall strong man.

Helgi was the name of Njal's third son. He too was fair of face and had fine hair. He was a strong man and well-skilled in arms. He was a man of sense and knew well how to behave. They were all unwedded at that time, Njal's sons.

Hauskuld was the fourth of Njal's sons. He was base-born. His mother was Rodny, and she was Hauskuld's daughter, the sister of Ingialld of the Springs.

Njal asked Skarphedinn one day if he would take to himself a wife. He bade his father settle the matter. Then Njal asked for his hand Thorhilda, the daughter of Ranvir of Thorolfsfell, and that was why they had another homestead there after that. Skarphedinn got Thorhilda, but he stayed still with his father to the end. Grim wooed Astrid of Deepback; she was a widow and very wealthy. Grim got her to wife, and yet lived on with Njal.

Chapter 26

Of Asgrim and His Children

There was a man named Asgrim. He was Ellidagrim's son. The brother of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son was Sigfus.

Asgrim had two sons, and both of them were named Thorhall. They were both hopeful men. Grim was the name of another of Asgrim's sons, and Thorhalla was his daughter's name. She was the fairest of women, and well behaved.

Njal came to talk with his son Helgi, and said, "I have thought of a match for thee, if thou wilt follow my advice".

"That I will surely," says he, "for I know that thou both meanest me well, and canst do well for me; but whither hast thou turned thine eyes?"

"We will go and woo Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter, for that is the best choice we can make."

Chapter 27

Helgi Njal's Son's Wooing

A little after they rode out across Thurso water, and fared till they came into Tongue. Asgrim was at home, and gave them a hearty welcome; and they were there that night. Next morning they began to talk, and then Njal raised the question of the wooing, and asked for Thorhalla for his son Helgi's hand. Asgrim answered that well, and said there were no men with whom he would be more willing to make this bargain than with them. They fell a-talking then about terms,

and the end of it was that Asgrim betrothed his daughter to Helgi, and the bridal day was named. Gunnar was at that feast, and many other of the best men. After the feast Njal offered to foster in his house Thorhall, Asgrim's son, and he was with Njal long after. He loved Njal more than his own father. Njal taught him law, so that he became the greatest lawyer in Iceland in those days.

Chapter 28

Hallvard Comes Out to Iceland

There came a ship out from Norway, and ran into Arnbæl's Oyce,ö and the master of the ship was Hallvard, the white, a man from the Bay.ö He went to stay at Lithend, and was with Gunnar that winter, and was always asking him to fare abroad with him. Gunnar spoke little about it, but yet said more unlikely things might happen; and about spring he went over to Bergthorsknoll to find out from Njal whether he thought it a wise step in him to go abroad.

"I think it is wise," says Njal; "they will think thee there an honourable man, as thou art."

"Wilt thou perhaps take my goods into thy keeping while I am away, for I wish my brother Kolskegg to fare with me; but I would that thou shouldst see after my household along with my mother."

"I will not throw anything in the way of that," says Njal; "lean on me in this thing as much as thou likest."

"Good go with thee for thy words," says Gunnar, and he rides then home.

The Easterling [the Norseman Hallvard] fell again to talk with Gunnar that he should fare abroad. Gunnar asked if he had ever sailed to other lands? He said he had sailed to every one of them that lay between Norway and Russia, and so, too, I have sailed to Biarmaland.ö

"Wilt thou sail with me eastward ho?" says Gunnar.

"That I will of a surety," says he.

Then Gunnar made up his mind to sail abroad with him. Njal took all Gunnar's goods into his keeping.

Chapter 29

Gunnar Goes Abroad

So Gunnar fared abroad, and Kolskegg with him. They sailed first to Tönsberg,ö and were there that winter. There had then been a shift of rulers in Norway, Harold Grayfell was then dead, and so was Gunnhillda. Earl Hacon the Bad, Sigurd's son, Hacon's son, Gritgarth's son, then ruled the realm. The mother of Hacon was Bergliot, the daughter of Earl Thorir. Her mother was Olof harvest-heal. She was Harold Fair-hair's daughter.

Hallvard asks Gunnar if he would make up his mind to go to Earl Hacon?

"No; I will not do that," says Gunnar. "Hast thou ever a long-ship?"

"I have two," he says.

"Then I would that we two went on warfare; and let us get men to go with us."

"I will do that," says Hallvard.

After that they went to the Bay, and took with them two ships, and fitted them out thence. They had good choice of men, for much praise was said of Gunnar.

"Whither wilt thou first fare?" says Gunnar.

"I wish to go south-east to Hisingen, to see my kinsman Oliver," says Hallvard.

"What dost thou want of him?" says Gunnar.

He answered - "He is a fine brave fellow, and he will be sure to get us some more strength for our voyage".

"Then let us go thither," says Gunnar.

So, as soon as they were "boun," they held on east to Hisingen, and had there a hearty welcome. Gunnar had only been there a short time ere Oliver made much of him. Oliver asks about his voyage, and Hallvard says that Gunnar wishes to go a-warfaring to gather goods for himself.

"There's no use thinking of that," says Oliver, "when ye have no force."

"Well," says Hallvard, "then you may add to it."

"So I do mean to strengthen Gunnar somewhat," says Oliver; "and though thou reckonest thyself my kith and kin, I think there is more good in him."

"What force, now, wilt thou add to ours?" he asks.

"Two long-ships, one with twenty, and the other with thirty seats for rowers."

"Who shall man them?" asks Hallvard.

"I will man one of them with my own house-carles, and the freemen around shall man the other. But still I have found out that strife has come into the river, and I know not whether ye two will be able to get away; for they are in the river."

"Who?" says Hallvard.

"Brothers twain," says Oliver; "one's name is Vandil and the other's Karli, sons of Sjolf the Old, east away out of Gothland."

Hallvard told Gunnar that Oliver had added some ships to theirs, and Gunnar was glad at that. They busked them for their voyage thence, till they were "all-boun". Then Gunnar and Hallvard went before Oliver, and thanked him; he bade them fare warily for the sake of those brothers.

Chapter 30

Gunnar Goes A-Sea-Roving

So Gunnar held on out of the river, and he and Kolskegg were both on board one ship. But Hallvard was on board another. Now, they see the ships before them, and then Gunnar spoke, and said -

"Let us be ready for anything if they turn towards us! but else let us have nothing to do with them."

So they did that, and made all ready on board their ships. The others parted their ships asunder, and made a fareway between the ships. Gunnar fared straight on between the ships, but Vandil caught up a grappling-iron, and cast it between their ships and Gunnar's ship, and began at once to drag it towards him.

Oliver had given Gunnar a good sword; Gunnar now drew it, and had not yet put on his helm. He leapt at once on the fore-castle of Vandil's ship, and gave one man his death-blow. Karli ran his ship alongside the other side of Gunnar's ship, and hurled a spear athwart the deck, and aimed at him about the waist. Gunnar sees this, and turned him about so quickly, that no eye could follow him, and caught the spear with his left hand, and hurled it back at Karli's ship, and that man got his death who stood before it. Kolskegg snatched up a grapnel and casts it at Karli's ship, and the fluke fell inside the hold, and went out through one of the planks, and in rushed the coal-blue sea, and all the men sprang on board other ships.

Now Gunnar leapt back to his own ship, and then Hallvard came up, and now a great battle arose. They saw now that their leader was unflinching, and every man did as well as he could. Sometimes Gunnar smote with the sword, and sometimes he hurled the spear, and many a man had his bane at his hand. Kolskegg backed him well. As for Karli, he hastened in a ship to his brother Vandil, and thence they fought that day. During the day Kolskegg took a rest on Gunnar's ship, and Gunnar sees that. Then he sung a song -

For the eagle ravine-eager,
Raven of my race, to-day
Better surely hast thou catered,
Lord of gold, than for thyself;
Here the morn come greedy ravens,
Many a rill of wolfö to sup,
But thee burning thirst down-beareth,
Prince of battle's Parliament!

After that Kolskegg took a beaker full of mead, and drank it off and went on fighting afterwards; and so it came about that those brothers sprang up on the ship of Vandil and his brother, and Kolskegg went on one side, and Gunnar on the other. Against Gunnar came Vandil, and smote at once at him with his sword, and the blow fell on his shield. Gunnar gave the shield a twist as the sword pierced it, and broke it short off at the hilt. Then Gunnar smote back at Vandil, and three swords seemed to be aloft, and Vandil could not see how to shun the blow. Then Gunnar cut both his legs from under him, and at the same

time Kolskegg ran Karli through with a spear. After that they took great war spoil.

Thence they held on south to Denmark, and thence east to Smoland,ö and had victory wherever they went. They did not come back in autumn. The next summer they held on to Reval, and fell in there with sea-rovers, and fought at once, and won the fight. After that they steered east to Osel,ö and lay there somewhere under a ness. There they saw a man coming down from the ness above them; Gunnar went on shore to meet the man, and they had a talk. Gunnar asked him his name, and he said it was Tofi. Gunnar asked again what he wanted.

"Thee I want to see," says the man. "Two warships lie on the other side under the ness, and I will tell thee who command them: two brothers are the captains - one's name is Hallgrim, and the other's Kolskegg. I know them to be mighty men of war; and I know too that they have such good weapons that the like are not to be had. Hallgrim has a bill which he had made by seething-spells; and this is what the spells say, that no weapon shall give him his death-blow save that bill. That thing follows it too that it is known at once when a man is to be slain with that bill, for something sings in it so loudly that it may be heard a long way off - such a strong nature has that bill in it."

Then Gunnar sang a song -

Soon shall I that spearhead seize,
And the bold sea-rover slay,
Him whose blows on headpiece ring,
Heaper up of piles of dead.
Then on Endil's courserö bounding,
O'er the sea-depths I will ride,
While the wretch who spells abuseth,
Life shall lose in Sigar's storm.ö

"Kolskegg has a short sword; that is also the best of weapons. Force, too, they have - a third more than ye. They have also much goods, and have stowed them away on land, and I know clearly where they are. But they have sent a spy-ship off the ness, and they know all about you. Now they are getting themselves ready as fast as they can; and as soon as they are 'boun,' they mean to run out against you. Now you have either to row away at once, or to busk yourselves as quickly as ye can; but if ye win the day, then I will lead you to all their store of goods."

Gunnar gave him a golden finger-ring, and went afterwards to his men and told them that war-ships lay on the other side of the ness, "and they know all about us; so let us take to our arms, and busk us well, for now there is gain to be got".

Then they busked them; and just when they were boun they see ships coming up to them. And now a fight sprung up between them, and they fought long, and many men fell. Gunnar slew many a man. Hallgrim and his men leapt on board Gunnar's ship, Gunnar turns to meet him, and Hallgrim thrust at him with his bill. There was a boom athwart the ship, and Gunnar leapt nimbly back over it, Gunnar's shield was just before the boom, and Hallgrim thrust his bill into it, and through it, and so on into the boom. Gunnar cut at Hallgrim's arm hard, and

lamed the forearm, but the sword would not bite. Then down fell the bill, and Gunnar seized the bill, and thrust Hallgrim through, and then sang a song -

Slain is he who spoiled the people,
Lashing them with flashing steel:
Heard have I how Hallgrim's magic
Helm-rod forged in foreign land;
All men know, of heart-strings doughty,
How this bill hath come to me,
Deft in fight, the wolf's dear feeder.
Death alone us two shall part.

And that vow Gunnar kept, in that he bore the bill while he lived. Those namesakes [the two Kolskeggs] fought together, and it was a near thing which would get the better of it. Then Gunnar came up, and gave the other Kolskegg his death-blow. After that the sea-rovers begged for mercy. Gunnar let them have that choice, and he let them also count the slain, and take the goods which the dead men owned, but he gave the others whom he spared their arms and their clothing, and bade them be off to the lands that fostered them. So they went off and Gunnar took all the goods that were left behind.

Tofi came to Gunnar after the battle, and offered to lead him to that store of goods which the sea-rovers had stowed away, and said that it was both better and larger than that which they had already got.

Gunnar said he was willing to go, and so he went ashore, and Tofi before him, to a wood, and Gunnar behind him. They came to a place where a great heap of wood was piled together. Tofi says the goods were under there, then they tossed off the wood, and found under it both gold and silver, clothes and good weapons. They bore those goods to the ships, and Gunnar asks Tofi in what way he wished him to repay him.

Tofi answered, "I am a Dansk man by race, and I wish thou wouldst bring me to my kinsfolk".

Gunnar asks why he was there away east?

"I was taken by sea-rovers," says Tofi, "and they put me on land here in Osel, and here I have been ever since."

Chapter 31

Gunnar Goes to King Harold Gorm's Son and Earl Hacon

Gunnar took Tofi on board, and said to Kolskegg and Hallvard, "Now we will hold our course for the north lands".

They were well pleased at that, and bade him have his way. So Gunnar sailed from the east with much goods. He had ten ships, and ran in with them to Heidarby in Denmark. King Harold Gorm's son was there up the country, and he was told about Gunnar, and how too that there was no man his match in all

Iceland. He sent men to him to ask him to come to him, and Gunnar went at once to see the king, and the king made him a hearty welcome, and sat him down next to himself. Gunnar was there half a month. The king made himself sport by letting Gunnar prove himself in divers feats of strength against his men, and there were none that were his match even in one feat.

Then the king said to Gunnar, "It seems to me as though thy peer is not to be found far or near," and the king offered to get Gunnar a wife, and to raise him to great power if he would settle down there.

Gunnar thanked the king for his offer and said - "I will first of all sail back to Iceland to see my friends and kinsfolk".

"Then thou wilt never come back to us," says the king.

"Fate will settle that, lord," says Gunnar.

Gunnar gave the king a good long-ship, and much goods besides, and the king gave him a robe of honour, and golden-seamed gloves, and a fillet with a knot of gold on it, and a Russian hat.

Then Gunnar fared north to Hisingen. Oliver welcomed him with both hands, and he gave back to Oliver his ships, with their lading, and said that was his share of the spoil. Oliver took the goods, and said Gunnar was a good man and true, and bade him stay with him some while. Hallvard asked Gunnar if he had a mind to go to see Earl Hacon. Gunnar said that was near his heart, "for now I am somewhat proved, but then I was not tried at all when thou badest me do this before".

After that they fared north to Drontheim to see Earl Hacon, and he gave Gunnar a hearty welcome, and bade him stay with him that winter, and Gunnar took that offer, and every man thought him a man of great worth. At Yule the Earl gave him a gold ring.

Gunnar set his heart on Bergliota, the Earl's kinswoman, and it was often to be seen from the Earl's way, that he would have given her to him to wife if Gunnar had said anything about that.

Chapter 32

Gunnar Comes Out to Iceland

When the spring came, the Earl asks Gunnar what course he meant to take. He said he would go to Iceland. The Earl said that had been a bad year for grain, "and there will be little sailing out to Iceland, but still thou shalt have meal and timber both in thy ship".

Gunnar fitted out his ship as early as he could, and Hallvard fared out with him and Kolskegg. They came out early in the summer, and made Arnbæl's Oyce before the Thing met.

Gunnar rode home from the ship, but got men to strip her and lay her up. But when they came home all men were glad to see them. They were blithe and

merry to their household, nor had their haughtiness grown while they were away.

Gunnar asks if Njal were at home; and he was told that he was at home; then he let them saddle his horse, and those brothers rode over to Bergthorskknoll.

Njal was glad at their coming, and begged them to stay there that night, and Gunnar told him of his voyages.

Njal said he was a man of the greatest mark, "and thou hast been much proved; but still thou wilt be more tried hereafter; for many will envy thee".

"With all men I would wish to stand well," says Gunnar.

"Much bad will happen," says Njal, "and thou wilt always have some quarrel to ward off."

"So be it, then," says Gunnar, "so that I have a good ground on my side."

"So will it be too," says Njal, "if thou hast not to smart for others."

Njal asked Gunnar if he would ride to the Thing. Gunnar said he was going to ride thither, and asks Njal whether he were going to ride; but he said he would not ride thither, "and if I had my will thou wouldst do the like".

Gunnar rode home, and gave Njal good gifts, and thanked him for the care he had taken of his goods, Kolskegg urged him on much to ride to the Thing, saying, "There thy honour will grow, for many will flock to see thee there".

"That has been little to my mind," says Gunnar, "to make a show of myself; but I think it good and right to meet good and worthy men."

Hallvard by this time was also come thither, and offered to ride to the Thing with them.

Chapter 33

Gunnar's Wooing

So Gunnar rode, and they all rode. But when they came to the Thing they were so well arrayed that none could match them in bravery; and men came out of every booth to wonder at them. Gunnar rode to the booths of the men of Rangriver, and was there with his kinsmen. Many men came to see Gunnar, and ask tidings of him; and he was easy and merry to all men, and told them all they wished to hear.

It happened one day that Gunnar went away from the Hill of Laws, and passed by the booths of the men from Mossfell; then he saw a woman coming to meet him, and she was in goodly attire; but when they met she spoke to Gunnar at once. He took her greeting well, and asks what woman she might be. She told him her name was Hallgerda, and said she was Hauskuld's daughter, Dalakoll's son. She spoke up boldly to him, and bade him tell her of his voyages; but he said he would not gainsay her a talk. Then they sat them down and talked. She was so clad that she had on a red kirtle, and had thrown over her a scarlet

cloak trimmed with needlework down to the waist. Her hair came down to her bosom, and was both fair and full. Gunnar was clad in the scarlet clothes which King Harold Gorm's son had given him; he had also the gold ring on his arm which Earl Hacon had given him.

So they talked long out loud, and at last it came about that he asked whether she were unmarried. She said, so it was, "and there are not many who would run the risk of that".

"Thinkest thou none good enough for thee?"

"Not that," she says, "but I am said to be hard to please in husbands."

"How wouldst thou answer were I to ask for thee?"

"That can not be in thy mind," she says.

"It is though," says he.

"If thou hast any mind that way, go and see my father."

After that they broke off their talk.

Gunnar went straightway to the Dalesmen's booths, and met a man outside the doorway, and asks whether Hauskuld were inside the booth?

The man says that he was. Then Gunnar went in, and Hauskuld and Hrut made him welcome. He sat down between them, and no one could find out from their talk that there had ever been any misunderstanding between them. At last Gunnar's speech turned thither; how these brothers would answer if he asked for Hallgerda?

"Well," says Hauskuld, "if that is indeed thy mind."

Gunnar says that he is in earnest, "but we so parted last time, that many would think it unlikely that we should ever be bound together".

"How thinkest thou, kinsman Hrut?" says Hauskuld.

Hrut answered, "Methinks this is no even match".

"How dost thou make that out?" says Gunnar.

Hrut spoke - "In this wise will I answer thee about this matter, as is the very truth. Thou art a brisk brave man, well to do, and unblemished; but she is much mixed up with ill report, and I will not cheat thee in anything."

"Good go with thee for thy words," says Gunnar, "but still I shall hold that for true, that the old feud weighs with ye, if ye will not let me make this match."

"Not so," says Hrut, "'tis more because I see that thou art unable to help thyself; but though we make no bargain, we would still be thy friends."

"I have talked to her about it," says Gunnar, "and it is not far from her mind."

Hrut says - "I know that you have both set your hearts on this match; and, besides, ye two are those who run the most risk as to how it turns out".

Hrut told Gunnar unasked all about Hallgerda's temper, and Gunnar at first thought that there was more than enough that was wanting; but at last it came about that they struck a bargain.

Then Hallgerda was sent for, and they talked over the business when she was by, and now, as before, they made her betroth herself. The bridal feast was to be at Lithend, and at first they were to set about it secretly; but the end after all was that every one knew of it.

Gunnar rode home from the Thing, and came to Bergthorsknoll, and told Njal of the bargain he had made. He took it heavily.

Gunnar asks Njal why he thought this so unwise?

"Because from her," says Njal, "will arise all kind of ill if she comes hither east."

"Never shall she spoil our friendship," says Gunnar.

"Ah! but yet that may come very near," says Njal; "and, besides, thou wilt have always to make atonement for her."

Gunnar asked Njal to the wedding, and all those as well whom he wished should be at it from Njal's house.

Njal promised to go; and after that Gunnar rode home, and then rode about the district to bid men to his wedding.

Chapter 34 Of Thrain Sigfus' Son

There was a man named Thrain, he was the son of Sigfus, the son of Sighvat the Red. He kept house at Gritwater on Fleetlithe. He was Gunnar's kinsman, and a man of great mark. He had to wife Thorhilda Skaldwife; she had a sharp tongue of her own, and was giving to jeering. Thrain loved her little. He and his wife were bidden to the wedding, and she and Bergthora, Skarphedinn's daughter, Njal's wife, waited on the guests with meat and drink.

Kettle was the name of the second son of Sigfus; he kept house in the Mark, east of Markfleet. He had to wife Thorgerda, Njal's daughter. Thorkell was the name of the third son of Sigfus; the fourth's name was Mord; the fifth's Lambi; the sixth's Sigmund; the seventh's Sigurd. These were all Gunnar's kinsmen, and great champions. Gunnar bade them all to the wedding.

Gunnar had also bidden Valgard the guileful, and Wolf Aurlpriest, and their sons Runolf and Mord.

Hauskuld and Hrut came to the wedding with a very great company, and the sons of Hauskuld, Torleik, and Olof, were there; the bride, too, came along with them, and her daughter Thorgerda came also, and she was one of the fairest of women; she was then fourteen winters old. Many other women were with her, and besides there were Thorkatla Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter, and Njal's two daughters, Thorgerda and Helga.

Gunnar had already many guests to meet them, and he thus arranged his men. He sat on the middle of the bench, and on the inside, away from him, Thrain Sigfus' son, then Wolf Aurlpriest, then Valgard the guileful, then Mord and Runolf, then the other sons of Sigfus, Lambi sat outermost of them.

Next to Gunnar on the outside, away from him, sat Njal, then Skarphedinn, then Helgi, then Grim, then Hauskuld Njal's son, then Hafr the Wise, then Ingialld from the Springs, then the sons of Thorir from Holt away east. Thorir would sit outermost of the men of mark, for every one was pleased with the seat he got.

Hauskuld, the bride's father, sat on the middle of the bench over against Gunnar, but his sons sat on the inside away from him; Hrut sat on the outside away from Hauskuld, but it is not said how the others were placed. The bride sat in the middle of the cross-bench on the dais; but on one hand of her sat her daughter Thorgerda, and on the other Thorkatla Asgrim Ellidagrim's son's daughter.

Thorhillda went about waiting on the guests, and Bergthora bore the meat on the board.

Now Thrain Sigfus' son kept staring at Thorgerda Glum's daughter; his wife Thorhillda saw this, and she got wroth, and made a couplet upon him.

"Thrain," she says,

"Gaping mouths are no wise good,
Goggle eyne are in thy head,"

He rose at once up from the board, and said he would put Thorhillda away, "I will not bear her jibes and jeers any longer;" and he was so quarrelsome about this, that he would not be at the feast unless she were driven away. And so it was, that she went away; and now each man sat in his place, and they drank and were glad.

Then Thrain began to speak - "I will not whisper about that which is in my mind. This I will ask thee, Hauskuld Dalakoll's son, wilt thou give me to wife Thorgerda, thy kinswoman?"

"I do not know that," says Hauskuld; "methinks thou art ill parted from the one thou hadst before. But what kind of man is he, Gunnar?"

Gunnar answers - "I will not say aught about the man, because he is near of kin; but say thou about him, Njal," says Gunnar, "for all men will believe it".

Njal spoke, and said - "That is to be said of this man, that the man is well to do for wealth, and a proper man in all things. A man, too, of the greatest mark; so that ye may well make this match with him."

Then Hauskuld spoke - "What thinkest thou we ought to do, kinsman Hrut?"

"Thou mayst make the match, because it is an even one for her," says Hrut.

Then they talk about the terms of the bargain, and are soon of one mind on all points.

Then Gunnar stands up, and Thrain too, and they go to the cross-bench. Gunnar asked that mother and daughter whether they would say yes to this

bargain. They said they would find no fault with it, and Hallgerda betrothed her daughter. Then the places of the women were shifted again, and now Thorhalla sate between the brides. And now the feast sped on well, and when it was over, Hauskuld and his company ride west, but the men of Rangriver rode to their own abode. Gunnar gave many men gifts, and that made him much liked.

Hallgerda took the housekeeping under her, and stood up for her rights in word and deed. Thorgerda took to housekeeping at Gritwater, and was a good housewife.

Chapter 35

The Visit to Bergthorsknoll

Now it was the custom between Gunnar and Njal, that each made the other a feast, winter and winter about, for friendship's sake; and it was Gunnar's turn to go to feast at Njal's. So Gunnar and Hallgerda set off for Bergthorsknoll, and when they got there Helgi and his wife were not at home. Njal gave Gunnar and his wife a hearty welcome, and when they had been there a little while, Helgi came home with Thorhalla his wife. Then Bergthora went up to the cross-bench, and Thorhalla with her, and Bergthora said to Hallgerda -

"Thou shalt give place to this woman."

She answered - "To no one will I give place, for I will not be driven into the corner for any one".

"I shall rule here," said Bergthora, After that Thorhalla sat down, and Bergthora went round the table with water to wash the guests' hands. Then Hallgerda took hold of Bergthora's hand, and said -

"There's not much to choose, though, between you two. Thou hast hangnails on every finger, and Njal is beardless."

"That's true," says Bergthora, "yet neither of us finds fault with the other for it; but Thorwald, thy husband, was not beardless, and yet thou plottedst his death."

Then Hallgerda said - "It stands me in little stead to have the bravest man in Iceland if thou dost not avenge this, Gunnar!"

He sprang up and strode across away from the board, and said - "Home I will go, and it were more seemly that thou shouldest wrangle with those of thine own household, and not under other men's roofs; but as for Njal, I am his debtor for much honour, and never will I be egged on by thee like a fool".

After that they set off home.

"Mind this, Bergthora," said Hallgerda, "that we shall meet again."

Bergthora said she should not be better off for that. Gunnar said nothing at all, but went home to Lithend, and was there at home all the winter. And now the summer was running on towards the Great Thing.

Chapter 36

Kol Slew Swart

Gunnar rode away to the Thing, but before he rode from home he said to Hallgerda - "Be good now while I am away, and show none of thine ill temper in anything with which my friends have to do".

"The trolls take thy friends," says Hallgerda.

So Gunnar rode to the Thing, and saw it was not good to come to words with her. Njal rode to the Thing too, and all his sons with him.

Now it must be told of what tidings happened at home. Njal and Gunnar owned a wood in common at Redslip; they had not shared the wood, but each was wont to hew in it as he needed, and neither said a word to the other about that. Hallgerda's grieve'sö name was Kol; he had been with her long, and was one of the worst of men. There was a man named Swart; he was Njal's and Bergthora's house-carle; they were very fond of him. Now Bergthora told him that he must go up into Redslip and hew wood; but she said - "I will get men to draw home the wood".

He said he would do the work She set him to win; and so he went up into Redslip, and was to be there a week.

Some gangrel men came to Lithend from the east across Markfleet, and said that Swart had been in Redslip, and hewn wood, and done a deal of work.

"So," says Hallgerda, "Bergthora must mean to rob me in many things, but I'll take care that he does not hew again."

Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, heard that, and said - "There have been good housewives before now, though they never set their hearts on manslaughter".

Now the night wore away, and early next morning Hallgerda came to speak to Kol, and said - "I have thought of some work for thee"; and with that she put weapons into his hands, and went on to say - "Fare thou to Redslip; there wilt thou find Swart".

"What shall I do to him?" he says.

"Askest thou that when thou art the worst of men?" she says. "Thou shalt kill him."

"I can get that done," he says, "but 'tis more likely that I shall lose my own life for it."

"Everything grows big in thy eyes," she says, "and thou behavest ill to say this after I have spoken up for thee in everything. I must get another man to do this if thou darest not."

He took the axe, and was very wroth, and takes a horse that Gunnar owned, and rides now till he comes east of Markfleet. There he got off and bided in the wood, till they had carried down the firewood, and Swart was left alone behind.

Then Kol sprang on him, and said - "More folk can hew great strokes than thou alone"; and so he laid the axe on his head, and smote him his death-blow, and rides home afterwards, and tells Hallgerda of the slaying.

She said - "I shall take such good care of thee, that no harm shall come to thee".

"May be so," says he, "but I dreamt all the other way as I slept ere I did the deed."

Now they come up into the wood, and find Swart slain, and bear him home. Hallgerda sent a man to Gunnar at the Thing to tell him of the slaying. Gunnar said no hard words at first of Hallgerda to the messenger, and men knew not at first whether he thought well or ill of it. A little after he stood up, and bade his men go with him: they did so, and fared to Njal's booth. Gunnar sent a man to fetch Njal, and begged him to come out. Njal went out at once, and he and Gunnar fell a-talking, and Gunnar said -

"I have to tell thee of the slaying of a man, and my wife and my grieve Kol were those who did it; but Swart, thy house-carle, fell before them."

Njal held his peace while he told him the whole story. Then Njal spoke -

"Thou must take heed not to let her have her way in everything."

Gunnar said - "Thou thyself shall settle the terms".

Njal spoke again - "'Twill be hard work for thee to atone for all Hallgerda's mischief; and somewhere else there will be a broader trail to follow than this which we two now have a share in, and yet, even here there will be much awaiting before all be well; and herein we shall need to bear in mind the friendly words that passed between us of old; and something tells me that thou wilt come well out of it, but still thou wilt be sore tried".

Then Njal took the award into his own hands from Gunnar, and said -

"I will not push this matter to the uttermost; thou shalt pay twelve ounces of silver; but I will add this to my award, that if anything happens from our homestead about which thou hast to utter an award, thou wilt not be less easy in thy terms".

Gunnar paid up the money out of hand, and rode home afterwards. Njal, too, came home from the Thing, and his sons. Bergthora saw the money, and said -

"This is very justly settled; but even as much money shall be paid for Kol as time goes on."

Gunnar came home from the Thing and blamed Hallgerda. She said, better men lay unatoned in many places, Gunnar said, she might have her way in beginning a quarrel, "but how the matter is to be settled rests with me".

Hallgerda was for ever chattering of Swart's slaying, but Bergthora liked that ill. Once Njal and her sons went up to Thorolf'sfell to see about the housekeeping there, but that selfsame day this thing happened when Bergthora was out of doors: she sees a man ride up to the house on a black horse. She stayed there

and did not go in, for she did not know the man. That man had a spear in his hand, and was girded with a short sword. She asked this man his name.

"Atli is my name," says he.

She asked whence he came.

"I am an Eastfirther," he says.

"Whither shalt thou go?" she says.

"I am a homeless man," says he, "and I thought to see Njal and Skarphedinn, and know if they would take me in."

"What work is handiest to thee?" says she.

"I am a man used to field-work," he says, "and many things else come very handy to me; but I will not hide from thee that I am a man of hard temper and it has been many a man's lot before now to bind up wounds at my hand."

"I do not blame thee," she says, "though thou art no milksop."

Atli said - "Hast thou any voice in things here?"

"I am Njal's wife," she says, "and I have as much to say to our housefolk as he."

"Wilt thou take me in then?" says he.

"I will give thee thy choice of that," says she. "If thou wilt do all the work that I set before thee, and that though I wish to send thee where a man's life is at stake."

"Thou must have so many men at thy beck," says he, "that thou wilt not need me for such work."

"That I will settle as I please," she says.

"We will strike a bargain on these terms," says he.

Then she took him into the household. Njal and his sons came home and asked Bergthora what man that might be?

"He is thy house-carle," she says, "and I took him in." Then she went on to say he was no sluggard at work.

"He will be a great worker enough, I daresay," says Njal, "but I do not know whether he will be such a good worker."

Skarphedinn was good to Atli.

Njal and his sons ride to the Thing in the course of the summer; Gunnar was also at the Thing.

Njal took out a purse of money.

"What money is that, father?"

"Here is the money that Gunnar paid me for our house-carle last summer."

"That will come to stand thee in some stead," says Skarphedinn, and smiled as he spoke.

Chapter 37

The Slaying of Kol, Whom Atli Slew

Now we must take up the story, and say that Atli asked Bergthora what work he should do that day.

"I have thought of some work for thee," she says; "thou shalt go and look for Kol until thou find him; for now shalt thou slay him this very day, if thou wilt do my will."

"This work is well fitted," says Atli, "for each of us two are bad fellows; but still I will so lay myself out for him that one or other of us shall die."

"Well mayest thou fare," she says, "and thou shalt not do this deed for nothing."

He took his weapons and his horse, and rode up to Fleetlithe, and there met men who were coming down from Lithend. They were at home east in the Mark. They asked Atli whither he meant to go? He said he was riding to look for an old jade. They said that was a small errand for such a workman, "but still 'twould be better to ask those who have been about last night".

"Who are they?" says he.

"Killing-Kol," say they, "Hallgerda's house-carle, fared from the fold just now, and has been awake all night."

"I do not know whether I dare to meet him," says Atli, "he is bad-tempered, and may be that I shall let another's wound be my warning."

"Thou bearest that look beneath the brows as though thou wert no coward," they said, and showed him where Kol was.

Then he spurred his horse and rides fast, and when he meets Kol, Atli said to him -

"Go the pack-saddle bands well?"

"That's no business of thine, worthless fellow, nor of any one else whence thou comest."

Atli said - "Thou hast something behind that is earnest work, but that is to die".

After that Atli thrust at him with his spear, and struck him about his middle. Kol swept at him with his axe, but missed him, and fell off his horse, and died at once.

Atli rode till he met some of Hallgerda's workmen, and said, "Go ye up to the horse yonder, and look to Kol, for he has fallen off, and is dead".

"Hast thou slain him?" say they.

"Well, 'twill seem to Hallgerda as though he has not fallen by his own hand."

After that Atli rode home and told Bergthora; she thanked him for this deed, and for the words which he had spoken about it.

"I do not know," says he, "what Njal will think of this."

"He will take it well upon his hands," she says, "and I will tell thee one thing as a token of it, that he has earned away with him to the Thing the price of that thrall which we took last spring, and that money will now serve for Kol; but though peace be made thou must still beware of thyself, for Hallgerda will keep no peace."

"Wilt thou send at all a man to Njal to tell him of the slaying?"

"I will not," she says, "I should like it better that Kol were unatoned."

Then they stopped talking about it.

Hallgerda was told of Kol's slaying, and of the words that Atli had said. She said Atli should be paid off for them. She sent a man to the Thing to tell Gunnar of Kol's slaying; he answered little or nothing, and sent a man to tell Njal. He too made no answer, but Skarphedinn said -

"Thralls are men of more mettle than of yore; they used to fly at each other and fight, and no one thought much harm of that; but now they will do naught but kill," and as he said this he smiled.

Njal pulled down the purse of money which hung up in the booth, and went out; his sons went with him to Gunnar's booth.

Skarphedinn said to a man who was in the doorway of the booth -

"Say thou to Gunnar that my father wants to see him."

He did so, and Gunnar went out at once and gave Njal a hearty welcome. After that they began to talk.

"'Tis ill done," says Njal, "that my housewife should have broken the peace, and let thy house-carle be slain."

"She shall not have blame for that," says Gunnar.

"Settle the award thyself," says Njal.

"So I will do," say Gunnar, "and I value those two men at an even price, Swart and Kol. Thou shalt pay me twelve ounces in silver."

Njal took the purse of money and handed it to Gunnar. Gunnar knew the money, and saw it was the same that he had paid Njal. Njal went away to his booth, and they were just as good friends as before. When Njal came home, he blamed Bergthora; but she said she would never give way to Hallgerda. Hallgerda was very cross with Gunnar, because he had made peace for Kol's slaying, Gunnar told her he would never break with Njal or his sons, and she flew into a great rage; but Gunnar took no heed of that, and so they sat for that year, and nothing noteworthy happened.

Chapter 38

The Killing of Atli the Thrall

Next spring Njal said to Atli - "I wish that thou wouldst change thy abode to the east firths, so that Hallgerda may not put an end to thy life".

"I am not afraid of that," says Atli, "and I will willingly stay at home if I have the choice."

"Still that is less wise," says Njal.

"I think it better to lose my life in thy house than to change my master; but this I will beg of thee, if I am slain, that a thrall's price shall not be paid for me."

"Thou shalt be atoned for as a free man; but perhaps Bergthora will make thee a promise which she will fulfil, that revenge, man for man, shall be taken for thee."

Then he made up his mind to be a hired servant there.

Now it must be told of Hallgerda that she sent a man west to Bearfirth, to fetch Brynjolf the Unruly, her kinsman. He was a base son of Swan, and he was one of the worst of men. Gunnar knew nothing about it. Hallgerda said he was well fitted to be a grieve. So Brynjolf came from the west, and Gunnar asked what he was to do there? He said he was going to stay there.

"Thou wilt not better our household," says Gunnar, "after what has been told me of thee, but I will not turn away any of Hallgerda's kinsmen, whom she wishes to be with her."

Gunnar said little, but was not unkind to him, and so things went on till the Thing. Gunnar rides to the Thing and Kolskegg rides too, and when they came to the Thing they and Njal met, for he and his sons were at the Thing, and all went well with Gunnar and them.

Bergthora said to Atli - "Go thou up into Thorolfsfell and work there a week".

So he went up thither, and was there on the sly, and burnt charcoal in the wood.

Hallgerda said to Brynjolf - "I have been told Atli is not at home, and he must be winning work on Thorolfsfell".

"What thinkest thou likeliest that he is working at?" says he.

"At something in the wood," she says.

"What shall I do to him?" he asks.

"Thou shalt kill him," says she.

He was rather slow in answering her, and Hallgerda said -

"'Twould grow less in Thiofolf's eyes to kill Atli if he were alive."

"Thou shalt have no need to goad me on much more," he says, and then he seized his weapons, and takes his horse and mounts, and rides to Thorolfsfell. There he saw a great reek of coal smoke east of the homestead, so he rides

thither, and gets off his horse and ties him up, but he goes where the smoke was thickest. Then he sees where the charcoal pit is, and a man stands by it. He saw that he had thrust his spear in the ground by him. Brynjolf goes along with the smoke right up to him, but he was eager at his work, and saw him not. Brynjolf gave him a stroke on the head with his axe, and he turned so quick round that Brynjolf loosed his hold of the axe, and Atli grasped the spear, and hurled it after him. Then Brynjolf cast himself down on the ground, but the spear flew away over him.

"Lucky for thee that I was not ready for thee," says Atli, "but now Hallgerda will be well pleased, for thou wilt tell her of my death; but it is a comfort to know that thou wilt have the same fate soon; but come now, take thy axe which has been here."

He answered him never a word, nor did he take the axe before he was dead. Then he rode up to the house on Thorolfsfell, and told of the slaying, and after that rode home and told Hallgerda. She sent men to Bergthorsknoll, and let them tell Bergthora, that now Kol's slaying was paid for.

After that Hallgerda sent a man to the Thing to tell Gunnar of Atli's killing.

Gunnar stood up, and Kolskegg with him, and Kolskegg said -

"Unthrifty will Hallgerda's kinsmen be to thee."

Then they go to see Njal, and Gunnar said -

"I have to tell thee of Atli's killing." He told him also who slew him, and went on, "and now I will bid thee atonement for the deed, and thou shall make the award thyself".

Njal said - "We two have always meant never to come to strife about anything; but still I cannot make him out a thrall".

Gunnar said that was all right, and stretched out his hand.

Njal named his witnesses, and they made peace on those terms.

Skarphedinn said, "Hallgerda does not let our house-carles die of old age".

Gunnar said - "Thy mother will take care that blow goes for blow between the houses".

"Ay, ay," says Njal, "there will be enough of that work."

After that Njal fixed the price at a hundred in silver, but Gunnar paid it down at once. Many who stood by said that the award was high; Gunnar got wroth, and said that a full atonement was often paid for those who were no brisker men than Atli.

With that they rode home from the Thing.

Bergthora said to Njal when she saw the money - "Thou thinkest thou hast fulfilled thy promise, but now my promise is still behind".

"There is no need that thou shouldst fulfil it," says Njal.

"Nay," says she, "thou hast guessed it would be so; and so it shall be."

Hallgerda said to Gunnar -

"Hast thou paid a hundred in silver for Atli's slaying, and made him a free man?"

"He was free before," says Gunnar, "and besides, I will not make Njal's household outlaws who have forfeited their rights."

"There's not a pin to choose between you," she said, "for both of you are so blate."

"That's as things prove," says he.

Then Gunnar was for a long time very short with her, till she gave way to him; and now all was still for the rest of that year; in the spring Njal did not increase his household, and now men ride to the Thing about summer.

Chapter 39

The Slaying of Brynjolf the Unruly

There was a man named Thord, he was surnamed Freedmanson. Sigtrygg was his father's name, and he had been the freedman of Asgerd, and he was drowned in Markfleet. That was why Thord was with Njal afterwards. He was a tall man and a strong, and he had fostered all Njal's sons. He had set his heart on Gudfinna Thorolf's daughter, Njal's kinswoman; she was housekeeper at home there, and was then with child.

Now Bergthora came to talk with Thord Freedmanson; she said -

"Thou shalt go to kill Brynjolf, Hallgerda's kinsman."

"I am no man-slayer," he says, "but still I will do what ever thou wilt."

"This is my will," she says.

After that he went up to Lithend, and made them call Hallgerda out, and asked where Brynjolf might be.

"What's thy will with him?" she says.

"I want him to tell me where he has hidden Atli's body; I have heard say that he has buried it badly."

She pointed to him, and said he was down yonder in Acretongue.

"Take heed," says Thord, "that the same thing does not befall him as befell Atli."

"Thou art no man-slayer," she says, "and so nought will come of it even if ye two do meet."

"Never have I seen man's blood, nor do I know how I should feel if I did," he says, and gallops out of the "town" and down to Acretongue.

Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, had heard their talk.

"Thou goadest his mind much, Hallgerda," she says, "but I think him a dauntless man, and that thy kinsman will find."

They met on the beaten way, Thord and Brynjolf; and Thord said - "Guard thee, Brynjolf, for I will do no dastard's deed by thee".

Brynjolf rode at Thord, and smote at him with his axe. He smote at him at the same time with his axe, and hewed in sunder the haft just above Brynjolf's hands, and then hewed at him at once a second time, and struck him on the collarbone, and the blow went straight into his trunk. Then he fell from horseback, and was dead on the spot.

Thord met Hallgerda's herdsman, and gave out the slaying as done by his hand, and said where he lay, and bade him tell Hallgerda of the slaying. After that he rode home to Bergthorsknull, and told Bergthora of the slaying, and other people too.

"Good luck go with thy hands," she said.

The herdsman told Hallgerda of the slaying; she was snappish at it, and said much ill would come of it, if she might have her way.

Chapter 40

Gunnar and Njal Make Peace about Brynjolf's Slaying

Now these tidings come to the Thing, and Njal made them tell him the tale thrice, and then he said -

"More men now become man-slayers than I weened."

Skarphedinn spoke - "That man, though, must have been twice fey," he says, "who lost his life by our foster-father's hand, who has never seen man's blood. And many would think that we brothers would sooner have done this deed with the turn of temper that we have."

"Scant apace wilt thou have," says Njal, "ere the like befalls thee; but need will drive thee to it."

Then they went to meet Gunnar, and told him of the slaying. Gunnar spoke and said that was little manscathe, "but yet he was a free man".

Njal offered to make peace at once, and Gunnar said yes, and he was to settle the terms himself. He made his award there and then, and laid it at one hundred in silver. Njal paid down the money on the spot, and they were at peace after that.

Chapter 41

Sigmund Comes Out to Iceland

There was a man whose name was Sigmund. He was the son of Lambi, the son of Sighvat the Red. He was a great voyager, and a comely and a courteous man; tall too, and strong. He was a man of proud spirit, and a good skald, and well trained in most feats of strength. He was noisy and boisterous, and given to

jibes and mocking. He made the land east in Hornfirth. Skiold was the name of his fellow-traveller; he was a Swedish man, and ill to do with. They took horse and rode from the east out of Hornfirth, and did not draw bridle before they came to Lithend, in the Fleetlithe. Gunnar gave them a hearty welcome, for the bonds of kinship were close between them. Gunnar begged Sigmund to stay there that winter, and Sigmund said he would take the offer if Skiold his fellow might be there too.

"Well, I have been so told about him," said Gunnar, "that he is no better of thy temper; but as it is, thou rather needest to have it bettered. This, too, is a bad house to stay at, and I would just give both of you a bit of advice, my kinsmen, not to fire up at the egging on of my wife Hallgerda; for she takes much in hand that is far from my will."

"His hands are clean who warns another," says Sigmund.

"Then mind the advice given thee," says Gunnar, "for thou art sure to be sore tried; and go along always with me, and lean upon my counsel."

After that they were in Gunnar's company. Hallgerda was good to Sigmund; and it soon came about that things grew so warm that she loaded him with money, and tended him no worse than her own husband; and many talked about that, and did not know what lay under it.

One day Hallgerda said to Gunnar - "It is not good to be content with that hundred in silver which thou tookest for my kinsman Brynjolf. I shall avenge him if I may," she says.

Gunnar said he had no mind to bandy words with her, and went away. He met Kolskegg, and said to him, "Go and see Njal; and tell him that Thord must beware of himself though peace has been made, for, methinks, there is faithlessness somewhere".

He rode off and told Njal, but Njal told Thord, and Kolskegg rode home, and Njal thanked them for their faithfulness.

Once on a time they two were out in the "town," Njal and Thord; a he-goat was wont to go up and down in the "town," and no one was allowed to drive him away. Then Thord spoke and said -

"Well, this is a wondrous thing!"

"What is it that thou see'st that seems after a wondrous fashion?" says Njal.

"Methinks the goat lies here in the hollow, and he is all one gore of blood."

Njal said that there was no goat there, nor anything else.

"What is it then?" says Thord.

"Thou must be a 'fey' man," says Njal, "and thou must have seen the fetch that follows thee, and now be ware of thyself."

"That will stand me in no stead," says Thord, "if death is doomed for me."

Then Hallgerda came to talk with Thrain Sigfus' son, and said - "I would think thee my son-in-law indeed," she says, "if thou slayest Thord Freedmanson".

"I will not do that," he says, "for then I shall have the wrath of my kinsman Gunnar; and besides, great things hang on this deed, for this slaying would soon be avenged."

"Who will avenge it?" she asks; "is it the beardless carle?"

"Not so," says he; "his sons will avenge it."

After that they talked long and low, and no man knew what counsel they took together.

Once it happened that Gunnar was not at home, but those companions were. Thrain had come in from Gritwater, and then he and they and Hallgerda sat out of doors and talked. Then Hallgerda said -

"This have ye two brothers in arms, Sigmund and Skiold, promised to slay Thord Freedmanson; but Thrain thou hast promised me that thou wouldst stand by them when they did the deed."

They all acknowledged that they had given her this promise.

"Now I will counsel you how to do it," she says: "Ye shall ride east into Hornfirth after your goods, and come home about the beginning of the Thing, but if ye are at home before it begins, Gunnar will wish that ye should ride to the Thing with him. Njal will be at the Thing and his sons and Gunnar, but then ye two shall slay Thord."

They all agreed that this plan should be carried out. After that they busked them east to the Firth, and Gunnar was not aware of what they were about, and Gunnar rode to the Thing. Njal sent Thord Freedmanson away east under Eyjafell, and bade him be away there one night. So he went east, but he could not get back from the east, for the Fleet had risen so high that it could not be crossed on horseback ever so far up. Njal waited for him one night, for he had meant him to have ridden with him; and Njal said to Bergthora, that she must send Thord to the Thing as soon as ever he came home. Two nights after, Thord came from the east, and Bergthora told him that he must ride to the Thing, "but first thou shalt ride up into Thorolfsfell and see about the farm there, and do not be there longer than one or two nights."

Chapter 42

The Slaying of Thord Freedmanson

Then Sigmund came from the east and those companions. Hallgerda told them that Thord was at home, but that he was to ride straightway to the Thing after a few nights' space. "Now ye will have a fair chance at him," he says, "but if this goes off, ye will never get nigh him". Men came to Lithend from Thorolfsfell, and told Hallgerda that Thord was there. Hallgerda went to Thrain Sigfus' son, and his companions, and said to him, "Now is Thord on Thorolfsfell, and now your best plan is to fall on him and kill him as he goes home".

"That we will do," says Sigmund. So they went out, and took their weapons and horses and rode on the way to meet him. Sigmund said to Thrain, "Now thou shalt have nothing to do with it; for we shall not need all of us".

"Very well, so I will," says he.

Then Thord rode up to them a little while after, and Sigmund said to him -

"Give thyself up," he says, "for now shalt thou die."

"That shall not be," says Thord, "come thou to single combat with me."

"That shall not be either," says Sigmund, "we will make the most of our numbers; but it is not strange that Skarphedinn is strong, for it is said that a fourth of a foster-child's strength comes from the foster-father."

"Thou wilt feel the force of that," says Thord, "for Skarphedinn will avenge me."

After that they fall on him, and he breaks a spear of each of them, so well did he guard himself. Then Skiold cut off his hand, and he still kept them off with his other hand for some time, till Sigmund thrust him through. Then he fell dead to earth. They threw over him turf and stones; and Thrain said - "We have won an ill work, and Njal's sons will take this slaying ill when they hear of it".

They ride home and tell Hallgerda. She was glad to hear of the slaying, but Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, said -

"It is said 'but a short while is hand fain of blow,' and so it will be here; but still Gunnar will set thee free from this matter. But if Hallgerda makes thee take another fly in thy mouth, then that will be thy bane."

Hallgerda sent a man to Bergthorsknoll, to tell the slaying, and another man to the Thing, to tell it to Gunnar. Bergthora said she would not fight against Hallgerda with ill worth about such a matter; "that," quoth she, "would be no revenge for so great a quarrel".

Chapter 43

Njal and Gunnar Make Peace for the Slaying of Thord

But when the messenger came to the Thing to tell Gunnar of the slaying, then Gunnar said -

"This has happened ill, and no tidings could come to my ears which I should think worse; but yet we will now go at once and see Njal. I still hope he may take it well, though he be sorely tried."

So they went to see Njal, and called him to come out and talk to them. He went out at once to meet Gunnar, and they talked, nor were there any more men by at first than Kolskegg.

"Hard tidings have I to tell thee," says Gunnar; "the slaying of Thord Freedmanson, and I wish to offer thee self-doom for the slaying."

Njal held his peace some while, and then said -

"That is well offered, and I will take it; but yet it is to be looked for, that I shall have blame from my wife or from my sons for that, for it will mislike them much; but still I will run the risk, for I know that I have to deal with a good man and true; nor do I wish that any breach should arise in our friendship on my part."

"Wilt thou let thy sons be by, pray?" says Gunnar.

"I will not," says Njal, "for they will not break the peace which I make, but if they stand by while we make it, they will not pull well together with us."

"So it shall be," says Gunnar. "See thou to it alone."

Then they shook one another by the hand, and made peace well and quickly.

Then Njal said - "The award that I make is two hundred in silver, and that thou wilt think much".

"I do not think it too much," says Gunnar, and went home to his booth.

Njal's sons came home, and Skarphedinn asked whence that great sum of money came, which his father held in his hand.

Njal said - "I tell you of your foster-father's Thord's slaying, and we two, Gunnar and I, have now made peace in the matter, and he has paid an atonement for him as for two men".

"Who slew him?" says Skarphedinn.

"Sigmund and Skiolld, but Thrain was standing near too," says Njal.

"They thought they had need of much strength," says Skarphedinn, and sang a song -

Bold in deeds of derring-do,
Burdeners of ocean's steeds,
Strength enough it seems they needed
All to slay a single man;
When shall we our hands uplift?
We who brandish burnished steel -
Famous men erst reddened weapons,
When? if now we quiet sit?

"Yes! when shall the day come when we shall lift our hands?"

"That will not be long off," says Njal, "and then thou shalt not be baulked; but still, methinks, I set great store on your not breaking this peace that I have made."

"Then we will not break it," says Skarphedinn, "but if anything arises between us, then we will bear in mind the old feud."

"Then I will ask you to spare no one," says Njal.

Chapter 44

Sigmund Mocks Njal and His Sons

Now men ride home from the Thing; and when Gunnar came home, he said to Sigmund -

"Thou art a more unlucky man than I thought, and turnest thy good gifts to thine own ill. But still I have made peace for thee with Njal and his sons; and now, take care that thou dost not let another fly come into thy mouth. Thou art not at all after my mind, thou goest about with jibes and jeers, with scorn and mocking; but that is not my turn of mind. That is why thou gettest on so well with Hallgerda, because ye two have your minds more alike."

Gunnar scolded him a long time, and he answered him well, and said he would follow his counsel more for the time to come than he had followed it hitherto. Gunnar told him then they might get on together. Gunnar and Njal kept up their friendship though the rest of their people saw little of one another. It happened once that some gangrel women came to Lithend from Bergthorsknoll; they were great gossips and rather spiteful tongued. Hallgerda had a bower, and sate often in it, and there sate with her daughter Thorgerda, and there too were Thrain and Sigmund, and a crowd of women. Gunnar was not there nor Kolskegg. These gangrel women went into the bower, and Hallgerda greeted them, and made room for them; then she asked them for news, but they said they had none to tell. Hallgerda asked where they had been over night; they said at Bergthorsknoll.

"What was Njal doing?" she says.

"He was hard at work sitting still," they said.

"What were Njal's sons doing?" she says; "they think themselves men at any rate."

"Tall men they are in growth," they say, "but as yet they are all untried; Skarphedinn whetted an axe, Grim fitted a spearhead to the shaft, Helgi rivetted a hilt on a sword, Hauskuld strengthened the handle of a shield."

"They must be bent on some great deed," says Hallgerda.

"We do not know that," they say.

"What were Njal's house-carles doing?" she asks.

"We don't know what some of them were doing, but one was carting dung up the hill-side."

"What good was there in doing that?" she asks.

"He said it made the swathe better there than any where else," they reply.

"Witless now is Njal," says Hallgerda, "though he knows how to give counsel on every thing."

"How so?" they ask.

"I will only bring forward what is true to prove it," says she; "why doesn't he make them cart dung over his beard that he may be like other men? Let us call him 'the beardless carle': but his sons we will call 'dung-beardlings'; and now do pray give some stave about them, Sigmund, and let us get some good by thy gift of song."

"I am quite ready to do that," says he, and sang these verses -

Lady proud with hawk in hand.
Prithee why should dungbeard boys,
Reft of reason, dare to hammer
Handle fast on battle shield?
For these lads of loathly feature -
Lady scattering swanbath's beamsö -
Shall not shun this ditty shameful
Which I shape upon them now.

He the beardless carle shall listen
While I lash him with abuse,
Loon at whom our stomachs sicken.
Soon shall hear these words of scorn;
Far too nice for such base fellows
Is the name my bounty gives,
E'n my muse her help refuses,
Making mirth of dungbeard boys.

Here I find a nickname fitting
For those noisome dungbeard boys -
Loath am I to break my bargain
Linked with such a noble man -
Knit we all our taunts together -
Known to me is mind of man -
Call we now with outburst common,
Him, that churl, the beardless carle.

"Thou art a jewel indeed," says Hallgerda; "how yielding thou art to what I ask!"

Just then Gunnar came in. He had been standing outside the door of the bower, and heard all the words that had passed. They were in a great fright when they saw him come in, and then all held their peace, but before there had been bursts of laughter.

Gunnar was very wroth, and said to Sigmund, "thou art a foolish man, and one that cannot keep to good advice, and thou revilest Njal's sons, and Njal himself who is most worth of all; and this thou doest in spite of what thou hast already done. Mind, this will be thy death. But if any man repeats these words that thou hast spoken, or these verses that thou hast made, that man shall be sent away at once, and have my wrath beside."

But they were all so sore afraid of him, that no one dared to repeat those words. After that he went away, but the gangrel women talked among themselves, and said that they would get a reward from Bergthora if they told her all this. They

went then away afterwards down thither, and took Bergthora aside and told her the whole story of their own free will.

Bergthora spoke and said, when men sate down to the board, "Gifts have been given to all of you, father and sons, and ye will be no true men unless ye repay them somehow".

"What gifts are these?" asks Skarphedinn.

"You, my sons," says Bergthora, "have got one gift between you all. Ye are nicknamed 'Dung-beardlings,' but my husband 'the beardless carle'."

"Ours is no woman's nature," says Skarphedinn, "that we should fly into a rage at every little thing."

"And yet Gunnar was wroth for your sakes," says she, "and he is thought to be good-tempered. But if ye do not take vengeance for this wrong, ye will avenge no shame."

"The carline, our mother, thinks this fine sport," says Skarphedinn, and smiled scornfully as he spoke, but still the sweat burst out upon his brow, and red flecks came over his cheeks, but that was not his wont. Grim was silent and bit his lip. Helgi made no sign, and he said never a word. Hauskuld went off with Bergthora; she came into the room again, and fretted and foamed much.

Njal spoke and said, "'slow and sure,' says the proverb, mistress! and so it is with many things, though they try men's tempers, that there are always two sides to a story, even when vengeance is taken".

But at even when Njal was come into his bed, he heard that an axe came against the panel and rang loudly, but there was another shut bed, and there the shields were hung up, and he sees that they are away. He said, "who have taken down our shields?"

"Thy sons went out with them," says Bergthora.

Njal pulled his shoes on his feet, and went out at once, and round to the other side of the house, and sees that they were taking their course right up the slope; he said, "whither away, Skarphedinn?"

"To look after thy sheep," he answers.

"You would not then be armed," said Njal, "if you meant that, and your errand must be something else."

Then Skarphedinn sang a song -

Squanderer of hoarded wealth,
Some there are that own rich treasure,
Ore of sea that clasps the earth,
And yet care to count their sheep;
Those who forge sharp songs of mocking,
Death songs, scarcely can possess
Sense of sheep that crop the grass;
Such as these I seek in fight;

and said afterwards -

"We shall fish for salmon, father."

"'Twould be well then if it turned out so that the prey does not get away from you."

They went their way, but Njal went to his bed, and he said to Bergthora, "Thy sons were out of doors all of them, with arms, and now thou must have egged them on to something".

"I will give them my heartfelt thanks," said Bergthora, "if they tell me the slaying of Sigmund."

Chapter 45

The Slaying of Sigmund and Skiold

Now they, Njal's sons, fare up to Fleetlithe, and were that night under the Lithe, and when the day began to break, they came near to Lithend. That same morning both Sigmund and Skiold rose up and meant to go to the stud-horses; they had bits with them, and caught the horses that were in the "town" and rode away on them. They found the stud-horses between two brooks. Skarphedinn caught sight of them, for Sigmund was in bright clothing. Skarphedinn said, "See you now the red elf yonder, lads?" They looked that way, and said they saw him.

Skarphedinn spoke again: "Thou, Hauskuld, shalt have nothing to do with it, for thou wilt often be sent about alone without due heed; but I mean Sigmund for myself; methinks that is like a man; but Grim and Helgi, they shall try to slay Skiold".

Hauskuld sat him down, but they went until they came up to them. Skarphedinn said to Sigmund -

"Take thy weapons and defend thyself; that is more needful now, than to make mocking songs on me and my brothers."

Sigmund took up his weapons, but Skarphedinn waited the while. Skiold turned against Grim and Helgi, and they fell hotly to fight. Sigmund had a helm on his head, and a shield at his side, and was girt with a sword, his spear was in his hand; now he turns against Skarphedinn, and thrusts at once at him with his spear, and the thrust came on his shield. Skarphedinn dashes the spearhaft in two, and lifts up his axe and hews at Sigmund, and cleaves his shield down to below the handle. Sigmund drew his sword and cut at Skarphedinn, and the sword cuts into his shield, so that it stuck fast. Skarphedinn gave the shield such a quick twist, that Sigmund let go his sword. Then Skarphedinn hews at Sigmund with his axe, the "Ogress of war". Sigmund had on a corselet, the axe came on his shoulder. Skarphedinn cleft the shoulder-blade right through, and at the same time pulled the axe towards him, Sigmund fell down on both knees, but sprang up again at once.

"Thou hast lifted low to me already," says Skarphedinn, "but still thou shalt fall upon thy mother's bosom ere we two part."

"Ill is that then," says Sigmund.

Skarphedinn gave him a blow on his helm, and after that dealt Sigmund his death-blow.

Grim cut off Skiold's foot at the ankle-joint, but Helgi thrust him through with his spear, and he got his death there and then.

Skarphedinn saw Hallgerda's shepherd, just as he had hewn off Sigmund's head; he handed the head to the shepherd, and bade him bear it to Hallgerda, and said she would know whether that head had made jeering songs about them, and with that he sang a song.

Here! this head shall thou, that heapest
Hoards from ocean-caverns won, ð
Bear to Hallgerd with my greeting,
Her that hurries men to fight;
Sure am I, O firewood splitter!
That yon spendthrift knows it well,
And will answer if it ever
Uttered mocking songs on us.

The shepherd casts the head down as soon as ever they parted, for he dared not do so while their eyes were on him. They fared along till they met some men down by Markfleet, and told them the tidings. Skarphedinn gave himself out as the slayer of Sigmund; and Grim and Helgi as the slayers of Skiold; then they fared home and told Njal the tidings. He answers them -

"Good luck to your hands! Here no self-doom will come to pass as things stand."

Now we must take up the story, and say that the shepherd came home to Lithend. He told Hallgerda the tidings.

"Skarphedinn put Sigmund's head into my hands," he says, "and bade me bring it thee; but I dared not do it, for I knew not how thou wouldst like that."

"'Twas ill that thou didst not do that," she says; "I would have brought it to Gunnar, and then he would have avenged his kinsman, or have to bear every man's blame."

After that she went to Gunnar and said, "I tell thee of thy kinsman Sigmund's slaying: Skarphedinn slew him, and wanted them to bring me the head".

"Just what might be looked for to befall him," says Gunnar, "for ill redes bring ill luck, and both you and Skarphedinn have often done one another spiteful turns".

Then Gunnar went away; he let no steps be taken towards a suit for manslaughter, and did nothing about it. Hallgerda often put him in mind of it, and kept saying that Sigmund had fallen unatoned. Gunnar gave no heed to that.

Now three Things passed away, at each of which men thought that he would follow up the suit: then a knotty point came on Gunnar's hands, which he knew not how to set about, and then he rode to find Njal. He gave Gunnar a hearty

welcome. Gunnar said to Njal, "I am come to seek a bit of good counsel at thy hands about a knotty point".

"Thou art worthy of it," says Njal, and gave him counsel what to do. Then Gunnar stood up and thanked him. Njal then spoke and said, and took Gunnar by the hand, "Over long hath thy kinsman Sigmund been unatoned". "He has been long ago atoned," says Gunnar, "but still I will not fling back the honour offered me."

Gunnar had never spoken an ill word of Njal's sons. Njal would have nothing else than that Gunnar should make his own award in the matter. He awarded two hundred in silver, but let Skiold fall without a price. They paid down all the money at once.

Gunnar declared this their atonement at the Thingskala Thing, when most men were at it, and laid great weight on the way in which they (Njal and his sons) had behaved; he told too those bad words which cost Sigmund his life, and no man was to repeat them or sing the verses, but if any sung them, the man who uttered them was to fall without atonement.

Both Gunnar and Njal gave each other their words that no such matters should ever happen that they would not settle among themselves; and this pledge was well kept ever after, and they were always friends.

Chapter 46 Of Gizur the White and Geir the Priest

There was a man named Gizur the White; he was Teit's son; Kettlebjorn the Old's son, of Mossfell. Gizur the White kept house at Mossfell, and was a great chief. That man is also named in this story, whose name was Geir the priest; his mother was Thorkatla, another daughter of Kettlebjorn the Old of Mossfell. Geir kept house at Lithe. He and Gizur backed one another in every matter. At that time Mord Valgard's son kept house at Hof on the Rangriversvales; he was crafty and spiteful. Valgard his father was then abroad, but his mother was dead. He was very envious of Gunnar of Lithend. He was wealthy, so far as goods went, but had not many friends.

Chapter 47 Of Otkell in Kirkby

There was a man named Otkell; he was the son of Skarf, the son of Hallkell, who fought with Gorm of Gormness, and felled him on the holm.ö This Hallkell and Kettlebjorn the Old were brothers.

Otkell kept house at Kirkby; his wife's name was Thorgerda; she was a daughter of Mar, the son of Runolf, the son of Naddad of the Faroe isles. Otkell was wealthy in goods. His son's name was Thorgeir; he was young in years, and a bold dashing man.

Skamkell was the name of another man; he kept house at another farm called Hof; he was well off for money, but he was a spiteful man and a liar; quarrelsome too, and ill to deal with. He was Otkell's friend. Hallkell was the name of Otkell's brother; he was a tall strong man, and lived there with Otkell; their brother's name was Hallbjorn the White; he brought out to Iceland a thrall, whose name was Malcolm; he was Irish and had not many friends.

Hallbjorn went to stay with Otkell, and so did his thrall Malcolm. The thrall was always saying that he should think himself happy if Otkell owned him. Otkell was kind to him, and gave him a knife and belt, and a full suit of clothes, but the thrall turned his hand to any work that Otkell wished.

Otkell wanted to make a bargain with his brother for the thrall; he said he would give him the thrall, but said too, that he was a worse treasure than he thought. And as soon as Otkell owned the thrall, then he did less and less work. Otkell often said outright to Hallbjorn, that he thought the thrall did little work; and he told Otkell that there was worse in him yet to come.

At that time came a great scarcity, so that men fell short both of meat and hay, and that spread over all parts of Iceland. Gunnar shared his hay and meat with many men; and all got them who came thither, so long as his stores lasted. At last it came about that Gunnar himself fell short both of hay and meat. Then Gunnar called on Kolskegg to go along with him; he called too on Thrain Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son. They fared to Kirkby, and called Otkell out. He greeted them, and Gunnar said, "It so happens that I am come to deal with thee for hay and meat, if there be any left".

Otkell answers, "There is store of both, but I will sell thee neither".

"Wilt thou give me them then," says Gunnar, "and run the risk of my paying thee back somehow?"

"I will not do that either," says Otkell.

Skamkell all the while was giving him bad counsel.

Then Thrain Sigfus' son said, "It would serve him right if we take both hay and meat and lay down the worth of them instead".

Skamkell answered, "All the men of Mossfell must be dead and gone then, if ye, sons of Sigfus, are to come and rob them".

"I will have no hand in any robbery," says Gunnar.

"Wilt thou buy a thrall of me?" says Otkell.

"I'll not spare to do that," says Gunnar. After that Gunnar bought the thrall, and fared away as things stood.

Njal hears of this, and said, "Such things are ill done, to refuse to let Gunnar buy; and it is not a good outlook for others if such men as he cannot get what they want".

"What's the good of thy talking so much about such a little matter?" says Bergthora; "far more like a man would it be to let him have both meat and hay, when thou lackest neither of them."

"That is clear as day," says Njal, "and I will of a surety supply his need somewhat."

Then he fared up to Thorolfsfell, and his sons with him, and they bound hay on fifteen horses; but on five horses they had meat. Njal came to Lithend, and called Gunnar out. He greeted them kindly.

"Here is hay and meat," said Njal, "which I will give thee; and my wish is, that thou shouldst never look to any one else than to me if thou standest in need of any thing."

"Good are thy gifts," says Gunnar, "but methinks thy friendship is still more worth, and that of thy sons."

After that Njal fared home, and now the spring passes away.

Chapter 48

How Hallgerda Makes Malcolm Steal from Kirkby

Now Gunnar is about to ride to the Thing, but a great crowd of men from the Side east turned in as guests at his house.

Gunnar bade them come and be his guests again, as they rode back from the Thing; and they said they would do so.

Now they ride to the Thing, and Njal and his sons were there. That Thing was still and quiet.

Now we must take up the story, and say that Hallgerda comes to talk with Malcolm the thrall.

"I have thought of an errand to send thee on," she says; "thou shalt go to Kirkby."

"And what shall I do there?" he says.

"Thou shalt steal from thence food enough to load two horses, and mind and have butter and cheese; but thou shalt lay fire in the storehouse, and all will think that it has arisen out of heedlessness, but no one will think that there has been theft."

"Bad have I been," said the thrall, "but never have I been a thief."

"Hear a wonder!" says Hallgerda, "thou makest thyself good, thou that hast been both thief and murderer; but thou shalt not dare to do aught else than go, else will I let thee be slain."

He thought he knew enough of her to be sure that she would so do if he went not; so he took at night two horses and laid pack-saddles on them, and went his way to Kirkby. The house-dog knew him and did not bark at him, and ran and fawned on him. After that he went to the storehouse and loaded the two horses with food out of it, but the storehouse he burnt, and the dog he slew.

He went up along by Rangriver, and his shoe-thong snapped; so he takes his knife and makes the shoe right, but he leaves the knife and belt lying there behind him.

He fares till he comes to Lithend; then he misses the knife, but dares not to go back.

Now he brings Hallgerda the food, and she showed herself well pleased at it.

Next morning when men came out of doors at Kirkby there they saw great scathe. Then a man was sent to the Thing to tell Otkell, he bore the loss well, and said it must have happened because the kitchen was next to the storehouse; and all thought that that was how it happened.

Now men ride home from the Thing, and many rode to Lithend. Hallgerda set food on the hoard, and in came cheese and butter. Gunnar knew that such food was not to be looked for in his house, and asked Hallgerda whence it came?

"Thence," she says, "whence thou mightest well eat of it; besides, it is no man's business to trouble himself with housekeeping."

Gunnar got wroth and said, "Ill indeed is it if I am a partaker with thieves"; and with that he gave her a slap on the cheek.

She said she would bear that slap in mind and repay it if she could.

So she went off and he went with her, and then all that was on the board was cleared away, but flesh-meat was brought in instead, and all thought that was because the flesh was thought to have been got in a better way.

Now the men who had been at the Thing fare away.

Chapter 49 Of Skamkell's Evil Counsel

Now we must tell of Skamkell. He rides after some sheep up along Rangriver, and he sees something shining in the path. He finds a knife and belt, and thinks he knows both of them. He fares with them to Kirkby; Otkell was out of doors when Skamkell came. He spoke to him and said -

"Knowest thou aught of these pretty things?"

"Of a surety," says Otkell, "I know them."

"Who owns them?" asks Skamkell.

"Malcolm the thrall," says Otkell.

"Then more shall see and know them than we two," says Skamkell, "for true will I be to thee in counsel."

They showed them to many men, and all knew them. Then Skamkell said -

"What counsel wilt thou now take?"

"We shall go and see Mord Valgard's son," answers Otkell, "and seek counsel of him."

So they went to Hof, and showed the pretty things to Mord, and asked him if he knew them?

He said he knew them well enough, but what was there in that? "Do you think you have a right to look for anything at Lithend?"

"We think it hard for us," says Skamkell, "to know what to do, when such mighty men have a hand in it."

"That is so, sure enough," says Mord, "but yet I will get to know those things out of Gunnar's household, which none of you will ever know."

"We would give thee money," they say, "if thou wouldst search out this thing."

"That money I shall buy full dear," answered Mord, "but still, perhaps, it may be that I will look at the matter."

They gave him three marks of silver for lending them his help.

Then he gave them this counsel, that women should go about from house to house with small wares, and give them to the housewives, and mark what was given them in return.

"For," he says, "'tis the turn of mind of all men first to give away what has been stolen, if they have it in their keeping, and so it will be here also, if this hath happened by the hand of man. Ye shall then come and show me what has been given to each in each house, and I shall then be free from further share in this matter, if the truth comes to light."

To this they agreed, and went home afterwards.

Mord sends women about the country, and they were away half a month. Then they came back, and had big bundles. Mord asked where they had most given them?

They said that at Lithend most was given them, and Hallgerda had been most bountiful to them.

He asked what was given them there?

"Cheese," say they.

He begged to see it, and they showed it to him, and it was in great slices. These he took and kept.

A little after, Mord fared to see Otkell, and bade that he would bring Thorgerda's cheese-mould; and when that was done, he laid the slices down in it, and lo! they fitted the mould in every way.

Then they saw, too, that a whole cheese had been given to them.

Then Mord said, "Now may ye see that Hallgerda must have stolen the cheese"; and they all passed the same judgment; and then Mord said, that now he thought he was free of this matter.

After that they parted.

Shortly after Kolskegg fell to talking with Gunnar, and said -

"Ill is it to tell, but the story is in every man's mouth, that Hallgerda must have stolen, and that she was at the bottom of all that great scathe that befell at Kirkby."

Gunnar said that he too thought that must be so. "But what is to be done now?"

Kolskegg answered, "That wilt think it thy most bounden duty to make atonement for thy wife's wrong, and methinks it were best that thou farest to see Otkell, and makest him a handsome offer."

"This is well spoken," says Gunnar, "and so it shall be."

A little after Gunnar sent after Thrain Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and they came at once.

Gunnar told them whither he meant to go, and they were well pleased. Gunnar rode with eleven men to Kirkby, and called Otkell out. Skamkell was there too, and said, "I will go out with thee, and it will be best now to have the balance of wit on thy side. And I would wish to stand closest by thee when thou needest it most, and now this will be put to the proof. Methinks it were best that thou puttest on an air of great weight."

Then they, Otkell and Skamkell, and Hallkell and Hallbjorn, went out all of them.

They greeted Gunnar, and he took their greeting well. Otkell asks whither he meant to go?

"No farther than here," says Gunnar, "and my errand hither is to tell thee about that bad mishap - how it arose from the plotting of my wife and that thrall whom I bought from thee."

"'Tis only what was to be looked for," says Hallbjorn.

"Now I will make thee a good offer," says Gunnar, "and the offer is this, that the best men here in the country round settle the matter."

"This is a fair-sounding offer," said Skamkell, "but an unfair and uneven one. Thou art a man who has many friends among the householders, but Otkell has not many friends."

"Well," says Gunnar, "then I will offer thee that I shall make an award, and utter it here on this spot, and so we will settle the matter, and my good-will shall follow the settlement. But I will make thee an atonement by paying twice the worth of what was lost."

"This choice shalt thou not take," said Skamkell; "and it is unworthy to give up to him the right to make his own award, when thou oughtest to have kept it for thyself."

So Otkell said, "I will not give up to thee, Gunnar, the right to make thine own award."

"I see plainly," said Gunnar, "the help of men who will be paid off for it one day I daresay; but come now, utter an award for thyself."

Otkell leant toward Skamkell and said, "What shall I answer now?"

"This thou shalt call a good offer, but still put thy suit into the hands of Gizur the white, and Geir the priest, and then many will say this, that thou behavest like Hallkell, thy grandfather, who was the greatest of champions."

"Well offered is this, Gunnar," said Otkell, "but still my will is thou wouldst give me time to see Gizur the white."

"Do now whatever thou likest in the matter," said Gunnar; "but men will say this, that thou couldst not see thine own honour when thou wouldst have none of the choices I offer thee."

Then Gunnar rode home, and when he had gone away, Hallbjorn said, "Here I see how much man differs from man. Gunnar made thee good offers, but thou wouldst take none of them; or how dost thou think to strive with Gunnar in a quarrel, when no one is his match in fight. But now he is still so kind-hearted a man that it may be he will let these offers stand, though thou art only ready to take them afterwards. Methinks it were best that thou farest to see Gizur the white and Geir the priest now this very hour."

Otkell let them catch his horse, and made ready in every way. Otkell was not sharpsighted, and Skamkell walked on the way along with him, and said to Otkell -

"Methought it strange that thy brother would not take this toil from thee, and now I will make thee an offer to fare instead of thee, for I know that the journey is irksome to thee."

"I will take that offer," says Otkell, "but mind and be as truthful as ever thou canst."

"So it shall be," says Skamkell.

Then Skamkell took his horse and cloak, but Otkell walks home.

Hallbjorn was out of doors, and said to Otkell -

"Ill is it to have a thrall for one's bosom friend, and we shall rue this for ever that thou hast turned back, and it is an unwise step to send the greatest liar on an errand, of which one may so speak that men's lives hang on it."

"Thou wouldst be sore afraid," says Otkell, "if Gunnar had his bill aloft, when thou art so scared now."

"No one knows who will be most afraid then," said Hallbjorn; "but this thou wilt have to own, that Gunnar does not lose much time in brandishing his bill when he is wroth."

"Ah!" said Otkell, "ye are all of you for yielding but Skamkell."

And then they were both wroth.

Chapter 50 Of Skamkell's lying

Skamkell came to Mossfell, and repeated all the offers to Gizur.

"It so seems to me," says Gizur, "as though these have been bravely offered; but why took he not these offers?"

"The chief cause was," answers Skamkell, "that all wished to show thee honour, and that was why he waited for thy utterance; besides, that is best for all."

So Skamkell stayed there the night over, but Gizur sent a man to fetch Geir the priest; and he came there early. Then Gizur told him the story and said -

"What course is to be taken now?"

"As thou no doubt hast already made up thy mind - to make the best of the business for both sides."

"Now we will let Skamkell tell his tale a second time, and see how he repeats it."

So they did that, and Gizur said -

"Thou must have told this story right; but still I have seen thee to be the wickedest of men, and there is no faith in faces if thou turnest out well."

Skamkell fared home, and rides first to Kirkby and calls Otkell out. He greets Skamkell well, and Skamkell brought him the greeting of Gizur and Geir.

"But about this matter of the suit," he says, "there is no need to speak softly, how that it is the will of both Gizur and Geir that this suit should not be settled in a friendly way. They gave that counsel that a summons should be set on foot, and that Gunnar should be summoned for having partaken of the goods, but Hallgerda for stealing them."

"It shall be done," said Otkell, "in everything as they have given counsel."

"They thought most of this," says Skamkell, "that thou hadst behaved so proudly; but as for me, I made as great a man of thee in everything as I could."

Now Otkell tells all this to his brothers, and Hallbjorn said -

"This must be the biggest lie."

Now the time goes on until the last of the summoning days before the Althing came.

Then Otkell called on his brothers and Skamkell to ride on the business of the summons to Lithend.

Hallbjorn said he would go, but said also that they would rue this summoning as time went on.

Now they rode twelve of them together to Lithend, but when they came into the "town," there was Gunnar out of doors, and knew naught of their coming till they had ridden right up to the house.

He did not go indoors then, and Otkell thundered out the summons there and then; but when they had made an end of the summoning Skamkell said -

"Is it all right, master?"

"Ye know that best," says Gunnar, "but I will put thee in mind of this journey one of these days, and of thy good help."

"That will not harm us," says Skamkell, "if thy bill be not aloft."

Gunnar was very wroth and went indoors, and told Kolskegg, and Kolskegg said -

"Ill was it that we were not out of doors; they should have come here on the most shameful journey, if we had been by."

"Everything bides its time," says Gunnar; "but this journey will not turn out to their honour."

A little after Gunnar went and told Njal.

"Let it not worry thee a jot," said Njal, "for this will be the greatest honour to thee, ere this Thing comes to an end. As for us, we will all back thee with counsel and force."

Gunnar thanked him and rode home.

Otkell rides to the Thing, and his brothers with him and Skamkell.

Chapter 51 Of Gunnar

Gunnar rode to the Thing and all the sons of Sigfus; Njal and his sons too, they all went with Gunnar; and it was said that no band was so well knit and hardy as theirs.

Gunnar went one day to the booth of the Dalemén; Hrut was by the booth and Hauskuld, and they greeted Gunnar well. Now Gunnar tells them the whole story of the suit up to that time.

"What counsel gives Njal?" asks Hrut.

"He bade me seek you brothers," says Gunnar, "and said he was sure that he and you would look at the matter in the same light."

"He wishes then," says Hrut, "that I should say what I think for kinship's sake; and so it shall be. Thou shalt challenge Gizur the white to combat on the island, if they do not leave the whole award to thee; but Kolskegg shall challenge Geir the Priest. As for Otkell and his crew, men must be got ready to fall on them; and now we have such great strength all of us together, that thou mayst carry out whatever thou wilt."

Gunnar went home to his booth and told Njal.

"Just what I looked for," said Njal.

Wolf Aurlpriest got wind of this plan, and told Gizur, and Gizur said to Otkell -

"Who gave thee that counsel that thou shouldst summon Gunnar?"

"Skamkell told me that was the counsel of both Geir the priest and thyself."

"But where is that scoundrel," says Gizur, "who has thus lied?"

"He lies sick up at our booth," says Otkell.

"May he never rise from his bed," says Gizur, "Now we must all go to see Gunnar, and offer him the right to make his own award; but I know not whether he will take that now."

Many men spoke ill of Skamkell, and he lay sick all through the Thing.

Gizur and his friends went to Gunnar's booth; their coming was known, and Gunnar was told as he sat in his booth, and then they all went out and stood in array.

Gizur the white came first, and after a while he spoke and said -

"This is our offer - that thou, Gunnar, makest thine own award in this suit."

"Then," says Gunnar, "it was no doubt far from thy counsel that I was summoned."

"I gave no such counsel," says Gizur, "neither I nor Geir."

"Then thou must clear thyself of this charge by fitting proof."

"What proof dost thou ask?" says Gizur.

"That thou takest an oath," says Gunnar.

"That I will do," says Gizur, "if thou wilt take the award into thine own hands."

"That was the offer I made a while ago," says Gunnar; "but now, methinks, I have a greater matter to pass judgment on."

"It will not be right to refuse to make thine own award," said Njal; "for the greater the matter, the greater the honour in making it."

"Well," said Gunnar, "I will do this to please my friends, and utter my award; but I give Otkell this bit of advice, never to give me cause for quarrel hereafter."

Then Hrut and Hauskuld were sent for, and they came thither, and then Gizur the White and Geir the priest took their oaths; but Gunnar made his award, and spoke with no man about it, and afterwards he uttered it as follows: -

"This is my award," he says; "first, I lay it down that the storehouse must be paid for, and the food that was therein; but for the thrall, I will pay thee no fine, for that thou hiddest his faults; but I award him back to thee; for as the saying is, 'Birds of a feather flock most together'. Then, on the other hand, I see that thou hast summoned me in scorn and mockery, and for that I award to myself no less a sum than what the house that was burnt and the stores in it were worth; but if

ye think it better that we be not set at one again, then I will let you have your choice of that, but if so I have already made up my mind what I shall do, and then I will fulfil my purpose."

"What we ask," said Gizur, "is that thou shouldst not be hard on Otkell, but we beg this of thee, on the other hand, that thou wouldst be his friend."

"That shall never be," said Gunnar, "so long as I live; but he shall have Skamkell's friendship; on that he has long leant."

"Well," answers Gizur, "we will close with thee in this matter, though thou alone layest down the terms."

Then all this atonement was made and hands were shaken on it, and Gunnar said to Otkell -

"It were wiser to go away to thy kinsfolk; but if thou wilt be here in this country, mind that thou givest me no cause of quarrel."

"That is wholesome counsel," said Gizur; "and so he shall do."

So Gunnar had the greatest honour from that suit, and afterwards men rode home from the Thing.

Now Gunnar sits in his house at home, and so things are quiet for a while.

Chapter 52

Of Runolf, the son of Wolf Aurpriest

There was a man named Runolf, the son of Wolf Aurpriest, he kept house at the Dale, east of Markfleet. He was Otkell's guest once when he rode from the Thing. Otkell gave him an ox, all black, without a spot of white, nine winters old. Runolf thanked him for the gift, and bade him come and see him at home whenever he chose to go; and this bidding stood over for some while, so that he had not paid the visit. Runolf often sent men to him and put him in mind that he ought to come; and he always said he would come, but never went.

Now Otkell had two horses, dun coloured, with a black stripe down the back; they were the best steeds to ride in all the country round, and so fond of each other, that whenever one went before, the other ran after him.

There was an Easterling staying with Otkell, whose name was Audulf; he had set his heart on Signy Otkell's daughter. Audulf was a tall man in growth, and strong.

Chapter 53

How Otkell Rode over Gunnar

It happened next spring that Otkell said that they would ride east to the Dale, to pay Runolf a visit, and all showed themselves well pleased at that. Skamkell

and his two brothers, and Audulf and three men more, went along with Otkell. Otkell rode one of the dun horses, but the other ran loose by his side. They shaped their course east towards Markfleet; and now Otkell gallops ahead, and now the horses race against each other, and they break away from the path up towards the Fleetlithe.

Now, Otkell goes faster than he wished, and it happened that Gunnar had gone away from home out of his house all alone; and he had a corn-sieve in one hand, but in the other a hand-axe. He goes down to his seed field and sows his corn there, and had laid his cloak of fine stuff and his axe down by his aide, and so he sows the corn a while.

Now, it must be told how Otkell rides faster than he would. He had spurs on his feet, and so he gallops down over the ploughed field, and neither of them sees the other; and just as Gunnar stands upright, Otkell rides down upon him, and drives one of the spurs into Gunnar's ear, and gives him a great gash, and it bleeds at once much.

Just then Otkell's companions rode up.

"Ye may see, all of you," says Gunnar, "that thou hast drawn my blood, and it is unworthy to go on so. First thou hast summoned me, but now thou treadest me under foot, and ridest over me."

Skamkell said, "Well it was no worse, master, but thou wast not one whit less wroth at the Thing, when thou tookest the self-doom and clutchedst thy bill."

Gunnar said, "When we two next meet thou shalt see the bill." After that they part thus, and Skamkell shouted out and said, "Ye ride hard, lads!"

Gunnar went home, and said never a word to any one about what had happened, and no one thought that this wound could have come by man's doing.

It happened, though, one day that he told it to his brother Kolskegg, and Kolskegg said -

"This thou shalt tell to more men, so that it may not be said that thou layest blame on dead men; for it will be gainsaid if witnesses do not know beforehand what has passed between you."

Then Gunnar told it to his neighbours, and there was little talk about it at first.

Otkell comes east to the Dale, and they get a hearty welcome there, and sit there a week.

Skamkell told Runolf all about their meeting with Gunnar, and how it had gone off; and one man had happened to ask how Gunnar behaved.

"Why," said Skamkell, "if it were a low-born man it would have been said that he had wept."

"Such things are ill spoken," says Runolf, "and when ye two next meet, thou wilt have to own that there is no voice of weeping in his frame of mind; and it will be well if better men have not to pay for thy spite. Now it seems to me best when ye wish to go home that I should go with you, for Gunnar will do me no harm."

"I will not have that," says Otkell; "but I will ride across the Fleet lower down."
Runolf gave Otkell good gifts, and said they should not see one another again.
Otkell bade him then to bear his sons in mind if things turned out so.

Chapter 54

The Fight at Rangriver

Now we must take up the story, and say that Gunnar was out of doors at Lithend, and sees his shepherd galloping up to the yard. The shepherd rode straight into the "town"; and Gunnar said, "Why ridest thou so hard?"

"I would be faithful to thee," said the man; "I saw men riding down along Markfleet, eight of them together, and four of them were in coloured clothes."

Gunnar said, "That must be Otkell".

The lad said, "I have often heard many temper-trying words of Skamkell's; for Skamkell spoke away there East at Dale, and said that thou sheddest tears when they rode over thee; but I tell it thee because I cannot bear to listen to such speeches of worthless men".

"We must not be word-sick," says Gunnar, "but from this day forth thou shalt do no other work than what thou choosest for thyself."

"Shall I say aught of this to Kolskegg thy brother?" asked the shepherd.

"Go thou and sleep," says Gunnar; "I will tell Kolskegg."

The lad laid him down and fell asleep at once, but Gunnar took the shepherd's horse and laid his saddle on him; he took his shield, and girded him with his sword, Oliver's gift; he sets his helm on his head; takes his bill, and something sung loud in it, and his mother, Rannveig, heard it. She went up to him and said, "Wrathful art thou now, my son, and never saw I thee thus before".

Gunnar goes out, and drives the butt of his spear into the earth, and throws himself into the saddle, and rides away.

His mother, Rannveig, went into the sitting-room, where there was a great noise of talking.

"Ye speak loud," she says, "but yet the bill gave a louder sound when Gunnar went out."

Kolskegg heard what she said, and spoke, "This betokens no small tidings".

"That is well," says Hallgerda, "now they will soon prove whether he goes away from them weeping."

Kolskegg takes his weapons and seeks him a horse, and rides after Gunnar as fast as he could.

Gunnar rides across Acretongue, and so to Geilastofna, and thence to Rangriver, and down the stream to the ford at Hof. There were some women at

the milking-post there. Gunnar jumped off his horse and tied him up. By this time the others were riding up towards him; there were flat stones covered with mud in the path that led down to the ford.

Gunnar called out to them and said, "Now is the time to guard yourselves; here now is the bill, and here now ye will put it to the proof whether I shed one tear for all of you".

Then they all of them sprang off their horses' backs and made towards Gunnar. Hallbjorn was the foremost.

"Do not thou come on," says Gunnar; "thee last of all would I harm; but I will spare no one if I have to fight to my life."

"That I cannot do," says Hallbjorn; "thou wilt strive to kill my brother for all that, and it is a shame if I sit idly by." And as he said this he thrust at Gunnar with a great spear which he held in both hands.

Gunnar threw his shield before the blow, but Hallbjorn pierced the shield through. Gunnar thrust the shield down so hard that it stood fast in the earth, but he brandished his sword so quickly that no eye could follow it, and he made a blow with the sword, and it fell on Hallbjorn's arm above the wrist, so that it cut it off.

Skamkell ran behind Gunnar's back and makes a blow at him with a great axe. Gunnar turned short round upon him and parries the blow with the bill, and caught the axe under one of its horns with such a wrench that it flew out of Skamkell's hand away into the river.

Then Gunnar sang a song.

Once thou askedst, foolish fellow,
Of this man, this sea-horse racer,
When as fast as feet could foot it
Forth ye fled from farm of mine,
Whether that were rightly summoned?
Now with gore the spear we redden,
Battle-eager and avenge us
Thus on thee, vile source of strife.

Gunnar gives another thrust with his bill, and through Skamkell, and lifts him up and casts him down in the muddy path on his head.

Audulf the Easterling snatches up a spear and launches it at Gunnar. Gunnar caught the spear with his hand in the air, and hurled it back at once, and it flew through the shield and the Easterling too, and so down into the earth.

Otkell smites at Gunnar with his sword, and aims at his leg just below the knee, but Gunnar leapt up into the air and he misses him. Then Gunnar thrusts at him the bill, and the blow goes through him.

Then Kolskegg comes up, and rushes at once at Hallkell and dealt him his death-blow with his short sword. There and then they slay eight men.

A woman who saw all this, ran home and told Mord, and besought him to part them.

"They alone will be there," he says, "of whom I care not though they slay one another."

"Thou canst not mean to say that," she says, "for thy kinsman Gunnar, and thy friend Otkell will be there."

"Baggage that thou art," he says, "thou art always chattering," and so he lay still indoors while they fought.

Gunnar and Kolskegg rode home after this work, and they rode hard up along the river bank, and Gunnar slipped off his horse and came down on his feet.

Then Kolskegg said, "Hard now thou ridest, brother!"

"Ay," said Gunnar, "that was what Skamkell said when he uttered those very words when they rode over me."

"Well! thou hast avenged that now," says Kolskegg.

"I would like to know," says Gunnar, "whether I am by so much the less brisk and bold than other men, because I think more of killing men than they?"

Chapter 55

Njal's Advice to Gunnar

Now those tidings are heard far and wide, and many say that they thought they had not happened before it was likely. Gunnar rode to Bergthorsknoll and told Njal of these deeds.

Njal said, "Thou hast done great things, but thou hast been sorely tried."

"How will it now go henceforth?" says Gunnar.

"Wilt thou that I tell thee what hath not yet come to pass?" asks Njal. "Thou wilt ride to the Thing, and thou wilt abide by my counsel and get the greatest honour from this matter. This will be the beginning of thy manslayings."

"But give me some cunning counsel," says Gunnar.

"I will do that," says Njal: "never slay more than one man in the same stock, and never break the peace which good men and true make between thee and others, and least of all in such a matter as this."

Gunnar said, "I should have thought there was more risk of that with others than with me."

"Like enough," says Njal, "but still thou shalt so think of thy quarrels that, if that should come to pass of which I have warned thee, then thou wilt have but a little while to live; but otherwise, thou wilt come to be an old man."

Gunnar said, "Dost thou know what will be thine own death?"

"I know it," says Njal.

"What?" asks Gunnar.

"That," says Njal, "which all would be the last to think."

After that Gunnar rode home.

A man was sent to Gizur the white and Geir the priest, for they had the blood-feud after Otkell. Then they had a meeting, and had a talk about what was to be done; and they were of one mind that the quarrel should be followed up at law. Then some one was sought who would take the suit up, but no one was ready to do that.

"It seems to me," says Gizur, "that now there are only two courses, that one of us two undertakes the suit, and then we shall have to draw lots who it shall be, or else the man will be unatoned. We may make up our minds, too, that this will be a heavy suit to touch; Gunnar has many kinsmen and is much beloved; but that one of us who does not draw the lot shall ride to the Thing and never leave it until the suit comes to an end."

After that they drew lots, and Geir the priest drew the lot to take up the suit.

A little after, they rode from the west over the river, and came to the spot where the meeting had been by Rangriver, and dug up the bodies, and took witness to the wounds. After that they gave lawful notice and summoned nine neighbours to bear witness in the suit.

They were told that Gunnar was at home with about thirty men; then Geir the priest asked whether Gizur would ride against him with one hundred men.

"I will not do that," says he, "though the balance of force is great on our side."

After that they rode back home. The news that the suit was set on foot was spread all over the country, and the saying ran that the Thing would be very noisy and stormy.

Chapter 56

Gunnar and Geir the Priest Strive at the Thing

There was a man named Skapti. He was the son of Thorod. That father and son were great chiefs, and very well skilled in law. Thorod was thought to be rather crafty and guileful. They stood by Gizur the white in every quarrel.

As for the Lithemen and the dwellers by Rangriver, they came in a great body to the Thing. Gunnar was so beloved that all said with one voice that they would back him.

Now they all come to the Thing and fit up their booths. In company with Gizur the white were these chiefs: Skapti Thorod's son, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, Oddi of Kidberg, and Halldor Ormolf's son.

Now one day men went to the Hill of Laws, and then Geir the priest stood up and gave notice that he had a suit of manslaughter against Gunnar for the slaying of Otkell. Another suit of manslaughter he brought against Gunnar for the slaying of Hallbjorn the white; then too he went on in the same way as to the

slaying of Audulf, and so too as to the slaying of Skamkell. Then too he laid a suit of manslaughter against Kolskegg for the slaying of Hallkell.

And when he had given due notice of all his suits of manslaughter it was said that he spoke well. He asked, too, in what Quarter court the suits lay, and in what house in the district the defendants dwelt. After that men went away from the Hill of Laws, and so the Thing goes on till the day when the courts were to be set to try suits. Then either side gathered their men together in great strength.

Geir the priest and Gizur the white stood at the court of the men of Rangriver looking north, and Gunnar and Njal stood looking south towards the court.

Geir the priest bade Gunnar to listen to his oath, and then he took the oath, and afterwards declared his suit.

Then he let men bear witness of the notice given of the suit; then he called upon the neighbours who were to form the inquest to take their seats; then he called on Gunnar to challenge the inquest; and then he called on the inquest to utter their finding. Then the neighbours who were summoned on the inquest went to the court and took witness, and said that there was a bar to their finding in the suit as to Audulf's slaying, because the next of kin who ought to follow it up was in Norway, and so they had nothing to do with that suit.

After that they uttered their finding in the suit as to Otkell, and brought in Gunnar as truly guilty of killing him.

Then Geir the priest called on Gunnar for his defence, and took witness of all the steps in the suit which had been proved.

Then Gunnar, in his turn, called on Geir the priest to listen to his oath, and to the defence which he was about to bring forward in the suit. Then he took the oath and said -

"This defence I make to this suit, that I took witness and outlawed Otkell before my neighbours for that bloody wound which I got when Otkell gave me a hurt with his spur; but thee, Geir the priest, I forbid by a lawful protest made before a priest to pursue this suit, and so, too, I forbid the judges to hear it; and with this I make all the steps hitherto taken in this suit void and of none-effect. I forbid thee by a lawful protest, a full, fair, and binding protest, as I have a right to forbid thee by the common custom of the Thing and by the law of the land.

"Besides, I will tell thee something else which I mean to do," says Gunnar.

"What!" says Geir, "wilt thou challenge me to the island as thou art wont, and not bear the law?"

"Not that," says Gunnar; "I shall summon thee at the Hill of Laws for that thou calledst those men on the inquest who had no right to deal with Audulf's slaying, and I will declare thee for that guilty of outlawry."

Then Njal said, "Things must not take this turn, for the only end of it will be that this strife will be carried to the uttermost. Each of you, as it seems to me, has much on his side. There are some of these manslaughters, Gunnar, about which thou canst say nothing to hinder the court from finding thee guilty; but thou hast set on foot a suit against Geir, in which he, too, must be found guilty.

Thou too, Geir the priest, shalt know that this suit of outlawry which hangs over thee shall not fall to the ground if thou wilt not listen to my words."

Thorod the priest said, "It seems to us as though the most peaceful way would be that a settlement and atonement were come to in the suit. But why sayest thou so little, Gizur the white?"

"It seems to me," says Gizur, "as though we shall need to have strong props for our suit; we may see, too, that Gunnar's friends stand near him, and so the best turn for us that things can take will be that good men and true should utter an award on the suit, if Gunnar so wills it."

"I have ever been willing to make matters up," says Gunnar; "and, besides, ye have much wrong to follow up, but still I think I was hard driven to do as I did."

And now the end of those suits was, by the counsel of the wisest men, that all the suits were put to arbitration; six men were to make this award, and it was uttered there and then at the Thing.

The award was that Skamkell should be unatoned. The blood money for Otkell's death was to be set off against the hurt Gunnar got from the spur; and as for the rest of the manslaughters, they were paid for after the worth of the men, and Gunnar's kinsmen gave money so that all the fines might be paid up at the Thing.

Then Geir the priest and Gizur the white went up and gave Gunnar pledges that they would keep the peace in good faith.

Gunnar rode home from the Thing, and thanked men for their help, and gave gifts to many, and got the greatest honour from the suit.

Now Gunnar sits at home in his honour.

Chapter 57 Of Starkad and His Sons

There was a man named Starkad; he was a son of Bork the waxytoothed-blade, the son of Thorkell clubfoot, who took the land round about Threecorner as the first settler. His wife's name was Hallbera. The sons of Starkad and Hallbera were these: Thorgeir and Bork and Thorkell. Hildigunna the leech was their sister.

They were very proud men in temper, hard-hearted and unkind. They treated men wrongfully.

There was a man named Egil; he was a son of Kol, who took land as a settler between Storlek and Reydwater. The brother of Egil was Aunund of Witchwood, father of Hall the strong, who was at the slaying of Holt-Thorir with the sons of Kettle the smooth-tongued.

Egil kept house at Sandgil; his sons were these: Kol and Ottar and Hauk. Their mother's name was Steinvor; she was Starkad's sister.

Egil's sons were tall and strifeful; they were most unfair men. They were always on one side with Starkad's sons. Their sister was Gudruna nightsun, and she was the best-bred of women.

Egil had taken into his house two Easterlings; the one's name was Thorir and the other's Thorgrim. They were not long come out hither for the first time, and were wealthy and beloved by their friends; they were well skilled in arms, too, and dauntless in everything.

Starkad had a good horse of chesnut hue, and it was thought that no horse was his match in fight. Once it happened that these brothers from Sandgil were away under the Threecorner. They had much gossip about all the householders in the Fleetlithe, and they fell at last to asking whether there was any one that would fight a horse against them.

But there were some men there who spoke so as to flatter and honour them, that not only was there no one who would dare do that, but that there was no one that had such a horse.

Then Hildigunna answered, "I know that man who will dare to fight horses with you".

"Name him," they say.

"Gunnar has a brown horse," she says, "and he will dare to fight his horse against you, and against any one else."

"As for you women," they say, "you think no one can be Gunnar's match; but though Geir the priest or Gizur the white have come off with shame from before him, still it is not settled that we shall fare in the same way."

"Ye will fare much worse," she says; and so there arose out of this the greatest strife between them. Then Starkad said -

"My will is that ye try your hands on Gunnar last of all; for ye will find it hard work to go against his good luck."

"Thou wilt give us leave, though, to offer him a horse-fight?"

"I will give you leave, if ye play him no trick."

They said they would be sure to do what their father said.

Now they rode to Lithend; Gunnar was at home, and went out, and Kolskegg and Hjort went with him, and they gave them a hearty welcome, and asked whither they meant to go?

"No farther than hither," they say. "We are told that thou hast a good horse, and we wish to challenge thee to a horse-fight."

"Small stories can go about my horse," says Gunnar; "he is young and untried in every way."

"But still thou wilt be good enough to have the fight, for Hildigunna guessed that thou wouldst be easy in matching thy horse."

"How came ye to talk about that?" says Gunnar.

"There were some men," say they, "who were sure that no one would dare to fight his horse with ours."

"I would dare to fight him," says Gunnar; "but I think that was spitefully said."

"Shall we look upon the match as made, then?" they asked.

"Well, your journey will seem to you better if ye have your way in this; but still I will beg this of you, that we so fight our horses that we make sport for each other, but that no quarrel may arise from it, and that ye put no shame upon me; but if ye do to me as ye do to others, then there will be no help for it but that I shall give you such a buffet as it will seem hard to you to put up with. In a word, I shall do then just as ye do first."

Then they ride home. Starkad asked how their journey had gone off; they said that Gunnar had made their going good.

"He gave his word to fight his horse, and we settled when and where the horse-fight should be; but it was plain in everything that he thought he fell short of us, and he begged and prayed to get off."

"It will often be found," says Hildigunna, "that Gunnar is slow to be drawn into quarrels, but a hard hitter if he cannot avoid them."

Gunnar rode to see Njal, and told him of the horse-fight, and what words had passed between them, "But how dost thou think the horse-fight will turn out?"

"Thou wilt be uppermost," says Njal, "but yet many a man's bane will arise out of this fight."

"Will my bane perhaps come out of it?" asks Gunnar.

"Not out of this," says Njal; "but still they will bear in mind both the old and the new feud who fate against thee, and thou wilt have naught left, for it but to yield."

Then Gunnar rode home.

Chapter 58

How Gunnar's Horse fought

Just then Gunnar heard of the death of his father-in-law Hauskuld; a few nights after, Thorgerda, Thrain's wife, was delivered at Gritwater, and gave birth to a boy child. Then she sent a man to her mother, and bade her choose whether it should be called Glum or Hauskuld. She bade call it Hauskuld. So that name was given to the boy.

Gunnar and Hallgerda had two sons, the one's name was Hogni and the other's Grani. Hogni was a brave man of few words, distrustful and slow to believe, but truthful.

Now men ride to the horse-fight, and a very great crowd is gathered together there. Gunnar was there and his brothers, and the sons of Sigfus. Njal and all

his sons. There too was come Starkad and his sons, and Egil and his sons, and they said to Gunnar that now they would lead the horses together.

Gunner said, "That was well".

Skarphedinn said, "Wilt thou that I drive thy horse, kinsman Gunnar?"

"I will not have that," says Gunnar.

"It wouldn't be amiss though," says Skarphedinn; "we are hot-headed on both sides."

"Ye would say or do little," says Gunnar, "before a quarrel would spring up; but with me it will take longer, though it will be all the same in the end."

After that the horses were led together; Gunnar busked him to drive his horse, but Skarphedinn led him out. Gunnar was in a red kirtle, and had about his loins a broad belt, and a great riding-rod in his hand.

Then the horses run at one another, and bit each other long, so that there was no need for any one to touch them, and that was the greatest sport.

Then Thorgeir and Kol made up their minds that they would push their horse forward just as the horses rushed together, and see if Gunnar would fall before him.

Now the horses ran at one another again, and both Thorgeir and Kol ran alongside their horse's flank.

Gunnar pushes his horse against them, and what happened in a trice was this, that Thorgeir and his brother fall down flat on their backs, and their horse a-top of them.

Then they spring up and rush at Gunnar, Gunnar swings himself free and seizes Kol, casts him down on the field, so that he lies senseless, Thorgeir Starkad's son smote Gunnar's horse such a blow that one of his eyes started out. Gunnar smote Thorgeir with his riding-rod, and down falls Thorgeir senseless; but Gunnar goes to his horse, and said to Kolskegg, "Cut off the horse's head; he shall not live a maimed and blemished beast".

So Kolskegg cut the head off the horse.

Then Thorgeir got on his feet and took his weapons, and wanted to fly at Gunnar, but that was stopped, and there was a great throng and crush.

Skarphedinn said, "This crowd wearies me, and it is far more manly that men should fight it out with weapons"; and so he sang a song, -

At the Thing there is a throng;
Past all bounds the crowding comes;
Hard 'twill be to patch up peace
'Twixt the men: this wearies me;
Worthier is it far for men
Weapons red with gore to stain;
I for one would sooner tame
Hunger huge of cub of wolf.

Gunnar was still, so that one man held him, and spoke no ill words.

Njal tried to bring about a settlement, or to get pledges of peace; but Thorgeir said he would neither give nor take peace; far rather, he said, would he see Gunnar dead for the blow.

Kolskegg said, "Gunnar has before now stood too fast than that he should have fallen for words alone, and so it will be again".

Now men ride away from the horse-field, every one to his home. They make no attack on Gunnar, and so that half-year passed away. At the Thing, the summer after, Gunnar met Olaf the peacock, his cousin, and he asked him to come and see him, but yet bade him beware of himself; "For," says he, "they will do us all the harm they can, and mind and fare always with many men at thy back".

He gave him much good counsel beside, and they agreed that there should be the greatest friendship between them.

Chapter 59

Of Asgrim and Wolf Uggis' Son

Asgrim Ellidagrim's son had a suit to follow up at the Thing against Wolf Uggis' son. It was a matter of inheritance, Asgrim took it up in such a way as was seldom his wont; for there was a bar to his suit, and the bar was this, that he had summoned five neighbours to bear witness, when he ought to have summoned nine. And now they have this as their bar.

Then Gunnar spoke and said, "I will challenge thee to single combat on the island, Wolf Uggis' son, if men are not to get their rights by law; and Njal and my friend Helgi would like that I should take some share in defending thy cause, Asgrim, if they were not here themselves."

"But," says Wolf, "this quarrel is not one between thee and me."

"Still it shall be as good as though it were," says Gunnar.

And the end of the suit was, that Wolf had to pay down all the money.

Then Asgrim said to Gunnar, "I will ask thee to come and see me this summer, and I will ever be with thee in lawsuits, and never against thee".

Gunnar rides home from the Thing, and a little while after, he and Njal met, Njal besought Gunnar to be ware of himself, and said he had been told that those away under the Threecorner meant to fall on him, and bade him never go about with a small company, and always to have his weapons with him. Gunnar said so it should be, and told him that Asgrim had asked him to pay him a visit, "and I mean to go now this harvest."

"Let no men know before thou farest how long thou wilt be away," said Njal; "but, besides, I beg thee to let my sons ride with thee, and then no attack will be made on thee."

So they settled that among themselves.

"Now the summer wears away till it was eight weeks to winter," and then Gunnar says to Kolskegg, "Make thee ready to ride, for we shall ride to a feast at Tongue".

"Shall we say anything about it to Njal's sons?" said Kolskegg.

"No," says Gunnar; "they shall fall into no quarrels for me."

Chapter 60

An Attack Against Gunnar Agreed on

They rode three together, Gunnar and his brothers. Gunnar had the bill and his sword, Oliver's gift; but Kolskegg had his short sword; Hjort, too, had proper weapons.

Now they rode to Tongue, and Asgrim gave them a hearty welcome, and they were there some while. At last they gave it out that they meant to go home there and then. Asgrim gave them good gifts, and offered to ride east with them, but Gunnar said there was no need of any such thing; and so he did not go.

Sigurd Swinehead was the name of a man who dwelt by Thurso water. He came to the farm under the Threecorner, for he had given his word to keep watch on Gunnar's doings, and so he went and told them of his journey home; "and," quoth he, "there could never be a finer chance than just now, when he has only two men with him".

"How many men shall we need to have to lie in wait for him?" says Starkad.

"Weak men shall be as nothing before him," he says; "and it is not safe to have fewer than thirty men."

"Where shall we lie in wait?"

"By Knafahills," he says; "there he will not see us before he comes on us."

"Go thou to Sandgil and tell Egil that fifteen of them must busk themselves thence, and now other fifteen will go hence to Knafahills."

Thorgeir said to Hildigunna, "This hand shall show thee Gunnar dead this very night".

"Nay, but I guess," says she, "that thou wilt hang thy head after ye two meet."

So those four, father and sons, fare away from the Threecorner, and eleven men besides, and they fared to Knafahills, and lay in wait there.

Sigurd Swinehead came to Sandgil and said, "Hither am I sent by Starkad and his sons to tell thee, Egil, that ye, father and sons, must fare to Knafahills to lie in wait for Gunnar".

"How many shall we fare in all?" says Egil.

"Fifteen, reckoning me," he says.

Kol said, "Now I mean to try my hand on Kolskegg".

"Then I think thou meanest to have a good deal on thy hands," says Sigurd.

Egil begged his Easterlings to fare with them. They said they had no quarrel with Gunnar; "and besides," says Thorir, "ye seem to need much help here, when a crowd of men shall go against three men".

Then Egil went away and was wroth.

Then the mistress of the house said to the Easterling: "In an evil hour hath my daughter Gudruna humbled herself, and broken the point of her maidenly pride, and lain by thy side as thy wife, when thou wilt not dare to follow thy father-in-law, and thou must be a coward," she says.

"I will go," he says, "with thy husband, and neither of us two shall come back."

After that he went to Thorgrim his messmate, and said, "Take thou now the keys of my chests; for I shall never unlock them again. I bid thee take for thine own whatever of our goods thou wilt; but sail away from Iceland, and do not think of revenge for me. But if thou dost not leave the land, it will be thy death."

So the Easterling joined himself to their band.

Chapter 61

Gunnar's Dream

Now we must go back and say that Gunnar rides east over Thurso water, but when he had gone a little way from the river he grew very drowsy, and bade them lie down and rest there.

They did so. He fell fast asleep, and struggled much as he slumbered.

Then Kolskegg said, "Gunnar dreams now". But Hjort said, "I would like to wake him".

"That shall not be," said Kolskegg, "but he shall dream his dream out".

Gunnar lay a very long while, and threw off his shield from him, and he grew very warm. Kolskegg said, "What hast thou dreamt, kinsman?"

"That have I dreamt," says Gunnar, "which if I had dreamt it there I would never have ridden with so few men from Tongue."

"Tell us thy dream," says Kolskegg.

Then Gunnar sang a song.

Chief, that chargest foes in fight!
Now I fear that I have ridden
Short of men from Tongue, this harvest;
Raven's fast I sure shall break.
Lord, that scatters Ocean's fire!
This at least, I long to say,
Kite with wolf shall fight for marrow,
Ill I dreamt with wandering thought.

"I dreamt, methought, that I was riding on by Knafahills, and there I thought I saw many wolves, and they all made at me; but I turned away from them straight towards Rangriver, and then methought they pressed hard on me on all sides, but I kept them at bay, and shot all those that were foremost, till they came so close to me that I could not use my bow against them. Then I took my sword, and I smote with it with one hand, but thrust at them with my bill with the other. Shield myself then I did not, and methought then I knew not what shielded me. Then I slew many wolves, and thou, too, Kolskegg; but Hjort methought they pulled down, and tore open his breast, and one methought had his heart in his maw; but I grew so wroth that I hewed that wolf asunder just below the brisket, and after that methought the wolves turned and fled. Now my counsel is, brother Hjort, that thou ridest back west to Tongue."

"I will not do that," says Hjort; "though I know my death is sure, I will stand by thee still."

Then they rode and came east by Knafahills, and Kolskegg said -

"Seest thou, kinsman! many spears stand up by the hills, and men with weapons."

"It does not take me unawares," says Gunnar, "that my dream comes true."

"What is best to be done now?" says Kolskegg; "I guess thou wilt not run away from them."

"They shall not have that to jeer about," says Gunnar, "but we will ride on down to the ness by Rangriver; there is some vantage ground there."

Now they rode on to the ness, and made them ready there, and as they rode on past them Kol called out and said -

"Whither art thou running to now, Gunnar?"

But Kolskegg said, "Say the same thing farther on when this day has come to an end".

Chapter 62

The Slaying of Hjort and Fourteen Men

After that Starkad egged on his men, and then they turn down upon them into the ness. Sigurd Swinehead came first and had a red targe, but in his other hand he held a cutlass. Gunnar sees him and shoots an arrow at him from his bow; he held the shield up aloft when he saw the arrow flying high, and the shaft passes through the shield and into his eye, and so came out at the nape of his neck, and that was the first man slain.

A second arrow Gunnar shot at Ulfhedinn, one of Starkad's men, and that struck him about the middle and he fell at the feet of a yeoman, and the yeoman over him. Kolskegg cast a stone and struck the yeoman on the head, and that was his death-blow.

Then Starkad said, "'Twill never answer our end that he should use his bow, but let us come on well and stoutly". Then each man egged on the other, and Gunnar guarded himself with his bow and arrows as long as he could; after that he throws them down, and then he takes his bill and sword and fights with both hands. There is long the hardest fight, but still Gunnar and Kolskegg slew man after man.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "I vowed to bring Hildigunna thy head, Gunnar."

Then Gunnar sang a song -

Thou, that battle-sleet down bringeth,
Scarce I trow thou speakest truth;
She, the girl with golden armlets,
Cannot care for such a gift;
But, O serpent's hoard despoiler!
If the maid must have my head -
Maid whose wrist Rhine's fireö wreatheth,
Closer come to crash of spear.

"She will not think that so much worth having," says Gunnar; "but still to get it thou wilt have to come nearer!"

Thorgeir said to his brothers -

"Let us run all of us upon him at once; he has no shield and we shall have his life in our hands."

So Bork and Thorkel both ran forward and were quicker than Thorgeir. Bork made a blow at Gunnar, and Gunnar threw his bill so hard in the way that the sword flew out of Bork's hand; then he sees Thorkel standing on his other hand within stroke of sword. Gunnar was standing with his body swayed a little on one side, and he makes a sweep with his sword, and caught Thorkel on the neck, and off flew his head.

Kol Egil's son said, "Let me get at Kolskegg," and turning to Kolskegg he said, "This I have often said, that we two would be just about an even match in fight".

"That we can soon prove," says Kolskegg.

Kol thrust at him with his spear; Kolskegg had just slain a man and had his hands full, and so he could not throw his shield before the blow, and the thrust came upon his thigh, on the outside of the limb and went through it.

Kolskegg turned sharp round, and strode towards him, and smote him with his short sword on the thigh, and cut off his leg, and said, "Did it touch thee or not?"

"Now," says Kol, "I pay for being bare of my shield."

So he stood a while on his other leg and looked at the stump.

"Thou needest not to look at it," said Kolskegg; "'tis even as thou seest, the leg is off."

Then Kol fell down dead.

But when Egil sees this, he runs at Gunnar and makes a cut at him; Gunnar thrusts at him with the bill and struck him in the middle, and Gunnar hoists him up on the bill and hurls him out into Rangriver.

Then Starkad said, "Wretch that thou art indeed, Thorir Easterling, when thou sittest by; but thy host and father-in-law Egil is slain."

Then the Easterling sprung up and was very wroth. Hjort had been the death of two men, and the Easterling leapt on him and smote him full on the breast. Then Hjort fell down dead on the spot.

Gunnar sees this and was swift to smite at the Easterling, and cuts him asunder at the waist.

A little while after Gunnar hurls the bill at Bork, and struck him in the middle, and the bill went through him and stuck in the ground.

Then Kolskegg cut off Hauk Egil's son's head, and Gunnar smites off Otter's hand at the elbow-joint. Then Starkad said -

"Let us fly now. We have not to do with men!"

Gunnar said, "Ye two will think it a sad story if there is naught on you to show that ye have both been in the battle".

Then Gunnar ran after Starkad and Thorgeir, and gave them each a wound. After that they parted; and Gunnar and his brothers had then wounded many men who got away from the field, but fourteen lost their lives, and Hjort the fifteenth.

Gunnar brought Hjort home, laid out on his shield, and he was buried in a cairn there. Many men grieved for him, for he had many dear friends.

Starkad came home, too, and Hildigunna dressed his wounds and Thorgeir's, and said, "Ye would have given a great deal not to have fallen out with Gunnar".

"So we would," says Starkad.

Chapter 63

Njal's Counsel to Gunnar

Steinvor, at Sandgil, besought Thorgrim the Easterling to take in hand the care of her goods, and not to sail away from Iceland, and so to keep in mind the death of his messmate and kinsman.

"My messmate Thorir," said he, "foretold that I should fall by Gunnar's hand if I stayed here in the land, and he must have foreseen that when he foreknew his own death."

"I will give thee," she says, "Gudruna my daughter to wife, and all my goods into the bargain."

"I knew not," he said, "that thou wouldest pay such a long price."

After that they struck the bargain that he shall have her, and the wedding feast was to be the next summer.

Now Gunnar rides to Bergthorsknoll, and Kolskegg with him. Njal was out of doors and his sons, and they went to meet Gunnar and gave them a hearty welcome. After that they fell a-talking, and Gunnar said -

"Hither am I come to seek good counsel and help at thy hand."

"That is thy due," said Njal.

"I have fallen into a great strait," says Gunnar, "and slain many men, and I wish to know what thou wilt make of the matter?"

"Many will say this," said Njal, "that thou hast been driven into it much against thy will; but now thou shalt give me time to take counsel with myself."

Then Njal went away all by himself, and thought over a plan, and came back and said -

"Now have I thought over the matter somewhat, and it seems to me as though this must be carried through - if it be carried through at all - with hardihood and daring. Thorgeir has got my kinswoman Thorfinna with child, and I will hand over to thee the suit for seduction. Another suit of outlawry against Starkad I hand over also to thee, for having hewn trees in my wood on the Threecorner ridge. Both these suits shalt thou take up. Thou shalt fare too to the spot where ye fought, and dig up the dead, and name witnesses to the wounds, and make all the dead outlaws, for that they came against thee with that mind to give thee and thy brothers wounds or swift death. But if this be tried at the Thing, and it be brought up against thee that thou first gave Thorgeir a blow, and so mayest neither plead thine own cause nor that of others, then I will answer in that matter, and say that I gave thee back thy rights at the Thingskala-Thing, so that thou shouldest be able to plead thine own suit as well as that of others, and then there will be an answer to that point. Thou shalt also go to see Tyrving of Berianess, and he must hand over to thee a suit against Aunund of Witchwood, who has the blood feud after his brother Egil."

Then first of all Gunnar rode home; but a few nights after Njal's sons and Gunnar rode thither where the bodies were, and dug them up that were buried there. Then Gunnar summoned them all as outlaws for assault and treachery, and rode home after that.

Chapter 64 Of Valgard and Mord

That same harvest Valgard the guileful came out to Iceland, and fared home to Hof. Then Thorgeir went to see Valgard and Mord, and told them what a strait they were in if Gunnar were to be allowed to make all those men outlaws whom he had slain.

Valgard said that must be Njal's counsel, and yet every thing had not come out yet which he was likely to have taught him.

Then Thorgeir begged those kinsmen for help and backing, but they held out a long while, and at last asked for and got a large sum of money.

That, too, was part of their plan, that Mord should ask for Thorkatla, Gizur the white's daughter, and Thorgeir was to ride at once west across the river with Valgard and Mord.

So the day after they rode twelve of them together and came to Mossfell. There they were heartily welcomed, and they put the question to Gizur about the wooing, and the end of it was that the match should be made, and the wedding feast was to be in half a month's space at Mossfell.

They ride home, and after that they ride to the wedding, and there was a crowd of guests to meet them, and it went off well. Thorkatla went home with Mord and took the housekeeping in hand but Valgard went abroad again the next summer.

Now Mord eggs on Thorgeir to set his suit on foot against Gunnar, and Thorgeir went to find Aunund; he bids him now to begin a suit for manslaughter for his brother Egil and his sons; "but I will begin one for the manslaughter of my brothers, and for the wounds of myself and my father".

He said he was quite ready to do that, and then they set out, and give notice of the manslaughter, and summon nine neighbours who dwelt nearest to the spot where the deed was done. This beginning of the suit was heard of at Lithend; and then Gunnar rides to see Njal, and told him, and asked what he wished them to do next.

"Now," says Njal, "thou shalt summon those who dwell next to the spot, and thy neighbours; and call men to witness before the neighbours, and choose out Kol as the slayer in the manslaughter of Hjort thy brother: for that is lawful and right; then thou shalt give notice of the suit for manslaughter at Kol's hand, though he be dead. Then shall thou call men to witness, and summon the neighbours to ride to the Althing to bear witness of the fact, whether they, Kol and his companions, were on the spot, and in onslaught when Hjort was slain. Thou shalt also summon Thorgeir for the suit of seduction, and Aunund at the suit of Tyrping."

Gunnar now did in everything as Njal gave him counsel. This men thought a strange beginning of suits, and now these matters come before the Thing. Gunnar rides to the Thing, and Njal's sons and the sons of Sigfus. Gunnar had sent messengers to his cousins and kinsmen, that they should ride to the Thing, and come with as many men as they could, and told them that this matter would lead to much strife. So they gathered together in a great band from the west.

Mord rode to the Thing and Runolf of the Dale, and those under the Threecorner, and Aunund of Witchwood. But when they come to the Thing, they join them in one company with Gizur the white and Geir the priest.

Chapter 65

Of Fines and Atonements

Gunnar, and the sons of Sigfus, and Njal's sons, went altogether in one band, and they marched so swiftly and closely that men who came in their way had to take heed lest they should get a fall; and nothing was so often spoken about over the whole Thing as these great lawsuits.

Gunnar went to meet his cousins, and Olaf and his men greeted him well. They asked Gunnar about the fight, but he told them all about it, and was just in all he said; he told them, too, what steps he had taken since.

Then Olaf said, "'Tis worth much to see how close Njal stands by thee in all counsel".

Gunnar said he should never be able to repay that, but then he begged them for help; and they said that was his due.

Now the suits on both sides came before the court, and each pleads his cause.

Mord asked - "How it was that a man could have the right to set a suit on foot who, like Gunnar, had already made himself an outlaw by striking Thorgeir a blow?"

"Wast thou," answered Njal, "at Thingskala-Thing last autumn?"

"Surely I was," says Mord.

"Heardest thou," asks Njal, "how Gunnar offered him full atonement? Then I gave back Gunnar his right to do all lawful deeds."

"That is right and good law," says Mord, "but how does the matter stand if Gunnar has laid the slaying of Hjort at Kol's door, when it was the Easterling that slew him?"

"That was right and lawful," says Njal, "when he chose him as the slayer before witnesses."

"That was lawful and right, no doubt," says Mord; "but for what did Gunnar summon them all as outlaws?"

"Thou needest not to ask about that," says Njal, "when they went out to deal wounds and manslaughter."

"Yes," says Mord, "but neither befell Gunnar."

"Gunnar's brothers," said Njal, "Kolskegg and Hjort, were there, and one of them got his death and the other a flesh wound."

"Thou speakest nothing but what is law," says Mord, "though it is hard to abide by it."

Then Hjalldi Skeggis son of Thursodale, stood forth and said -

"I have had no share in any of your lawsuits; but I wish to know whether thou wilt do something, Gunnar, for the sake of my words and friendship."

"What askest thou?" says Gunnar.

"This," he says, "that ye lay down the whole suit to the award and judgment of good men and true."

"If I do so," said Gunnar, "then thou shalt never be against me, whatever men I may have to deal with."

"I will give my word to that," says Hjalldi.

After that he tried his best with Gunnar's adversaries, and brought it about that they were all set at one again. And after that each side gave the other pledges of peace; but for Thorgeir's wound came the suit for seduction, and for the hewing in the wood, Starkad's wound. Thorgeir's brothers were atoned for by half fines, but half fell away for the onslaught on Gunnar. Egil's staying and Tyrping's lawsuit were set off against each other. For Hjort's slaying, the slaying of Kol and of the Easterling were to come, and as for all the rest, they were atoned for with half fines.

Njal was in this award, and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Hjalldi Skeggi's son.

Njal had much money out at interest with Starkad, and at Sandgil too, and he gave it all to Gunnar to make up these fines.

So many friends had Gunnar at the Thing, that he not only paid up there and then all the fines on the spot, but gave besides gifts to many chiefs who had lent him help; and he had the greatest honour from the suit; and all were agreed in this, that no man was his match in all the South Quarter.

So Gunnar rides home from the Thing and sits there in peace, but still his adversaries envied him much for his honour.

Chapter 66 Of Thorgeir Otkell's Son

Now we must tell of Thorgeir Otkell's son; he grew up to be a tall strong man, true-hearted and guileless, but rather too ready to listen to fair words. He had many friends among the best men, and was much beloved by his kinsmen.

Once on a time Thorgeir Starkad's son had been to see his kinsman Mord.

"I can ill brook," he says, "that settlement of matters which we and Gunnar had, but I have bought thy help so long as we two are above ground; I wish thou wouldest think out some plan and lay it deep; this is why I say it right out, because I know that thou art Gunnar's greatest foe, and he too thine. I will much increase thine honour if thou takest pains in this matter."

"It will always seem as though I were greedy of gain, but so it must be. Yet it will be hard to take care that thou mayest not seem to be a truce-breaker, or peace-breaker, and yet carry out thy point. But now I have been told that Kolskegg means to try a suit, and regain a fourth part of Moeidsknoll, which was paid to thy father as an atonement for his son. He has taken up this suit for his mother, but this too is Gunnar's counsel, to pay in goods and not to let the land go. We

must wait till this comes about, and then declare that he has broken the settlement made with you. He has also taken a cornfield from Thorgeir Otkell's son, and so broken the settlement with him too. Thou shalt go to see Thorgeir Otkell's son, and bring him into the matter with thee, and then fall on Gunnar; but if ye fail in aught of this, and cannot get him hunted down, still ye shall set on him over and over again, I must tell thee that Njal has 'spaed' his fortune, and foretold about his life, if he slays more than once in the same stock, that it would lead him to his death, if it so fell out that he broke the settlement made after the deed. Therefore shalt thou bring Thorgeir into the suit, because he has already slain his father; and now, if ye two are together in an affray, thou shalt shield thyself; but he will go boldly on, and then Gunnar will slay him. Then he has slain twice in the same stock, but thou shalt fly from the fight. And if this is to drag him to his death he will break the settlement afterwards, and so we may wait till then."

After that Thorgeir goes home and tells his father secretly. Then they agreed among themselves that they should work out this plot by stealth.

Chapter 67

Of Thorgeir Starkad's Son

Sometime after Thorgeir Starkad's son fared to Kirkby to see his namesake, and they went aside to speak, and talked secretly all day; but at the end Thorgeir Starkad's son, gave his namesake a spear inlaid with gold, and rode home afterwards; they made the greatest friendship the one with the other.

At the Thingskala-Thing in the autumn, Kolskegg laid claim to the land at Moeidsknoll, but Gunnar took witness, and offered ready money, or another piece of land at a lawful price to those under the Threecorner.

Thorgeir took witness also, that Gunnar was breaking the settlement made between them.

After that the Thing was broken up, and so the next year wore away.

Those namesakes were always meeting, and there was the greatest friendship between them. Kolskegg spoke to Gunnar and said -

"I am told that there is great friendship between those namesakes, and it is the talk of many men that they will prove untrue, and I would that thou wouldst be ware of thyself."

"Death will come to me when it will come," says Gunnar, "wherever I may be, if that is my fate."

Then they left off talking about it.

About autumn, Gunnar gave out that they would work one week there at home, and the next down in the isles, and so make an end of their haymaking. At the same time, he let it be known that every man would have to leave the house, save himself and the women.

Thorgeir under Threecorner goes to see his namesake, but as soon as they met they began to talk after their wont, and Thorgeir Starkad's son, said -

"I would that we could harden our hearts and fall on Gunnar."

"Well," says Thorgeir Otkell's son, "every struggle with Gunnar has had but one end, that few have gained the day; besides, methinks it sounds ill to be called a peace-breaker."

"They have broken the peace, not we," says Thorgeir Starkad's son. "Gunnar took away from thee thy cornfield; and he has taken Moeidsknoll from my father and me."

And so they settle it between them to fall on Gunnar; and then Thorgeir said that Gunnar would be all alone at home in a few nights' space, "and then thou shalt come to meet me with eleven men, but I will have as many".

After that Thorgeir rode home.

Chapter 68 Of Njal and Those Namesakes

Now when Kolskegg and the house-carles had been three nights in the isles, Thorgeir Starkad's son had news of that, and sends word to his namesake that he should come to meet him on Threecorner ridge.

After that Thorgeir of the Threecorner busked him with eleven men; he rides up on the ridge and there waits for his namesake.

And now Gunnar is at home in his house, and those namesakes ride into a wood hard by. There such a drowsiness came over them that they could do naught else but sleep. So they hung their shields up in the boughs, and tethered their horses, and laid their weapons by their sides.

Njal was that night up in Thorolfselfell, and could not sleep at all, but went out and in by turns.

Thorhilda asked Njal why he could not sleep?

"Many things now flit before my eyes," said he; "I see many fetches of Gunnar's bitter foes, and what is very strange is this, they seem to be mad with rage, and yet they fare without plan or purpose."

A little after, a man rode up to the door and got off his horse's back and went in, and there was come the shepherd of Thorhilda and her husband.

"Didst thou find the sheep?" she asked.

"I found what might be more worth," said he.

"What was that?" asked Njal.

"I found twenty-four men up in the wood yonder; they had tethered their horses, but slept themselves. Their shields they had hung up in the boughs."

But so closely had he looked at them that he told of all their weapons and war-gear and clothes, and then Njal knew plainly who each of them must have been, and said to him -

"'Twere good hiring if there were many such shepherds; and this shall ever stand to thy good; but still I will send thee on an errand."

He said at once he would go.

"Thou shalt go," says Njal, "to Lithend and tell Gunnar that he must fare to Gritwater, and then send after men; but I will go to meet with those who are in the wood and scare them away. This thing hath well come to pass, so that they shall gain nothing by this journey, but lose much."

The shepherd set off and told Gunnar as plainly as he could the whole story. Then Gunnar rode to Gritwater and summoned men to him.

Now it is to be told of Njal how he rides to meet these namesakes.

"Unwarily ye lie here," he says, "or for what end shall this journey have been made? And Gunnar is not a man to be trifled with. But if the truth must be told then, this is the greatest treason. Ye shall also know this, that Gunnar is gathering force, and he will come here in the twinkling of an eye, and slay you all, unless ye ride away home."

They bestirred them at once, for they were in great fear, and took their weapons, and mounted their horses and galloped home under the Threecorner.

Njal fared to meet Gunnar and bade him not to break up his company.

"But I will go and seek for an atonement; now they will be finely frightened; but for this treason no less a sum shall be paid when one has to deal with all of them, than shall be paid for the slaying of one or other of those namesakes, though such a thing should come to pass. This money I will take into my keeping, and so lay it out that it may be ready to thy hand when thou hast need of it."

Chapter 69

Olaf the Peacock's Gifts to Gunnar

Gunnar thanked Njal for his aid, and Njal rode away under the Threecorner, and told those namesakes that Gunnar would not break up his band of men before he had fought it out with them.

They began to offer terms for themselves, and were full of dread, and bade Njal to come between them with an offer of atonement.

Njal said that could only be if there were no guile behind. Then they begged him to have a share in the award, and said they would hold to what he awarded.

Njal said he would make no award unless it were at the Thing, and unless the best men were by; and they agreed to that.

Then Njal came between them, so that they gave each other pledges of peace and atonement.

Njal was to utter the award, and to name as his fellows those whom he chose.

A little while after those namesakes met Mord Valgard's son, and Mord blamed them much for having laid the matter in Njal's hands, when he was Gunnar's great friend. He said that would turn out ill for them.

Now men ride to the Althing after their wont, and now both sides are at the Thing.

Njal begged for a hearing, and asked all the best men who were come thither, what right at law they thought Gunnar had against those namesakes for their treason. They said they thought such a man had great right on his side.

Njal went on to ask, whether he had a right of action against all of them, or whether the leaders had to answer for them all in the suit?

They say that most of the blame would fall on the leaders, but a great deal still on them all.

"Many will say this," said Mord, "that it was not without a cause when Gunnar broke the settlement made with those namesakes."

"That is no breach of settlement," says Njal, "that any man should take the law against another; for with law shall our land be built up and settled, and with lawlessness wasted and spoiled."

Then Njal tells them that Gunnar had offered land for Moeidsknoll, or other goods.

Then those namesakes thought they had been beguiled by Mord, and scolded him much, and said that this fine was all his doing.

Njal named twelve men as judges in the suit, and then every man paid a hundred in silver who had gone out, but each of those namesakes two hundred.

Njal took this money into his keeping, but either side gave the other pledges of peace, and Njal gave out the terms.

Then Gunnar rode from the Thing west to the Dales, till he came to Hjardarholt, and Olaf the peacock gave him a hearty welcome. There he sat half a month, and rode far and wide about the Dales, and all welcomed him with joyful hands. But at their parting Olaf said -

"I will give thee three things of price, a gold ring, and a cloak which Moorkjartan the Erse king owned, and a hound that was given me in Ireland; he is big, and no worse follower than a sturdy man. Besides, it is part of his nature that he has man's wit, and he will bay at every man whom he knows is thy foe, but never at thy friends; he can see, too, in any man's face, whether he means thee well or ill, and he will lay down his life to be true to thee. This hound's name is Sam."

After that he spoke to the hound, "Now shalt thou follow Gunnar, and do him all the service thou canst".

The hound went at once to Gunnar and laid himself down at his feet.

Olaf bade Gunnar to be ware of himself, and said he had many enviers, "For now thou art thought to be a famous man throughout all the land".

Gunnar thanked him for his gifts and good counsel, and rode home.

Now Gunnar sits at home for some time, and all is quiet.

Chapter 70

Mord's Counsel

A little after, those namesakes and Mord met, and they were not at all of one mind. They thought they had lost much goods for Mord's sake, but had got nothing in return; and they bade him set on foot some other plot which might do Gunnar harm.

Mord said so it should be. "But now this is my counsel, that thou, Thorgeir Otkell's son shouldest beguile Ormilda, Gunnar's kinswoman; but Gunnar will let his displeasure grow against thee at that, and then I will spread that story abroad that Gunnar will not suffer thee to do such things."

"Then ye two shall some time after make an attack on Gunnar, but still ye must not seek him at home, for there is no thinking of that while the hound is alive."

So they settled this plan among them that it should be brought about.

Thorgeir began to turn his steps towards Ormilda, and Gunnar thought that ill, and great dislike arose between them.

So the winter wore away. Now comes the summer, and their secret meetings went on oftener than before.

As for Thorgeir of the Threecorner and Mord, they were always meeting; and they plan an onslaught on Gunnar, when he rides down to the isles to see after the work done by his house-carles.

One day Mord was ware of it when Gunnar rode down to the isles, and sent a man off under the Threecorner to tell Thorgeir that then would be the likeliest time to try to fall on Gunnar.

They bestirred them at once, and fare thence twelve together, but when they came to Kirkby there they found thirteen men waiting for them.

Then they made up their minds to ride down to Rangriver and lie in wait there for Gunnar.

But when Gunnar rode up from the isles, Kolskegg rode with him. Gunnar had his bow and his arrows and his bill. Kolskegg had his short sword and weapons to match.

Chapter 71

The Slaying of Thorgeir Otkell's Son

That token happened as Gunnar and his brother rode up towards Rangriver, that much blood burst out on the bill.

Kolskegg asked what that might mean.

Gunnar says, "If such tokens took place in other lands, it was called 'wound-drops,' and Master Oliver told me also that this only happened before great fights".

So they rode on till they saw men sitting by the river on the other side, and they had tethered their horses.

Gunnar said, "Now we have an ambush".

Kolskegg answered, "Long have they been faithless; but what is best to be done now?"

"We will gallop up alongside them to the ford," says Gunnar, "and there make ready for them."

The others saw that and turned at once towards them.

Gunnar strings his bow, and takes his arrows and throws them on the ground before him, and shoots as soon as ever they come within shot; by that Gunnar wounded many men, but some he slew.

Then Thorgeir Otkell's son spoke and said, "This is no use; let us make for him as hard as we can".

They did so, and first went Aunund the fair, Thorgeir's kinsman. Gunnar hurled the bill at him, and it fell on his shield and clove it in twain, but the bill rushed through Aunund. Augmund Shockhead rushed at Gunnar behind his back. Kolskegg saw that and cut off at once both Augmund's legs from under him, and hurled him out into Rangriver, and he was drowned there and then.

Then a hard battle arose; Gunnar cut with one hand and thrust with the other. Kolskegg slew some men and wounded many.

Thorgeir's Starkad's son called out to his namesake, "It looks very little as though thou hadst a father to avenge".

"True it is," he answers, "that I do not make much way, but yet thou hast not followed in my footsteps; still I will not bear thy reproaches."

With that he rushes at Gunnar in great wrath, and thrust his spear through his shield, and so on through his arm.

Gunnar gave the shield such a sharp twist that the spearhead broke short off at the socket. Gunnar sees that another man was come within reach of his sword, and he smites at him and deals him his death-blow. After that, he clutches his bill with both hands; just then Thorgeir Otkell's son had come near him with a drawn sword, and Gunnar turns on him in great wrath, and drives the bill through him, and lifts him up aloft, and casts him out into Rangriver, and he

drifts down towards the ford, and stuck fast there on a stone; and the name of that ford has since been Thorgeir's ford.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "Let us fly now; no victory will be fated to us this time".

So they all turned and fled from the field.

"Let us follow them up now," says Kolskegg, "and take thou thy bow and arrows, and thou wilt come within bow-shot of Thorgeir Starkad's son."

Then Gunnar sang a song.

Reaver of rich river-treasure,
Plundered will our purses be,
Though to-day we wound no other
Warriors wight in play of spears;
Aye, if I for all these sailors
Lowly lying, fines must pay -
This is why I hold my hand,
Hearken, brother dear, to me.

"Our purses will be emptied," says Gunnar, "by the time that these are atoned for who now lie here dead."

"Thou wilt never lack money," says Kolskegg; "but Thorgier will never leave off before he compasses thy death."

Gunnar sung another song.

Lord of water-skatesö that skim
Sea-king's fields, more good as he,
Shedding wounds' red stream, must stand
In my way ere I shall wince.
I, the golden armlets' warder,
Snakelike twined around my wrist,
Ne'er shall shun a foeman's faulchion
Flashing bright in din of fight.

"He, and a few more as good as he," says Gunnar, "must stand in my path ere I am afraid of them."

After that they ride home and tell the tidings.

Hallgerda was well pleased to hear them, and praised the deed much.

Rannveig said, "May be the deed is good; but somehow," she says, "I feel too downcast about it to think that good can come of it".

Chapter 72

Of the Suits for Manslaughter at the Thing

These tidings were spread far and wide, and Thorgeir's death was a great grief to many a man. Gizur the white and his men rode to the spot and gave notice of

the manslaughter, and called the neighbours on the inquest to the Thing. Then they rode home west.

Njal and Gunnar met and talked about the battle. Then Njal said to Gunnar -

"Now be ware of thyself! Now hast thou slain twice in the same stock; and so now take heed to thy behaviour, and think that it is as much as thy life is worth, if thou dost not hold to the settlement that is made."

"Nor do I mean to break it in any way," says Gunnar, "but still I shall need thy help at the Thing."

"I will hold to my faithfulness to thee," said Njal, "till my death day."

Then Gunnar rides home. Now the Thing draws near; and each side gather a great company; and it is a matter of much talk at the Thing how these suits will end.

Those two, Gizur the white, and Geir the priest, talked with each other as to who should give notice of the suit of manslaughter after Thorgeir, and the end of it was that Gizur took the suit on his hand, and gave notice of it at the Hill of Laws, and spoke in these words: -

"I gave notice of a suit for assault laid down by law against Gunnar Hamond's son; for that he rushed with an onslaught laid down by law on Thorgeir Otkell's son, and wounded him with a body wound, which proved a death wound, so that Thorgeir got his death.

"I say on this charge he ought to become a convicted outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need.

"I say that his goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter, whose right it is by law to seize the goods of outlaws.

"I give notice of this charge in the Quarter Court, into which this suit ought by law to come.

"I give this lawful notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws.

"I give notice now of this suit, and of full forfeiture and outlawry against Gunnar Hamond's son."

A second time Gizur took witness, and gave notice of a suit against Gunnar Hamond's son, for that he had wounded Thorgeir Otkell's son with a body wound which was a death wound, and from which Thorgeir got his death, on such and such a spot when Gunnar first sprang on Thorgeir with an onslaught, laid down by law.

After that he gave notice of this declaration as he had done of the first. Then he asked in what Quarter Court the suit lay, and in what house in the district the defendant dwelt.

When that was over men left the Hill of Laws, and all said that he spoke well.

Gunnar kept himself well in hand and said little or nothing.

Now the Thing wears away till the day when the courts were to be set.

Then Gunnar stood looking south by the court of the men of Rangriver, and his men with him.

Gizur stood looking north, and calls his witnesses, and bade Gunnar to listen to his oath, and to his declaration of the suit, and to all the steps and proofs which he meant to bring forward. After that he took his oath, and then he brought forward the suit in the same shape before the court, as he had given notice of it before. Then he made them bring forward witness of the notice, then he bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, and called upon Gunnar to challenge the inquest.

Chapter 73

Of the Atonement

Then Njal spoke and said -

"Now I can no longer sit still and take no part. Let us go to where the neighbours sit on the inquest."

They went thither and challenged four neighbours out of the inquest, but they called on the five that were left to answer the following question in Gunnar's favour "whether those namesakes had gone out with that mind to the place of meeting to do Gunnar a mischief if they could?"

But all bore witness at once that so it was.

Then Njal called this a lawful defence to the suit, and said he would bring forward proof of it unless they gave over the suit to arbitration.

Then many chiefs joined in praying for an atonement, and so it was brought about that twelve men should utter an award in the matter.

Then either side went and handselled this settlement to the other. Afterwards the award was made, and the sum to be paid settled, and it was all to be paid down then and there at the Thing.

But besides, Gunnar was to go abroad and Kolskegg with him, and they were to be away three winters; but if Gunnar did not go abroad when he had a chance of a passage, then he was to be slain by the kinsmen of those whom he had killed.

Gunnar made no sign, as though he thought the terms of atonement were not good. He asked Njal for that money which he had handed over to him to keep. Njal had laid the money out at interest and paid it down all at once, and it just came to what Gunnar had to pay for himself.

Now they ride home. Gunnar and Njal rode both together from the Thing, and then Njal said to Gunnar -

"Take good care, messmate, that thou keepest to this atonement, and bear in mind what we have spoken about; for though thy former journey abroad brought thee to great honour, this will be a far greater honour to thee. Thou wilt come back with great glory, and live to be an old man, and no man here will then

tread on thy heel; but if thou dost not fare away, and so breakest thy atonement, then thou wilt be slain here in the land, and that is ill knowing for those who are thy friends."

Gunnar said he had no mind to break the atonement, and he rides home and told them of the settlement.

Rannveig said it was well that he fared abroad, for then they must find some one else to quarrel.

Chapter 74

Kolskegg Goes Abroad

Thrain Sigfus' son said to his wife that he meant to fare abroad that summer. She said that was well. So he took his passage with Hogni the white.

Gunnar took his passage with Arnfin of the Bay; and Kolskegg was to go with him.

Grim And Helgi, Njal's sons, asked their father's leave to go abroad too, and Njal said -

"This foreign voyage ye will find hard work, so hard that it will be doubtful whether ye keep your lives; but still ye two will get some honour and glory, but it is not unlikely that a quarrel will arise out of your journey when ye come back."

Still they kept on asking their father to let them go, and the end of it was that he bade them go if they chose.

Then they got them a passage with Bard the black, and Olaf Kettle's son of Elda; and it is the talk of the whole country that all the better men in that district were leaving it.

By this time Gunnar's sons, Hogni and Grani, were grown up; they were men of very different turn of mind. Grani had much of his mother's temper, but Hogni was kind and good.

Gunnar made men bear down the wares of his brother and himself to the ship, and when all Gunnar's baggage had come down, and the ship was all but "boun," then Gunnar rides to Bergthorsknoll, and to other homesteads to see men, and thanked them all for the help they had given him.

The day after he gets ready early for his journey to the ship, and told all his people that he would ride away for good and all, and men took that much to heart, but still they said that they looked to his coming back afterwards.

Gunnar threw his arms round each of the household when he was "boun," and every one of them went out of doors with him; he leans on the butt of his spear and leaps into the saddle, and he and Kolskegg ride away.

They ride down along Markfleet, and just then Gunnar's horse tripped and threw him off. He turned with his face up towards the Lithe and the homestead at Lithend, and said -

"Fair is the Lithe; so fair that it has never seemed to me so fair; the corn fields are white to harvest, and the home mead is mown; and now I will ride back home, and not fare abroad at all."

"Do not this joy to thy foes," says Kolskegg, "by breaking thy atonement, for no man could think thou wouldst do thus, and thou mayst be sure that all will happen as Njal has said."

"I will not go away any whither," says Gunnar, "and so I would thou shouldst do too."

"That shall not be," says Kolskegg; "I will never do a base thing in this, nor in anything else which is left to my good faith; and this is that one thing that could tear us asunder; but tell this to my kinsmen and to my mother, that I never mean to see Iceland again, for I shall soon learn that thou art dead, brother, and then there will be nothing left to bring me back."

So they parted there and then. Gunnar rides home to Lithend, but Kolskegg rides to the ship, and goes abroad.

Hallgerda was glad to see Gunnar when he came home, but his mother said little or nothing.

Now Gunnar sits at home that fall and winter, and had not many men with him.

Now the winter leaves the farmyard. Olaf the peacock asked Gunnar and Hallgerda to come and stay with him; but as for the farm, to put it into the hands of his mother and his son Hogni.

Gunnar thought that a good thing at first, and agreed to it, but when it came to the point he would not do it.

But at the Thing next summer, Gizur the white, and Geir the priest, gave notice of Gunnar's outlawry at the Hill of Laws; and before the Thing broke up Gizur summoned all Gunnar's foes to meet in the "Great Rift". He summoned Starkad under the Threecorner, and Thorgeir his son; Mord and Valgard the guileful; Geir the priest and Hjalti Skeggi's son; Thorbrand and Asbrand, Thorleik's sons; Eyjulf, and Aunund his son, Aunund of Witchwood and Thorgrim the Easterling of Sandgil.

Then Gizur spoke and said, "I will make you all this offer, that we go out against Gunnar this summer and slay him".

"I gave my word to Gunnar," said Hjalti, "here at the Thing, when he showed himself most willing to yield to my prayer, that I would never be in any attack upon him; and so it shall be."

Then Hjalti went away, but those who were left behind made up their minds to make an onslaught on Gunnar, and shook hands on the bargain, and laid a fine on any one that left the undertaking.

Mord was to keep watch and spy out when there was the best chance of falling on him, and they were forty men in this league, and they thought it would be a light thing for them to hunt down Gunnar, now that Kolskegg was away, and Thrain and many other of Gunnar's friends.

Men ride from the Thing, and Njal went to see Gunnar, and told him of his outlawry, and how an onslaught was planned against him.

"Me thinks thou art the best of friends," says Gunnar; "thou makest me aware of what is meant."

"Now," says Njal, "I would that Skarphedinn should come to thy house, and my son Hauskuld; they will lay down their lives for thy life."

"I will not," says Gunnar, "that thy sons should be slain for my sake, and thou hast a right to look for other things from me."

"All thy care will come to nothing," says Njal; "quarrels will turn thitherward where my sons are as soon as thou art dead and gone."

"That is not unlikely," says Gunnar, "but still it would mislike me that they fell into them for me; but this one thing I will ask of thee, that ye see after my son Hogni, but I say naught of Grani, for he does not behave himself much after my mind."

Njal rode home, and gave his word to do that.

It is said that Gunnar rode to all meetings of men, and to all lawful Things, and his foes never dared to fall on him.

And so some time went on that he went about as a free and guiltless man.

Chapter 75

The Riding to Lithend

Next autumn Mord Valgard's son, sent word that Gunnar would be all alone at home, but all his people would be down in the isles to make an end of their haymaking. Then Gizur the white and Geir the priest rode east over the rivers as soon as ever they heard that, and so east across the sands to Hof. Then they sent word to Starkad under the Threecorner, and there they all met who were to fall on Gunnar, and took counsel how they might best bring it about.

Mord said that they could not come on Gunnar unawares, unless they seized the farmer who dwelt at the next homestead, whose name was Thorkell, and made him go against his will with them to lay hands on the hound Sam, and unless he went before them to the homestead to do this.

Then they set out east for Lithend, but sent to fetch Thorkell. They seized him and bound him, and gave him two choices - one that they would slay him, or else he must lay hands on the hound; but he chooses rather to save his life, and went with them.

There was a beaten sunk road, between fences, above the farm yard at Lithend, and there they halted with their band. Master Thorkell went up to the homestead, and the tyke lay on the top of the house, and he entices the dog away with him into a deep hollow in the path. Just then the hound sees that there are men before them, and he leaps on Thorkell and tears his belly open.

Aunund of Witchwood smote the hound on the head with his axe, so that the blade sunk into the brain. The hound gave such a great howl that they thought it passing strange, and he fell down dead.

Chapter 76

Gunnar's Slaying

Gunnar woke up in his hall and said -

"Thou hast been sorely treated, Sam, my fosterling, and this warning is so meant that our two deaths will not be far apart."

Gunnar's hall was made all of wood, and roofed with beams above, and there were window-slits under the beams that carried the roof, and they were fitted with shutters.

Gunnar slept in a loft above the hall, and so did Hallgerda and his mother.

Now when they were come near to the house they knew not whether Gunnar were at home, and bade that some one would go straight up to the house and see if he could find out. But the rest sat them down on the ground.

Thorgrim the Easterling went and began to climb up on the hall; Gunnar sees that a red kirtle passed before the window-slit, and thrusts out the bill, and smote him on the middle. Thorgrim's feet slipped from under him, and he dropped his shield, and down he toppled from the roof.

Then he goes to Gizur and his band as they sat on the ground.

Gizur looked at him and said -

"Well, is Gunnar at home?"

"Find that out for yourselves," said Thorgrim; "but this I am sure of, that his bill is at home," and with that he fell down dead.

Then they made for the buildings. Gunnar shot out arrows at them, and made a stout defence, and they could get nothing done. Then some of them got into the out-houses and tried to attack him thence, but Gunnar found them out with his arrows there also, and still they could get nothing done.

So it went on for while, then they took a rest, and made a second onslaught. Gunnar still shot out at them, and they could do nothing, and fell off the second time. Then Gizur the white said-

"Let us press on harder; nothing comes of our onslaught."

Then they made a third bout of it, and were long at it, and then they fell off again.

Gunnar said, "There lies on arrow outside on the wall, and it is one of their shafts; I will shoot at them with it, and it will be a shame to them if they get a hurt from their own weapons".

His mother said, "Do not so, my son; nor rouse them again when they have already fallen off from the attack".

But Gunnar caught up the arrow and shot it after them, and struck Eylif Aunund's son, and he got a great wound; he was standing all by himself, and they knew not that he was wounded.

"Out came an arm yonder," says Gizur, "and there was a gold ring on it, and took an arrow from the roof and they would not look outside for shafts if there were enough in doors; and now ye shall make a fresh onslaught."

"Let us burn him house and all," said Mord.

"That shall never be," says Gizur, "though I knew that my life lay on it; but it is easy for thee to find out some plan, such a cunning man as thou art said to be."

Some ropes lay there on the ground, and they were often used to strengthen the roof. Then Mord said - "Let us take the ropes and throw one end over the end of the carrying beams, but let us fasten the other end to these rocks and twist them tight with levers, and so pull the roof off the hall."

So they took the ropes and all lent a hand to carry this out, and before Gunnar was aware of it, they had pulled the whole roof off the hall.

Then Gunnar still shoots with his bow so that they could never come nigh him. Then Mord said again that they must burn the house over Gunnar's head. But Gizur said -

"I know not why thou wilt speak of that which no one else wishes, and that shall never be."

Just then Thorbrand Thorleik's son sprang up on the roof, and cuts asunder Gunnar's bowstring. Gunnar clutches the bill with both hands, and turns on him quickly and drives it through him, and hurls him down on the ground.

Then up sprung Asbrand his brother. Gunnar thrusts at him with the bill, and he threw his shield before the blow, but the bill passed clean through the shield and broke both his arms, and down he fell from the wall.

Gunnar had already wounded eight men and slain those twain. By that time Gunnar had got two wounds, and all men said that he never once winced either at wounds or death.

Then Gunnar said to Hallgerda, "Give me two locks of thy hair, and ye two, my mother and thou, twist them together into a bowstring for me."

"Does aught lie on it?" she says.

"My life lies on it," he said; "for they will never come to close quarters with me if I can keep them off with my bow."

"Well!" she says, "now I will call to thy mind that slap on the face which thou gavest me; and I care never a whit whether thou holdest out a long while or a short."

Then Gunnar sang a song -

Each who hurls the gory javelin
Hath some honour of his own,
Now my helpmeet wimple-hooded
Hurries all my fame to earth.
No one owner of a war-ship
Often asks for little things,
Woman, fond of Frodi's flour,ö
Wends her hand as she is wont.

"Every one has something to boast of," says Gunnar, "and I will ask thee no more for this."

"Thou behavest ill," said Rannveig, "and this shame shall long be had in mind."

Gunnar made a stout and bold defence, and now wounds other eight men with such sore wounds that many lay at death's door. Gunnar keeps them all off until he fell worn out with toil. Then they wounded him with many and great wounds, but still he got away out of their hands, and held his own against them a while longer, but at last it came about that they slew him.

Of this defence of his, Thorkell the Skald of Göta-Elf sang in the verses which follow -

We have heard how south in Iceland
Gunnar guarded well himself,
Boldly battle's thunder wielding,
Fiercest Iceman on the wave;
Hero of the golden collar,
Sixteen with the sword he wounded;
In the shock that Odin loveth,
Two before him lasted death.

But this is what Thormod Olaf's son sang -

None that scattered sea's bright sunbeams,ö
Won more glorious fame than Gunnar,
So runs fame of old in Iceland,
Fitting fame of heathen men;
Lord of fight when helms were crashing,
Lives of foeman twain he took,
Wielding bitter steel he sorely
Wounded twelve, and four besides.

Then Gizur spoke and said: "We have now laid low to earth a mighty chief, and hard work has it been, and the fame of this defence of his shall last as long as men live in this land".

After that he went to see Rannveig and said, "Wilt thou grant us earth here for two of our men who are dead, that they may lie in a cairn here?"

"All the more willingly for two," she says, "because I wish with all my heart I had to grant it to all of you."

"It must be forgiven thee," he says, "to speak thus, for thou hast had a great loss."

Then he gave orders that no man should spoil or rob anything there.

After that they went away.

Then Thorgeir Starkad's son said, "We may not be in our house at home for the sons of Sigfus, unless thou Gizur or thou Geir be here south some little while".

"This shall be so," says Gizur, and they cast lots, and the lot fell on Geir to stay behind.

After that he came to the Point, and set up his house there; he had a son whose name was Hroald; he was base born, and his mother's name was Biartey; he boasted that he had given Gunnar his death-blow. Hroald was at the Point with his father.

Thorgeir Starkad's son boasted of another wound which he had given to Gunnar.

Gizur sat at home at Mossfell. Gunnar's slaying was heard of, and ill spoken of throughout the whole country, and his death was a great grief to many a man.

Chapter 77

Gunnar Sings a Song Dead

Njal could ill brook Gunnar's death, nor could the sons of Sigfus brook it either.

They asked whether Njal thought they had any right to give notice of a suit of manslaughter for Gunnar, or to set the suit on foot.

He said that could not be done, as the man had been outlawed; but said it would be better worth trying to do something to wound their glory, by slaying some men in vengeance after him.

They cast a cairn over Gunnar, and made him sit upright in the cairn. Rannveig would not hear of his bill being buried in the cairn, but said he alone should have it as his own, who was ready to avenge Gunnar. So no one took the bill.

She was so hard on Hallgerda, that she was on the point of killing her; and she said that she had been the cause of her son's slaying.

Then Hallgerda fled away to Gritwater, and her son Grani with her, and they shared the goods between them; Hogni was to have the land at Lithend and the homestead on it, but Grani was to have the land let out on lease.

Now this token happened at Lithend, that the neat-herd and the serving-maid were driving cattle by Gunnar's cairn. They thought that he was merry, and that he was singing inside the cairn. They went home and told Rannveig, Gunnar's mother, of this token, but she bade them go and tell Njal.

Then they went over to Bergthorsknoll and told Njal, but he made them tell it three times over.

After that, he had a long talk all alone with Skarphedinn; and Skarphedinn took his weapons and goes with them to Lithend.

Rannveig and Hogni gave him a hearty welcome, and were very glad to see him. Rannveig asked him to stay there some time, and he said he would.

He and Hogni were always together, at home and abroad. Hogni was a brisk, brave man, well-bred and well-trained in mind and body, but distrustful and slow to believe what he was told, and that was why they dared not tell him of the token.

Now those two, Skarphedinn and Hogni, were out of doors one evening by Gunnar's cairn on the south side. The moon and stars were shining clear and bright, but every now and then the clouds drove over them. Then all at once they thought they saw the cairn standing open, and lo! Gunnar had turned himself in the cairn and looked at the moon. They thought they saw four lights burning in the cairn, and none of them threw a shadow. They saw that Gunnar was merry, and he wore a joyful face. He sang a song, and so loud, that it might have been heard though they had been farther off.

He that lavished rings in largesse,
When the fight's red rain-drops fell,
Bright of face, with heart-strings hardy,
Hogni's father met his fate;
Then his brow with helmet shrouding,
Bearing battle-shield, he spake,
"I will die the prop of battle,
Sooner die than yield an inch.
Yes, sooner die than yield an inch".

After that the cairn was shut up again.

"Wouldst thou believe these tokens if Njal or I told them to thee?" says Skarphedinn.

"I would believe them," he says, "if Njal told them, for it is said he never lies."

"Such tokens as these mean much," says Skarphedinn, "when he shows himself to us, he who would sooner die than yield to his foes; and see how he has taught us what we ought to do."

"I shall be able to bring nothing to pass," says Hogni, "unless thou wilt stand by me."

"Now," says Skarphedinn, "will I bear in mind how Gunnar behaved after the slaying of your kinsman Sigmund; now I will yield you such help as I may. My father gave his word to Gunnar to do that whenever thou or thy mother had need of it."

After that they go home to Lithend.

Chapter 78

Gunnar of Lithend Avenged

"Now we shall set off at once," says Skarphedinn, "this very night; for if they learn that I am here, they will be more wary of themselves."

"I will fulfil thy counsel," says Hogni.

After that they took their weapons when all men were in their beds. Hogni takes down the bill, and it gave a sharp ringing sound.

Rannveig sprang up in great wrath and said -

"Who touches the bill, when I forbade every one to lay hand on it?"

"I mean," says Hogni, "to bring it to my father, that he may bear it with him to Valhalla, and have it with him when the warriors meet."

"Rather shalt thou now bear it," she answered, "and avenge thy father; for the bill has spoken of one man's death or more."

Then Hogni went out, and told Skarphedinn all the words that his grandmother had spoken.

After that they fare to the Point, and two ravens flew along with them all the way. They came to the Point while it was still night. Then they drove the flock before them up to the house, and then Hroald and Tjorfi ran out and drove the flock up the hollow path, and had their weapons with them.

Skarphedinn sprang up and said, "Thou needest not to stand and think if it be really as it seems. Men are here."

Then Skarphedinn smites Tjorfi his death-blow. Hroald had a spear in his hand, and Hogni rushes at him; Hroald thrusts at him, but Hogni hewed asunder the spear-shaft with his bill, and drives the bill through him.

After that they left them there dead, and turn away thence under the Threecorner.

Skarphedinn jumps up on the house and plucks the grass, and those who were inside the house thought it was cattle that had come on the roof. Starkad and Thorgeir took their weapons and upper clothing, and went out and round about the fence of the yard. But when Starkad sees Skarphedinn he was afraid, and wanted to turn back.

Skarphedinn cut him down by the fence. Then Hogni comes against Thorgeir and slays him with the bill.

Thence they went to Hof, and Mord was outside in the field, and begged for mercy, and offered them full atonement.

Skarphedinn told Mord the slaying of those four men, and sang a song.

Four who wielded warlike weapons
We have slain, all men of worth,
Them at once, gold-greedy fellow,
Thou shalt follow on the spot;
Let us press this pinch-purse so,
Pouring fear into his heart;
Wretch! reach out to Gunnar's son
Right to settle all disputes.

"And the like journey," says Skarphedinn, "shalt thou also fare, or hand over to Hogni the right to make his own award, if he will take these terms."

Hogni said his mind had been made up not to come to any terms with the slayers of his father; but still at last he took the right to make his own award from Mord.

Chapter 79

Hogni Takes an Atonement for Gunnar's Death

Njal took a share in bringing those who had the blood-feud after Starkad and Thorgeir to take an atonement, and a district meeting was called together, and men were chosen to make the award, and every matter was taken into account, even the attack on Gunnar, though he was an outlaw; but such a fine as was awarded, all that Mord paid; for they did not close their award against him before the other matter was already settled, and then they set off one award against the other.

Then they were all set at one again, but at the Thing there was great talk, and the end of it was, that Geir the priest and Hogni were set at one again, and that atonement they held to ever afterwards.

Geir the priest dwelt in the Lithe till his death-day, and he is out of the story.

Njal asked as a wife for Hogni Alfeida the daughter of Weatherlid the Skald, and she was given away to him. Their son was Ari, who sailed for Shetland, and took him a wife there; from him is come Einar the Shetlander, one of the briskest and boldest of men.

Hogni kept up his friendship with Njal, and he is now out of the story.

Chapter 80

Of Kolskegg: How He Was Baptised

Now it is to be told of Kolskegg how he comes to Norway, and is in the Bay east that winter. But the summer after he fares east to Denmark, and bound himself to Sweyn Forkbeard the Dane-king, and there he had great honour.

One night he dreamt that a man came to him; he was bright and glistening, and he thought he woke him up. He spoke, and said to him -

"Stand up and come with me."

"What wilt thou with me?" he asks.

"I will get thee a bride, and thou shalt be my knight."

He thought he said yea to that, and after that he woke up.

Then he went to a wizard and told him the dream, but he read it so that he should fare to southern lands and become God's knight.

Kolskegg was baptised in Denmark, but still he could not rest there, but fared east to Russia, and was there one winter. Then he fared thence out to Micklegarth,ö and there took service with the Emperor. The last that was heard of him was, that he wedded a wife there, and was captain over the Varangians, and stayed there till his death-day; and he, too, is out of this story.

Chapter 81

Of Thrain: How He Slew Kol

Now we must take up the story, and say how Thrain Sigfus' son came to Norway. They made the land north in Helgeland, and held on south to Drontheim, and so to Hlada.ö But as soon as Earl Hacon heard of that, he sent men to them, and would know what men were in the ship. They came back and told him who the men were. Then the Earl sent for Thrain Sigfus' son, and he went to see him. The Earl asked of what stock he might be. He said that he was Gunnar of Lithend's near kinsman. The Earl said -

"That shall stand thee in good stead; for I have seen many men from Iceland, but none his match."

"Lord," said Thrain, "is it your will that I should be with you this winter?"

The Earl took to him, and Thrain was there that winter, and was thought much of.

There was a man named Kol, he was a great sea-rover. He was the son of Asmund Ashside, east out of Smoland. He lay east in the Göta-Elf, and had five ships, and much force.

Thence Kol steered his course out of the river to Norway, and landed at Fold,ö in the bight of the "Bay," and came on Hallvard Soti unawares, and found him in a loft. He kept them off bravely till they set fire to the house, then he gave himself up; but they slew him, and took there much goods, and sailed thence to Lödese.ö

Earl Hacon heard these tidings, and made them make Kol an outlaw over all his realm, and set a price upon his head.

Once on a time it so happened that the Earl began to speak thus -

"Too far off from us now is Gunnar of Lithend. He would slay my outlaw if he were here; but now the Icelanders will slay him, and it is ill that he hath not fared to us."

Then Thrain Sigfus' son answered -

"I am not Gunnar, but still I am near akin to him, and I will undertake this voyage."

The Earl said, "I should be glad of that, and thou shalt be very well fitted out for the journey".

After that his son Eric began to speak, and said -

"Your word, father, is good to many men, but fulfilling it is quite another thing. This is the hardest undertaking; for this sea-rover is tough and ill to deal with, wherefore thou wilt need to take great pains, both as to men and ships for this voyage."

Thrain said, "I will set out on this voyage, though it looks ugly".

After that the Earl gave him five ships, and all well trimmed and manned. Along with Thrain was Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son. Gunnar was Thrain's brother's son, and had come to him young, and each loved the other much.

Eric, the Earl's son, went heartily along with them, and looked after strength for them, both in men and weapons, and made such changes in them as he thought were needful. After they were "boun," Eric got them a pilot. Then they sailed south along the land; but wherever they came to land, the Earl allowed them to deal with whatever they needed as their own.

So they held on east to Lödese, and then they heard that Kol was gone to Denmark. Then they shaped their course south thither; but when they came south to Helsingborg, they met men in a boat, who said that Kol was there just before them, and would be staying there for a while.

One day when the weather was good, Kol saw the ships as they sailed up towards him, and said he had dreamt of Earl Hacon the night before, and told his people he was sure these must be his men, and bade them all to take their weapons.

After that they busked them, and a fight arose; and they fought long, so that neither side had the mastery.

Then Kol sprang up on Thrain's ship, and cleared the gangways fast, and slays many men. He had a gilded helm.

Now Thrain sees that this is no good, and now he eggs on his men to go along with him, but he himself goes first and meets Kol.

Kol hews at him, and the blow fell on Thrain's shield, and cleft it down from top to bottom. Then Kol got a blow on the arm from a stone, and then down fell his sword.

Thrain hews at Kol, and the stroke came on his leg so that it cut it off. After that they slew Kol, and Thrain cut off his head, and they threw the trunk over-board, but kept his head.

There they took much spoil, and then they held on north to Drontheim, and go to see the Earl.

The Earl gave Thrain a hearty welcome, and he showed the Earl Kol's head, but the Earl thanked him for that deed.

Eric said it was worth more than words alone, and the Earl said so it was, and bade them come along with him.

They went thither, where the Earl had made them make a good ship that was not made like a common long-ship. It had a vulture's head, and was much carved and painted.

"Thou art a great man for show, Thrain," said the Earl, "and so have both of you, kinsmen, been, Gunnar and thou; and now I will give thee this ship, but it is called the 'Vulture'. Along with it shall go my friendship; and my will is that thou stayest with me as long as thou wilt."

He thanked him for his goodness, and said he had no longing to go to Iceland just yet.

The Earl had a journey to make to the marches of the land to meet the Swede-king. Thrain went with him that summer, and was a shipmaster and steered the Vulture, and sailed so fast that few could keep up with him, and he was much envied. But it always came out that the Earl laid great store on Gunnar, for he set down sternly all who tried Thrain's temper.

So Thrain was all that winter with the Earl, but next spring the Earl asked Thrain whether he would stay there or fare to Iceland; but Thrain said he had not yet made up his mind, and said that he wished first to know tidings from Iceland.

The Earl said that so it should be as he thought it suited him best; and Thrain was with the Earl.

Then those tidings were heard from Iceland, which many thought great news, the death of Gunnar of Lithend. Then the Earl would not that Thrain should fare out to Iceland, and so there he stayed with him.

Chapter 82

Njal's Sons Sail Abroad

Now it must be told how Njal's sons, Grim and Helgi, left Iceland the same summer that Thrain and his fellows went away; and in the ship with them were Olaf Kettle's son of Elda, and Bard the black. They got so strong a wind from the north that they were driven south into the main; and so thick a mist came over them that they could not tell whither they were driving, and they were out a long while. At last they came to where was a great ground sea, and thought then they must be near land. So then Njal's sons asked Bard if he could tell at all to what land they were likely to be nearest.

"Many lands there are," said he, "which we might hit with the weather we have had - the Orkneys, or Scotland, or Ireland."

Two nights after, they saw land on both boards, and a great surf running up in the firth. They cast anchor outside the breakers, and the wind began to fall; and next morning it was calm. Then they see thirteen ships coming out to them.

Then Bard spoke and said, "What counsel shall we take now, for these men are going to make an onslaught on us?"

So they took counsel whether they should defend themselves or yield, but before they could make up their minds, the Vikings were upon them. Then each

side asked the other their names, and what their leaders were called. So the leaders of the chapmen told their names, and asked back who led that host. One called himself Gritgard, and the other Snowcolf, sons of Moldan of Duncansby in Scotland, kinsmen of Malcolm the Scot king.

"And now," says Gritgard, "we have laid down two choices, one that ye go on shore, and we will take your goods; the other is, that we fall on you and slay every man that we can catch."

"The will of the chapmen," answers Helgi, "is to defend themselves."

But the chapmen called out, "Wretch that thou art to speak thus! What defence can we make? Lading is less than life."

But Grim, he fell upon a plan to shout out to the Vikings, and would not let them hear the bad choice of the chapmen.

Then Bard and Olaf said, "Think ye not that these Icelanders will make game of you sluggards; take rather your weapons and guard your goods".

So they all seized their weapons, and bound themselves, one with another, never to give up so long as they had strength to fight.

Chapter 83

Of Kari Solmund's Son

Then the Vikings shot at them and the fight began, and the chapmen guard themselves well. Snowcolf sprang aboard and at Olaf, and thrust his spear through his body, but Grim thrust at Snowcolf with his spear, and so stoutly, that he fell over-board. Then Helgi turned to meet Grim, and they too drove down all the Vikings as they tried to board, and Njal's sons were ever where there was most need. Then the Vikings called out to the chapmen and bade them give up, but they said they would never yield. Just then some one looked seaward, and there they see ships coming from the south round the Ness, and they were not fewer than ten, and they row hard and steer thitherwards. Along their sides were shield on shield, but on that ship that came first stood a man by the mast, who was clad in a silken kirtle, and had a gilded helm, and his hair was both fair and thick; that man had a spear inlaid with gold in his hand.

He asked, "Who have here such an uneven game?"

Helgi tells his name, and said that against them are Gritgard and Snowcolf.

"But who are your captains?" he asks.

Helgi answered, "Bard the black, who lives, but the other, who is dead and gone, was called Olaf".

"Are ye men from Iceland?" says he.

"Sure enough we are," Helgi answers.

He asked whose sons they were, and they told him, then he knew them and said -

"Well known names have ye all, father and sons both."

"Who art thou?" asks Helgi.

"My name is Kari, and I am Solmund's son."

"Whence comest thou?" says Helgi.

"From the Southern Isles."

"Then thou art welcome," says Helgi, "if thou wilt give us a little help."

"I'll give ye all the help ye need," says Kari; "but what do ye ask?"

"To fall on them," says Helgi.

Kari says that so it shall be. So they pulled up to them, and then the battle began the second time; but when they had fought a little while, Kari springs up on Snowcolf's ship; he turns to meet him and smites at him with his sword. Kari leaps nimbly backwards over a beam that lay athwart the ship, and Snowcolf smote the beam so that both edges of the sword were hidden. Then Kari smites at him, and the sword fell on his shoulder, and the stroke was so mighty that he cleft in twain shoulder, arm, and all, and Snowcolf got his death there and then. Gritgard hurled a spear at Kari, but Kari saw it and sprang up aloft, and the spear missed him. Just then Helgi and Grim came up both to meet Kari, and Helgi springs on Gritgard and thrusts his spear through him, and that was his death blow; after that they went round the whole ship on both boards, and then men begged for mercy. So they gave them all peace, but took all their goods. After that they ran all the ships out under the islands.

Chapter 84 Of Earl Sigurd

Sigurd was the name of an earl who ruled over the Orkneys; he was the son of Hlodver, the son of Thorfinn the scull-splitter, the son of Turf-Einar, the son of Rognvald, Earl of M[oe]jren, the son of Eystein the noisy. Kari was one of Earl Sigurd's body-guard, and had just been gathering scatts in the Southern Isles from Earl Gilli. Now Kari asks them to go to Hrossey,ö and said the Earl would take to them well. They agreed to that, and went with Kari and came to Hrossey. Kari led them to see the Earl, and said what men they were.

"How came they," says the Earl, "to fall upon thee?"

"I found them," says Kari, "in Scotland's Firths, and they were fighting with the sons of Earl Moldan, and held their own so well that they threw themselves about between the bulwarks, from side to side, and were always there where the trial was greatest, and now I ask you to give them quarters among your body-guard."

"It shall be as thou choosest," says the Earl, "thou hast already taken them so much by the hand."

Then they were there with the Earl that winter, and were worthily treated, but Helgi was silent as the winter wore on. The Earl could not tell what was at the bottom of that, and asked why he was so silent, and what was on his mind.

"Thinkest thou it not good to be here?"

"Good, methinks, it is here," he says.

"Then what art thou thinking about?" asks the Earl.

"Hast thou any realm to guard in Scotland?" asks Helgi.

"So we think," says the Earl, "but what makes thee think about that, or what is the matter with it?"

"The Scots," says Helgi, "must have taken your steward's life, and stopped all the messengers; that none should cross the Pentland Firth."

"Hast thou the second sight?" said the Earl.

"That has been little proved," answers Helgi.

"Well," says the Earl, "I will increase thy honour if this be so, otherwise thou shalt smart for it."

"Nay," says Kari, "Helgi is not that kind of man, and like enough his words are sooth, for his father has the second sight."

After that the Earl sent men south to Straumeyö to Arnljot, his steward there, and after that Arnljot sent them across the Pentland Firth, and they spied out and learnt that Earl Hundi and Earl Melsnati had taken the life of Havard in Thraswick, Earl Sigurd's brother-in-law. So Arnljot sent word to Earl Sigurd to come south with a great host and drive those earls out of his realm, and as soon as the Earl heard that, he gathered together a mighty host from all the isles.

Chapter 85

The Battle with the Earls

After that the Earl set out south with his host, and Kari went with him, and Njal's sons too. They came south to Caithness. The Earl had these realms in Scotland, Ross and Moray, Sutherland, and the Dales. There came to meet them men from those realms, and said that the Earls were a short way off with a great host. Then Earl Sigurd turns his host thither, and the name of that place is Duncansness, above which they met, and it came to a great battle between them. Now the Scots had let some of their host go free from the main battle, and these took the Earl's men in flank, and many men fell there till Njal's sons turned against the foe, and fought with them and put them to flight; but still it was a hard fight, and then Njal's sons turned back to the front by the Earl's standard, and fought well. Now Kari turns to meet Earl Melsnati, and Melsnati hurled a spear at him, but Kari caught the spear and threw it back and through the Earl. Then Earl Hundi fled, but they chased the fleers until they learnt that Malcolm was gathering a host at Duncansby. Then the Earl took counsel with

his men, and it seemed to all the best plan to turn back, and not to fight with such a mighty land force; so they turned back. But when the Earl came to Straume they shared the battle-spoil. After that he went north to Hrossey, and Njal's sons and Kari followed him. Then the Earl made a great feast, and at that feast he gave Kari a good sword, and a spear inlaid with gold; but he gave Helgi a gold ring and a mantle, and Grim a shield and sword. After that he took Helgi and Grim into his body-guard, and thanked them for their good help. They were with the Earl that winter and the summer after, till Kari went sea-roving; then they went with him, and harried far and wide that summer, and everywhere won the victory. They fought against Godred, King of Man, and conquered him; and after that they fared back, and had gotten much goods. Next winter they were still with the Earl, and when the spring came Njal's sons asked leave to go to Norway. The Earl said they should go or not as they pleased, and he gave them a good ship and smart men. As for Kari, he said he must come that summer to Norway with Earl Hacon's scatts, and then they would meet; and so it fell out that they gave each other their word to meet. After that Njal's sons put out to sea and sailed for Norway, and made the land north near Drontheim.

Chapter 86

Hrapp's Voyage from Iceland

There was a man named Kolbein, and his surname was Arnljot's son; he was a man from Drontheim; he sailed out to Iceland that same summer in which Kolskegg and Njal's sons went abroad. He was that winter east in Broaddale; but the spring after, he made his ship ready for sea in Gautawick; and when men were almost "boun," a man rowed up to them in a boat, and made the boat fast to the ship, and afterwards he went on board the ship to see Kolbein.

Kolbein asked that man for his name.

"My name is Hrapp," says he.

"What wilt thou with me?" says Kolbein.

"I wish to ask thee to put me across the Iceland main."

"Whose son art thou?" asks Kolbein.

"I am a son of Aurgunleid, the son of Geirolf the fighter."

"What need lies on thee," asked Kolbein, "to drive thee abroad?"

"I have slain a man," says Hrapp.

"What manslaughter was that," says Kolbein, "and what men have the blood-feud?"

"The men of Weaponfirth," says Hrapp, "but the man I slew was Aurlyg, the son of Aurlyg, the son of Roger the white."

"I guess this," says Kolbein, "that he will have the worst of it who bears thee abroad."

"I am the friend of my friend," said Hrapp, "but when ill is done to me I repay it. Nor am I short of money to lay down for my passage."

Then Kolbein took Hrapp on board, and a little while after a fair breeze sprung up, and they sailed away on the sea.

Hrapp ran short of food at sea, and then he sate him down at the mess of those who were nearest to him. They sprang up with ill words, and so it was that they came to blows, and Hrapp, in a trice, has two men under him.

Then Kolbein was told, and he bade Hrapp to come and share his mess, and he accepted that.

Now they come off the sea, and lie outside off Agdirness.

Then Kolbein asked where that money was which he had offered to pay for his fare?

"It is out in Iceland," answers Hrapp.

"Thou wilt beguile more men than me, I fear," says Kolbein; "but now I will forgive thee all the fare."

Hrapp bade him have thanks for that. "But what counsel dost thou give as to what I ought to do?"

"That first of all," he says, "that thou goest from the ship as soon as ever thou canst, for all Easterlings will bear thee bad witness; but there is yet another bit of good counsel which I will give thee, and that is, never to cheat thy master."

Then Hrapp went on shore with his weapons, and he had a great axe with an iron-bound haft in his hand.

He fares on and on till he comes to Gudbrand of the Dale. He was the greatest friend of Earl Hacon. They two had a shrine between them, and it was never opened but when the Earl came thither. That was the second greatest shrine in Norway, but the other was at Hlada.

Thrand was the name of Gudbrand's son, but his daughter's name was Gudruna.

Hrapp went in before Gudbrand, and hailed him well. He asked whence he came and what was his name. Hrapp told him about himself, and how he had sailed abroad from Iceland.

After that he asks Gudbrand to take him into his household as a guest.

"It does not seem," said Gudbrand, "to look on thee, as though thou wert a man to bring good luck."

"Methinks, then," says Hrapp, "that all I have heard about thee has been great lies; for it is said that thou takest every one into thy house that asks thee; and that no man is thy match for goodness and kindness, far or near; but now I shall have to speak against that saying, if thou dost not take me in."

"Well, thou shalt stay here," said Gudbrand.

"To what seat wilt thou show me?" says Hrapp.

"To one on the lower bench, over against my high seat."

Then Hrapp went and took his seat. He was able to tell of many things, and so it was at first that Gudbrand and many thought it sport to listen to him; but still it came about that most men thought him too much given to mocking, and the end of it was that he took to talking alone with Gudruna, so that many said that he meant to beguile her.

But when Gudbrand was aware of that, he scolded her much for daring to talk alone with him, and bade her beware of speaking aught to him if the whole household did not hear it. She gave her word to be good at first, but still it was soon the old story over again as to their talk. Then Gudbrand got Asvard, his overseer, to go about with her, out of doors and in, and to be with her wherever she went. One day it happened that she begged for leave to go into the nut-wood for a pastime, and Asvard went along with her. Hrapp goes to seek for them and found them, and took her by the hand, and led her away alone.

Then Asvard went to look for her, and found them both together stretched on the grass in a thicket.

He rushes at them, axe in air, and smote at Hrapp's leg, but Hrapp gave himself a second turn, and he missed him. Hrapp springs on his feet as quick as he can, and caught up his axe. Then Asvard wished to turn and get away, but Hrapp hewed asunder his backbone.

Then Gudruna said, "Now hast thou done that deed which will hinder thy stay any Longer with my father; but still there is something behind which he will like still less, for I go with child".

"He shall not learn this from others," says Hrapp, "but I will go home and tell him both these tidings."

"Then," she says, "thou will not come away with thy life."

"I will run the risk of that," he says.

After that he sees her back to the other women, but he went home. Gudbrand sat in his high seat, and there were few men in the hall.

Hrapp went in before him, and bore his axe high.

"Why is thine axe bloody?" asks Gudbrand.

"I made it so by doing a piece of work on thy overseer Asvard's back," says Hrapp.

"That can be no good work," says Gudbrand; "thou must have slain him."

"So it is, be sure," says Hrapp.

"What did ye fall out about?" asks Gudbrand.

"Oh!" says Hrapp, "what you would think small cause enough. He wanted to hew off my leg."

"What hast thou done first?" asked Gudbrand.

"What he had no right to meddle with," says Hrapp.

"Still thou wilt tell me what it was."

"Well!" said Hrapp, "if thou must know, I lay by thy daughter's side, and he thought that bad."

"Up men!" cried Gudbrand, "and take him. He shall be slain out of hand."

"Very little good wilt thou let me reap of my son-in-lawship," says Hrapp, "but thou hast not so many men at thy back as to do that speedily."

Up they rose, but he sprang out of doors. They run after him, but he got away to the wood, and they could not lay hold of him.

Then Gudbrand gathers people, and lets the wood be searched; but they find him not, for the wood was great and thick.

Hrapp fares through the wood till he came to a clearing; there he found a house, and saw a man outside cleaving wood.

He asked that man for his name, and he said his name was Tofi.

Tofi asked him for his name in turn, and Hrapp told him his true name.

Hrapp asked why the householder had set up his abode so far from other men?

"For that here," he says, "I think I am less likely to have brawls with other men."

"It is strange how we beat about the bush in our talk," says Hrapp, "but I will first tell thee who I am. I have been with Gudbrand of the Dale, but I ran away thence because I slew his overseer; but now I know that we are both of us bad men; for thou wouldst not have come hither away from other men unless thou wert some man's outlaw. And now I give thee two choices, either that I will tell where thou art, or that we two have between us, share and share alike, all that is here."

"This is even as thou sayest," said the householder; "I seized and carried off this woman who is here with me, and many men have sought for me."

Then he led Hrapp in with him; there was a small house there, but well built.

The master of the house told his mistress that he had taken Hrapp into his company.

"Most men will get ill luck from this man," she says; "but thou wilt have thy way."

So Hrapp was there after that. He was a great wanderer, and was never at home. He still brings about meetings with Gudruna; her father and brother, Thrand and Gudbrand, lay in wait for him, but they could never get nigh him, and so all that year passed away.

Gudbrand sent and told Earl Hacon what trouble he had had with Hrapp, and the Earl let him be made an outlaw, and laid a price upon his head. He said too, that he would go himself to look after him; but that passed off, and the Earl thought it easy enough for them to catch him when he went about so unwarily.

Chapter 87

Thrain Took to Hrapp

That same summer Njal's sons fared to Norway from the Orkneys, as was before written, and they were there at the fair during the summer. Then Thrain Sigfus' son busked his ship for Iceland, and was all but "boun". At that time Earl Hacon went to a feast at Gudbrand's house. That night Killing-Hrapp came to the shrine of Earl Hacon and Gudbrand, and he went inside the house, and there he saw Thorgerda Shrinebride sitting, and she was as tall as a full-grown man. She had a great gold ring on her arm, and a wimple on her head; he strips her of her wimple, and takes the gold ring from off her. Then he sees Thor's car, and takes from him a second gold ring; a third he took from Irpa; and then dragged them all out, and spoiled them of all their gear.

After that he laid fire to the shrine, and burnt it down, and then he goes away just as it began to dawn. He walks across a ploughed field, and there six men sprung up with weapons, and fall upon him at once; but he made a stout defence, and the end of the business was that he slays three men, but wounds Thrand to the death, and drives two to the woods, so that they could bear no news to the Earl. He then went up to Thrand and said -

"It is now in my power to slay thee if I will, but I will not do that; and now I will set more store by the ties that are between us than ye have shown to me."

Now Hrapp means to turn back to the wood, but now he sees that men have come between him and the wood, so he dares not venture to turn thither, but lays him down in a thicket, and so lies there a while.

Earl Hacon and Gudbrand went that morning early to the shrine and found it burnt down; but the three gods were outside, stripped of all their bravery.

Then Gudbrand began to speak, and said -

"Much might is given to our gods, when here they have walked of themselves out of the fire!"

"The gods can have naught to do with it," says the Earl; "a man must have burnt the shrine, and borne the gods out; but the gods do not avenge everything on the spot. That man who has done this will no doubt be driven away out of Valhalla, and never come in thither."

Just then up ran four of the Earl's men, and told them ill tidings; for they said they had found three men slain in the field, and Thrand wounded to the death.

"Who can have done this?" says the Earl.

"Killing-Hrapp," they say.

"Then he must have burnt down the shrine," says the Earl.

They said they thought he was like enough to have done it.

"And where may he be now?" says the Earl.

They said that Thrand had told them that he had laid down in a thicket.

The Earl goes thither to look for him, but Hrapp was off and away. Then the Earl set his men to search for him, but still they could not find him. So the Earl was in the hue and cry himself, but first he bade them rest a while.

Then the Earl went aside by himself, away from other men, and bade that no man should follow him, and so he stays a while. He fell down on both his knees, and held his hands before his eyes; after that he went back to them, and then he said to them, "Come with me".

So they went along with him. He turns short away from the path on which they had walked before, and they came to a dell. There up sprang Hrapp before them, and there it was that he had hidden himself at first.

The Earl urges on his men to run after him, but Hrapp was so swift-footed that they never came near him. Hrapp made for Hlada. There both Thrain and Njal's sons lay "boun" for sea at the same time. Hrapp runs to where Njal's sons are.

"Help me, like good men and true," he said, "for the Earl will slay me."

Helgi looked at him and said -

"Thou lookest like an unlucky man, and the man who will not take thee in will have the best of it."

"Would that the worst might befall you from me," says Hrapp.

"I am the man," says Helgi, "to avenge me on thee for this as time rolls on."

Then Hrapp turned to Thrain Sigfus' son, and bade him shelter him.

"What hast thou on thy hand?" says Thrain.

"I have burnt a shrine under the Earl's eyes, and slain some men, and now he will be here speedily, for he has joined in the hue and cry himself."

"It hardly beseems me to do this," says Thrain, "when the Earl has done me so much good."

Then he showed Thrain the precious things which he had borne out of the shrine, and offered to give him the goods, but Thrain said he could not take them unless he gave him other goods of the same worth for them.

"Then," said Hrapp, "here will I take my stand, and here shall I be slain before thine eyes, and then thou wilt have to abide by every man's blame."

Then they see the Earl and his band of men coming, and then Thrain took Hrapp under his safeguard, and let them shove off the boat, and put out to his ship.

Then Thrain said, "Now this will be thy best hiding place, to knock out the bottoms of two casks, and then thou shalt get into them".

So it was done, and he got into the casks, and then they were lashed together, and lowered over-board.

Then comes the Earl with his band to Njal's sons, and asked if Hrapp had come there.

They said that he had come.

The Earl asked whither he had gone thence.

They said they had not kept eyes on him, and could not say.

"He," said the Earl, "should have great honour from me who would tell me where Hrapp was."

Then Grim said softly to Helgi -

"Why should we not say. What know I whether Thrain will repay us with any good?"

"We should not tell a whit more for that," says Helgi, "when his life lies at stake."

"Maybe," said Grim, "the Earl will turn his vengeance on us, for he is so wroth that some one will have to fall before him."

"That must not move us," says Helgi, "but still we will pull our ship out, and so away to sea as soon as ever we get a wind."

So they rowed out under an isle that lay there, and wait there for a fair breeze.

The Earl went about among the sailors, and tried them all, but they, one and all, denied that they knew aught of Hrapp.

Then the Earl said, "Now we will go to Thrain, my brother-in-arms, and he will give Hrapp up, if he knows anything of him".

After that they took a long-ship and went off to the merchant ship.

Thrain sees the Earl coming, and stands up and greets him kindly. The Earl took his greeting well and spoke thus -

"We are seeking for a man whose name is Hrapp, and he is an Icelander. He has done us all kind of ill; and now we will ask you to be good enough to give him up, or to tell us where he is."

"Ye know, Lord," said Thrain, "that I slew your outlaw, and then put my life in peril, and for that I had of you great honour."

"More honour shalt thou now have," says the Earl.

Now Thrain thought within himself, and could not make up his mind how the Earl would take it, so he denies that Hrapp is there, and bade the Earl to look for him. He spent little time on that, and went on land alone, away from other men, and was then very wroth, so that no man dared to speak to him.

"Show me to Njal's sons," said the Earl, "and I will force them to tell me the truth."

Then he was told that they had put out of the harbour.

"Then there is no help for it," says the Earl, "but still there were two water-casks alongside of Thrain's ship, and in them a man may well have been hid, and if Thrain has hidden him, there he must be; and now we will go a second time to see Thrain."

Thrain sees that the Earl means to put off again and said -

"However wroth the Earl was last time, now he will be half as wroth again, and now the life of every man on board the ship lies at stake."

They all gave their words to hide the matter, for they were all sore afraid. Then they took some sacks out of the lading, and put Hrapp down into the hold in their stead, and other sacks that were tight were laid over him.

Now comes the Earl, just as they were done stowing Hrapp away. Thrain greeted the Earl well. The Earl was rather slow to return it, and they saw that the Earl was very wroth.

Then said the Earl to Thrain -

"Give thou up Hrapp, for I am quite sure that thou hast hidden him."

"Where shall I have hidden him, Lord?" says Thrain.

"That thou knowest best," says the Earl; "but if I must guess, then I think that thou hiddest him in the water-casks a while ago."

"Well!" says Thrain, "I would rather not be taken for a liar, far sooner would I that ye should search the ship."

Then the Earl went on board the ship and hunted and hunted, but found him not.

"Dost thou speak me free now?" says Thrain. "Far from it," says the Earl, "and yet I cannot tell why we cannot find him, but methinks I see through it all when I come on shore, but when I come here, I can see nothing."

With that he made them row him ashore. He was so wroth that there was no speaking to him. His son Sweyn was there with him, and he said, "A strange turn of mind this to let guiltless men smart for one's wrath!"

Then the Earl went away alone aside from other men, and after that he went back to them at once, and said -

"Let us row out to them again," and they did so.

"Where can he have been hidden?" says Sweyn.

"There's not much good in knowing that," says the Earl, "for now he will be away thence; two sacks lay there by the rest of the lading, and Hrapp must have come into the lading in their place."

Then Thrain began to speak, and said -

"They are running off the ship again, and they must mean to pay us another visit. Now we will take him out of the lading, and stow other things in his stead, but let the sacks still lie loose. They did so, and then Thrain spoke -

"Now let us fold Hrapp in the sail."

It was then brailed up to the yard, and they did so.

Then the Earl comes to Thrain and his men, and he was very wroth, and said, "Wilt thou now give up the man, Thrain?" and he is worse now than before.

"I would have given him up long ago," answers Thrain, "if he had been in my keeping, or where can he have been?"

"In the lading," says the Earl.

"Then why did ye not seek him there?" says Thrain.

"That never came into our mind," says the Earl.

After that they sought him over all the ship, and found him not.

"Will you now hold me free?" says Thrain.

"Surely not," says the Earl, "for I know that thou hast hidden away the man, though I find him not; but I would rather that thou shouldst be a dastard to me than I to thee," says the Earl, and then they went on shore.

"Now," says the Earl, "I seem to see that Thrain has hidden away Hrapp in the sail."

Just then up sprung a fair breeze, and Thrain and his men sailed out to sea. He then spoke these words which have long been held in mind since -

Let us make the Vulture fly,
Nothing now gars Thrain flinch.

But when the Earl heard of Thrain's words, then he said -

"Tis not my want of foresight which caused this, but rather their ill-fellowship, which will drag them both to death."

Thrain was a short time out on the sea, and so came to Iceland, and fared home to his house. Hrapp went along with Thrain, and was with him that year; but the spring after, Thrain got him a homestead at Hrappstede, and he dwelt there; but yet he spent most of his time At Gritwater. He was thought to spoil everything there, and some men even said that he was too good friends with Hallgerda, and that he led her astray, but some spoke against that.

Thrain gave the Vulture to his kinsman, Mord the reckless; that Mord slew Oddi Haldor's son, east in Gautawick by Berufirth.

All Thrain's kinsmen looked on him as a chief.

Chapter 88

Earl Hacon Fights with Njal's Sons

Now we must take up the story, and say how, when Earl Hacon missed Thrain, he spoke to Sweyn his son, and said -

"Let us take four long-ships, and let us fare against Njal's sons and slay them, for they must have known all about it with Thrain."

"Tis not good counsel," says Sweyn, "to throw the blame on guiltless men, but to let him escape who is guilty."

"I shall have my way in this," says the Earl.

Now they hold on after Njal's sons, and seek for them, and find them under an island.

Grim first saw the Earl's ships and said to Helgi -

"Here are war ships sailing up, and I see that here is the Earl, and he can mean to offer us no peace."

"It is said," said Helgi, "that he is the boldest man who holds his own against all comers, and so we will defend ourselves."

They all bade him take the course he thought best, and then they took to their arms.

Now the Earl comes up and called out to them, And bade them give themselves up.

Helgi said that they would defend themselves so long as they could.

Then the Earl offered peace and quarter to all who would neither defend themselves nor Helgi; but Helgi was so much beloved that all said they would rather die with him.

Then the Earl and his men fall on them, but they defended themselves well, and Njal's sons were ever where there was most need. The Earl often offered peace, but they all made the same answer, and said they would never yield.

Then Aslak of Longisle pressed them hard, and came on board their ship thrice. Then Grim said -

"Thou pressest on hard, and 'twere well that thou gettest what thou seekest;" and with that he snatched up a spear and hurled it at him, and hit him under the chin, and Aslak got his death wound there and then.

A little after, Helgi slew Egil the Earl's banner-bearer.

Then Sweyn, Earl Bacon's son, fell on them, and made men hem them in and bear them down with shields, and so they were taken captive.

The Earl was for letting them all be slain at once, but Sweyn said that should not be, and said too that it was night.

Then the Earl said, "Well, then, slay them to-morrow, but bind them fast to-night".

"So, I ween, it must be," says Sweyn; "but never yet have I met brisker men than these, and I call it the greatest manscathe to take their lives."

"They have slain two of our briskest men," said the Earl, "and for that they shall be slain."

"Because they were brisker men themselves," says Sweyn; "but still in this it must be done as thou wilt."

So they were bound and fettered.

After that the Earl fell asleep; but when all men slept, Grim spoke to Helgi, and said, "Away would I get if I could".

"Let us try some trick then," says Helgi.

Grim sees that there lies an axe edge up, so Grim crawled thither, and gets the bowstring which bound him cut asunder against the axe, but still he got great wounds on his arms.

Then he set Helgi loose, and after that they crawled over the ship's side, and got on shore, so that neither Hacon nor his men were ware of them. Then they broke off their fetters and walked away to the other side of the island. By that time it began to dawn. There they found a ship, and knew that there was come Kari Solmund's son. They went at once to meet him, and told him of their wrongs and hardships, and showed him their wounds, and said the Earl would be then asleep.

"Ill is it," said Karl, "that ye should suffer such wrongs for wicked men; but what now would be most to your minds?"

"To fall on the Earl," they say, "and slay him."

"This will not be fated," says Kari; "but still ye do not lack heart, but we will first know whether he is there now."

After that they fared thither, and then the Earl was up and away.

Then Kari sailed in to Hlada to meet the Earl, and brought him the Orkney scatts; so the Earl said -

"Hast thou taken Njal's sons into thy keeping?"

"So it is, sure enough," says Kari.

"Wilt thou hand Njal's sons over to me?" asks the Earl.

"No, I will not," said Kari.

"Wilt thou swear this," says the Earl, "that thou wilt not fall on me with Njal's sons?"

Then Eric, the Earl's son, spoke and said -

"Such things ought not to be asked. Kari has always been our friend, and things should not have gone as they have, had I been by. Njal's sons should have been set free from all blame, but they should have had chastisement who had wrought for it. Methinks now it would be more seemly to give Njal's sons good gifts for the hardships and wrongs which have been put upon them, and the wounds they have got."

"So it ought to be, sure enough," says the Earl, "but I know not whether they will take an atonement."

Then the Earl said that Kari should try the feeling of Njal's sons as to an atonement.

After that Kari spoke to Helgi, and asked whether he would take any amends from the Earl or not.

"I will take them," said Helgi, "from his son Eric, but I will have nothing to do with the Earl."

Then Kari told Eric their answer.

"So it shall be," says Eric. "He shall take the amends from me if he thinks it better; and tell them this too, that I bid them to my house, and my father shall do them no harm."

This bidding they took, and went to Eric's house, and were with him till Kari was ready to sail west across the sea to meet Earl Sigurd.

Then Eric made a feast for Kari, and gave him gifts, and Njal's sons gifts too. After that Kari fared west across the sea, and met Earl Sigurd, and he greeted them very well, and they were with the Earl that winter.

But when the spring came, Kari asked Njal's sons to go on warfare with him, but Grim said they would only do so if he would fare with them afterwards out to Iceland. Kari gave his word to do that, and then they fared with him a-sea-roving. They harried south about Anglesea and all the Southern isles. Thence they held on to Cantyre, and landed there, and fought with the landsmen, and got thence much goods, and so fared to their ships. Thence they fared south to Wales, and harried there. Then they held on for Man, and there they met Godred, and fought with him, and got the victory, and slew Dungal the king's son. Thence they took great spoil. Thence they held on north to Coll, and found Earl Gilli there, and he greeted them well, and there they stayed with him a while. The Earl fared with them to the Orkneys to meet Earl Sigurd, but next spring Earl Sigurd gave away his sister Nereida to Earl Gilli, and then he fared back to the Southern isles.

Chapter 89

Njal's Sons and Kari Come Out to Iceland

That summer Kari and Njal's sons busked them for Iceland, and when they were "all-boun" they went to see the Earl. The Earl gave them good gifts, and they parted with great friendship.

Now they put to sea and have a short passage, and they got a fine fair breeze, and made the land at Eyrar. Then they got them horses and ride from the ship to Bergthorsknoll, but when they came home all men were glad to see them. They flitted home their goods and laid up the ship, and Kari was there that winter with Njal.

But the spring after, Kari asked for Njal's daughter, Helga, to wife, and Helgi and Grim backed his suit; and so the end of it was that she was betrothed to Kari, and the day for the wedding-feast was fixed, and the feast was held half a month before mid-summer, and they were that winter with Njal.

Then Kari bought him land at Dyrholms, east away by Mydale, and set up a farm there; they put in there a griever and housekeeper to see after the farm, but they themselves were ever with Njal.

Chapter 90

The Quarrel of Njal's Sons with Thrain Sigfus' Son

Hrapp owned a farm at Hrappstede, but for all that he was always at Gritwater, and he was thought to spoil everything there. Thrain was good to him.

Once on a time it happened that Kettle of the Mark was at Bergthorsknoll; then Njal's sons told him of their wrongs and hardships, and said they had much to lay at Thrain Sigfus' son's door, whenever they chose to speak about it.

Njal said it would be best that Kettle should talk with his brother Thrain about it, and he gave his word to do so.

So they gave Kettle breathing-time to talk to Thrain.

A little after they spoke of the matter again to Kettle, but he said that he would repeat few of the words that had passed between them, "for it was pretty plain that Thrain thought I set too great store on being your brother-in-law".

Then they dropped talking about it, and thought they saw that things looked ugly, and so they asked their father for his counsel as to what was to be done, but they told him they would not let things rest as they then stood.

"Such things," said Njal, "are not so strange. It will be thought that they are slain without a cause, if they are slain now, and my counsel is, that as many men as may be should be brought to talk with them about these things, that thus as many as we can find may be ear-witnesses if they answer ill as to these things. Then Kari shall talk about them too, for he is just the man with the right turn of mind for this; then the dislike between you will grow and grow, for they will heap bad words on bad words when men bring the matter forward, for they are foolish men. It may also well be that it may be said that my sons are slow to take up a quarrel, but ye shall bear that for the sake of gaining time, for there are two sides to everything that is done, and ye can always pick a quarrel; but still ye shall let so much of your purpose out, as to say that if any wrong be put upon you that ye do mean something. But if ye had taken counsel from me at first, then these things should never have been spoken about at all, and then ye would have gotten no disgrace from them; but now ye have the greatest risk of it, and so it will go on ever growing and growing with your disgrace, that ye will never get rid of it until ye bring yourselves into a strait, and have to fight your way out with weapons; but in that there is a long and weary night in which ye will have to grope your way."

After that they ceased speaking about it; but the matter became the daily talk of many men.

One day it happened that those brothers spoke to Kari and bade him go to Gritwater. Kari said he thought he might go elsewhere on a better journey, but still he would go if that were Njal's counsel. So after that Kari fares to meet Thrain, and then they talk over the matter, and they did not each look at it in the same way.

Kari comes home, and Njal's sons ask how things had gone between Thrain and him. Kari said he would rather not repeat the words that had passed, "but," he went on, "it is to be looked for that the like words will be spoken when ye yourselves can hear them".

Thrain had fifteen house-earles trained to arms in his house, and eight of them rode with him whithersoever he went. Thrain was very fond of show and dress, and always rode in a blue cloak, and had on a gilded helm, and the spear - the Earl's gift - in his hand, and a fair shield, and a sword at his belt. Along with him always went Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Grani, Gunnar of Lithend's son. But nearest of all to him went Killing-Hrapp. Lodinn was the name of his serving-man, he too went with Thrain when he journeyed; Tjorvi was the name of Loddin's brother, and he too was one of Thrain's band. The worst of all, in their words against Njal's sons, were Hrapp and Grani; and it was mostly their doing that no atonement was offered to them.

Njal's sons often spoke to Kari that he should ride with them; and it came to that at last, for he said it would be well that they heard Thrain's answer.

Then they busked them, four of Njal's sons, and Kari the fifth, and so they fare to Gritwater.

There was a wide porch in the homestead there, so that many men might stand in it side by side. There was a woman out of doors, and she saw their coming, and told Thrain of it; he bade them to go out into the porch, and take their arms, and they did so.

Thrain stood in mid-door, Killing-Hrapp and Grani Gunnar's son stood on either hand of him; then next stood Gunnar Lambi's son, then Lodinn and Tjorvi, then Lambi Sigurd's son; then each of the others took his place right and left; for the house-earles were all at home.

Skarphedinn and his men walk up from below, and he went first, then Kari, then Hauskuld, then Grim, then Helgi. But when they had come up to the door, then not a word of welcome passed the lips of those who stood before them.

"May we all be welcome here?" said Skarphedinn.

Hallgerda stood in the porch, and had been talking low to Hrapp, then she spoke out loud -

"None of those who are here will say that ye are welcome."

Then Skarphedinn sang a song.

Prop of sea-waves' fire, ð thy fretting
Cannot cast a weight on us,
Warriors wight; yes, wolf and eagle
Willingly I feed to-day;
Carline thrust into the ingle,
Or a tramping whore, art thou;
Lord of skates that skim the sea-belt, ð
Odin's mocking cup ð I mix.

"Thy words," said Skarphedinn, "will not be worth much, for thou art either a hag, only fit to sit in the ingle, or a harlot."

"These words of thine thou shalt pay for," she says, "ere thou farest home."

"Thee am I come to see, Thrain," said Helgi, "and to know if thou will make me any amends for those wrongs and hardships which befell me for thy sake in Norway."

"I never knew," said Thrain, "that ye two brothers were wont to measure your manhood by money; or, how long shall such a claim for amends stand over?"

"Many will say," says Helgi, "that thou oughtest to offer us atonement, since thy life was at stake."

Then Hrapp said, "'Twas just luck that swayed the balance, when he got stripes who ought to bear them; and she dragged you under disgrace and hardship, but us away from them."

"Little good luck was there in that," says Helgi, "to break faith with the Earl, and to take to thee instead."

"Thinkest thou not that thou hast some amends to seek from me?" says Hrapp, "I will atone thee in a way that, methinks, were fitting."

"The only dealings we shall have," says Helgi, "will be those which will not stand thee in good stead."

"Don't bandy words with Hrapp," said Skarphedinn, "but give him a red skin for a grey."ö

"Hold thy tongue, Skarphedinn," said Hrapp, "or I will not spare to bring my axe on thy head."

"'Twill be proved soon enough, I dare say," says Skarphedinn, "which of us is to scatter gravel over the other's head."

"Away with you home, ye 'Dung-beardlings!'" says Hallgerda, "and so we will call you always from this day forth; but your father we will call 'the Beardless Carle'."

They did not fare home before all who were there had made themselves guilty of uttering those words, save Thrain; he forbade men to utter them.

Then Njal's sons went away, and fared till they came home; then they told their father.

"Did ye call any men to witness of those words?" says Njal.

"We called none," says Skarphedinn; "we do not mean to follow that suit up except on the battlefield."

"No one will now think," says Bergthora, "that ye have the heart to lift your weapons."

"Spare thy tongue, mistress!" says Kari, "in egging on thy sons, for they will be quite eager enough."

After that they all talk long in secret, Njal and his sons, and Kari Solmund's son, their brother-in-law.

Chapter 91

Thrain Sigfus' Son's Slaying

Now there was great talk about this quarrel of theirs, and all seemed to know that it would not settle down peacefully.

Runolf, the son of Wolf Aurlpriest, east in the Dale, was a great friend of Thrain's, and had asked Thrain to come and see him, and it was settled that he should come east when about three weeks or a month were wanting to winter.

Thrain bade Hrapp, and Grani, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Lodinn, and Tjorvi, eight of them in all, to go on this journey with him. Hallgerda and Thorgerda were to go too. At the same time Thrain gave it out that he meant to stay in the Mark with his brother Kettle, and said how many nights he meant to be away from home.

They all of them had full arms. So they rode east across Markfleet, and found there some gangrel women, and they begged them to put them across the Fleet west on their horses, and they did so.

Then they rode into the Dale, and had a hearty welcome; there Kettle of the Mark met them, and there they sate two nights.

Both Runolf and Kettle besought Thrain that he would make up his quarrel with Njal's sons; but he said he would never pay any money, and answered crossly, for he said he thought himself quite a match for Njal's sons wherever they met.

"So it may be," says Runolf; "but so far as I can see, no man has been their match since Gunnar of Lithend died, and it is likelier that ye will both drag one another down to death."

Thrain said that was not to be dreaded.

Then Thrain fared up into the Mark, and was there two nights more; after that he rode down into the Dale, and was sent away from both houses with fitting gifts.

Now the Markfleet was then flowing between sheets of ice on both sides, and there were tongues of ice bridging it across every here and there.

Thrain said that he meant to ride home that evening, but Runolf said that he ought not to ride home; he said, too, that it would be more wary not to fare back as he had said he would before he left home.

"That is fear, and I will none of it," answers Thrain.

Now those gangrel women whom they had put across the Fleet came to Bergthorsknoll, and Bergthora asked whence they came, but they answered, "Away east under Eyjafell".

"Then, who put you across Markfleet?" said Bergthora.

"Those," said they, "who were the most boastful and bravest clad of men."

"Who?" asked Bergthora.

"Thrain Sigfus' son," said they, "and his company, but we thought it best to tell thee that they were so full-tongued and foul-tongued towards this house, against thy husband and his sons."

"Listeners do not often hear good of themselves," says Bergthora. After that they went their way, and Bergthora gave them gifts on their going, and asked them when Thrain might be coming home.

They said that he would be from home four or five nights.

After that Bergthora told her sons and her son-in-law Kari, and they talked long and low about the matter.

But that same morning, when Thrain and his men rode from the east, Njal woke up early and heard how Skarphedinn's axe came against the panel.

Then Njal rises up, and goes out, and sees that his sons are all there with their weapons, and Karl, his son-in-law too. Skarphedinn was foremost. He was in a blue cape, and had a targe, and his axe aloft on his shoulder. Next to him went Helgi; he was in a red kirtle, had a helm on his head, and a red shield, on which a hart was marked. Next to him went Kari; he had on a silken jerkin, a gilded helm and shield, and on it was drawn a lion. They were all in bright holiday clothes.

Njal called out to Skarphedinn -

"Whither art thou going, kinsman?"

"On a sheep hunt," he said.

"So it was once before," said Njal, "but then ye hunted men."

Skarphedinn laughed at that, and said -

"Hear ye what the old man says? He is not without his doubts."

"When was it that thou spokest thus before?" asks Kari.

"When I slew Sigmund the white," says Skarphedinn, "Gunnar of Lithend's kinsman."

"For what?" asks Kari.

"He had slain Thord Freedmanson, my foster-father."

Njal went home, but they fared up into the Redslips, and bided there; thence they could see the others as soon as ever they rode from the east out of the dale.

There was sunshine that day and bright weather.

Now Thrain and his men ride down out of the Dale along the river bank.

Lambi Sigurd's son said -

"Shields gleam away yonder in the Redslips when the sun shines on them, and there must be some men lying in wait there."

"Then," says Thrain, "we will turn our way lower down the Fleet, and then they will come to meet us if they have any business with us."

So they turn down the Fleet. "Now they have caught sight of us," said Skarphedinn, "for lo! they turn their path elsewhither, and now we have no other choice than to run down and meet them."

"Many men," said Kari, "would rather not lie in wait if the balance of force were not more on their side than it is on ours; they are eight, but we are five."

Now they turn down along the Fleet, and see a tongue of ice bridging the stream lower down and mean to cross there.

Thrain and his men take their stand upon the ice away from the tongue, and Thrain said -

"What can these men want? They are five, and we are eight."

"I guess," said Lambi Sigurd's son, "that they would still run the risk though more men stood against them."

Thrain throws off his cloak, and takes off his helm.

Now it happened to Skarphedinn, as they ran down along the Fleet, that his shoe-string snapped asunder, and he stayed behind.

"Why so slow, Skarphedinn?" quoth Grim.

"I am tying my shoe," he says.

"Let us get on ahead," says Kari; "methinks he will not be slower than we."

So they turn off to the tongue, and run as fast as they can. Skarphedinn sprang up as soon as he was ready, and had lifted his axe, "the ogress of war," aloft, and runs right down to the Fleet. But the Fleet was so deep that there was no fording it for a long way up or down.

A great sheet of ice had been thrown up by the flood on the other side of the Fleet as smooth and slippery as glass, and there Thrain and his men stood in the midst of the sheet.

Skarphedinn takes a spring into the air, and leaps over the stream between the icebanks, and does not check his course, but rushes still onwards with a slide. The sheet of ice was very slippery, and so he went as fast as a bird flies. Thrain was just about to put his helm on his head; and now Skarphedinn bore down on them, and hews at Thrain with his axe, "the ogress of war," and smote him on the head, and clove him down to the teeth, so that his jaw-teeth fell out on the ice. This feat was done with such a quick sleight that no one could get a blow at him; he glided away from them at once at full speed. Tjorvi, indeed, threw his shield before him on the ice, but he leapt over it, and still kept his feet, and slid quite to the end of the sheet of ice.

There Kari and his brothers came to meet him.

"This was done like a man," says Kari.

"Your share is still left," says Skarphedinn, and sang a song.

To the strife of swords not slower,
After all, I came than you,
For with ready stroke the sturdy
Squanderer of wealth I felled;
But since Grim's and Helgi's sea-stagö
Norway's Earl erst took and stripped,
Now 'tis time for sea-fire bearersö
Such dishonour to avenge.

And this other song he sang -

Swiftly down I dashed my weapon,
Gashing giant, byrnie-breacher,ö
She, the noisy ogre's namesake,ö
Soon with flesh the ravens glutted;
Now your words to Hrapp remember,
On broad ice now rouse the storm,
With dull crash war's eager ogress
Battle's earliest note hath sung.

"That befits us well, and we wilt do it well," says Helgi. Then they turn up towards them. Both Grim and Helgi see where Hrapp is, and they turned on him at once. Hrapp hews at Grim there and then with his axe; Helgi sees this and cuts at Hrapp's arm, and cut it off, and down fell the axe.

"In this," says Hrapp, "thou hast done a most needful work, for this hand hath wrought harm and death to many a man."

"And so here an end shall be put to it," says Grim; and with that he ran him through with a spear, and then Hrapp fell down dead.

Tjorvi turns against Kari and hurls a spear at him. Kari leapt up in the air, and the spear flew below his feet. Then Kari rushes at him, and hews at him on the breast with his sword, and the blow passed at once into his chest, and he got his death there and then.

Then Skarphedinn seizes both Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and said -

"Here have I caught two whelps! but what shall we do with them?"

"It is in thy power," says Helgi, "to slay both or either of them, if you wish them dead."

"I cannot find it in my heart to do both - help Hogni and slay his brother," says Skarphedinn.

"Then the day will once come," says Helgi, "when thou wilt wish that thou hadst slain him, for never will he be true to thee, nor will any one of the others who are now here."

"I shall not fear them," answers Skarphedinn.

After that they gave peace to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Lodinn.

After that they went down to the Fleet where Skarphedinn had leapt over it, and Kari and the others measured the length of the leap with their spear-shafts, and it was twelve ells (about eighteen feet, according to the old Norse measure).

Then they turned homewards, and Njal asked what tidings.

They told him all just as it had happened, and Njal said -

"These are great tidings, and it is more likely that hence will come the death of one of my sons, if not more evil."

Gunnar Lambi's son bore the body of Thrain with him to Gritwater, and he was laid in a cairn there.

Chapter 92

Kettle Takes Hauskuld as His Foster-Son

Kettle of the Mark had to wife Thorgerda, Njal's daughter, but he was Thrain's brother, and he thought he was come into a strait, so he rode to Njal's house, and asked whether he were willing to atone in any way for Thrain's slaying?

"I will atone for it handsomely," answered Njal; "and my wish is that thou shouldst look after the matter with thy brothers who have to take the price of the atonement, that they may be ready to join in it."

Kettle said he would do so with all his heart, and Kettle rode home first; a little after, he summoned all his brothers to Lithend, and then he had a talk with them; and Hogni was on his side all through the talk; and so it came about that men were chosen to utter the award; and a meeting was agreed on, and the fair price of a man was awarded for Thrain's slaying, and they all had a share in the blood-money who had a lawful right to it. After that pledges of peace and good faith were agreed to, and they were settled in the most sure and binding way.

Njal paid down all the money out of hand well and bravely; and so things were quiet for a while.

One day Njal rode up into the Mark, and he and Kettle talked together the whole day, Njal rode home at even, and no man knew of what they had taken counsel.

A little after Kettle fares to Gritwater, and he said to Thorgerda -

"Long have I loved my brother Thrain much, and now I will show it, for I will ask Hauskuld Thrain's son to be my foster-child."

"Thou shalt have thy choice of this," she says; "and thou shalt give this lad all the help in thy power when he is grown up, and avenge him if he is slain with weapons, and bestow money on him for his wife's dower; and besides, thou shalt swear to do all this."

Now Hauskuld fares home with Kettle, and is with him some time.

Chapter 93

Njal Takes Hauskuld to Foster

Once on a time Njal rides up into the Mark, and he had a hearty welcome. He was there that night, and in the evening Njal called out to the lad Hauskuld, and he went up to him at once.

Njal had a ring of gold on his hand, and showed it to the lad. He took hold of the gold, and looked at it, and put it on his finger.

"Wilt thou take the gold as a gift?" said Njal.

"That I will," said the lad.

"Knowest thou," says Njal, "what brought thy father to his death?"

"I know," answers the lad, "that Skarphedinn slew him; but we need not keep that in mind, when an atonement has been made for it, and a full price paid for him."

"Better answered than asked," said Njal; "and thou wilt live to be a good man and true," he adds.

"Methinks thy forecasting," says Hauskuld, "is worth having, for I know that thou art foresighted and unlying."

"Now I will offer to foster thee," said Njal, "if thou wilt take the offer."

He said he would be willing to take both that honour and any other good offer which he might make. So the end of the matter was, that Hauskuld fared home with Njal as his foster-son.

He suffered no harm to come nigh the lad, and loved him much. Njal's sons took him about with them, and did him honour in every way. And so things go on till Hauskuld is full grown. He was both tall and strong; the fairest of men to look on, and well-haired; blithe of speech, bountiful, well-behaved; as well trained to arms as the best; fairspoken to all men, and much beloved.

Njal's sons and Hauskuld were never apart, either in word or deed.

Chapter 94

Of Flosi Thord's Son

There was a man named Flosi, he was the son of Thord Freyspriest. Flosi had to wife Steinvora, daughter of Hall of the Side. She was base born, and her mother's name was Solvora, daughter of Herjolf the white. Flosi dwelt at Swinefell, and was a mighty chief. He was tall of stature, and strong withal, the most forward and boldest of men. His brother's name was Starkad; he was not by the same mother as Flosi.

The other brothers of Flosi were Thorgeir and Stein, Kolbein and Egil. Hildigunna was the name of the daughter of Starkad Flosi's brother. She was a proud, high-spirited maiden, and one of the fairest of women. She was so skilful with her hands, that few women were equally skilful. She was the grimmest and hardest-hearted of all women; but still a woman of open hand and heart when any fitting call was made upon her.

Chapter 95

Of Hall of the Side

Hall was the name of a man who was called Hall of the Side. He was the son of Thorstein Baudvar's son. Hall had to wife Joreida, daughter of Thidrandi the wise. Thorstein was the name of Hall's brother, and he was nick-named broadpaunch. His son was Kol, whom Kari slays in Wales. The sons of Hall of the Side were Thorstein and Egil, Thorwald and Ljot, and Thidrandi, whom, it is said, the goddesses slew.

There was a man named Thorir, whose surname was Holt-Thorir; his sons were these: Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorleif crow, from whom the Wood-dwellers are come, and Thorgrim the big.

Chapter 96

Of the Change of Faith

There had been a change of rulers in Norway, Earl Hacon was dead and gone, but in his stead was come Olaf Tryggvi's son. That was the end of Earl Hacon, that Kark, the thrall, cut his throat at Rimul in Gaulardale.

Along with that was heard that there had been a change of faith in Norway; they had cast off the old faith, but King Olaf had christened the western lands, Shetland, and the Orkneys, and the Faroe Isles.

Then many men spoke so that Njal heard it, that it was a strange and wicked thing to throw off the old faith.

Then Njal spoke and said -

"It seems to me as though this new faith must be much better, and he will be happy who follows this rather than the other; and if those men come out hither who preach this faith, then I will back them well."

He went often alone away from other men and muttered to himself.

That same harvest a ship came out into the firths east to Berufirth, at a spot called Gautawick. The captain's name was Thangbrand. He was a son of Willibald, a count of Saxony, Thangbrand was sent out hither by King Olaf Tryggvi's son, to preach the faith. Along with him came that man of Iceland whose name was Gudleif. Gudleif was a great man-slayer, and one of the strongest of men, and hardy and forward in everything.

Two brothers dwelt at Beruness; the name of the one was Thorleif, but the other was Kettle. They were sons of Holmstein, the son of Auzur of Broaddale. These brothers held a meeting, and forbade men to have any dealings with them. This Hall of the Side heard. He dwelt at Thvattwater in Alftafirth; he rode to the ship with twenty-nine men, and he fares at once to find Thangbrand, and spoke to him and asked him -

"Trade is rather dull, is it not?"

He answered that so it was.

"Now will I say my errand," says Hall; "it is, that I wish to ask you all to my house, and run the risk of my being able to get rid of your wares for you."

Thangbrand thanked him, and fared to Thvattwater that harvest.

It so happened one morning that Thangbrand was out early and made them pitch a tent on land, and sang mass in it, and took much pains with it, for it was a great high day.

Hall spoke to Thangbrand and asked, "In memory of whom keepest thou this day?"

"In memory of Michael the archangel," says Thangbrand.

"What follows that angel?" asks Hall.

"Much good," says Thangbrand. "He will weigh all the good that thou doest, and he is so merciful, that whenever any one pleases him, he makes his good deeds weigh more."

"I would like to have him for my friend," says Hall.

"That thou mayest well have," says Thangbrand, "only give thyself over to him by God's help this very day."

"I only make this condition," says Hall, "that thou givest thy word for him that he will then become my guardian angel."

"That I will promise," says Thangbrand.

Then Hall was baptised, and all his household.

Chapter 97 Of Thangbrand's Journeys

The spring after Thangbrand set out to preach Christianity, and Hall went with him. But when they came west across Lonsheath to Staffell, there they found a man dwelling named Thorkell. He spoke most against the faith, and challenged Thangbrand to single combat. Then Thangbrand bore a rood-crossö before his shield, and the end of their combat was that Thangbrand won the day and slew Thorkell.

Thence they fared to Hornfirth and turned in as guests at Borgarhaven, west of Heinabergs sand. There Hildir the old dwelt,ö and then Hildir and all his household took upon them the new faith.

Thence they fared to Fellcombe, and went in as guests to Calffell. There dwelt Kol Thorstein's son, Hall's kinsman, and he took upon him the faith and all his house.

Thence they fared to Swinefell, and Flosi only took the sign of the cross, but gave his word to back them at the Thing.

Thence they fared west to Woodcombe, and went in as guests at Kirkby. There dwelt Surt Asbjorn's son, the son of Thorstein, the son of Kettle the foolish. These had all of them been Christians from father to son.

After that they fared out of Woodcombe on to Headbrink. By that time the story of their journey was spread far and wide. There was a man named Sorcerer-Hedinn who dwelt in Carlinedale. There heathen men made a bargain with him that he should put Thangbrand to death with all his company. He fared upon Arnstacksheath, and there made a great sacrifice when Thangbrand was riding from the east. Then the earth burst asunder under his horse, but he sprang off his horse and saved himself on the brink of the gulf, but the earth swallowed up the horse and all his harness, and they never saw him more.

Then Thangbrand praised God.

Chapter 98 Of Thangbrand and Gudleif

Gudleif now searches for Sorcerer-Hedinn and finds him on the heath, and chases him down into Carlinedale, and got within spearshot of him, and shoots a spear at him and through him.

Thence they fared to Dyrholms and held a meeting there, and preached the faith there, and there Ingialld, the son of Thorsteinn Highbankawk, became a Christian.

Thence they fared to the Fleetlithe and preached the faith there. There Weatherlid the Skald, and Ari his son, spoke most against the faith, and for that they slew Weatherlid, and then this song was sung about it -

He who proved his blade on bucklers,
South went through the land to whet
Brand that oft hath felled his foeman,
'Gainst the forge which foams with song;ö
Mighty wielder of war's sickle
Made his sword's avenging edge
Hard on hero's helm-prop rattle,ö
Skull of Weatherlid the Skald.

Thence Thangbrand fared to Bergthorsknoll, and Njal took the faith and all his house, but Mord and Valgard went much against it, and thence they fared out

across the rivers; so they went on into Hawkdale and there they baptised Hall,ö and he was then three winters old.

Thence Thangbrand fared to Grimsness, there Thorwald the scurvy gathered a band against him, and sent word to Wolf Uggi's son, that he must fare against Thangbrand and slay him, and made this song on him -

To the wolf in Woden's harness,
Uggi's worthy warlike son,
I, steel's swinger dearly loving,
This my simple bidding send;
That the wolf of Godsö he chaseth, -
Man who snaps at chink of gold -
Wolf who base our Gods blasphemeth,
I the other wolfö will crush.

Wolf sang another song in return -

Swarthy skarf from month that skimmeth
Of the man who speaks in song
Never will I catch, though surely
Wealthy warrior it hath sent;
Tender of the sea-horse snorting,
E'en though ill deeds are on foot,
Still to risk mine eyes are open;
Harmful 'tis to snap at flies.ö

"And," says he, "I don't mean to be made a catspaw by him, but let him take heed lest his tongue twists a noose for his own neck."

And after that the messenger fared back to Thorwald the scurvy and told him Wolf's words. Thorwald had many men about him, and gave it out that he would lie in wait for them on Bluewoodheath.

Now those two, Thangbrand and Gudleif, ride out of Hawkdale, and there they came upon a man who rode to meet them. That man asked for Gudleif, and when he found him he said -

"Thou shalt gain by being the brother of Thorgil of Reykiahole, for I will let thee know that they have set many ambushes, and this too, that Thorwald the scurvy is now with his band At Hestbeck on Grimsness."

"We shall not the less for all that ride to meet him," says Gudleif, and then they turned down to Hestbeck. Thorwald was then come across the brook, and Gudleif said to Thangbrand -

"Here is now Thorwald; let us rush on him now." Thangbrand shot a spear through Thorwald, but Gudleif smote him on the shoulder and hewed his arm off, and that was his death.

After that they ride up to the Thing, and it was a near thing that the kinsmen of Thorwald had fallen on Thangbrand, but Njal and the eastfirthers stood by Thangbrand.

Then Hjalalti Skeggi's son sang this rhyme at the Hill of Laws -

Ever will I Gods blaspheme
Freyja methinks a dog does seem,
Freyja a dog? Aye! let them be
Both dogs together Odin and she.ö

Hjalalti fared abroad that summer and Gizur the white with him, but Thangbrand's ship was wrecked away east at Bulandsness, and the ship's name was "Bison".

Thangbrand and his messmate fared right through the west country, and Steinvora, the mother of Ref the Skald, came against him; she preached the heathen faith to Thangbrand and made him a long speech. Thangbrand held his peace while she spoke, but made a long speech after her, and turned all that she had said the wrong way against her.

"Hast thou heard," she said, "how Thor challenged Christ to single combat, and how he did not dare to fight with Thor?"

"I have heard tell," says Thangbrand, "that Thor was naught but dust and ashes, if God had not willed that he should live."

"Knowest thou," she says, "who it was that shattered thy ship?"

"What hast thou to say about that?" he asks.

"That I will tell thee," she says.

He that giant's offspringö slayeth
Broke the new-field's bison stout,ö
Thus the Gods, bell's warderö grieving.
Crushed the falcon of the strand;ö
To the courser of the causewayö
Little good was Christ I ween,
When Thor shattered ships to pieces
Gylfi's hartö no God could help.

And again she sang another song -

Thangbrand's vessel from her moorings,
Sea-king's steed, Thor wrathful tore,
Shook and shattered all her timbers,
Hurled her broadside on the beach;
Ne'er again shall Viking's snow-shoe,ö
On the briny billows glide,
For a storm by Thor awakened,
Dashed the bark to splinters small.

After that Thangbrand and Steinvora parted, and they fared west to Bardastrand.

Chapter 99 Of Gest Oddleif's Son

Gest Oddleif's son dwelt at Hagi on Bardastrand, He was one of the wisest of men, so that he foresaw the fates and fortunes of men. He made a feast for Thangbrand and his men. They fared to Hagi with sixty men. Then it was said that there were two hundred heathen men to meet them, and that a Baresark was looked for to come thither, whose name was Otrygg, and all were afraid of him. Of him such great things as these were said, that he feared neither fire nor sword, and the heathen men were sore afraid at his coming. Then Thangbrand asked if men were willing to take the faith, but all the heathen men spoke against it.

"Well," says Thangbrand, "I will give you the means whereby ye shall prove whether my faith is better. We will hallow two fires. The heathen men shall hallow one and I the other, but a third shall he unhallowed; and if the Baresark is afraid of the one that I hallow, but treads both the others, then ye shall take the faith."

"That is well-spoken," says Gest, "and I will agree to this for myself and my household."

And when Gest had so spoken, then many more agreed to it.

Then it was said that the Baresark was coming up to the homestead, and then the fires were made and burned strong. Then men took their arms and sprang up on the benches, and so waited.

The Baresark rushed in with his weapons. He comes into the room, and treads at once the fire which the heathen men had hallowed, and so comes to the fire that Thangbrand had hallowed, and dares not to tread it, but said that he was on fire all over. He hews with his sword at the bench, but strikes a cross-beam as he brandished the weapon aloft. Thangbrand smote the arm of the Baresark with his crucifix, and so mighty a token followed that the sword fell from the Baresark's hand.

Then Thangbrand thrusts a sword into his breast, and Gudleif smote him on the arm and hewed it off. Then many went up and slew the Baresark.

After that Thangbrand asked if they would take the faith now?

Gest said he had only spoken what he meant to keep to.

Then Thangbrand baptised Gest and all his house and many others. Then Thangbrand took counsel with Gest whether he should go any further west among the firths, but Gest set his face against that, and said they were a hard race of men there, and ill to deal with, "but if it be foredoomed that this faith shall make its way, then it will be taken as law at the Althing, and then all the chiefs out of the districts will be there".

"I did all that I could at the Thing," says Thangbrand, "and it was very uphill work."

"Still thou hast done most of the work," says Gest, "though it may be fated that others shall make Christianity law; but it is here as the saying runs, 'No tree falls at the first stroke'."

After that Gest gave Thangbrand good gifts, and he fared back south. Thangbrand fared to the Southlander's Quarter, and so to the Eastfirths. He turned in as a guest at Bergthorsknoll, and Njal gave him good gifts. Thence he rode east to Alftafirth to meet Hall of the Side. He caused his ship to be mended, and heathen man called it "Iron-basket". On board that ship Thangbrand fared abroad, and Gudleif with him.

Chapter 100

Of Gizur the White and Hjalldi

That same summer Hjalldi Skeggi's son was outlawed at the Thing for blasphemy against the Gods.

Thangbrand told King Olaf of all the mischief that the Icelanders had done to him, and said that they were such sorcerers there that the earth burst asunder under his horse and swallowed up the horse.

Then King Olaf was so wroth that he made them seize all the men from Iceland and set them in dungeons, and meant to slay them.

Then they, Gizur the white and Hjalldi, came up and offered to lay themselves in pledge for those men, and fare out to Iceland and preach the faith. The king took this well, and they got them all set free again.

Then Gizur and Hjalldi busked their ship for Iceland, and were soon "boun". They made the land at Eyrar when ten weeks of summer had passed; they got them horses at once, but left other men to strip their ship. Then they ride with thirty men to the Thing, and sent word to the Christian men that they must be ready to stand by them.

Hjalldi stayed behind at Reydarmull, for he had heard that he had been made an outlaw for blasphemy, but when they came to the "Boiling Kettle" ö down below the brink of the Rift, ö there came Hjalldi after them, and said he would not let the heathen men see that he was afraid of them.

Then many Christian men rode to meet them, and they ride in battle array to the Thing. The heathen men had drawn up their men in array to meet them, and it was a near thing that the whole body of the Thing had come to blows, but still it did not go so far.

Chapter 101

Of Thorgeir of Lightwater

There was a man named Thorgeir who dwelt at Lightwater; he was the son of Tjorfi, the son of Thorkel the long, the son of Kettle Longneck. His mother's

name was Thoruna, and she was the daughter of Thorstein, the son of Sigmund, the son of Bard of the Nip. Gudrida was the name of his wife; she was a daughter of Thorkel the black of Hleidrargarth. His brother was Worm wallet-back, the father of Hlenni the old of Saurby.

The Christian men set up their booths, and Gizur the white and Hjalfti were in the booths of the men from Mossfell. The day after both sides went to the Hill of Laws, and each, the Christian men as well as the heathen, took witness, and declared themselves out of the other's laws, and then there was such an uproar on the Hill of Laws that no man could hear the other's voice.

After that men went away, and all thought things looked like the greatest entanglement. The Christian men chose as their Speaker Hall of the Side, but Hall went to Thorgeir, the priest of Lightwater, who was the old Speaker of the law, and gave him three marks of silver to utter what the law should be, but still that was most hazardous counsel, since he was an heathen.

Thorgeir lay all that day on the ground, and spread a cloak over his head, so that no man spoke with him; but the day after men went to the Hill of Laws, and then Thorgeir bade them be silent and listen, and spoke thus -

"It seems to me as though our matters were come to a dead lock, if we are not all to have one and the same law; for if there be a sundering of the laws, then there will be a sundering of the peace, and we shall never be able to live in the land. Now, I will ask both Christian men and heathen whether they will hold to those laws which I utter".

They all say they would.

He said he wished to take an oath of them, and pledges that they would hold to them, and they all said "yea" to that, and so he took pledges from them.

"This is the beginning of our laws," he said, "that all men shall be Christian here in the land, and believe in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but leave off all idol-worship, not expose children to perish, and not eat horseflesh. It shall be outlawry if such things are proved openly against any man; but if these things are done by stealth, then it shall be blameless."

But all this heathendom was all done away with within a few years' space, so that those things were not allowed to be done either by stealth or openly.

Thorgeir then uttered the law as to keeping the Lord's day and fast days, Yuletide and Easter, and all the greatest highdays and holidays.

The heathen men thought they had been greatly cheated; but still the true faith was brought into the law, and so all men became Christian here in the land.

After that men fare home from the Thing.

Chapter 102

The Wedding of Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness

Now we must take up the story, and say that Njal spoke thus to Hauskuld, his foster-son, and said -

"I would seek thee a match."

Hauskuld bade him settle the matter as he pleased, and asked whether he was most likely to turn his eyes.

"There is a woman called Hildigunna," answers Njal, "and she is the daughter of Starkad, the son of Thord Freyspriest. She is the best match I know of."

"See thou to it, foster-father," said Hauskuld; "that shall be my choice which thou choosest."

"Then we will look thitherward," says Njal.

A little while after, Njal called on men to go along with him. Then the sons of Sigfus, and Njal's sons, and Kari Solmund's son, all of them fared with him and they rode east to Swinefell.

There they got a hearty welcome.

The day after, Njal and Flosi went to talk alone, and the speech of Njal ended thus, that he said -

"This is my errand here, that we have set out on a wooing-journey, to ask for thy kinswoman Hildigunna."

"At whose hand?" says Flosi.

"At the hand of Hauskuld my foster-son," says Njal.

"Such things are well meant," says Flosi, "but still ye run each of you great risk, the one from the other; but what hast thou to say of Hauskuld?"

"Good I am able to say of him," says Njal; "and besides, I will lay down as much money as will seem fitting to thy niece and thyself, if thou wilt think of making this match."

"We will call her hither," says Flosi, "and know how she looks on the man."

Then Hildigunna was called, and she came thither.

Flosi told her of the wooing, but she said she was a proud-hearted woman.

"And I know not how things will turn out between me and men of like spirit; but this, too, is not the least of my dislike, that this man has no priesthood or leadership over men, but thou hast always said that thou wouldest not wed me to a man who had not the priesthood."

"This is quite enough," says Flosi, "if thou wilt not be wedded to Hauskuld, to make me take no more pains about the match."

"Nay!" she says, "I do not say that I will not be wedded to Hauskuld if they can get him a priesthood or a leadership over men; but otherwise I will have nothing to say to the match."

"Then," said Njal, "I will beg thee to let this match stand over for three winters, that I may see what I can do."

Flosi said that so it should be.

"I will only bargain for this one thing," says Hildigunna, "if this match comes to pass, that we shall stay here away east."

Njal said he would rather leave that to Hauskuld, but Hauskuld said that he put faith in many men, but in none so much as his foster-father.

Now they ride from the east.

Njal sought to get a priesthood and leadership for Hauskuld, but no one was willing to sell his priesthood, and now the summer passes away till the Althing.

There were great quarrels at the Thing that summer, and many a man then did as was their wont, in faring to see Njal; but he gave such counsel in men's lawsuits as was not thought at all likely, so that both the pleadings and the defence came to naught, and out of that great strife arose, when the lawsuits could not be brought to an end, and men rode home from the Thing unatoned.

Now things go on till another Thing comes. Njal rode to the Thing, and at first all is quiet until Njal says that it is high time for men to give notice of their suits.

Then many said that they thought that came to little, when no man could get his suit settled, even though the witnesses were summoned to the Althing, "and so," say they, "we would rather seek our rights with point and edge."

"So it must not be," says Njal, "for it will never do to have no law in the land. But yet ye have much to say on your side in this matter, and it behoves us who know the law, and who are bound to guide the law, to set men at one again, and to ensue peace. 'Twere good counsel, then, methinks, that we call together all the chiefs and talk the matter over."

Then they go to the Court of Laws, and Njal spoke and said -

"Thee, Skapti Thorod's son and you other chiefs, I call on, and say, that methinks our lawsuits have come into a deadlock, if we have to follow up our suits in the Quarter Courts, and they get so entangled that they can neither be pleaded nor ended. Methinks, it were wiser if we had a Fifth Court, and there pleaded those suits which cannot be brought to an end in the Quarter Courts."

"How," said Skapti, "wilt thou name a Fifth Court, when the Quarter Court is named for the old priesthoods, three twelves in each quarter?"

"I can see help for that," says Njal, "by setting up new priesthoods, and filling them with the men who are best fitted in each Quarter, and then let those men who are willing to agree to it, declare themselves ready to join the new priest's Thing."

"Well," says Skapti, "we will take this choice; but what weighty suits shall come before the court?"

"These matters shall come before it," says Njal - "all matters of contempt of the Thing, such as if men bear false witness, or utter a false finding; hither, too, shall come all those suits in which the Judges are divided in opinion in the Quarter Court; then they shall be summoned to the Fifth Court; so, too, if men offer bribes, or take them, for their help in suits. In this court all the oaths shall be of the strongest kind, and two men shall follow every oath, who shall support on their words of honour what the others swear. So it shall be also, if the pleadings on one side are right in form, and the other wrong, that the judgment shall be given for those that are right in form. Every suit in this court shall be pleaded just as is now done in the Quarter Court, save and except that when four twelves are named in the Fifth Court, then the plaintiff shall name and set aside six men out of the court, and the defendant other six; but if he will not set them aside, then the plaintiff shall name them and set them aside as he has done with his own six; but if the plaintiff does not set them aside, then the suit comes to naught, for three twelves shall utter judgment on all suits. We shall also have this arrangement in the Court of Laws, that those only shall have the right to make or change laws who sit on the middle bench, and to this bench those only shall be chosen who are wisest and best. There, too, shall the Fifth Court sit; but if those who sit in the Court of Laws are not agreed as to what they shall allow or bring in as law, then they shall clear the court for a division, and the majority shall bind the rest; but if any man who has a seat in the Court be outside the Court of Laws and cannot get inside it, or thinks himself overborne in the suit, then he shall forbid them by a protest, so that they can hear it in the Court, and then he has made all their grants and all their decisions void and of none effect, and stopped them by his protest."

After that, Skapti Thorod's son brought the Fifth Court into the law, and all that was spoken of before. Then men went to the Hill of Laws, and men set up new priesthoods: in the Northlanders' Quarter were these new priesthoods. The priesthood of the Melmen in Midfirth, and the Laufesingers' priesthood in the Eyjafirth.

Then Njal begged for a hearing, and spoke thus -

"It is known to many men what passed between my sons and the men of Gritwater when they slew Thrain Sigfus' son. But for all that we settled the matter; and now I have taken Hauskuld into my house, and planned a marriage for him if he can get a priesthood anywhere; but no man will sell his priesthood, and so I will beg you to give me leave to set up a new priesthood at Whiteness for Hauskuld."

He got this leave from all, and after that he set up the new priesthood for Hauskuld; and he was afterwards called Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness.

After that, men ride home from the Thing, and Njal stayed but a short time at home ere he rides east to Swinefell, and his sons with him, and again stirs in the matter of the marriage with Flosi; but Flosi said he was ready to keep faith with them in everything.

Then Hildigunna was betrothed to Hauskuld, and the day for the wedding feast was fixed, and so the matter ended. They then ride home, but they rode again

shortly to the bridal, and Flosi paid down all her goods and money after the wedding, and all went off well.

They fared home to Bergthorsknoll, and were there the next year, and all went well between Hildigunna and Bergthora. But the next spring Njal bought land in Ossaby, and hands it over to Hauskuld, and thither he fares to his own abode. Njal got him all his household, and there was such love between them all, that none of them thought anything that he said or did any worth unless the others had a share in it.

Hauskuld dwelt long at Ossaby, and each backed the other's honour, and Njal's sons were always in Hauskuld's company. Their friendship was so warm, that each house bade the other to a feast every harvest, and gave each other great gifts; and so it goes on for a long while.

Chapter 103

The Slaying of Hauskuld Njal's Son

There was a man named Lyting; he dwelt at Samstede, and he had to wife a woman named Steinvora; she was a daughter of Sigfus, and Thrain's sister. Lyting was tall of growth and a strong man, wealthy in goods and ill to deal with.

It happened once that Lyting had a feast in his house at Samstede, and he had bidden thither Hauskuld and the sons of Sigfus, and they all came. There, too, was Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son.

Hauskuld Njal's son and his mother had a farm at Holt, and he was always riding to his farm from Bergthorsknoll, and his path lay by the homestead at Samstede. Hauskuld had a son called Amund; he had been born blind, but for all that he was tall and strong. Lyting had two brothers - the one's name was Hallstein, and the other's Hallgrim. They were the most unruly of men, and they were ever with their brother, for other men could not bear their temper.

Lyting was out of doors most of that day, but every now and then he went inside his house. At last he had gone to his seat, when in came a woman who had been out of doors, and she said -

"You were too far off to see outside how that proud fellow rode by the farmyard!"

"What proud fellow was that," says Lyting, "of whom thou speakest?"

"Hauskuld Njal's son rode here by the yard," she says.

"He rides often here by the farmyard," said Lyting, "and I can't say that it does not try my temper; and now I will make thee an offer, Hauskuld [Sigfus' son], to go along with thee if thou wilt avenge thy father and slay Hauskuld Njal's son."

"That I will not do," says Hauskuld, "for then I should repay Njal, my foster father, evil for good, and mayst thou and thy feasts never thrive henceforth."

With that he sprang up away from the board, and made them catch his horses, and rode home.

Then Lyting said to Grani Gunnar's son -

"Thou wert by when Thrain was slain, and that will still be in thy mind; and thou, too, Gunnar Lambi's son, and thou, Lambi Sigurd's son. Now, my will is that we ride to meet him this evening, and slay him."

"No," says Grani, "I will not fall on Njal's son, and so break the atonement which good men and true have made."

With like words spoke each man of them, and so, too, spoke all the sons of Sigfus; and they took that counsel to ride away.

Then Lyting said, when they had gone away -

"All men know that I have taken no atonement for my brother-in-law Thrain, and I shall never be content that no vengeance - man for man - shall be taken for him."

After that he called on his two brothers to go with him, and three house-carles as well. They went on the way to meet Hauskuld [Njal's son] as he came back, and lay in wait for him north of the farmyard in a pit; and there they bided till it was about mid-even [six o'clock P.M.]. Then Hauskuld rode up to them. They jump up all of them with their arms, and fall on him. Hauskuld guarded himself well, so that for a long while they could not get the better of him; but the end of it was at last that he wounded Lyting on the arm, and slew two of his serving-men, and then fell himself. They gave Hauskuld sixteen wounds, but they hewed not off the head from his body. They fared away into the wood east of Rangriver, and hid themselves there.

That same evening, Rodny's shepherd found Hauskuld dead, and went home and told Rodny of her son's slaying.

"Was he surely dead?" she asks; "was his head off?"

"It was not," he says.

"I shall know if I see," she says; "so take thou my horse and driving gear."

He did so, and got all things ready, and then they went thither where Hauskuld lay.

She looked at the wounds, and said -

"'Tis even as I thought, that he could not be quite dead, and Njal no doubt can cure greater wounds."

After that they took the body and laid it on the sledge and drove to Bergthorsknoll, and drew it into the sheepcote, and made him sit upright against the wall.

Then they went both of them and knocked at the door, and a house-carle went to the door. She steals in by him at once, and goes till she comes to Njal's bed.

She asked whether Njal were awake? He said he had slept up to that time, but was then awake.

"But why art thou come hither so early?"

"Rise thou up," said Rodny, "from thy bed by my rival's side, and come out, and she too, and thy sons, to see thy son Hauskuld."

They rose and went out.

"Let us take our weapons," said Skarphedinn, "and have them with us."

Njal said naught at that, and they ran in and came out again armed.

She goes first till they come to the sheepcote; she goes in and bade them follow her. Then she lit a torch and held it up and said -

"Here, Njal, is thy son Hauskuld, and he hath gotten many wounds upon him, and now he will need leechcraft."

"I see death marks on him," said Njal, "but no signs of life; but why hast thou not closed his eyes and nostrils? see, his nostrils are still open!"

"That duty I meant for Skarphedinn," she says.

Then Skarphedinn went to close his eyes and nostrils, and said to his father -

"Who, sayest thou, hath slain him?"

"Lyting of Samstede and his brothers must have slain him," says Njal.

Then Rodny said, "Into thy hands, Skarphedinn, I leave it to take vengeance for thy brother, and I ween that thou wilt take it well, though he be not lawfully begotten, and that thou wilt not be slow to take it".

"Wonderfully do ye men behave," said Bergthora, "when ye slay men for small cause, but talk and tarry over such wrongs as this until no vengeance at all is taken; and now tidings of this will soon come to Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness, and he will be offering you atonement, and you will grant him that, but now is the time to act about it, if ye seek for vengeance."

"Our mother eggs us on now with a just goading," said Skarphedinn, and sang a song.

Well we know the warrior's temper,ö
One and all, well, father thine,
But atonement to the mother,
Snake-land's stemö and thee were base;
He that hoardeth ocean's fireö
Hearing this will leave his home;
Wound of weapon us hath smitten,
Worse the lot of those that wait!

After that they all ran out of the sheepcote, but Rodny went indoors with Njal, and was there the rest of the night.

Chapter 104

The Slaying of Lyting's Brothers

Now we must speak of Skarphedinn and his brothers, how they bend their course up to Rangriver. Then Skarphedinn said -

"Stand we here and listen, and let us go stilly, for I hear the voices of men up along the river's bank. But will ye, Helgi and Grim, deal with Lyting single-handed, or with both his brothers?"

They said they would sooner deal with Lyting alone.

"Still," says Skarphedinn, "there is more game in him, and methinks it were ill if he gets away, but I trust myself best for not letting him escape."

"We will take such steps," says Helgi, "if we get a chance at him, that he shall not slip through our fingers."

Then they went thitherward, Where they heard the voices of men, and see where Lyting and his brothers are by a stream.

Skarphedinn leaps over the stream at once, and alights on the sandy brink on the other side. There upon it stands Hallgrim and his brother. Skarphedinn smites at Hallgrim's thigh, so that he cut the leg clean off, but he grasps Hallstein with his left hand. Lyting thrust at Skarphedinn, but Helgi came up then and threw his shield before the spear, and caught the blow on it. Lyting took up a stone and hurled it at Skarphedinn, and he lost his hold on Hallstein. Hallstein sprang up the sandy bank, but could get up it in no other way than by crawling on his hands and knees. Skarphedinn made a side blow at him with his axe, "the ogress of war," and hews asunder his backbone. Now Lyting turns and flies, but Helgi and Grim both went after him, and each gave him a wound, but still Lyting got across the river away from them, and so to the horses, and gallops till he comes to Ossaby.

Hauskuld was at home, and meets him at once. Lyting told him of these deeds.

"Such things were to be looked for by thee," says Hauskuld. "Thou hast behaved like a madman, and here the truth of the old saw will be proved: 'but a short while is hand fain of blow'. Methinks what thou hast got to look to now is whether thou wilt be able to save thy life or not."

"Sure enough," says Lyting, "I had hard work to get away, but still I wish now that thou wouldest get me atoned with Njal and his sons, so that I might keep my farm."

"So it shall be," says Hauskuld.

After that Hauskuld made them saddle his horse, and rode to Bergthorsknoll with five men. Njal's sons were then come home and had laid them down to sleep.

Hauskuld went at once to see Njal, and they began to talk.

"Hither am I come," said Hauskuld to Njal, "to beg a boon on behalf of Lyting, my uncle. He has done great wickedness against you and yours, broken his atonement and slain thy son."

"Lyting will perhaps think," said Njal, "that he has already paid a heavy fine in the loss of his brothers, but if I grant him any terms, I shall let him reap the good of my love for thee, and I will tell thee before I utter the award of atonement, that Lyting's brothers shall fall as outlaws. Nor shall Lyting have any atonement for his wounds, but on the other hand, he shall pay the full blood-fine for Hauskuld."

"My wish," said Hauskuld, "is, that thou shouldest make thine own terms."

"Well," says Njal, "then I will utter the award at once if thou wilt."

"Wilt thou," says Hauskuld, "that thy sons should be by?"

"Then we should be no nearer an atonement than we were before," says Njal, "but they will keep to the atonement which I utter."

Then Hauskuld said, "Let us close the matter then, and handsel him peace on behalf of thy sons".

"So it shall be," says Njal. "My will then is that he pays two hundred in silver for the slaying of Hauskuld, but he may still dwell at Samstede; and yet I think it were wiser if he sold his land and changed his abode; but not for this quarrel; neither I nor my sons will break our pledges of peace to him: but methinks it may be that some one may rise up in this country against whom he may have to be on his guard. Yet, lest it should seem that I make a man an outcast from his native place, I allow him to be here in this neighbourhood, but in that case he alone is answerable for what may happen."

After that Hauskuld fared home, and Njal's sons woke up as he went, and asked their father who had come, but he told them that his foster-son Hauskuld had been there.

"He must have come to ask a boon for Lyting then," said Skarphedinn.

"So it was," says Njal

"Ill was it then," says Grim.

"Hauskuld could not have thrown his shield before him," says Njal, "if thou hadst slain him, as it was meant thou shouldst."

"Let us throw no blame on our father," says Skarphedinn.

Now it is to be said that this atonement was kept between them afterwards.

Chapter 105

Of Amund the Blind

That event happened three winters after at the Thingskala-Thing that Amund the blind was at the Thing; he was the son of Hauskuld Njal's son. He made

men lead him about among the booths, and so he came to the booth inside which was Lyting of Samstede. He made them lead him into the booth till he came before Lyting.

"Is Lyting of Samstede here?" he asked.

"What dost thou want?" says Lyting.

"I want to know," says Amund, "what atonement thou wilt pay me for my father, I am base-born, and I have touched no fine."

"I have atoned for the slaying of thy father," says Lyting, "with a full price, and thy father's father and thy father's brothers took the money; but my brothers fell without a price as outlaws; and so it was that I had both done an ill-deed, and paid dear for it."

"I ask not," says Amund, "as to thy having paid an atonement to them. I know that ye two are now friends, but I ask this, what atonement thou wilt pay to me?"

"None at all," says Lyting.

"I cannot see," says Amund, "how thou canst have right before God, when thou hast stricken me so near the heart; but all I can say is, that if I were blessed with the sight of both my eyes, I would have either a money fine for my father, or revenge man for man; and so may God judge between us."

After that he went out; but when he came to the door of the booth, he turned short round towards the inside. Then his eyes were opened, and he said -

"Praised be the Lord! now I see what His will is."

With that he ran straight into the booth until he comes before Lyting, and smites him with an axe on the head, so that it sunk in up to the hammer, and gives the axe a pull towards him.

Lyting fell forwards and was dead at once.

Amund goes out to the door of the booth, and when he got to the very same spot on which he had stood when his eyes were opened, lo! they were shut again, and he was blind all his life after.

Then he made them lead him to Njal and his sons, and he told them of Lyting's slaying.

"Thou mayest not be blamed for this," says Njal, "for such things are settled by a higher power; but it is worth while to take warning from such events, lest we cut any short who have such near claims as Amund had."

After that Njal offered an atonement to Lyting's kinsmen. Hauskuld the Priest of Whiteness had a share in bringing Lyting's kinsmen to take the fine, and then the matter was put to an award, and half the fines fell away for the sake of the claim which he seemed to have on Lyting.

After that men came forward with pledges of peace and good faith, and Lyting's kinsmen granted pledges to Amund. Men rode home from the Thing; and now all is quiet for a long while.

Chapter 106

Of Valgard the Guileful

Valgard the guileful came back to Iceland that summer; he was then still heathen. He fared to Hof to his son Mord's house, and was there the winter over. He said to Mord -

"Here I have ridden far and wide all over the neighbourhood, and methinks I do not know it for the same. I came to Whiteness, and there I saw many tofts of booths and much ground levelled for building, I came to Thingskala-Thing, and there I saw all our booths broken down. What is the meaning of such strange things?"

"New priesthoods," answers Mord, "have been set up here, and a law for a Fifth Court, and men have declared themselves out of my Thing, and have gone over to Hauskuld's Thing."

"Ill hast thou repaid me," said Valgard, "for giving up to thee my priesthood, when thou hast handled it so little like a man, and now my wish is that thou shouldst pay them off by something that will drag them all down to death; and this thou canst do by setting them by the ears by tale-bearing, so that Njal's sons may slay Hauskuld; but there are many who will have the blood-feud after him, and so Njal's sons will be slain in that quarrel."

"I shall never be able to get that done," says Mord.

"I will give thee a plan," says Valgard; "thou shalt ask Njal's sons to thy house, and send them away with gifts, but thou shalt keep thy tale-bearing in the back ground until great friendship has sprung up between you, and they trust thee no worse than their own selves. So wilt thou be able to avenge thyself on Skarphedinn for that he took thy money from thee after Gunnar's death; and in this wise, further on, thou wilt be able to seize the leadership when they are all dead and gone."

This plan they settled between them should be brought to pass; and Mord said -

"I would, father, that thou wouldst take on thee the new faith. Thou art an old man."

"I will not do that," says Valgard. "I would rather that thou shouldst cast off the faith, and see what follows then."

Mord said he would not do that. Valgard broke crosses before Mord's face, and all holy tokens. A little after Valgard took a sickness and breathed his last, and he was laid in a cairn by Hof.

Chapter 107

Of Mord and Njal's Sons

Some while after Mord rode to Bergthorsknoll and saw Skarphedinn there; he fell into very fair words with them, and so he talked the whole day, and said he wished to be good friends with them, and to see much of them.

Skarphedinn took it all well, but said he had never sought for anything of the kind before. So it came about that he got himself into such great friendship with them, that neither side thought they had taken any good counsel unless the other had a share in it.

Njal always disliked his coming thither, and it often happened that he was angry with him.

It happened one day that Mord came to Bergthorsknoll, and Mord said to Njal's sons -

"I have made up my mind to give a feast yonder, and I mean to drink in my heirship after my father, but to that feast I wish to bid you, Njal's sons, and Kari; and at the same time I give you my word that ye shall not fare away giftless."

They promised to go, and now he fares home and makes ready the feast. He bade to it many householders, and that feast was very crowded.

Thither came Njal's sons and Kari. Mord gave Skarphedinn a brooch of gold, and a silver belt to Kari, and good gifts to Grim and Helgi.

They come home and boast of these gifts, and show them to Njal. He said they would be bought full dear, "and take heed that ye do not repay the giver in the coin which he no doubt wishes to get".

Chapter 108

Of the Slander of Mord Valgard's Son

A little after Njal's sons and Hauskuld were to have their yearly feasts, and they were the first to bid Hauskuld to come to them.

Skarphedinn had a brown horse four winters old, both tall and sightly. He was a stallion, and had never yet been matched in fight. That horse Skarphedinn gave to Hauskuld, and along with him two mares. They all gave Hauskuld gifts, and assured him of their friendship.

After that Hauskuld bade them to his house at Ossaby, and had many guests to meet them, and a great crowd.

It happened that he had just then taken down his hall, but he had built three out-houses, and there the beds were made.

So all that were bidden came, and the feast went off very well. But when men were to go home Hauskuld picked out good gifts for them, and went a part of the way with Njal's sons.

The sons of Sigfus followed him and all the crowd, and both sides said that nothing should ever come between them to spoil their friendship.

A little while after Mord came to Ossaby and called Hauskuld out to talk with him, and they went aside and spoke.

"What a difference in manliness there is," said Mord, "between thee and Njal's sons! Thou gavest them good gifts, but they gave thee gifts with great mockery."

"How makest thou that out?" says Hauskuld.

"They gave thee a horse which they called a 'dark horse,' and that they did out of mockery at thee, because they thought thee too untried, I can tell thee also that they envy thee the priesthood, Skarphedinn took it up as his own at the Thing when thou camest not to the Thing at the summoning of the Fifth Court, and Skarphedinn never means to let it go."

"That is not true," says Hauskuld, "for I got it back at the Folkmote last harvest."

"Then that was Njal's doing," says Mord. "They broke, too, the atonement about Lyting."

"I do not mean to lay that at their door," says Hauskuld.

"Well," says Mord, "thou canst not deny that when ye two, Skarphedinn and thou, were going east towards Markfleet, an axe fell out from under his belt, and he meant to have slain thee then and there."

"It was his woodman's axe," says Hauskuld, "and I saw how he put it under his belt; and now, Mord, I will just tell thee this right out, that thou canst never say so much ill of Njal's sons as to make me believe it; but though there were aught in it, and it were true as thou sayest, that either I must slay them or they me, then would I far rather suffer death at their hands than work them any harm. But as for thee, thou art all the worse a man for having spoken this."

After that Mord fares home. A little after Mord goes to see Njal's sons, and he talks much with those brothers and Kari.

"I have been told," says Mord, "that Hauskuld has said that thou, Skarphedinn, hast broken the atonement made with Lyting; but I was made aware also that he thought that thou hadst meant some treachery against him when ye two fared to Markfleet. But still, methinks that was no less treachery when he bade you to a feast at his house, and stowed you away in an outhouse that was farthest from the house, and wood was then heaped round the outhouse all night, and he meant to burn you all inside; but it so happened that Hogni Gunnar's son came that night, and naught came of their onslaught, for they were afraid of him. After that he followed you on your way and great band of men with him, then he meant to make another onslaught on you, and set Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son to kill thee; but their hearts failed them, and they dared not to fall on thee."

But when he had spoken thus, first of all they spoke against it, but the end of it was that they believed him, and from that day forth a coldness sprung up on their part towards Hauskuld, and they scarcely ever spoke to him when they met; but Hauskuld showed them little deference, and so things went on for a while.

Next harvest Hauskuld fared east to Swinefell to a feast, and Flosi gave him a hearty welcome. Hildigunna was there too. Then Flosi spoke to Hauskuld and said -

"Hildigunna tells me that there is great coldness with you and Njal's sons, and methinks that is ill, and I will beg thee not to ride west, but I will get thee a homestead in Skaptarfell, and I will send my brother, Thorgeir, to dwell at Ossaby."

"Then some will say," says Hauskuld, "that I am flying thence for fear's sake, and that I will not have said."

"Then it is more likely that great trouble will arise," says Flosi.

"Ill is that then," says Hauskuld, "for I would rather fall unatoned, than that many should reap ill for my sake."

Hauskuld busked him to ride home a few nights after, but Flosi gave him a scarlet cloak, and it was embroidered with needlework down to the waist.

Hauskuld rode home to Ossaby, and now all is quiet for a while.

Hauskuld was so much beloved that few men were his foes, but the same ill-will went on between him and Njal's sons the whole winter through.

Njal had taken as his foster-child, Thord, the son of Kari. He had also fostered Thorhall, the son of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. Thorhall was a strong man, and hardy both in body and mind, he had learnt so much law that he was the third greatest lawyer in Iceland.

Next spring was an early spring, and men are busy sowing their corn.

Chapter 109

Of Mord and Njal's Sons

It happened one day that Mord came to Bergthorsknoll. He and Kari and Njal's sons fell a-talking at once, and Mord slanders Hauskuld after his wont, and has now many new tales to tell, and does naught but egg Skarphedinn and them on to slay Hauskuld, and said he would be beforehand with them if they did not fall on him at once.

"I will let thee have thy way in this," says Skarphedinn, "if thou wilt fare with us, and have some hand in it."

"That I am ready to do," says Mord, and so they bound that fast with promises, and he was to come there that evening.

Bergthora asked Njal -

"What are they talking about out of doors?"

"I am not in their counsels," says Njal, "but I was seldom left out of them when their plans were good."

Skarphedinn did not lie down to rest that evening, nor his brothers, nor Kari.

That same night, when it was well-nigh spent, came Mord Valgard's son, and Njal's sons and Kari took their weapons and rode away. They fared till they came to Ossaby, and bided there by a fence. The weather was good, and the sun just risen.

Chapter 110

The Slaying of Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness

About that time Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness, awoke; he put on his clothes, and threw over him his cloak, Flosi's gift. He took his corn-sieve, and had his sword in his other hand, and walks towards the fence, and sows the corn as he goes.

Skarphedinn and his band had agreed that they would all give him a wound. Skarphedinn sprang up from behind the fence, but when Hauskuld saw him he wanted to turn away, then Skarphedinn ran up to him and said -

"Don't try to turn on thy heel, Whiteness priest," and hews at him, and the blow came on his head, and he fell on his knees. Hauskuld said these words when he fell -

"God help me, and forgive you!"

Then they all ran up to him and gave him wounds.

After that Mord said -

"A plan comes into my mind."

"What is that?" says Skarphedinn.

"That I shall fare home as soon as I can, but after that I will fare up to Gritwater, and tell them the tidings, and say 'tis an ill deed; but I know surely that Thorgerda will ask me to give notice of the slaying, and I will do that, for that will be the surest way to spoil their suit. I will also send a man to Ossaby, and know how soon they take any counsel in the matter, and that man will learn all these tidings thence, and I will make believe that I have heard them from him."

"Do so by all means," says Skarphedinn.

Those brothers fared home, and Kari with them, and when they came home they told Njal the tidings.

"Sorrowful tidings are these," says Njal, "and such are ill to hear, for sooth to say this grief touches me so nearly, that methinks it were better to have lost two of my sons and that Hauskuld lived."

"It is some excuse for thee," says Skarphedinn, "that thou art an old man, and it is to be looked for that this touches thee nearly."

"But this," says Njal, "no less than old age, is why I grieve, that I know better than thou what will come after."

"What will come after?" says Skarphedinn.

"My death," says Njal, "and the death of my wife and of all my sons."

"What dost thou foretell for me?" says Kari.

"They will have hard work to go against thy good fortune, for thou wilt be more than a match for all of them."

This one thing touched Njal so nearly that he could never speak of it without shedding tears.

Chapter 111 Of Hildigunna and Mord Valgard's Son

Hildigunna woke up and found that Hauskuld was away out of his bed.

"Hard have been my dreams," she said, "and not good; but go and search for him, Hauskuld."

So they searched for him about the homestead and found him not.

By that time she had dressed herself; then she goes and two men with her, to the fence, and there they find Hauskuld slain.

Just then, too, came up Mord Valgard's son's shepherd, and told her that Njal's sons had gone down thence, "and," he said, "Skarphedinn called out to me and gave notice of the slaying as done by him".

"It were a manly deed," she says, "if one man had been at it."

She took the cloak and wiped off all the blood with it, and wrapped the gouts of gore up in it, and so folded it together and laid it up in her chest.

Now she sent a man up to Gritwater to tell the tidings thither, but Mord was there before him, and had already told the tidings. There, too, was come Kettle of the Mark.

Thorgerda said to Kettle -

"Now is Hauskuld dead as we know, and now bear in mind what thou promisedst to do when thou tookest him for thy foster-child."

"It may well be," says Kettle, "that I promised very many things then, for I thought not that these days would ever befall us that have now come to pass; but yet I am come into a strait, for 'nose is next of kin to eyes,' since I have Njal's daughter to wife."

"Art thou willing, then," says Thorgerda, "that Mord should give notice of the suit for the slaying?"

"I know not that," says Kettle, "for methinks ill comes from him more often than good."

But as soon as ever Mord began to speak to Kettle he fared the same as others, in that he thought as though Mord would be true to him, and so the end of their council was that Mord should give notice of the slaying, and get ready the suit in every way before the Thing.

Then Mord fared down to Ossaby, and thither came nine neighbours who dwelt nearest the spot.

Mord had ten men with him. He shows the neighbours Hauskuld's wounds, and takes witness to the hurts, and names a man as the dealer of every wound save one; that he made as though he knew not who had dealt it, but that wound he had dealt himself. But the slaying he gave notice of at Skarphedinn's hand, and the wounds at his brothers' and Kari's.

After that he called on nine neighbours who dwelt nearest the spot to ride away from home to the Althing on the inquest.

After that he rode home. He scarce ever met Njal's sons, and when he did meet them, he was cross, and that was part of their plan.

The slaying of Hauskuld was heard over all the land, and was ill-spoken of. Njal's sons went to see Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and asked him for aid.

"Ye very well know that ye may look that I shall help you in all great suits, but still my heart is heavy about this suit, for there are many who have the blood feud, and this slaying is ill-spoken of over all the land."

Now Njal's sons fare home.

Chapter 112

The Pedigree of Gudmund the Powerful

There was a man named Gudmund the powerful, who dwelt at Modruvale in Eyjafirth. He was the son of Eyjolf the son of Einar. Gudmund was a mighty chief, wealthy in goods; he had in his house a hundred hired servants. He overbore in rank and weight all the chiefs in the north country, so that some left their homesteads, but some he put to death, and some gave up their priesthoods for his sake, and from him are come the greatest part of all the picked and famous families in the land, such as "the Point-dwellers" and the "Sturlungs" and the "Hvamdwellers," and the "Fleetmen," and Kettle the bishop, and many of the greatest men.

Gudmund was a friend of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and so he hoped to get his help.

Chapter 113

Of Snorri the Priest, and His Stock

There was a man named Snorri, who was surnamed the Priest. He dwelt at Helgafell before Gudruna Oswif's daughter bought the land of him, and dwelt there till she died of old age; but Snorri then went and dwelt at Hvamsfirth on Sælingdale's tongue. Thorgrim was the name of Snorri's father, and he was a son of Thorstein codcatcher. Snorri was a great friend of Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and he looked for help there also. Snorri was the wisest and shrewdest of all these men in Iceland who had not the gift of foresight. He was good to his friends, but grim to his foes.

At that time there was a great riding to the Thing out of all the Quarters, and men had many suits set on foot.

Chapter 114

Of Flosi Thord's Son

Flosi hears of Hauskuld's slaying, and that brings him much grief and wrath, but still he kept his feelings well in hand. He was told how the suit had been set on foot, as has been said, for Hauskuld's slaying, and he said little about it. He sent word to Hall of the Side, his father-in-law, and to Ljot his son, that they must gather in a great company at the Thing. Ljot was thought the most hopeful man for a chief away there east. It had been foretold that if he could ride three summers running to the Thing, and come safe and sound home, that then he would be the greatest chief in all his family, and the oldest man. He had then ridden one summer to the Thing, and now he meant to ride the second time.

Flosi sent word to Kol Thorstein's son, and Glum the son of Hilldir the old, the son of Gerleif, the son of Aunund wallet-back, and to Modolf Kettle's son, and they all rode to meet Flosi.

Hall gave his word, too, to gather a great company, and Flosi rode till he came to Kirkby, to Surt Asbjorn's son. Then Flosi sent after Kolbein Egil's son, his brother's son, and he came to him there. Thence he rode to Headbrink. There dwelt Thorgrim the showy, the son of Thorkel the fair. Flosi begged him to ride to the Althing with him, and he said yea to the journey, and spoke thus to Flosi -

"Often hast thou been more glad, master, than thou art now, but thou hast some right to be so."

"Of a truth," said Flosi, "that hath now come on my hands, which I would give all my goods that it had never happened. Ill seed has been sown, and so an ill crop will spring from it."

Thence he rode over Arnstacksheath, and so to Solheim that evening. There dwelt Lodmund Wolf's son, but he was a great friend of Flosi, and there he stayed that night, and next morning Lodmund rode with him into the Dale.

There dwelt Runolf, the son of Wolf Aupriest.

Flosi said to Runolf -

"Here we shall have true stories as to the slaying of Hauskuld, the Priest of Whiteness. Thou art a truthful man, and hast got at the truth by asking, and I will trust to all that thou tellest me as to what was the cause of quarrel between them."

"There is no good in mincing the matter," said Runolf, "but we must say outright that he has been slain for less than no cause; and his death is a great grief to all men. No one thinks it so much a loss as Njal, his foster-father."

"Then they will be ill off for help from men," says Flosi; "and they will find no one to speak up for them."

"So it will be," says Runolf, "unless it be otherwise foredoomed."

"What has been done in the suit?" says Flosi.

"Now the neighbours have been summoned on the inquest," says Runolf, "and due notice given of the suit for manslaughter."

"Who took that step?" asks Flosi.

"Mord Valgard's son," says Runolf.

"How far is that to be trusted?" says Flosi.

"He is of my kin," says Runolf; "but still, if I tell the truth of him, I must say that more men reap ill than good from him. But this one thing I will ask of thee, Flosi, that thou givest rest to thy wrath, and takest the matter up in such a way as may lead to the least trouble. For Njal will make a good offer, and so will others of the best men."

"Ride thou then to the Thing, Runolf," said Flosi, "and thy words shall have much weight with me, unless things turn out worse than they should."

After that they cease speaking about it, and Runolf promised to go to the Thing.

Runolf sent word to Hatr the wise, his kinsman, and he rode thither at once.

Thence Flosi rode to Ossaby.

Chapter 115 Of Flosi and Hildigunna

Hildigunna was out of doors, and said, "Now shall all the men of my household be out of doors when Flosi rides into the yard; but the women shall sweep the house and deck it with hangings, and make ready the high-seat for Flosi."

Then Flosi rode into the town, and Hildigunna turned to him and said -

"Come in safe and sound and happy kinsman, and my heart is fain at thy coming hither."

"Here," says Flosi, "we will break our fast, and then we will ride on."

Then their horses were tethered, and Flosi went into the sitting-room and sat him down, and spurned the high-seat away from him on the dais, and said -

"I am neither king nor earl, and there is no need to make a high-seat for me to sit on, nor is there any need to make a mock of me."

Hildigunna was standing close by, and said -

"It is ill if it mislikes thee, for this we did with a whole heart."

"If thy heart is whole towards me, then what I do will praise itself if it be well done, but it will blame itself if it be ill done."

Hildigunna laughed a cold laugh, and said -

"There is nothing new in that, we will go nearer yet ere we have done."

She sat her down by Flosi, and they talked long and low. After that the board was laid, and Flosi and his band washed their hands. Flosi looked hard at the towel and saw that it was all in rags, and had one end torn off. He threw it down on the bench and would not wipe himself with it, but tore off a piece of the table-cloth, and wiped himself with that, and then threw it to his men.

After that Flosi sat down to the board and bade men eat.

Then Hildigunna came into the room and went before Flosi, and threw her hair off her eyes and wept.

"Heavy-hearted art thou now, kinswoman," said Flosi, "when thou weepest, but still it is well that thou shouldst weep for a good husband."

"What vengeance or help shall I have of thee?" she says.

"I will follow up thy suit," said Flosi, "to the utmost limit of the law, or strive for that atonement which good men and true shall say that we ought to have as full amends."

"Hauskuld would avenge thee," she said, "if he had the blood-feud after thee."

"Thou lackest not grimness," answered Flosi, "and what thou wantest is plain."

"Arnor Ornof's son, of Forswaterwood," said Hildigunna, "had done less wrong towards Thord Frey's priest thy father; and yet thy brothers Kolbein and Egil slew him at Skaptarfells-Thing."

Then Hildigunna went back into the hall and unlocked her chest, and then she took out the cloak, Flosi's gift, and in it Hauskuld had been slain, and there she had kept it, blood and all. Then she went back into the sitting room with the cloak; she went up silently to Flosi. Flosi had just then eaten his full, and the board was cleared. Hildigunna threw the cloak over Flosi, and the gore rattled down all over him.

Then she spoke and said -

"This cloak, Flosi, thou gavest to Hauskuld, and now I will give it back to thee; he was slain in it, and I call God and all good men to witness, that I adjure thee, by all the might of thy Christ, and by thy manhood and bravery, to take

vengeance for all those wounds which he had on his dead body, or else to be called every man's dastard."

Flosi threw the cloak off him and hurled it into her lap, and said -

"Thou art the greatest hell-hag, and thou wishest that we should take that course which will be the worst for all of us. But 'women's counsel is ever cruel'."

Flosi was so stirred at this, that sometimes he was bloodred in the face, and sometimes ashy pale as withered grass, and sometimes blue as death.

Flosi and his men rode away; he rode to Holtford, and there waits for the sons of Sigfus and other of his men.

Ingialld dwelt at the Springs; he was the brother of Rodny, Hauskuld Njal's son's mother. Ingialld had to wife Thraslauga, the daughter of Egil, the son of Thord Frey's priest. Flosi sent word to Ingialld to come to him, and Ingialld went at once, with fourteen men. They were all of his household. Ingialld was a tall man and a strong, and slow to meddle with other men's business, one of the bravest of men, and very bountiful to his friends.

Flosi greeted him well, and said to him, "Great trouble hath now come on me and my brothers-in-law, and it is hard to see our way out of it; I beseech thee not to part from my suit until this trouble is past and gone."

"I am come into a strait myself," said Ingialld, "for the sake of the ties that there are between me and Njal and his sons, and other great matters which stand in the way."

"I thought," said Flosi, "when I gave away my brother's daughter to thee, that thou gavest me thy word to stand by me in every suit."

"It is most likely," says Ingialld, "that I shall do so, but still I will now, first of all, ride home, and thence to the Thing."

Chapter 116 Of Flosi and Mord and the Sons of Sigfus

The sons of Sigfus heard how Flosi was at Holtford, and they rode thither to meet him, and there were Kettle of the Mark, and Lambi his brother, Thorkell and Mord, the sons of Sigfus, Sigmund their brother, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and Vebrand Hamond's son.

Flosi stood up to meet them, and greeted them gladly. So they went down to the river. Flosi had the whole story from them about the slaying, and there was no difference between them and Kettle of the Mark's story.

Flosi spoke to Kettle of the Mark, and said -

"This now I ask of thee; how tightly are your hearts knit as to this suit, thou and the other sons of Sigfus?"

"My wish is," said Kettle, "that there should be peace between us, but yet I have sworn an oath not to part from this suit till it has been brought somehow to an end, and to lay my life on it."

"Thou art a good man and true," said Flosi, "and it is well to have such men with one."

Then Grani Gunnar's son and Lambi Sigurd's son both spoke together, and said -

"We wish for outlawry and death."

"It is not given us," said Flosi, "both to share and choose, we must take what we can get."

"I have had it in my heart," says Grani, "ever since they slew Thrain by Markfleet, and after that his son Hauskuld, never to be atoned with them by a lasting peace, for I would willingly stand by when they were all slain, every man of them."

"Thou hast stood so near to them," said Flosi, "that thou mightest have avenged these things hadst thou had the heart and manhood. Methinks thou and many others now ask for what ye would give much money hereafter never to have had a share in. I see this clearly, that though we slay Njal or his sons, still they are men of so great worth, and of such good family, that there will be such a blood feud and hue and cry after them, that we shall have to fall on our knees before many a man, and beg for help, ere we get an atonement and find our way out of this strait. Ye may make up your minds, then, that many will become poor who before had great goods, but some of you will lose both goods and life."

Mord Valgard's Son rode to meet Flosi, and said he would ride to the Thing with him with all his men. Flosi took that well, and raised a matter of a wedding with him, that he should give away Rannveiga his daughter to Starkad Flosi's brother's son, who dwelt at Staffell. Flosi did this because he thought he would so make sure both of his faithfulness and force.

Mord took the wedding kindly, but handed the matter over to Gizur the white, and bade him talk about it at the Thing.

Mord had to wife Thorkatla, Gizur the white's daughter.

They two, Mord and Flosi, rode both together to the Thing, and talked the whole day, and no man knew aught of their counsel.

Chapter 117

Njal and Skarphedinn Talk Together

Now, we must say how Njal said to Skarphedinn -

"What plan have ye laid down for yourselves, thou and thy brothers and Kari?"

"Little reck we of dreams in most matters," said Skarphedinn; "but if thou must know, we shall ride to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and thence to the Thing; but what meanest thou to do about thine own journey, father?"

"I shall ride to the Thing," says Njal, "for it belongs to my honour not to be severed from your suit so long as I live. I ween that many men will have good words to say of me, and so I shall stand you in good stead, and do you no harm."

There, too, was Thorhall Asgrim's son, and Njal's foster-son. The sons of Njal laughed at him because he was clad in a coat of russet, and asked how long he meant to wear that?

"I shall have thrown it off," he said, "when I have to follow up the blood-feud for my foster father."

"There will ever be most good in thee," said Njal, "when there is most need of it."

So they all busked them to ride away from home, and were nigh thirty men in all, and rode till they came to Thursowater. Then came after them Njal's kinsmen, Thorleif crow, and Thorgrim the big; they were Holt-Thorir's sons, and offered their help and following to Njal's sons, and they took that gladly.

So they rode altogether across Thursowater, until they came on Laxwater bank, and took a rest and baited their horses there, and there Hjallti's Skeggi's son came to meet them, and Njal's sons fell to talking with him, and they talked long and low.

"Now, I will show," said Hjallti, "that I am not black-hearted; Njal has asked me for help, and I have agreed to it, and given my word to aid him; he has often given me and many others the worth of it in cunning counsel."

Hjallti tells Njal all about Flosi's doings. They sent Thorhall on to Tongue to tell Asgrim that they would be there that evening; and Asgrim made ready at once, and was out of doors to meet them when Njal rode into the town.

Njal was clad in a blue cape, and had a felt hat on his head, and a small axe in his hand. Asgrim helped Njal off his horse, and led him and sate him down in his own seat. After that they all went in, Njal's sons and Kari. Then Asgrim went out.

Hjallti wished to turn away, and thought there were too many there; but Asgrim caught hold of his reins, and said he should never have his way in riding off, and made men unsaddle their horses, and led Hjallti in and sate him down by Njal's aide; but Thorleif and his brother sat on the other bench and their men with them.

Asgrim sate him down on a stool before Njal, and asked -

"What says thy heart about our matter?"

"It speaks rather heavily," says Njal, "for I am afraid that we shall have no lucky men with us in the suit; but I would, friend, that thou shouldest send after all the men who belong to thy Thing, and ride to the Althing with me."

"I have always meant to do that," says Asgrim; "and this I will promise thee at the same time - that I will never leave thy cause while I can get any men to follow me."

But all those who were in the house thanked him, and said, that was bravely spoken. They were there that night, but the day after all Asgrim's band came thither.

And after that they all rode together till they come up on the Thingfield, and fit up their booths.

Chapter 118

Asgrim and Njal's Sons Pray Men for Help

By that time Flosi had come to the Thing, and filled all his booths. Runolf filled the Dale-dwellers' booths, and Mord the booths of the men from Rangriver. Hall of the Side had long since come from the east, but scarce any of the other men; but still Hall of the Side had come with a great band, and joined this at once to Flosi's company, and begged him to take an atonement and to make peace.

Hall was a wise man and good-hearted, Flosi answered him well in everything, but gave way in nothing.

Hall asked what men had promised him help? Flosi named Mord Valgard's son, and said he had asked for his daughter at the hand of his kinsman Starkad.

Hall said she was a good match, but it was ill dealing with Mord, "and that thou wilt put to the proof ere this Thing be over".

After that they ceased talking.

One day Njal and Asgrim had a long talk in secret.

Then all at once Asgrim sprang up and said to Njal's sons -

"We must set about seeking friends, that we may not be overborne by force; for this suit will be followed up boldly."

Then Asgrim went out, and Helgi Njal's son next; then Kari Solmund's son; then Grim Njal's son; then Skarphedinn; then Thorhall; then Thorgrim the big; then Thorleif crow.

They went to the booth of Gizur the white and inside it. Gizur stood up to meet them, and bade them sit down and drink.

"Not thitherward," says Asgrim, "tends our way, and we will speak our errand out loud, and not mutter and mumble about it. What help shall I have from thee, as thou art my kinsman?"

"Jorunn my sister," said Gizur, "would wish that I should not shrink from standing by thee; and so it shall be now and hereafter, that we will both of us have the same fate."

Asgrim thanked him, and went away afterwards.

Then Skarphedinn asked, "Whither shall we go now?"

"To the booths of the men of Olfus," says Asgrim.

So they went thither, and Asgrim asked whether Skapti Thorod's son were in the booth? He was told that he was. Then they went inside the booth.

Skapti sate on the cross bench, and greeted Asgrim, and he took the greeting well.

Skapti offered Asgrim a seat by his side, but Asgrim said he should only stay there a little while, "but still we have an errand to thee".

"Let me hear it," says Skapti.

"I wish to beg thee for thy help, that thou wilt stand by us in our suit."

"One thing I had hoped," says Skapti, "and that is, that neither you nor your troubles would ever come into my dwelling."

"Such things are ill-spoken," says Asgrim, "when a man is the last to help others, when most lies on his aid."

"Who is yon man," says Skapti, "before whom four men walk, a big burly man, and pale-faced, unlucky-looking, well-knit, and troll-like?"

"My name is Skarphedinn," he answers, "and thou hast often seen me at the Thing; but in this I am wiser than thou, that I have no need to ask what thy name is. Thy name is Skapti Thorod's son, but before thou calledst thyself 'Bristle-poll,' after thou hadst slain Kettle of Elda; then thou shavedst thy poll, and puttedst pitch on thy head, and then thou hiredst thralls to cut up a sod of turf, and thou creptest underneath it to spend the night. After that thou wentest to Thorolf Lopt's son of Eyrar, and he took thee on board, and bore thee out here in his meal sacks."

After that Asgrim and his band went out, and Skarphedinn asked -

"Whither shall we go now?"

"To Snorri the Priest's booth," says Asgrim.

Then they went to Snorri's booth. There was a man outside before the booth, and Asgrim asked whether Snorri were in the booth.

The man said he was.

Asgrim went into the booth, and all the others. Snorri was sitting on the cross bench, and Asgrim went and stood before him, and hailed him well.

Snorri took his greeting blithely, and bade him sit down.

Asgrim said he should be only a short time there, "but we have an errand with thee".

Snorri bade him tell it.

"I would," said Asgrim, "that thou wouldst come with me to the court, and stand by me with thy help, for thou art a wise man, and a great man of business."

"Suits fall heavy on us now," says Snorri the Priest, "and now many men push forward against us, and so we are slow to take up the troublesome suits of other men from other quarters."

"Thou mayest stand excused," says Asgrim, "for thou art not in our debt for any service."

"I know," says Snorri, "that thou art a good man and true, and I will promise thee this, that I will not be against thee, and not yield help to thy foes."

Asgrim thanked him, and Snorri the Priest asked -

"Who is that man before whom four go, pale-faced, and sharp-featured, and who shows his front teeth, and has his axe aloft on his shoulder?"

"My name is Hedinn," he says, "but some men call me Skarphedinn by my full name; but what more hast thou to say to me?"

"This," said Snorri the Priest, "that methinks thou art a well-knit, ready-handed man, but yet I guess that the best part of thy good fortune is past, and I ween thou hast not long to live."

"That is well," says Skarphedinn, "for that is a debt we all have to pay, but still it were more needful to avenge thy father than to foretell my fate in this way."

"Many have said that before," says Snorri, "and I will not be angry at such words."

After that they went out, and got no help there. Then they fared to the booths of the men of Skagafirth. There Hafr the wealthy had his booth. The mother of Hafr was named Thoruna, she was a daughter of Asbjorn baldpate of Myrka, the son of Hrosbjorn.

Asgrim and his band went into the booth, and Hafr sate in the midst of it, and was talking to a man.

Asgrim went up to him, and hailed him well; he took it kindly, and bade him sit down.

"This I would ask of thee," said Asgrim, "that thou wouldst grant me and my sons-in-law help."

Hafr answered sharp and quick, and said he would have nothing to do with their troubles.

"But still I must ask who that pale-faced man is before whom four men go, so ill-looking, as though he had come out of the sea-crag."

"Never mind, milksop that thou art!" said Skarphedinn, "who I am, for I will dare to go forward wherever thou standest before me, and little would I fear though such striplings were in my path. 'Twere rather thy duty, too, to get back thy sister Swanlauga, whom Eydis ironsword and his messmate Stediakoll took away out of thy house, but thou didst not dare to do aught against them."

"Let us go out," said Asgrim, "there is no hope of help here."

Then they went out to the booths of men of Modruvale, and asked whether Gudmund the powerful were in the booth, but they were told he was.

Then they went into the booth. There was a high seat in the midst of it, and there sat Gudmund the powerful.

Asgrim went and stood before him, and hailed him.

Gudmund took his greeting well, and asked him to sit down.

"I will not sit," said Asgrim, "but I wish to pray thee for help, for thou art a bold man and a mighty chief."

"I will not be against thee," said Gudmund, "but if I see fit to yield thee help, we may well talk of that afterwards," and so he treated them well and kindly in every way.

Asgrim thanked him for his words, and Gudmund said -

"There is one man in your band at whom I have gazed for awhile, and he seems to me more terrible than most men that I have seen."

"Which is he?" says Asgrim.

"Four go before him," says Gudmund; "dark brown is his hair, and pale is his face; tall of growth and sturdy. So quick and shifty in his manliness, that I would rather have his following than that of ten other men; but yet the man is unlucky-looking."

"I know," said Skarphedinn, "that thou speakest at me, but it does not go in the same way as to luck with me and thee. I have blame, indeed, from the slaying of Hauskuld, the Whiteness priest, as is fair and right; but both Thorkel foulmouth and Thorir Helgi's son spread abroad bad stories about thee, and that has tried thy temper very much."

Then they went out, and Skarphedinn said -

"Whither shall we go now?"

"To the booths of the men of Lightwater," said Asgrim.

There Thorkel foulmouth had set up his booth.

Thorkel foulmouth had been abroad and worked his way to fame in other lands. He had slain a robber east in Jemtland's wood, and then he fared on east into Sweden, and was a messmate of Saurkvir the churl, and they harried eastward ho; but to the east of Baltic side.ö Thorkel had to fetch water for them one evening; then he met a wild man of the woods,ö and struggled against him long; but the end of it was that he slew the wild man. Thence he fared east into Adalssysla, and there he slew a flying fire-drake. After that he fared back to Sweden, and thence to Norway, and so out to Iceland, and let these deeds of derring do be carved over his shut bed, and on the stool before his high-seat. He fought, too, on Lightwater way with his brothers against Gudmund the powerful, and the men of Lightwater won the day. He and Thorir Helgi's son spread abroad bad stories about Gudmund. Thorkel said there was no man in Iceland with whom he would not fight in single combat, or yield an inch to, if need were. He was called Thorkel foulmouth, because he spared no one with whom he had to do either in word or deed.

Chapter 119 Of Skarphedinn and Thorkel Foulmouth

Asgrim and his fellows went to Thorkel foulmouth's booth, and Asgrim said then to his companions, "This booth Thorkel foulmouth owns, a great champion, and it were worth much to us to get his help. We must here take heed in everything, for he is self-willed and bad tempered; and now I will beg thee, Skarphedinn, not to let thyself be led into our talk."

Skarphedinn smiled at that. He was so clad, he had on a blue kirtle and gray breeks, and black shoes on his feet, coming high up his leg; he had a silver belt about him, and that same axe in his hand with which he slew Thrain, and which he called the "ogress of war," a round buckler, and a silken band round his brow, and his hair was brushed back behind his ears. He was the most soldier-like of men, and by that all men knew him. He went in his appointed place, and neither before nor behind.

Now they went into the booth and into its inner chamber. Thorkel sate in the middle of the cross-bench, and his men away from him on all sides. Asgrim hailed him, and Thorkel took the greeting well, and Asgrim said to him -

"For this have we come hither, to ask help of thee, and that thou wouldst come to the court with us."

"What need can ye have of my help," said Thorkel, "when ye have already gone to Gudmund; he must surely have promised thee his help?"

"We could not get his help," says Asgrim.

"Then Gudmund thought the suit likely to make him foes," said Thorkel; "and so no doubt it will be, for such deeds are the worst that have ever been done; nor do I know what can have driven you to come hither to me, and to think that I should be easier to undertake your suit than Gudmund, or that I would back a wrongful quarrel."

Then Asgrim held his peace, and thought it would be hard work to win him over.

Then Thorkel went on and said, "Who is that big and ugly fellow, before whom four men go, pale-faced and sharp-featured, and unlucky-looking, and cross-grained?"

"My name is Skarphedinn," said Skarphedinn, "and thou hast no right to pick me out, a guiltless man, for thy railing. It never has befallen me to make my father bow down before me, or to have fought against him, as thou didst with thy father. Thou hast ridden little to the Althing, or toiled in quarrels at it, and no doubt it is handier for thee to mind thy milking pails at home than to be here at Axewater in idleness. But stay, it were as well if thou pickedst out from thy teeth that steak of mare's rump which thou atest ere thou rodest to the Thing, while thy shepherd looked on all the while, and wondered that thou couldst work such filthiness!"

Then Thorkel sprang up in mickle wrath, and clutched his short sword and said

-

"This sword I got in Sweden when I slew the greatest champion, but since then I have slain many a man with it, and as soon as ever I reach thee I will drive it through thee, and thou shalt take that for thy bitter words."

Skarphedinn stood with his axe aloft, and smiled scornfully and said -

"This axe I had in my hand when I leapt twelve ells across Markfleet, and slew Thrain Sigfus' son, and eight of them stood before me, and none of them could touch me. Never have I aimed weapon at man that I have not smitten him."

And with that he tore himself from his brothers, and Kari his brother-in-law, and strode forward to Thorkel.

Then Skarphedinn said -

"Now, Thorkel foulmouth, do one of these two things: sheathe thy sword and sit thee down, or I drive the axe into thy head and cleave thee down to the chine."

Then Thorkel sate him down and sheathed the sword, and such a thing never happened to him either before or since.

Then Asgrim and his band go out, and Skarphedinn said -

"Whither shall we now go?"

"Home to our booths," answered Asgrim.

"Then we fare hark to our booths wearied of begging," says Skarphedinn.

"In many places," said Asgrim, "hast thou been rather sharp-tongued, but here now, in what Thorkel had a share methinks thou hast only treated him as is fitting."

Then they went home to their booths, and told Njal, word for word, all that had been done.

"Things," he said, "draw on to what must be."

Now Gudmund the powerful heard what had passed between Thorkel and Skarphedinn, and said -

"Ye all know how things fared between us and the men of Lightwater, but I have never suffered such scorn and mocking at their hands as has befallen Thorkel from Skarphedinn, and this is just as it should be."

Then he said to Einar of Thvera, his brother, "Thou shalt go with all my band, and stand by Njal's sons when the courts go out to try suits; but if they need help next summer, then I myself will yield them help".

Einar agreed to that, and sent and told Asgrim, and Asgrim said -

"There is no man like Gudmund for nobleness of mind," and then he told it to Njal.

Chapter 120

Of the Pleading of the Suit

The next day Asgrim, and Gizur the white, and Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and Einar of Thvera, met together. There too was Mord Valgard's son; he had then let the suit fall from his hand, and given it over to the sons of Sigfus.

Then Asgrim spoke.

"Thee first I speak to about this matter, Gizur the white, and thee Hjalldi, and thee Einar, that I may tell you how the suit stands. It will be known to all of you that Mord took up the suit, but the truth of the matter is, that Mord was at Hauskuld's slaying, and wounded him with that wound, for giving which no man was named. It seems to me, then, that this suit must come to nought by reason of a lawful flaw."

"Then we will plead it at once," says Hjalldi.

"It is not good counsel," said Thorhall Asgrim's son, "that this should not be hidden until the courts are set."

"How so?" asks Hjalldi.

"If," said Thorhall, "they knew now at once that the suit has been wrongly set on foot, then they may still save the suit by sending a man home from the Thing, and summoning the neighbours from home over again, and calling on them to ride to the Thing, and then the suit will be lawfully set on foot."

"Thou art a wise man, Thorhall," say they, "and we will take thy counsel."

After that each man went to his booth.

The sons of Sigfus gave notice of their suits at the Hill of Laws, and asked in what Quarter Courts they lay, and in what house in the district the defendants dwelt. But on the Friday night the courts were to go out to try suits, and so the Thing was quiet up to that day.

Many sought to bring about an atonement between them, but Flosi was steadfast; but others were still more wordy, and things looked ill.

Now the time comes when the courts were to go out, on the Friday evening. Then the whole body of men at the Thing went to the courts. Flosi stood south at the court of the men of Rangriver, and his band with him. There with him was Hall of the Side, and Runolf of the Dale, Wolf Aurpriest's son, and those other men who had promised Flosi help.

But north of the court of the men of Rangriver stood Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Gizur the white, Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and Einar of Thvera. But Njal's sons were at home at their booth, and Kari and Thorleif crow, and Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorgrim the big. They sate all with their weapons, and their band looked safe from onslaught.

Njal had already prayed the judges to go into the court, and now the sons of Sigfus plead their suit. They took witness and bade Njal's sons to listen to their oath; after that they took their oath, and then they declared their suit; then they brought forward witness of the notice, then they bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, then they called on Njal's sons to challenge the inquest.

Then up stood Thorhall Asgrim's son, and took witness, and forbade the inquest by a protest to utter their finding; and his ground was, that he who had given notice of the suit was truly under the ban of the law, and was himself an outlaw.

"Of whom speakest thou this?" says Flosi.

"Mord Valgard's son," said Thorhall, "fared to Hauskuld's slaying with Njal's sons, and wounded him with that wound for which no man was named when witness was taken to the death-wounds; and ye can say nothing against this, and so the suit comes to naught."

Chapter 121

Of the Award of Atonement Between Flosi and Njal

Then Njal stood up and said -

"This I pray, Hall of the Side, and Flosi, and all the sons of Sigfus, and all our men too, that ye will not go away, but listen to my words."

They did so, and then he spoke thus -

"It seems to me as though this suit were come to naught, and it is likely it should, for it hath sprung from an ill root. I will let you all know that I loved Hauskuld more than my own sons, and when I heard that he was slain, methought the sweetest light of my eyes was quenched, and I would rather have lost all my sons, and that he were alive. Now I ask thee, Hall of the Side, and thee Runolf of the Dale, and thee Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and thee Einar of Thvera, and thee Hafr the wise, that I may be allowed to make an atonement for the slaying of Hauskuld on my sons' behalf; and I wish that those men who are best fitted to do so shall utter the award."

Gizur, and Hafr, and Einar, spoke each on their own part, and prayed Flosi to take an atonement, and promised him their friendship in return.

Flosi answered them well in all things, but still did not give his word.

Then Hall of the Side said to Flosi -

"Wilt thou now keep thy word, and grant me my boon which thou hast already promised me, when I put beyond sea Thorgrim, the son of Kettle the fat, thy kinsman, when he had slain Halli the red."

"I will grant it thee, father-in-law," said Flosi, "for that alone wilt thou ask which will make my honour greater than it erewhile was."

"Then," said Hall, "my wish is that thou shouldst be quickly atoned, and lettest good men and true make an award, and so buy the friendship of good and worthy men."

"I will let you all know," said Flosi, "that I will do according to the word of Hall, my father-in-law, and other of the worthiest men, that he and others of the best men on each side, lawfully named, shall make this award. Methinks Njal is worthy that I should grant him this."

Njal thanked him and all of them, and others who were by thanked them too, and said that Flosi had behaved well.

Then Flosi said -

"Now will I name my daysmen [arbitrators] - First, I name Hall, my father-in-law; Auzur from Broadwater; Surt Asbjorn's son of Kirkby; Modolf Kettle's son" - he dwelt then at Asar - "Hafr the wise; and Runolf of the Dale; and it is scarce worth while to say that these are the fittest men out of all my company."

Now he bade Njal to name his daysmen, and then Njal stood up, and said -

"First of these I name, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son; and Hjallti Skeggi's son; Gizur the white; Einar of Thvera; Snorri the priest; and Gudmund the powerful."

After that Njal and Flosi, and the sons of Sigfus shook hands, and Njal pledged his hand on behalf of all his sons, and of Kari, his son-in-law, that they would hold to what those twelve men doomed; and one might say that the whole body of men at the Thing was glad at that.

Then men were sent after Snorri and Gudmund, for they were in their booths.

Then it was given out that the judges in this award would sit in the Court of Laws, but all the others were to go away.

Chapter 122

Of the Judges

Then Snorri the priest spoke thus - "Now are we here twelve judges to whom these suits are handed over, now I will beg you all that we may have no stumbling-blocks in these suits, so that they may not be atoned".

"Will ye," said Gudmund, "award either the lesser or the greater outlawry? Shall they be banished from the district, or from the whole land?"

"Neither of them," says Snorri, "for those banishments are often ill fulfilled, and men have been slain for that sake, and atonements broken, but I will award so great a money fine that no man shall have had a higher price here in the land than Hauskuld."

They all spoke well of his words.

Then they talked over the matter, and could not agree which should first utter how great he thought the fine ought to be, and so the end of it was that they cast lots, and the lot fell on Snorri to utter it.

Then Snorri said, "I will not sit long over this, I will now tell you what my utterance is, I will let Hauskuld be atoned for with triple manfines, but that is six hundred in silver. Now ye shall change it, if ye think it too much or too little."

They said that they would change it in nothing.

"This too shall be added," he said, "that all the money shall be paid down here at the Thing."

Then Gizur the white spoke and said -

"Methinks that can hardly be, for they will not have enough money to pay their fines."

"I know what Snorri wishes," said Gudmund the powerful, "he wants that all we daysmen should give such a sum as our bounty will bestow, and then many will do as we do."

Hall of the Side thanked him, and said he would willingly give as much as any one else gave, and then all the other daysmen agreed to that.

After that they went away, and settled between them that Hall should utter the award at the Court of Laws.

So the bell was rung, and all men went to the Court of Laws, and Hall of the Side stood up and spoke -

"In this suit, in which we have come to an award, we have been all well agreed, and we have awarded six hundred in silver, and half this sum we the daysmen will pay, but it must all be paid up here at the Thing. But it is my prayer to all the people that each man will give something for God's sake."

All answered well to that, and then Hall took witness to the award, that no one should be able to break it.

Njal thanked them for their award, but Skarphedinn stood by, and held his peace, and smiled scornfully.

Then men went from the Court of Laws and to their booths, but the daysmen gathered together in the freeman's church-yard the money which they had promised to give.

Njal's sons handed over that money which they had by them, and Kari did the same, and that came to a hundred in silver.

Njal took out that money which he had with him, and that was another hundred in silver.

So this money was all brought before the Court of Laws, and then men gave so much, that not a penny was wanting.

Then Njal took a silken scarf and a pair of boots and laid them on the top of the heap.

After that, Hall said to Njal, that he should go to fetch his sons, "but I will go for Flosi, and now each must give the other pledges of peace".

Then Njal went home to his booth, and spoke to his sons and said, "Now, are our suits come into a fair way of settlement, now are we men atoned, for all the money has been brought together in one place; and now either side is to go and grant the other peace and pledges of good faith. I will therefore ask you this, my sons, not to spoil these things in any way."

Skarphedinn stroked his brow, and smiled scornfully. So they all go to the Court of Laws.

Hall went to meet Flosi and said -

"Go thou now to the Court of Laws, for now all the money has been bravely paid down, and it has been brought together in one place."

Then Flosi bade the sons of Sigfus to go up with him, and they all went out of their booths. They came from the east, but Njal went from the west to the Court of Laws, and the sons with him.

Skarphedinn went to the middle bench and stood there.

Flosi went into the Court of Laws to look closely at his money, and said -

"This money is both great and good, and well paid down, as was to be looked for."

After that he took up the scarf, and waved it, and asked -

"Who may have given this?"

But no man answered him.

A second time he waved the scarf, and asked -

"Who may have given this?" and laughed, but no man answered him.

Then Flosi said -

"How is it that none of you knows who has owned this gear, or is it that none dares to tell me?"

"Who?" said Skarphedinn, "dost thou think, has given it?"

"If thou must know," said Flosi, "then I will tell thee; I think that thy father the 'Beardless Carle' must have given it, for many know not who look at him whether he is more a man than a woman."

"Such words are ill-spoken," said Skarphedinn, "to make game of him, an old man, and no man of any worth has ever done so before. Ye may know, too, that he is a man, for he has had sons by his wife, and few of our kinsfolk have fallen unatoned by our house, so that we have not had vengeance for them."

Then Skarphedinn took to himself the silken scarf, but threw a pair of blue breeks to Flosi, and said he would need them more.

"Why," said Flosi, "should I need these more?"

"Because," said Skarphedinn, "thou art the sweetheart of the Swinefell's goblin, if, as men say, he does indeed turn thee into a woman every ninth night."

Then Flosi spurned the money, and said he would not touch a penny of it, and then he said he would only have one of two things: either that Hauskuld should fall unatoned, or they would have vengeance for him.

Then Flosi would neither give nor take peace, and he said to the sons of Sigfus -

"Go we now home; one fate shall befall us all."

Then they went home to their booth, and Hall said -

"Here most unlucky men have a share in this suit."

Njal and his sons went home to their booth, and Njal said -

"Now comes to pass what my heart told me long ago, that this suit would fall heavy on us."

"Not so," says Skarphedinn; "they can never pursue us by the laws of the land."

"Then that will happen," says Njal, "which will be worse for all of us."

Those men who had given the money spoke about it, and said that they should take it back; but Gudmund the powerful said -

"That shame I will never choose for myself, to take back what I have given away, either here or elsewhere."

"That is well spoken," they said; and then no one would take it back.

Then Snorri the priest said, "My counsel is, that Gizur the white and Hjalldi Skeggi's son keep the money till the next Althing; my heart tells me that no long time will pass ere there may be need to touch this money".

Hjalldi took half the money and kept it safe, but Gizur took the rest.

Then men went home to their booths.

Chapter 123

An Attack Planned on Njal and His Sons

Flosi summoned all his men up to the "Great Rift," and went thither himself.

So when all his men were come, there were one hundred and twenty of them.

Then Flosi spake thus to the sons of Sigfus -

"In what way shall I stand by you in this quarrel, which will be most to your minds?"

"Nothing will please us," said Gunnar Lambi's son, "until those brothers, Njal's sons, are all slain."

"This," said Flosi, "will I promise to you, ye sons of Sigfus, not to part from this quarrel before one of us bites the dust before the other, I will also know whether there be any man here who will not stand by us in this quarrel."

But they all said they would stand by him.

Then Flosi said -

"Come now all to me, and swear an oath that no man will shrink from this quarrel."

Then all went up to Flosi and swore oaths to him; and then Flosi said -

"We will all of us shake hands on this, that he shall have forfeited life and land who quits this quarrel ere it be over."

These were the chiefs who were with Flosi: - Kol the son of Thorstein broadpaunch, the brother's son of Hall of the Side, Hroald Auzur's son from Broadwater, Auzur son of Anund wallet-back, Thorstein the fair the son of Gerleif, Glum Hilldir's son, Modolf Kettle's son, Thorir the son of Thord Illugi's son of Mauratongue, Kolbein and Egil Flosi's kinsmen, Kettle Sigfus' son, and Mord his brother, Ingjalld of the Springs, Thorkel and Lambi, Grani Gunnar's son, Gunnar Lambi's son, and Sigmund Sigfus' son, and Hroar from Hromundstede.

Then Flosi said to the sons of Sigfus -

"Choose ye now a leader, whomsoever ye think best fitted; for some one man must needs be chief over the quarrel."

Then Kettle of the Mark answered -

"If the choice is to be left with us brothers, then we will soon choose that this duty should fall on thee; there are many things which lead to this. Thou art a man of great birth, and a mighty chief, stout of heart, and strong of body, and wise withal, and so we think it best that thou shouldst see to all that is needful in the quarrel."

"It is most fitting," said Flosi, "that I should agree to undertake this as your prayer asks; and now I will lay down the course which we shall follow, and my counsel is, that each man ride home from the Thing and look after his household during the summer, so long as men's haymaking lasts. I, too, will ride home, and be at home this summer; but when that Lord's day comes on which winter is eight weeks off, then I will let them sing me a mass at home, and afterwards ride west across Loomnips Sand; each of our men shall have two horses. I will not swell our company beyond those which have now taken the oath, for we have enough and to spare if all keep true tryst. I will ride all the Lord's day and the night as well, but at even on the second day of the week, I shall ride up to Threecorner ridge about mid-even. There shall ye then be all come who have sworn an oath in this matter. But if there be any one who has not come, and who has joined us in this quarrel, then that man shall lose nothing save his life, if we may have our way."

"How does that hang together," said Kettle, "that thou canst ride from home on the Lord's day, and come the second day of the week to Threecorner ridge?"

"I will ride," said Flosi, "up from Skaptartongue, and north of the Eyjafell Jokul, and so down into Godaland, and it may be done if I ride fast. And now I will tell you my whole purpose, that when we meet there all together, we shall ride to Bergthorsknoll with all our band, and fall on Njal's sons with fire and sword, and

not turn away before they are all dead. Ye shall hide this plan, for our lives lie on it. And now we will take to our horses and ride home."

Then they all went to their booths.

After that Flosi made them saddle his horses, and they waited for no man, and rode home.

Flosi would not stay to meet Hall his father-in-law, for he knew of a surety that Hall would set his face against all strong deeds.

Njal rode home from the Thing and his sons. They were at home that summer. Njal asked Kari his son-in-law whether he thought at all of riding east to Dyrholms to his own house.

"I will not ride east," answered Kari, "for one fate shall befall me and thy sons."

Njal thanked him, and said that was only what was likely from him. There were nearly thirty fighting men in Njal's house, reckoning the house-carles.

One day it happened that Rodny Hauskuld's daughter, the mother of Hauskuld Njal's son, came to the Springs. Her brother Ingialld greeted her well, but she would not take his greeting, but yet bade him go out with her. Ingialld did so, and went out with her; and so they walked away from the farmyard both together. Then she clutched hold of him and they both sat down, and Rodny said -

"Is it true that thou hast sworn an oath to fall on Njal, and slay him and his sons?"

"True it is," said he.

"A very great dastard art thou," she says, "thou, whom Njal hath thrice saved from outlawry."

"Still it hath come to this," says Ingialld, "that my life lies on it if I do not this."

"Not so," says she, "thou shalt live all the same, and be called a better man, if thou betrayest not him to whom thou oughtest to behave best."

Then she took a linen hood out of her bag, it was clotted with blood all over, and torn and tattered, and said, "This hood, Hauskuld Njal's son, and thy sister's son, had on his head when they slew him; methinks, then, it is ill owing to stand by those from whom this mischief sprang".

"Well!" answers Ingialld, "so it shall be that I will not be against Njal whatever follows after, but still I know that they will turn and throw trouble on me."

"Now mightest thou," said Rodny, "yield Njal and his sons great help, if thou tellest him all these plans."

"That I will not do," says Ingialld, "for then I am every man's dastard, if I tell what was trusted to me in good faith; but it is a manly deed to sunder myself from this quarrel when I know that there is a sure looking for of vengeance; but tell Njal and his sons to beware of themselves all this summer, for that will be good counsel, and to keep many men about them."

Then she fared to Bergthorsknoll, and told Njal all this talk; and Njal thanked her, and said she had done well, "for there would be more wickedness in his falling on me than of all men else".

She fared home, but he told this to his sons.

There was a carline at Bergthorsknoll, whose name was Saevuna. She was wise in many things, and foresighted; but she was then very old, and Njal's sons called her an old dotard, when she talked so much, but still some things which she said came to pass. It fell one day that she took a cudgel in her hand, and went up above the house to a stack of vetches. She beat the stack of vetches with her cudgel, and wished it might never thrive, "wretch that it was!"

Skarphedinn laughed at her, and asked why she was so angry with the vetch stack.

"This stack of vetches," said the carline, "will be taken and lighted with fire when Njal my master is burnt, house and all, and Bergthora my foster-child. Take it away to the water, or burn it up as quick as you can."

"We will not do that," says Skarphedinn, "for something else will be got to light a fire with, if that were foredoomed, though this stack were not here."

The carline babbled the whole summer about the vetch-stack that it should be got indoors, but something always hindered it.

Chapter 124 Of Portents

At Reykium on Skeid dwelt one Runolf Thorstein's son. His son's name was Hildiglum. He went out on the night of the Lord's day, when nine weeks were still to winter; he heard a great crash, so that he thought both heaven and earth shook. Then he looked into the west "airt," and he thought he saw thereabouts a ring of fiery hue, and within the ring a man on a gray horse. He passed quickly by him, and rode hard. He had a flaming firebrand in his hand, and he rode so close to him that he could see him plainly. He was as black as pitch, and he sung this song with a mighty voice -

Here I ride swift steed,
His flank flecked with rime,
Rain from his mane drips,
Horse mighty for harm;
Flames flare at each end,
Gall glows in the midst,
So fares it with Flosi's redes
As this flaming brand flies;
And so fares it with Flosi's redes
As this flaming brand flies.

Then he thought he hurled the firebrand east towards the fells before him, and such a blaze of fire leapt up to meet it that he could not see the fells for the

blaze. It seemed as though that man rode east among the flames and vanished there.

After that he went to his bed, and was senseless a long time, but at last he came to himself. He bore in mind all that had happened, and told his father, but he bade him tell it to Hjallti Skeggi's son. So he went and told Hjallti, but he said he had seen "'the Wolfs ride,' and that comes ever before great tidings".

Chapter 125

Flosi's Journey from Home

Flosi busked him from the east when two months were still to winter, and summoned to him all his men who had promised him help and company. Each of them had two horses and good weapons, and they all came to Swinefell, and were there that night.

Flosi made them say prayers betimes on the Lord's day, and afterwards they sate down to meat. He spoke to his household, and told them what work each was to do while he was away. After that he went to his horses.

Flosi and his men rode first west on the Sand.ö Flosi bade them not to ride too hard at first; but said they would do well enough at that pace, and he bade all to wait for the others if any of them had need to stop. They rode west to Woodcombe, and came to Kirkby. Flosi there bade all men to come into the church, and pray to God, and men did so.

After that they mounted their horses, and rode on the fell, and so to Fishwaters, and rode a little to the west of the lakes, and so struck down west on to the Sand.ö Then they left Eyjafell Jokul on their left hand, and so came down into Godaland, and so on to Markfleet, and came about nonesö on the second day of the week to Threecorner ridge, and waited till mid-even. Then all had come thither save Ingialld of the Springs.

The sons of Sigfus spoke much ill of him, but Flosi bade them not blame Ingialld when he was not by, "but we will pay him for this hereafter".

Chapter 126

Of Portents at Bergthorsknoll

Now we must take up the story, and turn to Bergthorsknoll, and say that Grim and Helgi go to Holar. They had children out at foster there, and they told their mother that they should not come home that evening. They were in Holar all the day, and there came some poor women and said they had come from far. Those brothers asked them for tidings, and they said they had no tidings to tell, "but still we might tell you one bit of news".

They asked what that might be, and bade them not hide it. They said so it should be.

"We came down out of Fleetlithe, and we saw all the sons of Sigfus riding fully armed - they made for Threecorner ridge, and were fifteen in company. We saw, too, Grani Gunnar's son and Gunnar Lambi's son, and they were five in all. They took the same road, and one may say now that the whole country-side is faring and flitting about."

"Then," said Helgi Njal's son, "Flosi must have come from the east, and they must have all gone to meet him, and we two, Grim, should be where Skarphedinn is."

Grim said so it ought to be, and they fared home.

That same evening Bergthora spoke to her household, and said, "Now shall ye choose your meat to-night, so that each may have what he likes best; for this evening is the last that I shall set meat before my household".

"That shall not be," they said.

"It will be though," she says, "and I could tell you much more if I would, but this shall be a token, that Grim and Helgi will be home ere men have eaten their full to-night; and if this turns out so, then the rest that I say will happen too."

After that she set meat on the board, and Njal said, "Wondrously now it seems to me. Methinks I see all round the room, and it seems as though the gable wall were thrown down, but the whole board and the meat on it is one gore of blood."

All thought this strange but Skarphedinn, he bade men not be downcast, nor to utter other unseemly sounds, so that men might make a story out of them.

"For it befits us surely more than other men to bear us well, and it is only what is looked for from us."

Grim and Helgi came home ere the board was cleared, and men were much struck at that. Njal asked why they had returned so quickly, but they told what they had heard.

Njal bade no man go to sleep, but to beware of themselves.

Chapter 127

The Onslaught on Bergthorsknoll

Now Flosi speaks to his men -

"Now we will ride to Bergthorsknoll, and come thither before supper-time."

They do so. There was a dell in the knoll, and they rode thither, and tethered their horses there, and stayed there till the evening was far spent.

Then Flosi said, "Now we will go straight up to the house, and keep close, and walk slow, and see what counsel they will take".

Njal stood out of doors, and his sons, and Kari and all the serving-men, and they stood in array to meet them in the yard, and they were near thirty of them.

Flosi halted and said - "Now we shall see what counsel they take, for it seems to me, if they stand out of doors to meet us, as though we should never get the mastery over them".

"Then is our journey bad," says Grani Gunnar's son, "if we are not to dare to fall on them."

"Nor shall that be," says Flosi; "for we will fall on them though they stand out of doors; but we shall pay that penalty, that many will not go away to tell which side won the day."

Njal said to his men, "See ye now what a great band of men they have".

"They have both a great and well-knit band," says Skarphedinn; "but this is why they make a halt now, because they think it will be a hard struggle to master us."

"That cannot be why they halt," says Njal; "and my will is that our men go indoors, for they had hard work to master Gunnar of Lithend, though he was alone to meet them; but here is a strong house as there was there, and they will be slow to come to close quarters."

"This is not to be settled in that wise," says Skarphedinn, "for those chiefs fell on Gunnar's house, who were so noble-minded, that they would rather turn back than burn him, house and all; but these will fall on us at once with fire, if they cannot get at us in any other way, for they will leave no stone unturned to get the better of us; and no doubt they think, as is not unlikely, that it will be their deaths if we escape out of their hands. Besides, I am unwilling to let myself be stifled indoors like a fox in his earth."

"Now," said Njal, "as often it happens, my sons, ye set my counsel at naught, and show me no honour, but when ye were younger ye did not so, and then your plans were better furthered."

"Let us do," said Helgi, "as our father wills; that will be best for us."

"I am not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, "for now he is 'fey'; but still I may well humour my father in this, by being burnt indoors along with him, for I am not afraid of my death."

Then he said to Kari, "Let us stand by one another well, brother-in-law, so that neither parts from the other".

"That I have made up my mind to do," says Kari; "but if it should be otherwise doomed, - well! then it must be as it must be, and I shall not be able to fight against it."

"Avenge us, and we will avenge thee," says Skarphedinn, "if we live after thee."

Kari said so it should be.

Then they all went in, and stood in array at the door.

"Now are they all 'fey,'" said Flosi, "since they have gone indoors, and we will go right up to them as quickly as we can, and throng as close as we can before the door, and give heed that none of them, neither Kari nor Njal's sons, get away; for that were our bane."

So Flosi and his men came up to the house, and set men to watch round the house, if there were any secret doors in it. But Flosi went up to the front of the house with his men.

Then Hroald Auzur's son ran up to where Skarphedinn stood, and thrust at him. Skarphedinn hewed the spearhead off the shaft as he held it, and made another stroke at him, and the axe fell on the top of the shield, and dashed back the whole shield on Hroald's body, but the upper horn of the axe caught him on the brow, and he fell at full length on his back, and was dead at once.

"Little chance had that one with thee, Skarphedinn," said Kari, "and thou art our boldest."

"I'm not so sure of that," says Skarphedinn, and he drew up his lips and smiled.

Kari, and Grim, and Helgi, threw out many spears, and wounded many men; but Flosi and his men could do nothing.

At last Flosi said, "We have already gotten great manscathes in our men; many are wounded, and he slain whom we would choose last of all. It is now clear that we shall never master them with weapons; many now there be who are not so forward in fight as they boasted, and yet they were those who goaded us on most. I say this most to Grani Gunnar's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, who were the least willing to spare their foes. But still we shall have to take to some other plan for ourselves, and now there are but two choices left, and neither of them good. One is to turn away, and that is our death; the other, to set fire to the house, and burn them inside it; and that is a deed which we shall have to answer for heavily before God, since we are Christian men ourselves; but still we must take to that counsel."

Chapter 128

Njal's Burning

Now they took fire, and made a great pile before the doors. Then Skarphedinn said.

"What, lads! are ye lighting a fire, or are ye taking to cooking?"

"So it shall be," answered Grani Gunnar's son; "and thou shalt not need to be better done."

"Thou repayest me," said Skarphedinn, "as one may look for from the man that thou art. I avenged thy father, and thou settest most store by that duty which is farthest from thee."

Then the women threw whey on the fire, and quenched it as fast as they lit it. Some, too, brought water, or slops.

Then Kol Thorstein's son said to Flosi -

"A plan comes into my mind; I have seen a loft over the hall among the crosstrees, and we will put the fire in there, and light it with the vetch-stack that stands just above the house."

Then they took the vetch-stack and set fire to it, and they who were inside were not aware of it till the whole hall was ablaze over their heads.

Then Flosi and his men made a great pile before each of the doors, and then the women folk who were inside began to weep and to wail.

Njal spoke to them and said, "Keep up your hearts, nor utter shrieks, for this is but a passing storm, and it will be long before ye have another such; and put your faith in God, and believe that He is so merciful that He will not let us burn both in this world and the next."

Such words of comfort had he for them all, and others still more strong.

Now the whole house began to blaze. Then Njal went to the door and said -

"Is Flosi so near that he can hear my voice?"

Flosi said that he could hear it.

"Wilt thou," said Njal, "take an atonement from my sons, or allow any men to go out?"

"I will not," answers Flosi, "take any atonement from thy sons, and now our dealings shall come to an end once for all, and I will not stir from this spot till they are all dead; but I will allow the women and children and house-carles to go out."

Then Njal went into the house, and said to the folk -

"Now all those must go out to whom leave is given, and so go thou out Thorhalla Asgrim's daughter, and all the people also with thee who may."

Then Thorhalla said -

"This is another parting between me and Helgi than I thought of a while ago; but still I will egg on my father and brothers to avenge this manscath which is wrought here."

"Go, and good go with thee," said Njal, "for thou art a brave woman."

After that she went out and much folk with her.

Then Astrid of Deepback said to Helgi Njal's son -

"Come thou out with me, and I will throw a woman's cloak over thee, and tire thy head with a kerchief."

He spoke against it at first, but at last he did so at the prayer of others.

So Astrid wrapped the kerchief round Helgi's head, but Thorhilda, Skarphedinn's wife, threw the cloak over him, and he went out between them, and then Thorgerda Njal's daughter, and Helga her sister, and many other folk went out too.

But when Helgi came out Flosi said -

"That is a tall woman and broad across the shoulders that went yonder, take her and hold her."

But when Helgi heard that, he cast away the cloak. He had got his sword under his arm, and hewed at a man, and the blow fell on his shield and cut off the point of it, and the man's leg as well. Then Flosi came up and hewed at Helgi's neck, and took off his head at a stroke.

Then Flosi went to the door and called out to Njal, and said he would speak with him and Bergthora.

Now Njal does so, and Flosi said -

"I will offer thee, master Njal, leave to go out, for it is unworthy that thou shouldst burn indoors."

"I will not go out," said Njal, "for I am an old man, and little fitted to avenge my sons, but I will not live in shame."

Then Flosi said to Bergthora -

"Come thou out, housewife, for I will for no sake burn thee indoors."

"I was given away to Njal young," said Bergthora, "and I have promised him this, that we would both share the same fate."

After that they both went back into the house.

"What counsel shall we now take?" said Bergthora.

"We will go to our bed," says Njal, "and lay us down; I have long been eager for rest."

Then she said to the boy Thord, Kari's son -

"Thee will I take out, and thou shalt not burn in here."

"Thou hast promised me this, grandmother," says the boy, "that we should never part so long as I wished to be with thee; but methinks it is much better to die with thee and Njal than to live after you."

Then she bore the boy to her bed, and Njal spoke to his steward and said -

"Now shalt thou see where we lay us down, and how I lay us out, for I mean not to stir an inch hence, whether reek or burning smart me, and so thou wilt be able to guess where to look for our bones."

He said he would do so.

There had been an ox slaughtered and the hide lay there. Njal told the steward to spread the hide over them, and he did so.

So there they lay down both of them in their bed, and put the boy between them. Then they signed themselves and the boy with the cross, and gave over their souls into God's hand, and that was the last word that men heard them utter.

Then the steward took the hide and spread it over them, and went out afterwards. Kettle of the Mark caught hold of him, and dragged him out, he asked carefully after his father-in-law Njal, but the steward told him the whole truth. Then Kettle said -

"Great grief hath been sent on us, when we have had to share such ill-luck together."

Skarphedinn saw how his father laid him down, and how he laid himself out, and then he said -

"Our father goes early to bed, and that is what was to be looked for, for he is an old man."

Then Skarphedinn, and Kari, and Grim, caught the brands as fast as they dropped down, and hurled them out at them, and so it went on a while. Then they hurled spears in at them, but they caught them all as they flew, and sent them back again.

Then Flosi bade them cease shooting, "for all feats of arms will go hard with us when we deal with them; ye may well wait till the fire overcomes them".

So they do that, and shoot no more.

Then the great beams out of the roof began to fall, and Skarphedinn said -

"Now must my father be dead, and I have neither heard groan nor cough from him."

Then they went to the end of the hall, and there had fallen down a cross-beam inside which was much burnt in the middle.

Kari spoke to Skarphedinn, and said - "Leap thou out here, and I will help thee to do so, and I will leap out after thee, and then we shall both get away if we set about it so, for hitherward blows all the smoke."

"Thou shalt leap first," said Skarphedinn; "but I will leap straightway on thy heels."

"That is not wise," says Kari, "for I can get out well enough elsewhere, though it does not come about here."

"I will not do that," says Skarphedinn; "leap thou out first, but I will leap after thee at once."

"It is bidden to every man," says Kari, "to seek to save his life while he has a choice, and I will do so now; but still this parting of ours will be in such wise that we shall never see one another more; for if I leap out of the fire, I shall have no mind to leap back into the fire to thee, and then each of us will have to fare his own way."

"It joys me, brother-in-law," says Skarphedinn, "to think that if thou gettest away thou wilt avenge me."

Then Kari took up a blazing bench in his hand, and runs up along the cross-beam, then he hurls the bench out at the roof, and it fell among those who were outside.

Then they ran away, and by that time all Kari's upper-clothing and his hair were ablaze, then he threw himself down from the roof, and so crept along with the smoke.

Then one man said who was nearest -

"Was that a man that leapt out at the roof?"

"Far from it," says another; "more likely it was Skarphedinn who hurled a firebrand at us."

After that they had no more mistrust.

Kari ran till he came to a stream, and then, he threw himself down into it, and so quenched the fire on him.

After that he ran along under shelter of the smoke into a hollow, and rested him there, and that has since been called Kari's Hollow.

Chapter 129

Skarphedinn's Death

Now it is to be told of Skarphedinn that he runs out on the cross-beam straight after Kari, but when he came to where the beam was most burnt, then it broke down under him. Skarphedinn came down on his feet, and tried again the second time, and climbs up the wall with a run, then down on him came the wall-plate, and he toppled down again inside.

Then Skarphedinn said - "Now one can see what will come;" and then he went along the side wall. Gunnar Lambi's son leapt up on the wall and sees Skarphedinn; he spoke thus -

"Weapest thou now, Skarphedinn?"

"Not so," says Skarphedinn, "but true it is that the smoke makes one's eyes smart, but is it as it seems to me, dost thou laugh?"

"So it is surely," says Gunnar, "and I have never laughed since thou slewest Thrain on Markfleet."

Then Skarphedinn said - "He now is a keepsake for thee;" and with that he took out of his purse the jaw-tooth which he had hewn out of Thrain, and threw it at Gunnar, and struck him in the eye, so that it started out and lay on his cheek.

Then Gunnar fell down from the roof.

Skarphedinn then went to his brother Grim, and they held one another by the hand and trode the fire; but when they came to the middle of the hall Grim fell down dead.

Then Skarphedinn went to the end of the house, and then there was a great crash, and down fell the roof. Skarphedinn was then shut in between it and the gable, and so he could not stir a step thence.

Flosi and his band stayed by the fire until it was broad daylight; then came a man riding up to them. Flosi asked him for his name, but he said his name was Geirmund, and that he was a kinsman of the sons of Sigfus.

"Ye have done a mighty deed," he says.

"Men," says Flosi, "will call it both a mighty deed and an ill deed, but that can't be helped now."

"How many men have lost their lives here?" asks Geirmund.

"Here have died," says Flosi, "Njal and Bergthora and all their sons, Thord Kari's son, Kari Solmund's son, but besides these we cannot say for a surety, because we know not their names."

"Thou tellest him now dead," said Geirmund, "with whom we have gossiped this morning."

"Who is that?" says Flosi.

"We two," says Geirmund, "I and my neighbour Bard, met Kari Solmund's son, and Bard gave him his horse, and his hair and his upper clothes were burned off him."

"Had he any weapons?" asks Flosi.

"He had the sword 'Life-luller,'" says Geirmund, "and one edge of it was blue with fire, and Bard and I said that it must have become soft, but he answered thus, that he would harden it in the blood of the sons of Sigfus or the other Burners."

"What said he of Skarphedinn?" said Flosi.

"He said both he and Grim were alive," answers Geirmund, "when they parted; but he said that now they must be dead."

"Thou hast told us a tale," said Flosi, "which bodes us no idle peace, for that man hath now got away who comes next to Gunnar of Lithend in all things; and now, ye sons of Sigfus, and ye other Burners, know this, that such a great blood feud, and hue and cry will be made about this burning, that it will make many a man headless, but some will lose all their goods. Now I doubt much whether any man of you, ye sons of Sigfus, will dare to stay in his house; and that is not to be wondered at; and so I will bid you all to come and stay with me in the east, and let us all share one fate."

They thanked him for his offer, and said they would be glad to take it.

Then Modolf Kettle's son sang a song.

But one prop of Njal's house liveth,
All the rest inside are burnt,
All but one, - those bounteous spenders,
Sigfus' stalwart sons wrought this;
Son of Gollnirö now is glutted
Vengeance for brave Hauskuld's death,
Brisk flew fire through thy dwelling,
Bright flames blazed above thy roof.

"We shall have to boast of something else than that Njal has been burnt in his house," says Flosi, "for there is no glory in that."

Then he went up on the gable, and Glum Hilldir's son, and some other men. Then Glum said, "Is Skarphedinn dead, indeed?" But the others said he must have been dead long ago.

The fire sometimes blazed up fitfully and sometimes burned low, and then they heard down in the fire beneath them that this song was sung -

Deep, I ween, ye Ogre offspring!
Devilish brood of giant birth,
Would ye groan with gloomy visage
Had the fight gone to my mind;
But my very soul it gladdens
That my friendsö who now boast high,
Wrought not this foul deed, their glory,
Save with footsteps filled with gore.

"Can Skarphedinn, think ye, have sung this song dead or alive?" said Grani Gunnar's son.

"I will go into no guesses about that," says Flosi.

"We will look for Skarphedinn," says Grani, "and the other men who have been here burnt inside the house."

"That shall not be," says Flosi, "it is just like such foolish men as thou art, now that men will be gathering force all over the country; and when they do come, I trow the very same man who now lingers will be so scared that he will not know which way to run; and now my counsel is that we all ride away as quickly as ever we can."

Then Flosi went hastily to his horse and all his men.

Then Flosi said to Geirmund -

"Is Ingialld, thinkest thou, at home, at the Springs?"

Geirmund said he thought he must be at home.

"There now is a man," says Flosi, "who has broken his oath with us and all good faith."

Then Flosi said to the sons of Sigfus - "What course will ye now take with Ingialld; will ye forgive him, or shall we now fall on him and slay him?"

They all answered that they would rather fall on him and slay him.

Then Flosi jumped on his horse, and all the others, and they rode away. Flosi rode first, and shaped his course for Rangriver, and up along the river bank.

Then he saw a man riding down on the other bank of the river, and he knew that there was Ingialld of the Springs. Flosi calls out to him. Ingialld halted and turned down to the river bank; and Flosi said to him -

"Thou hast broken faith with us, and hast forfeited life and goods. Here now are the sons of Sigfus, who are eager to slay thee; but methinks thou hast fallen into a strait, and I will give thee thy life if thou will hand over to me the right to make my own award."

"I will sooner ride to meet Kari," said Ingjalld, "than grant thee the right to utter thine own award, and my answer to the sons of Sigfus is this, that I shall be no whit more afraid of them than they are of me."

"Bide thou there," says Flosi, "if thou art not a coward, for I will send thee a gift."

"I will bide of a surety," says Ingjalld.

Thorstein Kolbein's son, Flosi's brother's son, rode up by his side and had a spear in his hand, he was one of the bravest of men, and the most worthy of those who were with Flosi.

Flosi snatched the spear from him, and launched it at Ingjalld, and it fell on his left side, and passed through the shield just below the handle, and clove it all asunder, but the spear passed on into his thigh just above the knee-pan, and so on into the saddle-tree, and there stood fast.

Then Flosi said to Ingjalld -

"Did it touch thee?"

"It touched me sure enough," says Ingjalld, "but I call this a scratch and not a wound."

Then Ingjalld plucked the spear out of the wound, and said to Flosi -

"Now bide thou, if thou art not a milksop."

Then he launched the spear back over the river. Flosi sees that the spear is coming straight for his middle, and then he backs his horse out of the way, but the spear flew in front of Flosi's horse, and missed him, but it struck Thorstein's middle, and down he fell at once dead off his horse.

Now Ingjalld tuns for the wood, and they could not get at him.

Then Flosi said to his men -

"Now have we gotten manscathe, and now we may know, when such things befall us, into what a luckless state we have got. Now it is my counsel that we ride up to Threecorner ridge; thence we shall be able to see where men ride all over the country, for by this time they will have gathered together a great band, and they will think that we have ridden east to Fleetlithe from Threecorner ridge; and thence they will think that we are riding north up on the fell, and so east to our own country, and thither the greater part of the folk will ride after us; but some will ride the coast road east to Selialandsmull, and yet they will think there is less hope of finding us thitherward, but I will now take counsel for all of us, and my plan is to ride up into Threecorner-fell, and bide there till three suns have risen and set in heaven."

Chapter 130 Of Kari Solmund's Son

Now it is to be told of Kari Solmund's son that he fared away from that hollow in which he had rested himself until he met Bard, and those words passed between them which Geirmund had told.

Thence Kari rode to Mord, and told him the tidings, and he was greatly grieved.

Kari said there were other things more befitting a man than to weep for them dead, and bade him rather gather folk and come to Holtford.

After that he rode into Thursodale to Hjalld Skeggi's son, and as he went along Thurso water, he sees a man riding fast behind him. Kari waited for the man, and knows that he was Ingialld of the Springs. He sees that he is very bloody about the thigh; and Kari asked Ingialld who had wounded him, and he told him.

"Where met ye two?" says Kari.

"By Rangwater side," says Ingialld, "and he threw a spear over at me."

"Didst thou aught for it?" asks Kari.

"I threw the spear back," says Ingialld, "and they said that it met a man, and he was dead at once."

"Knowest thou not," said Kari, "who the man was?"

"Methought he was like Thorstein Flosi's brother's son," says Ingialld.

"Good luck go with thy hand," says Kari.

After that they rode both together to see Hjalld Skeggi's son, and told him the tidings. He took these deeds ill, and said there was the greatest need to ride after them and slay them all.

After that he gathered men and roused the whole country; now he and Kari and Ingialld ride with this band to meet Mord Valgard's son, and they found him at Holtford, and Mord was there waiting for them with a very great company. Then they parted the hue and cry; some fared the straight road by the east coast to Selialandsmull, but some went up to Fleetlithe, and other-some the higher road thence to Threecorner ridge, and so down into Godaland. Thence they rode north to Sand. Some too rode as far as Fishwaters, and there turned back. Some the coast road east to Holt, and told Thorgeir the tidings, and asked whether they had not ridden by there.

"This is how it is," said Thorgeir, "though I am not a mighty chief, yet Flosi would take other counsel than to ride under my eyes, when he has slain Njal, my father's brother, and my cousins; and there is nothing left for any of you but e'en to turn back again, for ye should have hunted longer nearer home; but tell this to Kari, that he must ride hither to me and be here with me if he will; but though he will not come hither east, still I will look after his farm at Dyrholms if he will, but tell him too that I will stand by him and ride with him to the Althing. And he

shall also know this, that we brothers are the next of kin to follow up the feud, and we mean so to take up the suit, that outlawry shall follow and after that revenge, man for man, if we can bring it about; but I do not go with you now, because I know naught will come of it, and they will now be as wary as they can of themselves."

Now they ride back, and all met at Hof and talked there among themselves, and said that they had gotten disgrace since they had not found them. Mord said that was not so. Then many men were eager that they should fare to Fleetlithe, and pull down the homesteads of all those who had been at those deeds, but still they listened for Mord's utterance.

"That," he said, "would be the greatest folly." They asked why he said that.

"Because," he said, "if their houses stand, they will be sure to visit them to see their wives; and then, as time rolls on, we may hunt them down there; and now ye shall none of you doubt that I will be true to thee Kari, and to all of you, and in all counsel, for I have to answer for myself."

Hjallti bade him do as he said. Then Hjallti bade Kari to come and stay with him; he said he would ride thither first. They told him what Thorgeir had offered him, and he said he would make use of that offer afterwards, but said his heart told him it would be well if there were many such.

After that the whole band broke up.

Flosi and his men saw all these tidings from where they were on the fell; and Flosi said -

"Now we will take our horses and ride away, for now it will be some good."

The sons of Sigfus asked whether it would be worth while to get to their homes and tell the news.

"It must be Mord's meaning," says Flosi, "that ye will visit your wives; and my guess is, that his plan is to let your houses stand unsacked; but my plan is that not a man shall part from the other, but all ride east with me."

So every man took that counsel, and then they all rode east and north of the Jokul, and so on till they came to Swinefell.

Flosi sent at once men out to get in stores, so that nothing might fall short.

Flosi never spoke about the deed, but no fear was found in him, and he was at home the whole winter till Yule was over.

Chapter 131

Njal's and Bergthora's Bones Found

Kari bade Hjallti to go and search for Njal's bones, "for all will believe in what thou sayest and thinkest about them".

Hjallti said he would be most willing to bear Njal's bones to church; so they rode thence fifteen men. They rode east over Thurso-water, and called on men there to come with them till they had one hundred men, reckoning Njal's neighbours.

They came to Bergthorsknoll at mid-day.

Hjallti asked Kari under what part of the house Njal might be lying, but Kari showed them to the spot, and there was a great heap of ashes to dig away. There they found the hide underneath, and it was as though it were shrivelled with the fire. They raised up the hide, and lo! they were unburnt under it. All praised God for that, and thought it was a great token.

Then the boy was taken up who had lain between them, and of him a finger was burnt off which he had stretched out from under the hide.

Njal was borne out, and so was Bergthora, and then all men went to see their bodies.

Then Hjallti said - "What like look to you these bodies?"

They answered, "We will wait for thy utterance".

Then Hjallti said, "I shall speak what I say with all freedom of speech. The body of Bergthora looks as it was likely she would look, and still fair; but Njal's body and visage seem to me so bright that I have never seen any dead man's body so bright as this."

They all said they thought so too.

Then they sought for Skarphedinn, and the men of the household showed them to the spot where Flosi and his men heard the song sung, and there the roof had fallen down by the gable, and there Hjallti said that they should look. Then they did so, and found Skarphedinn's body there, and he had stood up hard by the gable-wall, and his legs were burnt off him right up to the knees, but all the rest of him was unburnt. He had bitten through his under lip, his eyes were wide open and not swollen nor starting out of his head; he had driven his axe into the gable-wall so hard that it had gone in up to the middle of the blade, and that was why it was not softened.

After that the axe was broken out of the wall, and Hjallti took up the axe, and said -

"This is a rare weapon, and few would be able to wield it."

"I see a man," said Kari, "who shall bear the axe."

"Who is that?" says Hjallti.

"Thorgeir Craggeir," says Kari, "he whom I now think to be the greatest man in all their family."

Then Skarphedinn was stripped of his clothes, for they were unburnt; he had laid his hands in a cross, and the right hand uppermost. They found marks on him; one between his shoulders and the other on his chest, and both were branded in the shape of a cross, and men thought that he must have burnt them in himself.

All men said that they thought that it was better to be near Skarphedinn dead than they weened, for no man was afraid of him.

They sought for the bones of Grim, and found them in the midst of the hall. They found, too, there, right over-against him under the side wall, Thord Freedmanson; but in the weaving-room they found Saevuna the carline, and three men more. In all they found there the bones of nine souls. Now they carried the bodies to the church, and then Hjallti rode home and Kari with him. A swelling came on Ingialld's leg, and then he fared to Hjallti, and was healed there, but still he limped ever afterwards.

Kari rode to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. By that time Thorhalla was come home, and she had already told the tidings. Asgrim took Kari by both hands, and bade him be there all that year. Kari said so it should be.

Asgrim asked besides all the folk who had been in the house at Bergthorsknull to stay with him. Kari said that was well offered, and said he would take it on their behalf.

Then all the folk were flitted thither.

Thorhall Asgrim's son was so startled when he was told that his foster-father Njal was dead, and that he had been burnt in his house, that he swelled all over, and a stream of blood burst out of both his ears, and could not be staunched, and he fell into a swoon, and then it was staunched.

After that he stood up, and said he had behaved like a coward, "but I would that I might be able to avenge this which has befallen me on some of those who burnt him".

But when others said that no one would think this a shame to him, he said he could not stop the mouths of the people from talking about it.

Asgrim asked Kari what trust and help he thought he might look for from those east of the rivers. Kari said that Mord Valgard's son, and Hjallti, Skeggi's son, would yield him all the help they could, and so, too, would Thorgeir Craggeir, and all those brothers.

Asgrim said that was great strength.

"What strength shall we have from thee?" says Kari.

"All that I can give," says Asgrim, "and I will lay down my life on it."

"So do," says Kari.

"I have also," says Asgrim, "brought Gizur the white into the suit, and have asked his advice how we shall set about it."

"What advice did he give?" asks Kari.

"He counselled," answers Asgrim, "that we should hold us quite still till spring, but then ride east and set the suit on foot against Flosi for the manslaughter of Helgi, and summon the neighbours from their homes, and give due notice at the Thing of the suits for the burning, and summon the same neighbours there too on the inquest before the court. I asked Gizur who should plead the suit for manslaughter, but he said that Mord should plead it whether he liked it or not,

and now,' he went on, 'it shall fall most heavily on him that up to this time all the suits he has undertaken have had the worst ending. Kari shall also be wroth whenever he meets Mord, and so, if he be made to fear on one side, and has to look to me on the other, then he will undertake the duty.'"

Then Kari said, "We will follow thy counsel as long as we can, and thou shalt lead us".

It is to be told of Kari that he could not sleep of nights. Asgrim woke up one night and heard that Kari was awake, and Asgrim said - "Is it that thou canst not sleep at night?"

Then Kari sang this song -

Bender of the bow of battle,
Sleep will not my eyelids seal,
Still my murdered messmates' bidding
Haunts my mind the livelong night;
Since the men their brands abusing
Burned last autumn guileless Njal,
Burned him house and home together,
Mindful am I of my hurt.

Kari spoke of no men so often as of Njal and Skarphedinn, and Bergthora and Helgi. He never abused his foes, and never threatened them.

Chapter 132

Flosi's Dream

One night it so happened that Flosi struggled much in his sleep. Glum Hilldir's son woke him up, and then Flosi said -

"Call me Kettle of the Mark."

Kettle came thither, and Flosi said, "I will tell thee my dream".

"I am ready to hear it," says Kettle.

"I dreamt," says Flosi, "that methought I stood below Loom-nip, and went out and looked up to the Nip, and all at once it opened, and a man came out of the Nip, and he was clad in goatskins, and had an iron staff in his hand. He called, as he walked, on many of my men, some sooner and some later, and named them by name. First he called Grim the Red my kinsman, and Arni Kol's son. Then methought something strange followed, methought he called Eyjolf Bolverk's son, and Ljot son of Hall of the Side, and some six men more. Then he held his peace awhile. After that he called five men of our band, and among them were the sons of Sigfus, thy brothers; then he called other six men, and among them were Lambi, and Modolf, and Glum. Then he called three men. Last of all he called Gunnar Lambi's son, and Kol Thorstein's son. After that he came up to me; I asked him 'what news'. He said he had tidings enough to tell. Then I asked him for his name, but he called himself Irongrim. I asked him whither he was going; he said he had to fare to the Althing. 'What shalt thou do

there?' I said. 'First I shall challenge the inquest,' he answers, 'and then the courts, then clear the field for fighters.' After that he sang this song -

"Soon a man death's snake-strokes dealing
High shall lift his head on earth,
Here amid the dust low rolling
Battered brainpans men shall see:
Now upon the hills in hurly
Buds the blue steel's harvest bright;
Soon the bloody dew of battle
Thigh-deep through the ranks shall rise.'

"Then he shouted with such a mighty shout that methought everything near shook, and dashed down his staff, and there was a mighty crash. Then he went back into the fell, but fear clung to me; and now I wish thee to tell me what thou thinkest this dream is."

"It is my foreboding," says Kettle, "that all those who were called must be 'fey'. It seems to me good counsel that we tell this dream to no man just now."

Flosi said so it should be. Now the winter passes away till Yule was over. Then Flosi said to his men -

"Now I mean that we should fare from home, for methinks we shall not be able to have an idle peace. Now we shall fare to pray for help, and now that will come true which I told you, that we should have to bow the knee to many ere this quarrel were ended."

Chapter 133 Of Flosi's Journey and His Asking for Help

After that they busked them from home all together. Flosi was in long-hose because he meant to go on foot, and then he knew that it would seem less hard to the others to walk.

Then they fared from home to Knappvale, but the evening after to Broadwater, and then to Calffell, thence by Bjornness to Hornfirth, thence to Staffell in Lon, and then to Thvattwater to Hall of the Side.

Flosi had to wife Steinvora, his daughter.

Hall gave them a very hearty welcome, and Flosi said to Hall -

"I will ask thee, father-in-law, that thou wouldst ride to the Thing with me with all thy Thingmen."

"Now," answered Hall, "it has turned out as the saw says, 'but a short while is hand fain of blow'; and yet it is one and the same man in thy band who now hangs his head, and who then goaded thee on to the worst of deeds when it was still undone. But my help I am bound to lend thee in all such places as I may."

"What counsel dost thou give me," said Flosi, "in the strait in which I now am?"

"Thou shalt fare," said Hall, "north, right up to Weaponfirth, and ask all the chiefs for aid, and thou wilt yet need it all before the Thing is over."

Flosi stayed there three nights, and rested him, and fared thence east to Geitahellna, and so to Berufirth; there they were the night. Thence they fared east to Broaddale in Haydale. There Hallbjorn the strong dwelt. He had to wife Oddny the sister of Saurli Broddhelgi's son, and Flosi had a hearty welcome there.

Hallbjorn asked how far north among the firths Flosi meant to go. He said he meant to go as far as Weaponfirth. Then Flosi took a purse of money from his belt, and said he would give it to Hallbjorn. He took the money, but yet said he had no claim on Flosi for gifts, but still I would be glad to know in what thou wilt that I repay thee.

"I have no need of money," says Flosi, "but I wish thou wouldst ride to the Thing with me, and stand by me in my quarrel, but still I have no ties or kinship to tell towards thee."

"I will grant thee that," said Hallbjorn, "to ride to the Thing with thee, and to stand by thee in thy quarrel as I would by my brother."

Flosi thanked him, and Hallbjorn asked much about the Burning, but they told him all about it at length.

Thence Flosi fared to Broaddale's heath, and so to Hrafnkelstede, there dwelt Hrafnkell, the son of Thorir, the son of Hrafnkell Raum. Flosi had a hearty welcome there, and sought for help and a promise to ride to the Thing from Hrafnkell, but he stood out a long while, though the end of it was that he gave his word that his son Thorir should ride with all their Thingmen, and yield him such help as the other priests of the same district.

Flosi thanked him and fared away to Bersastede. There Holmstein son of Bersi the wise dwelt, and he gave Flosi a very hearty welcome. Flosi begged him for help. Holmstein said he had been long in his debt for help.

Thence they fared to Waltheofstede - there Saurli Broddhelgi's son, Bjarni's brother, dwelt. He had to wife Thordisa, a daughter of Gudmund the powerful, of Modruvale. They had a hearty welcome there. But next morning Flosi raised the question with Saurli that he should ride to the Althing with him, and bid him money for it.

"I cannot tell about that," says Saurli, "so long as I do not know on which side my father-in-law Gudmund the powerful stands, for I mean to stand by him on whichever side he stands."

"Oh!" said Flosi, "I see by thy answer that a woman rules in this house."

Then Flosi stood up and bade his men take their upper clothing and weapons, and then they fared away, and got no help there. So they fared below Lagarfleet and over the heath to Njardwick; there two brothers dwelt, Thorkel the allwise, and Thorwald his brother; they were sons of Kettle, the son of Thidrandi the wise, the son of Kettle rumble, son of Thorir Thidrandi. The mother of Thorkel the allwise and Thorwald was Yngvilda, daughter of Thorkel the wise. Flosi got a hearty welcome there; he told those brothers plainly of his errand, and asked

for their help; but they put him off until he gave three marks of silver to each of them for their aid; then they agreed to stand by Flosi.

Their mother Yngvillda was by when they gave their words to ride to the Althing, and wept. Thorkel asked why she wept; and she answered -

"I dreamt that thy brother Thorwalld was clad in a red kirtle, and methought it was so tight as though it were sewn on him; methought too that he wore red hose on his legs and feet, and bad shoethongs were twisted round them; methought it ill to see when I knew he was so uncomfortable, but I could do naught for him."

They laughed and told her she had lost her wits, and said her babble should not stand in the way of their ride to the Thing.

Flosi thanked them kindly, and fared thence to Weaponfirth and came to Hof. There dwelt Bjarni Broddhelgi's son. Bjarni took Flosi by both hands, and Flosi bade Bjarni money for his help.

"Never," says Bjarni, "have I sold my manhood or help for bribes, but now that thou art in need of help, I will do thee a good turn for friendship's sake, and ride to the Thing with thee, and stand by thee as I would by my brother."

"Then thou hast thrown a great load of debt on my hands," said Flosi, "but still I looked for as much from thee."

Thence Flosi and his men fared to Crosswick. Thorkel Geiti's son was a great friend of his. Flosi told him his errand, and Thorkel said it was but his duty to stand by him in every way in his power, and not to part from his quarrel. Thorkel gave Flosi good gifts at parting.

Thence they fared north to Weaponfirth and up into the Fleetdale country, and turned in as guests at Holmstein's, the son of Bersi the wise. Flosi told him that all had backed him in his need and business well, save Saurli Broddhelgi's son. Holmstein said the reason of that was that he was not a man of strife. Holmstein gave Flosi good gifts.

Flosi fared up Fleetdale, and thence south on the fell across Oxenlava and down Swinehorndale, and so out by Alftafirth to the west, and did not stop till he came to Thvattwater to his father-in-law Hall's house. There he stayed half a month, and his men with him and rested him.

Flosi asked Hall what counsel he would now give him, and what he should do next, and whether he should change his plans.

"My counsel," said Hall, "is this, that thou goest home to thy house, and the sons of Sigfus with thee, but that they send men to set their homesteads in order. But first of all fare home, and when ye ride to the Thing, ride all together, and do not scatter your band. Then let the sons of Sigfus go to see their wives on the way. I too will ride to the Thing, and Ljot my son with all our Thingmen, and stand by thee with such force as I can gather to me."

Flosi thanked him, and Hall gave him good gifts at parting.

Then Flosi went away from Thvattwater, and nothing is to be told of his journey till he comes home to Swinefell. There he stayed at home the rest of the winter, and all the summer right up to the Thing.

Chapter 134 Of Thorhall and Kari

Thorhall Asgrim's son, and Kari Solmund's son, rode one day to Mossfell to see Gizur the white; he took them with both hands, and there they were at his house a very long while. Once it happened as they and Gizur talked of Njal's burning, that Gizur said it was very great luck that Kari had got away. Then a song came into Kari's mouth.

I who whetted helmet-hewer, ð
I who oft have burnished brand,
From the fray went all unwilling
When Njal's roof-tree crackling roared;
Out I leapt when bands of spearmen
Lighted there a blaze of flame!
Listen men unto my moaning,
Mark the telling of my grief.

Then Gizur said, "It must be forgiven thee that thou art mindful, and so we will talk no more about it just now".

Kari says that he will ride home; and Gizur said "I will now make a clean breast of my counsel to thee. Thou shalt not ride home, but still thou shalt ride away, and east under Eyjafell, to see Thorgeir Craggeir, and Thorleif crow. They shall ride from the east with thee. They are the next of kin in the suit, and with them shall ride Thorgrim the big, their brother. Ye shall ride to Mord Valgard's son's house, and tell him this message from me, that he shall take up the suit for manslaughter for Helgi Njal's son against Flosi. But if he utters any words against this, then shalt thou make thyself most wrathful, and make believe as though thou wouldst let thy axe fall on his head; and in the second place, thou shalt assure him of my wrath if he shows any ill will. Along with that shalt thou say, that I will send and fetch away my daughter Thorkatla, and make her come home to me; but that he will not abide, for he loves her as the very eyes in his head."

Kari thanked him for his counsel. Kari spoke nothing of help to him, for he thought he would show himself his good friend in this as in other things.

Thence Kari rode east over the rivers, and so to Fleetlithe, and east across Markfleet, and so on to Selialandsmull. So they ride east to Holt.

Thorgeir welcomed them with the greatest kindness. He told them of Flosi's journey, and how great help he had got in the east firths.

Kari said it was no wonder that he, who had to answer for so much, should ask for help for himself.

Then Thorgeir said, "The better things go for them, the worse it shall be for them; we will only follow them up so much the harder".

Kari told Thorgeir of Gizur's advice. After that they ride from the east to Rangrivale to Mord Valgard's son's house. He gave them a hearty welcome. Kari told him the message of Gizur his father-in-law. He was slow to take the duty on him, and said it was harder to go to law with Flosi than with any other ten men.

"Thou behavest now as he [Gizur] thought," said Kari; "for thou art a bad bargain in every way; thou art both a coward and heartless, but the end of this shall be as is fitting, that Thorkatla shall fare home to her father."

She busked her at once, and said she had long been "boun" to part from Mord. Then he changed his mood and his words quickly, and begged off their wrath, and took the suit upon him at once.

"Now," said Kari, "thou hast taken the suit upon thee, see that thou pleadest it without fear, for thy life lies on it."

Mord said he would lay his whole heart on it to do this well and manfully.

After that Mord summoned to him nine neighbours - they were all near neighbours to the spot where the deed was done. Then Mord took Thorgeir by the hand and named two witnesses to bear witness, "that Thorgeir Thorir's son hands me over a suit for manslaughter against Flosi Thord's son, to plead it for the slaying of Helgi Njal's son, with all those proofs which have to follow the suit. Thou handest over to me this suit to plead and to settle, and to enjoy all rights in it, as though I were the rightful next of kin. Thou handest it over to me by law, and I take it from thee by law."

A second time Mord named his witnesses, "to bear witness," said he, "that I give notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, for that he dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound; and from which Helgi got his death. I give notice of this before five witnesses" - here he named them all by name - "I give this lawful notice, I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Again he named witnesses to "bear witness that I give notice of a brain, of a body, or a marrow wound against Flosi Thord's son, for that wound which proved a death wound, but Helgi got his death therefrom on such and such a spot, when Flosi Thord's son first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I give notice of this before five neighbours" - then he named them all by name - "I give this lawful notice. I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then Mord named his witnesses again "to bear witness," said he, "that I summon these nine neighbours who dwell nearest the spot" - here he named them all by name - "to ride to the Althing, and to sit on the inquest to find whether Flosi Thord's son rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I call on you to utter all those words which ye are bound to find by law, and which I shall call on you to utter before the court, and which belong to

this suit; I call upon you by a lawful summons - I call on you so that ye may yourselves hear - I call on you in the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Again Mord named his witnesses, "to bear witness, that I summon these nine neighbours who dwell nearest to the spot to ride to the Althing, and to sit on an inquest to find whether Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or body, or marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I call on you to utter all those words which ye are bound to find by law, and which I shall call on you to utter before the court, and which belong to this suit I call upon you by a lawful summons - I call on you so that ye may yourselves hear - I call on you in the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then Mord said -

"Now is the suit set on foot as ye asked, and now I will pray thee, Thorgeir Craggeir, to come to me when thou ridest to the Thing, and then let us both ride together, each with our band, and keep as close as we can together, for my band shall be ready by the very beginning of the Thing, and I will be true to you in all things."

They showed themselves well pleased at that, and this was fast bound by oaths, that no man should sunder himself from another till Kari willed it, and that each of them should lay down his life for the other's life. Now they parted with friendship, and settled to meet again at the Thing.

Now Thorgeir rides back east, but Kari rides west over the rivers till he came to Tongue, to Asgrim's house. He welcomed them wonderfully well, and Kari told Asgrim all Gizur the white's plan, and of the setting on foot of the suit.

"I looked for as much from him," says Asgrim, "that he would behave well, and now he has shown it."

Then Asgrim went on -

"What heardest thou from the east of Flosi?"

"He went east all the way to Weaponfirth," answers Kari, "and nearly all the chiefs have promised to ride with him to the Althing, and to help him. They look, too, for help from the Reykdalesmen, and the men of Lightwater, and the Axefirthers."

Then they talked much about it, and so the time passes away up to the Althing.

Thorhall Asgrim's son took such a hurt in his leg that the foot above the ankle was as big and swollen as a woman's thigh, and he could not walk save with a staff. He was a man tall in growth, and strong and powerful, dark of hue in hair and skin, measured and guarded in his speech, and yet hot and hasty tempered. He was the third greatest lawyer in all Iceland.

Now the time comes that men should ride from home to the Thing, Asgrim said to Kari -

"Thou shalt ride at the very beginning of the Thing, and fit up our booths, and my son Thorhall with thee. Thou wilt treat him best and kindest, as he is footlame, but we shall stand in the greatest need of him at this Thing. With you two, twenty men more shall ride."

After that they made ready for their journey, and then they rode to the Thing, and set up their booths, and fitted them out well.

Chapter 135

Of Flosi and the Burners

Flosi rode from the east and those hundred and twenty men who had been at the Burning with him. They rode till they came to Fleetlithe. Then the sons of Sigfus looked after their homesteads and tarried there that day, but at even they rode west over Thurso-water, and slept there that night. But next morning early they saddled their horses and rode off on their way.

Then Flosi said to his men -

"Now will we ride to Tongue to Asgrim to breakfast, and trample down his pride a little."

They said that were well done. They rode till they had a short way to Tongue. Asgrim stood out of doors, and some men with him. They see the band as soon as ever they could do so from the house. Then Asgrim's men said -

"There must be Thorgeir Craggeir."

"Not he," said Asgrim. "I think so all the more because these men fare with laughter and wantonness; but such kinsmen of Njal as Thorgeir is would not smile before some vengeance is taken for the Burning, and I will make another guess, and maybe ye will think that unlikely. My meaning is, that it must be Flosi and the Burners with him, and they must mean to humble us with insults, and we will now go indoors all of us."

Now they do so, and Asgrim made them sweep the house and put up the hangings, and set the boards and put meat on them. He made them place stools along each bench all down the room.

Flosi rode into the "town," and bade men alight from their horses and go in. They did so, and Flosi and his men went into the hall, Asgrim sate on the cross-bench on the dais. Flosi looked at the benches and saw that all was made ready that men needed to have. Asgrim gave them no greeting, but said to Flosi -

"The boards are set, so that meat may be free to those that need it."

Flosi sat down to the board, and all his men; but they laid their arms up against the wainscot. They sat on the stools who found no room on the benches; but four men stood with weapons just before where Flosi sat while they ate.

Asgrim kept his peace during the meat, but was as red to look on as blood.

But when they were full, some women cleared away the boards, while others brought in water to wash their hands. Flosi was in no greater hurry than if he had been at home. There lay a pole-axe in the corner of the dais. Asgrim caught it up with both hands, and ran up to the rail at the edge of the dais, and made a blow at Flosi's head. Glum Hilldir's son happened to see what he was about to do, and sprang up at once, and got hold of the axe above Asgrim's hands, and turned the edge at once on Asgrim; for Glum was very strong. Then many more men ran up and seized Asgrim, but Flosi said that no man was to do Asgrim any harm, "for we put him to too hard a trial, and he only did what he ought, and showed in that that he had a big heart".

Then Flosi said to Asgrim, "Here, now, we shall part safe and sound, and meet at the Thing, and there begin our quarrel over again".

"So it will be," says Asgrim; "and I would wish that, ere this Thing be over, ye should have to take in some of your sails."

Flosi answered him never a word, and then they went out, and mounted their horses, and rode away. They rode till they came to Laugarwater, and were there that night; but next morning they rode on to Baitvale, and baited their horses there, and there many bands rode to meet them. There was Hall of the Side, and all the Eastfirthers. Flosi greeted them well, and told them of his journeys and dealings with Asgrim. Many praised him for that, and said such things were bravely done.

Then Hall said, "I look on this in another way than ye do, for methinks it was a foolish prank; they were sure to bear in mind their griefs, even though they were not reminded of them anew; but those men who try others so heavily must look for all evil".

It was seen from Hall's way that he thought this deed far too strong. They rode thence all together, till they came to the Upper Field, and there they set their men in array, and rode down on the Thing.

Flosi had made them fit out Byrgir's booth ere he rode to the Thing; but the Eastfirthers rode to their own booths.

Chapter 136 Of Thorgeir Craggeir

Thorgeir Craggeir rode from the east with much people. His brothers were with him, Thorleif crow and Thorgrim the big. They came to Hof, to Mord Valgard's son's house, and bided there till he was ready. Mord had gathered every man who could bear arms, and they could see nothing about him but that he was most steadfast in everything, and now they rode until they came west across the rivers. Then they waited for Hjalti Skeggi's son. He came after they had waited a short while, and they greeted him well, and rode afterwards all together till they came to Reykia in Bishop's-tongue, and bided there for Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and he came to meet them there. Then they rode west across Bridgewater. Then Asgrim told them all that had passed between him and Flosi; and Thorgeir said -

"I would that we might try their bravery ere the Thing closes."

They rode until they came to Baitvale. There Gizur the white came to meet them with a very great company, and they fell to talking together. Then they rode to the Upper Field, and drew up all their men in array there, and so rode to the Thing.

Flosi and his men all took to their arms, and it was within an ace that they would fall to blows. But Asgrim and his friends and their followers would have no hand in it, and rode to their booths; and now all was quiet that day, so that they had naught to do with one another. Thither were come chiefs from all the Quarters of the land; there had never been such a crowded Thing before, that men could call to mind.

Chapter 137

Of Eyjolf Bolverk's Son

There was a man named Eyjolf. He was the son of Bolverk, the son of Eyjolf the guileful, of Otterdale. Eyjolf was a man of great rank, and best skilled in law of all men, so that some said he was the third best lawyer in Iceland. He was the fairest in face of all men, tall and strong, and there was the making of a great chief in him. He was greedy of money, like the rest of his kinsfolk.

One day Flosi went to the booth of Bjarni Broddhelgi's son. Bjarni took him by both hands, and sat Flosi down by his side. They talked about many things, and at last Flosi said to Bjarni -

"What counsel shall we now take?"

"I think," answered Bjarni, "that it is now hard to say what to do, but the wisest thing seems to me to go round and ask for help, since they are drawing strength together against you. I will also ask thee, Flosi, whether there be any very good lawyer in your band; for now there are but two courses left; one to ask if they will take an atonement, and that is not a bad choice, but the other is to defend the suit at law, if there be any defence to it, though that will seem to be a bold course; and this is why I think this last ought to be chosen, because ye have hitherto fared high and mightily, and it is unseemly now to take a lower course."

"As to thy asking about lawyers," said Flosi, "I will answer thee at once that there is no such man in our band; nor do I know where to look for one except it be Thorkel Geiti's son, thy kinsman."

"We must not reckon on him," said Bjarni, "for though he knows something of law, he is far too wary, and no man need hope to have him as his shield; but he will back thee as well as any man who backs thee best, for he has a stout heart; besides, I must tell thee that it will be that man's bane who undertakes the defence in this suit for the Burning, but I have no mind that this should befall my kinsman Thorkel, so ye must turn your eyes elsewhere."

Flosi said he knew nothing about who were the best lawyers.

"There is a man named Eyjolf," said Bjarni; "he is Bolverk's son, and he is the best lawyer in the Westfirther's Quarter; but you will need to give him much money if you are to bring him into the suit, but still we must not stop at that. We must also go with our arms to all law business, and be most wary of ourselves, but not meddle with them before we are forced to fight for our lives. And now I will go with thee, and set out at once on our begging for help, for now methinks the peace will be kept but a little while longer."

After that they go out of the booth, and to the booths of the Axefirthers. Then Bjarni talks with Lyting and Bleing, and Hroi Arnstein's son, and he got speedily whatever he asked of them. Then they fared to see Kol, the son of Killing-Skuti, and Eyvind Thorkel's son, the son of Askel the priest, and asked them for their help; but they stood out a long while, but the end of it was that they took three marks of silver for it, and so went into the suit with them.

Then they went to the booths of the men of Lightwater, and stayed there some time. Flosi begged the men of Lightwater for help, but they were stubborn and hard to win over, and then Flosi said, with much wrath, "Ye are ill-behaved! ye are grasping and wrongful at home in your own country, and ye will not help men at the Thing, though they need it. No doubt you will be held up to reproach at the Thing, and very great blame will be laid on you if ye bare not in mind that scorn and those biting words which Skarphedinn hurled at you men of Lightwater."

But on the other hand, Flosi dealt secretly with them, and bade them money for their help, and so coaxed them over with fair words, until it came about that they promised him their aid, and then became so steadfast that they said they would fight for Flosi, if need were.

Then Bjarni said to Flosi -

"Well done! well done! Thou art a mighty chief, and a bold outspoken man, and reckest little what thou sayest to men."

After that they fared away west across the river, and so to the Hladbooth. They saw many men outside before the booth. There was one man who had a scarlet cloak over his shoulders, and a gold band round his head, and an axe studded with silver in his hand.

"This is just right," said Bjarni, "here now is the man I spoke of, Eyjolf Bolverk's son, if thou wilt see him, Flosi."

Then they went to meet Eyjolf, and hailed him. Eyjolf knew Bjarni at once, and greeted him well. Bjarni took Eyjolf by the hand, and led him up into the "Great Rift". Flosi's and Bjarni's men followed after, and Eyjolf's men went also with him. They bade them stay upon the lower brink of the Rift, and look about them, but Flosi, and Bjarni, and Eyjolf went on till they came to where the path leads down from the upper brink of the Rift.

Flosi said it was a good spot to sit down there, for they could see around them far and wide. Then they sat them down there. They were four of them together, and no more.

Then Bjarni spoke to Eyjolf, and said -

"Thee, friend, have we come to see, for we much need thy help in every way."

"Now," said Eyjolf, "there is good choice of men here at the Thing, and ye will not find it hard to fall on those who will be a much greater strength to you than I can be."

"Not so," said Bjarni, "Thou hast many things which show that there is no greater man than thou at the Thing; first of all, that thou art so well-born, as all those men are who are sprung from Ragnar hairybreeks; thy forefathers, too, have always stood first in great suits, both here at the Thing, and at home in their own country, and they have always had the best of it; we think, therefore, it is likely that thou wilt be lucky in winning suits, like thy kinsfolk."

"Thou speakest well, Bjarni," said Eyjolf; "but I think that I have small share in all this that thou sayest."

Then Flosi said -

"There is no need beating about the bush as to what we have in mind. We wish to ask for thy help, Eyjolf, and that thou wilt stand by us in our suits, and go to the court with us, and undertake the defence, if there be any, and plead it for us, and stand by us in all things that may happen at this Thing."

Eyjolf jumped up in wrath, and said that no man had any right to think that he could make a catspaw of him, or drag him on if he had no mind to go himself.

"I see, too, now," he says, "what has led you to utter all those fair words with which ye began to speak to me."

Then Hallbjorn the strong caught hold of him and sate him down by his side, between him and Bjarni, and said -

"No tree falls at the first stroke, friend, but sit here awhile by us."

Then Flosi drew a gold ring off his arm.

"This ring will I give thee, Eyjolf, for thy help and friendship, and so show thee that I will not befool thee. It will be best for thee to take the ring, for there is no man here at the Thing to whom I have ever given such a gift."

The ring was such a good one, and so well made, that it was worth twelve hundred yards of russet stuff.

Hallbjorn drew the ring on Eyjolf's arm; and Eyjolf said -

"It is now most fitting that I should take the ring, since thou behavest so handsomely; and now thou mayest make up thy mind that I will undertake the defence, and do all things needful."

"Now," said Bjarni, "ye behave handsomely on both sides, and here are men well fitted to be witnesses, since I and Hallbjorn are here, that thou hast undertaken the suit."

Then Eyjolf arose, and Flosi too, and they took one another by the hand; and so Eyjolf undertook the whole defence of the suit off Flosi's hands, and so, too, if any suit arose out of the defence, for it often happens that what is a defence in one suit, is a plaintiff's plea in another. So he took upon him all the proofs and

proceedings which belonged to those suits, whether they were to be pleaded before the Quarter Court or the Fifth Court. Flosi handed them over in lawful form, and Eyjolf took them in lawful form, and then he said to Flosi and Bjarni.

"Now I have undertaken this defence just as ye asked, but my wish it is that ye should still keep it secret at first; but if the matter comes into the Fifth Court, then be most careful not to say that ye have given goods for my help."

Then Flosi went home to his booth, and Bjarni with him, but Eyjolf went to the booth of Snorri the priest, and sate down by him, and they talked much together.

Snorri the priest caught hold of Eyjolf's arm, and turned up the sleeve, and sees that he had a great ring of gold on his arm. Then Snorri the priest said -

"Pray, was this ring bought or given?"

Eyjolf was put out about it, and had never a word to say. Then Snorri said -

"I see plainly that thou must have taken it as a gift, and may this ring not be thy death!"

Eyjolf jumped up and went away, and would not speak about it; and Snorri said, as Eyjolf arose -

"It is very likely that thou wilt know what kind of gift thou hast taken by the time this Thing is ended."

Then Eyjolf went to his booth.

Chapter 138 Of Asgrim, and Gizur, and Kari

Now Asgrim Ellidagrim's son talks to Gizur the white, and Kari Solmund's son, and to Hjalldi Skeggi's son, Mord Valgard's son, and Thorgeir Craggeir, and says -

"There is no need to have any secrets here, for only those men are by who know all our counsel. Now I will ask you if ye know anything of their plans, for if you do, it seems to me that we must take fresh counsel about our own plans."

"Snorri the priest," answers Gizur the white, "sent a man to me, and bade him tell me that Flosi had gotten great help from the Northlanders; but that Eyjolf Bolverk's son, his kinsman, had had a gold ring given him by some one, and made a secret of it, and Snorri said it was his meaning that Eyjolf Bolverk's son must be meant to defend the suit at law, and that the ring must have been given him for that."

They were all agreed that it must be so. Then Gizur spoke to them -

"Now has Mord Valgard's son, my son-in-law, undertaken a suit, which all must think most hard, to prosecute Flosi; and now my wish is that ye share the other suits amongst you, for now it will soon be time to give notice of the suits at the Hill of Laws. We shall need also to ask for more help."

Asgrim said so it should be, "but we will beg thee to go round with us when we ask for help". Gizur said he would be ready to do that.

After that Gizur picked out all the wisest men of their company to go with him as his backers. There was Hjalalti Skeggi's son, and Asgrim, and Kari, and Thorgeir Craggeir.

Then Gizur the white said -

"Now will we first go to the booth of Skapti Thorod's son," and they do so. Gizur the white went first, then Hjalalti, then Kari, then Asgrim, then Thorgeir Craggeir, and then his brothers.

They went into the booth. Skapti sat on the cross-bench on the dais, and when he saw Gizur the white he rose up to meet him, and greeted him and all of them well, and bade Gizur to sit down by him, and he does so. Then Gizur said to Asgrim -

"Now shalt thou first raise the question of help with Skapti, but I will throw in what I think good."

"We are come hither," said Asgrim, "for this sake, Skapti, to seek help and aid at thy hand."

"I was thought to be hard to win the last time," said Skapti, "when I would not take the burden of your trouble on me."

"It is quite another matter now," said Gizur. "Now the feud is for master Njal and mistress Bergthora, who were burnt in their own house without a cause, and for Njal's three sons, and many other worthy men, and thou wilt surely never be willing to yield no help to men, or to stand by thy kinsmen and connections."

"It was in my mind," answers Skapti, "when Skarphedinn told me that I had myself borne tar on my own head, and cut up a sod of turf and crept under it, and when he said that I had been so afraid that Thorolf Lopt's son of Eyraar bore me abroad in his ship among his meal-sacks, and so carried me to Iceland, that I would never share in the blood feud for his death."

"Now there is no need to bear such things in mind," said Gizur the white, "for he is dead who said that, and thou wilt surely grant me this, though thou wouldst not do it for other men's sake."

"This quarrel," says Skapti, "is no business of thine, except thou choosest to be entangled in it along with them."

Then Gizur was very wrath, and said -

"Thou art unlike thy father, though he was thought not to be quite clean-handed; yet was he ever helpful to men when they needed him most."

"We are unlike in temper," said Skapti. "Ye two, Asgrim and thou, think that ye have had the lead in mighty deeds; thou, Gizur the white, because thou overcamest Gunnar of Lithend; but Asgrim, for that he slew Gauk, his foster-brother."

"Few," said Asgrim, "bring forward the better if they know the worse, but many would say that I slew not Gauk ere I was driven to it. There is some excuse for

thee for not helping us, but none for heaping reproaches on us; and I only wish before this Thing is out that thou mayest get from this suit the greatest disgrace, and that there may be none to make thy shame good."

Then Gizur and his men stood up all of them, and went out, and so on to the booth of Snorri the priest.

Snorri sat on the cross-bench in his booth; they went into the booth, and he knew the men at once, and stood up to meet them, and bade them all welcome, and made room for them to sit by him.

After that, they asked one another the news of the day.

Then Asgrim spoke to Snorri, and said -

"For that am I and my kinsman Gizur come hither, to ask thee for thy help."

"Thou speakest of what thou mayest always be forgiven for asking, for help in the blood-feud after such connections as thou hadst. We, too, got many wholesome counsels from Njal, though few now bear that in mind; but as yet I know not of what ye think ye stand most in need."

"We stand most in need," answers Asgrim, "of brisk lads and good weapons, if we fight them here at the Thing."

"True it is," said Snorri, "that much lies on that, and it is likeliest that ye will press them home with daring, and that they will defend themselves so in likewise, and neither of you will allow the other's right. Then ye will not bear with them and fall on them, and that will be the only way left; for then they will seek to pay you off with shame for manscathe, and with dishonour for loss of kin."

It was easy to see that he goaded them on in everything.

Then Gizur the white said -

"Thou speakest well, Snorri, and thou behavest ever most like a chief when most lies at stake."

"I wish to know," said Asgrim, "in what way thou wilt stand by us if things turn out as thou sayest."

"I will show thee those marks of friendship," said Snorri, "on which all your honour will hang, but I will not go with you to the court. But if ye fight here on the Thing, do not fall on them at all unless ye are all most steadfast and dauntless, for you have great champions against you. But if ye are over-matched, ye must let yourselves be driven hither towards us, for I shall then have drawn up my men in array hereabouts, and shall be ready to stand by you. But if it falls out otherwise, and they give way before you, my meaning is that they will try to run for a stronghold in the 'Great Rift'. But if they come thither, then ye will never get the better of them. Now I will take that on my hands, to draw up my men there, and guard the pass to the stronghold, but we will not follow them whether they turn north or south along the river. And when you have slain out of their band about as many as I think ye will be able to pay blood-fines for, and yet keep your priesthoods and abodes, then I will run up with all my men and part you. Then ye shall promise to do us I bid you, and stop the battle, if I on my part do what I have now promised."

Gizur thanked him kindly, and said that what he had said was just what they all needed, and then they all went out.

"Whither shall we go now?" said Gizur.

"To the Northlanders' booth," said Asgrim.

Then they fared thither.

Chapter 139 Of Asgrim and Gudmund

And when they came into the booth then they saw where Gudmund the powerful sate and talked with Einer Conal's son, his foster-child; he was a wise man.

Then they come before him, and Gudmund welcomed them very heartily, and made them clear the booth for them, that they might all be able to sit down.

Then they asked what tidings, and Asgrim said -

"There is no need to mutter what I have to say. We wish, Gudmund, to ask for thy steadfast help."

"Have ye seen any other chiefs before?" said Gudmund.

They said they had been to see Skapti Thorod's son and Snorri the priest, and told him quietly how they had fared with each of them.

Then Gudmund said -

"Last time I behaved badly and meanly to you. Then I was stubborn, but now ye shall drive your bargain with me all the more quickly because I was more stubborn then, and now I will go myself with you to the court with all my Thingmen, and stand by you in all such things as I can, and fight for you though this be needed, and lay down my life for your lives. I will also pay Skapti out in this way, that Thorstein gapemouth his son shall be in the battle on our side, for he will not dare to do aught else than I will, since he has Jodisa my daughter to wife, and then Skapti will try to part us."

They thanked him, and talked with him long and low afterwards, so that no other men could hear.

Then Gudmund bade them not to go before the knees of any other chiefs, for he said that would be little-hearted.

"We will now run the risk with the force that we have. Ye must go with your weapons to all law-business, but not fight as things stand."

Then they went all of them home to their booths, and all this was at first with few men's knowledge.

So now the Thing goes on.

Chapter 140

Of the Declarations of the Suits

It was one day that men went to the Hill of Laws, and the chiefs were so placed that Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Gizur the white, and Gudmund the powerful, and Snorri the priest, were on the upper hand by the Hill of Laws; but the Eastfirthers stood down below.

Mord Valgard's son stood next to Gizur his father-in-law; he was of all men the readiest-tongued.

Gizur told him that he ought to give notice of the suit for manslaughter, and bade him speak up, so that all might hear him well.

Then Mord took witness and said - "I take witness to this that I give notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, for that he rushed at Helgi Njal's son and dealt him a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I say that in this suit he ought to be made a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all his goods are forfeited, half to me, and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take his forfeited goods. I give notice of this suit for manslaughter in the Quarter Court into which this suit ought by law to come. I give notice of this lawful notice; I give notice in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws; I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son; I give notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son has handed over to me."

Then a great shout was uttered at the Hill of Laws, that Mord spoke well and boldly.

Then Mord begun to speak a second time.

"I take you to witness to this," says he, "that I give notice of a suit against Flosi Thord's son, I give notice for that he wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death on that spot where Flosi Thord's son had first rushed on Helgi Njal's son with an assault laid down by law. I say that thou, Flosi, ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all thy goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take the goods which have been forfeited by thee. I give notice of this suit in the Quarter Court into which it ought by law to come; I give notice of this lawful notice; I give notice of it in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws; I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son, I give notice of the suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son hath handed over to me."

After that Mord sat him down.

Flosi listened carefully, but said never a word the while.

Then Thorgeir Craggeir stood up and took witness, and said - "I take witness to this, that I give notice of a suit against Glum Hildir's son, in that he took firing

and lit it, and bore it to the house at BergthorsknoU, when they were burned inside it, to wit, Njal Thorgeir's son, and Bergthora Skarphedinn's daughter, and all those other men who were burned inside it there and then. I say that in this suit he ought to be made a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need. I say that all his goods are forfeited, half to me, and half to the men of the Quarter, who have a right by law to take his forfeited goods; I give notice of this suit in the Quarter Court into which it ought by law to come. I give notice in the hearing of all men on the Hill of Laws. I give notice of this suit to be pleaded this summer, and of full outlawry against Glum Hilldir's son."

Kari Solmund's son declared his suits against Kol Thorstein's son, and Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son, and it was the common talk of men that he spoke wondrous well.

Thorleif crow declared his suit against all the sons of Sigfus, but Thorgrim the big, his brother, against Modolf Kettle's son, and Lambi Sigurd's son, and Hroar Hamond's son, brother of Leidolf the strong.

Asgrim Ellidagrim's son declared his suit against Leidolf and Thorstein Geirleif's son. Arni Kol's son, and Grim the red.

And they all spoke well.

After that other men gave notice of their suits, and it was far on in the day that it went on so.

Then men fared home to their booths.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son went to his booth with Flosi; they passed east around the booth, and Flosi said to Eyjolf -

"See'st thou any defence in these suits?"

"None," says Eyjolf.

"What counsel is now to be taken?" says Flosi.

"I will give thee a piece of advice," said Eyjolf. "Now thou shalt hand over thy priesthood to thy brother Thorgeir, but declare that thou hast joined the Thing of Askel the priest the son of Thorkettle, north away in Reykiardale; but if they do not know this, then may be that this will harm them, for they will be sure to plead their suit in the Eastfirther's court, but they ought to plead it in the Northlanders' court, and they will overlook that, and it is a Fifth Court matter against them if they plead their suit in another court than that in which they ought, and then we will take that suit up, but not until we have no other choice left."

"May be," said Flosi, "that we shall get the worth of the ring."

"I don't know that," says Eyjolf; "but I will stand by thee at law, so that men shall say that there never was a better defence. Now, we must send for Askel, but Thorgeir shall come to thee at once, and a man with him."

A little while after Thorgeir came, and then he took on him Flosi's leadership and priesthood.

By that time Askel was come thither too, and then Flosi declared that he had joined his Thing, and this was with no man's knowledge save theirs.

Now all is quiet till the day when the courts were to go out to try suits.

Chapter 141

Now Men Go to the Courts

Now the time passes away till the courts were to go out to try suits. Both sides then made them ready to go thither, and armed them. Each side put war-tokens on their helmets.

Then Thorhall Asgrim's son said -

"Walk hastily in nothing, father mine, and do everything as lawfully and rightly as ye can, but if ye fall into any strait let me know as quickly as ye can, and then I will give you counsel."

Asgrim and the others looked at him, and his face was as though it were all blood, but great teardrops gushed out of his eyes. He bade them bring him his spear, that had been a gift to him from Skarphedinn, and it was the greatest treasure.

Asgrim said as they went away -

"Our kinsman Thorhall was not easy in his mind as we left him behind in the booth, and I know not what he will be at."

Then Asgrim said again -

"Now we will go to Mord Valgard's son, and think of naught else but the suit, for there is more sport in Flosi than in very many other men."

Then Asgrim sent a man to Gizur the white, and Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and Gudmund the powerful. Now they all came together, and went straight to the court of Eastfirthers. They went to the court from the south, but Flosi and all the Eastfirthers with him went to it from the north. There were also the men of Reykdale and the Axefirthers with Flosi. There, too, was Eyjolf Bolverk's son. Flosi looked at Eyjolf, and said -

"All now goes fairly, and may be that it will not be far off from thy guess."

"Keep thy peace about it," says Eyjolf, "and then we shall be sure to gain our point."

Now Mord took witness, and bade all those men who had suits of outlawry before the court to cast lots who should first plead or declare his suit, and who next, and who last; he bade them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges heard it. Then lots were cast as to the declarations, and he, Mord, drew the lot to declare his suit first.

Now Mord Valgard's son took witness the second time, and said -

"I take witness to this, that I except all mistakes in words in my pleading, whether they be too many or wrongly spoken, and I claim the right to amend all my words until I have put them into proper lawful shape. I take witness to myself of this."

Again Mord said -

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or any other man who has undertaken the defence made over to him by Flosi, to listen for him to my oath, and to my declaration of my suit, and to all the proofs and proceedings which I am about to bring forward against him; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it across the court."

Again Mord Valgard's son said -

"I take witness to this, that I take an oath on the book, a lawful until, and I say it before God, that I will so plead this suit in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know; and that I will bring forward all my proofs in due form, and utter them faithfully so long as I am in this suit."

After that he spoke in these words -

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second; I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, on that spot where he, Flosi Thord's son, rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, when Flosi Thord's son, wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed heard it. Then lots were cast as to the declarations, and he, Mord, drew the lot to declare his suit first".

Now Mord Valgard's son took witness the second time, and said -

"I take witness to this, that I except all mistakes in words in my pleading, whether they be too many or wrongly spoken, and I claim the right to amend all my words until I have put them into proper lawful shape. I take witness to myself of this."

Again Mord said -

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or any other man who has undertaken the defence made over to him by Flosi, to listen for him to my oath, and to my declaration of my suit, and to all the proofs and proceedings which I am about to bring forward against him; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it across the court."

Again Mord Valgard's son said -

"I take witness to this, that I take an oath on the book, a lawful oath, and I say it before God, that I will so plead this suit in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know; and that I will bring forward all my proofs in due form, and utter them faithfully so long as I am in this suit."

After that he spoke in these words -

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second; I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son, on that spot where he, Flosi Thord's son, rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, when Flosi Thord's son, wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to me; and I had all these words in my notice which I have now used in this declaration of my suit. I now declare this suit of outlawry in this shape before the court of the Eastfirthers over the head of John, as I uttered it when I gave notice of it."

Then Mord spoke again -

"I have called Thorodd as my first witness, and Thorbjorn as my second. I have called them to bear witness that I gave notice of a suit against Flosi Thord's son for that he wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death. I said that he ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not he fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured in any need; I said that all his goods were forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he has forfeited; I gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; I gave notice of that lawful notice; I gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; I gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. I gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to me; and I had all these words in my notice which I have now used in this declaration of my suit. I now declare this suit of outlawry in this shape before the court of the Eastfirthers over the head of John, as I uttered it when I gave notice of it."

Then Mord's witnesses to the notice came before the court, and spake so that one uttered their witness, but both confirmed it by their common consent in this form, "I bear witness that Mord called Thorodd as his first witness, and me as his second, and my name is Thorbjorn" - then he named his father's name - "Mord called us two as his witnesses that he gave notice of an assault laid down by law against Flosi Thord's son when he rushed on Helgi Njal's son, in that spot where Flosi Thord's son dealt Helgi Njal's son a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, that proved a death-wound, and from which Helgi got his death."

He said that Flosi ought to be made in this suit a guilty man, an outlaw, not to be fed, not to be forwarded, not to be helped or harboured by any man; he said that all his goods were forfeited, half to himself and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take the goods which he had forfeited; he gave notice of the suit in the Quarter Court into which the suit ought by law to come; he gave notice of that lawful notice; he gave notice in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws; he gave notice of this suit to be pleaded now this summer, and of full outlawry against Flosi Thord's son. He gave notice of a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to him. He used all those words in his notice which he used in the declaration of his suit, and which we have used in bearing witness; we have now borne our witness rightly and lawfully, and we are agreed in bearing it; we bear this witness in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, as Mord uttered it when he gave his notice."

A second time they bore their witness of the notice before the court, and put the wounds first and the assault last, and used all the same words as before, and bore their witness in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court just as Mord uttered them when he gave his notice.

Then Mord's witnesses to the handing over of the suit went before the court, and one uttered their witness, and both confirmed it by common consent, and spoke in these words - "That those two, Mord Valgard's son and Thorgeir Thorir's son, took them to witness that Thorgeir Thorir's son handed over a suit for manslaughter to Mord Valgard's son against Flosi Thord's son for the laying of Helgi Njal's son; he handed over to him then the suit, with all the proofs and proceedings which belonged to the suit, he handed it over to him to plead and to settle, and to make use of all rights as though he were the rightful next of kin; Thorgeir handed it over lawfully, and Mord took it lawfully".

They bore this witness of the handing over of the suit in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, just as Mord or Thorgeir had called them as witnesses to prove.

They made all these witnesses swear an oath ere they bore witness, and the judges too.

Again Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness to this," said he, "that I bid those nine neighbours whom I summoned when I laid this suit against Flosi Thord's son, to take their seats west on the river-bank, and I call on the defendant to challenge this inquest, I call on him by a lawful bidding before the court so that the judges may hear."

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has the defence handed over to him, to challenge the inquest which I have caused to take their seats west on the river-bank. I bid thee by a lawful bidding before the court so that the judges may hear."

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness to this, that now are all the first steps and proofs brought forward which belong to the suit. Summons to hear my oath, oath taken, suit declared,

witness borne to the notice, witness borne to the handing over of the suit, the neighbours on the inquest bidden to take their seats, and the defendant bidden to challenge the inquest. I take this witness to these steps and proofs which are now brought forward, and also to this that I shall not be thought to have left the suit though I go away from the court to look up proofs, or on other business."

Now Flosi and his men went thither where the neighbours on the inquest sate.

Then Flosi said to his men -

"The sons of Sigfus must know best whether these are the rightful neighbours to the spot who are here summoned."

Kettle of the Mark answered -

"Here is that neighbour who held Mord at the font when he was baptised, but another is his second cousin by kinship."

Then they reckoned up his kinship, and proved it with an oath.

Then Eyjolf took witness that the inquest should do nothing till it was challenged.

A second time Eyjolf took witness -

"I take witness to this," said he, "that I challenge both these men out of the inquest, and set them aside" - here he named them by name, and their fathers as well - "for this sake, that one of them is Mord's second cousin by kinship, but the other for gossipry, for which sake it is lawful to challenge a neighbour on the inquest; ye two are for a lawful reason incapable of uttering a finding, for now a lawful challenge has overtaken you, therefore I challenge and set you aside by the rightful custom of pleading at the Althing, and by the law of the land; I challenge you in the cause which Flosi Thord's son has handed over to me."

Now all the people spoke out, and said that Mord's suit had come to naught, and all were agreed in this that the defence was better than the prosecution.

Then Asgrim said to Mord -

"The day is not yet their own, though they think now that they have gained a great step; but now some one shall go to see Thorhall my son, and know what advice he gives us."

Then a trusty messenger was sent to Thorhall, and told him as plainly as he could how far the suit had gone, and how Flosi and his men thought they had brought the finding of the inquest to a dead lock.

"I will so make it out," says Thorhall, "that this shall not cause you to lose the suit; and tell them not to believe it, though quirks and quibbles be brought against them, for that wiseacre Eyjolf has now overlooked something. But now thou shalt go back as quickly as thou canst, and say that Mord Valgard's son must go before the court, and take witness that their challenge has come to naught," and then he told him step by step how they must proceed.

The messenger came and told them Thorhall's advice.

Then Mord Valgard's son went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this," said he, "that I make Eyjolf's challenge void and of none effect; and my ground is, that he challenged them not for their kinship to the true plaintiff, the next of kin, but for their kinship to him who pleaded the suit; I take this witness to myself, and to all those to whom this witness will be of use."

After that he brought that witness before the court.

Now he went whither the neighbours sate on the inquest, and bade those to sit down again who had risen up, and said they were rightly called on to share in the finding of the inquest.

Then all said that Thorhall had done great things, and all thought the prosecution better than the defence.

Then Flosi said to Eyjolf - "Thinkest thou that this is good law?"

"I think so, surely," he says, "and beyond a doubt we overlooked this; but still we will have another trial of strength with them."

Then Eyjolf took witness. "I take witness to this," said he, "that I challenge these two men out of the inquest" - here he named them both - "for that sake that they are lodgers, but not householders; I do not allow you two to sit on the inquest, for now a lawful challenge has overtaken you; I challenge you both and set you aside out of the inquest, by the rightful custom of the Althing and by the law of the land."

Now Eyjolf said he was much mistaken if that could be shaken; and then all said that the defence was better than the prosecution.

Now all men praised Eyjolf, and said there was never a man who could cope with him in lawcraft.

Mord Valgard's son and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son now sent a man to Thorhall to tell him how things stood; but when Thorhall heard that, he asked what goods they owned, or if they were paupers?

The messenger said that one gained his livelihood by keeping milch-kine, and "he has both cows and ewes at his abode; but the other has a third of the land which he and the freeholder farm, and finds his own food; and they have one hearth between them, he and the man who lets the land, and one shepherd".

Then Thorhall said -

"They will fare now as before, for they must have made a mistake, and I will soon upset their challenge, and this though Eyjolf had used such big words that it was law."

Now Thorhall told the messenger plainly, step by step, how they must proceed; and the messenger came back and told Mord and Asgrim all the counsel that Thorhall had given.

Then Mord went to the court and took witness, "I take witness to this, that I bring to naught Eyjolf Bolverk's son's challenge, for that he has challenged those men out of the inquest who have a lawful right to lie there; every man has a right to sit on an inquest of neighbours, who owns three hundreds in land or

more, though he may have no dairy-stock; and he too has the same right who lives by dairy-stock worth the same sum, though he leases no land."

Then he brought this witness before the court, and then he went whither the neighbours on the inquest were, and bade them sit down, and said they were rightfully among the inquest.

Then there was a great shout and cry, and then all men said that Flosi's and Eyjolf's cause was much shaken, and now men were of one mind as to this, that the prosecution was better than the defence.

Then Flosi said to Eyjolf -

"Can this be law?"

Eyjolf said he had not wisdom enough to know that for a surety, and then they sent a man to Skapti, the Speaker of the Law, to ask whether it were good law, and he sent them back word that it was surely good law, though few knew it.

Then this was told to Flosi, and Eyjolf Bolverk's son asked the sons of Sigfus as to the other neighbours who were summoned thither.

They said there were four of them who were wrongly summoned; "for those sit now at home who were nearer neighbours to the spot".

Then Eyjolf took witness that he challenged all those four men out of the inquest, and that he did it with lawful form of challenge. After that he said to the neighbours -

"Ye are bound to render lawful justice to both sides, and now ye shall go before the court when ye are called, and take witness that ye find that bar to uttering your finding; that ye are but five summoned to utter your finding, but that ye ought to be nine; and now Thorhall may prove and carry his point in every suit, if he can cure this flaw in this suit."

And now it was plain in everything that Flosi and Eyjolf were very boastful; and there was a great cry that now the suit for the Burning was quashed, and that again the defence was better than the prosecution.

Then Asgrim spoke to Mord -

"They know not yet of what to boast ere we have seen my son Thorhall. Njal told me that he had so taught Thorhall law, that he would turn out the best lawyer in Iceland when ever it were put to the proof."

Then a man was sent to Thorhall to tell him how things stood, and of Flosi's and Eyjolf's boasting, and the cry of the people that the suit for the Burning was quashed in Mord's bands.

"It will be well for them," says Thorhall, "if they get not disgrace from this. Thou shalt go and tell Mord to take witness, and swear an oath, that the greater part of the inquest is rightly summoned, and then he shall bring that witness before the court, and then he may set the prosecution on its feet again; but he will have to pay a fine of three marks for every man that he has wrongly summoned; but he may not be prosecuted for that at this Thing; and now thou shalt go back."

He does so, and told Mord and Asgrim all, word for word, that Thorhall had said.

Then Mord went to the court, and took witness, and swore an oath that the greater part of the inquest was rightly summoned, and said then that he had set the prosecution on its feet again, and then he went on, "and so our foes shall have honour from something else than from this, that we have here taken a great false step".

Then there was a great roar that Mord handled the suit well; but it was said that Flosi and his men betook them only to quibbling and wrong.

Flosi asked Eyjolf if this could be good law, but he said he could not surely tell, but said the Lawman must settle this knotty point.

Then Thorkel Geiti's son went on their behalf to tell the Lawman how things stood, and asked whether this were good law that Mord had said.

"More men are great lawyers now," says Skapti, "than I thought I must tell thee, then, that this is such good law in all points, that there is not a word to say against it; but still I thought that I alone would know this, now that Njal was dead, for he was the only man I ever knew who knew it."

Then Thorkel went back to Flosi and Eyjolf, and said that this was good law.

Then Mord Valgard's son went to the court and took witness. "I take witness to this," he said, "that I bid those neighbours on the inquest in the suit which I set on foot against Flosi Thord's son now to utter their finding, and to find it either against him or for him; I bid them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may bear it across the court."

Then the neighbours on Mord's inquest went to the court, and one uttered their finding, but all confirmed it by their consent; and they spoke thus, word for word

-

"Mord Valgard's son summoned nine of us thanes on this inquest, but here we stand five of us, but four have been challenged and set aside, and now witness has been borne as to the absence of the four who ought to have uttered this finding along with us, and now we are bound by law to utter our finding. We were summoned to bear this witness, whether Flosi Thord's son rushed with an assault laid down by law on Helgi Njal's son, on that spot where Flosi Thord's son wounded Helgi Njal's son with a brain, or a body, or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Helgi got his death. He summoned us to utter all those words which it was lawful for us to utter, and which he should call on us to answer before the court, and which belong to this suit; he summoned us, so that we heard what he said; he summoned us in a suit which Thorgeir Thorir's son had handed over to him, and now we have all sworn an oath, and found our lawful finding, and are all agreed, and we utter our finding against Flosi, and we say that he is truly guilty in this suit. We nine men on this inquest of neighbours so shapen, utter this our finding before the Eastfirthers' Court over the head of John, as Mord summoned us to do; but this is the finding of all of us."

Again a second time they uttered their finding against Flosi, and uttered it first about the wounds, and last about the assault, but all their other words they

uttered just as they had before uttered their finding against Flosi, and brought him in truly guilty in the suit.

Then Mord Valgard's son went before the court, and took witness that those neighbours whom he had summoned in the suit which he had set on foot against Flosi Thord's son had now uttered their finding, and brought him in truly guilty in the suit; he took witness to this for his own part, or for those who might wish to make use of this witness.

Again a second time Mord took witness and said -

"I take witness to this that I call on Flosi, or that man who has to undertake the lawful defence which he has handed over to him, to begin his defence to this suit which I have set on foot against him, for now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward which belong by law to this suit; all witness borne, the finding of the inquest uttered and brought in, witness taken to the finding, and to all the steps which have gone before; but if any such thing arises in their lawful defence which I need to turn into a suit against them, then I claim the right to set that suit on foot against them. I bid this my lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear."

"It gladdens me now, Eyjolf," said Flosi, "in my heart to think what a wry face they will make, and how their pates will tingle when thou bringest forward our defence."

Chapter 142

Of Eyjolf Bolverk's Son

Then Eyjolf Bolverk's son went before the court, and took witness to this -

"I take witness that this is a lawful defence in this cause, that ye have pleaded the suit in the Eastfirthers' Court, when ye ought to have pleaded it in the Northlanders' Court; for Flosi has declared himself one of the Thingmen of Askel the priest; and here now are those two witnesses who were by, and who will bear witness that Flosi handed over his priesthood to his brother Thorgeir, but afterwards declared himself one of Askel the priest's Thingmen. I take witness to this for my own part, and for those who may need to make use of it."

Again Eyjolf took witness - "I take witness," he said, "to this, that I bid Mord who pleads this suit, or the next of kin, to listen to my oath, and to my declaration of the defence which I am about to bring forward; I bid him by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear me".

Again Eyjolf took witness -

"I take witness to this, that I swear an oath on the book, a lawful oath, and say it before God, that I will so defend this cause, in the most truthful, and most just, and most lawful way, so far as I know, and so fulfil all lawful duties which belong to me at this Thing."

Then Eyjolf said -

"These two men I take to witness that I bring forward this lawful defence that this suit was pleaded in another Quarter Court, than that in which it ought to have been pleaded; and I say that for this sake their suit has come to naught; I utter this defence in this shape before the Eastfirthers' Court."

After that he let all the witness be brought forward which belonged to the defence, and then he took witness to all the steps in the defence to prove that they had all been duly taken.

After that Eyjolf again took witness and said -

"I take witness to this, that I forbid the judges, by a lawful protest before the priest, to utter judgment in the suit of Mord and his friends, for now a lawful defence has been brought before the court. I forbid you by a protest made before a priest; by a full, fair, and binding protest; as I have a right to forbid you by the common custom of the Althing, and by the law of the land."

After that he called on the judges to pronounce for the defence.

Then Asgrim and his friends brought on the other suits for the Burning, and those suits took their course.

Chapter 143

The Counsel of Thorhall Asgrim's Son

Now Asgrim and his friends sent a man to Thorhall, and let him be told in what a strait they had come.

"Too far off was I now," answers Thorhall, "for this cause might still not have taken this turn if I had been by. I now see their course that they must mean to summon you to the Fifth Court for contempt of the Thing. They must also mean to divide the Eastfirthers' Court in the suit for the Burning, so that no judgment may be given, for now they behave so as to show that they will stay at no ill. Now shalt thou go back to them as quickly as thou canst, and say that Mord must summon them both, both Flosi and Eyjolf, for having brought money into the Fifth Court, and make it a case of lesser outlawry. Then he shall summon them with a second summons for that they have brought forward that witness which had nothing to do with their cause, and so were guilty of contempt of the Thing; and tell them that I say this, that if two suits for lesser outlawry hang over one and the same man, that he shall be adjudged a thorough outlaw at once. And for this ye must set your suits on foot first, that then ye will first go to trial and judgment."

Now the messenger went his way back and told Mord and Asgrim.

After that they went to the Hill of Laws, and Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness to this that I summon Flosi Thord's son, for that he gave money for his help here at the Thing to Eyjolf Bolverk's son. I say that he ought on this charge to be made a guilty outlaw, for this sake alone to be forwarded or to be allowed the right of frithstow [sanctuary], if his fine and bail are brought forward at the execution levied on his house and goods, but else to become a thorough

outlaw. I say all his goods are forfeited, half to me and half to the men of the Quarter who have the right by law to take his goods after he has been outlawed. I summon this cause before the Fifth Court, whither the cause ought to come by law; I summon it to be pleaded now and to full outlawry. I summon with a lawful summons. I summon in the hearing of all men at the Hill of Laws."

With a like summons he summoned Eyjolf Bolverk's son, for that he had taken and received the money, and he summoned him for that sake to the Fifth Court.

Again a second time he summoned Flosi and Eyjolf, for that sake that they had brought forward that witness at the Thing which had nothing lawfully to do with the cause of the parties, and had so been guilty of contempt of the Thing; and he laid the penalty for that at lesser outlawry.

Then they went away to the Court of Laws, there the Fifth Court was then set.

Now when Mord and Asgrim had gone away, then the judges in the Eastfirthers' Court could not agree how they should give judgment, for some of them wished to give judgment for Flosi, but some for Mord and Asgrim. Then Flosi and Eyjolf tried to divide the court, and there they stayed, and lost time over that while the summoning at the Hill of Laws was going on. A little while after Flosi and Eyjolf were told that they had been summoned at the Hill of Laws into the Fifth Court, each of them with two summons. Then Eyjolf said -

"In an evil hour have we loitered here while they have been before us in quickness of summoning. Now hath come out Thorhall's cunning, and no man is his match in wit. Now they have the first right to plead their cause before the court, and that was everything for them; but still we will go to the Hill of Laws, and set our suit on foot against them, though that will now stand us in little stead."

Then they fared to the Hill of Laws, and Eyjolf summoned them for contempt of the Thing.

After that they went to the Fifth Court.

Now we must say that when Mord and Asgrim came to the Fifth Court, Mord took witness and bade them listen to his oath and the declaration of his suit, and to all those proofs and steps which he meant to bring forward against Flosi and Eyjolf. He bade them by a lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges could hear him across the court.

In the Fifth Court vouchers had to follow the oaths of the parties, and they had to take an oath after them.

Mord took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I take a Fifth Court oath. I pray God so to help me in this light and in the next, as I shall plead this suit as I know to be most truthful, and just, and lawful. I believe with all my heart that Flosi is truly guilty in this suit, if I may bring forward my proofs; and I have not brought money into this court in this suit, and I will not bring it. I have not taken money, and I will not take it, neither for a lawful nor for an unlawful end."

The men who were Mord's vouchers then went two of them before the court, and took witness to this -

"We take witness that we take an oath on the book, a lawful oath; we pray God so to help us two in this light and in the next, as we lay it on our honour that we believe with all our hearts that Mord will so plead this suit as he knows to be most truthful, and most just, and most lawful, and that he hath not brought money into this court in this suit to help himself, and that he will not offer it, and that he hath not taken money, nor will he take it, either for a lawful or unlawful end."

Mord had summoned nine neighbours who lived next to the Thingfield on the inquest in the suit, and then Mord took witness, and declared those four suits which he had set on foot against Flosi and Eyjolf; and Mord used all those words in his declaration that he had used in his summons. He declared his suits for outlawry in the same shape before the Fifth Court as he had uttered them when he summoned the defendants.

Mord took witness, and bade those nine neighbours on the inquest to take their seats west on the river-bank.

Mord took witness again, and bade Flosi and Eyjolf to challenge the inquest.

They went up to challenge the inquest, and looked narrowly at them, but could get none of them set aside; then they went away as things stood, and were very ill pleased with their case.

Then Mord took witness, and bade those nine neighbours whom he had before called on the inquest, to utter their finding, and to bring it in either for or against Flosi.

Then the neighbours on Mord's inquest came before the court, and one uttered the finding, but all the rest confirmed it by their consent. They had all taken the Fifth Court oath, and they brought in Flosi as truly guilty in the suit, and brought in their finding against him. They brought it in in such a shape before the Fifth Court over the head of the same man over whose head Mord had already declared his suit. After that they brought in all those findings which they were bound to bring in in all the other suits, and all was done in lawful form.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son and Flosi watched to find a flaw in the proceedings, but could get nothing done.

Then Mord Valgard's son took witness. "I take witness," said he, "to this, that these nine neighbours whom I called on these suits which I have had hanging over the heads of Flosi Thord's son, and Eyjolf Bolverk's son, have now uttered their finding, and have brought them in truly guilty in these suits."

He took this witness for his own part.

Again Mord took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I bid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has taken his lawful defence in hand, now to begin their defence; for now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward in the suit, summons to listen to oaths, oaths taken, suit declared, witness taken to the summons, neighbours called on to take their seats on the inquest, defendant called on to challenge the inquest, finding uttered, witness taken to the finding."

He took this witness to all the steps that had been taken in the suit.

Then that man stood up over whose head the suit had been declared and pleaded, and summed up the case. He summed up first how Mord had bade them listen to his oath, and to his declaration of the suit, and to all the steps and proofs in it; then he summed up next how Mord took his oath and his vouchers theirs; then he summed up how Mord pleaded his suit, and used the very words in his summing up that Mord had before used in declaring and pleading his suit, and which he had used in his summons, and he said that the suit came before the Fifth Court in the same shape as it was when he uttered it at the summoning. Then he summed up that men had borne witness to the summoning, and repeated all those words that Mord had used in his summons, and which they had used in bearing their witness, "and which I now," he said, "have used in my summing up, and they bore their witness in the same shape before the Fifth Court as he uttered them at the summoning". After that he summed up that Mord bade the neighbours on the inquest to take their seats, then he told next of all how he bade Flosi to challenge the inquest, or that man who had undertaken this lawful defence for him; then he told how the neighbours went to the court, and uttered their finding, and brought in Flosi truly guilty in the suit, and how they brought in the finding of an inquest of nine men in that shape before the Fifth Court. Then he summed up how Mord took witness to all the steps in the suit, and how he had bidden the defendant to begin his defence.

After that Mord Valgard's son took witness. "I take witness," he said, "to this, that I forbid Flosi Thord's son, or that other man who has undertaken the lawful defence for him, to set up his defence; for now are all the steps taken which belong to the suit, when the case has been summed up and the proofs repeated."

After that the foreman added these words of Mord to his summing up.

Then Mord took witness, and prayed the judges to give judgment in this suit.

Then Gizur the white said, "Thou wilt have to do more yet, Mord, for four twelves can have no right to pass judgment."

Now Flosi said to Eyjolf, "What counsel is to be taken now?"

Then Eyjolf said, "Now we must make the best of a bad business; but still, we will bide our time, for now I guess that they will make a false step in their suit, for Mord prayed for judgment at once in the suit, but they ought to call and set aside six men out of the court, and after that they ought to offer us to call and set aside six other men, but we will not do that, for then they ought to call and set aside those six men, and they will perhaps overlook that; then all their case has come to naught if they do not do that, for three twelves have to judge in every cause".

"Thou art a wise man, Eyjolf," said Flosi, "so that few can come nigh thee."

Mord Valgard's son took witness.

"I take witness," he said, "to this, that I call and set aside these six men out of the court" - and named them all by name - "I do not allow you to sit in the court; I call you out and set you aside by the rightful custom of the Althing, and the law of the land."

After that he offered Eyjolf and Flosi, before witnesses, to call out by name and set aside other six men, but Flosi and Eyjolf would not call them out.

Then Mord made them pass judgment in the cause; but when the judgment was given, Eyjolf took witness, and said that all their judgment had come to naught, and also everything else that had been done, and his ground was that three twelves and one half had judged, when three only ought to have given judgment.

"And now we will follow up our suits before the Fifth Court," said Eyjolf, "and make them outlaws."

Then Gizur the white said to Mord Valgard's son -

"Thou hast made a very great mistake in taking such a false step, and this is great ill-luck; but what counsel shall we now take, kinsman Asgrim?" says Gizur.

Then Asgrim said - "Now we will send a man to my son Thorhall, and know what counsel he will give us".

Chapter 144

Battle at the Althing

Now Snorri the priest hears how the causes stood, and then he begins to draw up his men in array below the "Great Rift," between it and Hadbooth, and laid down beforehand to his men how they were to behave.

Now the messenger comes to Thorhall Asgrim's son, and tells him how things stood, and how Mord Valgard's son and his friends would all be made outlaws, and the suits for manslaughter be brought to naught.

But when he heard that, he was so shocked at it that he could not utter a word. He jumped up then from his bed, and clutched with both hands his spear, Skarphedinn's gift, and drove it through his foot; then flesh clung to the spear, and the eye of the boil too, for he had cut it clean out of the foot, but a torrent of blood and matter poured out, so that it fell in a stream along the floor. Now he went out of the booth unhalting, and walked so hard that the messenger could not keep up with him, and so he goes until he came to the Fifth Court. There he met Grim the red, Flosi's kinsman, and as soon as ever they met, Thorhall thrust at him with the spear, and smote him on the shield and clove it in twain, but the spear passed right through him, so that the point came out between his shoulders. Thorhall cast him off his spear.

Then Kari Solmund's son caught sight of that, and said to Asgrim -

"Here, now, is come Thorhall thy son, and has straightway slain a man, and this is a great shame, if he alone shall have the heart to avenge the Burning."

"That shall not be," says Asgrim, "but let us turn on them now."

Then there was a mighty cry all over the host, and then they shouted their war-cries.

Flosi and his friends then turned against their foes, and both sides egged on their men fast.

Kari Solmund's son turned now thither where Arni Kol's son and Hallbjorn the strong were in front, and as soon as ever Hallbjorn saw Kari, he made a blow at him, and aimed at his leg, but Kari leapt up into the air, and Hallbjorn missed him. Kari turned on Arni Kol's son and cut at him, and smote him on the shoulder, and cut asunder the shoulder blade and collar bone, and the blow went right down into his breast, and Arni fell down dead at once to earth.

After that he hewed at Hallbjorn and caught him on the shield, and the blow passed through the shield, and so down and cut off his great toe. Holmstein hurled a spear at Kari, but he caught it in the air, and sent it back, and it was a man's death in Flosi's band.

Thorgeir Craggeir came up to where Hallbjorn the strong was in front, and Thorgeir made such a spear-thrust at him with his left hand that Hallbjorn fell before it, and had hard work to get on his feet again, and turned away from the fight there and then. Then Thorgeir met Thorwalld Kettle rumble's son, and hewed at him at once with the axe, "the ogress of war," which Skarphedinn had owned. Thorwalld threw his shield before him, and Thorgeir hewed the shield and cleft it from top to bottom, but the upper horn of the axe made its way into his breast, and passed into his trunk, and Thorwalld fell and was dead at once.

Now it must be told how Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, and Thorhall his son, Hjalti Skeggi's son, and Gizur the white, made an onslaught where Flosi and the sons of Sigfus, and the other Burners were; then there was a very hard fight, and the end of it was that they pressed on so hard, that Flosi and his men gave way before them. Gudmund the powerful, and Mord Valgard's son, and Thorgeir Craggeir, made their onslaught where the Axefirthers and Eastfirthers, and the men of Reykdale stood, and there too there was a very hard fight.

Kari Solmund's son came up where Bjarni Broddhelgi's son had the lead. Kari caught up a spear and thrust at him, and the blow fell on his shield. Bjarni slipped the shield on one side of him, else it had gone straight through him. Then he cut at Kari and aimed at his leg, but Kari drew back his leg and turned short round on his heel, and Bjarni missed him. Kari cut at once at him, and then a man ran forward and threw his shield before Bjarni. Kari cleft the shield in twain, and the point of the sword caught his thigh, and ripped up the whole leg down to the ankle. That man fell there and then, and was ever after a cripple so long as he lived.

Then Kari clutched his spear with both hands, and turned on Bjarni and thrust at him; he saw he had no other chance but to throw himself down side-long away from the blow, but as soon as ever Bjarni found his feet, away he fell back out of the fight.

Thorgeir Craggeir and Gizur the white fell on there where Holmstein the son of Bersi the wise, and Thorkel Geiti's son were leaders, and the end of the struggle was, that Holmstein and Thorkel gave way, and then arose a mighty hooting after them from the men of Gudmund the powerful.

Thorwalld Tjorfi's son of Lightwater got a great wound; he was shot in the forearm, and men thought that Halldor Gudmund the powerful's son had hurled

the spear, but he bore that wound about with him all his life long, and got no atonement for it.

Now there was a mighty throng. But though we hear tell of some of the deeds that were done, still there are far many more of which men have handed down no stories.

Flosi had told them that they should make for the stronghold in the Great Rift if they were worsted, "for there," said he, "they will only be able to attack us on one side". But the band which Hall of the Side and his son Ljot led, had fallen away out of the fight before the onslaught of that father and son, Asgrim and Thorhall. They turned down east of Axewater, and Hall said -

"This is a sad state of things when the whole host of men at the Thing fight, and I would, kinsman Ljot, that we begged us help even though that be brought against us by some men, and that we part them. Thou shalt wait for me at the foot of the bridge, and I will go to the booths and beg for help."

"If I see," said Ljot, "that Flosi and his men need help from our men, then I will at once run up and aid them."

"Thou wilt do in that as thou pleasest," says Hall, "but I pray thee to wait for me here."

Now flight breaks out in Flosi's band, and they all fly west across Axewater; but Asgrim and Gizur the white went after them and all their host. Flosi and his men turned down between the river and the Outwork booth. Snorri the priest had drawn up his men there in array, so thick that they could not pass that way, and Snorri the priest called out then to Flosi -

"Why are ye in such haste, or who chase you?"

"Thou askest not this," answered Flosi, "because thou dost not know it already; but whose fault is it that we cannot get to the stronghold in the Great Rift?"

"It is not my fault," says Snorri, "but it is quite true that I know whose fault it is, and I will tell thee if thou wilt; it is the fault of Thorwalld cropbeard and Kol."

They were both then dead, but they had been the worst men in all Flosi's band.

Again Snorri said to his men -

"Now do both, cut at them and thrust at them, and drive them away hence, they will then hold out but a short while here, if the others attack them from below; but then ye shall not go after them, but let both sides shift for themselves."

The son of Skapti Thorod's son was Thorstein gapemouth, as was written before, he was in the battle with Gudmund the powerful, his father-in-law, and as soon as Skapti knew that, he went to the booth of Snorri the priest, and meant to beg for help to part them; but just before he had got as far as the door of Snorri's booth, there the battle was hottest of all. Asgrim and his friends and his men were just coming up thither, and then Thorhall said to his father Asgrim -

"See there now is Skapti Thorod's son, father."

"I see him, kinsman," said Asgrim, and then he shot a spear at Skapti, and struck him just below where the calf was fattest, and so through both his legs. Skapti fell at the blow, and could not get up again, and the only counsel they could take who were by, was to drag Skapti flat on his face into the booth of a turf-cutter.

Then Asgrim and his men came up so fast that Flosi and his men gave way before them south along the river to the booths of the men of Modruvale. There there was a man outside one booth whose name was Solvi; he was boiling broth in a great kettle, and had just then taken the meat out, and the broth was boiling as hotly as it could.

Solvi cast his eyes on the Eastfirthers as they fled, and they were then just over against him, and then he said - "Can all these cowards who fly here be Eastfirthers, and yet Thorkel Geiti's son, he ran by as fast as any one of them, and very great lies have been told about him when men say that he is all heart, but now no one ran faster than he".

Hallbjorn the strong was near by them, and said -

"Thou shalt not have it to say that we are all cowards."

And with that he caught hold of him, and lifted him up aloft, and thrust him head down into the broth-kettle. Solvi died at once; but then a rush was made at Hallbjorn himself, and he had to turn and fly.

Flosi threw a spear at Bruni Hafliði's son, and caught him at the waist, and that was his bane; he was one of Gudmund the powerful's band.

Thorstein Hlenni's son took the spear out of the wound, and hurled it back at Flosi, and hit him on the leg, and he got a great wound and fell; he rose up again at once.

Then they passed on to the Waterfirther's booth, and then Hall and Ljot came from the east across the river, with all their band; but just when they came to the lava, a spear was hurled out of the band of Gudmund the powerful, and it struck Ljot in the middle, and he fell down dead at once; and it was never known surely who had done that manslaughter.

Flosi and his men turned up round the Waterfirther's booth, and then Thorgeir Craggeir said to Kari Solmund's son -

"Look, yonder now is Eyjolf Bolverk's son, if thou hast a mind to pay him off for the ring."

"That I ween is not far from my mind," says Kari, and snatched a spear from a man, and hurled it at Eyjolf, and it struck him in the waist, and went through him, and Eyjolf then fell dead to earth.

Then there was a little lull in the battle, and then Snorri the priest came up with his band, and Skapti was there in his company, and they ran in between them, and so they could not get at one another to fight.

Then Hall threw in his people with theirs, and was for parting them there and then, and so a truce was set, and was to be kept throughout the Thing, and

then the bodies were laid out and borne to the church, and the wounds of those men were bound up who were hurt.

The day after men went to the Hill of Laws. Then Hall of the Side stood up and asked for a hearing, and got it at once; and he spoke thus -

"Here there have been hard happenings in lawsuits and loss of life at the Thing, and now I will show again that I am little-hearted, for I will now ask Asgrim and the others who take the lead in these suits, that they grant us an atonement on even terms;" and so he goes on with many fair words.

Kari Solmund's son said -

"Though all others take an atonement in their quarrels, yet will I take no atonement in my quarrel; for ye will wish to weigh these manslayings against the Burning, and we cannot bear that."

In the same way spoke Thorgeir Craggeir.

Then Skapti Thorod's son stood up and said -

"Better had it been for thee, Kari, not to have run away from thy father-in-law and thy brothers-in-law, than now to sneak out of this atonement."

Then Kari sang these verses -

Warrior wight that weapon wieldest
Spare thy speering why we fled,
Oft for less falls hail of battle,
Forth we fled to wreak revenge;
Who was he, faint-hearted foeman,
Who, when tongues of steel sung high,
Stole beneath the booth for shelter,
While his beard blushed red for shame?

Many fetters Skapti fettered
When the men, the Gods of fight,
From the fray fared all unwilling
Where the skald scarce held his shield;
Then the suttlers dragged the lawyer
Stout in scolding to their booth,
Laid him low amongst the ruffraff,
How his heart then quaked for fear.

Men who skim the main on sea stag
Well in this ye showed your sense,
Making game about the Burning,
Mocking Helgi, Grim, and Njal;
Now the moor round rocky Swinestye,ö
As men run and shake their shields,
With another grunt shall rattle
When this Thing is past and gone.

Then there was great laughter. Snorri the priest smiled, and sang this between his teeth, but so that many heard -

Skill hath Skapti us to tell
Whether Asgrim's shaft flew well;
Holmstein hurried swift to flight,
Thorstein turned him soon to fight.

Now men burst out in great fits of laughter.

Then Hall of the Side said -

"All men know what a grief I have suffered in the loss of my son Ljot; many will think that he would be valued dearest of all those men who have fallen here; but I will do this for the sake of an atonement - I will put no price on my son, and yet will come forward and grant both pledges and peace to those who are my adversaries. I beg thee, Snorri the priest, and other of the best men, to bring this about, that there may be an atonement between us."

Now he sits him down, and a great hum in his favour followed, and all praised his gentleness and good-will.

Then Snorri the priest stood up and made a long and clever speech, and begged Asgrim and the others who took the lead in the quarrel to look towards an atonement.

Then Asgrim said -

"I made up my mind when Flosi made an inroad on my house that I would never be atoned with him; but now Snorri the priest, I will take an atonement from him for thy word's sake and other of our friends."

In the same way spoke Thorleif crow and Thorgrim the big, that they were willing to be atoned, and they urged in every way their brother Thorgeir Craggeir to take an atonement also; but he hung back, and says he would never part from Kari.

Then Gizur the white said -

"Now Flosi must see that he must make his choice, whether he will be atoned on the understanding that some will be out of the atonement."

Flosi says he will take that atonement; "and methinks it is so much the better," he says, "that I have fewer good men and true against me".

Then Gudmund the powerful said -

"I will offer to hansom peace on my behalf for the slayings that have happened here at the Thing, on the understanding that the suit for the Burning is not to fall to the ground."

In the same way spoke Gizur the white and Hjalldi Skeggi's son, Asgrim Ellidagrim's son and Mord Valgard's son.

In this way the atonement came about, and then hands were shaken on it, and twelve men were to utter the award; and Snorri the priest was the chief man in the award, and others with him. Then the manslaughters were set off the one against the other, and those men who were over and above were paid for in fines. They also made an award in the suit about the Burning.

Njal was to be atoned for with a triple fine, and Bergthora with two. The slaying of Skarphedinn was to be set off against that of Hauskuld the Whiteness priest. Both Grim and Helgi were to be paid for with double fines; and one full man-fine should be paid for each of those who had been burnt in the house.

No atonement was taken for the slaying of Thord Kari's son.

It was also in the award that Flosi and all the Burners should go abroad into banishment, and none of them was to sail the same summer unless he chose; but if he did not sail abroad by the time that three winters were spent, then he and all the Burners were to become thorough outlaws. And it was also said that their outlawry might be proclaimed either at the Harvest-Thing or Spring-Thing, whichever men chose; and Flosi was to stay abroad three winters.

As for Gunnar Lambi's son, and Grani Gunnar's son. Glum Hildir's son, and Kol Thorstein's son, they were never to be allowed to come back.

Then Flosi was asked if he would wish to have a price put upon his wound, but he said he would not take bribes for his hurt.

Eyjolf Bolverk's son had no fine awarded for him, for his unfairness and wrongfulness.

And now the settlement and atonement was handselled, and was well kept afterwards.

Asgrim and his friends gave Snorri the priest good gifts, and he had great honour from these suits.

Skapti got a fine for his hurt.

Gizur the white, and Hjalldi Skeggi's son, and Asgrim Ellidagrim's son, asked Gudmund the powerful to come and see them at home. He accepted the bidding, and each of them gave him a gold ring.

Now Gudmund rides home north, and had praise from every man for the part he had taken in these quarrels.

Thorgeir Craggeir asked Kari to go along with him, but yet first of all they rode with Gudmund right up to the fells north. Kari gave Gudmund a golden brooch, but Thorgeir gave him a silver belt, and each was the greatest treasure. So they parted with the utmost friendship, and Gudmund is out of this story.

Kari and Thorgeir rode south from the fell, and down to the Rapes,ö and so to Thurso-water.

Flosi, and the Burners along with him, rode east to Fleetlithe, and he allowed the sons of Sigfus to settle their affairs at home. Then Flosi heard that Thorgeir and Kari had ridden north with Gudmund the powerful, and so the Burners thought that Kari and his friend must mean to stay in the north country; and then the sons of Sigfus asked leave to go east under Eyjafell to get in their money, for they had money out on call at Headbrink. Flosi gave them leave to do that, but still bade them be ware of themselves, and be as short a time about it as they could.

Then Flosi rode up by Godaland, and so north of Eyjafell Jokul, and did not draw bridle before he came home east to Swinefell.

Now it must be said that Hall of the Side had suffered his son to fall without a fine, and did that for the sake of an atonement, but then the whole host of men at the Thing agreed to pay a fine for him, and the money so paid was not less than eight hundred in silver, but that was four times the price of a man; but all the others who had been with Flosi got no fines paid for their hurts, and were very ill pleased at it.

Chapter 145

Of Kari and Thorgeir

Those two, Kari Solmund's and Thorgeir Craggeir, rode that day east across Markfleet, and so on east to Selialandsmull. They found there some women. The wives knew them, and said to them -

"Ye two are less wanton than the sons of Sigfus yonder, but still ye fare unwarily."

"Why do ye talk thus of the sons of Sigfus, or what do ye know about them?"

"They were last night," they said, "at Raufarfell, and meant to get to Myrdale to-night, but still we thought they must have some fear of you, for they asked when he would be likely to come home."

Then Kari and Thorgeir went on their way and spurred their horses.

"What shall we lay down for ourselves to do now," said Thorgeir, "or what is most to thy mind? Wilt thou that we ride on their track?"

"I will not hinder this," answers Kari, "nor will I say what ought to be done, for it may often be that those live Long who are slain with words alone;ö but I well know what thou meanest to take on thyself, thou must mean to take on thy hands eight men, and after all that is less than it was when thou slewest those seven in the sea-crag,ö and let thyself down by a rope to get at them; but it is the way with all you kinsmen, that ye always wish to be doing some famous feat, and now I can do no less than stand by thee and have my share in the story. So now we two alone will ride after them, for I see that thou hast so made up thy mind."

After that they rode east by the upper way, and did not pass by Holt, for Thorgeir would not that any blame should be laid at his brother's door for what might be done.

Then they rode east to Myrdale, and there they met a man who had turf-panniers on his horse. He began to speak thus -

"Too few men, messmate Thorgeir, hast thou now in thy company."

"How is that?" says Thorgeir.

"Why," said the other, "because the prey is now before thy hand. The sons of Sigfus rode by a while ago, and mean to sleep the whole day east in Carlinedale, for they mean to go no farther to-night than to Headbrink."

After that they rode on their way east on Arnstacks heath, and there is nothing to be told of their journey before they came to Carlinedale-water.

The stream was high, and now they rode up along the river, for they saw their horses with saddles. They rode now thitherward, and saw that there were men asleep in a dell and their spears were standing upright in the ground a little below them. They took the spears from them, and threw them into the river.

Then Thorgeir said -

"Wilt thou that we wake them?"

"Thou hast not asked this," answers Kari, "because thou hast not already made up thy mind not to fall on sleeping men, and so to slay a shameful manslaughter."

After that they shouted to them, and then they all awoke and grasped at their arms.

They did not fall on them till they were armed.

Thorgeir Craggeir runs thither where Thorkel Sigfus' son stood, and just then a man ran behind his back, but before he could do Thorgeir any hurt, Thorgeir lifted the axe, "the ogress of war," with both hands, and dashed the hammer of the axe with a back-blow into the head of him that stood behind him, so that his skull was shattered to small bits.

"Slain is this one," said Thorgeir; and down the man fell at once, and was dead.

But when he dashed the axe forward, he smote Thorkel on the shoulder, and hewed it off, arm and all.

Against Kari came Mord Sigfus' son, and Sigmund Sigfus' son, and Lambi Sigurd's son; the last ran behind Kari's back, and thrust at him with a spear; Kari caught sight of him, and leapt up as the blow fell, and stretched his legs far apart, and so the blow spent itself on the ground, but Kari jumped down on the spear-shaft, and snapped it in sunder. He had a spear in one hand, and a sword in the other, but no shield. He thrust with the right hand at Sigmund Sigfus' son, and smote him on his breast, and the spear came out between his shoulders, and down he fell and was dead at once. With his left hand he made a cut at Mord, and smote him on the hip, and cut it asunder, and his backbone too; he fell flat on his lace, and was dead at once.

After that he turned sharp round on his heel like a whipping-top, and made at Lambi Sigurd's son, but he took the only way to save himself, and that was by running away as hard as he could.

Now Thorgeir turns against Leidolf the strong, and each hewed at the other at the same moment, and Leidolf's blow was so great that it shore off that part of the shield on which it fell.

Thorgeir had hewn with "the ogress of war," holding it with both hands, and the lower horn fell on the shield and clove it in twain, but the upper caught the collar bone and cut it in two, and tore on down into the breast and trunk. Kari came up just then, and cut off Leidolf's leg at mid-thigh, and then Leidolf fell and died at once.

Kettle of the Mark said - "We will now run for our horses, for we cannot hold our own here, for the overbearing strength of these men".

Then they ran for their horses, and leapt on their backs; and Thorgeir said -

"Wilt thou that we chase them? if so, we shall yet slay some of them."

"He rides last," says Kari, "whom I would not wish to slay, and that is Kettle of the Mark, for we have two sisters to wife; and besides, he has behaved best of all of them as yet in our quarrels."

Then they got on their horses, and rode till they came home to Holt. Then Thorgeir made his brothers fare away east to Skoga, for they had another farm there, and because Thorgeir would not that his brothers should be called truce-breakers.

Then Thorgeir kept many men there about him, so that there were never fewer than thirty fighting men there.

Then there was great joy there, and men thought Thorgeir had grown much greater, and pushed himself on; both he and Kari too. Men long kept in mind this hunting of theirs, how they two rode upon fifteen men and slew those five, but put those ten to flight who got away.

Now it is to be told of Kettle, that they rode as they best might till they came home to Swinefell, and told how bad their journey had been.

Flosi said it was only what was to be looked for; "and this is a warning that ye should never do the like again".

Flosi was the merriest of men, and the best of hosts, and it is so said that he had most of the chieftain in him of all the men of his time.

He was at home that summer, and the winter too.

But that winter, after Yule, Hall of the Side came from the east, and Kol his son. Flosi was glad at his coming, and they often talked about the matter of the Burning. Flosi said they had already paid a great fine, and Hall said it was pretty much what he had guessed would come of Flosi's and his friends' quarrel. Then he asked him what counsel he thought best to be taken, and Hall answers -

"The counsel I give is, that thou beest atoned with Thorgeir if there be a choice, and yet he will be hard to bring to take any atonement."

"Thinkest thou that the manslaughters will then be brought to an end?" asks Flosi.

"I do not think so," says Hall; "but you will have to do with fewer foes if Kari be left alone; but if thou art not atoned with Thorgeir, then that will be thy bane."

"What atonement shall we offer him?" asks Flosi.

"You will all think that atonement hard," says Hall, "which he will take, for he will not hear of an atonement unless he be not called on to pay any fine for what he has just done, but he will have fines for Njal and his sons, so far as his third share goes."

"That is a hard atonement," says Flosi.

"For thee at least," says Hall, "that atonement is not hard, for thou hast not the blood-feud after the sons of Sigfus; their brothers have the blood-feud, and Hamond the halt after his son; but thou shalt now get an atonement from Thorgeir, for I will now ride to his house with thee, and Thorgeir will in anywise receive me well; but no man of those who are in this quarrel will dare to sit in his house on Fleetlithe if they are out of the atonement, for that will be their bane; and, indeed, with Thorgeir's turn of mind, it is only what must be looked for."

Now the sons of Sigfus were sent for, and they brought this business before them; and the end of their speech was, on the persuasion of Hall, that they all thought what he said right, and were ready to be atoned.

Grani Gunnar's son and Gunnar Lambi's son said -

"It will be in our power, if Kari be left alone behind, to take care that he be not less afraid of us than we of him."

"Easier said than done," says Hall, "and ye will find it a dear bargain to deal with him. Ye will have to pay a heavy fine before you have done with him."

After that they ceased speaking about it.

Chapter 146

The Award of Atonement with Thorgeir Craggeir

Hall of the Side and his son Kol, seven of them in all, rode west over Loomnip's Sand, and so west over Arnstacksheath, and did not draw bridle till they came into Myrdales. There they asked whether Thorgeir would be at home at Holt, and they were told that they would find him at home.

The men asked whither Hall meant to go.

"Thither to Holt," he said.

They said they were sure he went on a good errand.

He stayed there some while and baited their horses, and after that they mounted their horses and rode to Solheim about even, and they were there that night, but the day-after they rode to Holt.

Thorgeir was out of doors, and Kari too, and their men, for they had seen Hall's coming. He rode in a blue cape, and had a little axe studded with silver in his hand; but when they came into the "town," Thorgeir went to meet him, and helped him off his horse, and both he and Kari kissed him and led him in between them into the sitting-room, and sate him down in the high seat on the dais, and they asked him tidings about many things.

He was there that night. Next morning Hall raised the question of the atonement with Thorgeir, and told him what terms they offered him; and he spoke about them with many fair and kindly words.

"It may be well known to thee," answers Thorgeir, "that I said I would take no atonement from the Burners."

"That was quite another matter then," says Hall; "ye were then wroth with fight, and, besides, ye have done great deeds in the way of manslaying since."

"I daresay ye think so," says Thorgeir, "but what atonement do ye offer to Kari?"

"A fitting atonement shall be offered him," says Hall, "if he will take it."

Then Kari said -

"I pray this of thee, Thorgeir, that thou wilt be atoned, for thy lot cannot be better than good."

"Methinks," says Thorgeir, "it is ill done to take an atonement, and sunder myself from thee, unless thou takest the same atonement as I."

"I will not take any atonement," says Kari, "but yet I say that we have avenged the Burning; but my son, I say, is still unavenged, and I mean to take that on myself alone, and see what I can get done."

But Thorgeir would take no atonement before Kari said that he would take it ill if he were not atoned. Then Thorgeir handselled a truce to Flosi and his men, as a step to a meeting for atonement; but Hall did the same on behalf of Flosi and the sons of Sigfus.

But ere they parted, Thorgeir gave Hall a gold ring and a scarlet cloak, but Kari gave him a silver brooch, and there were hung to it four crosses of gold. Hall thanked them kindly for their gifts, and rode away with the greatest honour. He did not draw bridle till he came to Swinefell, and Flosi gave him a hearty welcome. Hall told Flosi all about his errand and the talk he had with Thorgeir, and also that Thorgeir would not take the atonement till Kari told him he would quarrel with him if he did not take it; but that Kari would take no atonement.

"There are few men like Kari," said Flosi, "and I would that my mind were shapen altogether like his."

Hall and Kol stayed there some while, and afterwards they rode west at the time agreed on to the meeting for atonement, and met at Headbrink, as had been settled between them.

Then Thorgeir came to meet them from the west, and then they talked over their atonement, and all went off as Hall had said.

Before the atonement, Thorgeir said that Kari should still have the right to be at his house all the same if he chose.

"And neither side shall do the others any harm at my house; and I will not have the trouble of gathering in the fines from each of the Burners; but my will is that Flosi alone shall be answerable for them to me, but he must get them in from his followers. My will also is that all that award which was made at the Thing

about the Burning shall be kept and held to; and my will also is, Flosi, that thou payest me up my third share in unclipped coin."

Flosi went quickly into all these terms.

Thorgeir neither gave up the banishment nor the outlawry.

Now Flosi and Hall rode home east, and then Hall said to Flosi -

"Keep this atonement well, son-in-law, both as to going abroad and the pilgrimage to Rome, and the fines, and then thou wilt be thought a brave man, though thou hast stumbled into this misdeed, if thou fulfilllest handsomely all that belongs to it."

Flosi said it should be so.

Now Hall rode home east, but Flosi rode home to Swinefell, and was at home afterwards.

Chapter 147

Kari Comes to Bjorn's House in the Mark

Thorgeir Craggeir rode home from the peace-meeting, and Kari asked whether the atonement had come about. Thorgeir said that they now fully atoned.

Then Kari took his horse and was for riding away.

"Thou hast no need to ride away," says Thorgeir, "for it was laid down in our atonement that thou shouldst be here as before if thou chocest."

"It shall not be so, cousin, for as soon as ever I slay a man they will be sure to say that thou wert in the plot with me, and I will not have that; but I wish this, that thou wouldst let me hand over in trust to thee my goods, and the estates of me and my wife Helga Njal's daughter, and my three daughters, and then they will not be seized by those adversaries of mine."

Thorgeir agreed to what Kari wished to ask of him, and then Thorgeir had Kari's goods handed over to him in trust.

After that Kari rode away. He had two horses and his weapons and outer clothing, and some ready money in gold and silver.

Now Kari rode west by Selialandsmull and up along Markfleet, and so on up into Thorsmark. There there are three farms all called "Mark". At the midmost farm dwelt that man whose name was Bjorn, and his surname was Bjorn the white; he was the son of Kadal, the son of Bjalfi. Bjalfi had been the freedman of Asgerda, the mother of Njal and Holt-Thorir; Bjorn had to wife Valgerda, she was the daughter of Thorbrand, the son of Asbrand. Her mother's name was Gudlauga, she was a sister of Hamond, the father of Gunnar of Lithend; she was given away to Bjorn for his money's sake, and she did not love him much, but yet they had children together, and they had enough and to spare in the house.

Bjorn was a man who was always boasting and praising himself, but his housewife thought that bad. He was sharp-sighted and swift of foot.

Thither Kari turned in as a guest, and they took him by both hands, and he was there that night. But the next morning Kari said to Bjorn -

"I wish thou wouldst take me in, for I should think myself well housed here with thee. I would too that thou shouldst be with me in my journeyings, as thou art a sharp-sighted, swift-footed man, and besides I think thou wouldst be dauntless in an onslaught."

"I can't blame myself," says Bjorn, "for wanting either sharp sight, or dash, or any other bravery; but no doubt thou camest hither because all thy other earths are stopped. Still, at thy prayer, Kari, I will not look on thee as an everyday man; I will surely help thee in all that thou askest."

"The trolls take thy boasting and bragging," said his housewife, "and thou shouldst not utter such stuff and silliness to any one than thyself. As for me, I will willingly give Kari meat and other good things, which I know will be useful to him; but on Bjorn's hardihood, Kari, thou shalt not trust, for I am afraid that thou wilt find it quite otherwise than he says."

"Often hast thou thrown blame upon me," said Bjorn, "but for all that I put so much faith in myself that though I am put to the trial I will never give way to any man; and the best proof of it is this, that few try a tussle with me because none dare to do so."

Kari was there some while in hiding, and few men knew of it.

Now men think that Kari must have ridden to the north country to see Gudmund the powerful, for Kari made Bjorn tell his neighbours that he had met Kari on the beaten track, and that he rode thence up into Godaland, and so north to Goose-sand, and then north to Gudmund the powerful at Modruvale.

So that story was spread over all the country.

Chapter 148 Of Flosi and the Burners

Now Flosi spoke to the Burners, his companions -

"It will no longer serve our turn to sit still, for now we shall have to think of our going abroad and of our fines, and of fulfilling our atonement as bravely as we can, and let us take a passage wherever it seems most likely to get one."

They bade him see to all that. Then Flosi said -

"We will ride east to Hornfirth; for there that ship is laid up, which is owned by Eyjolf nosy, a man from Drontheim, but he wants to take to him a wife here, and he will not get the match made unless he settles himself down here. We will buy the ship of him, for we shall have many men and little freight. The ship is big and will take us all."

Then they ceased talking of it.

But a little after they rode east, and did not stop before they came east to Bjornness in Hornfirth, and there they found Eyjolf, for he had been there as a guest that winter.

There Flosi and his men had a hearty welcome, and they were there the night. Next morning Flosi dealt with the captain for the ship, but he said he would not be hard to sell the ship if he could get what he wanted for her. Flosi asked him in what coin he wished to be paid for her; the Easterling says he wanted land for her near where he then was.

Then Eyjolf told Flosi all about his dealings with his host, and Flosi says he will pull an oar with him, so that his marriage bargain might be struck, and buy the ship of him afterwards. The Easterling was glad at that. Flosi offered him land at Borgarhaven, and now the Easterling holds on with his suit to his host when Flosi was by, and Flosi threw in a helping word, so that the bargain was brought about between them.

Flosi made over the land at Borgarhaven to the Easterling, but shook hands on the bargain for the ship. He got also from the Easterling twenty hundreds in wares, and that was also in their bargain for the land.

Now Flosi rode back home. He was so beloved by his men that their wares stood free to him to take either on loan or gift, just as he chose.

He rode home to Swinefell, and was at home a while.

Then Flosi sent Kol Thorstein's son and Gunnar Lambi's son east to Hornfirth. They were to be there by the ship, and to fit her out, and set up booths, and sack the wares, and get all things together that were needful.

Now we must tell of the sons of Sigfus how they say to Flosi that they will ride west to Fleetlithe to set their houses in order, and get wares thence, and such other things as they needed. "Kari is not there now to be guarded against," they say, "if he is in the north country as is said."

"I know not," answers Flosi, "as to such stories, whether there be any truth in what is said of Kari's journeyings; methinks, we have often been wrong in believing things which are nearer to learn than this. My counsel is that ye go many of you together, and part as little as ye can, and be as wary of yourselves as ye may. Thou, too, Kettle of the Mark, shalt bear in mind that dream which I told thee, and which thou prayedst me to hide; for many are those in thy company who were then called."

"All must come to pass as to man's life," said Kettle, "as it is foredoomed; but good go with thee for thy warning."

Now they spoke no more about it.

After that the sons of Sigfus busked them and those men with them who were meant to go with them. They were eight in all, and then they rode away, and ere they went they kissed Flosi, and he bade them farewell, and said he and some of those who rode away would not see each other more. But they would not let themselves be hindered. They rode now on their way, and Flosi said that they

should take his wares in Middleland, and carry them east, and do the same in Landsbreach and Woodcombe.

After that they rode to Skaptartongue, and so on the fell, and north of Eyjafell Jokul, and down into Godaland, and so down into the woods in Thorsmark.

Bjorn of the Mark caught sight of them coming, and went at once to meet them.

Then they greeted each other well, and the sons of Sigfus asked after Kari Solmund's son.

"I met Kari," said Bjorn, "and that is now very long since; he rode hence north on Goose-sand, and meant to go to Gudmund the powerful, and methought if he were here now, he would stand in awe of you, for he seemed to be left all alone."

Grani Gunnar's son said -

"He shall stand more in awe of us yet before we have done with him, and he shall learn that as soon as ever he comes within spearthrow of us; but as for us, we do not fear him at all, now that he is all alone."

Kettle of the Mark bade them be still, and bring out no big words.

Bjorn asked when they would be coming back.

"We shall stay near a week in Fleetlithe," said they; and so they told him when they should be riding back on the fell.

With that they parted.

Now the sons of Sigfus rode to their homes, and their households were glad to see them. They were there near a week.

Now Bjorn comes home and sees Kari, and told him all about the doings of the sons of Sigfus, and their purpose.

Kari said he had shown in this great faithfulness to him, and Bjorn said -

"I should have thought there was more risk of any other man's failing in that than of me if I had pledged my help or care to any one."

"Ah," said his mistress, "but you may still be bad and yet not be so bad as to be a traitor to thy master."

Kari stayed there six nights after that.

Chapter 149

Of Kari and Bjorn

Now Kari talks to Bjorn and says -

"We shall ride east across the fell and down into Skaptartongue, and fare stealthily over Flosi's country, for I have it in my mind to get myself carried abroad east in Alftafirth."

"This is a very risky journey," said Bjorn, "and few would have the heart to take it save thou and I."

"If thou backest Kari ill," said his housewife, "know this, that thou shalt never come afterwards into my bed, and my kinsmen shall share our goods between us."

"It is likelier, mistress," said he, "that thou wilt have to look out for something else than this if thou hast a mind to part from me; for I will bear my own witness to myself what a champion and daredevil I am when weapons clash."

Now they rode that day east on the fell to the north of the Jokul, but never on the highway, and so down into Skaptartongue, and above all the homesteads to Skaptarwater, and led their horses into a dell, but they themselves were on the look-out, and had so placed themselves that they could not be seen.

Then Kari said to Bjorn -

"What shall we do now if they ride down upon us here from the fell?"

"Are there not but two things to be done," said Bjorn; "one to ride away from them north under the crags, and so let them ride by us, or to wait and see if any of them lag behind, and then to fall on them."

They talked much about this, and one while Bjorn was for flying as fast as he could in every word he spoke, and at another for staying and fighting it out with them, and Kari thought this the greatest sport.

The sons of Sigfus rode from their homes the same day that they had named to Bjorn. They came to the Mark and knocked at the door there, and wanted to see Bjorn; but his mistress went to the door and greeted them. They asked at once for Bjorn, and she said he had ridden away down under Eyjafell, and so east under Selialandsmull, and on east to Holt, "for he has some money to call in thereabouts," she said.

They believed this, for they knew that Bjorn had money out at call there.

After that they rode east on the fell, and did not stop before they came to Skaptartongue, and so rode down along Skaptarwater, and baited their horses just where Kari had thought they would. Then they split their band. Kettle of the Mark rode east into Middleland, and eight men with him, but the others laid them down to sleep, and were not ware of aught until Kari and Bjorn came up to them. A little ness ran out there into the river; into it Kari went and took his stand, and bade Bjorn stand back to back with him, and not to put himself too forward, "but give me all the help thou canst".

"Well," says Bjorn, "I never had it in my head that any man should stand before me as a shield, but still as things are thou must have thy way; but for all that, with my gift of wit and my swiftness I may be of some use to thee, and not harmless to our foes."

Now they all rose up and ran at them, and Modolf Kettle's son was quickest of them, and thrust at Kari with his spear. Kari had his shield before him, and the blow fell on it, and the spear stuck fast in the shield. Then Kari twists the shield so smartly, that the spear snapped short off, and then he drew his sword and smote at Modolf; but Modolf made a cut at him too, and Kari's sword fell on

Modolf's hilt, and glanced off it on to Modolph's wrist, and took the arm off, and down it fell, and the sword too. Then Kari's sword passed on into Modolf's side, and between his ribs, and so Modolf fell down and was dead on the spot.

Grani Gunnar's son snatched up a spear and hurled it at Kari, but Kari thrust down his shield so hard that the point stood fast in the ground, but with his left hand he caught the spear in the air, and hurled it back at Grani, and caught up his shield again at once with his left hand. Grani had his shield before him, and the spear came on the shield and passed right through it, and into Grani's thigh just below the small guts, and through the limb, and so on, pinning him to the ground, and he could not get rid of the spear before his fellows drew him off it, and carried him away on their shields, and laid him down in a dell.

There was a man who ran up to Kari's side, and meant to cut off his leg, but Bjorn cut off that man's arm, and sprang back again behind Kari, and they could not do him any hurt. Kari made a sweep at that same man with his sword, and cut him asunder at the waist.

Then Lambi Sigfus' son rushed at Kari, and hewed at him with his sword. Kari caught the blow sideways on his shield, and the sword would not bite; then Kari thrust at Lambi with his sword just below the breast, so that the point came out between his shoulders, and that was his death-blow.

Then Thorstein Geirleif's son rushed at Kari, and thought to take him in flank, but Kari caught sight of him, and swept at him with his sword across the shoulders, so that the man was cleft asunder at the chine.

A little while after he gave Gunnar of Skal, a good man and true, his death-blow. As for Bjorn, he had wounded three men who had tried to give Kari wounds, and yet he was never so far forward that he was in the least danger, nor was he wounded, nor was either of those companions hurt in that fight, but all those that got away were wounded.

Then they ran for their horses, and galloped them off across Skaptarwater as hard as they could; and they were so scared that they stopped at no house, nor did they dare to stay and tell the tidings anywhere.

Kari and Bjorn hooted and shouted after them as they galloped off. So they rode east to Woodcombe, and did not draw bridle till they came to Swinefell.

Flosi was not at home when they came thither, and that was why no hue and cry was made thence after Kari.

This journey of theirs was thought most shameful by all men.

Kari rode to Skal, and gave notice of these manslayings as done by his hand; there, too, he told them of the death of their master and five others, and of Grani's wound, and said it would be better to bear him to the house if he were to live.

Bjorn said he could not bear to slay him, though he said he was worthy of death; but those who answered him said they were sure few had bitten the dust before him. But Bjorn told them he had it now in his power to make as many of the Sidemen as he chose bite the dust; to which they said it was a bad look out.

Then Kari and Bjorn ride away from the house.

Chapter 150

More of Kari and Bjorn

Then Kari asked Bjorn -

"What counsel shall we take now? Now I will try what thy wit is worth."

"Dost thou think now," answered Bjorn, "that much lies on our being as wise as ever we can?"

"Ay," said Kari, "I think so surely."

"Then our counsel is soon taken," says Bjorn. "We will cheat them all as though they were giants; and now we will make as though we were riding north on the fell, but as soon as ever we are out of sight behind the brae, we will turn down along Skaptarwater, and hide us there where we think handiest, so long as the hue and cry is hottest, if they ride after us."

"So will we do," said Kari; "and this I had meant to do all along."

"And so you may put it to the proof," said Bjorn, "that I am no more of an everyday body in wit than I am in bravery."

Now Kari and his companion rode as they had purposed down along Skaptarwater, till they came where a branch of the stream ran away to the south-east; then they turned down along the middle branch, and did not draw bridle till they came into Middleland, and on that moor which is called Kringlemire; it has a stream of lava all around it.

Then Kari said to Bjorn that he must watch their horses, and keep a good look-out; "but as for me," he says, "I am heavy with sleep".

So Bjorn watched the horses, but Kari lay him down, and slept but a very short while ere Bjorn waked him up again, and he had already led their horses together, and they were by their side. Then Bjorn said to Kari -

"Thou standest in much need of me, though! A man might easily have run away from thee if he had not been as brave-hearted as I am; for now thy foes are riding upon thee, and so thou must up and be doing."

Then Kari went away under a jutting crag, and Bjorn said -

"Where shall I stand now?"

"Well!" answers Kari, "now there are two choices before thee; one is, that thou standest at my back and have my shield to cover thyself with, if it can be of any use to thee; and the other is, to get on thy horse and ride away as fast as thou canst."

"Nay," says Bjorn, "I will not do that, and there are many things against it; first of all, may be, if I ride away, some spiteful tongues might begin to say that I ran away from thee for faintheartedness; and another thing is, that I well know what game they will think there is in me, and so they will ride after me, two or three of

them, and then I should be of no use or help to thee after all. No! I will rather stand by thee and keep them off so long as it is fated."

Then they had not long to wait ere horses with pack-saddles were driven by them over the moor, and with them went three men.

Then Kari said -

"These men see us not."

"Then let us suffer them to ride on," said Bjorn.

So those three rode on past them; but the six others then came riding right up to them, and they all leapt off their horses straightway in a body, and turned on Kari and his companion.

First, Glum Hilldir's son rushed at them, and thrust at Kari with a spear; Kari turned short round on his heel, and Glum missed him, and the blow fell against the rock. Bjorn sees that, and hewed at once the head off Glum's spear. Kari leant on one side and smote at Glum with his sword, and the blow fell on his thigh, and took off the limb high up in the thigh, and Glum died at once.

Then Vebrand and Asbrand the sons of Thorbrand ran up to Kari, but Kari flew at Vebrand and thrust his sword through him, but afterwards he hewed off both of Asbrand's feet from under him.

In this bout both Kari and Bjorn were wounded.

Then Kettle of the Mark rushed at Kari, and thrust at him with his spear. Kari threw up his leg, and the spear stuck in the ground, and Kari leapt on the spear-shaft, and snapped it in sunder.

Then Kari grasped Kettle in his arms, and Bjorn ran up just then, and wanted to slay him, but Kari said -

"Be still now. I will give Kettle peace; for though it may be that Kettle's life is in my power, still I will never slay him."

Kettle answers never a word, but rode away after his companions, and told those the tidings who did not know them already.

They told also these tidings to the men of the Hundred, and they gathered together at once a great force of armed men, and went straightway up all the water-courses, and so far up on the fell that they were three days in the chase; but after that they turned back to their own homes, but Kettle and his companions rode east to Swinefell, and told the tidings there.

Flosi was little stirred at what had befallen them, but said no one could tell whether things would stop there, "for there is no man like Kari of all that are now left in Iceland".

Chapter 151

Of Kari and Bjorn and Thorgeir

Now we must tell of Bjorn and Kari that they ride down on the Sand, and lead their horses under the banks where the wild oats grew, and cut the oats for them, that they might not die of hunger. Kari made such a near guess, that he rode away thence at the very time that they gave over seeking for him. He rode by night up through the Hundred, and after that he took to the fell; and so on all the same way as they had followed when they rode east, and did not stop till they came to Midmark.

Then Bjorn said to Kari -

"Now shalt thou be my great friend before my mistress, for she will never believe one word of what I say; but everything lies on what you do, so now repay me for the good following which I have yielded to thee."

"So it shall be; never fear," says Kari.

After that they ride up to the homestead, and then the mistress asked them what tidings, and greeted them well.

"Our troubles have rather grown greater, old lass!"

She answered little, and laughed; and then the mistress went on to ask -

"How did Bjorn behave to thee, Kari?"

"Bare is back," he answers, "without brother behind it, and Bjorn behaved well to me. He wounded three men, and, besides, he is wounded himself, and he stuck as close to me as he could in everything."

They were three nights there, and after that they rode to Holt to Thorgeir, and told him alone these tidings, for those tidings had not yet been heard there.

Thorgeir thanked him, and it was quite plain that he was glad at what he heard. He asked Kari what now was undone which he meant to do.

"I mean," answers Kari, "to kill Gunnar Lambi's son and Kol Thorstein's son, if I can get a chance. Then we have slain fifteen men, reckoning those five whom we two slew together. But one boon I will now ask of thee."

Thorgeir said he would grant him whatever he asked.

"I wish, then, that thou wilt take under thy safeguard this man whose name is Bjorn, and who has been in these slayings with me, and that thou wilt change farms with him, and give him a farm ready stocked here close by thee, and so hold thy hand over him that no vengeance may befall him; but all this will be an easy matter for thee who art such a chief."

"So it shall be," says Thorgeir.

Then he gave Bjorn a ready-stocked farm at Asolfskal, but he took the farm in the Mark into his own hands. Thorgeir flitted all Bjorn's household stuff and

goods to Asolfskal, and all his live stock; and Thorgeir settled all Bjorn's quarrels for him, and he was reconciled to them with a full atonement. So Bjorn was thought to be much more of a man than he had been before.

Then Kari rode away, and did not draw rein till he came west to Tongue to Asgrim Ellidagrim's son. He gave Kari a most hearty welcome, and Kari told him of all the tidings that had happened in these slayings.

Asgrim was well pleased at them, and asked what Kari meant to do next.

"I mean," said Kari, "to fare abroad after them, and so dog their footsteps and slay them, if I can get at them."

Asgrim said there was no man like him for bravery and hardihood.

He was there some nights, and after that he rode to Gizur the white, and he took him by both hands. Kari stayed there some while, and then he told Gizur that he wished to ride down to Eyrar.

Gizur gave Kari a good sword at parting.

Now he rode down to Eyrar, and took him a passage with Kolbein the black; he was an Orkneyman and an old friend of Kari, and he was the most forward and brisk of men.

He took Kari by both hands, and said that one fate should befall both of them.

Chapter 152

Flosi Goes Abroad

Now Flosi rides east to Hornfirth, and most of the men in his Thing followed him, and bore his wares east, as well as all his stores and baggage which he had to take with him.

After that they busked them for their voyage, and fitted out their ship.

Now Flosi stayed by the ship until they were "boun". But as soon as ever they got a fair wind they put out to sea. They had a long passage and hard weather.

Then they quite lost their reckoning, and sailed on and on, and all at once three great waves broke over their ship, one after the other. Then Flosi said they must be near some land, and that this was a ground-swell. A great mist was on them, but the wind rose so that a great gale overtook them, and they scarce knew where they were before they were dashed on shore at dead of night, and the men were saved, but the ship was dashed all to pieces, and they could not save their goods.

Then they had to look for shelter and warmth for themselves, and the day after they went up on a height. The weather was then good.

Flosi asked if any man knew this land, and there were two men of their crew who had fared thither before, and said they were quite sure they knew it, and, say they -

"We are come to Hrossey in the Orkneys."

"Then we might have made a better landing," said Flosi, "for Grim and Helgi, Njal's sons, whom I slew, were both of them of Earl Sigurd Hlodver's son's bodyguard."

Then they sought for a hiding-place, and spread moss over themselves, and so lay for a while, but not for long, ere Flosi spoke and said -

"We will not lie here any longer until the landsmen are ware of us."

Then they arose, and took counsel, and then Flosi said to his men -

"We will go all of us and give ourselves up to the Earl; for there is naught else to do, and the Earl has our lives at his pleasure if he chooses to seek for them."

Then they all went away thence, and Flosi said that they must tell no man any tidings of their voyage, or what manner of men they were, before he told them to the Earl.

Then they walked on until they met men who showed them to the town, and then they went in before the Earl, and Flosi and all the others hailed him.

The Earl asked what men they might be, and Flosi told his name, and said out of what part of Iceland he was.

The Earl had already heard of the Burning, and so he knew the men at once, and then the Earl asked Flosi - "What hast thou to tell me about Helgi Njal's son, my henchman?"

"This," said Flosi, "that I hewed off his head."

"Take them all," said the Earl.

Then that was done, and just then in came Thorstein, son of Hall of the Side. Flosi had to wife Steinvora, Thorstein's sister. Thorstein was one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard, but when he saw Flosi seized and held, he went in before the Earl, and offered for Flosi all the goods he had.

The Earl was very wroth a long time, but at last the end of it was, by the prayer of good men and true, joined to those of Thorstein, for he was well backed by friends, and many threw in their word with his, that the Earl took an atonement from them, and gave Flosi and all the rest of them peace. The Earl held to that custom of mighty men that Flosi took that place in his service which Helgi Njal's son had filled.

So Flosi was made Earl Sigurd's henchman, and he soon won his way to great love with the Earl.

Chapter 153

Kari Goes Abroad

Those messmates Kari and Kolbein the black put out to sea from Eyrar half a month later than Flosi and his companions from Hornfirth.

They got a fine fair wind, and were but a short time out. The first land they made was the Fair Isle; it lies between Shetland and the Orkneys. There that man whose name was David the white took Kari into his house, and he told him all that he had heard for certain about the doings of the Burners. He was one of Kari's greatest friends, and Kari stayed with him for the winter.

There they heard tidings from the west out of the Orkneys of all that was done there.

Earl Sigurd bade to his feast at Yule Earl Gilli, his brother-in-law, out of the Southern Isles; he had to wife Swanlauga, Earl Sigurd's sister; and then too came to see Earl Sigurd that king from Ireland whose name was Sigtrygg. He was a son of Olaf rattle, but his mother's name was Kormlada; she was the fairest of all women, and best gifted in everything that was not in her own power, but it was the talk of men that she did all things ill over which she had any power.

Brian was the name of the king who first had her to wife, but they were then parted. He was the best-natured of all kings. He had his seat in Connaught, in Ireland; his brother's name was Wolf the quarrelsome, the greatest champion and warrior; Brian's foster-child's name was Kerthialfad. He was the son of King Kylfi, who had many wars with King Brian, and fled away out of the land before him, and became a hermit; but when King Brian went south on a pilgrimage, then he met King Kylfi, and then they were atoned, and King Brian took his son Kerthialfad to him, and loved him more than his own sons. He was then full grown when these things happened, and was the boldest of all men.

Duncan was the name of the first of King Brian's sons; the second was Margad; the third, Takt, whom we call Tann, he was the youngest of them; but the elder sons of King Brian were full grown, and the briskest of men.

Kormlada was not the mother of King Brian's children, and so grim was she against King Brian after their parting, that she would gladly have him dead.

King Brian thrice forgave all his outlaws the same fault, but if they misbehaved themselves oftener, then he let them be judged by the law; and from this one may mark what a king he must have been.

Kormlada egged on her son Sigtrygg very much to kill King Brian, and she now sent him to Earl Sigurd to beg for help.

King Sigtrygg came before Yule to the Orkneys, and there, too, came Earl Gilli, as was written before.

The men were so placed that King Sigtrygg sat in a high seat in the middle, but on either side of the king sat one of the earls. The men of King Sigtrygg and Earl Gilli sate on the inner side away from him, but on the outer side away from Earl Sigurd, sate Flosi and Thorstein, son of Hall of the Side, and the whole hall was full.

Now King Sigtrygg and Earl Gilli wished to hear of these tidings which had happened at the Burning, and so, also, what had befallen since.

Then Gunnar Lambi's son was got to tell the tale, and a stool was set for him to sit upon.

Chapter 154

Gunnar Lambi's Son's Slaying

Just at that very time Kari and Kolbein and David the white came to Hrossey unawares to all men. They went straightway up on land, but a few men watched their ship.

Kari and his fellows went straight to the Earl's homestead, and came to the hall about drinking time.

It so happened that just then Gunnar was telling the story of the Burning, but they were listening to him meanwhile outside. This was on Yule-day itself.

Now King Sigtrygg asked -

"How did Skarphedinn bear the Burning?"

"Well at first for a long time," said Gunnar, "but still the end of it was that he wept." And so he went on giving an unfair leaning in his story, but every now and then he laughed out loud.

Kari could not stand this, and then he ran in with his sword drawn, and sang this song -

Men of might, in battle eager,
Boast of burning Njal's abode,
Have the Princes heard how sturdy
Seahorse racers sought revenge?
Hath not since, on foemen holding
High the shield's broad orb aloft,
All that wrong been fully wroken?
Raw flesh ravens got to tear.

So he ran in up the hall, and smote Gunnar Lambi's son on the neck with such a sharp blow, that his head spun off on to the board before the king and the earls, and the board was all one gore of blood, and the Earl's clothing too.

Earl Sigurd knew the man that had done the deed, and called out -

"Seize Kari and kill him."

Kari had been one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard, and he was of all men most beloved by his friends; and no man stood up a whit more for the Earl's speech.

"Many would say, Lord," said Kari, "that I have done this deed on your behalf, to avenge your henchman."

Then Flosi said - "Kari hath not done this without a cause; he is in no atonement with us, and he only did what he had a right to do".

So Kari walked away, and there was no hue and cry after him. Kari fared to his ship, and his fellows with him. The weather was then good, and they sailed off at once south to Caithness, and went on shore at Thraswick to the house of a

worthy man whose name was Skeggi, and with him they stayed a very long while.

Those behind in the Orkneys cleansed the board, and bore out the dead man.

The Earl was told that they had set sail south for Scotland, and King Sigtrygg said -

"This was a mighty bold fellow, who dealt his stroke so stoutly, and never thought twice about it!"

Then Earl Sigurd answered -

"There is no man like Kari for dash and daring."

Now Flosi undertook to tell the story of the Burning, and he was fair to all; and therefore what he said was believed.

Then King Sigtrygg stirred in his business with Earl Sigurd, and bade him go to the war with him against King Brian.

The Earl was long steadfast, but the end of it was that he let the king have his way, but said he must have his mother's hand for his help, and be king in Ireland, if they slew Brian. But all his men besought Earl Sigurd not to go into the war, but it was all no good.

So they parted on the understanding that Earl Sigurd gave his word to go; but King Sigtrygg promised him his mother and the kingdom.

It was so settled that Earl Sigurd was to come with all his host to Dublin by Palm Sunday.

Then King Sigtrygg fared south to Ireland, and told his mother Kormlada that the Earl had undertaken to come, and also what he had pledged himself to grant him.

She showed herself well pleased at that, but said they must gather greater force still.

Sigtrygg asked whence this was to be looked for?

She said there were two vikings lying off the west of Man; and that they had thirty ships, and, she went on, "they are men of such hardihood that nothing can withstand them. The one's name is Ospak, and the other's Brodir. Thou shalt fare to find them, and spare nothing to get them into thy quarrel, whatever price they ask."

Now King Sigtrygg fares and seeks the vikings, and found them lying outside off Man; King Sigtrygg brings forward his errand at once, but Brodir shrank from helping him until he, King Sigtrygg, promised him the kingdom and his mother, and they were to keep this such a secret that Earl Sigurd should know nothing about it; Brodir too was to come to Dublin on Palm Sunday.

So King Sigtrygg fared home to his mother, and told her how things stood.

After that those brothers, Ospak and Brodir, talked together, and then Brodir told Ospak all that he and Sigtrygg had spoken of, and bade him fare to battle with him against King Brian, and said he set much store on his going.

But Ospak said he would not fight against so good a king.

Then they were both wroth, and sundered their band at once. Ospak had ten ships and Brodir twenty.

Ospak was a heathen, and the wisest of all men. He laid his ships inside in a sound, but Brodir lay outside him.

Brodir had been a Christian man and a mass-deacon by consecration, but he had thrown off his faith and become God's dastard, and now worshipped heathen fiends, and he was of all men most skilled in sorcery. He had that coat of mail on which no steel would bite. He was both tall and strong, and had such long locks that he tucked them under his belt. His hair was black.

Chapter 155

Of Signs and Wonders

It so happened one night that a great din passed over Brodir and his men, so that they all woke, and sprang up and put on their clothes.

Along with that came a shower of boiling blood.

Then they covered themselves with their shields, but for all that many were scalded.

This wonder lasted all till day, and a man had died on board every ship.

Then they slept during the day, but the second night there was again a din, and again they all sprang up. Then swords leapt out of their sheaths, and axes and spears flew about in the air and fought.

The weapons pressed them so hard that they had to shield themselves, but still many were wounded, and again a man died out of every ship.

This wonder lasted all till day.

Then they slept again the day after.

But the third night there was a din of the same kind, and then ravens flew at them, and it seemed to them as though their beaks and claws were of iron.

The ravens pressed them so hard that they had to keep them off with their swords, and covered themselves with their shields, and so this went on again till day, and then another man had died in every ship.

Then they went to sleep first of all, but when Brodir woke up, he drew his breath painfully, and bade them put off the boat. "For," he said, "I will go to see Ospak."

Then he got into the boat and some men with him, but when he found Ospak he told him of the wonders which had befallen them, and bade him say what he thought they boded.

Ospak would not tell him before he pledged him peace, and Brodir promised him peace, but Ospak still shrank from telling him till night fell.

Then Ospak spoke and said - "When blood rained on you, therefore shall ye shed many men's blood, both of your own and others. But when ye heard a great din, then ye must have been shown the crack of doom, and ye shall all die speedily. But when weapons fought against you, that must forbode a battle; but when ravens pressed you, that marks the devils which ye put faith in, and who will drag you all down to the pains of hell."

Then Brodir was so wroth that he could answer never a word, but he went at once to his men, and made them lay his ships in a line across the sound, and moor them by bearing their cables on shore at either end of the line, and meant to slay them all next morning.

Ospak saw all their plan, and then he vowed to take the true faith, and to go to King Brian, and follow him till his death-day.

Then he took that counsel to lay his ships in a line, and punt them along the shore with poles, and cut the cables of Brodir's ships. Then the ships of Brodir's men began to fall aboard of one another when they were all fast asleep; and so Ospak and his men got out of the firth, and so west to Ireland, and came to Connaught.

Then Ospak told King Brian all that he had learnt, and took baptism, and gave himself over into the king's hand.

After that King Brian made them gather force over all his realm, and the whole host was to come to Dublin in the week before Palm Sunday.

Chapter 156

Brian's Battle

Earl Sigurd Hlodver's son busked him from the Orkneys, and Flosi offered to go with him.

The Earl would not have that, since he had his pilgrimage to fulfil.

Flosi offered fifteen men of his band to go on the voyage, and the Earl accepted them, but Flosi fared with Earl Gilli to the Southern Isles.

Thorstein, the Son of Hall of the Side, went along with Earl Sigurd, and Hrafn the red, and Erling of Straumey.

He would not that Hareck should go, but said he would be sure to be the first to tell him the tidings of his voyage.

The Earl came with all his host on Palm Sunday to Dublin, and there too was come Brodir with all his host.

Brodir tried by sorcery how the fight would go, but the answer ran thus, that if the fight were on Good Friday King Brian would fall but win the day; but if they fought before, they would all fall who were against him.

Then Brodir said that they must not fight before the Friday.

On the fifth day of the week a man rode up to Kormlada and her company on an apple-grey horse, and in his hand he held a halberd; he talked long with them.

King Brian came with all his host to the Burg, and on the Friday the host fared out of the Burg, and both armies were drawn up in array.

Brodir was on one wing of the battle, but King Sigtrygg on the other.

Earl Sigurd was in the mid battle.

Now it must be told of King Brian that he would not fight on the fast-day, and so a shieldburgó was thrown round him, and his host was drawn up in array in front of it.

Wolf the quarrelsome was on that wing of the battle against which Brodir stood; but on the other wing, where Sigtrygg stood against them, were Ospak and his sons.

But in mid battle was Kerthialfad, and before him the banners were borne.

Now the wings fall on one another, and there was a very hard fight, Brodir went through the host of the foe, and felled all the foremost that stood there, but no steel would bite on his mail.

Wolf the quarrelsome turned then to meet him, and thrust at him thrice so hard that Brodir fell before him at each thrust, and was well-nigh not getting on his feet again; but as soon as ever he found his feet, he fled away into the wood at once.

Earl Sigurd had a hard battle against Kerthialfad, and Kerthialfad came on so fast that he laid low all who were in the front rank, and he broke the array of Earl Sigurd right up to his banner, and slew the banner-bearer.

Then he got another man to bear the banner, and there was again a hard fight.

Kerthialfad smote this man too his death blow at once, and so on one after the other all who stood near him.

Then Earl Sigurd called on Thorstein the son of Hall of the Side, to bear the banner, and Thorstein was just about to lift the banner, but then Asmund the white said -

"Don't bear the banner! for all they who bear it get their death."

"Hrafn the red!" called out Earl Sigurd, "bear thou the banner."

"Bear thine own devil thyself," answered Hrafn.

Then the Earl said -

"'Tis fittest that the beggar should bear the bag;" and with that he took the banner from the staff and put it under his cloak.

A little after Asmund the white was slain, and then the Earl was pierced through with a spear.

Ospak had gone through all the battle on his wing, he had been sore wounded, and lost both his sons ere King Sigtrygg fled before him.

Then flight broke out throughout all the host.

Thorstein Hall of the Side's son stood still while all the others fled, and tied his shoe-string. Then Kerthialfad asked why he ran not as the others.

"Because," said Thorstein, "I can't get home to-night, since I am at home out in Iceland."

Kerthialfad gave him peace.

Hrafn the red was chased out into a certain river; he thought he saw there the pains of hell down below him, and he thought the devils wanted to drag him to them.

Then Hrafn said -

"Thy dog, ð Apostle Peter! hath run twice to Rome, and he would run the third time if thou gavest him leave."

Then the devils let him loose, and Hrafn got across the river.

Now Brodir saw that King Brian's men were chasing the fleers, and that there were few men by the shieldburg.

Then he rushed out of the wood, and broke through the shieldburg, and hewed at the king.

The lad Takt threw his arm in the way, and the stroke took it off and the king's head too, but the king's blood came on the lad's stump, and the stump was healed by it on the spot.

Then Brodir called out with a loud voice -

"Now let man tell man that Brodir felled Brian."

Then men ran after those who were chasing the fleers, and they were told that King Brian had fallen, and then they turned back straightway, both Wolf the quarrelsome and Kerthialfad.

Then they threw a ring round Brodir and his men, and threw branches of trees upon them, and so Brodir was taken alive.

Wolf the quarrelsome cut open his belly, and led him round and round the trunk of a tree, and so wound all his entrails out of him, and he did not die before they were all drawn out of him.

Brodir's men were slain to a man.

After that they took King Brian's body and laid it out. The king's head had grown fast to the trunk.

Fifteen men of the Burners fell in Brian's battle, and there, too, fell Halldor the son of Gudmund the powerful, and Erling of Straumey.

On Good Friday that event happened in Caithness that a man whose name was Daurrud went out. He saw folk riding twelve together to a bower, and there they were all lost to his sight. He went to that bower and looked in through a window slit that was in it, and saw that there were women inside, and they had set up a

loom. Men's heads were the weights, but men's entrails were the warp and weft, a sword was the shuttle, and the reels were arrows.

They sang these songs, and he learnt them by heart--

THE WOOF OF WAR.

See! warp is stretched
For warriors' fall,
Lo! weft in loom
'Tis wet with blood;
Now fight foreboding,
'Neath friends' swift fingers,
Our gray woof waxeth
With war's alarms,
Our warp bloodred,
Our weft corseblue.

This woof is y-woven
With entrails of men,
This warp is hardweighted
With heads of the slain,
Spears blood-besprinkled
For spindles we use,
Our loom ironbound,
And arrows our reels;
With swords for our shuttles
This war-woof we work;
So weave we, weird sisters,
Our warwinning woof.

Now War-winner walketh
To weave in her turn.
Now Swordswinger steppeth,
Now Swiftstroke, now Storm;
When they speed the shuttle
How spear-heads shall flash!
Shields crash, and helmgnawerö
On harness bite hard!

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof.
Woof erst for king youthful
Foredoomed as his own,
Forth now we will ride,
Then through the ranks rushing
Be busy where friends
Blows blithe give and take.

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof,

After that let us steadfastly
Stand by the brave king;
Then men shall mark mournful
Their shields red with gore,
How Swordstroke and Spearthrust
Stood stout by the prince.

Wind we, wind swiftly
Our warwinning woof;
When sword-bearing rovers
To banners rush on,
Mind, maidens, we spare not
One life in the fray!
We corse-choosing sisters
Have charge of the slain.

Now new-coming nations
That island shall rule.
Who on outlying headlands
Abode ere the fight;
I say that King mighty
To death now is done,
Now low before spearpoint
That Earl bows his head.

Soon over all Ersemen
Sharp sorrow shall fall,
That woe to those warriors
Shall wane nevermore;
Our woof now is woven.
Now battle-field waste,
O'er land and o'er water
War tidings shall leap.

Now surely 'tis gruesome
To gaze all around,
When bloodred through heaven
Drives cloudrack o'er head;
Air soon shall be deep hued
With dying men's blood
When this our spaedom
Comes speedy to pass.

So cheerily chant we
Charms for the young king,
Come maidens lift loudly
His warwinning lay;
Let him who now listens
Learn well with his ears,
And gladden brave swordsmen
With bursts of war's song.

Now mount we our horses,
Now bare we our brands,
Now haste we hard, maidens,
Hence far, far away.

Then they plucked down the woof and tore it asunder, and each kept what she had hold of.

Now Daurrud goes away from the slit, and home; but they got on their steeds and rode six to the south, and the other six to the north.

A like event befell Brand Gneisti's son in the Faroe Isles.

At Swinefell, in Iceland, blood came on the priest's stole on Good Friday, so that he had to put it off.

At Thvattwater the priest thought he saw on Good Friday a long deep of the sea hard by the altar, and there he saw many awful sights, and it was long ere he could sing the prayers.

This event happened in the Orkneys, that Hareck thought he saw Earl Sigurd, and some men with him. Then Hareck took his horse and rode to meet the Earl. Men saw that they met and rode under a brae, but they were never seen again, and not a scrap was ever found of Hareck.

Earl Gilli in the Southern Isles dreamed that a man came to him and said his name was Hostfinn, and told him he was come from Ireland.

The Earl thought he asked him for tidings thence, and then he sang this song -

I have been where warriors wrestled,
High in Erin sang the sword,
Boss to boss met many bucklers.
Steel rung sharp on rattling helm;
I can tell of all their struggle;
Sigurd fell in flight of spears;
Brian fell, but kept his kingdom
Ere he lost one drop of blood.

Those two, Flosi and the Earl, talked much of this dream. A week after, Hrafn the red came thither, and told them all the tidings of Brian's battle, the fall of the king, and of Earl Sigurd, and Brodir, and all the Vikings.

"What," said Flosi, "hast thou to tell me of my men?"

"They all fell there," says Hrafn, "but thy brother-in-law Thorstein took peace from Kerthialfad, and is now with him."

Flosi told the Earl that he would now go away, "for we have our pilgrimage south to fulfil".

The Earl bade him go as he wished, and gave him a ship and all else that he needed, and much silver.

Then they sailed to Wales, and stayed there a while.

Chapter 157

The Slaying of Kol Thorstein's Son

Kari Solmund's son told master Skeggi that he wished he would get him a ship. So master Skeggi gave Kari a long-ship, fully trimmed and manned, and on board it went Kari, and David the white, and Kolbein the black.

Now Kari and his fellows sailed south through Scotland's Firths, and there they found men from the Southern Isles. They told Kari the tidings from Ireland, and also that Flosi was gone to Wales, and his men with him.

But when Kari heard that, he told his messmates that he would hold on south to Wales, to fall in with Flosi and his band. So he bade them then to part from his company, if they liked it better, and said that he would not wish to beguile any man into mischief, because he thought he had not yet had revenge enough on Flosi and his band.

All chose to go with him; and then he sails south to Wales, and there they lay in hiding in a creek out of the way.

That morning Kol Thorstein's son went into the town to buy silver. He of all the Burners had used the bitterest words. Kol had talked much with a mighty dame, and he had so knocked the nail on the head, that it was all but fixed that he was to have her, and settle down there.

That same morning Kari went also into the town. He came where Kol was telling the silver.

Kari knew him at once, and ran at him with his drawn sword and smote him on the neck; but he still went on telling the silver, and his head counted "ten" just as it spun off the body.

Then Kari said -

"Go and tell this to Flosi, that Kari Solmund's son hath slain Kol Thorstein's son. I give notice of this slaying as done by my hand."

Then Kari went to his ship, and told his shipmates of the manslaughter.

Then they sailed north to Beruwick, and laid up their ship, and fared up into Whitherne in Scotland, and were with Earl Malcolm that year.

But when Flosi heard of Kol's slaying, he laid out his body, and bestowed much money on his burial.

Flosi never uttered any wrathful words against Kari.

Thence Flosi fared south across the sea and began his pilgrimage, and went on south, and did not stop till he came to Rome. There he got so great honour that he took absolution from the Pope himself, and for that he gave a great sum of money.

Then he fared back again by the east road, and stayed long in towns, and went in before mighty men, and had from them great honour.

He was in Norway the winter after, and was with Earl Eric till he was ready to sail, and the Earl gave him much meal, and many other men behaved handsomely to him.

Now he sailed out to Iceland, and ran into Hornfirth, and thence fared home to Swinefell. He had then fulfilled all the terms of his atonement, both in fines and foreign travel.

Chapter 158

Of Flosi and Kari

Now it is to be told of Kari that the summer after he went down to his ship and sailed south across the sea, and began his pilgrimage in Normandy, and so went south and got absolution and fared back by the western way, and took his ship again in Normandy, and sailed in her north across the sea to Dover in England.

Thence he sailed west, round Wales, and so north, through Scotland's Firths, and did not stay his course till he came to Thraswick in Caithness, to master Skeggi's house.

There he gave over the ship of burden to Kolbein and David, and Kolbein sailed in that ship to Norway, but David stayed behind in the Fair Isle.

Kari was that winter in Caithness. In this winter his housewife died out in Iceland.

The next summer Kari busked him for Iceland. Skeggi gave him a ship of burden, and there were eighteen of them on board her.

They were rather late "boun," but still they put to sea, and had a long passage, but at last they made Ingolf's Head. There their shin was dashed all to pieces, but the men's lives were saved. Then, too, a gale of wind came on them.

Now they ask Kari what counsel was to be taken; but he said their best plan was to go to Swinefell and put Flosi's manhood to the proof.

So they went right up to Swinefell in the storm. Flosi was in the hall. He knew Kari as soon as ever he came into the hall, and sprang up to meet him, and kissed him, and sate him down in the high-seat by his side.

Flosi asked Kari to be there that winter, and Kari took his offer. Then they were atoned with a full atonement.

Then Flosi gave away his brother's daughter Hildigunna, whom Hauskuld the priest of Whiteness had had to wife, to Kari, and they dwelt first of all at Broadwater.

Men say that the end of Flosi's life was, that he fared abroad, when he had grown old, to seek for timber to build him a hall; and he was in Norway that winter, but the next summer he was late "boun"; and men told him that his ship was not seaworthy.

Flosi said she was quite good enough for an old and death-doomed man, and bore his goods on shipboard and put out to sea. But of that ship no tidings were ever heard.

These were the children of Kari Solmund's son and Helga Njal's daughter - Thorgerda and Ragneida, Valgerda, and Thord who was burnt in Njal's house. But the children of Hildigunna and Kari were these, Starkad, and Thord, and Flosi.

The son of Burning-Flosi was Kolbein, who has been the most famous man of any of that stock.

And here we end the saga of Burnt Njal.

EGIL'S SAGA

Chapter 1 Of Kveldulf and His Sons

There was a man named Ulf, son of Bjalf, and Hallbera, daughter of Ulf the fearless; she was sister of Hallbjorn Half-giant in Hrafnista, and he the father of Kettle Hæing. Ulf was a man so tall and strong that none could match him, and in his youth he roved the seas as a freebooter. In fellowship with him was one Kari of Berdla, a man of renown for strength and daring; he was a Berserk. Ulf and he had one common purse, and were the dearest friends.

But when they gave up freebooting, Kari went to his estate at Berdla, being a man of great wealth. Three children had Kari, one son named Eyvind Lambi, another Aulvir Hnuf, and a daughter Salbjorg, who was a most beautiful woman of a noble spirit. Her did Ulf take to wife, and then he too went to his estates. Wealthy he was both in lands and chattels; he took baron's rank as his forefathers had done, and became a great man. It was told of Ulf that he was a great householder; it was his wont to rise up early, and then go round among his labourers or where his smiths were, and to overlook his stalk and fields, and at times he would talk with such as needed his counsel, and good counsel he could give in all things, for he was very wise. But everyday as evening drew on he became sullen, so that few could come to speak with him. He was an evening sleeper, and it was commonly said that he was very shape strong. He was called Kveldulf.

Kveldulf and his wife had two sons, the elder was named Thorolf, the younger Grim; these, when they grew up, were both tall men and strong, as was their father. But Thorolf was most comely as well as doughty, favoring his mother's kin; very cheery was he, liberal, impetuous in everything, a good trader, winning the hearts of all men. Grim was swarthy, ill-favoured, like his father both in face and mind; he became a good man of business; skilful was he in wood and iron,

an excellent smith. In the winter he often went to the herring fishing, and with him many house-carles.

But when Thorolf was twenty years old, then he made him ready to go a harrying. Kveldulf gave him a long-ship, and Kari of Berdla's sons, Eyvind and Aulvir, resolved to go on that voyage, taking a large force and another long-ship; and they roved the seas in the summer, and got them wealth, and had a large booty to divide. For several summers they were out roving, but stayed at home in winter with their fathers. Thorolf brought home many costly things, and took them to his father and mother; thus they were well-to-do both for possessions and honour. Kveldulf was now well stricken in years, and his sons were grown men.

Chapter 2

Of Aulvir Hnuf

Audbjorn was then king over the Firthfolk; there was an earl of his named Hroald, whose son was Thorir. Atli the Slim was then an earl, he dwelt at Gaula; he had sons - Hallstein, Holmstein, and Herstein; and a daughter, Solveig the Fair. It happened one autumn that much people were gathered at Gaula for a sacrificial feast, then saw Aulvir Hnuf Solveig and courted her; he afterwards asked her to wife. But the earl thought him an unequal match and would not give her. Whereupon Aulvir composed many love-songs, and thought so much of Solveig that he left freebooting, but Thorolf and Eyvind Lambi kept it on.

Chapter 3

The Beginning of the Rule of Harold Fairhair

Harold, son of Halfdan Swarthy, was heir after his father. He had bound himself by this vow, not to let his hair be cut or combed till he were sole king over Norway, wherefore he was called Harold Shockhead. So first he warred with the kings nearest to him and conquered them, as is told at length elsewhere. Then he got possession of Upland; thence he went northwards to Thronheim, and had many battles there before he became absolute over all the Thronds. After that he purposed to go north to Naumdale to attack the brothers Herlaug and Hrollaug, kings of Naumdale. But when these brothers heard of his coming, Herlaug with twelve men entered the sepulchral mound which they had caused to be made (they were three winters at the making), and the mound then was closed after them. But king Hrollaug sank from royalty to earldom, giving up his kingdom and becoming a vassal of Harold. So Harold gained the Naumdalesmen and Halogaland, and he set rulers over his realm there. Then went he southwards with a fleet to Mæra and Raumsdale. But Solvi Bandy-legs, Hunthiof's son, escaped thence, and going to king Arnvid, in South Mæra, he asked help, with these words:

'Though this danger now touches us, before long the same will come to you; for Harold, as I ween, will hasten hither when he has enthralled and oppressed

after his will all in North Mæra and Raumsdale. Then will the same need be upon you as was upon us, to guard your wealth and liberty, and to try everyone from whom you may hope for aid. And I now offer myself with my forces against this tyranny and wrong. But, if you make the other choice, you must do as the Naumdalesmen have done, and go of your own will into slavery, and become Harold's thralls. My father though it victory to die a king with honour rather than become in his old age another king's subject. Thou, as I judge, wilt think the same, and so will others who have any high spirit and claim to be men of valour.'

By such persuasion king Arnvid was determined to gather his forces and defend his land. He and Solvi made a league, and sent messengers to Audbjorn, king of the Firthfolk, that he should come and help them. Audbjorn, after counsel taken with friends, consented, and bade cut the war-arrow and send the war-summons throughout his realm, with word to his nobles that they should join him.

But when the king's messengers came to Kveldulf and told him their errand, and that the king would have Kveldulf come to him with all his house-carles, then answered he:

'It is my duty to the king to take the field with him if he have to defend his own land, and there be harrying against the Firthfolk; but this I deem clean beyond my duty, to go north to Mæra and defend their land. Briefly ye may say when ye meet your king that Kveldulf will sit at home during this rush to war, nor will he gather forces nor leave his home to fight with Harold Shockhead. For I think that he has a whole load of good-fortune where our king has not a handful.'

The messengers went back to the king, and told him how their errand had sped; but Kveldulf sat at home on his estates.

Chapter 4

Battle of King Harold and Audbjorn

King Audbjorn went with his forces northwards to Mæra; there he joined king Arnvid and Solvi Bandy-legs, and altogether they had a large host. King Harold also had come from the north with his forces, and the armies met inside Solskel. There was fought a great battle, with much slaughter in either host. Of the Mærian forces fell the kings Arnvid and Audbjorn, but Solvi escaped, and afterwards became a great sea-rover, and wrought much scathe on Harold's kingdom, and was nicknamed Bandy-legs. On Harold's side fell two earls, Asgaut and Asbjorn, and two sons of earl Hacon, Grjotgard and Herlaug, and many other great men. After this Harold subdued South Mæra. Vemund Audbjorn's brother still retained the Firthfolk, being made king. It was now autumn, and king Harold was advised not to go south in autumn-tide. So he set earl Rognvald over North and South Mæra and Raumsdale, and kept a numerous force about himself.

That same autumn the sons of Atli set on Aulvir Hnuf at his home, and would fain have slain him. They had such a force that Aulvir could not withstand them, but fled for his life. Going northwards to Mæra, he there found Harold, and

submitted to him, and went north with the king to Throndeim, and he became most friendly with him, and remained with him for a long time thereafter, and was made a skald.

In the winter following earl Rognvald went the inner way by the Eid-sea southwards to the Firths. Having news by spies of the movements of king Vemund, he came by night to Naust-dale, where Vemund was at a banquet, and, surrounding the house, burnt within it the king and ninety men. After that Karl of Berdla came to earl Rognvald with a long-ship fully manned, and they two went north to Mæra. Rognvald took the ships that had belonged to Vemund and all the chattels he could get. Kari of Berdla then went north to king Harold at Throndeim, and became his man.

Next spring king Harold went southwards along the coast with a fleet, and subdued firths and fells, and arranged for men of his own to rule them. Earl Hroald he set over the Firthfolk. King Harold was very careful, when he had gotten new peoples under his power, about barons and rich landowners, and all those whom he suspected of being at all likely to raise rebellion. Every such man he treated in one of two ways: he either made him become his liege-man, or go abroad; or (as a third choice) suffer yet harder conditions, some even losing life or limb. Harold claimed as his own through every district all patrimonies, and all land tilled or untilled, likewise all seas and freshwater lakes. All landowners were to be his tenants, as also all that worked in the forest, salt-burners, hunters and fishers by land and sea, all these owed him duty. But many fled abroad from this tyranny, and much waste land was then colonized far and wide, both eastwards in Jamtaland and Helsingjaland, and also the West lands, the Southern isles, Dublin in Ireland, Caithness in Scotland, and Shetland. And in that time Iceland was found.

Chapter 5

The King's Message to Kveldulf

King Harold lay with his fleet in the Firths, whence he sent messengers round the land to such as had not come to him, but with whom he thought he had business. The messengers came to Kveldulf, and were well received. They set forth their errand, said that the king would have Kveldulf come to him.

'He has heard,' said they, 'that you are a man of renown and high family. You will get from him terms of great honour, for the king is very keen on this, to have with him such as he hears are men of mark for strength and bravery.'

Kveldulf answered that he was an old man, not fit for war or to be out in warships. 'I will now,' said he, 'sit at home and leave serving kings.'

Upon this the messengers said, 'Then let your son go to the king; he is a tall man and a likely warrior. The king will make you a baron,' said they to Grim, 'if you will serve him.'

'I will be made baron under none,' said Grim, 'while my father lives; he, while he lives, shall be my liege-lord.'

The messengers went away, and when they came to the king told him all that Kveldulf had said before them. Whereat the king looked sullen, but he spoke little; these men, he said, were proud, or what were they aiming at? Aulvir Hnuf was standing near, and he bade the king not be wroth. 'I will go,' said he, 'to Kveldulf; and he will consent to come to you, as soon as he knows that you think it a matter of moment.'

So Aulvir went to Kveldulf and told him that the king was wroth, and it would not go well unless one of the two, father or son, came to the king; he said, too, that he would get them great honour from the king if they would but pay homage. Further he told them at length, as was true, that the king was liberal to his men both in money and in honours.

Kveldulf said, 'My foreboding is that I and my sons shall get no luck from this king; and I will not go to him. But if Thorolf returns this summer, he will be easily won to this journey, as also to be made the king's man. Say you this to the king, that I will be his friend, and will keep to his friendship all who heed my words; I will also hold the same rule and authority from his hand that I held before from the former king, if he will that it continue so still, and I will see how I and the king agree.'

Then Aulvir went back and told the king that Kveldulf would send him his son, and he (said Aulvir) would suit better; but he was not then at home. The king let the matter rest. In the summer he went inland to Sogn, but in autumn made ready to go northwards to Throndheim.

Chapter 6

Thorolf Resolves to Serve the King

Thorolf Kveldulf's son and Eyvind Lambi came home from sea-roving in the autumn. Thorolf went to his father, and father and son had some talk together. Thorolf asked what had been the errand of the men whom Harold sent thither. Kveldulf said the king had sent them with this message, that Kveldulf or else one of his sons should become his man.

'How answeredst thou?' said Thorolf.

'I spake what was in my mind, that I would never take service with king Harold; and ye two will both do the same, if I may counsel: this I think will be the end, that we shall reap ruin from that king.'

'That,' said Thorolf, 'is quite contrary to what my mind tells me, for I think I shall get from him much advancement. And on this I am resolved, to seek the king, and become his man; and this I have learnt for true, that his guard is made up of none but valiant men. To join their company, if they will have me, seems to me most desirable; these men are in far better case than all others in the land. And 'tis told me of the king that he is most generous in money gifts to his men, and not slow to give them promotion and to grant rule to such as he deems meet for it. Whereas I hear this about all that turn their backs upon him and pay him not homage with friendship, that they all become men of nought, some flee abroad, some are made hirelings. It seems wonderful to me, father, in a man so

wise and ambitious as thou art, that thou wouldst not thankfully take the dignity which the king offered thee. But if thou thinkest that thou hast prophetic foresight of this, that we shall get misfortune from this king, and that he will be our enemy, then why didst thou not go to battle against him with that king in whose service thou wert before? Now, methinks it is most unreasonable neither to be his friend nor his enemy.'

'It went,' said Kveldulf, 'just as my mind foreboded, that they marched not to victory who went northwards to fight with Harold Shockhead in Mæra; and equally true will this be, that Harold will work much scathe on my kin. But thou, Thorolf, wilt take thine own counsel in thine own business; nor do I fear, though thou enter into the company of Harold's guards, that thou wilt not be thought capable and equal to the foremost in all proofs of manhood. Only beware of this, keep within bounds, nor rival thy betters; thou wilt not, I am sure, yield to others overmuch.'

But when Thorolf made him ready to go, Kveldulf accompanied him down to the ship and embraced him, with wishes for his happy journey and their next merry meeting.

Chapter 7 Of Bjorgolf, Brynjolf, Bard, and Hildirida

There was a man in Halogaland named Bjorgolf; he dwelt in Torgar. He was a baron, powerful and wealthy; in strength, stature, and kindred half hill-giant. He had a son named Brynjolf, who was like his father. Bjorgolf was now old, and his wife was dead; and he had given over into his son's hands all business, and found him a wife, Helga, daughter of Kettle Hæing of Hrafnista. Their son was named Bard; he soon grew to be tall and handsome, and became a right doughty man.

One autumn there was a banquet where many men were gathered, Bjorgolf and his son being there the most honourable guests. In the evening they were paired off by lot to drink together, as the old custom was. Now, there was at the banquet a man named Hogni, owner of a farm in Leka, a man of great wealth, very handsome, shrewd, but of low family, who had made his own way. He had a most beautiful daughter, Hildirida by name; and it fell to her lot to sit by Bjorgolf. They talked much together that evening, and the fair maiden charmed the old man. Shortly afterwards the banquet broke up.

That same autumn old Bjorgolf journeyed from home in a cutter of his own, with thirty men aboard. He came to Leka, and twenty of them went up to the house, while ten guarded the ship. When they came to the farm, Hogni went out to meet him, and made him welcome, invited him and his comrades to lodge there, which offer Bjorgolf accepted, and they entered the room. But when they had doffed their travelling clothes and donned mantles, then Hogni gave orders to bring in a large bowl of beer; and Hildirida, the daughter of the house, bare ale to the guests.

Bjorgolf called to him Hogni the goodman, and said, 'My errand here is this: I will have your daughter to go home with me, and will even now make with her a hasty wedding.'

Hogni saw no choice but to let all be as Bjorgolf would; so Bjorgolf bought her with an ounce of gold, and they became man and wife, and Hildirida went home with Bjorgolf to Torgar. Brynjolf showed him ill-pleased at this business. Bjorgolf and Hildirida had two sons; one was named Harek, the other Hærek.

Soon after this Bjorgolf died; but no sooner was he buried than Brynjolf sent away Hildirida and her sons. She went to her father at Leka, and there her sons were brought up. They were good-looking, small of stature, naturally shrewd, like their mother's kin. They were commonly called Hildirida's sons. Brynjolf made little count of them, and did not let them inherit aught of their father's. Hildirida was Hogni's heiress, and she and her sons inherited from him and dwelt in Leka, and had plenty of wealth. Bard, Brynjolf's son, and Hildirida's sons were about of an age.

Bjorgolf and his son Brynjolf had long held the office of going to the Finns, and collecting the Finns' tribute.

Northwards, in Halogaland is a firth called Vefsnir, and in the firth lies an island called Alost, a large island and a good, and in this a farm called Sandness. There dwelt a man named Sigurd, the richest man thereabouts in the north; he was a baron, and wise of understanding. He had a daughter named Sigridr; she was thought the best match in Halogaland, being his only child and sole heiress to her father. Bard Brynjolf's son journeyed from home with a cutter and thirty men aboard northwards to Alost, and came to Sigurd at Sandness. There he declared his business, and asked Sigridr to wife. This offer was well received and favourable answered, and so it came about that Bard was betrothed to the maiden. The marriage was to take place the next summer. Bard was then to come north for the wedding.

Chapter 8 Of Bard and Thorolf

King Harold had that summer sent word to the men of power that were in Halogaland, summoning to him such as had not come to him before. Brynjolf resolved to go, and with him Bard his son; and in the autumn they went southwards to Thronheim, and there met the king. He received them most gladly. Brynjolf was made a baron of the king's; the king also gave him large grants beside what he had before. He gave him withal the right of journey to the Finns, with the king's business on the fells and the Finn traffic. Then Brynjolf went away home to his estate, but Bard remained, and was made one of the king's guard.

Of all his guard the king most prized his skalds; they occupied the second high seat. Of these Audun Ill-skald sat innermost, being the oldest; he had been skald to Halfdan Swarthy, king Harold's father. Next to him sat Thorbjorn Raven, then Aulvir Hnuf, and next to him was placed Bard; he was there by-named

Bard the White or Bard the Strong. He was in honour with everyone there, but between him and Aulvir Hnuf was a close friendship.

That same autumn came to king Harold Thorolf Kveldulf's son and Eyvind Lambi, Kari of Berdla's son, and they were well received. They brought thither a swift twenty-benched long-ship well manned, which they had before used in sea-roving. They and their company were placed in the guest-hall; but when they had waited there till they thought it a fit time to go before the king, Kari of Berdla and Aulvir Hnuf went in with them. They greeted the king. Then said Aulvir Hnuf, 'Here is come Kveldulf's son, whom I told thee in the summer Kveldulf would send. His promise to thee will now stand fast; for here thou canst see true tokens that he will be thy friend in all when he hath sent his son hither to take service with thee, a stalwart man as thou mayest see. Now, this is the boon craved by Kveldulf and by us all, that thou receive Thorolf with honour and make him a great man with thee.'

The king answered his words well, promising that so he would do, 'If,' said he, 'Thorolf proves himself as accomplished in deed as he is right brave in look.'

After this Thorolf was made of the king's household, and one of his guard.

But Kari of Berdla and his son Eyvind Lambi went back south in the ship which Thorolf had brought north, and so home to Kari's farm. Thorolf remained with the king, who appointed him a seat between Aulvir Hnuf and Bard; and these three struck up a close friendship. And all men said of Thorolf and Bard that they were a well-matched pair for comeliness, stature, strength, and all doughty deeds. And both were in high favour with the king.

But when winter was past and summer came, then Bard asked leave to go and see to the marriage promised to him the summer before. And when the king knew that Bard's errand was urgent, he allowed him to go home. Then Bard asked Thorolf to go north with him, saying (as was true) that he would meet there many of his kin, men of renown, whom he had not yet seen or known. Thorolf thought this desirable, so they got leave from the king for this; then they made them ready, took a good ship and crew, and went their way.

When they came to Torgar, they sent word to Sigurd that Bard would now see to that marriage on which they had agreed the summer before. Sigurd said that he would hold to all that they had arranged; so they fixed the wedding-day, and Bard with his party were to come north to Sandness. At the appointed time Brynjolf and Bard set out, and with them many great men of their kin and connexions. And it was as Bard had said, that Thorolf met there many of his kinsmen that he had not known before. They journeyed to Sandness, and there was held the most splendid feast. And when the feast was ended, Bard went home with his wife, and remained at home through the summer, and Thorolf with him.

In the autumn they came south to the king, and were with him another winter. During that winter Brynjolf died; and when Bard learnt that the inheritance there was open for him, he asked leave to go home. This the king granted, and before they parted Bard was made a baron, as his father had been, and held of the king all those same grants that Brynjolf had held. Bard went home to his estate, and at once became a great chief; but Hildirida's sons got no more of

the heritage than before. Bard had a son by his wife; he was named Grim. Meanwhile Thorolf was with the king, and in great honour.

Chapter 9

Battle in Hafr's Firth

King Harold proclaimed a general levy, and gathered a fleet, summoning his forces far and wide through the land. He went out from Throndeim, and bent his course southwards, for he had heard that a large host was gathered throughout Agdir, Rogaland, and Hordaland, assembled from far, both from the inland parts above, and from the east out of Vik, and many great men were there met who purposed to defend their land from the king. Harold held on his way from the north, with a large force, having his guards on board. In the forecastle of the king's ship were Thorolf Kveldulfsson, Bard the White, Kari of Berdla's sons, Aulvir Hnuf and Eyvind Lambi, and in the prow were twelve Berserks of the king.

The fleets met south in Rogaland in Hafr's Firth. There was fought the greatest battle that king Harold had had, with much slaughter in either host. The king set his own ship in the van, and there the battle was most stubborn, but the end was that king Harold won the victory. Thorir Longchin, king of Agdir, fell there, but Kjotvi the wealthy fled with all his men that could stand, save some that surrendered after the battle. When the roll of Harold's army was called, many were they that had fallen, and many were sore wounded. Thorolf was badly wounded, Bard even worse; nor was there a man unwounded in the king's ship before the mast, except those whom iron bit not to wit the Berserks.

Then the king had his men's wounds bound up, and thanked them for their valour, and gave them gifts, adding most praise where he thought it most deserved. He promised them also further honour, naming some to be steersmen, others forecastle men, others bow-sitters. This was the last battle king Harold had within the land; after this none withstood him; he was supreme over all Norway.

The king saw to the healing of his men, whose wounds gave them hope of life, as also to the burial of the dead with all customary honours. Thorolf and Bard lay wounded. Thorolf's wounds began to heal, but Bard's proved mortal. Then Bard had the king called to him, and spoke thus:

'If it so be that I die of these wounds, then I would ask this of thee, that I may myself name my heir.'

To this when the king assented, then said he:

'I will that Thorolf my friend and kinsman take all my heritage, both lands and chattels. To him, also, will I give my wife and the bringing up of my son, because I trust him for this above all men.'

This arrangement he made fast, as the law was, with the leave of the king. Then Bard died, and was buried, and his death was much mourned. Thorolf was healed of his wounds, and followed the king, and had won great glory.

In the autumn the king went north to Thronnheim. Then Thorolf asked to go north to Halogaland, to see after those gifts which he had received in the summer from his kinsman Bard. The king gave leave for this, adding a message and tokens that Thorolf should take all that Bard had given him, showing that the gift was with the counsel of the king, and that he would have it so. Then the king made Thorolf a baron, and granted him all the rights which Bard had had before, giving him the journey to the Finns on the same terms. He also supplied to Thorolf a good long-ship, with tacking complete, and had everything made ready for his journey thence in the best possible way. So Thorolf set out, and he and the king parted with great affection.

But when Thorolf came north to Torgar, he was well received. He told them of Bard's death; also how Bard had left him both lands and chattels, and her that had been his wife; then he showed the king's order and tokens. When Sigdr heard these tidings, she felt her great loss in her husband, but with Thorolf she was already well acquainted, and knew him for a man of great mark; and this promise of her in marriage was good, and besides there was the king's command. So she and her friends saw it to be the best plan that she should be betrothed to Thorolf, unless that were against her father's mind. Thereupon Thorolf took all the management of the property, and also the king's business.

Soon after this Thorolf started with a long-ship and about sixty men, and coasted northwards, till one day at eventide he came to Sandness in Alost; there they moored the ship. And when they had raised their tent, and made arrangements, Thorolf went up to the farm buildings with twenty men. Sigurd received him well, and asked him to lodge there, for there had been great intimacy between them since the marriage connection between Sigurd and Bard. Then Thorolf and his men went into the hall, and were there entertained. Sigurd sat and talked with Thorolf, and asked tidings. Thorolf told of the battle fought that summer in the south, and of the fall of many men whom Sigurd knew well, and withal how Bard his son-in-law had died of wounds received in the battle. This they both felt to be a great loss. Then Thorolf told Sigurd what had been the covenant between him and Bard before he died, and he declared also the orders of the king, how he would have all this hold good, and this he showed by the tokens.

After this Thorolf entered on his wooing with Sigurd, and asked Sigdr, his daughter, to wife. Sigurd received the proposal well; he said there were many reasons for this; first, the king would have it so; next, Bard had asked it; and further he himself knew Thorolf well, and thought it a good match for his daughter. Thus Sigurd was easily won to grant this suit; whereupon the betrothal was made, and the wedding was fixed for the autumn at Torgar.

Then Thorolf went home to his estate, and his comrades with him. There he prepared a great feast, and bade many thereto. Of Thorolf's kin many were present, men of renown. Sigurd also came thither from the north with a long-ship and a chosen crew. Numerously attended was that feast, and it was at once seen that Thorolf was free-handed and munificent. He kept about him a large following, whereof the cost was great, and much provision was needed; but the year was good, and needful supplies were easily found.

During that winter Sigurd died at Sandness, and Thorolf was heir to all his property; this was great wealth.

Now the sons of Hildirida came to Thorolf, and put in the claim which they thought they had on the property that had belonged to their father Bjorgolf. Thorolf answered them thus:

'This I knew of Brynjolf, and still better of Bard, that they were men so generous that they would have let you have of Bjorgolf's heritage what share they knew to be your right. I was present when ye two put in this same claim on Bard, and I heard what he thought, that there was no ground for it, for he called you illegitimate.'

Harek said that they would bring witnesses that their mother was duly bought with payment.

'It is true that we did not at first treat of this matter with Brynjolf our brother it was a case of sharing between kinsmen, but of Bard we hoped to get our dues in every respect, though our dealings with him were not for long. Now however this heritage has come to men who are in nowise our kin, and we cannot be altogether silent about our wrong; but it may be that, as before, might will so prevail that we get not our right of thee in this, if thou refuse to hear the witness that we can bring to prove us honourably born.'

Thorolf then answered angrily:

'So far am I from thinking you legitimate heirs that I am told your mother was taken by force, and carried home as a captive.'

After that they left talking altogether.

Chapter 10

Thorolf in Finmark

In the winter Thorolf took his way up to the fells with a large force of not less than ninety men, whereas before it had been the wont of the king's stewards to have thirty men, and sometimes fewer. He took with him plenty of wares for trading. At once he appointed a meeting with the Finns, took of them the tribute, and held a fair with them. All was managed with goodwill and friendship, though not without fear on the Finns' side. Far and wide about Finmark did he travel; but when he reached the fells eastward, he heard that the Kylfings were come from the east, and were there for trading with the Finns, but in some places for plunder also. Thorolf set Finns to spy out the movements of the Kylfings, and he followed after to search for them, and came upon thirty men in one den, all of whom he slew, letting none escape. Afterwards he found together fifteen or twenty. In all they slew near upon a hundred, and took immense booty, and returned in the spring after doing this.

Thorolf then went to his estates at Sandness, and remained there through the spring. He had a long-ship built, large, and with a dragon's head, fitted out in the best style; this he took with him from the north. Thorolf gathered great stores of what there was in Halogaland, employing his men after the herrings and in other fishing; seal-hunting there was too in abundance, and egg-gathering, and all such provision he had brought to him. Never had he fewer freedmen about

his home than a hundred; he was open-handed and liberal, and readily made friends with the great, and with all that were near him. A mighty man he became, and he bestowed much care on his ships, equipment, and weapons.

Chapter 11

The King Feasts with Thorolf

King Harold went that summer to Halogaland, and banquets were made ready against his coming, both where his estates were, and also by barons and powerful landowners. Thorolf prepared a banquet for the king at great cost; it was fixed for when the king should come there. To this he bade a numerous company, the best men that could be found. The king had about three hundred men with him when he came to the banquet, but Thorolf had five hundred present. Thorolf had caused a large granary to be fitted up where the drinking should be, for there was no hall large enough to contain all that multitude. And all around the building shields were hung.

The king sate in the high seat; but when the foremost bench was filled, then the king looked round, and he turned red, but spoke not, and men thought they could see he was angry. The banquet was magnificent, and all the viands of the best. The king, however, was gloomy; he remained there three nights, as had been intended. On the day when the king was to leave Thorolf went to him, and offered that they should go together down to the strand. The king did so, and there, moored off the land, floated that dragon-ship which Thorolf had had built, with tent and tackling complete. Thorolf gave the ship to the king, and prayed the king to believe that he had gathered such numbers for this end, to show the king honour, and not to enter into rivalry with him. The king took Thorolf's words well, and then became merry and cheerful. Many added their good word, saying (as was true) that the banquet was most splendid, and the farewell escort magnificent, and that the king gained much strength by such men. Then they parted with much affection.

The king went northwards through Halogaland as he had purposed, and returned south as summer wore on. He went to yet other banquets there that were prepared for him.

Chapter 12

Hildirida's Sons Talk with Harold

Hildirida's sons went to the king and bade him to a three nights' banquet. The king accepted their bidding, and fixed when he would come. So at the appointed time he and his train came thither. The company was not numerous, but the feast went off very well, and the king was quite cheerful. Harek entered into talk with the king, and their talk turned on this, that he asked about the king's journeys in those parts during the summer.

The king answered his questions, and said that all had received him well, each after his means.

'Great will have been the difference,' said Harek, 'and at Torgar the company at the banquet will have been the most numerous.'

The king said that it was so.

Harek said: 'That was to be looked for, because on that banquet most was spent; and thou, O king, hadst great luck in matters so turning out that thy life was not endangered. The end was as was likely; thou wert very wise and very fortunate; for thou at once suspectedst all was not for good on seeing the numerous company there gathered; but (as I am told) thou madest all thy men remain armed constantly and keep watch and ward night and day.'

The king looked at him and said: 'Why speakest thou thus, Harek? What canst thou tell of this?'

Harek answered: 'May I speak with permission what I please?'

'Speak,' said the king.

'This I judge,' said Harek, 'that thou wouldst not deem it to be well, if thou, O king, hearest every one's words, what men say when speaking their minds freely at home, how they think that it is a tyranny thou exercisest over all people. But the plain truth is, O king, that to rise against thee the people lack nothing but boldness and a leader. Nor is it wonderful in a man like Thorolf that he thinks himself above everyone; he wants not for strength and comeliness; he keeps a guard round him like a king; he has wealth in plenty, even though he had but what is truly his, but besides that he holds others' property equally at his disposal with his own. Thou, too, hast bestowed on him large grants, and he had now made all ready to repay them with ill. For this is the truth that I tell thee: when it was learnt that thou wert coming north to Halogaland with no more force than three hundred men, the counsel of people here was that an army should assemble and take thy life, O king, and the lives of all thy force. And Thorolf was head of these counsels, and it was offered him that he should be king over the Halogalanders and Naumdalesmen. Then he went in and out of each firth and round all the islands, and got together every man he could find and every weapon, and it was no secret that this army was to muster for battle against king Harold. But the truth is, O king, that though thou hadst somewhat less force than those who met thee, yet the farmer folk took flight when they saw thy fleet. Then this counsel was adopted, to meet thee with friendly show and bid thee to a banquet: but it was intended, when thou wert well drunk and lying asleep, to attack thee with fire and weapon. And here is a proof whether I am rightly informed; ye were led into a granary because Thorolf was loth to burn up his new and beautiful hall; and a further proof is that every room was full of weapons and armour. But when all their devices against thee miscarried, then they chose the best course they could; they hushed up their former purpose. And I doubt not that all may deny this counsel, because few, methinks, know themselves guiltless, were the truth to come out. Now this is my counsel, O king, that thou keep Thorolf near thee, and let him be in thy guard, and bear thy standard, and be in the forecastle of thy ship; for this duty no man is fitter. Or if thou wilt have him to be a baron, then give him a grant southwards in the Firths, where are all his family: thou mayest then keep an eye on him, that he make not himself too great for thee. But the business here in Halogaland put thou into the hands of men who are moderate and will serve thee faithfully, and have

kinsfolk here, men whose relatives have had the same work here before. We two brothers are ready and willing for such service as thou wilt use us in; our father long had the king's business here, and it prospered in his hands. It is difficult, O king, to place men as managers here, because thou wilt seldom come hither thyself. The strength of the land is too little to need thy coming with an army, yet thou must not come hither again with few followers, for there are here many disloyal people.'

The king was very angry at these words, but he spoke quietly, as was always his wont when he heard tidings of great import. He asked whether Thorolf were at home at Torgar. Harek said this was not likely.

'Thorolf,' said he, 'is too wise to be in the way of thy followers, O king, for he must guess that all will not be so close but thou wilt get to know these things. He went north to Alost as soon as he heard that thou wert on thy way south.'

The king spoke little about this matter before other men; but it was easy to see that he inclined to believe the words that had been spoken.

After this the king went his way, Hildirida's sons giving him honourable escort with gifts at parting, while he promised them his friendship. The brothers made themselves an errand into Naumdale, and so went round about as to cross the king's path now and again; he always received their words well.

Chapter 13

Thorgils Goes to the King

There was a man named Thorgils Yeller, a house-carle of Thorolf's, honoured above all the rest of his household; he had followed Thorolf in his roving voyages as fore-castle man and standard-bearer. He had been in Hafr's Firth, in the fleet of king Harold, and was then steering the very ship that Thorolf had used in his roving. Thorgils was strong of body and right bold of heart; the king had bestowed on him friendly gifts after the battle, and promised him his friendship. Thorgils was manager at Torgar, and bore rule there when Thorolf was not at home.

Before Thorolf went away this time he had counted over all the king's tribute that he had brought from the fells, and he put it in Thorgils' hand, bidding him convey it to the king, if he himself came not home before the king returned south. So Thorgils made ready a large ship of burden belonging to Thorolf, and put the tribute on board, and taking about twenty men sailed southward after the king, and found him in Naumdale.

But when Thorgils met the king he gave him greeting from Thorolf, and said that he was come thither with the Finns' tribute sent by Thorolf. The king looked at him, but answered never a word, and all saw that he was angry. Thorgils then went away, thinking to find a better time to speak with the king; he sought Aulvir Hnuf, and told him what had passed, and asked him if he knew what was the matter.

'That do I not,' said he; 'but this I have marked, that, since we were at Leka, the king is silent every time Thorolf is mentioned, and I suspect he has been slandered. This I know of Hildirida's sons, that they were long in conference with the king, and it is easy to see from their words that they are Thorolf's enemies. But I will soon be certain about this from the king himself.'

Thereupon Aulvir went to the king, and said: 'Here is come Thorgils Yeller thy friend, with the tribute which is thine; and the tribute is much larger than it has been before, and far better wares. He is eager to be on his way; be so good, O king, as to go and see it; for never have been seen such good gray furs.'

The king answered not, but he went to where the ship lay. Thorgils at once set forth the furs and showed them to the king. And when the king saw that it was true, that the tribute was much larger and better, his brows somewhat cleared, and Thorgils got speech with him. He brought the king some bearskins which Thorolf sent him, and other valuables besides, which he had gotten upon the fells. So the king brightened up, and asked tidings of the journey of Thorolf and his company. Thorgils told it all in detail.

Then said the king: 'Great pity is it Thorolf should be unfaithful to me and plot my death.'

Then answered many who stood by, and all with one mind, that it was a slander of wicked men if such words had been spoken, and Thorolf would be found guiltless. The king said he would prefer to believe this. Then was the king cheerful in all his talk with Thorgils, and they parted friends.

But when Thorgils met Thorolf he told him all that had happened.

Chapter 14

Thorolf Again in Finmark

That winter Thorolf went again to Finmark, taking with him about a hundred men. As before, he held a fair with the Finns, and travelled far and wide over Finmark. But when he reached the far east, and his coming was heard of, then came to him some Kvens, saying that they were sent by Faravid, king of Kvenland, because the Kiriales were harrying his land; and his message was that Thorolf should go thither and bear him help; and further that Thorolf should have a share of the booty equal to the king's share, and each of his men as much as two Kvens. With the Kvens the law was that the king should have one-third as compared with his men when the booty was shared, and beyond that, as reserved for him, all bearskins and sables. Thorolf put this proposal before his men, giving them the choice to go or not; and the more part chose to venture it, as the prize was so great. This is was decided that they should go eastwards with the messengers.

Finmark is a wide tract; it is bounded westwards by the sea, wherefrom large firths run in; by sea also northwards and round to the east; but southwards lies Norway; and Finmark stretches along nearly all the inland region to the south, as also does Halogaland outside. But eastwards from Naumdale is Jamtaland, then Helsingjaland and Kvenland, then Finland, then Kirialaland; along all these

lands to the north lies Finmark, and there are wide inhabited fell-districts, some in dales, some by lakes. The lakes of Finmark are wonderfully large, and by the lakes there are extensive forests. But high fells lie behind from end to end of the Mark, and this ridge is called Keels.

But when Thorolf came to Kvenland and met king Faravid, they made them ready for their march, being three hundred of the kings men and a fourth hundred Norsemen. And they went by the upper way over Finmark, and came where the Kiriales were on the fell, the same who had before harried the Kvens. These, when they were aware of the enemy, gathered themselves and advanced to meet them, expecting victory as heretofore. But, on the battle being joined, the Norsemen charged furiously forwards, bearing shields stronger than those of the Kvens; the slaughter turned to be in the Kiriales' ranks many fell, some fled. King Faravid and Thorolf took there immense wealth of spoil, and returned to Kvenland, whence afterwards Thorolf and his men came to Finmark, he and Faravid parting in friendship.

Thorolf came down from the fell to Vefsnir; then went first to his farm at Sandness, stayed there awhile, and in spring went with his men north to Torgar.

But when he came there, it was told him how Hildirida's sons had been that winter at Thronheim with king Harold, and that they would not spare to slander Thorolf with the king; and it was much questioned what grounds they had had for their slander. Thorolf answered thus: 'The king will not believe this, though such lies be laid before him; for there are no grounds for my turning traitor to him, when he has done me much good and no evil. And so far from wishing to do him harm (though I had the choice), I would much rather be a baron of his than be called king, when some other fellow-countrymen might rise and make me his thrall.'

Chapter 15

King Harold and Harek

Hildirida's sons had been that winter with king Harold, and in their company twelve men of their own household and neighbours. The brothers were often talking with the king, and they still spoke in the same way of Thorolf. Harek asked: 'Didst thou like well, O king, the Finns' tribute which Thorolf sent thee?'

'I did,' said the king.

'Then wouldst thou have been surprised,' said he, 'if thou hadst received all that belonged to thee! But it was far from being so; Thorolf kept for himself the larger share. He sent thee three bearskins, but I know for certain that he kept back thirty that were by right thine; and I guess it was the same with other things. This will prove true, O king, that, if thou put the stewardship into the hand of myself and my brother, we shall bring thee more wealth.'

And to all that they said about Thorolf their comrades bore witness, wherefore the king was exceeding angry.

Chapter 16

Thorolf and the King

In the summer Thorolf went south to king Harold at Throndeim, taking with him all the tribute and much wealth besides, and ninety men well arrayed. When he came to the king, he and his were placed in the guest-hall and entertained magnificently.

On the morrow Aulvir Hnuf went to his kinsman Thorolf; they talked together, Aulvir saying that Thorolf was much slandered, and the king gave ear to such tales. Thorolf asked Aulvir to plead his cause with the king, 'for,' said he, 'I shall be short-spoken before the king if he choose rather to believe the lies of wicked men than truth and honesty which he will find in me.'

The next day Aulvir came to see Thorolf, and told him he had spoken on his business with the king; 'but,' said he, 'I know no more than before what is in his mind.'

'Then must I myself go to him,' said Thorolf.

He did so; he went to the king where he sat at meat, and when he came in he greeted the king. The king accepted his greeting, and bade them serve him with drink. Thorolf said that he had there the tribute belonging to the king from Finmark; 'and yet a further portion of booty have I brought as a present to thee, O king. And what I bring will, I know, owe all its worth to this, that it is given out of gratitude to thee.'

The king said that he could expect nought but good from Thorolf, 'because,' said he, 'I deserve nought else; yet men tell two tales of thee as to thy being careful to win my approval.'

'I am not herein justly charged,' said Thorolf, 'if any say I have shown disloyalty to thee. This I think, and with truth: That they who speak such lying slanders of me will prove to be in nowise thy friends, but it is quite clear that they are my bitter enemies; 'tis likely, however, that they will pay dearly for it if we come to deal together.'

Then Thorolf went away.

But on the morrow Thorolf counted out the tribute in the king's presence; and when it was all paid, he then brought out some bearskins and sables, which he begged the king to accept. Many of the bystanders said that this was well done and deserved friendship. The king said that Thorolf had himself taken his own reward. Thorolf said that he had loyally done all he could to please the king. 'But if he likes it not,' said he, 'I cannot help it: the king knows, when I was with him and in his train, how I bore myself; it is wonderful to me if the king thinks me other now than he proved me to be then.'

The king answered: 'Thou didst bear thyself well, Thorolf, when thou wert with us; and this, I think, is best to do still, that thou join my guard, bear my banner, be captain over the guard; then will no man slander thee, if I can oversee night and day what thy conduct is.'

Thorolf looked on either hand where stood his house-carles; then said he: 'Loth were I to deliver up these my followers: about thy titles and grants to me, O king, thou wilt have thine own way, but my following I will not deliver up while my means last, though I manage at my own sole cost. My request and wish, O king, is this, that thou come and visit me at my home, and the hear word of men whom thou trustest, what witness they bear to me in this matter; thereafter do as thou findest proof to warrant.'

The king answered and said that he would not again accept entertainment from Thorolf; so Thorolf went out, and made ready to return home.

But when he was gone, the king put into the hands of Hildirida's sons his business in Halogaland which Thorolf had before had, as also the Finmark journey. The king claimed ownership of the estate at Torgar, and of all the property that Brynjolf had had; and all this he gave into the keeping of Hildirida's sons. The king sent messengers with tokens to Thorolf to tell him of this arrangement, whereupon Thorolf took the ships belonging to him, put on board all the chattels he could carry, and with all his men, both freedmen and thralls, sailed northwards to his farm at Sandness, where he kept up no fewer and no less state than before.

Chapter 17

Hildirida's Sons in Finmark and at Harold's Court

Hildirida's sons took the business in Halogaland; and none gainsaid this because of the king's power, but Thorolf's kinsmen and friends were much displeased at the change. The two brothers went on the fell in the winter, taking with them thirty men. To the Finns there seemed much less honour in these stewards than when Thorolf came, and the money due was far worse paid.

That same winter Thorolf went up on the fell with a hundred men; he passed on at once eastwards to Kvenland and met king Faravid. They took counsel together, and resolved to go on the fell again as in the winter before; and with four hundred men they made a descent on Kirialaland, and attacked those districts for which they thought themselves a match in numbers, and harrying there took much booty, returning up to Finmark as the winter wore on. In the spring Thorolf went home to his farm, and then employed his men at the fishing in Vagar, and some in herring-fishing, and had the take of every kind brought to his farm.

Thorolf had a large ship, which was waiting to put to sea. It was elaborate in everything, beautifully painted down to the sea-line, the sails also carefully striped with blue and red, and all the tackling as elaborate as the ship. Thorolf had this ship made ready, and put aboard some of his house-carles as crew; he freighted it with dried fish and hides, and ermine and gray furs too in abundance, and other peltry such as he had gotten from the fell; it was a most valuable cargo. This ship he bade sail westwards for England to buy him clothes and other supplies that he needed; and they, first steering southwards along the coast, then stretching across the main, came to England. There they

found a good market, laded the ship with wheat and honey and wine and clothes, and sailing back in autumn with a fair wind came to Hordaland.

That same autumn Hildirida's sons carried tribute to the king. But when they paid it the king himself was present and saw. He said:

'Is this tribute now paid all that ye took in Finmark?'

'It is,' they answered.

'Less by far,' said the king, 'and much worse paid is the tribute now than when Thorolf gathered it; yet ye said that he managed the business ill.'

'It is well, O king,' said Harek, 'that thou hast considered how large a tribute should usually come from Finmark, because thus thou knowest how much thou lovest, if Thorolf waste all the tribute before thee. Last winter we were in Finmark with thirty men, as has been the wont of thy stewards heretofore. Soon after came Thorolf with a hundred men, and we learnt this, that he meant to take the lives of us two brothers and all our followers, his reason being that thou, O king, hadst handed over to us the business that he wished to have. It was then our best choice to shun meeting him, and to save ourselves: therefore we quickly left the settled districts, and went on the fell. But Thorolf went all round Finmark with his armed warriors; he had all the trade, the Finns paid him tribute, and he hindered thy stewards from entering Finmark. He means to be made king over the north there, both over Finmark and Halogaland: and the wonder is that thou wilt listen to him in anything whatever. Herein may true evidence be found of Thorolf's ill-gotten gains from Finmark; for the largest merchant ship in Halogaland was made ready for sea at Sandness in the spring, and all the cargo on board was said to be Thorolf's. It was laden mostly, I think, with gray furs, but there would be found there also bearskins and sables more than Thorolf brought to thee. And with that ship went Thorgils Yeller, and I believe he sailed westwards for England. But if thou wilt know the truth of this, set spies on the track of Thorgils when he comes eastwards; for I fancy that no trading-ship in our days has carried such store of wealth. And I am telling thee what is true, O king, when I say that to thee belongs every penny on board.'

All that Harek said his companions confirmed, and none there ventured to gainsay.

Chapter 18

Thorolf's Ship is Taken

There were two brothers named Sigtrygg Swiffarer and Hallvard Hardfarer, kinsmen of king Harold on the mother's side; from their father, a wealthy man, they had inherited an estate in Hising. Four brothers there were in all; but Thord and Thorgeir, the two younger, were at home, and managed the estate. Sigtrygg and Hallvard carried all the king's messages, both within and without the land, and had gone on many dangerous journeys, both for putting men out of the way and confiscating the goods of those whose homes the king ordered to be attacked. They kept about them a large following; they were not generally in favour, but the king prized them highly. None could match them at travelling,

either on foot or on snow-shoes; in voyaging also they were speedier than others, valiant men they were, and very wary.

These two men were with the king when those things happened that have just been told. In the autumn the king went to a banquet in Hordaland. And one day he summoned to him the brothers Hallvard and Sigtrygg, and when they came he bade them go with their following and spy after the ship which Thorgils had taken westward to England in the summer.

'Bring me,' said he, 'the ship and all that is in it, except the men; let them go their way in peace, if they do not try to defend the ship.'

The brothers made them ready for this, and, taking each one his long-ship, went to seek Thorgils, and learnt that he was come from the west, and had sailed northwards along the coast. Northwards after him went they, and found him in Fir Sound. They knew the ship at once, and laid one of their ships on the seaward side of her, while some of them landed, and thence went out on to the ship by the gangways. Thorgils' crew, apprehending no danger, made no defence; they found out nothing till many armed men were aboard, and so they were all seized, and afterwards put on shore weaponless, with nothing but the clothes they wore. But Hallvard's men drew out the gangways, loosed the cables, and towed out the ship; then turned them about, and sailed southwards along the coast till they met the king, to whom they brought the ship and all that was in it. And when the cargo was unloaded, the king saw that it was great wealth, and what Harek had said was no lie.

But Thorgils and his comrades got conveyance, and went to Kveldulf and his son, and told of the misadventure of their voyage, yet were they well received. Kveldulf said all was tending to what he had foreboded, that Thorolf would not in the end have good luck in his friendship with king Harold.

'And I care little,' said he, 'for Thorolf's money loss in this, if worse does not come after; but I misdoubt, as before, that Thorolf will not rightly rate his own means against the stronger power with which he has to deal.'

And he bade Thorgils say this to Thorolf:

'My counsel is that you go away out of the land, for maybe you will do better for yourself if you serve under the king of England, or of Denmark, or of Sweden.'

Then he gave Thorgils a rowing-cutter with tackling complete, a tent also, and provisions, and all things needful for their journey. So they departed, and stayed not their journey till they came to Thorolf and told him all that had happened.

Thorolf took his loss cheerfully, and said that he should not be short of money; "'tis good,' said he, 'to be in partnership with a king.' He then bought meal and all that he needed for the maintenance of his people; his house-carles must for awhile, he said, be less bravely attired than he had purposed. Some lands he sold, some he mortgaged, but he kept up all expenses as before; he had no fewer men with him than last winter, nay, rather more. And as to feasts and friends entertained at his house, he had more means for all this than before. He stayed at home all that winter.

Chapter 19

Thorolf Retaliates

When spring came, and the snow and ice were loosed, then Thorolf launched a large warship of his own, and he had it made ready, and equipped his house-carles, taking with him more than a hundred men; and a goodly company there were, and well weaponed. And when a fair wind blew, Thorolf steered southwards along the coast till he came to Byrda; then they held an outer course outside the islands, but at times through channels between hill-slopes. Thus they coasted on southwards, and had no tidings of men till they came eastwards to Vik. There they heard that king Harold was in Vik, meaning in the summer to go into Upland. The people of the country knew nothing of Thorolf's voyage. With a fair wind he held on south to Denmark, and thence into the Baltic, where he harried through that summer, but got no good booty. In the autumn he steered back from the east to Denmark, at the time when the fleet at Eyrar was breaking up. In the summer there had been, as was usual, many ships from Norway. Thorolf let all these vessels sail past, and did not show himself. One day at eventide he sailed into Mostrarsound, where in the haven was a large ship of burden that had come from Eyrar. The steersman was named Thorir Thruma; he was a steward of king Harold's, manager of his farm at Thruma, a large farm in which the king used to make a long stay when he was in Vik. Much provision was needed for this farm, and Thorir had gone to Eyrar for this, to buy a cargo, malt, wheat, and honey; and much wealth of the king's had he for that end. Thorolf made for this ship, and offered Thorir and his crew the choice to defend themselves, but, as they had no force to make defence against such numbers, they yielded. The ship with all its freight Thorolf took, but Thorir he put out on an island.

Then he sailed northwards along the coast with both the ships; but when they came to the mouth of the Elbe, they lay there and waited for night. And when it was dark, they rowed their long-ship up the river and stood in for the farm-buildings belonging to Hallvard and Sigtrygg. They came there before daybreak, and formed a ring of men round the place, then raised a war-whoop and wakened those within, who quickly leapt up to their weapons. Thorgeir at once fled from his bedchamber. Round the farmhouse were high wooden palings: at these Thorgeir leapt, grasping with his hand the stakes, and so swung himself out of the yard. Thorgils Yeller was standing near; he made a sweep with his sword at Thorgeir, and cut off his hand along with the fence-stake. Then Thorgeir escaped to the wood, but Thord, his brother, fell slain there, and more than twenty men. Thorolf's band plundered and burnt the house, then went back down the river to the sea.

With a fair wind they sailed north to Vik; there again they fell in with a large merchant-ship belonging to men of Vik, laden with malt and meal. For this ship they made; but those on board, deeming they had no means of defence, yielded, and were disarmed and put on shore, and Thorolf's men, taking the ship and its cargo, went on their way.

Thorolf had now three ships, with which he sailed westwards by Fold. Then they took the high road of the sea to Lidandisness, going with all despatch, but making raid and lifting cattle on ness and shore. Northwards from Lidandisness they held a course further out, but pillaged wherever they touched land. But when Thorolf came over against the Firths, then he turned his course inward, and went to see his father Kveldulf, and there they were made welcome. Thorolf told his father what had happened in his summer voyage; he stayed there but a short time, and Kveldulf and his son Grim accompanied him to the ship.

But before they parted Thorolf and his father talked together, and Kveldulf said: 'I was not far wrong, Thorolf, in telling thee, when thou wentest to join king Harold's guard, that neither thou nor we thy kindred would in the long run get good-fortune therefrom. Now thou hast taken up the very counsel against which I warned thee; thou matchest thy force against king Harold's. But though thou art well endowed with valour and all prowess, thou hast not luck enough for this, to play on even terms with the king - a thing wherein no one here in the land has succeeded, though others have had great power and large force of men. And my foreboding is that this is our last meeting: it were in the course of nature from our ages that thou shouldst overlive me, but I think it will be otherwise.'

After this Thorolf embarked and went his way. And no tidings are told of his voyage till he arrived home at Sandness, and caused to be conveyed to his farm all the booty he had taken, and had his ship set up upon land. There was now no lack of provision to keep his people through the winter. Thorolf stayed on at home with no fewer men than in the winter before.

Chapter 20

Skallagrim's Marriage

There was a man named Yngvar, powerful and wealthy. He had been a baron of the former kings. But after Harold came to the throne, Yngvar sat at home and served not the king. Yngvar was married and had a daughter named Bera. Yngvar dwelt in the Firths. Bera was his only child and heiress. Grim Kveldulf's son asked Bera to wife, and the match was arranged. Grim took Bera in the winter following the summer when Thorolf had parted from him and his father.

Grim was then twenty-five years old, and was now bald, wherefore he was henceforth called Skallagrim. He had then the management of all the farms belonging to his father and himself and of all the produce, though Kveldulf was yet a hale and strong man. They had many freedmen about them, and many men who had grown up there at home and were about Skallagrim's equals in age. Men of prowess and strength they were mostly, for both father and son chose strong fellows to be their followers, and trained them after their mind. Skallagrim was like his father in stature and strength, as also in face and temper.

Chapter 21

Hallvard and His Grother go After Thorolf

King Harold was in Vik while Thorolf was harrying, and in the autumn he went to Upland, and thence northward to Throndeim, where he stayed through the winter with a large force. Sigtrygg and Hallvard were with him: they had heard what Thorolf had done at their house on Hising, what scathe he had wrought on men and property. They often reminded the king of this, and withal how Thorolf had plundered the king and his subjects, and had gone about harrying within the land. They begged the king's leave that they two brothers might go with their usual following and attack Thorolf in his home.

The king answered thus: 'Ye may think ye have good cause for taking Thorolf's life, but I doubt your fortune falls far short of this work. Thorolf is more than your match, brave and doughty as ye may deem yourselves.'

The brothers said that his would be put to the proof, if the king would grant them leave; they had often run great risk against men on whom they had less to avenge, and generally they had won the day.

And when spring came, and men made ready to go their several ways, then did Hallvard and his brother again urge their request that they might go and take Thorolf's life. So the king gave them leave. 'And I know,' he said, 'ye will bring me his head and many costly things withal when ye come back; yet some do guess that if ye sail north ye will both sail and row south.'

They made them ready with all speed, taking two ships and two hundred men; and when they were ready they sailed with a north-east wind out of the firth, but that is a head-wind for those coasting northward.

Chapter 22

Death of Thorolf Kveldulfsson

King Harold was at Hlada when the brothers went away. Immediately after this the king made him ready with all haste, and embarked his force on four ships, and they rowed up the firth, and so by Beitis-sea inwards to the isthmus of Elda. There he left his ships behind, and crossed the isthmus northwards to Naumdale. The king there took ships belonging to the landowners, and embarked his force on them, having with him his guard; four hundred men they were. Six ships he had well equipped both with weapons and men. They encountered a fresh head-wind, and rowed night and day, making what progress they could. The night was then light enough for travel.

On the evening of a day after sunset they came to Sandness, and saw lying there opposite the farm a long-ship with tent spread, which they knew to be Thorolf's. He was even then purposing to sail away, and had bidden them brew the ale for their parting carousal. The king ordered his men to disembark and his standard to be raised. It was but a short way to the farm buildings.

Thorolf's watchmen sate within drinking, and were not gone to their posts; not a man was without; all sate within drinking. The king had a ring of men set round the hall: they then shouted a war-whoop, and a war-blast was blown on the king's trumpet. On hearing which Thorolf's men sprang to their weapons, for each man's weapons hung above his seat. The king caused some to make proclamation at the door, bidding women, children, old men, thralls, and bondmen to come out. Then came out Sigridr the mistress, and with her the women that were within, and the others to whom permission was given. Sigridr asked if the sons of Kari of Berdla were there. They both came forward and asked what she would of them.

'Lead me to the king,' said she.

They did so. But when she came to the king, she said: 'Will anything, my lord, avail to reconcile thee with Thorolf?'

The king answered, 'If Thorolf will yield him to my mercy, then shall he have life and limb, but his men shall undergo punishment according to the charges against them.'

Upon this Aulvir Hnuf went to the room, and had Thorolf called to speak with him, and told him what terms the king offered them.

Thorolf answered that he would not take of the king compulsory terms or reconciliation. 'Bid thou the king allow us to go out, and then leave we things to go their own course.'

The king said: 'Set fire to the room; I will not waste my men by doing battle with him outside; I know that Thorolf will work us great man-scathe if he come out, though he has fewer men than we.'

So fire was set to the room, and it soon caught, because the wood was dry and the walls tarred and the roof thatched with birch-bark. Thorolf bade his men break up the wainscoting and get gable-beams, and so burst through the planking; and when they got the beams, then as many men as could hold on to it took one beam, and they rammed at the corner with the other beam-end so hard that the clasps flew out, and the walls started asunder, and there was a wide outlet.

First went out Thorolf, then Thorgils Yeller, then the rest one after another. Fierce then was the fight; nor for awhile could it be seen which had the better of it, for the room guarded the rear of Thorolf's force. The king lost many men before the room began to burn; then the fire attacked Thorolf's side, and many of them fell. Now Thorolf bounded forwards and hewed on either hand; small need to bind the wounds of those who encountered him. He made for where the king's standard was, and at this moment fell Thorgils Yeller. But when Thorolf reached the shield-wall, he pierced with a stroke the standard-bearer, crying, 'Now am I but three feet short of my aim.' Then bore at him both sword and spear; but the king himself dealt him his death-wound, and he fell forward at the king's feet. The king called out then, and bade them cease further slaughter; and they did so.

After this the king bade his men go down to the ships. To Aulvir Hnuf and his brother he said:

'Take ye Thorolf your kinsman and give him honourable burial; bury also the other men who have fallen, and see to the binding of the wounds of those who have hope of life; but let none plunder here, for all this is my property.'

This said, the king went down to his ships, and most of his force with him; and when they were come on board men began to bind their wounds. The king went round the ship and looked at men's wounds; and when he saw a man binding a surface-wound, he said: 'Thorolf gave not that wound; his weapon bites far otherwise; few, methinks, bind the wounds which he gave; and great loss have we in such men.'

As soon as day dawned the king had his sail hoisted, and sailed south as fast as he could. As the day wore on, they came upon many rowing-vessels in all the sounds between the islands; the forces on board them had meant to join Thorolf, for spies of his had been southwards as far as Naumdale, and far and wide about the islands. These had got to know how Hallvard and his brother were come from the south with a large force meaning to attack Thorolf. Hallvard's company had constantly met a head-wind, and had waited about in various havens till news of them had gone the upper way overland, and Thorolf's spies had become aware of it, and this gathering of force was on this account.

The king sailed before a strong wind till he came to Naumdale; there he left the ships behind, and went by land to Throndeim, where he took his own ships that he had left there, and thence stood out to Hlada. These tidings were soon heard, and reached Hallvard and his men where they lay. They then returned to the king, and their voyage was much mocked at.

The brothers Aulvir Hnuf and Eyvind Lambi remained awhile at Sandness and saw to the burial of the slain. To Thorolf's body they gave all the customary honours paid at the burial of a man of wealth and renown, and set over him a memorial stone. They saw also to the healing of the wounded. They arranged also the house with Sigridr; all the stock remained, but most of the house-furniture and table-service and clothing was burnt. And when this was done, they went south and came to king Harold at Throndeim, and were with him for awhile.

They were sad, and spoke little with others. And it was so that one day the brothers went before the king, and Aulvir said:

'This permission we brothers claim of thee, O king, that we go home to our farms; for such things have happened here that we have no heart to share drink and seat with those who drew weapon on our kinsman Thorolf.'

The king looked at them, and answered curtly:

'I will not grant you this; ye shall be here with me.'

They went back to their place.

Next day, as the king sat in the audience hall, he had the brothers called to him, and said:

'Now shall ye know of that your business which ye began with me, craving to go home. Ye have been some while here with me, and have borne you well, and

always done your duty. I have thought well of you in everything. Now will I, Eyvind, that thou go north to Halogaland. I will give thee in marriage Sigridr of Sandness, her that Thorolf had to wife; and I will bestow on thee all the wealth that belonged to Thorolf; thou shalt also have my friendship if thou canst keep it. But Aulvir shall remain with me; for his skill as skald I cannot spare him.'

The brothers thanked the king for the honour granted to them, and said that they would willingly accept it.

Then Eyvind made him ready for the journey, getting a good and suitable ship. The king gave him tokens for this matter. His voyage sped well, and he came north to Alost and Sandness. Sigridr welcomed him; and Eyvind then showed her the king's tokens and declared his errand, and asked her in marriage, saying that it was the king's message that he should obtain this match. But Sigridr saw that her only choice, as things had gone, was to let the king rule it. So the arrangement was made, and Eyvind married Sigridr, receiving with her the farm at Sandness and all the property that had been Thorolf's. Thus Eyvind was a wealthy man.

The children of Eyvind and Sigridr were Fid Squinter, father of Eyvind Skald-spoiler, and Geirlaug, whom Sighvat Red had to wife. Fid Squinter married Gunnhilda, daughter of earl Halfdan. Her mother was Ingibjorg, daughter of king Harold Fairhair. Eyvind Lambi kept the king's friendship so long as they both lived.

Chapter 23

The Slaying of Hildirida's Sons

There was a man named Kettle Hæing, son of Thorkel earl of Naumdale, and of Hrafnilda daughter of Kettle Hæing of Hrafnista. He was a man of wealth and renown; he had been a fast friend of Thorolf Kveldulf's son, and was his near kinsman. He had been out on that expedition when forces gathered in Halogaland with intent to join Thorolf, as has been written above. But when king Harold went south, and men knew of Thorolf's slaying, then they called a gathering.

Hæing took with him sixty men, and turned to Torgar. Hildirida's sons were there, and few men with them. He went up to the farm, and made an attack on them; and there fell Hildirida's sons, and most of those who were there; and Hæing and his company took all the wealth they could lay hands on. After that Hæing took two ships of burden, the largest he could get, and put on board all the wealth belonging to him that he could carry; his wife and children also he took, and all the men that had been with him in the late work. And when they were ready and the wind blew fair, they sailed out to sea. A man named Baug, Hæing's foster-brother, of good family and wealthy, steered the second ship.

A few winters before Ingjolf and Hjorleif had gone to settle in Iceland; their voyage was much talked about, and 'twas said there was good choice of land there. So Hæing sailed west over the sea to seek Iceland. And when they saw land, they were approaching it from the south. But because the wind was boisterous, and the surf ran high on the shore, and there was no haven, they

sailed on westwards along the sandy coast. And when the wind began to abate, and the surf to calm down, there before them was a wide river-mouth. Up this river they steered their ships, and lay close to the eastern shore thereof. That river is now called Thjors-river; its stream was then much narrower and deeper than it is now. They unloaded their ships, then searched the land eastward of the river, bringing their cattle after them. Hæing remained for the first winter on the eastern bank of the outer Rang-river.

But in the spring he searched the land eastwards, and then took land between Thjors-river and Mark-fleet, from fell to firth, and made his home at Hofi by east Rang-river. Ingunn his wife bare a son in this spring after their first winter, and the boy was named Hrafn. And though the house there was pulled down, the place continued to be called Hrafn-toft.

Hæing gave Baug land in Fleet-lithe, down from Mark-river to the river outside Bredabolstead; and he dwelt at Lithe-end. To his shipmates Hæing gave land or sold it for a small price, and these first settlers are called land-takers. Hæing had sons Storolf, Herjolf, Helgi, Vestar; they all had land. Hrafn was Hæing's fifth son. He was the first law-man in Iceland; he dwelt at Hofi after his father, and was the most renowned of Hæing's sons.

Chapter 24 Kveldulf's Grief

Kveldulf heard of his son Thorolf's death, and so deeply grieved was he at the tidings that he took to his bed from sorrow and age. Skallagrim came often to him, and talked with him; he bade him cheer up. 'Anything,' (he said) 'was more fitting than to become worthless and lie bedridden; better counsel is it that we seek to avenge Thorolf. Maybe we shall come across some of those who took part in his slaying; but if not that, yet there will be men whom we can reach, and thereby displease the king.'

Kveldulf sang a stave:

'Thorolf in northern isle
(O cruel Norns!) is dead:
Too soon the Thunder-god
Hath ta'en my warrior son.
Thor's heavy wrestler, age,
Holds my weak limbs from fray:
Though keen my spirit spurs,
No speedy vengeance mine.'

King Harold went that summer to Upland, and in the autumn westwards to Valres, and as far as Vors. Aulvir Hnuf was with the king, and often spoke with him about whether he would pay atonement for Thorolf, granting to Kveldulf and Skallagrim money compensation, or such honour as would content them. The king did not altogether refuse this, if father and son would come to him. Whereupon Aulvir started northwards for the Firths, nor stayed his journey till he came one evening to these twain. They received him gratefully, and he

remained there for some time. Kveldulf questioned Aulvir closely about the doings at Sandness when Thorolf fell, what doughty deeds Thorolf had wrought before he fell, who smote him with weapon, where he received most wounds, what was the manner of his fall. Aulvir told him all that he asked; and that king Harold gave him the wound that was alone enough for his bane, and that Thorolf fell forward at the very feet of the king.

Then answered Kveldulf: 'Good is that thou tellest; for 'tis an old saw that he will be avenged who falls forward, and that vengeance will reach him who stands before him when he falls; yet is it unlikely that such good-fortune will be ours.'

Aulvir told father and son that he hoped, if they would go to the king and crave atonement, that it would be a journey to their honour; and he bade them venture this, adding many words to that end.

Kveldulf said he was too old to travel: 'I shall sit at home,' said he.

'Wilt thou go, Grim?' said Aulvir.

'I think I have no errand thither,' said Grim; 'I shall seem to the king not fluent in speech; nor do I think I shall long pray for atonement.'

Aulvir said that he would not need to do so: 'We will do all the speaking for thee as well as we can.'

And seeing that Aulvir pressed this matter strongly, Grim promised to go when he thought he could be ready. He and Aulvir set them a time when Grim should come to the king. Then Aulvir went away first, and returned to the king.

Chapter 25

Skallagrim's Journey to the King

Skallagrim made him ready for this journey, choosing out of his household and neighbours the strongest and doughtiest that were to be found. One was Ani, a wealthy landowner, another Grani, a third Grimolf and his brother Grim, house-carles these of Skallagrim, and the two brothers Thorbjorn Krum and Thord Beigaldi. These were called Thororna's sons; she dwelt hard by Skallagrim, and was of magic skill. Beigaldi was a coal-biter. There was a man named Thorir Giant, and his brother Thorgeir Earthlong, Odd Lonedweller, and Griss Freedman. Twelve there were for the journey, all stalwart men, and several of them shape-strong.

They took a rowing-ship of Skallagrim's, went southwards along the coast, stood in to Ostra Firth, then travelled by land up to Vors to the lake there; and, their course lying so that they must cross it, they got a suitable rowing-ship and ferried them over, whence they had not very far to go to the farm where the king was being entertained.

They came there at the time when the king was gone to table. Some men they found to speak with outside in the yard, and asked what was going on. This being told them, Grim begged one to call Aulvir Hnuf to speak with him. The man went into the room and up to where Aulvir sat, and said: 'There be men

here outside newly come, twelve together, if men one may call them, for they are liker to giants in stature and semblance than to mortal men.'

Aulvir at once rose and went out, for he knew who they were who had come. He greeted well his kinsman Grim, and bade him go with him into the room.

Grim said to his comrades: 'Tis the custom here that men go weaponless before the king; six of us shall go in, the other six shall bide without and keep our weapons.'

Then they entered, and Aulvir went up to the king, Skallagrim standing at his back. Aulvir was spokesman: 'Here now is come Grim Kveldulf's son; we shall feel thankful to thee, O king, if thou make his journey hither a good one, as we hope it will be. Many get great honour from thee to whom less is due, and who are not nearly so accomplished as is he in every kind of skill. Thou wilt also do this because it is a matter of moment to me, if that is of any worth in thy opinion.'

Aulvir spoke fully and fluently, for he was a man ready of words. And many other friends of Aulvir went before the king and pleaded this cause.

The king looked round, and saw that a man stood at Aulvir's back taller than the others by a head, and bald.

'Is that Skallagrim,' asked the king, 'that tall man?'

Grim said he guessed rightly.

'I will then,' said the king, 'if thou cravest atonement for Thorolf, that thou become my liege-man, and enter my guard here and serve me. Maybe I shall so like thy service that I shall grant thee atonement for thy brother, or other honour not less than I granted him; but thou must know how to keep it better than he did, if I make thee as great a man as was he.'

Skallagrim answered: 'It is well known how far superior to me was Thorolf in every point, and he got no luck by serving thee, O king. Now will I not take that counsel; serve thee I will not, for I know I should get no luck by yielding thee such service as I should wish and as would be worthy. Methinks I should fail herein more than Thorolf.'

The king was silent, and his face became blood-red. Aulvir at once turned away, and bade Grim and his men go out. They did so. They went out, and took their weapons, and Aulvir bade them begone with all haste. He and many with him escorted them to the water-side. Before parting with Skallagrim, Aulvir said:

'Kinsman, thy journey to the king ended otherwise than I would have chosen. I urged much thy coming hither; now, I entreat thee, go home with all speed, and come not in the way of king Harold, unless there be better agreement between you than now seems likely, and keep thee well from the king and from his men.'

Then Grim and his company went over the water; but Aulvir with his men, going to the ships drawn up by the water-side, so hacked them about that none was fit to launch. For they saw men coming down from the king's house, a large body well armed and advancing furiously. These men king Harold had sent after them to slay Grim. The king had found words soon after Grim went out, and said:

'This I see in that tall baldhead: that he is brim full of wolfishness, and he will, if he can reach them, work scathe on men whom we should be loth to lose. Ye may be sure, ye against whom he may bear a grudge, that he will spare none, if he get a chance. Wherefore go after him and slay him.'

Upon this they went and came to the water, and saw no ship there fit to launch. So they went back and told the king of their journey, and that Grim and his comrades would now have got clear over the lake.

Skallagrim went his way with his comrades till he reached home; he then told Kveldulf of this journey. Kveldulf showed him well pleased that Skallagrim had not gone to the king on this errand to take service under him; he still said, as before, that from the king they would get only loss and no amends. Kveldulf and Skallagrim spoke often of their plans, and on this they were agreed, that they would not be able to remain in the land any more than other men who were at enmity with the king, but their counsel must be to go abroad. And it seemed to them desirable to seek Iceland, for good reports were given about choice of land there. Already friends and acquaintances of theirs had gone thither - to wit, Ingolf Arnarson, and his companions - and had taken to them land and homestead in Iceland. Men might take land there free of cost, and choose their homestead at will.

So they quite settled to break up their household and go abroad.

Thorir Hroaldson had in his childhood been fostered with Kveldulf, and he and Skallagrim were about of an age, and as foster-brothers were dear friends. Thorir had become a baron of the king's at the time when the events just told happened, but the friendship between him and Skallagrim continued.

Early in the spring Kveldulf and his company made ready their ships. They had plenty of good craft to choose from; they made ready two large ships of burden, and took in each thirty able-bodied men, besides women and children. All the movable goods that they could carry they took with them, but their lands none dared buy, for fear of the king's power. And when they were ready, they sailed away: first to the islands called Solundir, which are many and large, and so scored with bays that few men (it is said) know all their havens.

Chapter 26

Of Guttorm

There was a man named Guttorm, son of Sigurd Hart. He was mother's brother to king Harold; also he had been his foster-father, and ruler over his forces, for the king was a child when he first came to the throne. Guttorm had commanded the army in all battles which Harold had fought to bring the land under his sway. But when Harold became sole king of all Norway, and sat in peace, then he gave to his kinsman Guttorm Westfold and East-Agdir, and Hringariki, and all the land that had belonged to Halfdan Swarthy his father. Guttorm had two sons and two daughters. His sons were named Sigurd and Ragnar; his daughters Ragnhildr and Aslaug.

Guttorm fell sick, and when near his end sent to king Harold, bidding him see to his children and his province. Soon after this he died. On hearing of his death, the king summoned Hallvard Hardfarer and his brother, and told them to go on a message for him eastwards to Vik, he being then at Throndeim. They made great preparations for their journey, choosing them men and the best ship they could get; it was the very ship they had taken from Thorgils Yeller. But when they were ready, the king told them their errand: they were to go eastwards to Tunsberg, the market town where Guttorm had resided. 'Ye shall,' said the king, 'bring to me Guttorm's sons, but his daughters shall be fostered there till I bestow them in marriage. I will find men to take charge of the province and foster the maidens.'

So the brothers started with a fair wind, and came in the spring eastwards to Vik and to Tunsberg, and there declared their errand. They took the sons of Guttorm, and much movable property, and went their way back. The wind was then somewhat slack, and their voyage slower, but nothing happened till they sailed northwards over the Sogn-sea, having now a good wind and bright weather, and being in merry mood.

Chapter 27

Slaying of Hallvard and Sigtrygg

All through the summer Kveldulf and Skallagrim kept a look-out shorewards on the highway of vessels. Skallagrim was very sharp-sighted. He saw Hallvard's company sailing by, and he knew the ship, for he had seen it before when Thorgils went with it. Skallagrim watched their course, and where they lay to in haven at eventide. Then he went back to his own people, and told Kveldulf what he had seen, and withal how he had recognised the ship, being that which once was Thorolf's, and was taken by Hallvard from Thorgils, and doubtless there were some men on board who would be worth catching.

So they made them ready with both their boats, and twenty men in each. Kveldulf steered one, Skallagrim the other. Then they rowed and made for the ship. But when they came where it lay, they put in to land.

Hallvard's men had set up the tent over their ship, and laid them down to sleep. But when Kveldulf's force came upon them, then the watchmen who sat at the gangway-end leapt up, and called out to the ship; they bade the men rise, for an enemy was upon them. Hallvard's party leapt to their weapons. But when Kveldulf with his men came to the gangway-end, he went out by the stern gangway, while Skallagrim went forward to the other gangway.

Kveldulf had in his hand a battle-axe; but when he got on board, he bade his men go along the outer way by the gunwale and cut the tent from its forks, while he himself rushed aft to the stern-castle. And it is said that he then had a fit of shape-strength, as had also several of his comrades. They slew all that came in their way, the same did Skallagrim where he boarded the ship; nor did father and son stay hands till the ship was cleared. When Kveldulf came aft to the stern-castle, he brandished high his battle-axe, and smote Hallvard right through helm and head, so that the axe sank in even to the shaft; then he

snatched it back towards him so forcibly that he whirled Hallvard aloft, and slung him overboard. Skallagrim cleared the forecastle, slaying Sigtrygg. Many men plunged into the sea; but Skallagrim's men took one of the boats, and rowed after and slew all that were swimming.

There were lost with Hallvard fifty men in all. The ship and the wealth that was in it Skallagrim's men took. Two or three men whom they deemed of least note they seized, and gave them their lives, asking of them who had been in the ship, and what had been the purport of the voyage. After learning all the truth about this, they looked over the slain who lay on ship-board. It was found that more had leapt overboard, and so perished, than had fallen on the ship. The sons of Guttorm had leapt overboard and perished. Of these, one was twelve years old, the other ten, and both were lads of promise.

Then Skallagrim set free the men whose lives he had spared, and bade them go to king Harold and tell him the whole tale of what had been done there, and who had been the doers of it. 'Ye shall also,' said he, 'bear to the king this ditty:

'For a noble warrior slain
Vengeance now on king is ta'en:
Wolf and eagle tread as prey
Princes born to sovereign sway.
Hallvard's body cloven through
Headlong in the billows flew;
Wounds of wight once swift to fare
Swooping vulture's beak doth tear.'

After this Skallagrim and his men took out to their ships and captured ship and her cargo. And then they made an exchange, loading the ship they had taken, but emptying one of their own which was smaller; and in this they put stones, and bored holes and sank it. Then, as soon as ever the wind was fair, they sailed out to sea.

It is said of shape-strong men, or men with a fit of Berserk fury on them, that while the fit lasted they were so strong that nought could withstand them; but when it passed off, then they were weaker than their wont. Even so it was with Kveldulf. When the shape-strong fit went from him, then he felt exhaustion from the onset he had made, and became so utterly weak that he lay in bed.

And now a fair wind took them out to sea. Kveldulf commanded the ship which they had taken from Hallvard. With the fair wind the ships kept well together, and for long time were in sight of each other.

But when they were now far advanced over the main, Kveldulf's sickness grew worse. And when it came to this, that death was near, then he called to him his shipmates, and told them that he thought it likely they and he would soon take different ways. 'I have never,' he said, 'been an ailing man; but if it so be (as now seems likely) that I die, then make me a coffin, and put me overboard: and it will go far otherwise than I think if I do not come to Iceland and take land there. Ye shall bear my greeting to my son Grim, when ye meet, and tell him withal that if he come to Iceland, and things so turn out that unlikely as it may seem I be there first, then he shall choose him a homestead as near as may be to where I have come ashore.'

Shortly after this Kveldulf died.

His shipmates did as he had bidden them do; they laid him in a coffin, and shot it overboard. There was a man named Grim, son of Thorir Kettle-son Keel-fare, of noble kin and wealthy. He was in Kveldulf's ship; he had been an old friend of both father and son, and a companion both of them and of Thorolf, for which reason he had incurred the king's anger. He now took command of the ship after Kveldulf was dead.

But when they were come to Iceland, approaching the land from the south, they sailed westwards along the coast, because they had heard that Ingolf had settled there. But coming over against Reykja-ness, and seeing the firth open before them, they steered both ships into the firth.

And now the wind came on to blow hard, with much rain and mist. Thus the ships were parted.

Grim the Halogalander and his crew sailed in up the Borgar Firth past all the skerries; then they cast anchor till the wind fell and the weather cleared. They waited for the flood-tide, and then took their ship up into a river-mouth; it is called Gufu-river. They drew the ship up this river as far as it could go; then unshipped the cargo, and remained there for the first winter. They explored the land along the sea both inwards and outwards, and they had not gone far before they found Kveldulf's coffin cast up in a creek. They carried the coffin to the ness hard by, set it down there, and raised thereover a pile of stones.

Chapter 28

Of Skallagrim's Land-Taking

Skallagrim came to land where a large ness ran out into the sea, and above the ness was a narrow isthmus; and there they put out their lading. That ness they called Ship-ness. Then Skallagrim spied out the land: there was much moorland and wide woods, and a broad space between fells and firths, seal-hunting in plenty, and good fishing. But as they spied out the land southwards along the sea, they found before them a large firth; and, turning inwards along this firth, they stayed not their going till they found their companions, Grim the Halogalander and the rest. A joyful meeting was there. They told Skallagrim of his father's death, and how Kveldulf had come to land there, and they had buried him. Then they led Skallagrim to the place, and it seemed to him that thereabouts would be a good spot to build a homestead. He then went away, and back to his shipmates; and for that winter each party remained where they had come to land. Then Skallagrim took land between fells and firths, all the moors out to Seal-loch, and the upper land to Borgarhraun, and southwards to Hafnar-fell, and all that land from the watershed to the sea. Next spring he moved his ship southwards to the firth, and into the creek close to where Kveldulf came to land; and there he set his homestead, and called it Borg, and the firth Borgar-firth, and so too the country-side further up they named after the firth.

To Grim the Halogalander he gave dwelling-place south of Borgar-firth, on the shore named Hvang-eyrr. A little beyond this a bay of no great size cuts into the

land. There they found many ducks, wherefore they called it Duck-kyle, and the river that fell into the sea there Duck-kyle-river. From this river to the river called Grims-river, the land stretching upwards between them Grim had. That same spring, as Skallagrim had his cattle driven inwards along the sea, they came to a small ness where they caught some swans, so they called it Swan-ness. Skallagrim gave land to his shipmates. The land between Long-river and Hafsbrook he gave to Ani, who dwelt at Anabrekka. His son was Aunund Sjoni. About this was the controversy of Thorstein and Tongue Odd.

Grani dwelt at Granastead on Digraness. To Thorbjorn Krum he gave the land by Gufu-river upward, and to Thord of Beigaldi. Krum dwelt at Krums-hills, but Thord at Beigaldi. To Thorir Giant and his brothers he gave land upwards from Einkunnir and the outer part by Long-river. Thorir Giant dwelt at Giantstead. His daughter was Thordis Staung, who afterwards dwelt at Stangerholt. Thorgeir dwelt at Earthlongstead.

Skallagrim spied out the land upwards all round the country-side. First he went inwards along the Borgar-firth to its head; then followed the west bank of the river, which he called White-river, because he and his companions had never before seen waters that fell out of glaciers, and the colour of the river seemed to them wonderful.

They went up along White-river till a river was before them coming down from the fells to the north; this they called North-river. And they followed it up till yet again before them was a river bringing down but little water. This river they crossed, and still went up along North-river; then they soon saw where the little river fell out of a cleft, and they called it Cleave-river. Then they crossed North-river, and went back to White-river, and followed that upwards. Soon again a river crossed their way, and fell into White-river; this they called Cross-river. They learnt that every river was full of fish. After this they returned to Borg.

Chapter 29

Of Skallagrim's Industry

Skallagrim was most industrious. He had about him always many men, whom he set to seek diligently all such provisions as could be got there for man's sustenance, because at first they had but little live-stock compared with the needs of their numerous company. But what live-stock they had went every winter self-feeding in the woods.

Skallagrim was a good shipwright, and westwards of Myrar was no lack of driftwood. He had buildings set up on Swan-ness, and had another house there. This he made a starting-point for sea-fishing, seal-hunting, and egg-gathering; in all these kinds there was plenty of provisions to get, as well as driftwood to bring to him. Whales also often came in there, and whoso would might shoot them. All such creatures were then tame on the hunting-ground, as they were unused to man. His third house he had on the sea in Western Myrar. This was even a better place to look out for driftwood. There, too, he had land sown, and called it Acres. Over against it lay islands, among which whales were found; these they called Whale-islands.

Skallagrim also sent his men up on the salmon-rivers to fish. He set Odd Lonehouse by Cleave-river to see to the salmon-fishing there. Odd dwelt under Lonehouse. Lonehouse-ness has its name from him. Sigmund was the name of the man whom Skallagrim set by North-river; he dwelt at what was then called Sigmundstead, but now Hauga. Sigmundar-ness takes its name from him. He afterwards moved his homestead to Munodar-ness, that being thought more convenient for salmon-fishing.

But as Skallagrim's live-stock multiplied, the cattle used to go up to the fells in the summer. And he found that the cattle that went on the heath were by far better and fatter; also that sheep did well through the winters in the fell-dales without being driven down. So Skallagrim set up buildings close to the fell, and had a house there; and there he had his sheep kept. Of this farm Griss was the overlooker, and after him was called Grisartongue. Thus Skallagrim's wealth had many legs to stand on.

Some time after Skallagrim's coming out, a ship put into Borgar-firth from the main, commanded by a man named Oleif Halt. With him were his wife and children and other of his kin, and the aim of his voyage was to get him a home in Iceland. Oleif was a man wealthy, high-born, and fore-seeing. Skallagrim asked Oleif and all his company to his house for lodging. Oleif accepted this, and was with Skallagrim for his first winter in Iceland.

But in the following spring Skallagrim showed him to choice land south of White-river upwards from Grims-river to Flokadale-river. Oleif accepted this, and moved thither his household, and set there his homestead by Warm-brook as it is called. He was a man of renown; his sons were Ragi in Hot-spring-dale, and Thorarin, Ragi's brother, who took the law-speakership next after Hrafn Hængsson. Thorarin dwelt at Warm-brook; he had to wife Thordis, daughter of Olaf Shy, sister of Thord Yeller.

Chapter 30

Of the Coming Out of Yngvar, and of Skallagrim's Iron Forging

King Harold Fair-hair took for his own all those lands that Kveldulf and Skallagrim had left behind in Norway, and all their other property that he could lay hands on. He also sought diligently after those men who had been in the counsels or confidence or in any way helpers of Skallagrim and his folk in the deeds which they wrought before Skallagrim went abroad out of the land. And so far stretched the enmity of the king against father and son, that he bore hatred against their kith and kin, or any whom he knew to have been their dear friends. Some suffered punishment from him, many fled away and sought refuge, some within the land, some out of the land altogether. Yngvar Skallagrim's wife's father was one of these men aforesaid. This rede did he take, that he turned all his wealth that he could into movables, then gat him a sea-going ship and a crew thereto, and made ready to go to Iceland, for he had heard that Skallagrim had taken up his abode there, and there would be no lack of choice land there with Skallagrim. So when they were ready and a fair wind

blew, he sailed out to sea, and his voyage sped well. He came to Iceland on the south coast, and held on westwards past Reykja-ness, and sailed into Borgarfirth, and entering Long-river went up it even to the Falls. There they put out the ship's lading.

But when Skallagrim heard of Yngvar's coming, he at once went to meet him and bade him to his house with as many men as he would. Yngvar accepted this offer. The ship was drawn up, and Yngvar went to Borg with many men, and stayed that winter with Skallagrim. In the spring Skallagrim offered him choice land. He gave Yngvar the farm which he had on Swan-ness, and land inwards to Mud-brook and outwards to Strome-firth. Thereupon Yngvar went out to this farm and took possession, and he was a most able man and a wealthy. Skallagrim then built a house on Ship-ness, and this he kept for a long time thereafter.

Skallagrim was a good iron-smith, and in winter wrought much in red iron ore. He had a smithy set up some way out from Borg, close by the sea, at a place now called Raufar-ness. The woods he thought were not too far from thence. But since he could find no stone there so hard or smooth as he thought good for hammering iron on (for there are no beach pebbles, the seashore being all fine sand), one evening, when other were gone to sleep, Skallagrim went to the sea, and pushed out an eight-oared boat he had, and rowed out to the Midfirth islands. There he dropped an anchor from the bows of the boat, then stepped overboard, and dived down to the bottom, and brought up a large stone, and lifted it into the boat. Then he himself climbed into the boat and rowed to land, and carried the stone to the smithy and laid it down before the smithy door, and thenceforth he hammered iron on it. That stone lies there yet, and much slag beside it; and the marks of the hammering may be seen on its upper face, and it is a surf-worn boulder, unlike the other stones that are there. Four men nowadays could not lift a larger mass. Skallagrim worked hard at smithying, but his house-carles grumbled thereat, and thought it over early rising. Then Skallagrim composed this stave:

'Who wins wealth by iron
Right early must rise:
Of the sea's breezy brother
Wind-holders need blast.
On furnace-gold glowing
My stout hammer rings,
While heat-feeding bellows
A whistling storm stir.'

Chapter 31 Of Skallagrim's Children

Skallagrim and Bera had a great many children, but at first they all died. Then they had a son, who was sprinkled with water and named Thorolf. As a child he soon grew to be tall and was fair of countenance. It was the talk of all that he would be just such another as Thorolf Kveldulf's son, after whom he was

named. Thorolf was far beyond children of his own age in strength. And as he grew to manhood he became doughty in most accomplishments then in vogue among those who were well trained. Thorolf was of a right cheery mood. Early did he come to such full strength as to be deemed fit for warlike service with other men. He was soon a favourite with all, and his father and mother loved him well. Skallagrim and his wife had two daughters; one was named Sæunn, the other Thorunn. They also were of great promise as they grew up. Then Skallagrim and his wife had yet another son. He was sprinkled with water and named, and his name was Egil. But as he grew up it was soon seen that he would be ill-favoured, like his father, with black hair. When but three years old he was as tall and strong as other boys of six or seven. He was soon talkative and word-wise. Somewhat ill to manage was he when at play with other lads.

That spring, Yngvar went to Borg, his errand being to bid Skallagrim to a feast at his house, he also named for the party his daughter Bera and Thorolf her son, and any others that Skallagrim liked to bring. Skallagrim promised to come. Yngvar then went home, prepared for the banquet, and had ale brewed. But when the set time came that Skallagrim and Bera should go to the feast, Thorolf made him ready to go with them, as also some house-carles, so that they were fifteen in all. Egil told his father that he wished to go.

'I am,' said he, 'as much akin to Yngvar as is Thorolf.'

'You shall not go,' said Skallagrim, 'for you know not how to behave yourself in company where there is much drinking, you who are not good to deal with though you be sober.'

Then Skallagrim mounted his horse and rode away, but Egil was ill content with his lot.

He went out of the yard, and found a draught horse of Skallagrim's, got on its back and rode after Skallagrim's party. No easy way had he over the moor, for he did not know the road; but he kept his eyes on the riders before him when copse or wood were not in the way. And this is to tell of his journey, that late in the evening he came to Swan-ness, when men sat there a-drinking. He went into the room, but when Yngvar saw Egil he received him joyfully, and asked why he had come so late. Egil told of his words with Skallagrim. Yngvar made Egil sit by him, they two sat opposite Skallagrim and Thorolf. For merriment over their ale they fell to reciting staves. Then Egil recited a stave:

'Hasting I came to the hearth fire
Of Yngvar, right fain so to find him,
Him who on heroes bestoweth
Gold that the heather-worm guardeth.
Thou, of the snake's shining treasure
Always a generous giver,
Wilt not than me of three winters
Doughtier song-smith discover.'

Yngvar praised this stave, and thanked Egil much therefor, but on the morrow he brought to Egil as reward for the poem three sea-snail shells and a duck's egg. And next day at the drinking Egil recited another stave about his poem's reward:

'The wielder of keen-biting wound-fowl
Gave unto Egil the talker
Three silent dogs of the surf-swell,
Meet for the praise in his poem.
He, the skilled guide of the sea-horse,
Knowing to please with a present,
Gave as fourth gift to young Egil
Round egg, the brook-bird's bed-bolster.'

Egil's poetry won him thanks from many men. No more tidings were there of that journey. Egil went home with Skallagrim.

Chapter 32 Of Lord Brynjolf and Bjorn, His Son

There was in Sogn a lord named Bjorn, a rich man; he dwelt at Aurland. His son was Brynjolf, who was sole heir to all his father's wealth. Brynjolf's sons were Bjorn and Thord. They were young when what has been just told happened. Bjorn was a great traveller, sometimes on free-booting, sometimes on trading voyages. He was a right doughty man. It so chanced that one summer Bjorn was present at a banquet attended by many. He saw there a fair maiden who pleased him well. He asked of what family she was, and was told that she was sister of lord Thorir Hroaldsson, and was named Thora, with the by-name Lacehand. Bjorn made his suit and asked Thora to wife. But Thorir refused his offer, and with this they parted. But that same autumn Bjorn took men and went with a cutter well equipt northwards to the Firths, and came to Thorir's when he was not at home. Bjorn took Thora away thence, and home with him to Aurland. They two were there for the winter, and Bjorn would fain hold a wedding with her. Brynjolf his father ill liked what Bjorn had done; he thought there was dishonour therein, whereas there had been ere this long friendship between Thorir and Brynjolf.

'So far,' said he, 'Bjorn, from your holding a wedding with Thora here in my house without the leave of her brother, she shall be here as well respected as if she were my daughter and your sister.' And all had to be as Brynjolf ordered in his household, whether Bjorn liked it well or ill. Brynjolf sent men to Thorir to offer him atonement and redress for what Bjorn had done. Thorir bade Brynjolf send Thora home; no atonement could there be else. But Bjorn would in no wise let her go away, though Brynjolf begged it. And so the winter wore on.

But when spring came, then Brynjolf and Bjorn were talking one day of their matters. Brynjolf asked what Bjorn meant to do. Bjorn said 'twas likeliest that he should go away out of the land.

'Most to my mind is it,' said he, 'that you should give me a long-ship and crew therewith, and I go a free-booting.'

'No hope is there of this,' said Brynjolf, 'that I shall put in your hands a warship and strong force, for I know not but you will go about just what is against my wish; why even now already I have enough trouble from you. A merchant-ship I

will give you, and wares withal: go you then southwards to Dublin. That voyage is now most highly spoken of. I will get you a good crew.'

Bjorn said he would take this as his father willed. So he had a good merchant-ship made ready, and got men for it. Bjorn now made him ready for this voyage, but was some time about it. But when he was quite ready and a fair wind blew, he embarked on a boat with twelve men and rowed in to Aurland, and they went up to the homestead and to his mother's bower. She was sitting therein with many women. Thora was there. Bjorn said Thora must go with him, and they led her away. But his mother bade the women not dare to let them know this within in the hall: Brynjolf, she said, would be in a sad way if he knew it, and this would bring about great mischief between father and son. But Thora's clothes and trinkets were all laid there ready to hand, and Bjorn and his men took all with them.

Then they went that night out to their ship, at once hoisted their sail, and sailed out by the Sogn-sea, and so to the main. They had an ill wind, before which they must needs run, and were long tossed about on the main, because they were bent on shunning Norway at all hazards. And so it was that one day they were sailing off the east coast of Shetland during a gale, and brake their ship in making land at Moss-ey. They got out the cargo, and went into the town that was there, carrying thither all their wares, and they drew up their ship and repaired damages.

Chapter 33

Bjorn Goes to Iceland

A little before winter came a ship from the south out of the Orkneys, with the tidings that a long-ship had come in autumn to those islands. Therein were messengers of king Harold, with this errand to earl Sigurd, that the king would have Bjorn Brynjolfsson slain wherever he might be found, and the same message Harold sent to the Southern Isles and even to Dublin. Bjorn heard these tidings, and withal that he was outlawed in Norway. Forthwith on reaching Shetland Bjorn had held his wedding with Thora, and through the winter they stayed at Moss-ey-town.

But in spring, as soon as ever the sea began to calm, Bjorn drew forth his ship, and made him ready with all speed. And when he was ready and got a wind, he sailed out to the main. They had a strong breeze, and were but little time out ere they came to the south coast of Iceland. The wind was blowing on the land; then it bore them westwards along the coast, and so out to sea. But when they got a shift of wind back again, then they sailed for the land. There was not a single man on board who had been in Iceland before. They sailed into a wondrous large firth, the wind bearing them towards its western shore. Landwards nothing was seen but breakers and harbourless shore. Then they stood slant-wise across the wind as they might (but still eastwards), till a firth lay over against them, into which they sailed, till all the skerries and the surf were passed. Then they put in by a ness. An island lay out opposite this, and a deep sound was between them: there they made fast the ship. A bay ran up west of the ness, and above this bay stood a good-sized rocky hill.

Bjorn and some men with him got into a boat, Bjorn telling his comrades to beware of saying about their voyage aught that might work them trouble. They rowed to the buildings, and found there men to speak to. First they asked where they had come to land. The men told them that this was named Borgar-firth; that the buildings they saw were called Borg; that the goodman was Skallagrim.

Bjorn at once remembered about him, and he went to meet Skallagrim, and they talked together. Skallagrim asked who they were. Bjorn named himself and his father, but Skallagrim knew Brynjolf well, so he offered to Bjorn such help as he needed. This Bjorn accepted thankfully. Then Skallagrim asked what others there were in the ship, persons of rank. Bjorn said there was Thora, Hroald's daughter, sister of lord Thorir. Skallagrim was right glad for that, and said that it was his bounden duty to give to the sister of Thorir his own foster-brother such help as she needed or he could supply; and he bade her and Bjorn both to his house with all his shipmates. Bjorn accepted this. So the cargo was moved from the ship up to the homestead at Borg. There they set up their booths; but the ship was drawn up into the brook hard by. And where Bjorn's party had their booths is still called Bjorn's home-field. Bjorn and his shipmates all took up their abode with Skallagrim, who never had about him fewer than sixty stout fellows.

Chapter 34

Of Skallagrim and Bjorn

It befell in autumn, when ships had come to Iceland from Norway, that this report came over, how Bjorn had run away with Thora without the consent of her kin, and for that the king had made him an outlaw from Norway. But when Skallagrim got to know this, he called Bjorn to him, and asked how it had been with his marriage; had it been made with the consent of his wife's kin.

'I never looked for this,' said he, 'in a son of Brynjolf, that I should not know the truth from him.'

Bjorn answered, 'Truth only told I to you, Grim, and you may not rebuke me for this, though I told you no further than you asked. But now I must own this, which is true, that you have heard truth about this match not being made with the agreement of Thorir, my wife's brother.'

Then spake Skallagrim in great wrath, 'How dared you come to meet me? Did you not know what friendship was between me and Thorir?'

Bjorn answered, 'I knew that between you two was foster-brotherhood and close friendship; but I sought your home because I was driven ashore here, and I knew it would avail naught to shun you. Now will it be for you to rule what my lot shall be, but I hope for good from you as I am of your household.'

Then came forward Thorolf Skallagrim's son, and added many a word, and begged his father not to lay this to Bjorn's charge after once receiving him. Several others spoke to the same end. And so it came that Skallagrim was appeased, and said that Thorolf should have his way here.

'Take you Bjorn,' said he, 'and deal with him as may best prove your manhood.'

Chapter 35

Thorolf Goes Abroad

Thora bare a child in the summer; it was a girl. She was sprinkled with water, and named Asgerdr. Bera got a woman to look after the girl. Bjorn stayed for the winter with Skallagrim as did all his shipmates. Thorolf struck up a friendship with Bjorn, and was ever in his company. But when spring came, one day Thorolf had a talk with his father, and asked him what counsel he would give about Bjorn his winter guest, or what help he would lend him. Grim asked Thorolf what Bjorn had in view.

'I think,' said Thorolf, 'that Bjorn would soonest go to Norway, if he could be there in peace. Methinks, father, this plan lies before us, that you send men to Norway to offer atonement for Bjorn; Thorir will greatly honour your word.'

Thorolf by his persuasion so managed that Skallagrim yielded and gave men for the outward voyage that summer. These went with message and tokens to Thorir Hroaldsson, and sought atonement between him and Bjorn. But no sooner did Brynjolf hear this than he, too, set his whole mind to offer atonement for Bjorn. And the end of this matter was that Thorir took atonement for Bjorn, because he saw that it had come to this now that Bjorn had nothing to fear. Thus Brynjolf got atonement accepted for Bjorn, and Skallagrim's messengers abode with Thorir for the winter. In the summer following they went back; and on their coming back in autumn they told their tidings that Bjorn was admitted to atonement in Norway. Bjorn was with Skallagrim for yet a third winter. But next spring he made him ready for departure with his following. And when Bjorn was ready for going, then Bera said she would fain have Asgerdr, her foster-child, left-behind. This Bjorn accepted, and the girl was left behind and brought up with Skallagrim's family. Thorolf, Skallagrim's son, settled to go with Bjorn, and Skallagrim gave him mean for the journey. So he went abroad in the summer with Bjorn. Their voyage sped well, and they came off the main into Sogn-sea. Bjorn then sailed into Sogn, and thence on home to his father, and Thorolf with him. Brynjolf received them joyfully. Then word was sent to Thorir Hroaldsson. He and Brynjolf set a time for a meeting; to this meeting Bjorn also came. He and Thorir there ratified their atonement. Then Thorir paid out of hand such property in his house as belonged to Thora; and thereafter Thorir and Bjorn were good brothers-in-law and friends. Bjorn then stayed at home at Aurland with Brynjolf, Thorolf also being there in much favour both with father and son.

Chapter 36

Of Eric Bloodaxe and Thorolf

King Harold long held his residence in Hordaland or Rogaland, at those large estates that he owned, at Outstone or Augvalds-ness, or at Arefksted in Fitjar, or at Seaham in Lygra. But this winter the king was in the north part of the land.

Now, when Bjorn and Thorolf had been one winter in Norway and spring came, they made ready a ship and gathered men. And in the summer they went a-freebooting eastwards, and came home in the autumn, having won much wealth. But when they came home they heard that King Harold was in Rogaland and would remain there for the winter. King Harold was beginning to age much and fail in strength, but many of his sons were come to vigour. His son Eric, by-named Bloodaxe, was then quite young. He was being fostered with lord Thorir Hroaldsson. The king loved Eric above all his sons. Thorir was on most intimate terms with the king then.

Bjorn and Thorolf, when they came home, went first to Aurland, but afterwards turned their way northwards to visit lord Thorir at his home. They had a certain galley rowed by thirteen or fourteen oarsmen on either side, and they had about thirty men with them. This ship they had taken in their summer freebooting. It was gaily painted above the sea-line, and was very beautiful. But when they came to Thorir they were made welcome, and abode there some time; while the ship, tented over, floated opposite the house. It happened one day that, as Thorolf and Bjorn were going down to the ship, they saw that Eric, the king's son, was there; he went now out on to the ship, now up to the land, and stood there looking at the ship. Then said Bjorn to Thorolf:

'The king's son admires the ship much; do you offer it to him as a present, for I know it will much help us with the king if Eric be our pleader with him. I have heard it said that the king bears a heavy grudge against you for your father's sake.'

Thorolf said that this would be a good plan.

They then went down to the ship, and Thorolf spoke:

'Thou regardest the ship carefully, prince; how dost thou like it?'

'Right well,' said he, 'it is a perfect beauty.'

'Then will I give it thee,' said Thorolf, 'if thou wilt take the present.'

'Take it I will,' said Eric, 'and thou wilt deem it but poor payment therefor though I should offer thee my friendship; but this thou mayest look for if I live.'

Thorolf said that he thought the ship were thus far overpaid.

Then they separated. But thenceforward the king's son was right cheerful with Thorolf and his friend.

Bjorn and Thorolf, talking with Thorir, asked him whether he thought it true that the king bore a heavy grudge against Thorolf.

Thorir did not deny that he had heard so.

'Then I would fain,' said Bjorn, 'that you should go and plead Thorolf's cause before him, for one lot shall befall me and Thorolf; he did as much for me when I was in Iceland.'

The end was that Thorir promised to go to the king, and bade them try whether the king's son would go with him. But when Thorolf and Bjorn spake of this with Eric, he promised his influence with his father.

After that Thorolf and Bjorn went their way to Sogn. But Thorir and Eric the king's son set in order the newly-given galley, and went south to meet the king, and found him in Hordaland. He received them joyfully. They remained there for awhile, watching for a fit time to approach the king when he should be in a good humour. Then they opened this matter before the king, and said that a certain man had come named Thorolf, Skallagrim's son. 'We would pray thee,' they said, 'O king, to bear in mind this: that his kinsmen have done good to thee, and not to make him pay for what his father did in avenging his brother.'

Thorir spoke herein soft words, but the king answered rather shortly that to him and his much mischance had come from Kveldulf and his sons, and 'twas to be looked for that this Thorolf would be like-minded with his kin. 'They are all,' said he, 'overbearing men, who know no measure, and care not with whom they have to deal.'

Then Eric took the word. He said that Thorolf had made friends with him, and given him a noble present that ship which they had there. 'I have,' said he, 'promised him my hearty friendship. There will be few to become friends with me if this man get nothing by it. Thou wilt not let it be so, father, with him who has been the first to give me such a treasure.'

The end was that the king promised them before they parted that Thorolf should be in peace with him. 'But I will not,' said he, 'that he come into my presence. And thou, Eric, mayst make him as close to thee as thou wilt, him or more of his kin. But one of two things will happen, either they will be softer to thee than to me, or thou wilt rue this thy intercession, and that thou lettest them be long in thy company.'

Thereafter went Eric Bloodaxe and Thorir home to the Firths; then they sent word to Thorolf how their errand to the king had sped. Thorolf and Bjorn were for that winter with Brynjolf. Many summers they were out a-freebooting, but the winters they spent with Brynjolf, or sometimes with Thorir.

Chapter 37

The Journey to Bjarmaland

Eric Bloodaxe now took a share in the realm. He held oversight in Hordaland and the Firths; he took and kept about him a body-guard. And one spring Eric Bloodaxe made ready to go to Bjarmaland, and chose him much people for that voyage. Thorolf betook him to this voyage with Eric, and was in the fore-castle of his ship, and bare his standard. Thorolf was then taller and stronger than other men, and herein like his father. In that expedition befell much tidings. Eric had a great battle by the river Dvina in Bjarmaland, wherein he won the victory, as is told in the lays about him. And in that voyage he took Gunnhilda, daughter of Auzur Toti, and brought her home with him. Gunnhilda was above all women beautiful and shrewd, and of magic cunning. There was great intimacy between Thorolf and Gunnhilda. Thorolf ever spend the winters with Eric, the summers in freebooting.

The next tidings were that Thora Bjorn's wife fell sick and died. But some while after Bjorn took to him another wife; she was named Aloh, the daughter of Erling the wealthy of Ostr. They two had a daughter named Gunnhilda.

There was a man named Thorgeir Thornfoot; he dwelt in Fenhring of Hordaland, at a place called Askr. He had three sons - one named Hadd, another Bergonund, the third Atli the short. Bergonund was beyond other men tall and strong, and he was grasping and ungentle; Atli the short was of small stature, square-built, of sturdy strength. Thorgeir was a very rich man, a devoted heathen worshipper, of magic cunning. Hadd went out freebooting, and was seldom at home.

Chapter 38

Thorolf Comes Out to Iceland

Thorolf Skallagrim's son made him ready one summer for a trading voyage; he purposed what he also performed, to go to Iceland and see his father. He had now been long abroad. By this he had got great store of wealth and many costly things. When ready for the voyage, he went to king Eric. And at their parting the king delivered to Thorolf an axe, which he said he wished to give to Skallagrim. The axe was snag-horned, large, gold-mounted, the hilt overlaid with silver; it was most valuable and costly.

Thorolf went his way as soon as he was ready, and his voyage sped well; he came with his ship into Borgar-firth, and at once hastened home to his father. A right joyful meeting was theirs. Then Skallagrim went down to Thorolf's ship, and had it drawn up, and Thorolf went home to Borg with twelve men. But when he came home, he gave Skallagrim King Eric's greeting, and delivered to him the axe which the king had sent him. Skallagrim took the axe and held it up, looked at it awhile, but said nothing. He fixed it up by his seat.

It chanced one day in the autumn at Borg that Skallagrim had several oxen driven home which he meant to slaughter. Two of these he had led under the house-wall, and placed with heads crossing. He took a large flat stone, and pushed it under their necks. Then he went near with the axe - the king's gift - and hewed at the oxen both at once, so that he took off the heads of the two. But the axe smote down on the stone, so that the mouth broke, and was rent through all the tempered steel. Skallagrim looked at the edge, said nothing, but went into the fire-hall, and, mounting to the wall-beam, thrust the axe up among the rafters above the door. There it lay in the smoke all the winter.

But in the spring Thorolf declared that he meant to go abroad that summer.

Skallagrim forbade him, saying: "Tis good to drive home with your wain whole. You have,' said he, 'gotten great honour by travel; but there is the old saw, "Many farings, many fortunes." Take you now here as much share of the property as you think will make you a great man.'

Thorolf said he would make yet one journey more. 'And I have,' said he, 'an urgent errand for the journey. But when I come back next time I shall settle

here. But Asgerdr, your foster-child, shall go out with me to her father. This he bade me when I came west.'

Skallagrim said Thorolf would have his way.

Thereafter Thorolf went to his ship, and put it in order. And when all was ready they moved the ship out to Digra-ness, and it lay there waiting a wind. Then Asgerdr went to the ship with him. But before Thorolf left Borg Skallagrim went and took down from the rafters over the door the axe, the king's gift - and came out with it. The haft was now black with smoke, and the blade rusted. Skallagrim looked at the axe's edge. Then he handed it to Thorolf, reciting this stave:

'The fierce would-wolf's tooth-edge
Hath flaws not a few,
An axe all deceitful,
A wood cleaver weak.
Begone! worthless weapon,
With shaft smoke-begrimed:
A prince ill-beseemed it
Such present to send.'

Chapter 39

Kettle Blund Comes Out to Iceland

This had happened while Thorolf was away, that one summer a merchant-ship from Norway came into Borgar-firth. Merchant-ships used then commonly to be drawn up into rivers, brook-mouths, or ditches. This ship belonged to a man named Kettle, and by-named Blund; he was a Norwegian of noble kin and wealthy. His son, named Geir, who was then of full age, was with him in the ship. Kettle meant to make his home in Iceland; he came late in the summer. Skallagrim knew all about him, and offered him lodging for himself and all his company. This Kettle took, and was with Skallagrim for the winter. That winter Geir, Kettle's son, asked to wife Thorunn, Skallagrim's daughter, and the match was made, and Geir took her.

Next spring Skallagrim showed Kettle to land above Oleif's land, by White-river, from Flokadale-river mouth to Reykjadale-river mouth, and all the tongue that lay between the rivers up to Redgill, and all Flokadale above the slopes. Kettle dwelt at Thrandarholt; Geir at Geirs-lithe; he had another farm in Reykjadale at Upper Reykir. He was called Geir the wealthy; his sons were Blund-Kettle and Thorgeir-blund. A third was Hrisa-blund, who first dwelt at Hrisa.

Chapter 40

Of Egil's and Skallagrim's Games

Skallagrim took much pleasure in trials of strength and games; he liked to talk about such. Ball-play was then a common game. Plenty of strong men there

were at that time in the neighbourhood, but not one of strength to match with Skallagrim. He was now somewhat stricken in years. There was a man named Thord, son of Grani, at Granastead, who was of great promise; he was then young; very fond he was of Egil, Skallagrim's son. Egil often engaged in wrestling; he was headstrong and hot-tempered, but all had the sense to teach their sons to give way to Egil. A game of ball was held at White-river-dale in the early winter, to which was a great gathering of people from all the country-side. Thither went many of Skallagrim's household to the game. Chief among them was Thord, Grani's son. Egil asked Thord to let him go with him to the game; he was then in his seventh winter. Thord let him do so, and Egil mounted behind him. But when they came to the play-meeting, then the men made up sides for the play. Many small boys had come there too, and they made up a game for themselves. For this also sides were chosen.

Egil was matched to play against a boy named Grim, son of Hegg, of Heggstead. Grim was ten or eleven years old, and strong for his age. But when they played together Egil got the worst of it. And Grim made all he could of his advantage. Then Egil got angry and lifted up the bat and struck Grim, whereupon Grim seized him and threw him down with a heavy fall, and handled him rather roughly, and said he would thrash him if he did not behave. But when Egil got to his feet, he went out of the game, and the boys hooted at him.

Egil went to Thord and told him what had been done. Thord said:

'I will go with you, and we will be avenged on them.'

He gave into his hands a halberd that he had been carrying. Such weapons were then customary. They went where the boys' game was. Grim had now got the ball and was running away with it, and the other boys after him. Then Egil bounded upon Grim, and drove the axe into his head, so that it at once pierced his brain. After this Egil and Thord went away to their own people. The Myramen ran to their weapons, and so did either party. Oleif Halt, with his following, ran to help the Borgarmen, who were thus far the larger number, and they parted without doing more. But hence arose a quarrel between Oleif and Hegg. They fought at Laxfit, by Grims-river; there seven men fell, but Hegg was wounded to death, and his brother Kvig fell. But when Egil came home, Skallagrim said little about it; but Bera said Egil had in him the makings of a freebooter, and that 'twould be well, so soon as he were old enough, to give him a long-ship. Then Egil made a stave:

'Thus counselled my mother,
For me should they purchase
A galley and good oars
To go forth a-roving.
So may I high-standing,
A noble barque steering,
Hold course for the haven,
Hew down many foemen.'

When Egil was twelve years old, he was grown so big that there were but few men howso large and strong that he could not overcome in games. In his twelfth winter he was often at games. Thord Grani's son was then twenty years

old; he was very strong. As the winter wore on, it often chanced that the two, Egil and Thord, were matched against Skallagrim. And once in the winter it so befell that there was ball-play at Borg, southwards in Sandvik. Thord and Egil were set against Skallagrim in the game; and he became weary before them, so that they had the best of it. But in the evening after sunset it began to go worse with Egil and his partner. Skallagrim then became so strong and he caught up Thord and dashed him down so violently that he was all bruised and at once got his bane. Then he seized Egil. Now there was a handmaid of Skallagrim's named Thorgerdr Brak, who had nursed Egil when a child; she was a big woman, strong as a man, and of magic cunning. Said Brak:

'Dost thou turn they shape-strength, Skallagrim, against thy son?'

Whereat Skallagrim let Egil loose, but clutched at her. She broke away and took to her heels with Skallagrim after her. So went they to the utmost point of Digra-ness. Then she leapt out from the rock into the water. Skallagrim hurled after her a great stone, which struck her between the shoulders, and neither ever came up again. The water there is now called Brakar-sound. But afterwards, in the evening, when they came home to Borg, Egil was very angry. Skallagrim and everybody else were set at table, but Egil had not yet come to his place. He went into the fire-hall, and up to the man who there had the overseeing of work and the management of moneys for Skallagrim, and was most dear to him. Egil dealt him his deathblow, then went to his seat. Skallagrim spoke not a word about it then, and thenceforward the matter was kept quiet. But father and son exchanged no word good or bad, and so that winter passed.

The next summer after this Thorolf came out, as was told above. And when he had been in Iceland one winter, in the spring following he made ready his ship in Brakar-sound. But when he was quite ready, then one day Egil went to his father, and asked him to give him an outfit.

'I wish,' said he, 'to go out with Thorolf.'

Skallagrim asked if he had spoken at all on that matter with Thorolf. Egil said he had not. Skallagrim bade him do that first. But when Egil started the question with Thorolf, he said:

"Tis not likely that I shall take you abroad with me; if your father thinks he cannot manage you here in his house, I have no confidence for this, to take you with me to foreign lands; for it will not do to show there such temper as you do here.'

'Maybe,' said Egil, 'neither of us will go.'

In the night came on a furious gale, a south-wester. But when it was dark, and now flood-tide, Egil came where the ship lay. He went out on to the ship, and outside the tenting; he cut asunder the cables that were on the seaward side; then, hurrying back to land by the bridge, he at once shot out the bridge, and cut the cables that were upon land. Then the ship was driven out into the firth. But when Thorolf's men were aware that the ship was adrift, they jumped into the boat; but the wind was far too strong for them to get anything done. The ship drifted over to Duck-kyle, and on the islands there; but Egil went home to Borg.

And when people got to know of the trick that Egil had played, the more part blamed it. Egil said he should before long do Thorolf more harm and mischief if he would not take him away. But then others mediated between them, and the end was that Thorolf took Egil, and he went out with him that summer.

When Thorolf came on shipboard, at once taking the axe which Skallagrim had given into his hands, he cast it overboard into the deep so that it nevermore came up. Thorolf went his way in the summer, and his voyage sped well, and they came out to Hordaland. He at once stood northwards to Sogn. There it had happened in the winter that Brynjolf had fallen sick and died, and his sons had shared the heritage. Thord had Aurland, the estate on which his father had dwelt. He had become a liege-man of the king, and was made a baron. Thord's daughter was named Rannveig, the mother of Thord and Helgi, this Thord being father if Ingiridr whom king Olaf had to wife. Helgi was father of Brynjolf, father of Serk, Sogn, and Svein.

Chapter 41 Of Bjorn

Bjorn got for his portion another good and valuable homestead. He did not become a liege-man of the king, wherefore he was called Bjorn Yeoman. He was right wealthy, and a great man. No sooner did Thorolf come off the sea then he went at once to Bjorn, and brought him Asgerdr his daughter. There was a joyful meeting. Asgerdr was a most beautiful and accomplished woman, wise and right skilful.

Thorolf went to see king Eric. And when they met, Thorolf greeted Eric from Skallagrim, and said that he had thankfully received the king's gift. He then brought out a good long-ship's sail, which he said Skallagrim had sent to the king. King Eric received the gift well, and bade Thorolf be with him for the winter. For this Thorolf thanked the king, but said: 'I must first go to Thorir; with him I have an urgent errand.'

Then Thorolf went to Thorir, as he had said, and met there a right hearty welcome. Thorir bade him be with him. This Thorolf said he would accept; 'and there is,' said he, 'one with me who must have lodging where I am; he is my brother, and he has never before been away from home, and he needs that I look after him.'

Thorir said that Thorolf had every right, if he would, to bring more men with him thither. 'Your brother, too,' said he, 'we think, betters our company if he be at all like you.'

Then Thorolf went to his ship, and had it drawn up and made snug, whereafter he and Egil went to lord Thorir. Thorir had a son named Arinbjorn, who was somewhat older than Egil. Arinbjorn early showed himself a manly fellow and a doughty. With Arinbjorn Egil struck up a friendship, and was ever his follower. But between the brothers was rather a coolness.

Chapter 42

Thorolf Asks Asgerdr to Wife

Thorolf Skallagrim's son now sounded Thorir as to how he would take the matter should Thorolf ask in marriage Asgerdr his kinswoman. Thorir welcomed this readily, saying that he would be his pleader in this suit. Soon after Thorolf went north to Sogn with a goodly company. He came to Bjorn's house, and was well received there. Bjorn bade him be with him as long as he would. Thorolf speedily opened to Bjorn his errand, and made his offer, asking Bjorn's daughter Asgerdr to wife. This proposal Bjorn took well, his consent was easily won; and it was settled that the betrothal should be there, and a day was fixed for the wedding. The feast was to be at Bjorn's in the autumn.

Then Thorolf went back to Thorir, and told him what had been done in his journey. Thorir was glad that the match was to be made. But when the time came that Thorolf should go to the feast, he bade men to go with him. First bade he Thorir and Arinbjorn and their house-carles, and some rich yeoman; and for the journey there was a large and goodly company.

But when the appointed day was near at hand that Thorolf should leave home, and the bridesmen were now come, then Egil fell sick, so that he could not go. Thorolf and his company had a large long-ship well equipt, and went on their way as had been agreed.

Chapter 43

Of Aulvir and Egil

There was a man named Aulvir, a house-carle of Thorir's, who was manager and bailiff over his estate. He had the getting in of debts, and was treasurer. Aulvir was past his youth, but was still quite a hale man. It so happened that Aulvir had to leave home to get in some rents of Thorir's that had stood over from the spring. He had a row-boat, on board which went twelve of Thorir's house-carles. Just then Egil began to recover, and rose from his bed. He thought it was dull work at home when everybody was gone away. So he spoke with Aulvir, and said he would like to go with him. But Aulvir thought one good comrade would not overload them, as there was enough ship-room. So Egil prepared to go. He had his weapons, sword, halberd, and buckler.

They went their way when they were ready. They had the wind blowing hard against them, and sharp gale and troublesome; but they pursued their journey vigorously, taking to their oars. And their progress was such, that on the evening of a day they came to Atla-isle, and there put in to land. In this island, not far up from the shore, was a large farm belonging to king Eric. The overlooker thereof was a man named Bard. He was called Bard of Atla-isle, and was a good business man and worker; not of high birth, but much prized by the king and Gunnhilda.

Aulvir and his men drew up their ship beyond flood-tide mark. They then went to the farm buildings, and found Bard outside, and told him of their journey, and withal that they would fain be there for the night. Bard saw that they were very wet, and led them to a fire-hall that stood apart from the other buildings. There he had a large fire made for them, at which their clothes were dried. When they had put them on again, Bard came in. 'Now will we,' said he, 'set you a table here. I know you will be glad to sleep; you are weary from your wetting.'

Aulvir liked that well. Soon the table was set, and food given them, bread and butter and large bowls of curds set forth. Bard said: 'Right sorry am I that there is no ale in the house, that I might receive you as I would; you will have to make out with what there is.'

Aulvir and his folk were very thirsty, and drank up the curds. Then Bard had oat-drink brought in, and they drank that. 'I should like,' said Bard, 'to give you better drink if I had any.'

There was no lack of straw in the room. Then he bade them lie down to sleep.

Chapter 44

The Slaying of Bard

King Eric and queen Gunnhilda came that same evening to Atla-isle, and Bard had prepared there a banquet for the king; and there was to be there a sacrifice to the guardian spirits. Sumptuous was the banquet, and great the drinking within the hall.

'Where is Bard?' asked the king; 'I see him not.'

Someone said: 'Bard is outside supplying his guests.'

'Who be these guests,' said the king, 'that he deemeth this more a duty than to be here within waiting on us?'

The man said that some house-carles of lord Thorir were come thither.

The king said: 'Go after them at once, and call them in hither.'

And so it was done, with the message that the king would fain see them.

Whereupon they came. The king received Aulvir well, and bade him sit in the high-seat facing himself, and his comrades outside him. They did so, Egil sitting next to Aulvir. Ale was then served to them to drink. Many toasts went round, and a horn should be drunk to each toast.

But as the evening wore on, many of Aulvir's companions became helpless. Some remained in the room, though sick, some went out of doors. Bard busily plied them with drink. Then Egil took the horn which Bard had offered to Aulvir, and drank it off. Bard said that Egil was very thirsty, and brought him at once the horn again filled, and bade him drink it off. Egil took the horn, and recited a stave:

'Wizard-worshipper of cairns!
Want of ale thou couldst allege,
Here at spirits' holy feast.
False deceiver thee I find.
Stranger guests thou didst beguile,
Cloaking thus thy churlish greed.
Bard, a niggard base art thou,
Traacherous trick on such to play.'

Bard bade him drink and stop that jeering. Egil drained every cup that came to him, drinking for Aulvir likewise. Then Bard went to the queen and told her there was a man there who put shame on them, for, howsoever much he drank, he still said he was thirsty. The queen and Bard then mixed the drink with poison, and bare it in. Bard consecrated the cup, then gave it to the ale-maid. She carried it to Egil, and bade him drink. Egil then drew his knife and pricked the palm of his hand. He took the horn, scratched runes thereon, and smeared blood in them. He sang:

'Write we runes around the horn,
Redden all the spell with blood;
Wise words choose I for the cup
Wrought from branching horn of beast.
Drink we then, as drink we will,
Draught that cheerful bearer brings,
Learn that health abides in ale,
Holy ale that Bard hath bless'd.'

The horn burst asunder in the midst, and the drink was spilt on the straw below. Then Aulvir began to be faint. So Egil stood up, took Aulvir by the hand, and led him to the door. Egil shifted his cloak to his left side, and under the mantle held his sword. But when they came to the door, then came Bard after them with a full horn, and bade them drink a farewell cup. Egil stood in the door. He took the horn and drank it off; then recited a stave:

'Ale is borne to me, for ale
Aulvir now maketh pale.
From ox-horn I let pour
'Twixt my lips the shower.
But blind they fate to see
Blows thou bring'st on thee:
Full soon from Odin's thane
Feel'st thou deadly rain.'

With that Egil threw down the horn, but gripped his sword and drew; it was dark in the room. He thrust Bard right through the middle with the sword, so that the point went out at the back. Bard fell dead, the blood welling from the wound. Aulvir fell too, vomiting. Then Egil dashed out of the room; it was pitch dark outside. Egil at once ran off from the buildings. But in the entrance-room it was now seen that Bard and Aulvir were fallen.

Then came the king, and bade them bring light; whereupon they saw what had happened, that Aulvir lay there senseless; but Bard was slain, and the floor all streaming with blood. Then the king asked where was that big man who had drunk most that evening. Men said that he had gone out.

'Seek him,' said the king, 'and bring him to me.'

Search was made for him round the premises, but nowhere was he found. But when they came to the detached fire-hall, there lay Aulvir's comrades. The king's men asked if Egil had come there at all. They said that he had run in, taken his weapons, and so out again.

This was told to the king. The king bade his men go with all speed and seize every ship or boat on the island.

'But in the morning,' said he, 'when it is light, we must search all the island and slay the man.'

Chapter 45

Flight of Egil

Egil went in the night and sought the places where boats were. But wheresoever he came to the strand, men were always there before him. He went thus through the whole night, and found never a boat. But when day dawned, he was standing on a certain ness. He saw then another island, and between him and it lay a very wide sound. This was then his counsel: he took helmet, sword, and spear, breaking off the spear-shaft and casting it out into the sea; but the weapons he wrapped round in his cloak and made thereof a bundle which he bound on his back. Then he plunged into the water, nor stayed his swimming till he came to the island. It was called Sheppey; it was an island of no great size covered with brushwood. There were cattle on it, both sheep and oxen, belonging to Atla-isle. But when he came to the island, he wrung his clothes dry.

By this time it was broad daylight, and the sun was risen. King Eric had Atla-island well searched as soon as it was light; this took some time, the island being large, and Egil was not found. Then the king made them row to other islands and seek him. It was evening when twelve men rowed to Sheppey. They were to look for Egil, and had also to bring from thence some cattle for slaughter. Egil saw the boat coming to the island; he then lay down and hid himself in the brushwood before the boat came to land. They left three men behind with the boat; but nine went up, and they separated into three search parties, with three in each. But when a rise in the ground was between them and the boat, then Egil stood up (having before got his weapons ready), and made straight across for the sea, and then along the shore. They who guarded the boat were not aware of it till Egil was upon them. He at once smote one with a death-blow; but another took to his heels, and he had to leap up something of a bank. Egil followed him with a blow cutting off his foot. The third man leapt out into the boat, and pushed off with the pole. Egil drew the boat to him with the rope, and leapt out into it. Few blows were exchanged ere Egil slew him, and

pushed him overboard. Then he took oars and rowed the boat away. He went all that night and the day after, nor stayed till he came to lord Thorir's.

As for Aulvir and his comrades, the king let them go in peace, as guiltless in this matter.

But the men who were in Sheppey were there for many nights, and killed cattle for food, and made a fire and cooked them, and piled a large fuel-heap on the side of the island looking towards Atla-isle, and set fire thereto, and let folk know their plight. When that was seen, men rowed out to them, and brought to land those who yet lived.

The king was by this time gone away; he went to another banquet.

But of Aulvir there is this to be told, that he reached home before Egil, and Thorolf and Thorir had come home even before that. Aulvir told the tidings, the slaying of Bard and the rest that had there befallen, but of Egil's goings since he knew nothing. Thorolf was much grieved hereat, as also was Arinbjorn; they thought that Egil would return nevermore. But the next morning Egil came home. Which when Thorolf knew, he rose up and went out to meet him, and asked in what way he had escaped, and what tidings had befallen in his journey. Then Egil recited this stave:

'From Norway king's keeping,
From craft of Gunnhilda,
So I freed me (nor flaunt I The feat overbold),
That three, whom but I wot not,
The warrior king's liege-men,
Lie dead, to the high hall
Of Hela downsped.'

Arinbjorn spoke well of this work, and said to his father that he would be bound to atone Egil with the king.

Thorir said, 'It will be the common verdict that Bard got his desert in being slain; yet hath Egil wrought too much after the way of his kin, in looking little before him and braving a king's wrath, which most men find a heavy burden. However, I will atone you, Egil, with the king for this time.'

Thorir went to find the king, but Arinbjorn remained at home and declared that one lot should befall them all. But when Thorir came to the king, he offered terms for Egil, his own bail, while the king should doom the fine. King Eric was very wroth, and it was hard to come to speech with him; he said that what his father had said would prove true - that family would never be trustworthy. He bade Thorir arrange it thus: 'Though I accept some atonement, Egil shall not be long harboured in my realm. But for the sake of thy intercession, Thorir, I will take a money fine for this man.' The king fixed such fine as he thought fit; Thorir paid it all and went home.

Chapter 46 Of Thorolf's and Egil's Harrying

Thorolf and Egil stayed that winter with Thorir, and were made much of. But in spring they got ready a large war-ship and gathered men thereto, and in summer they went the eastern way and harried; there won they much wealth and had many battles. They held on even to Courland, and made a peace for half a month with the men of the land and traded with them. But when this was ended, then they took to harrying, and put in at divers places. One day they put in at the mouth of a large river, where was an extensive forest upon land. They resolved to go up the country, dividing their force into companies of twelve. They went through the wood, and it was not long before they came to peopled parts. There they plundered and slew men, but the people fled, till at last there was no resistance. But as the day wore on, Thorolf had the blast sounded to recall his men down to the shore. Then each turned back from where they were into the wood. But when Thorolf mustered his force, Egil and his company had not come down; and the darkness of night was closing in, so that they could not, as they thought, look for him.

Now Egil and his twelve had gone through a wood and then saw wide plains and tillage. Hard by them stood a house. For this they made, and when they came there they ran into the house, but could see no one there. They took all the loose chattels that they came upon. There were many rooms, so this took them a long time. But when they came out and away from the house, an armed force was there between them and the wood, and this attacked them. High palings ran from the house to the wood; to these Egil bade them keep close, that they might not be come at from all sides. They did so. Egil went first, then the rest, one behind the other, so near that none could come between.

The Courlanders attacked them vigorously, but mostly with spears and javelins, not coming to close quarters. Egil's party going forward along the fence did not find out till too late that another line of palings ran along on the other side, the space between narrowing till there was a bend and all progress barred. The Courlanders pursued after them into this pen, while some set on them from without, thrusting javelins and swords through the palings, while others cast clothes on their weapons. Egil's party were wounded, and after that taken, and all bound, and so brought home to the farmhouse.

The owner of that farm was a powerful and wealthy man; he had a son grown up. Now they debated what they should do with their prisoners. The goodman said that he thought this were best counsel, to kill them one on the heels of another. His son said that the darkness of night was now closing in, and no sport was thus gotten by their torture; he bade them be let bide till the morning. So they were thrust into a room and strongly bound. Egil was bound hand and foot to a post. Then the room was strongly locked, and the Courlanders went into the dining-hall, ate, drank, and were merry.

Egil strained and worked at the post till he loosed it up from the floor. Then the post fell, and Egil slipped himself off it. Next he loosed his hands with his teeth. But when his hands were loose, he loosed therewith the bonds from his feet.

And then he freed his comrades; but when they were all loosed they searched round for the likeliest place to get out. The room was made with walls of large wooden beams, but at one end thereof was a smooth planking. At this they dashed and broke it through. They had now come into another room; this too had walls of wooden beams. Then they heard men's voices below under their feet. Searching about they found a trapdoor in the floor, which they opened. Thereunder was a deep vault; down in it they heard men's voices. Then asked Egil what men were these. He who answered named himself Aki. Would he like to come up, asked Egil. Aki answered, they would like it much.

Then Egil and his comrades lowered into the vault the rope with which they had been bound, and drew up thence three men. Aki said that these were his two sons, and they were Danes, who had been made prisoners of war last summer.

'I was,' he said, 'well treated through the winter, and had the chief care of the goodman's property; but the lads were enslaved and had a hard lot. In spring we made up our minds to run away, but were retaken. Then we were cast into this vault.'

'You must know all about the plan of this house,' said Egil; 'where have we the best hope to get out?'

Aki said that there was another plank partition: 'Break you up that, you will then come into a corn-store, whereout you may go as you will.'

Egil's men did so; they broke up the planking, came into the granary, and thence out. It was pitch dark.

Then said Egil's comrades that they should hasten to the wood. But Egil said to Aki, 'If you know the house here, you can show us the way to some plunder.'

Aki said there was no lack of chattels. 'Here is a large loft in which the goodman sleeps; therein is no stint of weapons.'

Egil bade them go to that loft. But when they came to the staircase head they saw that the loft was open. A light was inside, and servants, who were making the beds. Egil bade some stay outside and watch that none came out. Egil ran into the loft, seized weapons, of which there was no lack. They slew all the men that were in there, and they armed themselves fully. Aki went to a trapdoor in the floor and opened it, telling them that they should go down by this to the store-room below. They got a light and went thither. It was the goodman's treasury; there were many costly things, and much silver. There the men took them each a load and carried it out. Egil took under his arm a large mead-cask, and bare it so.

But when they came to the wood, then Egil stopped, and he said:

'This our going is all wrong, and not warlike. We have stolen the goodman's property without his knowing thereof. Never ought that shame to be ours. Go we back to the house, and let him know what hath befallen.'

All spoke against that, saying they would make for the ship.

Egil set down the mead-cask, then ran off, and sped him to the house. But when he came there, he saw that serving-lads were coming out of the kitchen with dishes and bearing them to the dining-hall. In the kitchen (he saw) was a

large fire and kettles thereon. Thither he went. Great beams had been brought home and lighted, as was the custom there, by setting fire to the beam-end and so burning it lengthwise. Egil seized a beam, carried it to the dining-hall, and thrust the burning end under the eaves, and so into the birch bark of the roof, which soon caught fire. Some fagot-wood lay hard by; this Egil brought and piled before the hall-door. This quickly caught fire. But those who sate drinking within did not find it out till the flame burst in round the roof. Then they rushed to the door; but there was no easy way out, both by reason of the fagot-wood, and because Egil kept the door, and slew most who strove to pass out either in the doorway or outside.

The goodman asked who had the care of the fire.

Egil answered, 'He has now the care of the fire whom you yester-even had thought least likely; nor will you wish to bake you hotter than I shall kindle; you shall have soft bath before soft bed, such as you meant to give to me and my comrades. Here now is that same Egil whom you bound hand and foot to the post in that room you shut so carefully. I will repay you your hospitality as you deserve.'

At this the goodman thought to steal out in the dark, but Egil was near, and dealt him his death-blow, as he did to many others. Brief moment was it ere the hall so burned that it fell in. Most of those who were within perished.

But Egil went back to the wood, where he found his comrades, and they all went together to the ship. Egil said he would have the mead-cask which he carried as his own special prize; it proved to be full of silver. Thorolf and his men were overjoyed when Egil came down. They put out from land as soon as day dawned; Aki and his two sons were with Egil's following. They sailed in the summer, now far spent, to Denmark, where they lay in wait for merchant-ships, and plundered when they got the chance.

Chapter 47

Of the Further Harrying of Thorolf and Egil

Harold Gormsson had then taken the kingdom in Denmark, his father Gorm being now dead. The land was then open to harrying; freebooters often lay off the Danish coast. Aki knew Denmark well both by sea and land. So Egil inquired of him diligently where the places were that promised good booty. But when they came to Eyrar-sound, then Aki said that up on land there was a large trading town named Lundr; there, he said, was hope of plunder, but 'twas likely that the townsmen would make resistance.

The question was put before the men whether they should go up or not. Opinions were much divided, some liking, some letting it; then the matter was referred to the leaders. Thorolf was rather for going up. Then Egil was asked what counsel he thought good. He recited a stave:

'Wolf-battening warrior,
Wield we high gleaming swords.
In snake-fostering summer

Such deeds well beseem.
Lead up to Lundr:
Let laggards be none!
Spear-music ungentle
By sunset shall sound.'

After that they made them ready to go up, and they came to the town. But when the townsmen were aware of the enemy's coming, they made against them. A wooden wall was round the town; they set men to guard this. A very fierce battle was there fought. Egil, with his following, charged fiercely on the gate nor spared himself. There was a great slaughter, the townsmen falling one upon another. It is said that Egil first entered the town, the others following. Then those of the town fled, and great was the slaughter. But Thorolf and his company plundered the town and took much wealth, and fired the buildings before they left. Then they went down to their ships.

Chapter 48 Of the Banquet at Earl Arnfid's

Thorolf stood northwards with his force past Holland, and they put into a harbour there, as the wind drove them back. They did not plunder there. A little way up the country dwelt an earl named Arnfid. But when he heard that freebooters had come to land there, he sent his men to meet them with this errand, to know whether they wished for peace or war. Upon the messengers' coming to Thorolf with their errand, he said that they would not harry there, that there was no need to harry there or come with warshield, the land being not wealthy. The messengers went back to the earl, and told him the issue of their errand: but when the earl knew that he need not gather men for this cause, then he rode down without any armed force to meet the freebooters. When they met, all went well at the conference. The earl bade Thorolf to a banquet with him, and as many of his men as he would. Thorolf promised to go.

On the appointed day the earl had riding-horses sent down to meet them. Thorolf and Egil went, and they had thirty men with them. When they came to the earl, he received them well; they were led into the dining-hall. At once beer was brought in and given them to drink. They sate there till evening.

But before the tables were removed the earl said that they should cast lots to drink together in pairs, man and woman, so far as numbers would allow, but the odd ones by themselves. They cast then their lots into the skirt of a cloak, and the earl drew them out. The earl had a very beautiful daughter then in the flower of youth; the lot decreed that Egil should sit by her for the evening. She was going about the floor of the hall amusing herself. Egil stood up and went to the place in which the earl's daughter had sat during the day. But when all took their several seats, then the earl's daughter went to her place. She said in verse:

'Why sittest in my seat, youth?
Thou seldom sure hast given
To wolf his warm flesh-banquet.

Alone I will mine own.
O'er carrion course thou heard'st not
Croak hoarse the joying raven,
Nor wentest where sword-edges
In warfare madly met.'

Egil took her, and set her down by him. He sang:

'With bloody brand on-striding
Me bird of bane hath followed:
My hurtling spear hath sounded
In the swift Vikings' charge.
Raged wrathfully our battle,
Ran fire o'er foemen's rooftrees;
Sound sleepeth many a warrior
Slain in the city gate.'

They two then drank together for the evening, and were right merry. The banquet was of the best, on that day and on the morrow. Then the rovers went to their ships, they and the earl parting in friendship with exchange of gifts.

Thorolf with his force then stood for the Brenn-islands. At that time these were a great lair of freebooters, because through the islands sailed many merchant-ships. Aki went home to his farms, and his sons with him. He was a very wealthy man, owning several farms in Jutland. He and Thorolf parted with affection, and pledged them to close friendship. But as autumn came on, Thorolf and his men sailed northward along the Norway coast till they reached the Firths, then went to lord Thorir.

He received them well, but Arinbjorn his son much better, who asked Egil to be there for the winter. Egil took this offer with thanks. But when Thorir knew of Arinbjorn's offer, he called it rather a hasty speech. 'I know not,' said he, 'how king Eric may like that; for after the slaying of Bard he said that he would not have Egil be here in the land.'

'You, father, can easily manage this with the king,' said Arinbjorn, 'so that he will not blame Egil's stay. You will ask Thorolf, your niece's husband, to be here; I and Egil will have one winter home.'

Thorir saw from this talk that Arinbjorn would have his way in this. So father and son offered Thorolf winter-home there, which he accepted. They were there through the winter with twelve men.

Two brothers there were named Thorvald Proud and Thorfid Strong, near kinsmen of Bjorn Yeoman, and brought up with him. Tall men they were and strong, of much energy and forward daring. They followed Bjorn so long as he went out roving; but when he settled down in quiet, then these brothers went to Thorolf, and were with him in his harrying; they were forecastle men in his ship. And when Egil took command of a ship, then Thorfid was his forecastle man. These brothers followed Thorolf throughout, and he valued them most of his crew.

They were of his company this winter, and sate next to the two brothers. Thorolf sate in the high seat over against Thorir, and drank with him; Egil sate as cup-mate over against Arinbjorn. At all toasts the cup must cross the floor.

Lord Thorir went in the autumn to king Eric. The king received him exceedingly well. But when they began to talk together, Thorir begged the king not to take it amiss that he had Egil with him that winter. The king answered this well; he said that Thorir might get from him what he would, but it should not have been so had any other man harboured Egil. But when Gunnhilda heard what they were talking of, then said she: 'This I think, Eric, that 'tis now going again as it has gone often before; thou lendest easy ear to talk, nor bearest long in mind the ill that is done thee. And now thou wilt bring forward the sons of Skallagrim to this, that they will yet again smite down some of thy near kin. But though thou mayest choose to think Bard's slaying of no account, I think not so.'

The king answered: 'Thou, Gunnhilda, more than others provokest me to savageness; yet time was when thou wert on better terms with Thorolf than now. However I will not take back my word about those brothers.'

'Thorolf was well here,' said she, 'before Egil made him bad; but now I reckon no odds between them.'

Thorir went home when he was ready, and told the brothers the words of the king and of the queen.

Chapter 49

Slaying of Thorvald Proud

Eyvind Skreyja and Alf were the names of two brothers of Gunnhilda, sons of Auzur Toti. They were tall and strong, and great traders. They were then made much of by king Eric and Gunnhilda. Not generally liked were they; at this time they were young, but fully grown to manhood. It so befell in the spring that a great sacrifice was fixed to be held in the summer at Gaular. Here was the most renowned chief temple. Thither flocked numbers from the firths and from the fells, and from Sogn, and almost all the great men. King Eric went thither. Then spoke Gunnhilda with her brothers: 'I would fain that you two should so manage matters in this crowded gathering, that ye get to slay one of the two sons of Skallagrim, or, better still, both.'

They said it should be done.

Lord Thorir made ready to go thither. He called Arinbjorn to speak with him. 'Now will I,' said he, 'go to the sacrifice, but I will not that Egil go thither. I know the craft of Gunnhilda, the vehemence of Egil, the power of the king; no easy task were it to watch these all at once. But Egil will not let himself be hindered, unless you stay behind. Now Thorolf and the rest of his company shall go with me; Thorolf shall sacrifice and pray for happiness for his brother as well as himself.'

Whereupon Arinbjorn told Egil that he meant to stay at home; 'and you shall be with me,' said he.

Egil agreed that it should be so.

But Thorir and the rest went to sacrifice, and a very great multitude was there, and there was much drinking. Thorolf went with Thorir wheresoever he went, and they never were apart day or night. Eyvind told Gunnhilda that he could get no chance at Thorolf. She bade him then slay some one of Thorolf's men rather than let everything fail.

It chanced one evening, when the king had gone to rest, as had also Thorir and Thorolf, but Thorfid and Thorvald still sate up, that the two brothers Eyvind and Alf came and sat down by them, and were very merry. First they drank as one drinking-party; but presently it came to this, that each should drink half a horn, Eyvind and Thorvald being paired together to drink, and Alf and Thorfid.

Now as the evening wore on there was unfair drinking; next followed bandying of words, then insulting language. Then Eyvind jumped up, drew a sword, and thrust at Thorvald, dealing him a wound that was his death. Whereupon up jumped on either side the king's men and Thorir's house-carles. But men were all weaponless in there, because it was sanctuary. Men went between and parted them who were most furious; nor did anything more happen that evening.

Eyvind had slain a man on holy ground; he was therefore made accursed, and had to go abroad at once. The king offered a fine for the man; but Thorolf and Thorfid said they never had taken man-fine, and would not take this. With that they parted. Thorir and his company went home. King Eric and Gunnhilda sent Eyvind south to Denmark to king Harold Gormsson, for he might not now abide on Norwegian soil. The king received him and his comrades well: Eyvind brought to Denmark a large war-ship. He then appointed Eyvind to be his coastguard there against freebooters, for Eyvind was a right good warrior.

In the spring following that winter Thorolf and Egil made them ready to go again a-freebooting. And when ready, they again stood for the eastern way. But when they came to Vik, they sailed then south along Jutland, and harried there; then went to Friesland, where they stayed for a great part of the summer; but then stood back for Denmark. But when they came to the borderland where Denmark and Friesland meet, and lay by the land there, so it was that one evening when they on shipboard were preparing for sleep, two men came to Egil's ship, and said they had an errand to him. They were brought before him. They said that Aki the wealthy had sent them thither with this message: 'Eyvind Skreyja is lying out off Jutland-side, and thinks to waylay you as you come from the south. And he has gathered such large force as ye cannot withstand if ye encounter it all at once; but he himself goes with two light vessels, and he is even now here close by you.'

But when these tidings came before Egil, at once he and his took down their tenting. He bade them go silently; they did so. They came at dawn to where Eyvind and his men lay at anchor; they set upon them at once, hurling both stones and spears. Many of Eyvind's force fell there; but he himself leapt overboard and got to land by swimming, as did all those of his men who escaped. But Egil took his ships, cargo, and weapons.

They went back that day to their own company, and met Thorolf. He asked wither Egil had gone, and where he had gotten those ships with which they

came. Egil said that Eyvind Skreyja had had the ships, but they had taken them from him. Then sang Egil:

'In struggle sternly hard
We strove off Jutland-side:
Well did the warrior fight,
Warder of Denmark's realm.
Till, with his wights o'erborne,
Eastwards from wave-horse high
To swim and seek the sand
Swift Eyvind Skreyja leapt.'

Thorolf said: 'Herein ye have so wrought, methinks, that it will not serve us as our autumn plan to go to Norway.'

Egil said it was quite as well, though they should seek some other place.

Chapter 50 Of Athelstan King of the English

Alfred the Great ruled England, being of his family the first supreme king over England. That was in the days of Harold Fairhair, king of Norway. After Alfred, Edward his son was king in England. He was father of Athelstan the Victorious, who was foster-father of Hacon the Good. It was at this time of our story that Athelstan took the kingdom after his father. There were several brothers sons of Edward.

But when Athelstan had taken the kingdom, then those chieftains who had before lost their power to his forefathers rose in rebellion; now they thought was the easiest time to claim back their own, when a young king ruled the realm. These were Britons, Scots, and Irish. King Athelstan therefore gathered him an army, and gave pay to all such as wished to enrich themselves, both foreigners and natives.

The brothers Thorolf and Egil were standing southwards along Saxony and Flanders, when they heard that the king of England wanted men, and that there was in his service hope of much gain. So they resolved to take their force thither. And they went on that autumn till they came to king Athelstan. He received them well; he saw plainly that such followers would be a great help. Full soon did the English king decide to ask them to join him, to take pay there, and become defenders of his land. They so agreed between them that they became king Athelstan's men.

England was thoroughly Christian in faith, and had long been so, when these things happened. King Athelstan was a good Christian; he was called Athelstan the Faithful. The king asked Thorolf and his brother to consent to take the first signing with the cross, for this was then a common custom both with merchants and those who took soldiers' pay in Christian armies, since those who were 'prime-signed' (as 'twas termed) could hold all intercourse with Christians and heathens alike, while retaining the faith which was most to their mind. Thorolf

and Egil did this at the king's request, and both let themselves be prime-signed. They had three hundred men with them who took the king's pay.

Chapter 51 Of Olaf King of Scots

Olaf the Red was the name of the king in Scotland. He was Scotch on his father's side, but Danish on his mother's side, and came of the family of Ragnar Hairy-breeks. He was a powerful prince. Scotland, as compared with England, was reckoned a third of the realm; Northumberland was reckoned a fifth part of England; it was the northernmost county, marching with Scotland on the eastern side of the island. Formerly the Danish kings had held it. Its chief town is York. It was in Athelstan's dominions; he had set over it two earls, the one named Alfgeir, the other Gudrek. They were set there as defenders of the land against the inroads of Scots, Danes, and Norsemen, who harried the land much, and though they had a strong claim on the land there, because in Northumberland nearly all the inhabitants were Danish by the father's or mother's side, and many by both.

Bretland was governed by two brothers, Hring and Adils; they were tributaries under king Athelstan, and withal had this right, that when they were with the king in the field, they and their force should be in the van of the battle before the royal standard. These brothers were right good warriors, but not young men.

Alfred the Great had deprived all tributary kings of name and power; they were now called earls, who had before been kings or princes. This was maintained throughout his lifetime and his son Edward's. But Athelstan came young to the kingdom, and of him they stood less in awe. Wherefore many now were disloyal who had before been faithful subjects.

Chapter 52 Of the Gathering of the Host

Olaf king of Scots, drew together a mighty host, and marched upon England. When he came to Northumberland, he advanced with shield of war. On learning this, the earls who ruled there mustered their force and went against the king. And when they met there was a great battle, whereof the issue was that king Olaf won the victory, but earl Gudrek fell, and Alfgeir fled away, as did the greater part of the force that had followed them and escaped from the field. And now king Olaf found no further resistance, but subdued all Northumberland.

Alfgeir went to king Athelstan, and told him of his defeat. But as soon as king Athelstan heard that so mighty a host was come into his land, he despatched men and summoned forces, sending word to his earls and other nobles. And with such force as he had he at once turned him and marched against the Scots. But when it was bruited about that Olaf king of Scots had won a victory and subdued under him a large part of England, he soon had a much larger army than Athelstan, for many nobles joined him. And on learning this, Hring

and Adils, who had gathered much people, turned to swell king Olaf's army. Thus their numbers became exceeding great.

All this when Athelstan learned, he summoned to conference his captains and his counsellors; he inquired of them what were best to do; he told the whole council point by point what he had ascertained about the doings of the Scots' king and his numbers. All present were agreed on this, that Alfgeir was most to blame, and thought it were but his due to lose his earldom. But the plan resolved on was this, that king Athelstan should go back to the south of England, and then for himself hold a levy of troops, coming northwards through the whole land; for they saw that the only way for the needful numbers to be levied in time was for the king himself to gather the force.

As for the army already assembled, the king set over it as commanders Thorolf and Egil. They were also to lead that force which the freebooters had brought to the king. But Alfgeir still held command over his own troops. Further, the king appointed such captains of companies as he thought fit.

When Egil returned from the council to his fellows, they asked him what tidings he could tell them of the Scots' king. He sang:

'Olaf one earl by furious
Onslaught in flight hath driven,
The other slain: a sovereign
Stubborn in fight is he.
Upon the field fared Gudrek
False path to his undoing.
He holds, this foe of England,
Northumbria's humbled soil.'

After this they sent messengers to king Olaf, giving out this as their errand, that king Athelstan would fain enhazel him a field and offer battle on Vin-heath by Vin-wood; meanwhile he would have them forbear to harry his land; but of the twain he should rule England who should conquer in the battle. He appointed a week hence for the conflict, and whichever first came on the ground should wait a week for the other. Now this was then the custom, that so soon as a king had enhazelled a field, it was a shameful act to harry before the battle was ended. Accordingly king Olaf halted and harried not, but waited till the appointed day, when he moved his army to Vin-heath.

North of the heath stood a town. There in the town king Olaf quartered him, and there he had the greatest part of his force, because there was a wide district around which seemed to him convenient for the bringing in of such provisions as the army needed. But he sent men of his own up to the heath where the battlefield was appointed; these were to take camping-ground, and make all ready before the army came. But when the men came to the place where the field was enhazelled, there were all the hazel-poles set up to mark the ground where the battle should be.

The place ought to be chosen level, and whereon a large host might be set in array. And such was this; for in the place where the battle was to be the heath was level, with a river flowing on one side, on the other a large wood. But where the distance between the wood and the river was least (though this was a good

long stretch), there king Athelstan's men had pitched, and their tents quite filled the space between wood and river. They had so pitched that in every third tent there were no men at all, and in one of every three but few. Yet when king Olaf's men came to them, they had then numbers swarming before all the tents, and the others could not get to go inside. Athelstan's men said that their tents were all full, so full that their people had not nearly enough room. But the front line of tents stood so high that it could not be seen over them whether they stood many or few in depth. Olaf's men imagined a vast host must be there. King Olaf's men pitched north of the hazel-poles, toward which side the ground sloped a little.

From day to day Athelstan's men said that the king would come, or was come, to the town that lay south of the heath. Meanwhile forces flocked to them both day and night.

But when the appointed time had expired, then Athelstan's men sent envoys to king Olaf with these words: 'King Athelstan is ready for battle, and had a mighty host. But he sends to king Olaf these words, that he would fain they should not cause so much bloodshed as now looks likely; he begs Olaf rather to go home to Scotland, and Athelstan will give him as a friendly gift one shilling of silver from every plough through all his realm, and he wishes that they should become friends.'

When the messengers came to Olaf he was just beginning to make ready his army, and purposing to attack. But on the messengers declaring their errand, he forebore to advance for that day. Then he and his captains sate in council. Wherein opinions were much divided. Some strongly desired that these terms should be taken; they said that this journey had already won them great honour, if they should go home after receiving so much money from Athelstan. But some were against it, saying that Athelstan would offer much more the second time, were this refused. And this latter counsel prevailed. Then the messengers begged king Olaf to give them time to go back to king Athelstan, and try if he would pay yet more money to ensure peace. They asked a truce of one day for their journey home, another for deliberation, a third to return to Olaf. The king granted them this.

The messengers went home, and came back on the third day according to promise; they now said to king Olaf that Athelstan would give all that he offered before, and over and above, for distribution among king Olaf's soldiers, a shilling to every freeborn man, a silver mark to every officer of a company of twelve men or more, a gold mark to every captain of the king's guard, and five gold marks to every earl. Then the king laid this offer before his forces. It was again as before; some opposed this, some desired it. In the end the king gave a decision: he said he would accept these terms, if this too were added, that king Athelstan let him have all Northumberland with the tributes and dues thereto belonging. Again the messengers ask armistice of three days, with this further, that king Olaf should send his men to hear Athelstan's answer, whether he would take these terms or no; they say that to their thinking Athelstan will hardly refuse anything to ensure peace. King Olaf agreed to this and sent his men to king Athelstan.

Then the messengers ride all together, and find king Athelstan in the town that was close to the heath on the south. King Olaf's messengers declare before

Athelstan their errand and the proposals for peace. King Athelstan's men told also with what offers they had gone to king Olaf, adding that this had been the counsel of wise men, thus to delay the battle so long as the king had not come.

But king Athelstan made a quick decision on this matter, and thus bespake the messengers: 'Bear ye these my words to king Olaf, that I will give him leave for this, to go home to Scotland with his forces; only let him restore all the property that he has wrongfully taken here in the land. Then make we peace between our lands, neither harrying the other. Further be it provided that king Olaf shall become my vassal, and hold Scotland for me, and be my under-king. Go now back,' said he, 'and tell him this.'

At once that same evening the messengers turned back on their way, and came to king Olaf about midnight; they then waked up the king, and told him straightway the words of king Athelstan. The king instantly summoned his earls and other captains; he then caused the messengers to come and declare the issue of their errand and the words of Athelstan. But when this was made known before the soldiers, all with one mouth said that this was now before them, to prepare for battle. The messengers said this too, that Athelstan had a numerous force, but he had come into the town on that same day when the messengers came there.

Then spoke earl Adils, 'Now, methinks, that has come to pass, O king, which I said, that ye would find tricksters in the English. We have sat here long time and waited while they have gathered to them all their forces, whereas their king can have been nowhere near when we came here. They will have been assembling a multitude while we were sitting still. Now this is my counsel, O king, that we two brothers ride at once forward this very night with our troop. It may be they will have no fear for themselves, now they know that their king is near with a large army. So we shall make a dash upon them. But if they turn and fly, they will lose some of their men, and be less bold afterwards for conflict with us.'

The king thought this good counsel. 'We will here make ready our army,' said he, 'as soon as it is light, and move to support you.'

This plan they fixed upon, and so ended the council.

Chapter 53 Of the Fight

Earl Hring and Adils his brother made ready their army, and at once in the night moved southwards for the heath. But when day dawned, Thorolf's sentries saw the army approaching. Then was a war-blast blown, and men donned their arms selects spirited and that they began to draw up the force, and they had two divisions. Earl Alfgeir commanded one division, and the standard was borne before him. In that division were his own followers, and also what force had been gathered from the countryside. It was a much larger force than that which followed Thorolf and Egil.

Thorolf was thus armed. He had a shield ample and stout, a right strong helmet on his head; he was girded with the sword that he called Long, a weapon large

and good. If his hand he had a halberd, whereof the feather-formed blade was two ells long, ending in a four-edged spike; the blade was broad above, the socket both long and thick. The shaft stood just high enough for the hand to grasp the socket, and was remarkably thick. The socket fitted with iron prong on the shaft, which was also wound round with iron. Such weapons were called mail-piercers.

Egil was armed in the same way as Thorolf. He was girded with the sword that he called Adder; this he had gotten in Courland; it was a right good weapon. Neither of the two had shirt of mail.

They set up their standard, which was borne by Thofid the Strong. All their men had Norwegian shields and Norwegian armour in every point; and in their division were all the Norsemen who were present. Thorolf's force was drawn up near the wood, Alfgeir's moved along the river.

Earl Adils and his brother saw that they would not come upon Thorolf unawares, so they began to draw up their force. They also made two divisions, and had two standards. Adils was opposed to earl Alfgeir, Hring to the freebooters. The battle now began; both charged with spirit. Earl Adils pressed on hard and fast till Alfgeir gave ground; then Adils' men pressed on twice as boldly. Nor was it long before Alfgeir fled. And this is to be told of him, that he rode away south over the heath, and a company of men with him. He rode till he came near the town, where sate the king.

Then spake the earl: 'I deem it not safe for us to enter the town. We got sharp words of late when we came to the king after defeat by king Olaf; and he will not think our case bettered by this coming. No need to expect honour where he is.'

Then he rode to the south country, and of his travel 'tis to be told that he rode night and day till he and his came westwards to Earls-ness. Then the earl got a ship to take him southwards over the sea; and he came to France, where half of his kin were. He never after returned to England.

Adils at first pursued the flying foe, but not far; then he turned back to where the battle was, and made an onset there. This when Thorolf saw, he said that Egil should turn and encounter him, and bade the standard be borne that way; his men he bade hold well together and stand close.

'Move we to the wood,' said he, 'and let it cover our back, so that they may not come at us from all sides.'

They did so; they followed along the wood. Fierce was the battle there. Egil charged against Adils, and they had a hard fight of it. The odds of numbers were great, yet more of Adils' men fell than of Egil's.

Then Thorolf became so furious that he cast his shield on his back, and, grasping his halberd with both hands, bounded forward dealing cut and thrust on either side. Men sprang away from him both ways, but he slew many. Thus he cleared the way forward to earl Hring's standard, and then nothing could stop him. He slew the man who bore the earl's standard, and cut down the standard-pole. After that he lunged with his halberd at the earl's breast, driving it right through mail-coat and body, so that it came out at the shoulders; and he lifted him up on the halberd over his head, and planted the butt-end in the

ground. There on the weapon the earl breathed out his life in sight of all, both friends and foes. Then Thorolf drew his sword and dealt blows on either side, his men also charging. Many Britons and Scots fell, but some turned and fled.

But earl Adils seeing his brother's fall, and the slaughter of many of his force, and the flight of some, while himself was in hard stress, turned to fly, and ran to the wood. Into the wood fled he and his company; and then all the force that had followed the earl took to flight. Thorolf and Egil pursued the flying foe. Great was then the slaughter; the fugitives were scattered far and wide over the heath. Earl Adils had lowered his standard; so none could know his company from others.

And soon the darkness of night began to close in. Thorolf and Egil returned to their camp; and just then king Athelstan came up with the main army, and they pitched their tents and made their arrangements. A little after came king Olaf with his army; they, too, encamped and made their arrangements where their men had before placed their tents. Then it was told king Olaf that both his earls Hring and Adils were fallen, and a multitude of his men likewise.

Chapter 54

The Fall of Thorolf

King Athelstan had passed the night before in the town whereof mention was made above, and there he heard rumour that there had been fighting on the heath. At once he and all the host made ready and marched northwards to the heath. There they learnt all the tidings clearly, how that battle had gone. Then the brothers Thorolf and Egil came to meet the king. He thanked them much for their brave advance, and the victory they had won; he promised them his hearty friendship. They all remained together for the night.

No sooner did day dawn than Athelstan waked up his army. He held conference with his captains, and told them how his forces should be arranged. His own division he first arranged, and in the van thereof he set those companies that were the smartest.

Then he said that Egil should command these: 'But Thorolf,' said he, 'shall be with his own men and such others as I add thereto. This force shall be opposed to that part of the enemy which is loose and not in set array, for the Scots are ever loose in array; they run to and fro, and dash forward here and there. Often they prove dangerous if men be not wary, but they are unsteady in the field if boldly faced.'

Egil answered the king: 'I will not that I and Thorolf be parted in the battle; rather to me it seems well that we two be placed there where is like to be most need and hardest fighting.'

Thorolf said, 'Leave we the king to rule where he will place us, serve we him as he likes best. I will, if you wish it, change places with you.'

Egil said, 'Brother, you will have your way; but this separation I shall often rue.'

After this they formed in the divisions as the king had arranged, and the standards were raised. The king's division stood on the plain towards the river; Thorolf's division moved on the higher ground beside the wood. King Olaf drew up his forces when he saw king Athelstan had done so. He also made two divisions; and his own standard, and the division that himself commanded, he opposed to king Athelstan and his division. Either had a large army, there was no difference on the score of numbers. But king Olaf's second division moved near the wood against the force under Thorolf. The commanders thereof were Scotch earls, the men mostly Scots; and it was a great multitude.

And now the armies closed, and soon the battle waxed fierce. Thorolf pressed eagerly forward, causing his standard to be borne onwards along the woodside; he thought to go so far forward as to turn upon the Scotch king's division behind their shields. His own men held their shields before them; they trusted to the wood which was on their right to cover that side. So far in advance went Thorolf that few of his men were before him. But just when he was least on his guard, out leapt from the wood earl Adils and his followers. They thrust at Thorolf at once with many halberds, and there by the wood he fell. But Thorolf, who bore the standard, drew back to where the men stood thicker. Adils now attacked them, and a fierce contest was there. The Scots shouted a shout of victory, as having slain the enemy's chieftain.

This shout when Egil heard, and saw Thorolf's standard going back, he felt sure that Thorolf himself would not be with it. So he bounded thither over the space between the two divisions. Full soon learnt he the tidings of what was done, when he came to his men. Then did he keenly spur them on to the charge, himself foremost in the van. He had in his hand his sword Adder. Forward Egil pressed, and hewed on either hand of him, felling many men. Thorolf bore the standard close after him, behind the standard followed the rest. Right sharp was the conflict there. Egil went forward till he met earl Adils. Few blows did they exchange ere earl Adils fell, and many men around him. But after the earl's death his followers fled. Egil and his force pursued, and slew all whom they overtook; no need there to beg quarter. Nor stood those Scotch earls long, when they saw the others their fellows fly; but at once they took to their heels.

Whereupon Egil and his men made for where king Olaf's division was, and coming on them behind their shields soon wrought great havoc. The division wavered, and broke up. Many of king Olaf's men then fled, and the Norsemen shouted a shout of victory.

But when king Athelstan perceived king Olaf's division beginning to break, he then spurred on his force, and bade his standard advance. A fierce onset was made, so that king Olaf's force recoiled, and there was a great slaughter. King Olaf fell there, and the greater part of the force which he had had, for of those who turned to fly all who were overtaken were slain. Thus king Athelstan gained a signal victory.

Chapter 55

Egil Buries Thorolf

While his men still pursued the fugitives, king Athelstan left the battle-field, and rode back to the town, nor stayed he for the night before he came thither. But Egil pursued the flying foe, and followed them far, slaying every man whom he overtook. At length, sated with pursuit, he with his followers turned back, and came where the battle had been, and found there the dead body of his brother Thorolf. He took it up, washed it, and performed such other offices as were the wont of the time. They dug a grave there, and laid Thorolf therein with all his weapons and raiment. Then Egil clasped a gold bracelet on either wrist before he parted from him; this done they heaped on stones and cast in mould. Then Egil sang a stave:

'Dauntless the doughty champion
Dashed on, the earl's bold slayer:
In stormy stress of battle
Stout-hearted Thorolf fell.
Green grows on soil of Vin-heath
Grass o'er my noble brother:
But we our woe - a sorrow
Worse than death-pang must bear.'

And again he further sang:

'With warriors slain round standard
The western field I burdened;
Adils with my blue Adder
Assailed mid snow of war.
Olaf, young prince, encountered
England in battle thunder:
Hring stood not stour of weapons,
Starved not the ravens' maw.'

Then went Egil and those about him to seek king Athelstan, and at once went before the king, where he sat at the drinking. There was much noise of merriment. And when the king saw that Egil was come in, he bade the lower bench be cleared for them, and that Egil should sit in the high-seat facing the king. Egil sat down there, and cast his shield before his feet. He had his helm on his head, and laid his sword across his knees; and now and again he half drew it, then clashed it back into the sheath. He sat upright, but with head bent forward.

Egil was large-featured, broad of forehead, with large eyebrows, a nose not long but very thick, lips wide and long, chin exceeding broad, as was all about the jaws; thick-necked was he, and big-shouldered beyond other men, hard-featured, and grim when angry. He was well-made, more than commonly tall, had hair wolf-gray and thick, but became early bald. He was black-eyed and brown-skinned,

But as he sat (as was before written), he drew one eye-brow down towards the cheek, the other up to the roots of the hair. He would not drink now, though the horn was borne to him, but alternately twitched his brows up and down. King Athelstan sat in the upper high-seat. He too laid his sword across his knees. When they had sat there for a time, then the king drew his sword from the sheath, and took from his arm a gold ring large and good, and placing it upon the sword-point he stood up, and went across the floor, and reached it over the fire to Egil. Egil stood up and drew his sword, and went across the floor. He stuck the sword-point within the round of the ring, and drew it to him; then he went back to his place. The king sate him again in his high-seat. But when Egil was set down, he drew the ring on his arm, and then his brows went back to their place. He now laid down sword and helm, took the horn that they bare to him, and drank it off. Then sang he:

'Mailed monarch, god of battle,
Maketh the tinkling circlet
Hang, his own arm forsaking,
On hawk-trod wrist of mine.
I bear on arm brand-wielding
Bracelet of red gold gladly.
War-falcon's feeder meetly
Findeth such meed of praise.'

Thereafter Egil drank his share, and talked with others. Presently the king caused to be borne in two chests; two men bare each. Both were full of silver.

The king said: 'These chests, Egil, thou shalt have, and, if thou comest to Iceland, shalt carry this money to thy father; as payment for a son I send it to him: but some of the money thou shalt divide among such kinsmen of thyself and Thorolf as thou thinkest most honourable. But thou shalt take here payment for a brother with me, land or chattels, which thou wilt. And if thou wilt abide with me long, then will I give thee honour and dignity such as thyself mayst name.'

Egil took the money, and thanked the king for his gifts and friendly words. Thenceforward Egil began to be cheerful; and then he sang:

'In sorrow sadly drooping
Sank my brows close-knitted;
Then found I one who furrows
Of forehead could smooth.
Fierce-frowning cliffs that shaded
My face a king hath lifted
With gleam of golden armlet:
Gloom leaveth my eyes.'

Then those men were healed whose wounds left hope of life. Egil abode with king Athelstan for the next winter after Thorolf's death, and had very great honour from the king. With Egil was then all that force which had followed the two brothers, and come alive out of the battle. Egil now made a poem about king Athelstan, and in it is this stave:

'Land-shielder, battle-quickener,
Low now this scion royal
Earls three hath laid. To Ella
Earth must obedient bow.
Lavish of gold, kin-glorious,
Great Athelstan victorious,
Surely, I swear, all humbled
To such high monarch yields.'

But this is the burden in the poem:

'Reindeer-trod hills obey
Bold Athelstan's high sway.'

Then gave Athelstan further to Egil as poet's meed two gold rings, each weighing a mark, and therewith a costly cloak that the king himself had formerly worn.

But when spring came Egil signified to the king this, that he purposed to go away in the summer to Norway, and to learn 'how matters stand with Asgerdr, my late brother Thorolf's wife. A large property is there in all; but I know not whether there be children of theirs living. I am bound to look after them, if they live; but I am heir to all, if Thorolf died childless.'

The king answered, 'This will be, Egil, for you to arrange, to go away hence, if you think you have an errand of duty; but I think 'twere the best way that you should settle down here with me on such terms as you like to ask.'

Egil thanked the king for his words.

'I will,' he said, 'now first go, as I am in duty bound to do; but it is likely that I shall return hither to see after this promise so soon as I can.'

The king bade him do so.

Whereupon Egil made him ready to depart with his men; but of these many remained behind with the king. Egil had one large war-ship, and on board thereof a hundred men or thereabouts. And when he was ready for his voyage, and a fair wind blew, he put out to sea. He and king Athelstan parted with great friendship: the king begged Egil to return as soon as possible. This Egil promised to do.

Then Egil stood for Norway, and when he came to land sailed with all speed into the Firths. He heard these tidings, that lord Thorir was dead, and Arinbjorn had taken inheritance after him, and was made a baron. Egil went to Arinbjorn and got there a good welcome. Arinbjorn asked him to stay there. Egil accepted this, had his ship set up, and his crew lodged. But Arinbjorn received Egil and twelve men; they stayed with him through the winter.

Chapter 56

Marriage of Egil

Bergonund son of Thorgeir Thornfoot had then married Gunnhilda daughter of Bjorn Yeoman. She had come to keep house with him at Askr. But Asgerdr, whom Thorolf Skallagrimsson had had to wife, was then with Arinbjorn, her kinsman. Thorolf and she had a daughter named Thordis, and the girl was there with her mother. Egil told Asgerdr of Thorolf's death, and offered her his guardianship. Asgerdr was much grieved at the tidings; she answered Egil's words well, saying however but little one way or the other.

But, at autumn wore on, Egil began to be very gloomy and drank little, and often say with his head drooping in his cloak. One time Arinbjorn went to him and asked what meant his gloom.

'Though now you have had a great loss in your brother, yet 'tis manly to bear up well; man must overlive man. Come, what verse are you now repeating? Let me hear.'

Egil said he had just made this verse:

'Unfriendly, who was friend,
Fair goddess seems. Of old
Bold with uplifted brow
Beheld I woman's face.
Now one (whose name I veil)
No sooner to the skald
Occurs, than shyly sinks
Screen'd in his cloak his head.'

Arinbjorn asked who was the woman about whom he composed such love-song. 'Have you hidden her name in this stave?'

Then Egil recited:

'Sorrow shows not, but hides
The saddening thought within.
Names in my poesy
Not oft I use to veil.
For Odin's warrior wights
Will surely searching find
In war-god's wine of song
What poet deep hath plunged.'

'Here,' said Egil, 'will the old saw be found true. All should be told to a friend. I will tell you that which you ask, about what woman I compose verse. 'Tis Asgerdr your kinswoman; and I would fain have your furtherance to secure this match.'

Arinbjorn said that he deemed it well thought of. 'I will,' said he, 'surely give my good word that this match may be made.'

Then Egil laid this matter before Asgerdr, but she referred it to the decision of her father and her kinsman Arinbjorn. Arinbjorn talked with Asgerdr, and she made the same answer. Arinbjorn was desirous of this match. After this Arinbjorn and Egil went together to Bjorn, and then Egil made his suit and asked to wife Asgerdr Bjorn's daughter. Bjorn took this matter well, and said that Arinbjorn should chiefly decide this. Arinbjorn greatly desired it; and the end of the matter was that Egil and Asgerdr were betrothed, and the wedding was to be at Arinbjorn's.

And when the appointed time came, there was a very grand feast at Egil's marriage. He was then very cheerful for the remaining part of the winter. In the spring he made ready a merchant-ship for a voyage to Iceland. Arinbjorn advised him not to settle in Norway while Gunnhilda's power was so great. 'For she is very wroth with you,' said Arinbjorn; 'and this has been made much worse by your encounter with Eyvind near Jutland.'

But when Egil was ready, and a fair wind blew, he sailed out to sea, and his voyage sped well. He came in the autumn to Iceland, and stood into Borgarfirth. He had now been out twelve winters. Skallagrim was an old man by this time. Full glad was he when Egil came home. Egil went to lodge at Borg, and with him Thofid Strong and many of their company; and they were there with Skallagrim for the winter. Egil had immense store of wealth; but it is not told that Egil shared that silver which king Athelstan had given him either with Skallagrim or others. That winter Thorfid married Sæunn, Skallagrim's daughter; and in the following spring Skallagrim gave them a homestead at Long-river-foss, and the land inwards from Leiru-brook between Long-river and Swan-river, even up to the fell. Daughter of Thorfid and Sæunn was Thordis wife to Arngeir in Holm, the son of Bersi Godless. Their son was Bjorn, Hitadale's champion.

Egil abode there with Skallagrim several winters. He took upon him the management of the property and farm no less than Skallagrim. Egil became more and more bald. The country-side began now to be settled far and wide. Hromund, brother of Grim the Halogalander, settled at this time in Cross-river-lithe with his shipmates. Hromund was father of Gunnlaug, the father of Thuridr Dylla, mother of Illugi the Swarthy.

Egil had now been several winters at Borg with his father, when one summer a ship from Norway to Iceland with these tidings from the east, that Bjorn Yeoman was dead. Further, it was told that all the property owned by Bjorn had been taken up by Bergonund, his son-in-law, who had moved to his own home all loose chattels, letting out the lands, and securing to himself all the rents. He had also got possession of all the farms occupied of late by Bjorn. This when Egil heard, he inquired carefully whether Bjorn had acted on his own counsel in this matter, or had the support of others more powerful. It was told him that Onund was become a close friend of king Eric, but was on even more intimate terms with Gunnhilda.

Egil let the matter rest for this autumn; but when winter was past and spring came, then Egil bade them draw out his ship, which had stood in the shed at Long-river-foss. This ship he made ready for sea, and got a crew thereto.

Asgerdr his wife was to go with him, but Thordis Thorolf's daughter remained behind. Egil sailed out to sea when he was ready, and of his voyage there is nothing to tell before he came to Norway. He at once, as soon as he could, went to seek Arinbjorn. Arinbjorn received him well, and asked Egil to stay with him; this offer he took. So both he and Asgerdr went thither and several men with them.

Egil very soon spoke with Arinbjorn about those claims on money that he thought he had there in the land.

Arinbjorn said, 'That matter seems to me unpromising. Bergonund is hard, ill to deal with, unjust, covetous; and he has now much support from the king and the queen. Gunnhilda is your bitter enemy, as you know already, and she will not desire Onund to put the case right.'

Egil said, 'The king will let us get law and justice in this matter, and with your help it seems no great thing in my eyes to take the law of Bergonund.'

They resolved on this, that Egil should equip a swift cutter, whereon they embarked some twenty men, and went south to Hordaland and on to Askr. There they go to the house and find Onund. Egil declares his business, and demands of Onund's sharing of the heritage of Bjorn. He says that Bjorn's daughters were by law both alike his heirs, 'Though methinks,' says Egil, 'Asgerdr will be deemed more nobly born than your wife Gunnhilda.'

Then says Onund in high-pitched voice, 'A wondrous bold man are you, Egil, the outlaw of king Eric, who come hither to his land and think here to attack his men and friends. You are to know, Egil, that I have overthrown men as good as you for less cause than methinks this is, when you claim heritage in right of your wife; for this is well known to all, that she is born of a bondwoman.'

Onund was furious in language for a time; but when Egil saw that Onund would do no right in this matter, then he summoned him to court, and referred the matter to the law of the Gula-thing.

Onund said, 'To the Gula-thing I will come, and my will is that you should not come away thence with a whole skin.'

Egil said he would risk coming to the Thing all the same: 'There let come what come may to end our matter.'

Egil then went away with his company, and when he came home told Arinbjorn of his journey and of Onund's answer. Arinbjorn was very angry that Thora his father's sister had been called a bondwoman. Arinbjorn went to king Eric, and declared this matter before him.'

The king took his words rather sullenly, and said that Arinbjorn had long advocated Egil's cause: 'He has had this grace through thee, that I have let him be here in the land; but now shall I think it too much to bear if thou back him in his assaults on my friends.'

Arinbjorn said, 'Thou wilt let us get law in this case.'

The king was rather peevish in this talk, but Arinbjorn could see that the queen was much worse-willed.

Arinbjorn went back and said that things looked rather unpromising. Then winter wore away, and the time came when men should go to the Gula-thing. Arinbjorn took to the Thing a numerous company, among them went Egil.

Chapter 57

Suit Between Egil and Onund

King Eric was there numerously attended. Bergonund was among his train, as were his brothers; there was a large following. But when the meeting was to be held about men's lawsuits, both the parties went where the court was set, to plead their proofs. Then was Onund full of big words. Now where the court sate was a level plot, with hazel-poles planted in a ring, and outside were twisted ropes all around. This was called, 'the precincts.' Within the ring sate twelve judges of the Firth-folk, twelve of the Sogn-folk, twelve of the Horda-folk. These three twelves were to judge all the suits. Arinbjorn ruled who should be judges from the Firth-folk, Thord of Aurland who should be so from the Sogn-folk. All these were of one party. Arinbjorn had brought thither a long-ship full equipt, also many small craft and store-ships. King Eric had six or seven long-ships all well equipt; a great number of landowners were also there.

Egil began his cause thus: he craved the judges to give him lawful judgement in the suit between him and Onund. He then set forth what proofs he held of his claim on the property that had belonged to Bjorn Brynjolf's son. He said that Asgerdr daughter of Bjorn, own wife of him Egil, was rightful heiress, born noble, of landed gentry, even of titled family further back. And he craved of the judges this, to adjudge to Asgerdr half of Bjorn's inheritance, whether land or chattels.

And when he ceased speaking, then Bergonund took the word and spoke thus: 'Gunnhilda my wife is the daughter of Bjorn and Alof, the wife whom Bjorn lawfully married. Gunnhilda is rightful heiress of Bjorn. I for this reason took possession of all the property left by Bjorn, because I knew that that other daughter of Bjorn had no right to inherit. Her mother was a captive of war, afterwards taken as concubine, without her kinsmen's consent, and carried from land to land. But thou, Egil, thinkest to go on here, as everywhere else, with thy fierceness and wrongful dealing. This will not avail thee now; for king Eric and queen Gunnhilda have promised me that I shall have right in every cause within the bounds of their dominion. I will produce true evidence before the king and the judges that Thora Lace-hand, Asgerdr's mother, was taken captive from the house of Thorir her brother, and a second time from Brynjolf's house at Aurland. Then she went away out of the land with freebooters, and was outlawed from Norway, and in this outlawry Bjorn and she had born to them this girl Asgerdr. A great wonder now is this in Egil, that he thinks to make void all the words of king Eric. First, Egil, thou art here in the land after Eric made thee an outlaw; secondly - which is worse - though, thou hast a bondwoman to thy wife, thou claimest for her right of heritage. I demand this of the judges, that they adjudge the inheritance to Gunnhilda, but adjudge Asgerdr to be the bondwoman of the king, because she was begotten when her father and mother were outlawed by the king.'

Right wroth was Arinbjorn when he heard Thora Lace-hand called a bondwoman; and he stood up, and would no longer hold his peace, but looked around on either side, and took the word:

'Evidence we will bring, sir king, in this matter, and oaths we will add, that this was in the reconciliation of my father and Bjorn Yeoman expressly provided, that Asgerdr daughter of Bjorn and Thora was to have right of inheriting after Bjorn her father; as also this, which thyself, O king, dost know, that thou restoredst Bjorn to his rights in Norway, and so everything was settled which had before stood in the way of their reconciliation.'

To these words the king found no ready answer. Then sang Egil a stave:

'Bondwoman born this knave
My brooch-decked lady calls.
Shameless in selfish greed
Such dealing Onund loves:
Braggart! my bride is one
Born heiress, jewell'd dame.
Our oaths, great king, accept,
Oaths that are meet and true.'

Then Arinbjorn produced witnesses, twelve men, and all well chosen. These all had heard, being present, the reconciliation of Thorir and Bjorn, and they offered to the king and judges to swear to it. The judges were willing to accept their oath if the king forbade it not.

Then did queen Gunnhilda take the word:

'Great wonder is this, sir king, that thou lettest this big Egil make such a coil of the whole cause before thee. Wouldst thou find nought to say against him, though he should claim at thy hand thy very kingdom? Now though thou wilt give no decision that may help Onund, yet will not I brook this, that Egil tread under foot our friends and wrongfully take the property from Onund. Where is Alf my brother? Go thou, Alf, with thy following, where the judges are, and let them not give this wrong judgment.'

Then he and his men went thither, and cut in sunder the precinct-ropes and tore down the poles, and scattered the judges. Great uproar was there in the Thing; but men there were all weaponless.

Then spake Egil: 'Can Bergonund hear my words?'

'I hear,' said Onund.

'Then do I challenge thee to combat, and be our fight here at the Thing. Let him of us twain have this property, both lands and chattels, who wins the victory. But be thou every man's dastard if thou darest not.'

Whereupon king Eric made answer: 'If thou, Egil, art strongly set on fighting, then will we grant thee this forthwith.'

Egil replied: 'I will not fight with king's power and overwhelming force; but before equal numbers I will not flee, if this be given me. Nor will I then make any distinction of persons, titled or untitled.'

Then spake Arinbjorn: 'Go we away, Egil; we shall not here effect to-day anything that will be to our gain.'

And with this Arinbjorn and all his people turned to depart.

But Egil turned him and cried aloud: 'This do I protest before thee, Arinbjorn, and thee, Thord, and all men that now can hear my word, barons and lawmen and all people, that I ban all those lands that belonged to Bjorn Brynjolfsson, from building and tillage, and from all gain therefrom to be gotten. I ban them to thee, Bergonund, and to all others, natives and foreigners, high and low; and anyone who shall herein offend I denounce as a law-breaker, a peace breaker, and accursed.'

After which Egil went away with Arinbjorn.

They then went to their ships; and there was a rise in the ground of some extent to pass over, so that the ships were not visible from the Thing-field. Egil was very wroth. And when they came to the ships, Arinbjorn spoke before his people and said:

'All men know what has been the issue of the Thing here, that we have not got law; but the king is much in wrath, so that I expect our men will get hard measure from him if he can bring it about. I will now that every man embark on his ship and go home. Let none wait for other.'

Then Arinbjorn went on board his own ship, and to Egil he said: 'Now go you with your comrades on board the cutter that lies here outside the long-ship, and get you away at once. Travel by night so much as you may, and not by day, and be on your guard, for the king will seek to meet with you. Come and find me afterwards, when all this is ended, whatever may have chanced between you and the king.'

Egil did as Arinbjorn said; they went aboard the cutter, about thirty men, and rowed with all their might. The vessel was remarkably fast. Then rowed out of the haven many other ships of Arinbjorn's people, cutters and row-boats; but the long-ship which Arinbjorn steered went last, for it was the heaviest under oars. Egil's cutter, which he steered, soon outstripped the rest. Then Egil sang a stave:

'My heritage he steals,
The money-grasping heir
Of Thornfoot. But his threats,
Though fierce, I boldly meet.
For land we sought the law:
Land-grabbing loon is he!
But robbery of my right
Ere long he shall repay.'

Chapter 58

Of King Eric and Egil

King Eric heard the concluding words of Egil that he spake last at the Thing, and his wrath waxed hot. But all men had gone weaponless to the Thing, therefore the king attempted no attack. He bade his men hasten to their ships, and they did as he bade. Then, when they came to the strand, the king summoned his household Thing, and told them his purpose.

'We must now,' said he, 'untent our ships and row after Arinbjorn and Egil, and this I will have you know, that we will take Egil's life if we get the chance, and spare no man who shall stand up for him.'

After that they went aboard, made all ready as speedily as might be, and pushed out the ships and rowed to the place where Arinbjorn's ships had been. These were now all gone. Then the king bade that they should row after them northwards by the sound. And when he came to Sogn-sea, then there was Arinbjorn's company rowing in towards Sheeping-sound, and thither the king turned in after them, and he came up with Arinbjorn's ship in the inner part of Sheeping-sound. At once the king made for it, and they exchanged words. The king asked whether Egil was in the ship. Arinbjorn answered.

'Egil is not here,' he said; 'that, O king, thou mayest at once see. Here on board on none but those whom thou knowest; and Egil will not be found down under the benches, though thou shouldst seek him there.'

The king asked Arinbjorn what he knew latest of Egil. He said that Egil was on a cutter with thirty men, and they took their way out to Stone-sound. Then the king told his men to row by the inner sound, and shape their course so as to meet Egil.

There was a man named Kettle Hod; he was of king Eric's guard, an Uplander by family. He was pilot on the king's ship, and steered the same. Kettle was a tall man and a handsome; he was near of kin to the king. And 'twas generally said that he and the king were like in appearance.

Now Egil, before going to the Thing, had had his ship launched and the cargo put on board. And after parting with Arinbjorn, he and his went their way to Stone-sound, till they came to his ship, which lay there afloat in the haven with tent overspread. Then they went up aboard the ship, but the cutter rode beside the rudder of the ship between the land and the ship, and the oars lay there in the loops.

Next morning, when day had hardly dawned, the watch were aware that some ships were rowing for them. But when Egil saw that it was an enemy, he stood up and bade that they should leap into the cutter. He armed himself at once, as did they all. Egil took up those chests of silver which king Athelstan gave him, and bore them with him. They leapt armed into the cutter, and rowed forward between the land and the long-ship that was advancing nearest to the land; this was king Eric's ship. But, as it happened suddenly and there was little light, the two ships ran past each other. And when the stern-castles were opposite, then

Egil hurled a spear and smote in the middle the man who sat steering, Kettle Hod to wit, and at once he got his bane. Then king Eric called out and bade men row after Egil and his party, but as their vessels ran past Egil's merchant-ship, the king's men leapt aboard of that. And those of Egil's men who had been left behind, and not leapt into the cutter, were all slain who could be caught, but some escaped to land. Ten men of Egil's followers were lost there.

Some ships rowed after Egil, but some plundered the merchant-ship. All the booty on board was taken, and the ship burnt. But those who rowed after Egil pulled hard; two at each oar, and they could even so take the rowing by turns. For they had no lack of men on board, while Egil's crew was short, they being now but eighteen on the cutter. So the distance between them lessened. But inside of the island was a shallow sound between it and other islands. It was now low water. Egil and his rowers ran their cutter into that shallow sound, but the long-ships could not float there; thus pursuers and pursued were parted. The king then turned back southwards, but Egil went north to seek Arinbjorn. Then sang Egil a stave:

'Waker of weapon-din,
The warlike prince, hath wrought
(Where I escaped scot-free)
Scathe on our gallant ten.
Yet sped my hand a spear,
Like springing salmon swift,
That rushed and Kettle's ribs
Rent sore with deathful wound.'

Egil came to Arinbjorn, and told him these tidings. Arinbjorn said that he could expect nothing better in dealing with king Eric. 'But you shall not want for money, Egil. I will make good the loss of your ship, and give you another, in which you can well sail to Iceland.' Asgerdr, Egil's wife, had remained at Arinbjorn's while they went to the Thing. Arinbjorn gave Egil a good sea-worthy ship, and had it laden with such things as Egil wished. This ship Egil got ready for sea, and again he had a crew of about thirty men. Then he and Arinbjorn parted in friendship. And Egil sang:

'Requite him, righteous gods,
For robbery of my wealth!
Hunt him away, be wroth,
High Odin, heavenly powers!
Foe of his folk, base king,
May Frey and Njord make flee!
Hate him, land-guardians, hate,
Who holy ground hath scorn'd!'

Chapter 59

King Eric Slays His Brothers

Harold Fairhair set his sons to rule in Norway when he began to grow old: Eric he made king above all his other sons. It was when Harold had been king for seventy years that he gave over the kingdom into the hands of his son Eric. At that time Gunnhilda bare a son, whom Harold the king sprinkled with water, giving him his own name; and he added this that he should be king after his father if he lived long enough. King Harold then settled down in retirement, being mostly in Rogaland or Hordaland. But three years later king Harold died in Rogaland, and a mound was raised to his memory by Haugasound.

After the death of the king there was great strife between his sons, for the men of Vik took Olaf for their king, but the Thronds Sigurd. But these two, his brothers, Eric slew at Tunsberg, one year after king Harold's death. All these things happened in one and the same summer, to wit, king Eric's going with his army eastwards to Vik to fight with his brothers, and (before that) the strife of Egil and Bergonund at the Gula-thing, with the other events that have just been related.

Bergonund remained at home on his estate when the king went to the war, for he thought it unsafe for him to leave home while Egil was still in the land. Hadd, his brother, was now there with him. There was a man named Frodi, a kinsman of king Eric, very handsome, young in years, but a man grown. King Eric left him behind to protect Bergonund. Frodi was staying at Alrekstead, a royal farm, and had some men there. A son of Eric and Gunnhilda there was named Rognvald, who was then ten or eleven years old, and had the makings of a very handsome man. He was with Frodi when these things happened. But before king Eric rowed forth to this war, he made Egil an outlaw through all Norway, and free for any man to slay. Arinbjorn was with the king in the war; but before he left home Egil took his ship to sea, and made for the outlying fishing station called Vitar, over against Aldi. It is on the high road of the seas: fishermen were there, and 'twas a good place for hearing tidings. Then he heard that the king had made him an outlaw. Whereupon Egil sang a stave:

'Law-breaker, land-demon,
Long voyage lays on me;
He bane of his brothers,
Beguiled by his bride.
Gunnhilda the guilt bears
(Grim queen) of my exile:
Fain am I full swiftly
Her frauds to repay.'

The weather was calm, a fell-wind blew by night, a sea breeze by day. One evening Egil sailed out to sea, but the fishermen were then rowing in to land, those, to wit, who had been set as spies on Egil's movements. They had this to tell, that Egil had put out and sailed to sea, and was gone. This news they carried to Bergonund. And when he knew these tidings, then he sent away all

those men that he had had before for protection. Thereafter he rowed in to Alrekstead, and bade Frodi to his house, for he had a great ale-drinking there. Frodi went with him, taking some men. They were feasted well there, and they made merry, with no fear of danger. Rognvald, the king's son, had a pinnace, rowed by six men on either side, painted all above the sea line. He had with him ten or twelve who constantly followed him; and when Frodi had left home, then Rognvald took the pinnace and they rowed out to Herdla twelve in number. A large farm of the king's was there, whereof the manager was named Skegg-Thorir. Rognvald in his childhood had been fostered there. Thorir received the king's son joyfully. There too was no lack of drink.

Chapter 60

The Slaying of Bergonund and Rognvald the King's Son

Egil sailed out to sea for the night, as was written above. And when morning came the wind fell and there was a calm. They then lay drifting, letting the ship ride free for some nights. But when a sea-breeze came on, Egil said to his shipmen, 'We will now sail to land, for I do not quite know, should the sea-wind come to blow hard, where we could make land, 'tis a dangerous-looking coast in most places.' The rowers bade Egil rule their course.

So then they made sail, and sailed into the waters about Herdla. There they found a good haven, and spread the tent over their ship, and lay there for the night. They had on the ship a little boat, into which went Egil with three men. They rowed into Herdla, and sent a man up into the island to learn tidings; and when he came down to the ship, he said that there at the farm was Rognvald, the king's son, and his men. 'They sate there a-drinking,' said he. 'I lit on one of the house-carles; he was ale-mad, and said that here they must not drink less than was drunk at Bergonund's, though Frodi was feasting there with a party of five. He said that no more were there than the house-hold, save Frodi and his men.'

Whereupon Egil rowed back to the ship, and bade the men rise and take their weapons. They did so. The ship they put out from the shore and anchored. Egil left twelve men to guard the ship, but himself went on the ship's boat, they being eighteen in all; they then rowed in along the sound. They so regulated their pace that they came to Fenhring at eventide, and put into a hidden creek there. Then said Egil: 'Now will I go up into the island and spy out what I can get to know; but you shall await me here.'

Egil had his weapons that he was wont to have, a helm and shield, a sword at his girdle, a halberd in his hand. He went up into the island and along the border of a wood. He had now drawn a hood over his helm. He came where there were some lads, and with them large sheep-dogs. And when they began to exchange words, he asked whence they were, and why they were there, and had such big dogs. They said: 'You must be a very silly fellow; have you not heard that a bear goes about the island here, a great pest? He kills both men

and sheep, and a price is set upon his head. We watch here at Askr every night over our flocks that are penned in the fold. By why go you at night thus armed?'

He answered: 'I, too, am afraid of the bear; and few, methinks, now go weaponless. He has long pursued me to-night. See there now, where he is in the skirt of the wood! Are all asleep at this farmhouse?'

The boy said that Bergonund and Frodi would be drinking still; 'they sit at it every night.'

'Then tell them,' said Egil, 'where the bear is; but I will hasten home.'

So he went away; but the boy ran home to the farmhouse, and into the room where they were drinking. All had gone to sleep save these three, Onund, Frodi, and Hadd. The boy told them where the bear was. They took their weapons which hung there by them, and at once ran out and up to the wood.

From the main forest ran out a spur of wood with scattered bushes. The boy told them where the bear had been in the bushes. Then they saw that the branches moved, whence they guessed that the bear would be there. Then Bergonund advised that Hadd and Frodi should run forward between the shrubs and the main forest, and stop the bear from gaining the wood. Bergonund ran forward to the bushes. He had helm and shield, a sword at his girdle, a halberd in his hand. Egil was there before him in the bushes, but no bear.

And when he saw where Bergonund was, he unsheathed his sword, and, taking the coil of cord attached to the hilt, would it round his arm, and so let the sword hang. In his hand he grasped his halberd, and then ran forward to meet Bergonund. Which when Bergonund saw, he quickened his pace and cast his shield before him, and ere they met each hurled his halberd at the other.

Egil opposed the halberd with shield held aslant, so that the halberd with a cut tore out of the shield and flew into the ground. But Egil's weapon came full on the middle of the shield, and went right through it far up the blade, and the weapon was fast in the shield. Onund's shield was thus cumbersome. Then quickly did Egil grasp his sword-hilt. Onund also began to draw his sword; but ere it was half drawn Egil pierced him with a thrust. Onund reeled at the blow; but Egil suddenly snatched back his sword, and made a cut at Onund, well-nigh taking off his head. Then Egil took his halberd out of the shield.

Now Hadd and Frodi saw Bergonund's fall, and ran thither. Egil turned to meet them. At Frodi he threw his halberd, which, piercing the shield, went into his breast and out at his back. At once he fell back dead. Then, taking his sword, Egil turned against Hadd, and they exchanged but few blows ere Hadd fell. Just then the herd-boys chanced to come up. Egil said to them: 'Watch you here by Onund your master and his friends, that no beast or bird tear their bodies.'

Egil then went his way, and before long eleven of his comrades met him, six staying to watch the ship. They asked him what success he had had.

Whereupon he sang:

'Long did we losers sit,
Losers through him who took
With greed the gold that once
To guard I better knew:

Till now Bergonund's bane
My blade with wounds hath wrought,
And hidden earth in veil
Of Hadd's and Frodi's blood.'

Then Egil said: 'We will now turn back to the farm, and act in warlike-wise, slaying all the men we can, and taking all the booty we can come by.'

They went to the farm, rushed into the house, and slew there fifteen or sixteen men. Some escaped by running away. They plundered the place, destroying what they could not take with them. The cattle they drove to the shore and slaughtered, putting on board as much as the boat would hold; then they rowed out by the sound between the islands. Egil was now furious, so that there was no speaking with him. He sat at the boat's helm.

And when they got further out in the firth towards Herdla, then came rowing out towards them Rognvald the king's son with twelve more on the painted pinnace. They had now learnt that Egil's ship lay in Herdla-water, and they meant to take to Onund news of Egil's whereabouts. And when Egil saw the boat, he knew it at once. Straight for it he steered; and when the boats came together, the beak of the cutter struck the side of the pinnace's bow, which so heeled over that the water poured in on one side and the boat filled. Egil leapt aboard, grasping his halberd, and cried to his men to let no one in the pinnace escape with life. This was easy, for there was no defence. All were slain as they swam, none escaped. Thirteen there perished, Rognvald and his comrades. Then Egil and his men rowed to Herdla island, and Egil sang a stave:

'I fought, nor feared vengeance;
Falchion there reddened
Blood of son of Bloodaxe,
Bold king, and his queen.
Perish'd on one pinnace
Prince with twelve his liege-men,
Such stress of stern battle
Against them I stirred.'

And when Egil and his men came to Herdla, at once fully armed they ran up to the farm buildings. But when Thorir and his household saw that, they at once ran away and saved themselves, all that could go, men and women. Egil's party plundered the place of all they could lay hands on; then they rowed out to their ship. Nor had they long to wait ere a breeze blew off the land. They made ready to sail.

And when all was ready for sailing, Egil went up into the island. He took in his hand a hazel-pole, and went to a rocky eminence that looked inward to the mainland. Then he took a horse's head and fixed it on the pole. After that, in solemn form of curse, he thus spake: 'Here set I up a curse-pole, and this curse I turn on king Eric and queen Gunnhilda. (Here he turned the horse's head landwards.) This curse I turn also on the guardian-spirits who dwell in this land, that they may all wander astray, nor reach or find their home till they have driven out of the land king Eric and Gunnhilda.'

This spoken, he planted the pole down in a rift of the rock, and let it stand there. The horse's head he turned inwards to the mainland; but on the pole he cut runes, expressing the whole form of curse.

After this Egil went aboard the ship. They made sail, and sailed out to sea. Soon the breeze freshened, and blew strong from a good quarter; so the ship ran on apace. Then sang Egil:

'Forest-foe, fiercely blowing,
Flogs hard and unceasing
With sharp storm the sea-way
That ship's stern doth plow.
The wind, willow-render,
With icy gust ruthless
Our sea-swan doth buffet
O'er bowsprit and beak.'

Their voyage sped well; from the main they came into Borgar-firth, brought their ship into the haven, carried their baggage on shore. Egil then went home to Borg; but his crew found them lodging. Skallagrim was now old and weak with age. Egil took the management of the property and care of the house.

Chapter 61

Death of Skallagrim

There was a man named Thorgeir. He had to wife Thordis Yngvar's daughter, Egil's mother's sister. Thorgeir dwelt on Swan-ness at Lambstead. He had come out to Iceland with Yngvar. He was wealthy and much honoured of men. Thorgeir and his wife had a son Thord, who was dwelling at Lambstead after his father, when Egil now came back to Iceland.

It chanced in the autumn, shortly before winter, that Thord rode in to Borg to find Egil his kinsman; and he bade him to a banquet. He had had ale brewed out at his home. Egil promised to go, and a day was fixed about a week thence. So when the time came, Egil prepared to go, and with him Asgerdr his wife; they were a company of ten or twelve in all.

But just when Egil was ready, Skallagrim went out with him, and embracing him before he mounted said: 'You are late, methinks, Egil, in paying to me that money which king Athelstan sent me. What do you mean to do with that money?'

Egil answered, 'Are you very short of money, father? I did not know it. I shall at once let you have silver, when I know you need it; but I know that you still have in your keeping one or two chests full of silver.'

'I suppose,' said Skallagrim, 'you think that we have made our division of the movable property. You must now be content if I do what I like with that money I have in keeping.'

Egil answered: 'You cannot think you need to ask any leave from me in this; for you will choose to have it your own way, whatever I may say.'

Then Egil rode away till he came to Lambstead, where he was made heartily welcome; he was to be there three nights. That same evening that Egil left home, Skallagrim had a horse saddled. He then rode out just when others were going to bed. When he went away, he bore before him on his knees a very large chest; but under his arm he carried a brazen kettle. It has been since held for certain that he let down one or both into Krum's bog-hole, and dropped a large stone slab atop of them. Skallagrim came home about midnight, and then went to his place and lay down in his clothes. But in the morning, when it was light and people were dressed, there sat Skallagrim forward on the seat's edge, already dead, and so stiff that they could not straighten him nor move him, though they tried all they could.

Then a man was put on horseback, who galloped off as hard as he might to Lambstead. At once he sought Egil, and told him these tidings. Then Egil took his weapons and clothes and rode home, reaching Borg by eventide. And at once on dismounting he went in, and to the passage that was round the hall, with doors leading from the passage to the seats inside. Egil went on to the chief seat, and took Skallagrim by the shoulders, and forced him backwards, and laid him down in the seat, and rendered then the services to the dead. Then Egil bade them take digging tools and break open the wall on the south side. When this was done, then Egil supported the head and others the feet of Skallagrim; and so they bore him athwart the house out through the breach in the wall just made. Then they bore him immediately down to Nausta-ness. There for the night a tent was set over the body; but in the morning with flood-tide Skallagrim was put on a boat and rowed out to Digra-ness. There Egil had a mound raised on the point of the ness. Therein was laid Skallagrim, with his horse, his weapons, and his smithy tools. It is not told that any valuables were laid in the mound beside him.

Egil took the heritage, lands and chattels. Thenceforward he ruled the house. With Egil there was Thordis, daughter of Thorolf and Asgerdr.

Chapter 62

Egil's Voyage to England

King Eric ruled over Norway one year after the death of his father king Harold, before Hacon Athelstan's foster-son, another son of Harold, came out of the west from England; and in that same summer Egil Skallagrimsson went to Iceland. Hacon went northwards to Throndeim. He was there accepted as king. He and Eric were for the winter both king in Norway. But in the following spring each gathered an army. Hacon had by far the larger numbers; the reason of this was that he made it law in the land that every man should own his patrimony, where king Harold had enslaved all, rich and poor alike. Eric saw no other choice but to flee the land; so he went abroad with Gunnhilda his wife and their children. Lord Arinbjorn was king Eric's foster-brother, and foster-father of his son. Dear to the king was he above all his barons; the king had set him as ruler over all the Firth-folk. Arinbjorn was with the king when he left the land;

they first went westwards over the main to the Orkneys. There Eric gave his daughter Ragnhildr in marriage to earl Arnfinn. After that he went south with his force along the coast of Scotland, and harried there; thence still south to England, and harried there. And when king Athelstan heard of this, he gathered force and went against Eric. But when they met, terms were proposed, and the terms were that king Athelstan gave to Eric the government of Northumberland; and he was to be for king Athelstan defender of the land against the Scots and Irish. Athelstan had made Scotland tributary under him after the death of king Olaf, but that people were constantly disloyal to him. The story goes that Gunnhilda had a spell worked, this spell being that Egil Skallagrimsson should find no rest in Iceland till she had seen him. But in that summer when Hacon and Eric had met and contended for Norway, all travel to any land from Norway was forbidden; so in that summer there came to Iceland from Norway neither ship nor tidings. Egil Skallagrimsson abode at his home.

But during the second winter that he was living at Borg after Skallagrim's death Egil became melancholy, and this was more marked as the winter wore on. And when summer came, Egil let it be known that he meant to make ready his ship for a voyage out in the summer. He then got a crew. He purposed to sail to England. They were thirty men on the ship. Asgerdr remained behind, and took charge of the house. Egil's purpose was to seek king Athelstan and look after the promise that he had made to Egil at their last parting.

It was late ere Egil was ready, and when he put to sea, the winds delayed him. Autumn then came on, and rough weather set in. They sailed past the north coast of the Orkneys. Egil would not put in there, for he thought king Eric's power would be supreme all over the islands. Then they sailed southwards past Scotland, and had great storms and cross winds. Weathering the Scotch coast they held on southwards along England; but on the evening of a day, as darkness came on, it blew a gale. Before they were aware, breakers were both seaward and ahead. There was nothing for it but to make for land, and this they did. Under sail they ran ashore, and came to land at Humber-mouth. All the men were saved, and most of the cargo, but as for the ship, that was broken to pieces.

When they found men to speak with, they learnt these tidings, which Egil thought good, that with king Athelstan all was well and with his kingdom: but other tidings were there which Egil thought dangerous, to wit, that king Eric Bloodaxe was there and Gunnhilda, and they had the government of the province, and Eric was but a short way up the country in the town of York. This also Egil learnt, that lord Arinbjorn was there with the king, and in great friendship with him.

And when Egil got to know these tidings, he resolved what to do. He thought he had little hope of escape, though he should try to conceal himself and to go disguised as long as he might till he were clear of Eric's dominions. For he was at that time easily known by such as should see him. He thought also it were a mean man's fate to be captured in such flight. So he took a bold heart, and resolved that at once, in that very night when they came there, he would get him a horse and ride to the town. He came there in the evening, and rode at once into the town. He had now a hood drawn over his helm, and was fully armed.

Egil inquired where in the town Arinbjorn was housed. It was told him. Thither he rode to the house. When he came to the hall-door, he dismounted from his horse, and found a man to speak to. It was told him that Arinbjorn sat at meat.

Egil said: 'I would fain, good fellow, you should go into the hall and ask Arinbjorn whether he will rather speak without or within to Egil Skallagrimsson.'

The man said: "Tis but little trouble for me to do this errand.'

He went into the hall, and spoke quite loud: 'There is a man come here out before the door,' said he, 'big as a giant, and he begged me go in and ask whether thou wouldst rather without or within speak to Egil Skallagrimsson.'

Arinbjorn said: 'Go and beg him to bide without, nor shall he need to bide long.'

He did as Arinbjorn told him, went out and said what had been said to him.

Arinbjorn bade take up the tables; then went he out and all his house-carles with him.

And when Arinbjorn met Egil, he greeted him well, and asked why he was come there.

Egil in few words told him clearly of his journey: 'And now you shall see what counsel I ought to take, if you will give me any help.'

'Have you,' said Arinbjorn, 'before you came to this house met any men in the town who are likely to have known you?'

'None,' said Egil.

'Let men then take their weapons,' said Arinbjorn.

They did so. But when all were armed, then went they to the king's house. And when they came to the hall, then Arinbjorn knocked at the door, asking them to open, and saying who was there. The door-keepers at once opened the door. The king was sitting at table.

Arinbjorn then bade that they should go in twelve in number, naming for this Egil and ten others. 'Now shall you, Egil, bring the king your head and clasp his foot, but I will be your spokesman.'

Then they went in. Arinbjorn went before the king and saluted him. The king received him, and asked what he would have.

Arinbjorn said: 'I lead hither one who has come a long way to seek thee in thy place, and to be reconciled to thee. Great is this honour to thee, my lord, when thine enemies travel of their own free will from other lands, and deem they cannot endure thy wrath though thou be nowhere near. Now show thyself princely to this man. Let him get of thee good terms, seeing that he hath so magnified thine honour, as thou now mayst see, by braving many seas and dangers to come hither from his own home. No compulsion drove him to this journey, nought but goodwill to thee.'

Then the king looked round, and saw over men's heads where Egil stood. The king knew him at once, and, darting a keen glance at him, said: 'How wert thou

so bold, Egil, that thou daredst to come before me? Thy last parting from me was such that of life thou couldst have from me no hope.'

Then went Egil up to the table, and clasped the foot of the king. He then sang:

'With cross-winds far cruising
I came on my wave-horse,
Eric England's warder
Eager soon to see.
Now wielder of wound-flash,
Wight dauntless in daring,
That strong strand of Harold's
Stout lineage I meet.'

King Eric said: 'I need not to count the crimes on thy hands, for they are so many and great that each one might well warrant that thou go not hence alive. Thou hast nothing else to expect but that here thou must die. This thou mightest know before, that thou wouldst get no terms from me.'

Gunnhilda said: 'Why shall not Egil be slain at once? Rememberest thou no more, O king, what Egil hath done to thee, slain thy friends and kin, ay, even thine own son to boot, and cursed thyself? Where ever was it known that a king was thus dealt with?'

Arinbjorn said: 'If Egil have spoken evil of the king, for that he can now atone in words of praise that shall live for all time.'

Gunnhilda said: 'We will hear none of his praise. O king, bid Egil be led out and beheaded. I will neither hear his words nor see him.'

Then said Arinbjorn: 'The king will not let himself be egged on to all thy dastardly work. He will not have Egil slain by night, for night-slaying is murder.'

The king said: 'So shall it be, Arinbjorn, as thou demandest. Egil shall live this night. Take thou him home with thee, and bring him to me in the morning.'

Arinbjorn thanked the king for his words: 'We hope, my lord, that henceforth Egil's cause will take a better turn. And though Egil has done great wrong against thee, yet look thou on this, that he has suffered much from thee and thy kin. King Harold thy father took the life of Thorolf, a man of renown, Egil's father's brother, for the slander of bad men, for no crime at all. And thou, O king, didst break the law in Egil's case for the sake of Bergonund; nay further thou didst wish to doom his death, and didst slay his men, and plunder all his goods, and withal didst make him an outlaw and drive him from the land. And Egil is one who will stand no teasing. But in every cause under judgment one must look on the act with its reasons. I will now have Egil in keeping for the night.'

Then Arinbjorn and Egil went back to the house, and when they came in they two went into a small upper room and talked over this matter. Arinbjorn said: 'The king just now was very wroth, yet methought his mood rather softened before the end, and fortune will now decide what may be the upshot. I know that Gunnhilda will set all her mind on marring your cause. Now I would fain that we take this counsel: that you be awake through the night, and compose a song of praise about king Eric. I should think it had best be a poem of twenty stanzas,

and you might recite it to-morrow when we come before the king. Thus did Bragi my kinsman, when he was under the wrath of Bjorn king of Sweden; he composed a poem of praise about him in one night, and for it received his head. Now may we also have the same luck with the king, that you may make your peace with him, if you can offer him the poem of praise.'

Egil said: 'I shall try this counsel that you wish, but 'twas the last thing I ever meant, to sing king Eric's praises.'

Arinbjorn bade him try.

Then Arinbjorn went away, and had food and drink carried to the upper room. Egil was there alone for the night. Arinbjorn went to his men, and they sate over drink till midnight. Then Arinbjorn and his men went to the sleeping chambers, but before undressing he went up to the room to Egil, and asked how he was getting on with the poem.

Egil said that nothing was done. 'Here,' said he, 'has sate a swallow by the window and twittered all night, so that I have never got rest for that same.'

Whereupon Arinbjorn went away and out by the door leading up to the house-roof, and he sate by the window of the upper room where the bird had before sate. He saw that something of a shape witch-possessed moved away from the roof. Arinbjorn sate there by the window all night till dawn. But after Arinbjorn had come there, Egil composed all the poem, and got it so by heart that he could recite it in the morning when he met Arinbjorn. They watched for a fit time to go before the king.

Chapter 63

Egil Recites the Poem

King Eric went to table according to his wont, and much people were with him. And when Arinbjorn knew this, then went he with all his followers fully armed to the king's palace while the king sate at table. Arinbjorn craved entrance into the hall; it was granted. He and Egil went in with half of his followers, but the other half stood without before the door. Arinbjorn saluted the king; the king received him well. Arinbjorn spoke: 'Here now is come Egil. He has not sought to run away in the night. Nor would we fain know, my lord, what his lot is to be. I hope thou wilt let him get good from my words, for I think it a matter of great moment to me that Egil gain terms from thee. I have so acted (as was right) that neither in word nor deed have I spared aught whereby thy honour should be made greater than before. I have also abandoned all my possessions, kinsmen, and friends that I had in Norway, and followed thee when all other barons deserted thee; and herein do I what is meet, for thou hast often done great good to me.'

Then spoke Gunnhilda: 'Cease, Arinbjorn, nor prate so at length of this. Thou hast done much good to king Eric, and this he hath fully rewarded. Thou owest far more duty to king Eric than to Egil. It is not for thee to ask that Egil go unpunished hence from king Eric's presence, seeing what crimes he hath wrought.'

Then said Arinbjorn: 'If thou, O king, and thou Gunnhilda, if ye two have resolved that Egil shall here get no terms, then is this the manly course, to give him respite and leave to go for a week, that he may look out for himself; of his own free will any way he came hither to seek you, and therefore hoped for peace. Thereafter, this done, let your dealings together end as they may.'

Gunnhilda said, 'Well can I see by this, Arinbjorn, that thou art more faithful to Egil than to king Eric. If Egil is to ride hence for a week, then will he in this time be come to king Athelstan. But king Eric cannot now hide this from himself, that every king is now stronger than is he, whereas a little while ago it had been deemed incredible that king Eric would not have the will and energy to avenge his wrongs on such a one as Egil.'

Said Arinbjorn: 'No one will call Eric a greater man for slaying a yeoman's son, a foreigner, who has freely come into his power. But if the king wishes to achieve greatness hereby, then will I help him in this, so that these tidings shall be thought more worthy of record; for I and Egil will now back each other, so that we must both be met at once. Thou wilt then, O king, dearly buy the life of Egil, when we be all laid dead on the field, I and my followers. Far other treatment should I have expected of thee, than that thou wouldst prefer seeing me laid dead on the earth to granting me the boon I crave of one man's life.'

Then answered the king: 'A wondrous eager champion art thou, Arinbjorn, in this thy helping of Egil. Loth were I to do thee scathe, if it comes to this; if thou wilt rather give away thine own life than that he be slain. But sufficient are the charges against Egil, whatever I cause to be done with him.'

And when the king had said this, then Egil advanced before him and began the poem, and recited in a loud voice, and at once won silence.

HEAD-RANSOM

1.

'Westward I sailed the wave,
Within me Odin gave
The sea of song I bear
(So 'tis my wont to fare):
I launched my floating oak
When loosening ice-floes broke,
My mind a galleon fraught
With load of minstrel thought.

2.

'A prince doth hold me guest,
Praise be his due confess'd:
Of Odin's mead let draught
In England now be quaff'd.
Laud bear I to the king,
Loudly his honour sing;

Silence I crave around,
My song of praise is found.

3.

'Sire, mark the tale I tell,
Such heed beseems thee well;
Better I chaunt my strain,
If stillness hush'd I gain.
The monarch's wars in word
Widely have peoples heard,
But Odin saw alone
Bodies before him strown.

4.

'Swell'd of swords the sound
Smiting bucklers round,
Fiercely waxed the fray,
Forward the king made way.
Struck the ear (while blood
Streamed from glaives in flood)
Iron hailstorm's song,
Heavy, loud and long.

5.

'Lances, a woven fence,
Well-ordered bristle dense;
On royal ships in line
Exulting spearmen shine.
Soon dark with bloody stain
Seethed there an angry main,
With war-fleet's thundering sound,
With wounds and din around.

6.

'Of men many a rank
Mid showering darts sank:
Glory and fame
Gat Eric's name.

7.

'More may yet be told,
An men silence hold:

Further feats and glory,
Fame hath noised in story.
Warriors' wounds were rife,
Where the chief waged strife;
Shivered swords with stroke
On blue shield-rims broke.

8.

'Breast-plates ringing crashed,
Burning helm-fire flashed,
Biting point of glaive
Bloody wound did grave.
Odin's oaks (they say)
In that iron-play
Baldric's crystal blade
Bowed and prostrate laid.

9.

'Spears crossing dashed,
Sword-edges clashed:
Glory and fame
Gat Eric's name.

10.

'Red blade the king did wield,
Ravens flocked o'er the field.
Dripping spears flew madly,
Darts with aim full deadly.
Scotland's scourge let feed
Wolf, the Ogress' steed:
For erne of downtrod dead
Dainty meal was spread.

11.

'Soared battle-cranes
O'er corse-strown lanes,
Found flesh-fowl's bill
Of blood its fill.
While deep the wound
He delves, around
Grim raven's beak
Blood-fountains break.

12.

'Axe furnished feast
For Ogress' beast:
Eric on the wave
To wolves flesh-banquet gave.

13.

'Javelins flying sped,
Peace affrighted fled;
Bows were bent amain,
Wolves were battle-fain:
Spears in shivers split,
Sword-teeth keenly bit;
Archers' strings loud sang,
Arrows forward sprang.

14.

'He back his buckler flings
From arm beset with rings,
Sword-play-stirrer good,
Spiller of foemen's blood.
Waxing everywhere
(Witness true I bear),
East o'er billows came
Eric's sounding name.

15.

'Bent the king his yew,
Bees wound-bearing flew:
Eric on the wave
To wolves flesh-banquet gave.

16.

'Yet to make more plain
I to men were fain
High-soul'd mood of king,
But must swiftly sing.
Weapons when he takes,
The battle-goddess wakes,
On ships' shielded side
Streams the battle-tide.

17.

'Gems from wrist he gives,
Glittering armlets rives:
Lavish ring-despiser
Loves not hoarding miser.
Frodi's flour of gold
Gladdens rovers bold;
Prince bestoweth scorning
Pebbles hand-adorning.

18.

'Foemen might not stand
For his deathful brand;
Yew-bow loudly sang,
Sword-blades meeting rang.
Lances aye were cast,
Still he the land held fast,
Proud Eric prince renowned;
And praise his feats hath crowned.

19.

'Monarch, at thy will
Judge my minstrel skill:
Silence thus to find
Sweetly cheered my mind.
Moved my mouth with word
From my heart's ground stirred,
Draught of Odin's wave
Due to warrior brave.

20.

'Silence I have broken,
A sovereign's glory spoken:
Words I knew well-fitting
Warrior-council sitting.
Praise from heart I bring,
Praise to honoured king:
Plain I sang and clear
Song that all could hear.'

Chapter 64

Egil's Life is Given Him

King Eric sate upright while Egil recited the poem, and looked keenly at him. And when the song of praise was ended, then spake the king: 'Right well was the poem recited; and now, Arinbjorn, I have resolved about the cause between me and Egil, how it shall go. Thou hast pleaded Egil's cause with great eagerness, since thou offerest to risk a conflict with me. Now shall I for thy sake do what thou hast asked, letting Egil go from my land safe and unhurt. But thou, Egil, so order thy going that, after leaving my presence and this hall, thou never come before my eyes, nor my sons' eyes, nor be ever in the way of myself or my people. But I give thee now thy head this time for this reason, that thou camest freely into my power. I will do no dastardly deed on thee; yet know thou this for sure, that this is no reconciliation with me or my sons or any of our kin who wish to wreak their vengeance.'

Then sang Egil:

'Loth am I in nowise,
Though in features loathly,
Helm-capt head in pardon
From high king to take.
Who can boast that ever
Better gift he won him,
From a lordly sovereign's
Noble-minded son?'

Arinbjorn thanked the king with many fair words for the honour and friendship that he had shown him. Then they two, Arinbjorn and Egil, went back to Arinbjorn's house. After that Arinbjorn bade horses be made ready for his people. He rode away with Egil, and a hundred fully armed men with him. Arinbjorn rode with that force till they came to king Athelstan, where they were well received. The king asked Egil to remain with him, and inquired how it had gone between him and king Eric. Whereupon Egil sang:

'Egil his eyes black-browed
From Eric, raven's friend,
Welcomed. Wise help therein
Wife's loyal kin lent.
My head, throne of helmet,
An heritage noble,
As erst, from rough rainstorm
To rescue I knew.'

But at the parting of Arinbjorn and Egil, Egil gave Arinbjorn those two gold rings that king Athelstan had given him, whereof each weighed a mark. And Arinbjorn gave Egil the sword called Dragvandill. This had been given to Arinbjorn by Thorolf Skallagrimsson; but before that Skallagrim had received it from Thorolf his brother; but to Thorolf the sword was given by Grim Shaggy-skin, son of

Kettle Hæing. Kettle Hæing had owned the sword and used it in his single combats, and no sword was there more biting. Egil and Arinbjorn parted with much affection. Arinbjorn went home to king Eric at York; but Egil's comrades and shipmates had good peace there, and disposed of their cargo under Arinbjorn's protection. But as winter wore on they moved south to England and joined Egil.

Chapter 65

Egil Goes to Norway

There was a baron in Norway named Eric Allwise. He married Thora, daughter of lord Thorir, sister of Arinbjorn. He owned property eastwards in Vik. He was a very wealthy man, much honoured, of prophetic foresight. Son of Eric and Thora was Thorstein; he was brought up with Arinbjorn, and was now fully grown, though quite young. He had gone westwards to England with Arinbjorn.

But in that same summer when Egil had come to England these tidings were heard from Norway, that Eric Allwise was dead, but the king's stewards had taken his inheritance, and claimed it for the king. These tidings when Arinbjorn and Thorstein heard, they resolved that Thorstein should go east and see after the inheritance.

So when spring came on and men made ready their ships who meant to travel from land to land, then Thorstein went south to London, and there found king Athelstan. He produced tokens and a message from Arinbjorn to the king and also to Egil, that he might be his advocate with the king, so that king Athelstan might send a message from himself to king Hacon, his foster-son, advising that Thorstein should get his inheritance and possessions in Norway. King Athelstan was easily persuaded to this, because Arinbjorn was known to him for good.

Then came Egil also to speak with king Athelstan, and told him his intention.

'I wish this summer,' said he, 'to go eastwards to Norway and see after the property of which king Eric and Bergonund robbed me. Atli the Short, Bergonund's brother, is now in possession. I know that, if a message of yours be added, I shall get law in this matter.'

The king said that Egil should rule his own goings. 'But best, methinks, were it,' he said, 'for thee to be with me and be made defender of my land and command my army. I will promote thee to great honour.'

Egil answered: 'This offer I deem most desirable to take. I will say yea to it and not nay. Yet have I first to go to Iceland, and see after my wife and the property that I have there.'

King Athelstan gave then to Egil a good merchant-ship and a cargo therewith; there was aboard for lading wheat and honey, and much money's worth in other wares. And when Egil made ready his ship for sea, then Thorstein Eric's son settled to go with him, he of whom mention was made before, who was afterwards called Thora's son. And when they were ready they sailed, king Athelstan and Egil parting with much friendship.

Egil and his company had a prosperous voyage; they came to Norway eastwards in Vik, and sailed their ship right into Osloar-firth. Up on land there Thorstein had estates, and also inwards as far as Raumarik. And when Thorstein landed there, he then preferred his claim to his father's property before the stewards who were settled on his farm. Many lent help to Thorstein in this matter: a meeting was held about it: Thorstein had there many kinsmen of renown. The end was that it was referred to the king's decision, Thorstein meanwhile taking to him the safe-keeping of his father's possessions.

For winter lodgment Egil went to Thorstein's with eleven more. Thither to Thorstein's house was moved the wheat and honey; a merry time of it they had that winter. Thorstein kept house in grand style, for provisions were in plenty.

Chapter 66

Egil and Thorstein Go Before the King

King Hacon Athelstan's foster-son then ruled Norway, as was told before. That winter the king held court in the north in Throndeim. But as the winter wore on, Thorstein started on his journey and Egil with him, and they had about thirty men. When ready they first went to Upland, thence northwards by the Dovre-fell to Throndeim, where they came before king Hacon. They declared their errand with the king. Thorstein explained his cause, and produced witnesses that he was rightful owner of all that inheritance which he claimed. The king received this matter well, and let Thorstein obtain his possessions, and therewith he was made a baron of the king even as his father had been.

Egil also went before king Hacon and declared his errand, giving therewith king Athelstan's message and tokens. Egil claimed property that had belonged to Bjorn Yeoman, lands and chattels. Half of this property he claimed for himself and Asgerdr his wife; and he offered witness and oaths to his cause. He said, too, that he had set all this before king Eric, adding that he had then not got law, owing to king Eric's power and the prompting of Gunnhilda. Egil set forth the whole cause which had been tried at the Gula-thing. He then begged the king to grant him law in this matter.

King Hacon answered: 'This have I heard, that my brother Eric and with him Gunnhilda both assert that thou, Egil, hast cast a stone beyond thy strength in thy dealings with them. Now, methinks, though I and Eric have not the luck to agree, yet thou mightest be well content should I do nothing in this cause.'

Egil said: 'Thou mayest not, O king, be silent about causes so great, for all men here in the land, natives or foreigners, must hearken to thy bidding or banning. I have heard that thou establishest here in the land law and right for everyone. Now I know that thou wilt let me get these even as other men. Methinks I am of birth and have strength of kinsfolk enough here in the land to win right against Atli the Short. But as for the cause between me and king Eric, there is this to say to thee, that I went before him, and that we so parted that he bade me go in peace whither I would. I will offer thee, my lord, my following and service. I know that there will be here with thee men who can in no wise be thought of more martial appearance than I am. My foreboding is that it will not be long ere thou

and king Eric meet, if ye both live. And I shall be surprised if thou come not then to think that Gunnhilda has borne too many sons.'

The king said: 'Thou shalt not, Egil, become my liege-man. Thy kin have hewn far too many gaps in our house for it to be well that thou shouldst settle here in this land. Go thou out to Iceland, and dwell there on thy father's inheritance. No harm will there touch thee from our kin; but in this land 'tis to be looked for that through all thy days our kin will be the more powerful. Yet for the sake of king Athelstan, my foster-father, thou shalt have peace here in the land, and shalt get law and land-right, for I know that he holds thee right dear.'

Egil thanked the king for his words, and prayed that the king would give him sure tokens to Thord in Aurland, or to other barons in Sogn and Hordaland. The king said that this should be done.

Chapter 67

Egil Slays Ljot the Pale

Thorstein and Egil made ready for their journey so soon as they had ended their errand. They then went their way back, and when they came south over the Dovre-fell, then said Egil that he would go down to Raumsdale, and after that south by way of the sounds. 'I will,' said he, 'finish my business in Sogn and Hordaland, for I would fain in the summer take my ship out to Iceland.' Thorstein bade him settle his journey as he would. So Thorstein and Egil separated.

Thorstein went south by the dales all the way till he came to his estates. There he produced the tokens of the king and his message before the stewards, that they should give up all that property which they had taken and Thorstein claimed. No one spoke against it, and he then took all his property.

Egil went his way, they being twelve in all. They came on to Raumsdale, there got them conveyance, and then went south to Mæri. Nothing is told of their journey before they came to the island called Hod, and went to pass the night at a farm named Bindheim. This was a well-to-do homestead, in which dwelt a baron named Fridgeir. He was young in years, and had but lately inherited his father's property. His mother was named Gyda; she was a sister of lord Arinbjorn, a woman of a noble presence and wealthy. She managed the house for her son Fridgeir: they lived in grand style. There Egil and his company found good welcome. In the evening Egil sat next to Fridgeir, and his comrades outside him. There was much drink and sumptuous viands. Gyda, the house-mistress, in the evening had some talk with Egil. She inquired about Arinbjorn, her brother, and other of her kinsmen and friends who had gone to England with Arinbjorn. Egil answered her inquiries. She asked what tidings had befallen in Egil's journey. He told her plainly. Then he sang:

'Gloomy on me glowered
In gruesome wrath a king:
But cuckoo faints and fails not
For vulture flapping near.
Aid good from Arinbjorn,
As oft, and peace I gat.

He falls not whom true friends
Help forward on his way.'

Egil was very cheerful that evening, but Fridgeir and his household were rather silent. Egil saw there a maiden fair and well dressed; he was told that she was Fridgeir's sister. The maiden was sad and wept constantly that evening, which they thought strange. They were there for the night, but in the morning the wind was blowing hard, and there was no putting to sea. They need a boat to take them from the island. Then went Fridgeir and with him Gyda to Egil, and offered that he and his comrades should stay there till it was good travelling weather, and should have thence such help for the journey as they needed. This Egil accepted. They stayed there weather-bound for three nights, most hospitably entertained. After that the weather became calm.

Then Egil and his men rose up early in the morning and made ready; then went to meat, and ale was given them to drink, and they sat awhile. Then they took their clothes. Egil stood up and thanked the master and mistress of the house for their entertainment; then they went out. The master and his mother went out into the path with them. Gyda then went to speak with her son Fridgeir, and talked low with him, Egil standing the while and waiting for them.

Egil said to the maiden: 'Why weep you, maiden? I never see you cheerful.'

She could not answer, but wept the more. Fridgeir now said to his mother aloud: 'I will not now ask this. They are even now ready for their journey.'

Then Gyda went to Egil and said: 'I will tell you, Egil, how things stand here with us. There is a man named Ljot the Pale. He is a Berserk and a duellist; he is hated. He came here and asked my daughter to wife; but we answered at once, refusing the match. Whereupon he challenged my son Fridgeir to wager of battle; and he has to go to-morrow to this combat on the island called Vors. Now I wished, Egil, that you should go to the combat with Fridgeir. It would soon be shown if Arinbjorn were here in the land, that we should not endure the overbearing of such a fellow as is Ljot.'

Egil said: 'Tis but my bounden duty, lady, for the sake of Arinbjorn thy kinsman that I go, if Fridgeir thinks this any help to him.'

'Herein you do well,' said Gyda. 'So we will go back into the hall, and be all together for the whole day.'

Then Egil and the rest went into the hall and drank. They sate there for the day. But in the evening came those friends of Fridgeir who had appointed to go with him, and there was a numerous company for the night, and a great banquet. On the morrow Fridgeir made ready to go, and many with him, Egil being one of the party. It was now good travelling weather.

They now start, and soon come to the island. There was a fair plain near the sea, which was to be the place of combat. The ground was marked out by stones lying round in a ring. Soon came thither Ljot and his party. Then he made him ready for the combat. He had shield and sword. Ljot was a man of vast size and strong. And as he came forward on the field to the ground of combat, a fit of Berserk fury seized him; he began to bellow hideously, and bit his shield. Fridgeir was not a tall man; he was slenderly built, comely in face,

not strong. He had not been used to combats. But when Egil saw Ljot, then he sang a stave:

'It fits not young Fridgeir
To fight with this warrior,
Grim gnawer of shield-rim,
By his gods who doth curse.
I better may meet him,
May rescue the maiden;
Full fearsome he stareth,
Yet "fey" are his eyes.'

Ljot saw where Egil stood, and heard his words. He said: 'Come thou hither, big man, to the holm, and fight with me, if thou hast a wish that way. That is a far more even match than that I should fight with Fridgeir, for I shall deem me no whit the greater man though I lay him low on earth.'

Then sang Egil:

'Ljot asketh but little,
Loth were I to baulk him.
Pale wight, my hand pliant
Shall play on his mail.
Come, busk we for combat;
Nor quarter expect thou:
Strife-stirrer, in Mæri
Stern shield-cutting ours.'

After this Egil made him ready for combat with Ljot. Egil had the shield that he was wont to have, was girded with the sword which he called Adder, but in his hand he had Dragvandil. He went in over the boundary that marked the battleground, but Ljot was then not ready. Egil shook his sword and sang:

'Hew we with hilt-wands flashing,
Hack we shield with falchion,
Test we moony targets,
Tinge red sword in blood.
Ljot from life be sundered,
Low stern play shall lay him,
Quelled the quarrel-seeker:
Come, eagles, to your prey.'

Then Ljot came forward on the field and declared the law of combat, that he should ever after bear the name of dastard who should draw back outside the boundary stones that were set up in a ring round the field of combat. This done, they closed, and Egil dealt a blow at Ljot, which Ljot parried with his shield, but Egil then dealt blow upon blow so fast that Ljot got no chance for a blow in return. He drew back to get room for a stroke, but Egil pressed as quickly after him, dealing blows with all his vigour. Ljot went out beyond the boundary stones far into the field. So ended the first bout. Then Ljot begged for a rest. Egil let it be so. They stopped therefore and rested. And Egil sang:

'Free-handed gold-giver,
Back goeth yon champion,
In craven fear crouches
This wealth-craving wight.
Not strongly fights spearmen
His strokes who delayeth.
Lo beat by a bald-head
This bragging pest flies.'

These were the laws of wager of battle in those times, that when one man challenged another on any claim, and the challenger gained the victory, then he should have as prize of victory that which he had claimed in his challenge. But if he were vanquished, then should he ransom himself for such price as should be fixed. But if he were slain on the field, then had he forfeited all his possessions, and he who slew him in the combat should take his inheritance. This was also law, that if a foreigner died who had no heir in the land, then that inheritance fell to the king's treasury.

And now Egil bade Ljot be ready.

'I will,' he said, 'that we now try to the uttermost this combat.'

Ljot sprang swiftly to his feet. Egil bounded at him and dealt at once a blow at him. He pressed him so close, that he was driven back, and the shield shifted from before him. Then smote Egil at Ljot, and the blow came on him above the knee, taking off his leg. Ljot then fell and soon expired. Then Egil went to where Fridgeir and his party stood. He was heartily thanked for this work. Then sang Egil:

'Fall'n lies the wolf-feeder,
Foul worker of mischief:
Ljot's leg by skald sever'd
Leaves Fridgeir in peace.
From the free gold-giver
Guerdon none I seek me,
Sport I deem the spear-din,
Sport with such pale foe.'

Ljot's death was little mourned, for he had been a turbulent bully. He was a Swede by birth, and had no kin there in the land. He had come thither and amassed him wealth by duels. He had slain many worthy landowners, whom he had first challenged to wager of battle for their lands and heritages; he had now become very wealthy both in lands and chattels.

Egil went home with Fridgeir from the field of combat. He stayed there but a short time before going south to Mæri. Egil and Fridgeir parted with much affection. Egil charged Fridgeir with the securing of those lands that had belonged to Ljot. Egil went on his way and came to the Firths, whence he went into Sogn to seek Thord in Aurland. Thord received him well; he declared his errand and the message of king Hacon. These words of Egil were taken well by Thord, who promised him his help in this matter. Egil remained there with Thord far into the spring.

Chapter 68 Of Egil's Journeyings

Egil went on southwards to Hordaland, taking for this journey a rowing vessel, and thereon thirty men. They came on a day to Askr on Fenhring island. Egil went up to the house with twenty men, while ten guarded the ship.

Atli the Short was there with some men. Egil bade him be called out and told that Egil Skallagrimsson had an errand with him. Atli took his weapons, as did all the fighting men that were there, and then they went out.

Egil spoke: 'I am told, Atli, that you hold in keeping that property which of right belongs to me and my wife Asgerdr. You will belike have heard it talked of ere now how I claimed the inheritance of Bjorn Yeoman, which Bergonund your brother kept from me. I am now come to look after that property, lands and chattels, and to beg you to give it up and pay it into my hands.'

Said Atli: 'Long have we heard, Egil, that you are a most unjust man, but now I shall come to prove it, if you mean to claim at my hands this property, which king Eric adjudged to Bergonund my brother. King Eric had then power to bid and ban in this land. I was thinking now, Egil, that you would be come here for this end, to offer me a fine for my brothers whose lives you took, and that you would pay atonement for the pillage committed by you here at Askr. I would make answer to this proposal, if you should plead this errand; but here to this other I can make none.'

'I shall then,' said Egil, 'offer you, as I offered Onund, that Gula-thing laws decide our cause. Your brothers I declare to have fallen without claim for fine and through their own wrong deeds, because they had first plundered me of law and land-right, and taken my property by force of arms. I have the king's leave herein to try the law with you in this cause. I summon you to the Gula-thing, there to have lawful decision on this matter.'

'To the Gula-thing,' said Atli, 'I will come, and we can there speak of this matter.'

Hereupon Egil with his comrades went away. He went north to Sogn, then into Aurland to Thord, his wife's kinsman, and there he stayed till the Gula-thing. And when men came to the Thing, then came Egil thither. Atli the Short was also there. They began to declare their cause, and pleaded it before those who were to judge. Egil made his demand of money due, but Atli offered against it as a lawful defence the oath of twelve men that he, Atli, had in keeping no money that belonged to Egil. And when Atli went before the court with his twelve who would swear, then went Egil to meet him, and said that he would not accept Atli's oaths for his own property. 'I will offer you other law, that we do battle here at the Thing, and he shall have the property who wins the victory.'

This was also law, that Egil proposed, and ancient custom, that any man had a right to challenge another to wager of battle, whether he were defendant in a cause or prosecutor.

Atli said that he would not refuse this to do battle with Egil. 'For,' said he, 'you propose what I ought to have proposed, seeing that I have enough loss to avenge on you. You have done to death my two brothers, and far shall I be from upholding the right if I yield to you mine own possessions unlawfully rather than fight with you when you offer me this choice.'

So then Atli and Egil joined hands and pledged them to do battle, the victor to own the lands for which they had been disputing.

After this they arrayed them for combat. Egil came forward with helm on head, and shield before him, and halberd in hand, but his sword Dragvandill he suspended from his right arm. It was the custom with those who fought in single combats so to arrange that the sword should need no drawing during the fight, but be attached to the arm, to be ready at once when the combatant willed. Atli had the same arming as Egil. He was experienced in single combats, was a strong man, and of a good courage. To the field was led forth a bull, large and old 'sacrificial beast' such was termed, to be slain by him who won the victory. Sometimes there was one such ox, sometimes each combatant had his own led forth.

And when they were ready for the combat, then ran they each at the other, and first they threw their halberds, neither of which stood fast in the foeman's shield, but both struck in the ground. Then took they both to their swords, and went at it with a will, blow upon blow. Atli gave no ground. They smote fast and hard, and full soon their shields were becoming useless. And when Atli's shield was of no use, then he cast it from him, and, grasping his sword with both hands, dealt blows as quickly as possible. Egil fetched him a blow on the shoulder, but the sword bit not. He dealt another, and a third. It was now easy to find parts in Atli that he could strike, since he had no cover; and Egil brandished and brought down his sword with all his might, yet it bit not, strike he where he might. Then Egil saw that nothing would be done this way, for his shield was now rendered useless. So Egil let drop both sword and shield, and bounding on Atli, gripped him with his hands. Then the difference of strength was seen, and Atli fell right back, but Egil went down prone upon him and bit through his throat. There Atli died.

Egil leapt up at once and ran to where the victim stood; with one hand he gripped his lips, with the other his horn, and gave him such a wrench, that his feet slipped up and his neck was broken; after which Egil went where his comrades stood, and then he sang:

'I bared blue Dragvandill,
Who bit not the buckler,
Atli the Short so blunted
All edge by his spells.
Straining my strength I grappled,
Staggered the wordy foeman;
My tooth I bade bite him,
Best of swords at need.'

Then Egil got possession of all those lands for which he had contended and claimed as rightfully coming to his wife Asgerdr from her father. Nothing is told

of further tidings at that Thing. Egil then went first into Sogn and arranged about those lands that he now got into his own power. He remained there for a great part of the spring. Afterwards he went with his comrades eastwards to Vik, then to seek Thorstein, and was there for awhile.

Chapter 69

Egil Comes Out to Iceland

In the summer Egil prepared his ship, and, when all was ready, at once set sail for Iceland. His voyage sped well. He came to Borgar-firth and brought in his ship just below his own house. He had his cargo conveyed home, and set up his ship. Egil stayed in his home that winter. He had now brought out very great wealth, and was a very rich man. He had a large and lofty house. Egil was by no means meddlesome with other men's matters, nor generally presuming when here in Iceland; nor did any try to encroach on what was his. Egil remained at home now for years not a few. Egil and Asgerdr had children thus named: Bodvar a son, and another son Gunnar; Thorgerdr a daughter, and Bera. Their youngest was Thorstein. All Egil's children were of good promise and intelligence. Thorgerdr was the eldest of the children, Bera the next.

Chapter 70

Egil Goes Abroad

Egil heard tidings from east over the seas that Eric Bloodaxe had fallen in the west while freebooting; but Gunnhilda and her sons and Eric's had gone to Denmark, and all those that had followed Eric to England had left that country. This, too, he heard, that Arinbjorn was now come to Norway. He had taken again the grants and possessions that he had before, and had gotten great favour with the king. Then Egil thought it desirable again to go to Norway. Besides this came the tidings that king Athelstan was dead. His brother Edmund now ruled England.

So Egil made ready his ship, and got him a crew. Aunund Sjoni was among them, son of Ani of Anabrekka. Aunund was tall, and the strongest of those men who were then in the country-side; nay, some doubted whether he were not shape-strong. Aunund had often been on voyages from land to land. He was somewhat older than Egil; there had long been friendship between the two.

And when Egil was ready he put out to sea, and their voyage sped well; they came to Mid-Norway. And when they sighted land, they steered for the Firths. They soon got tidings from land, and it was told them that Arinbjorn was at home on his estate.

Egil put his ship into the haven nearest to Arinbjorn's house; then went he to seek Arinbjorn, and a most joyful meeting was theirs. Arinbjorn offered quarters to Egil and such of his men as he liked to bring. This Egil accepted, and had his ship set up on rollers; but his crew found them quarters. Egil and eleven with him went to Arinbjorn's. Egil had caused to be made a long ship's sail,

elaborately worked; this he gave to Arinbjorn, and yet other gifts of value. Egil was there for the winter, treated with much honour.

In the winter Egil went southwards to Sogn to collect his land-rents, staying there some time. After that he came north again to the Firths. Arinbjorn held a great Yule-feast, to which he bade his friends and the neighbouring landowners. There was there much company and good cheer. Arinbjorn gave Egil as a Yule-gift a trailing robe made of silk, and richly broidered with gold, studded with gold buttons in front all down to the hem. Arinbjorn had had the robe made to fit Egil's stature. Arinbjorn gave also to Egil at Yule a complete suit newly made; it was cut of English cloth of many colours. Friendly gifts of many kinds gave Arinbjorn at Yule to those who were his guests, for Arinbjorn was beyond all men open-handed and noble.

Then Egil composed a stave:

'Warrior gave to poet
Silken robe gold-glistening:
Never shall I find me
Friend of better faith.
Arinbjorn untiring
Earneth well his honours:
For his like the ages
Long may look in vain.'

Chapter 71 Egil's Sadness

Egil after Yule-tide was taken with much sadness that he spake not a word. And when Arinbjorn perceived this he began to talk with Egil, and asked what this sadness meant. 'I wish,' said he, 'you would let me know whether you are sick, or anything ails you, that I may find a remedy.'

Egil said: 'Sickness of body I have none; but I have much anxiety about this, how I shall get that property which I won when I slew Ljot the Pale northwards in Mæra. I am told that the king's stewards have taken up all that property, and claimed ownership thereof for the king. Now I would fain have your help in the recovery of this.'

Arinbjorn: 'I do not think your claim to the ownership of that property is against the law of the land; yet methinks the property is now come into strong keeping. The king's treasury hath a wide entrance, but a narrow exit. We have urged many arduous claims of money against powerful persons, but we were in more confidence with the king than now; for the friendship between me and king Hacon is shallow; yet must I act after the old saw: He must tend the oak who is to dwell beneath it.'

'Yet,' said Egil, 'my mind is that, if we have law to show, we should try. Maybe the king will grant us right in this, for I am told that the king is just, and keeps

well to the laws which he has made here in the land. I am rather minded to go seek the king and try the matter with him.'

Arinbjorn said that he did not desire this. 'I think, Egil, that these things will be hard to reconcile, your eagerness and daring, and the king's temper and power. For I deem him to be no friend of yours, and for good reason as he thinks. I would rather that we let this matter drop, and did not take it up. But if you wish it, Egil, I will rather myself go to the king and moot the question.'

Egil said that he thanked him heartily, and would choose it to be so.

Hacon was then in Rogaland, but at times in Hordaland; there was no difficulty in finding him. And not long after this talk Arinbjorn made ready for his journey. It was then publicly known that he purposed to seek the king. He manned with his house-carles a twenty-oared galley that he had. Egil was to stay at home; Arinbjorn would not have him go. Arinbjorn started when ready, and his journey went well; he found king Hacon, and was well received.

And when he had been there a little while, he declared his errand before the king, and said that Egil Skallagrimsson was come there in the land, and thought he had a claim to all that property that had belonged to Ljot the Pale. 'We are told, O king, that Egil pleads but law in this; but your stewards have taken up the property, and claimed ownership for you. I would pray you, my lord, that Egil may get law herein.'

The king was slow to speak, but at length answered: 'I know not, Arinbjorn, why thou comest with such pleading for Egil. He came once before me, and I told him that I would not have him sojourn here in the land, for reasons which ye already know. Now Egil must not set up such claim before me as he did before my brother Eric. And to thee, Arinbjorn, I have this to say, that thou mayest be here in the land only so long as thou preferrest not foreigners before me and my word; for I know that thy heart is with Harold son of Eric, thy foster-son; and this is thy best choice, to go to those brothers and be with them; for I strongly suspect that men like thee will be ill to trust to, if I and Eric's sons ever have to try conclusions.'

And when the king had so spoken, Arinbjorn saw that it would not do to plead this cause any further with him; so he prepared to return home. The king was rather sullen and gloomy towards Arinbjorn after he knew his errand; but Arinbjorn was not in the mood to humble himself before the king about this matter. And so they parted.

Arinbjorn went home and told Egil the issue of his errand. 'I will not,' said he, 'again plead such a cause to the king.'

Egil at this report frowned much; he thought he had lost much wealth, and wrongfully. A few days after, early one morning when Arinbjorn was in his chamber and few men were present, he had Egil called thither; and when he came, then Arinbjorn had a chest opened, and weighed out forty marks of silver, adding these words: 'This money I pay you, Egil, for those lands which belonged to Ljot the Pale. I deem it just that you should have this reward from me and my kinsman Fridgeir for saving his life from Ljot; for I know that you did this for love of me. I therefore am bound not to let you be cheated of your lawful right in this matter.'

Egil took the money, and thanked Arinbjorn. Then Egil again became quite cheerful.

Chapter 72 Of Arinbjorn's Harrying

Arinbjorn stayed at home on his estate that winter, but in the next spring he let it be known that he meant to go a-freebooting. Arinbjorn had good choice of ships. He made ready in the spring three war-ships, all large, and he had three hundred men. His house-carles he had on his own ship, which was excellently equipt; he had also with him many landowners' sons. Egil settled to go with him; he steered a ship, and with him went many of the comrades whom he brought from Iceland. But the merchant-ship which he brought from Iceland he caused to be moved eastwards to Vik, getting some men there to dispose of the cargo.

But Arinbjorn and Egil with the war-ships held a southward course along the coast; then took their force still southwards to Saxland, where they harried in the summer and got wealth. As autumn came on they came back northward harrying, and lay off Friesland. One night when the weather was calm they went up a large river-mouth, where was bad harbourage, and the ebb of the tide was great. There up on land were wide flats with woods hard by. The fields were soaked because there had been much rain. They resolved to go up there, and left behind a third of their force to guard the ships. They followed up the river, keeping between it and the woods. Soon they came to a hamlet where dwelt several peasants. The people ran out of the hamlet into the fields, such as could do so, when they perceived the enemy, but the freebooters pursued them. Then they came to a second village, and a third; all the people fled before them. The land was level, flat fields everywhere, intersected by dykes full of water. By these the corn-lands or meadows were enclosed; in some places large stakes were set, and over the dyke, where men should go, were bridges and planks laid. The country folk fled to the forest. But when the freebooters had gone far into the settled parts, the Frisians gathered them in the woods, and when they had assembled three hundred men, they went against the freebooters resolved to give them battle. There was then some hard fighting; but the end was that the Frisians fled and the freebooters pursued the fugitives. The peasants that escaped were scattered far and wide, and so were their pursuers. Thus it happened that on either side few kept together.

Egil was hotly pursuing, and a few with him, after a numerous company that fled. The Frisians came to a dyke, over which they went, and then drew away the bridge. Then came up Egil and his men on the other bank. Egil at once went at the dyke and leapt it, but it was no leap for other men, and no one tried it. But when the Frisians saw that but one man was following, they turned back and attacked him, but he defended himself well, and used the dyke to cover him behind so that they could not attack him on all sides. Eleven men set on him, but the end of their encounter was that he slew them all. After that Egil pushed out the bridge over the dyke, and crossed it back again. He then saw that all his people had turned back to the ships. He was then near the wood, and he now went along the wood towards the ships so that he had the choice of the wood if

he needed its shelter. The freebooters had brought down to the shore much booty and cattle. And when they came to the ships, some slaughtered the cattle, some carried out the plunder to the ships, some stood higher up and formed a shield-burgh; for the Frisians were come down in great force and were shooting at them, being also in battle array. And when Egil came down and saw how matters stood, he ran at full speed right at the throng. His halberd he held before him grasped in both hands, and slung his shield behind his back. He thrust forward his halberd, and all before him started aside, and so gat he a passage right through their ranks. Thus he dashed down to his men, who looked on him as recovered from the dead.

Then they went on ship-board, and loosed from land. They sailed then to Denmark. And when they came to Lima-firth and lay at Hals, Arinbjorn held a meeting of his men, and laid before them his plans. 'Now will I,' said he, 'go seek Eric's sons with such force as will follow me. I have now learnt that the brothers are in Denmark here, and maintain a large following, and spend the summers in harrying, but for the winters abide here in Denmark. I now give leave to all to go to Norway who would rather do that than follow me. For you, Egil, methinks, the best counsel is that, as soon as we part, you return to Norway, and then on with all speed to Iceland.'

Then the men separated to their several ships. Those who wished to go back to Norway joined Egil, but by far the larger part of the force followed Arinbjorn. Arinbjorn and Egil parted in love and friendship. Arinbjorn went to seek Eric's sons, and joined the company of Harold Gray-fell his foster-son, and was with him henceforth so long as they both lived.

Egil went northwards to Vik, and into Osloar-firth. There was his merchant ship which he had caused to be moved thither in the spring. There were also his cargo and the men who had gone with the ship. Thorstein Thora's son came to seek Egil, and asked him and such men as he would bring to stay with him that winter. Egil accepted the offer, had his ship set up and the cargo safely bestowed. Of his followers some got quarters there, some went to their several homes in the north. Egil in a company of ten or twelve went to Thorstein's, and remained there for the winter an honoured guest.

Chapter 73

Mission to Vermaland

King Harold Fairhair had subdued Vermaland eastwards as far as Lake Wener. Vermaland had first been cleared and tilled by Olaf Tree-cutter, father of Halfdan Whitebone, who first of his family was king in Norway; and from him on the father's side was king Harold descended, and all his forefathers had ruled over Vermaland and taken tribute therefrom, and set men in charge over the land. But when Harold was grown old, then was an earl named Arnvid governor of Vermaland. It happened there, as elsewhere, that the tribute was worse paid now than when Harold was in the vigour of life. So also was it when Harold's sons strove for the rule in Norway, the outlying tributary lands were little looked after. But when Hacon sat in peace, then enquired he after all the empire that his father Harold had had. King Hacon had sent eastwards to Vermaland a

company of twelve men. These had received the tribute from the earl. But as they were going back to Eida-wood, robbers set upon them and slew them all. The same hap befell yet other messengers sent by king Hacon eastwards to Vermaland; the men were slain, and no money was brought back. Then was it said by some that earl Arnvid belike set men of his own to slay the king's men, while he kept the tribute for himself. Whereupon king Hacon sent yet a third company.

He was then in Throndeim; the messengers were to go to Vik and seek Thorstein Thora's son with these words, that he should go eastwards to Vermaland and gather in the tribute for the king, or else he must leave the land. For the king had heard that Arinbjorn Thorstein's mother's brother was gone southwards to Denmark and was with Eric's sons, and further that they had a large following and spent the summer in harrying. King Hacon mistrusted the loyalty of all this company, expecting as he did hostilities from Eric's sons if they had but strength to raise rebellion against him. And to Arinbjorn's kinsmen and friends he showed great dislike, putting some to death, driving some from the land, or laying on them other hard conditions. And so it was that before Thorstein the king put this choice.

The man who bore this message was named Kol; he was a man of all lands; he had been long in Denmark and in Sweden, and knew all about ways and men there. In Norway too he had travelled widely. And when he brought this proposal to Thorstein Thora's son, then Thorstein told Egil upon what errand these men came, and asked how he should answer them; he said that it seemed a hard thing for him to lose his possessions and be driven out of the land.

Egil said: 'It is to me quite clear what this message means; the king will have you out of the land like others of Arinbjorn's kin, for I call sending a man of your nobleness on such errand a sending to certain death. My advice is that you call the king's messengers to conference with you, and I will be present at your talk, and we will see what come of it.'

Thorstein did as he bade; he held conference with them. The messengers told all the truth of their errand and of the king's message, that Thorstein must go on this mission or else be outlawed.

Egil said: 'I see clearly about your errand, that if Thorstein refuses to go, then you will have to go and gather the in the tribute.' The messengers said that he guessed rightly. Said Egil: 'Thorstein shall not go on this journey; for he is in nowise bound thereto, a man of his renown, to go on such mean missions. Thorstein will do that whereto he is bound, to wit, attend the king within the land or without, if the king demands it. Also, if ye want to have some men from hence for this journey, this will be granted you, and all such furtherance of your journey as ye may name to Thorstein.'

Then the messengers talked among themselves, and agreed that they would accept these terms, if Egil would go with them on the journey. 'The king,' they said, 'bears him great ill-will, and he will think our journey a right good one if we bring it about that Egil be slain. He can then drive Thorstein out of the land if he pleases.' So they told Thorstein that they would be content if Egil went and Thorstein stayed at home.

'So shall it be,' said Egil. 'I will release Thorstein from this journey. But how many men think ye that ye need to take from hence?'

'We are eight,' said they; 'we would fain have four men go from hence; then are we twelve.'

Egil said it should be so. Aunund Sjoni and some of Egil's company had gone out to sea, to look after their ship and another cargo which they had given into safe keeping in the autumn, and they had not yet returned. Egil thought this a great pity, but the king's men were impatient to be gone, and would not wait.

Chapter 74

Journey to Vermaland

Egil with three comrades made him ready for the journey. They had horses and sledges, and so had the king's men. There was then deep snow, and all the roads were effaced. They betook them to their journey when they were ready, and sledged up the land; and when they came eastwards near Eida, it happened one night that so much fresh snow fell that they could not see the way. On the morrow they traveled slowly, because there were snowdrifts directly one left the track. And as the day wore on they stopped to bait their horses; this was near a wooded ridge. Then spoke the king's men with Egil: 'Here now the roads divide; forward below the ridge dwells a landowner named Arnold, our friend; we with our party will go and lodge there. But you shall go yonder up the ridge, and when you come over it you will soon have before you a large house where you are sure of lodging. A wealthy man dwells there, Armod Beard by name. But to-morrow early we will again join company and go on the next evening to Eida-wood. There dwells a worthy landowner named Thorfinn.'

Upon this they separated, Egil and his men going up the ridge. But of the king's men this is to be told, that no sooner were they and Egil out of sight of each other, than they took their snow-shoes (which they had brought with them) and put them on; then they retraced their way as fast as they could. Night and day they travelled, and turned toward Upland, thence north by the Dovre-fell, nor stayed they till they came before king Hacon, and told him of their journey, how it had sped.

Egil and his comrades crossed the ridge that evening. To be brief, so soon as they left the main road and got upon the ridge, they found deep snow, steep rocks, tangled copsewood. Now and again in the snow the horses so plunged and lay that they had to be pulled up out of it, and over rocks and crags was a hard struggle. Much ado had they with the horses; but the walking for the men was of the heaviest, and sorely wearied were they when they came off the ridge and saw before them a large house, for which they made.

And when they came to the enclosure, they saw men standing outside, Armod and some of his household. They exchanged words and asked each other's tidings, and when Armod knew that they were messengers of the king, he offered them lodging. This they accepted. Armod's house-carles took their horses and harness; but the master bade Egil go into the hall, and they did so.

Armod made Egil sit in the high seat on the lower bench, and his comrades outside him. They spoke much of what a toilsome way they had come that evening, but the house-carles thought it a great marvel that they had won through it at all; it was, they said, no road for man even were it free of snow.

Then said Armod: 'Think ye not this were the best hospitality, that a table should be set for you and supper given you now, and then you should sleep? This will best rest you.'

'We should like this right well,' said Egil.

So Armod had a table set for them, whereon were placed large bowls full of curds. Then said Armod that he was sorry he had no beer to give them. Egil and his men were very thirsty from weariness; they took up the bowls and drank the curds eagerly, Egil drinking far the most. No other food was brought.

The household was numerous. The mistress sat on the cross-bench, and beside her the other women. The master's daughter, ten or eleven years old, was running about the hall-floor. The mistress called her to her side, and spoke in her ear. Then the girl went out to where Egil sat, and recited a verse:

'To thee with this message
My mother doth send me,
To bear word that Egil
Be wary and wait.
"So temper thy stomach,"
Thus sayeth our lady,
"With fare far more worthy
Soon feed we our guests.'"

Armod struck the girl, and bade her hold her tongue: 'You are always,' said he, 'saying what least suits.'

The girl went away; but Egil threw down the curd-bowl, which was now nearly empty. The bowls were then removed from them.

And now the household took their seats, and tables were set all round the hall, and food served; dishes of meat were brought in and set before Egil and the rest. After this ale was borne in, beer of the strongest. Soon they began to drink bumpers, each man was to drink off the horn; and especial care was taken that Egil and his companions should drink hard. Egil drank without shirking a drop for a long while, but when his companions were become helpless, then he drank for them what they could not. So matters went on till the tables were removed, and by then all in the room were well drunk.

But before each cup that he drank Armod said: 'I drink to you, Egil,' and the house-carles drank to Egil's companions with the same preface. A man was appointed to bear every cup to Egil's party, and he urged them to drink it off quick. Egil told his companions to drink no more, but himself drank for them what they could not avoid.

Egil soon found that it would not do for him to go on so. Wherefore he stood up, went across the floor to where Armod sat, took him with his hands by the shoulders, and forced him back against the inner posts, and spat in his face.

There was an outcry and uproar, but Egil went back to his place, sate him down, and bade them serve him drink.

Armod leapt up and ran out; Egil continued to drink for a while, as did some others in the hall; but there was little merriment. Soon Egil and his men stood up, and took their weapons from the wall where they had hung them up; they then went to the granary in which their horse were, and laid themselves down in the straw, and slept through the night.

Chapter 75

Parting of Egil and Armod

Egil rose up in the morning as soon as it was day. He and his made them ready, and when ready went at once to the house to seek Armod. And when they came to the apartments where slept Armod and his wife and daughter, then Egil burst open the door and approached Armod's bed. He then drew his sword, but with the other hand grasped the beard of Armod, and forced him forward to the edge of the bed. But Armod's wife and daughter leapt up and prayed Egil not to slay Armod. Egil said he would spare him for their sakes; 'For,' said he, 'this is but meet; yet has he deserved to die.'

After this Egil cut off his beard close to his chin, and put out one of his eyes. Then he went out to his companions.

They went on their way and came a day-meal-time to the house of Thorfinn. He dwelt by Eida-wood. Of him they craved a day-meal and to bait their horses. Thorfinn granted this, and Egil with his men went into the hall. Egil asked if Thorfinn had seen anything of the rest of his party.

'We appointed,' he said, 'to meet here.'

Thorfinn said: 'Here passed six men together a little before day; and they were well armed.'

Then said a house-carle: 'I was driving a sledge in the night to fetch wood, and I came upon six men on the road; they were house-carles of Armod; but that was long before day. Now I am not sure whether these will be the same as the six of whom you spoke.'

Thorfinn said that the six men whom he had met had passed after the house-carle came back with the load of wood.

While they sat at meat Egil saw that a woman lay sick on the daïs at the ends of the hall. He asked who was that woman in such sad case. Thorfinn said she was named Helga, and was his daughter; she had long been ill; her complaint was a pining sickness; she got no sleep at night, and was as one possessed.

'Has anything,' asked Egil, 'been tried for her ailment?'

'Runes have been graven,' said Thorfinn; 'a landowner's son hard by did this; and she is since much worse than before. But can you, Egil, do anything for such ailments?'

Egil said: 'Maybe no harm will be done by my taking it in hand.'

And when Egil had finished his meal, he went where the woman lay and spoke with her. Then he bade them lift her from her place and lay clean clothes under her, and they did so. Next he searched the bed in which she had lain, and there he found a piece of whalebone whereon were runes. Egil read them, then cut the runes and scraped them off into the fire. He burned the whole piece of whalebone, and had the bed-clothes that she had used hung out to air. Then Egil sang:

'Runes none should grave ever
Who knows not to read them;
Of dark spell full many
The meaning may miss.
Ten spell-words writ wrongly
On whale-bone were graven:
Whence to leek-tending maiden,
Long sorrow and pain.'

Egil then graved runes, and laid them under the bolster of the bed where the woman lay. She seemed as if she waked out of sleep, and said she now felt well, but she was weak. But her father and mother were overjoyed. And Thorfinn offered to Egil all the furtherance that he might think needful.

Chapter 76

Egil Comes to Landowner Alf

Egil said to his comrades that he would go on his way and abide no longer. Thorfinn had a son named Helgi, a valiant man. Father and son offered Egil their company through the wood. They said they knew for a fact that Armod Beard had put six men into the wood to lie in wait for them, and it was likely that there would be more ambushed in the wood in case the first should fail. There were with Thorfinn four that offered to go. Then Egil sang a stave:

'If four with me follow,
Thou findest not six men
With us bloody sword-blows
To barter in fight.
And if he with eight go,
Undaunted in courage
On twelve black-browed Egil
The battle will dare.'

Thorfinn and his men decided to go into the wood with Egil: thus they were eight in all. And when they came where the ambush was set, they saw men there. But these house-carles of Armod who were in ambush, on seeing that the travellers were eight in number, thought they were overmatched, and hid them away in the wood. And when Egil's party came where the liers-in-wait had been, they saw that all was not peaceful. And now Egil said that Thorfinn and his men

should go back, but they offered to go further. However Egil would not have it, and bade them go home; so they did so and turned back.

But Egil and his men went on forward, being now four. And as the day wore on they perceived that there were six men in the wood, and they were pretty sure that these also were house-carles of Armod. Up leapt the liers-in-wait and made at them, and they met their charge: and the encounter ended in Egil's slaying two and the rest running back into the wood.

Then Egil's company went on their way, and nothing more happened till they got out of the wood and found lodging near the wood with a landowner named Alf, who was called Alf the wealthy. He was an old man, wealthy in money, of a strange temper, so that he could keep but few in his household. A good reception Egil found there, and with him Alf was talkative. Egil asked many questions, and Alf told him what he asked. They spoke much about the earl and the king of Norway's messengers, who had before gone eastward to gather the tribute. Alf in his talk was no friend to the earl.

Chapter 77

Egil Gathers Tribute

Egil made him ready early next morning to continue his journey, as did his comrades, but at parting Egil gave Alf a fur cloak. Alf took the gift with thanks, saying, 'A good mantle have I here.' And he bade Egil visit him on the way back. They parted friends; and Egil going on his way came on the evening of a day to earl Arnvid's court, where he found a good reception. He and his comrades were placed next to the sitter in the seat opposite the earl.

When Egil had been there for a night, he declared his errand with the earl, and the message of the king from Norway, and said that he wished to have all that tribute from Vermaland that had been owing since Arnvid had been set over the land. The earl said that he had paid out of hand all the tribute, and delivered it into the hands of the king's messengers. 'But I know not,' he said, 'what they have since done with it, whether they brought it to the king or ran away with it out of the land. However, as ye bear sure tokens that the king has sent you, I will pay all the tribute to which he has a right, and deliver it into your hands: but I will not be answerable afterwards for how you fare with it.' Egil and his men remained there for awhile. But before Egil went away the earl paid them the tribute. Part was in silver, part in gray fur.

And when Egil's party were ready they started to return. At their parting Egil said to the earl: 'Now we will bear to the king this tribute which we have received. But know, earl, that this is much less money than the king deems to be his due here; and that too without counting that, as he thinks, thou oughtest to pay atonement for the messengers whom common rumour says thou didst cause to be slain.' The earl said that that was not true. With this they parted.

Now when Egil was gone, the earl called to him his two brothers, each of whom was named Ulf, and spoke thus: 'That big fellow Egil, who was here for awhile, will, I expect, do us an ill turn when he comes to the king. We may by this mark how he will bear our matter before the king, that he threw in our face such a

charge, the taking the life of the king's men. Now must ye two go after their party and slay them all, and let none bear this slander before the king. Methinks the wisest plan were to lie in wait for them in Eida-wood. Take with you so many men as to make sure that not one of them escape, while ye get no less of men from them.'

Then did the brothers make them ready for their journey, and they took thirty men. They went to the wood, of which they knew every path: then they watched for Egil's coming. There were two roads through the wood. One led over a certain ridge, and there was a steep cliff, and only a path for one; this was the shorter road. The other led round the edge of the ridge, over wide bogs, across which hewn wood was laid, there too making a causeway for but one to pass. And they lay in wait fifteen in either place.

Chapter 78

Egil and His Band Slay Twenty-Five Men

Egil went till he came to Alf's, and was there for the night in good quarters. Next morning he rose before day and made ready for his journey. And while they sat over their morning meal, Alf the master came in. He said: 'You are making a start betimes, Egil; but my counsel would be that you hurry not your journey, but rather look before you, for I think there be liers-in-wait for you in the wood. I have no men to give you as escort who would be any strength to you: but this I offer, that ye tarry here with me till I can report to you that the wood is safe.' Egil said: 'That will be mere nonsense. I will go on my way as I before meant to do.'

So he and his men made ready to go, while Alf tried to stop them, and bade them come back, if they saw that the way was trodden: 'None,' he said, 'have passed the wood from the east since you, Egil, went eastward, except these, who, as I suspect, have gone wishing to encounter you.' Egil said, 'How many will they be, think you, if it is as you say? We have not lost the game, though there be some odds against us.' Alf said: 'I with my house-carles had gone to the wood, and we came on men's footprints; the trail led into the wood, and there must have been many in all. But if you do not believe this that I say, go and see for yourself the trail, and then turn back, if it seems as I tell you.' Egil went his way, and when they came where the road entered the wood, they saw there the tracks both of men and horses. Egil's comrades then advised that they should turn back. 'We will go on,' said Egil: 'methinks 'tis no wonder that men have gone through Eida-wood, for it is a public road.' So they went on, and the footmarks continued, being of a numerous company. And when they came there where the roads forked, then the trail also forked, and was equally strong either way.

Then said Egil: 'Now I think that maybe Alf has told the truth. We will now make us ready as expecting an encounter.' So then Egil and his men doffed their cloaks and all their loose clothing, and laid these on the sledge. Egil had brought in his sledge a very long cord of bast, for it is the wont of those who take long sledging journeys to have with them some spare cord in case the harness need mending. Egil took a large flat stone, and laid it before his breast

and stomach. Then he bent thereon the cord, and wound it round and round him, and so encased him right up to the shoulders.

Eida-wood is of this kind: there is reaching to the cultivated land on either side dense forest, but in the middle is a wide space of shrubs and thin copse, with some parts quite bare of wood. Egil and his company turned by the shorter way, which lay over the ridge. They all had shields and helms, and weapons both to cut and thrust. Egil walked first. And when they came to the ridge, there was wood at the foot of it, but above on the rock it was bare. But when they came up to the rock, then seven men leapt out of the wood and up to the cliff after them, and shot at them. Egil and his men turned and stood abreast across the path. Then came other men against them from above on the crag's brow, and cast stones at them, and this was by far the greater danger. Then said Egil, 'Now must you step back and close to the cliff, and cover yourselves as best ye may; but I will try to win the summit.' They did so. And when Egil got past the rock out on the top, there were in front eight men, who all at once set upon him. Of their exchange of blows nought is there to tell: the end was that Egil slew them all. Then he went forward to the verge of the summit and hurled over stones, that none could withstand; and thereafter three of the Vermians fell, but four gat them into the wood sore wounded and bruised.

Then Egil and his men took their horses and went on their way till they came over the ridge. But the Vermians who had escaped brought news of this to their fellows, who were by the bog. They then advanced by the lower road and so beset the way in front of Egil. Ulf said to his comrades: 'We must now go cunningly to work with them, and so manage that none get away. This,' said he, 'is the nature of the ground: the road skirts the ridge, close to the foot of which runs the bog, while a rocky brow is above, and the passage lies between these and is no broader than a footpath. Now some of us shall go forward round the brow to withstand them if they advance; but some shall hide here in the wood, and leap out at their back when they have got on before us. And take we such heed that none escape.' They did as Ulf bade: Ulf went forward round the brow and ten men with him.

Egil and his men went on their way knowing nought of this plan till they came into the narrow path. Then out leapt men behind them, and drove at them with weapons. They faced about and defended themselves. Now also dashed at them those who were in front of the rocky brow; and when Egil saw that, he turned to meet them. Quick were the blows exchanged between them; and Egil smote down some in the narrow pass, but some turned back to where there was more level space. Egil dashed after them. There fell Ulf. And in the end Egil slew there single-handed eleven men. Then he went where his comrades were keeping the pass before eight men: there were some wounded on either side. But when Egil came, then at once the Vermians fled to the wood hard by. Five escaped, all sore wounded, but three fell there. Egil had many wounds, but none serious.

They then continued their journey. He bound his comrades' wounds, none of which were mortal. They sat in the sledge, and drove for the rest of the day.

But the Vermians who escaped took their horses, and dragged themselves from the wood eastwards to inhabited parts. There they got their wounds bound. Procuring companions, they made their way to the earl, and told him of their

misadventure. They told how both the Ulfs had fallen, twenty-five men were dead, and but five escaped with life, and they all wounded and bruised. The earl then asked what were the tidings of Egil and his comrades. They answered: 'We know not for sure how much they were wounded; but full boldly did they set on us when we were eight and they four; then we fled. Five reached the wood, but three perished; yet, for all we could see, Egil and his men were as fresh as ever.'

The earl said that their journey had been as bad as could be. 'I could have been content we should have great loss of life, had ye but slain these Northmen; but now when they come west from the wood and tell these tidings to Norway's king, then may we expect from him the very hardest terms.'

Chapter 79

Egil comes to Thorfinn's. The Harrying of king Hacon

Egil traveled on till he came westward out of the wood. They made for Thorfinn's that evening, where they were well received: their wounds were bound up, and they stayed there several nights. Helga, the master's daughter, was now on her feet, and whole of her ailment. For this she and all the family thanked Egil. He and his rested there themselves and their beasts.

The man who had graved the runes for Helga dwelt not far off. It now came out that he had asked her to wife, but Thorfinn would not give her. Then this landowner's son would fain beguile her, but she would not consent. So he thought to grave for her love-runes, but he did not understand them aright, and graved that wherefrom she took her sickness.

And when Egil was ready to depart, Thorfinn and his son escorted them on the road: they being thus ten or twelve in company. They went with them all that day as a guard against Armod and his house-carles. But when the tidings were heard how Egil's band had fought against overwhelming odds in the wood and conquered, then Armod thought it hopeless to raise shield against Egil: wherefore he with all his men sat at home. Egil and Thorfinn exchanged gifts at parting, and pledged themselves to friendship. Then Egil and his men went their way, and no tidings are told of their journey before they came to Thorstein's.

There their wounds were healed. Egil stayed there till spring. But Thorstein sent messengers to king Hacon to bring him the tribute for which Egil had gone to Vermaland. Who, when they came before the king, told him the tidings of what had been done in Egil's journey, and brought him the tribute. The king was now sure that what he had before suspected was true, namely, that earl Arnvid had caused the slaying of the two companies of messengers sent eastwards by him. The king said that Thorstein should have leave to dwell in the land, and should be reconciled to him. Then the messengers returned home; and on coming to Thorstein's told him that the king was well pleased with this Vermaland journey, and that Thorstein was now to have reconciliation and friendship with the king.

King Hacon in the summer went eastwards to Vik: whence he journeyed still eastwards to Vermaland with a large force. Earl Arnvid fled away; but the king took large fines from those landowners whom he thought guilty against him

according to the report of those who went after the tribute. He set over the land another earl, taking hostages of him and of the landowners. In this expedition Hacon went far and wide about western Gautland and subdued it, as is told in his Saga, and is found in the poems composed about him. It is also told that he went to Denmark, and harried there far and wide. Then was it that with two ships he disabled twelve ships of the Danes, and gave to Tryggva, son of his brother Olaf, the name of king and the rule over Vik eastwards.

Egil in the summer made ready his merchant-ship and got thereto a crew. But the long-ship that he had brought from Denmark in the autumn he gave to Thorstein at parting. Thorstein gave Egil good gifts, and they pledged them to close friendship. Egil sent messengers to Thord, his wife's kinsman, at Aurland, and gave him charge to arrange for those lands that Egil owned in Sogn and Hordaland, bidding him sell them if there were a buyer. And when Egil was ready for his voyage, they sailed out along the bay, and then northwards along the Norway coast, and afterwards out into the main. They had a fairly good breeze, and came from the main into Borgar-firth; and Egil steered his ship up the firth to the haven close to his own house. He had his cargo conveyed home, and his ship set up on wooden props. Egil went home to his house: fain were folk to see him; and there he stayed for that winter.

Chapter 80

Of the Marriages of Egil's Daughters

By the time that Egil came out to Iceland from this journey, the whole district was settled. All the original land-takers were dead, but their sons or sons' sons were living, and dwelt there in the district. There was a man named Grim, son of Sverting; he dwelt at Moss-fell below the heath; rich was he and of good family; his sister was Rannveig whom Thorod, the priest in Olvos, had to wife; their son was Skapti the lawman. Grim was also afterwards lawman. He asked to wife Thordis daughter of Thorolf Egil's brother, and stepdaughter of Egil. Egil loved Thordis no whit less than his own children. She was a very beautiful woman. And since Egil knew that Grim was a wealthy man and the match was a good one, it was so settled, and Thordis was given to Grim. Then Egil paid over to her her father's heritage, and she went home with Grim, and the pair dwelt long at Moss-fell.

There was a man named Olaf, son of Hauskuld Dale-koll's son and Melkorka daughter of Myrkjartan king of the Irish. Olaf dwelt at Hjardarholt in Lax-riverdale, westward in Broad-firth dales. Olaf was very wealthy, the handsomest man in Iceland of his time, of a noble character. He asked to wife Thorgerdr, Egil's daughter. Thorgerdr was comely, tall above woman's wont, wise, rather proud-spirited, but in daily life gentle. Egil was well acquainted with Olaf, and knew that the match was a worthy one, wherefore Thorgerdr was given to Olaf. She went home with him to Hjardarholt.

Auzur, Eyvind's son, brother of Thorod in Olvos, had to wife Egil's daughter Bera.

Chapter 81

Death of Bodvar: Egil's Poem Thereon

Bodvar Egil's son was just now growing up; he was a youth of great promise, handsome, tall and strong as had been Egil or Thorolf at his age. Egil loved him dearly, and Bodvar was very fond of his father. One summer it happened that there was a ship in White-river, and a great fair was held there. Egil had there bought much wood, which he was having conveyed home by water: for this his house-carles went, taking with them an eight-oared boat belonging to Egil. It chanced one time that Bodvar begged to go with them, and they allowed him so to do. So he went into the field with the house-carles. They were six in all on the eight-oared boat. And when they had to go out again, high-water was late in the day, and, as they must needs wait for the turn of tide, they did not start till late in the evening. Then came on a violent south-west gale, against which ran the stream of the ebb. This made a rough sea in the firth, as can often happen. The end was that the boat sank under them, and all were lost. The next day the bodies were cast up: Bodvar's body came on shore at Einars-ness, but some came in on the south shore of the firth, whither also the boat was driven, being found far in near Reykjarhamar.

Egil heard these tidings that same day, and at once rode to seek the bodies: he found Bodvar's, took it up and set it on his knees, and rode with it out to Digra-ness, to Skallagrim's mound. Then he had the mound opened, and laid Bodvar down there by Skallagrim. After which the mound was closed again; this task was not finished till about nightfall. Egil then rode home to Borg, and, when he came home, he went at once to the locked bed-closet in which he was wont to sleep. He lay down, and shut himself in, none daring to crave speech of him.

It is said that when they laid Bodvar in earth Egil was thus dressed: his hose were tight-fitting to his legs, he wore a red kirtle of fustian, closely-fitting, and laced at the sides: but they say that his muscles so swelled with his exertion that the kirtle was rent off him, as were also the hose.

On the next day Egil still did not open the bed-closet: he had no meat or drink: there he lay for that day and the following night, no man daring to speak with him. But on the third morning, as soon as it was light, Asgerdr had a man set on horseback, who rode as hard as he could westwards to Hjarðarholt, and told Thorgerdr all these tidings; it was about nones when he got there. He said also that Asgerdr had sent her word to come without delay southwards to Borg. Thorgerdr at once bade them saddle her a horse, and two men attended her. They rode that evening and through the night till they came to Borg. Thorgerdr went at once into the hall. Asgerdr greeted her, and asked whether they had eaten supper. Thorgerdr said aloud, 'No supper have I had, and none will I have till I sup with Freyja. I can do no better than does my father: I will not overlive my father and brother.' She then went to the bed-closet and called, 'Father, open the door! I will that we both travel the same road.' Egil undid the lock. Thorgerdr stepped up into the bed-closet, and locked the door again, and lay down on another bed that was there.

Then said Egil, 'You do well, daughter, in that you will follow your father. Great love have you shown to me. What hope is there that I shall wish to live with this grief?' After this they were silent awhile. Then Egil spoke: 'What is it now, daughter? You are chewing something, are you not?' 'I am chewing samphire,' said she, 'because I think it will do me harm. Otherwise I think I may live too long.' 'Is samphire bad for man?' said Egil. 'Very bad,' said she; 'will you eat some?' 'Why should I not?' said he. A little while after she called and bade them give her drink. Water was brought to her. Then said Egil, 'This comes of eating samphire, one ever thirsts the more.' 'Would you like a drink, father?' said she. He took and swallowed the liquid in a deep draught: it was in a horn. Then said Thorgerdr: 'Now are we deceived; this is milk.' Whereat Egil bit a sherd out of the horn, all that his teeth gripped, and cast the horn down.

Then spoke Thorgerdr: 'What counsel shall we take now? This our purpose is defeated. Now I would fain, father, that we should lengthen our lives, so that you may compose a funeral poem on Bodvar, and I will grave it on a wooden roller; after that we can die, if we like. Hardly, I think, can Thorstein your son compose a poem on Bodvar; but it were unseemly that he should not have funeral rites. Though I do not think that we two shall sit at the drinking when the funeral feast is held.' Egil said that it was not to be expected that he could now compose, though he were to attempt it. 'However, I will try this,' said he.

Egil had had another son named Gunnar, who had died a short time before.

So then Egil began the poem, and this is the beginning.

SONA-TORREK (SONS' LOSS).

1.

'Much doth it task me
My tongue to move,
Through my throat to utter
The breath of song.
Poesy, prize of Odin,
Promise now I may not,
A draught drawn not lightly
From deep thought's dwelling.

2.

'Forth it flows but hardly;
For within my breast
Heaving sobbing stifles
Hindered stream of song
Blessed boon to mortals
Brought from Odin's kin,
Goodly treasure, stolen
From Giant-land of yore.

3.

'He, who so blameless
Bore him in life,
O'erborne by billows
With boat was whelmed.
Sea-wavesflood that whilom
Welled from giant's wound
Smite upon the grave-gate
Of my sire and son.

4.

'Dwindling now my kindred
Draw near to their end,
Ev'n as forest-saplings
Felled or tempest-strown.
Not gay or gladsome
Goes he who beareth
Body of kinsman
On funeral bier.

5.

'Of father fallen
First I may tell;
Of much-loved mother
Must mourn the loss.
Sad store hath memory
For minstrel skill,
A wood to bloom leafy
With words of song.

6.

'Most woful the breach,
Where the wave in-brake
On the fenced hold
Of my father's kin.
Unfilled, as I wot,
And open doth stand
The gap of son rent
By the greedy surge.

7.

'Me Ran, the sea-queen,
Roughly hath shaken:
I stand of beloved ones
Stript and all bare.
Cut hath the billow
The cord of my kin,
Strand of mine own twisting
So stout and strong.

8.

'Sure, if sword could venge
Such cruel wrong,
Evil times would wait
gir, ocean-god.
That wind-giant's brother
Were I strong to slay,
'Gainst him and his sea-brood
Battling would I go.

9.

'But I in no wise
Boast, as I ween,
Strength that may strive
With the stout ships' Bane.
For to eyes of all
Easy now 'tis seen
How the old man's lot
Helpless is and lone.

10.

'Me hath the main
Of much bereaved;
Dire is the tale,
The deaths of kin:
Since he the shelter
And shield of my house
Hied him from life
To heaven's glad realm.

11.

'Full surely I know,
In my son was waxing
The stuff and the strength
Of a stout-limbed wight:
Had he reached but ripeness
To raise his shield,
And Odin laid hand
On his liegeman true.

12.

'Willing he followed
His father's word,
Though all opposing
Should thwart my rede:
He in mine household
Mine honour upheld,
Of my power and rule
The prop and the stay.

13.

'Oft to my mind
My loss doth come,
How I brotherless bide
Bereaved and lone.
Thereon I bethink me,
When thickens the fight
Thereon with much searching
My soul doth muse:

14.

'Who staunch stands by me
In stress of fight,
Shoulder to shoulder,
Side by side?
Such want doth weaken
In war's dread hour;
Weak-winged I fly,
Whom friends all fail.

15.

'Son's place to his sire
(Saith a proverb true)
Another son born
Alone can fill.
Of kinsmen none
(Though ne'er so kind)
To brother can stand
In brother's stead.

16.

'O'er all our ice-fields,
Our northern snows,
Few now I find
Faithful and true.
Dark deeds men love,
Doom death to their kin,
A brother's body
Barter for gold.

17.

'Unpleasing to me
Our people's mood,
Each seeking his own
In selfish peace.
To the happier bees' home
Hath passed my son,
My good wife's child
To his glorious kin.

18.

'Odin, mighty monarch,
Of minstrel mead the lord,
On me a heavy hand
Harmful doth lay.
Gloomy in unrest
Ever I grieve,
Sinks my drooping brow,
Seat of sight and thought.

19.

'Fierce fire of sickness
First from my home
Swept off a son
With savage blow:
One who was heedful,
Harmless, I wot,
In deeds unblemished,
In words unblamed.

20.

'Still do I mind me,
When the Friend of men
High uplifted
To the home of gods
That sapling stout
Of his father's stem,
Of my true wife born
A branch so fair.

21.

'Once bare I goodwill
To the great spear-lord,
Him trusty and true
I trowed for friend:
Ere the giver of conquest,
The car-borne god,
Broke faith and friendship
False in my need.

22.

'Now victim and worship
To Viliir's brother,
The god once honoured,
I give no more.
Yet the friend of Mimir
On me hath bestowed
Some boot for bale,
If all boons I tell.

23.

'Yea he, the wolf-tamer,
The war-god skilful,
Gave poesy faultless
To fill my soul:
Gave wit to know well
Each wily trickster,
And force him to face me
As foeman in fight.

24.

'Hard am I beset;
Whom Hela, the sister
Of Odin's fell captive,
On Digra-ness waits.
Yet shall I gladly
With right good welcome
Dauntless in bearing
Her death-blow bide.'

Egil began to cheer up as the composing of the poem went on; and when the poem was complete, he brought it before Asgerdr and Thorgerdr and his family. He rose from his bed, and took his place in the high-seat. This poem he called 'Loss of Sons.' And now Egil had the funeral feast of his son held after ancient custom. But when Thorgerdr went home, Egil enriched her with good gifts.

Chapter 82

Hacon's Wars and Death. Poem on Arinbjorn

Long time did Egil dwell at Borg, and became an old man. But it is not told that he had lawsuits with any here in the land; nor is there a word of single combats, or war and slaughter of his after he settled down here in Iceland. They say that Egil never went abroad out of Iceland after the events already related. And for this the main cause was that Egil might not be in Norway, by reason of the charges which (as has been told before) the kings there deemed they had against him. He kept house in munificent style, for there was no lack of money, and his disposition led him to munificence.

King Hacon, Athelstan's foster-son, long ruled over Norway; but in the latter part of his life Eric's sons came to Norway and strove with him for the kingdom; and they had battles together, wherein Hacon ever won the victory. The last battle was fought in Hordaland, on Stord-island, at Fitjar: there king Hacon won the victory, but also got his death-wound. After that Eric's sons took the kingdom in Norway.

Lord Arinbjorn was with Harold Eric's son, and was made his counsellor, and had of him great honours. He was commander of his forces and defender of the land. A great warrior was Arinbjorn, and a victorious. He was governor of the Firth folk. Egil Skallagrimsson heard these tidings of the change of kings in Norway, and therewith how Arinbjorn had returned to his estates in Norway, and was there in great honour. Then Egil composed a poem about Arinbjorn, whereof this is the beginning:

ARINBJORN'S EPIC, OR A PART THEREOF.

1.

'For generous prince
Swift praise I find,
But stint my words
To stingy churl.
Openly sing I
Of king's true deeds,
But silence keep
On slander's lies.

2.

'For fabling braggarts
Full am I of scorn,
But willing speak I
Of worthy friends:
Courts I of monarchs
A many have sought,
A gallant minstrel
Of guileless mood.

3.

'Erewhile the anger
Of Yngling's son
I bore, prince royal
Of race divine.
With hood of daring
O'er dark locks drawn
A lord right noble
I rode to seek.

4.

'There sate in might
The monarch strong,
With helm of terror

High-throned and dread;
A king unbending
With bloody blade
Within York city
Wielded he power.

5.

'That moon-like brightness
Might none behold,
Nor brook undaunted
Great Eric's brow:
As fiery serpent
His flashing eyes
Shot starry radiance
Stern and keen.

6.

'Yet I to this ruler
Of fishful seas
My bolster-mate's ransom
Made bold to bear,
Of Odin's goblet
O'erflowing dew
Each listening ear-mouth
Eagerly drank.

7.

'Not beauteous in seeming
My bardic fee
To ranks of heroes
In royal hall:
When I my hood-knoll
Wolf-gray of hue
For mead of Odin
From monarch gat.

8.

'Thankful I took it,
And therewithal
The pit-holes black
Of my beetling brows;
Yea and that mouth
That for me bare

The poem of praise
To princely knees.

9.

'Tooth-fence took I,
And tongue likewise,
Ears' sounding chambers
And sheltering eaves.
And better deemed I
Than brightest gold
The gift then given
By glorious king.

10.

'There a staunch stay
Stood by my side,
One man worth many
Of meaner wights,
Mine own true friend
Whom trusty I found,
High-couraged ever
In counsels bold.

11.

'Arinbjorn
Alone us saved
Foremost of champions
From fury of king;
Friend of the monarch
He framed no lies
Within that palace
Of warlike prince.

12.

'Of the stay of our house
Still spake he truth,
(While much he honoured
My hero-deeds)
Of the son of Kveldulf,
Whom fair-haired king
Slew for a slander,
But honoured slain.

13.

'Wrong were it if he
Who wrought me good,
Gold-splender lavish,
Such gifts had cast
To the wasteful tract
Of the wild sea-mew,
To the surge rough-ridden
By sea-kings' steeds.

14.

'False to my friend
Were I fairly called,
An untrue steward
Of Odin's cup;
Of praise unworthy,
Pledge-breaker vile,
If I for such good
Gave nought again.

15.

'Now better seeth
The bard to climb
With feet poetic
The frowning steep,
And set forth open
In sight of all
The laud and honour
Of high-born chief.

16.

'Now shall my voice-plane
Shape into song
Virtues full many
Of valiant friend.
Ready on tongue
Twofold they lie,
Yea, threefold praises
Of Thorir's son.

17.

'First tell I forth
What far is known,
Openly bruited
In ears of all;
How generous of mood
Men deem this lord,
Bjorn of the hearth-fire
The birchwood's bane.

18.

'Folk bear witness
With wond'ring praise,
How to all guests
Good gifts he gives:
For Bjorn of the hearth-stone
Is blest with store
Freely and fully
By Frey and Njord.

19.

'To him, high scion
Of Hroald's tree,
Fulness of riches
Flowing hath come;
And friends ride thither
In thronging crowd
By all wide ways
'Neath windy heaven.

20.

'Above his ears
Around his brow
A coronal fair,
As a king, he wore.
Beloved of gods,
Beloved of men,
The warrior's friend,
The weakling's aid.

21.

'That mark he hitteth
That most men miss;
Though money they gather,
This many lack:
For few be the bounteous
And far between,
Nor easily shafted
Are all men's spears.

22.

'Out of the mansion
Of Arinbjorn,
When guested and rested
In generous wise,
None with hard jest,
None with rude jeer,
None with his axe-hand
Ungifted hie.

23.

'Hater of money
Is he of the Firths,
A foe to the gold-drops
Of Draupnir born.

.....

24.

'Rings he scatters,
Riches he squanders,
Of avarice thievish
An enemy still.

.....

25.

'Long course of life
His lot hath been,
By battles broken,
Bereft of peace.

.....

26.

'Early waked I,
Word I gathered,
Toiled each morning
With speech-moulding tongue.
A proud pile built I
Of praise long-lasting
To stand unbroken
In Bragi's town.'

Chapter 83 Of Einar Helgi's Son and Egil

There was a man named Einar. He was the son of Helgi, the son of Ottar, the son of Bjorn Easterling, who took land in Broad-firth. Einar was brother of Osvif the seer. Einar at an early age was tall and strong, and most doughty. He began to compose poetry when quite young, and was eager for learning. One summer at the Thing Einar went to the booth of Egil Skallagrimsson, and they began to talk, and soon their talk took this turn that they spoke of poetry. In this converse both of them found pleasure. After this Einar often went to talk with Egil, and a great friendship was struck up between them.

Einar had not long returned to Iceland from foreign travel. Egil asked Einar much of tidings from the east, and about his friends, and withal about those that he deemed his enemies. He asked also much about men of rank. Einar in turn asked Egil about the events that had happened in his travels, and about his exploits. This talk pleased Egil, and was kept up briskly. Einar asked Egil on what occasion his prowess had been most hardly tried; this he begged him to say. Egil then sang:

'One with eight I battled,
Eleven faced I twice,
Made for wolf a meal,
Myself the bane of all.
Shields shook by sword-strokes
Smitten fast and furious;
Angry fire forth-flashing
Flew my ashen spear.'

Egil and Einar pledged them to friendship on parting. Einar was long abroad from Iceland with men of rank. Einar was open-handed, and often short of money, but noble-hearted and manly. He was in the body-guard of earl Hacon Sigurd's son. At that time there was in Norway much war, the battles between earl Hacon and Eric's sons; and now one, now the other, was driven from the land. King Harold, Eric's son, fell south in Denmark, at Hals in Lima-firth; this was by treachery. He was then fighting with Harold Knut's son, who was called Gold-Harold, and earl Hacon was there. There fell also with king Harold lord

Arinbjorn, of whom much has already been told. And when Egil heard of the fall of Arinbjorn, then he sang:

'Mead-givers, glorious men,
Gold-spending warrior wights
Are spent and gone. Where seek
Such lavish donors now?
Erewhile, beyond the sea,
Earth's islet-studded belt,
Such on my high hawk-perch
Hailed down the silver shower.'

Einar Helgi's son the poet was nicknamed Skala-glam. He composed a poem about earl Hacon, which is called 'Dearth of Gold'; and for a long time the earl would not hear the poem because he was wroth with Einar. Then Einar sang:

'Song made I on a chief
Supreme o'er land enthroned;
While others slept, I wrought,
Whereof I much repent.
Hither the earl to seek
Eager I came, nor thought
From brave free-handed prince
Far-comers worse would fare.'

And further he sang:

'Seek we that earl whose sword
Spreads banquet for the wolf:
To Sigvald's ship well-oared,
Shield-fenced, my sword I lend.
Wielder of wound-snake, he
Will not my succour scorn:
I to his sea-borne barque
My buckler now will bear.'

The earl did not wish Einar to go away; so he granted a hearing to the poem, and thereafter gave Einar a shield, which was a most costly work. It was inscribed with old tales; and between the writing were overlaid spangles of gold with precious stones set therein. Einar went to Iceland and lodged with his brother Osvif: but in autumn he rode east and came to Borg, and was guest there. Egil was just then not at home, having gone to the northern part of the district, but was expected home. Einar waited for him three nights: longer than three nights it was not the custom to stay on a friendly visit. Then Einar made him ready to go; but when ready he went to Egil's place in the hall, and there he hung up that precious shield, and told the house-carles that he left it a gift for Egil. Then he rode away.

But on that same day Egil came home. And when he came in to his place, then he saw the shield, and asked whose was that costly work. It was told him that Einar Skala-glam had come there, and had left the shield as a gift for him. Then

said Egil: 'The wretched man, to give it! He means that I should bide awake and compose poetry about his shield. Now, bring my horse. I must ride after him and slay him.' He was told that Einar had ridden away early in the morning. 'He will,' they said, 'by this be come westwards to the dales.' Soon after Egil composed a poem, whereof this is the beginning:

'Of shield, the ship's bright guard,
To show the praise 'tis time,
Home to my hand is given
The treasure-sender's gift.
Sure hath Skala-glam
To skilful guidance lent
(Speak, ye who list my lay)
The reins of minstrel lore.'

Egil and Einar remained friends so long as they both lived. But about the shield's fortune at last this is told, that Egil took it with him to the wedding when he went north to Broadmoor with Thorkettle Gunnvald's son and Red-Bjorn's sons Trefill and Helgi. There the shield was spoilt by falling into a tub of sour whey. After this Egil had the outer ornaments taken off: and there were twelve ounces of gold in the spangles.

Chapter 84 Of Thorstein Egil's Son

Thorstein Egil's son when he grew up was a most handsome man, white-haired, bright-faced. Tall he was and strong, yet not so much so as his father. Thorstein was wise, gentle, quite of temper, calm above other men. Egil loved him little; nor was Thorstein affectionate with his father; but Asgerdr and Thorstein loved each other dearly. Egil was now beginning to age much.

One summer Thorstein rode to the Thing, but Egil sat at home. Before Thorstein left home he and Asgerdr managed to take from Egil's chest without his knowledge the silken robe given him by Arinbjorn, and Thorstein took it to the Thing. But when he wore it at the Thing it trailed behind him, and became soiled at the hem as they were going to the hill of laws. And when he came home, Asgerdr put the robe in the chest where it was before. Long after, when Egil opened his chest, he found that the robe was spoilt, and questioned Asgerdr how that had come about. She told him the truth. Then Egil sang:

'Him who from me inherits
I hold no worthy heir.
A son deceives me living,
Deceit I call his deed.
Well might he, wave-horse-rider,
Wait but awhile, till me
Sea-skimming shipmen cover
With shroud of piled stones.'

Thorstein married Jofridr, daughter of Gunnar son of Hlif: her mother was Helga daughter of Olaf Feilan, sister of Thord Gellir. Jofridr had before been wife of Thorod the son of Tongue-Odd.

Soon after this Asgerdr died. After her death Egil gave up his housekeeping to Thorstein, and went south to Moss-fell to Grim, his son-in-law, for he loved Thordis his step-daughter most of all who were then living. One summer a ship came out and put into Loam Bay, steered by a man named Thormod. He was a Norwegian, a house-carle of Thorstein Thora's son. He was to take with him a shield, which Thorstein had sent to Egil Skallagrimsson: it was a valuable treasure. Thormod brought Egil the shield, and he received it with thanks. In the following winter Egil composed a poem about the gift of the shield: it is called Buckler-poem, and this is the beginning:

'List to the stream of lay
From long-haired Odin flowing,
Thane of a king, and bid
Thy folk due silence keep.
For thee, sea-raven's ruler,
Rained from the eagle's beak
Full oft shall shower of song
In Horda's shore be heard.'

Thorstein Egil's son dwelt at Borg. He had two illegitimate sons, Hrifla and Hrafn. But after his marriage he and Jofridr had ten children. Helga the fair was their daughter, she about whom quarrelled Skald-Hrafn and Gunnlaug Wormstongue. Grim was their eldest son, the second Skuli, the third Thorgeir, the fourth Kollsvein, the fifth Hjorleif, the sixth Hall, the seventh Egil, the eighth Thord. The other daughter was Thora, who was married to Thormod Kleppjarn's son. From Thorstein's children sprang a large progeny, and many great men. They are called Myra-men, all those that sprang from Skallagrim.

Chapter 85 Of Aunund Sjoni and Steinar His Son

Aunund Sjoni dwelt at Anabrekka, while Egil dwelt at Borg. Aunund married Thorgerdr daughter of Thorbjorn the Stout, of Snæfell-strand: the children of Aunund and his wife were a son Steinar, and a daughter Dalla. And when Aunund grew old and his sight was dim, then he gave up the housekeeping to Steinar his son. Father and son had much wealth.

Steinar was above other men tall and strong, ill-favoured, with a stoop, long in the legs, short in the body. He was a very quarrelsome man, vehement, overbearing, and obstinate, a most headstrong fellow. And when Thorstein Egil's son came to dwell at Borg, there was at once a coolness between him and Steinar. South of Hafs-brook lies a moor called Stack-moor. In winter this is under water, but in spring, when the ice breaks up, such good grazing for cattle is there, that it was deemed equal to stacked hay. Hafs-brook by old custom marked the boundary; but in spring Steinar's cattle encroached much on Stack-

moor, when driven out to Hafs-brook, and Thorstein's house-carles complained of it. Steinar took no notice of this; and so matters went on for the first summer without anything happening. But in the second spring Steinar continued to take the pasturage; wherefore Thorstein spoke with him about it, but quietly, asking him to control the grazing of his kine, as had been the old usage. Steinar said the cattle should go where they would. He spoke on the whole matter with obstinacy, and he and Thorstein had words about it. Thorstein then had the cattle turned back to the moor beyond Hafs-brook. This when Steinar knew, he charged Grani his thrall to sit by the cattle on Stack-moor, and he sat there every day. This was in the latter part of the summer: all the pasture south of Hafs-brook had been grazed by then.

Now it happened one day that Thorstein had mounted a knoll to look round. He saw where Steinar's cattle were moving. Out he went on to the moor: it was late in the day. He saw that the cattle had now come far out on the fenny hollow. Thorstein ran out on the moor. And when Grani saw that, he drove the cattle away apace till they came to the milking-shed. Thorstein followed, and he and Grani met in the gate. Thorstein slew him there: and it has been called since Grani's gate: it is in the wall of the enclosure. Thorstein pulled down the wall over Grani, and so covered his body. Then he went home to Borg, but the women who came to the milking-shed found Grani where he lay. After that they carried him home to the house, and told Steinar these tidings. Steinar buried him up on the hillside, and soon got another thrall to go with the cattle, whose name is not told. Thorstein made as though he knew nothing about the pasture for the remainder of the summer.

It now happened that Steinar in the early part of the winter went out to Snæfell-strand and stayed there awhile. There he saw a thrall named Thrand, who was tall and strong above other men. Steinar, wishing to buy him, bid a large sum: but his owner valued him at three marks of silver, which was twice the price of a common thrall, and at this sum the bargain was made. Steinar took Thrand home with him, and when they came home, then spoke Steinar with Thrand: 'Now stand matters so that I will have work of you. But as all the work is already arranged, I will put on you a task of but little trouble: you shall sit by my cattle. I make a great point of their being well kept at pasture. I would have you go by no man's rule but your own, take them wherever the pasture on the moor is best. I am no judge of a man's look if you have not courage and strength enough to hold your own against any house-carle of Thorstein's.'

Steinar delivered into Thrand's hand a large axe, whose blade was an ell long, it was keen as a razor. 'This I think of you, Thrand,' said Steinar, 'that you would not regard the priesthood of Thorstein if ye two were face to face.' Thrand answered: 'No duty do I, as I deem, owe to Thorstein; and methinks I understand what work you have laid before me. You think you risk little where I am; and I believe I shall come well out of it if I and Thorstein try our strength together.'

After this Thrand took charge of the cattle. He understood, ere he had been long there, whither Steinar had had his cattle taken, and he sat by them on Stack-moor. When Thorstein was aware of this, he sent a house-carle to seek Thrand, bidding him tell Thrand the boundary between his land and Steinar's. When the house-carle came to Thrand, he told him his errand, and bade him

take the cattle otherwith, saying that the land on which they were belonged to Thorstein Egil's son. Thrand said, 'I care not a jot who owns the land; I shall take the cattle where I think the pasture is best.' Then they parted: the house-carle went home and told him the thrall's answer. Thorstein let the matter rest, and Thrand took to sitting by the cattle night and day.

Chapter 86 Slaying of Thrand

One morning Thorstein rose with the sun, and went up on the hill. He saw where Steinar's cattle were. Then went Thorstein out on the moor till he came to the cattle. There stands a wood-clad rock by Hafs-brook: upon this Thrand was lying asleep, having put off his shoes. Thorstein mounted the rock: he had in his hand a small axe, and no other weapon. With the shaft of the axe he poked Thrand, and bade him wake. Up he jumped swiftly and suddenly, gripped his axe with both hands and raised it aloft, and asked Thorstein what he wanted. He replied, 'I wish to tell you that this land is mine; yours is the pasture beyond the brook. It is no wonder if you do not yet know the landmarks here.' Said Thrand, 'It makes no odds to me who owns the land: I shall let the cattle be where they please.' 'Tis likely,' said Thorstein, 'that I shall wish myself, and not Steinar's thralls, to rule my own land.' Said Thrand, 'You are a far more foolish man, Thorstein, than I judged you to be, if you will take night-quarters under my axe, and for this risk your honours. Methinks, from what I see, I have twice your strength; nor lack I courage: better weaponed am I also than you.' Thorstein replied: 'That risk I shall run, if you do not as I say about the pasture. I hope that our good fortune may differ much, as does the justice of our cause.' Thrand said: 'Now shall you see, Thorstein, whether I at all fear your threats.' And with that Thrand sat down and tied on his shoe. But Thorstein raised his axe swiftly, and smote on Thrand's neck so that his head fell forward on his breast. Then Thorstein heaped some stones over him and covered his body, which done, he went home to Borg.

On that day Steinar's cattle were late in coming home; and when there seemed no hope of their coming, Steinar took his horse and saddled it, and fully armed himself. He then rode to Borg. And when he came there he found men to speak to, and asked where Thorstein was. It was told him that he was sitting within. Then Steinar asked that he should come out; he had (he said) an errand with him. Which when Thorstein heard, he took his weapons and went out to the door. Then he asked Steinar what was his errand. 'Have you slain Thrand my thrall?' said Steinar. 'Truly I have,' said Thorstein; 'you need not put that upon any other man.' 'Then I see,' said Steinar, 'that you mean to guard your land with the strong hand, since you have slain my two thralls: yet methinks this is no great exploit. Now will I offer you in this a far better choice, if you wish to guard your land by force: I shall not trust other men with the driving of my cattle, but be you sure of this, the cattle shall be on your land both night and day.' 'So it is,' said Thorstein, 'that I slew last summer your thrall, whom you set to feed cattle on my land, but afterwards let you have the feed as you would up to the winter. Now have I slain another thrall of yours, for the same fault as the former. Again you shall have the feed from now through the summer, as you will. But next

summer, if you feed on my land, and set men to drive your cattle thither, then will I go on slaying for you every man that tends them, though it be yourself. I will act this every summer while you hold to the manner of grazing that you have begun.'

Then Steinar rode away and home to Brekka. And a little while after Steinar rode up to Stafar-holt, where Einar then dwelt. He was a priest. Steinar asked his help, and offered him money. Einar said, 'You will gain little by my help, unless more men of honour back you in this cause.' After that Steinar rode up to Reykjar-dale to see Tongue-Odd, and asked his help and offered him money. Odd took the money, and promised his help; he was to strengthen Steinar to take the law of Thorstein. Then Steinar rode home.

But in the spring Odd and Einar went with Steinar on the journey of summons, taking a large company. Steinar summoned Thorstein for thrall-slaying, and claimed lesser outlawry as the penalty of each slaying. For this was the law, when thralls of anyone were slain, and the fine for the thrall was not brought to the owner before the third sunrise. But two charges of lesser outlawry were equivalent to one of full outlawry. Thorstein brought no counter-summons on any charge.

And soon after he sent men southwards to Ness, who came to Grim as Moss-fell and there told these tidings. Egil did not show much interest about it, but he quietly learned by the questions what had passed between Thorstein and Steinar, as also about those who had strengthened Steinar in this cause. Then the messengers went home, and Thorstein appeared well pleased with their journey.

Thorstein Egil's son took a numerous company to the spring-tide Thing: he came there one night before other men, and they roofed their booths, he and the Thingmen who had booths there. And when they had made all arrangements, then Thorstein bade his Thingmen set to work, and they built there large booth-walls. Then he had roofed in a far larger booth than the other that were there. In this booth were no men.

Steinar rode to the Thing also with a numerous company, as did Tongue-Odd, and Einar from Stafar-holt; they roofed their booths. The Thing was a very full one. Men pleaded their causes. Thorstein offered no atonement for himself, but to those who advised atonement made answer, that he meant to abide by judgment. He said that he thought the cause which Steinar came, about the slaying of his thralls, was little worth; Steinar's thralls, he argued, had done enough to deserve death. Steinar was high and mighty about his cause: he had, as he thought, charges good in law, and helpers strong enough to win his rights. So he was most impetuous in his cause.

That day men went to the Thing-brink and spoke their pleadings; but in the evening the judges were to go out to try suits. Thorstein was there with his train; he had there chief authority as to the rules of the Thing, for so it had been while Egil held priesthood and headship. Both parties were fully armed.

And now it was seen from the Thing that a troop of men was riding down along Cleave-river with gleaming shields. And when they rode into the Thing, there rode foremost a man in a blue mantle. He had on his head a gilded helm, by his side a gold-decked shield, in his hand a barbed spear whose socket was

overlaid with gold, and a sword at his girdle. Thither had come Egil Skallagrim's son with eighty men, all well-weaponed, as if arrayed for battle. A choice company it was: Egil had brought with him the best landowners' sons from the southern Nesses, those whom he thought the most warlike. With this troop Egil rode to the booth which Thorstein had had roofed, a booth hitherto empty. They dismounted. And when Thorstein perceived his father's coming, he with all his troop went to meet him, and bade him welcome. Egil and his force had their travelling gear carried into the booth, and their horses turned out to pasture. This done, Egil and Thorstein with the whole troop went up to the Thing-brink, and sat them down where they were wont to sit.

Then Egil stood up and spoke with loud voice: 'Is Aunund Sjoni here on the Thing-brink?' Aunund replied that he was there. And he said, 'I am glad, Egil, that you are come. This will set right all the dispute here between these men.' 'Is it by your counsel,' said Egil, 'that your son Steinar brings a charge against my son Thorstein, and has gathered much people to this end, to make Thorstein an outcast?' 'Of this I am not the cause,' said Aunund, 'that they are quarrelling. I have spend many a word and begged Steinar to be reconciled with Thorstein; for in any case I would have spared your son Thorstein disgrace: and good cause for this is the loving friendship of old that has been between us two, Egil, since we grew up here as next-door neighbours.' 'It will soon be clear,' said Egil, 'whether you speak this as truth or vain words; though I think this latter can hardly be. I remember the day when either of us had deemed it incredible that one should be accusing the other, or that we should not control our sons from going on with such folly as I hear this is like to prove. To me this seems right counsel, while we both live and are so nearly concerned with their quarrel, that we take this cause into our own hands and quash it, and let not Tongue-Odd and Einar match our sons together like fighting horses. Let them henceforth find some other way than this of making money.'

Then stood up Aunund and spoke: 'Rightly say you, Egil; and it ill-beseems us to be at a Thing where our sons quarrel. Never shall that shame be ours, that we lacked the manhood to reconcile them. Now, Steinar, I will that you give this cause into my hands, and let me deal with it as I please.'

'I am not sure,' said Steinar, 'that I will so abandon my cause; for I have already sought me the help of great men. I will now only bring my cause to such an issue as shall content Odd and Einar.' Then Odd and Steinar talked together. Odd said, 'I will give you, Steinar, the help that I promised towards getting law, or for such issue of the cause as you may consent to accept. You will be mainly answerable for how your cause goes, if Egil is to be judge therein.'

Whereupon Aunund said: 'I need not leave this matter to the tongue of Odd. Of him I have had neither good or bad; but Egil has done to me much that is very good. I trust him far more than others; and I shall have my way in this. It will be for your advantage not to have all of us on your hands. I have hitherto ruled for us both, and will do so still.' Steinar said, 'You are right eager about this cause, father; but I think we shall oft rue this.'

After this Steinar made over the cause to Aunund to prosecute or compromise according to law. And no sooner had Aunund the management of this cause, than he went to seek the father and son, Thorstein and Egil. Then said Aunund:

'Now I will, Egil, that you alone shape and shear in this matter as you will, for I trust you best to deal with this my cause as with all others.'

Then Thorstein and Aunund took hands, and named them witnesses, declaring withal that Egil Skallagrimsson should along judge this cause, as he would, without appeal, then and there at the Thing. And so ended this suit.

Now men went home to their booths. Thorstein had three oxen led to Egil's booth and slaughtered for the Thing banquet.

And when Tongue-Odd and Steinar came home to their booth, Odd said: 'Now have you, Steinar, and your father ruled the issue of your suit. I now declare myself free of debt to you, Steinar, in regard of that help which I promised you; for it was agreed between us that I should help you in carrying through your suit, or to such issue as should content you; free am I, I say, whatever may be the terms adjudged you by Egil.' Steinar said that Odd had helped him well and manfully, and their friendship should be closer than before. 'I pronounce you,' he said, 'free of debt to me in regard of that whereto you were bound.'

In the evening the judges went out; but nothing happened that needs to be told.

Chapter 87

Of Egil and Aunund Sjoni

The next day Egil Skallagrimsson went to the Thing-brink, and with him Thorstein and all their party. Thither came also Aunund and Steinar, Tongue-Odd and Einar, and company. And when the law pleadings were finished, then stood up Egil and spoke thus: 'Are Steinar and Aunund, father and son, present, so that they can hear my words?' Aunund answered that they were.

'Then will I,' said Egil, 'deliver my judgment between Steinar and Thorstein. I begin the cause with this: Grim my father came to this island, and took to him here all the land of Myrar and the district round about, and chose him a homestead at Borg, and assigned a parcel of land thereto, but gave to his friends choice of land outside that same, in which they have since settled. To Ani he gave a homestead at Anabrekka, where Aunund and Steinar have hitherto dwelt. We all know this, Steinar, what are the landmarks between Borg and Anabrekka, that the chief one is Hafs-brook. Now therefore not from ignorance, Steinar, did you act in grazing on Thorstein's land, for you, Steinar, and you, Aunund, might know that Ani received the land of my father Grim: but you encroached on his land, thinking that he would be so degenerate as tamely to submit to your robbery. But Thorstein slew two thralls of yours. Now it is evident to all that these died for their ill-deeds, and are therefore unatonable, nay, even had they been free men, yet had they been unatonable, no fine could have been claimed for them. But as for you, Steinar, seeing that you devised to rob my son Thorstein of his property which he took with my authority, and I took by inheritance after my father, you shall therefore lose your land at Anabrekka, and have no payment for the same. And further, you shall have neither homestead nor lodgment here in the district south of Long-river. And you must quit Anabrekka before flitting days are past; else may you, immediately after

flitting days, be slain with impunity by any who wish to help Thorstein, if you refuse to go away or break any of these terms that I have pronounced for you.'

But when Egil sat down, then Thorstein named witnesses to his decision.

Then spoke Aunund Sjoni: "Twill be said, Egil, that this judgment which you have given and pronounced is very crooked. And what I have to say is this: hitherto I have done all I could to prevent strife, but henceforth I shall not spare to do what I can to harm Thorstein.' 'This I forebode,' said Egil, 'that the longer our quarrel lasts, the worse will be the fortune of you and your son. I thought you must have known, Aunund, that I have held mine own before men quite as great as are you and your son. But for Odd and Einar, who have so eagerly thrust themselves into this cause, they have reaped therefrom due honour.'

Chapter 88 Of Thorgeir

Thorgeir Blund was there at the Thing, Egil's sister's son; he had given Thorstein much help in this suit. He begged father and son to give him some land out there on the Moors. Hitherto he had dwelt south of White-river below Blunds-water. Egil received the request well, and persuaded Thorstein to let him come thither. So they settled Thorgeir at Anabrekka, but Steinar moved house beyond Long-river and settled down at Leiru-brook. But Egil rode home southwards to Ness, father and son parting on friendly terms.

There was a man with Thorstein named Iri, fleet of foot and keen of sight above others; he was a foreigner, a freedman of Thorstein's, but he still had the care of his flocks, and especially to gather the wethers up to the fell in spring, and in autumn down to the fold. Now, after flitting days, Thorstein bade gather the wethers that had been left behind in spring, meaning to have them driven to the fell. Iri was there in the sheepfold, but Thorstein and his house-carles rode up to the fell, being eight in all. Thorstein was having a fence made across Grisar-tongue, between Long-water and Cleave-river; at which many of his men were employed in the spring. After inspecting his house-carles' work here, Thorstein rode homewards. Now as he came over against the Thing-field, Iri came running to meet them, and said that he wished to speak to Thorstein alone. Thorstein bade his companions ride on while they spoke together. Iri said he had gone up to Einkunnir that day, and looked to the sheep. 'But I saw,' said he, 'in the wood above the winter road the gleam of twelve spears and some shields.' Then Thorstein said in a loud voice, so that his companions could hear: 'Why can he be in such a hurry to see me that I may not ride on my way home? However Aulvald will think it strange that I refuse him the visit if he is sick.' Iri then ran up to the fell as fast as he could. Thorstein said to his companions: 'I think we must lengthen our way, for we must first ride south to Aulvaldstead. Aulvald send me word I am to go to him. And he will think it no more than a fair return for the ox that he gave me last autumn that I should go and see him, if he deems the matter important.' Whereupon Thorstein with his company rode south by the moor above Stangar-holt, and so on south to Gufa-river, and down along the river by the riding-path. And when they came down below the lake,

they saw south of the river man cattle and a man with them. He was a house-carle of Aulvald's. Thorstein asked whether all was well there. He said that all was well, and that Aulvald was in the copse cutting wood. 'Then tell him,' said Thorstein, 'if he has an urgent errand with me, to come to Borg, for I will now ride home.' And so he did. It was afterwards learnt that Steinar, with eleven more, had lain in ambush at Einkunnir that same day. Thorstein made as though he had heard nought of it, and things remained quiet.

Chapter 89

Thorstein Goes to a Feast

There was a man named Thorgeir, a kinsman and friend of Thorstein: he dwelt then at Swan-ness. Thorgeir was wont to have a harvest feast every autumn. He went to Thorstein Egil's son and asked him to his house. Thorstein promised to come, and Thorgeir went home. But on the appointed day Thorstein made him ready to go: it wanted then four weeks of winter. With Thorstein went an Easterling, his guest, and two house-carles. There was a son of Thorstein named Grim, who was then ten years old; he too went with Thorstein, thus they were five in all. And they rode out to Foss, there they crossed Long-river, then out, as the road lay, to Aurrida-river. On the outer bank of that river Steinar was at work, and Aunund, and their house-carles. And when they perceived Thorstein they ran to their weapons, then pursued his party. On seeing Steinar's pursuit, these rode outside Long-holt. There is a hillock, high and bare of wood. Thorstein's party dismounted there, and climbed the hillock. Thorstein bade the boy Grim go into the wood, and not be present at the encounter. As soon as Steinar and his company came to the hillock they set upon Thorstein's party, and there was a fight. There were in Steinar's band six grown men in all, and a seventh was Steinar's son, ten years old. This encounter was seen by those who were on the meadows from other farms, and they ran to part them. But by the time they were parted both Thorstein's house-carles had lost their lives, one house-carle of Steinar's had fallen, and several were wounded.

After they were parted Thorstein sought for Grim. And they found him sore wounded, while Steinar's son lay there by him dead. And when Thorstein leapt on his horse, then Steinar called after him, 'You run now, Thorstein the white.' Thorstein answered, 'You shall run further ere a week be out.'

Then Thorstein with his company rode out over the moor, taking with them the boy Grim. And when they came to the holt that is there, the boy died; and they buried him there in the holt, called since Grimsholt. And the place where they fought is called Battle-hillock.

Thorstein rode to Swan-ness that evening, as he had intended, and sat there at the feast three nights, after which he made him ready to go home. Men offered to go with him, but he would not; so he and his Easterling friend rode two together.

That same day Steinar, expecting that Thorstein would be riding home, rode out along the shore. But when he came to the dunes below Lamba-stead he lay in wait there. He had the sword named Skrymir, an excellent weapon. He stood

there on the sandhill with drawn sword and eyes turned one way, for he saw Thorstein riding out on the sand. Lambi, who dwelt at Lamba-stead, saw what Steinar was doing. He left the house and went down the back, and, when he came to Steinar, he gripped him behind between the shoulders. Steinar tried to shake him off, but Lambi held fast, and so they went from the sandhill on to the level, and just then Thorstein and his friend rode by on the path below. Steinar had ridden thither on his stallion, which was now galloping inwards along the seashore. Thorstein and his friend saw this, and wondered, for they had perceived nothing of Steinar's coming. Then Steinar turned to regain the bank (for he saw not that Thorstein had ridden by). And as they came on the edge of the bank, Lambi suddenly threw Steinar from the sandhill down on to the flat sand, and himself ran home. As soon as he could get to his feet Steinar ran after Lambi. But when Lambi reached his house-door, he dashed in and slammed the door after him, Steinar aiming a blow after him so that the sword stuck in the wood of the door. There they parted, and Steinar went home.

But when Thorstein came home, he sent next day a house-carle out to Leiru-brook to bid Steinar move house beyond Borgar-hraun, else would he take advantage of this against Steinar when he had more power on his side, 'and you will then,' said he, 'have no choice of migration.' So Steinar prepared to go out to Snæfells-strand, and there he set up his household at a place called Ellida. And thus ended the dealings between him and Thorstein Egil's son.

Thorgeir Blund dwelt at Anabrekka. He proved a bad neighbour to Thorstein in every way that he could do so. On one occasion, when Egil and Thorstein met, they talked much about Thorgeir Blund their kinsman, and they both agreed about him. Then Egil sang:

'Steinar my word erewhile
Striped of his fruitful acres:
So did I hope to help
The heir of Geir and Kettle.
False, though he promised fair,
My sister's son hath failed me.
Blund now (whereat I wonder)
Withholds him not from ill.'

Thorgeir Blund left Anabrekka, and went south to Floka-dale; for Thorstein saw he could not get on with him, and yet wished to be forbearing. Thorstein was a man with no trickery, just, and never aggressive on others, but he held his own if others attacked him. But it proved disastrous to most to match their force with him.

Odd was then head-man in Borgar-firth, south of White-river. He was temple-priest, and ruled over that temple, to which all paid tribute within Skards-heath.

Chapter 90

Death of Egil Skallagrim's Son

Egil Skallagrim's son now grew old, and in his old age became heavy in movement, and dull both in hearing and sight; he became also stiff in the legs. Egil was at Moss-fell with Grim and Thordis. It happened one day that as Egil went out along the house-wall he stumbled and fell. Some women saw this, and laughed, saying: 'You are now quite gone, Egil, if you fall when alone.' Then said the master Grim, 'Women jeered at us less when we were younger.' Egil then sang:

'Old haltered horse I waver,
Bald-head I weakly fall:
Hollow my failing leg-bones,
The fount of hearing dry.'

Egil became quite blind. And it was so that one day, when the weather was cold, Egil went to the fire to warm himself. Whereupon the cook said that it was a great wonder, so mighty a man as Egil had been, that he should lie in their way so that they could not do their work. 'Be you civil,' said Egil, 'though I bask by the fire, and let us bear and forbear about place.' 'Stand you up,' said she, 'and go to your seat, and let us do our work.' Egil stood up, and went to his place and sang:

'Blind near the blaze I wander,
Beg of the fire-maid pardon,
Crave for a seat. Such sorrow
From sightless eyes I bear.
Yet England's mighty monarch
Me whilom greatly honoured:
And princes once with pleasure
The poet's accents heard.'

Again, once when Egil went to the fire to warm himself, a man asked him whether his feet were cold, and warned him not to put them too near the fire. 'That shall be so,' said Egil; 'but 'tis not easy steering my feet now that I cannot see; a very dismal thing is blindness.' Then Egil sang:

'Lonely I lie,
And think it long,
Carle worn with eld
From kings' courts exiled.
Feet twain have I,
Frosty and cold,
Bedfellows needing
Blaze of fire.'

In the later days of Hacon the Great Egil Skallagrim's son was in his ninth decade of years, and save for his blindness was a hale and hearty man. One summer, when men made ready to go to the Thing, Egil asked Grim that he might ride with him to the Thing. Grim was slow to grant this. And when Grim and Thordis talked together, Grim told her what Egil had asked. 'I would like you,' said he, 'to find out what lies under this request.' Thordis then went to talk with Egil her uncle: it was Egil's chief pleasure to talk to her. And when she met him she asked: 'Is it true, uncle, that you wish to ride to the Thing? I want you to tell me what plan you have in this?' 'I will tell you,' said he, 'what I have thought of. I mean to take with me to the Thing two chests that king Athelstan gave me, each of which is full of English silver. I mean to have these chests carried to the Hill of Laws just when it is most crowded. Then I mean to sow broadcast the silver, and I shall be surprized if all share it fairly between them. Kicks, I fancy, there will be and blows; nay, it may end in a general fight of all the assembled Thing.' Thordis said: 'A famous plan, methinks, is this, and it will be remembered so long as Iceland is inhabited.'

After this Thordis went to speak with Grim and told him Egil's plan. 'That shall never be,' said he, 'that he carry this out, such monstrous folly.' And when Egil came to speak with Grim of their going to the Thing, Grim talked him out of it all; and Egil sat at home during the Thing. But he did not like it, and he wore a frowning look.

At Moss-fell were the summer-sheds of the milch kine, and during the Thing-time Thordis was at the sheds. It chanced one evening, when the household at Moss-fell were preparing to go to bed, that Egil called to him two thralls of Grim's. He bade them bring him a horse. 'I will go to the warm bath, and you shall go with me,' said he. And when Egil was ready, he went out, and he had with him his chests of silver. He mounted the horse. They then went down through the home paddock and under the slope there, as men saw afterwards. But in the morning, when men rose, they saw Egil wandering about in the holt east of the farm, and leading the horse after him. They went to him, and brought him home. But neither thralls nor chests ever came back again, and many are the guesses as to where Egil hid his money. East of the farm at Moss-fell is a gill coming down from the fell: and it is noteworthy that in rapid thaws there was a great rush of water there, but after the water has fallen there have been found in the gill English pennies. Some guess that Egil must have hidden his money there. Below the farm enclosure at Moss-fell are bogs wide and very deep. Many feel sure that 'tis there Egil hid his money. And south of the river are hot springs, and hard by there large earthholes, and some men guess that Egil must have hidden his money there, because out that way cairn-fires were often seen to hover. Egil said that he had slain Grim's thralls, also that he had hidden the chests, but where he had hidden them he told no man.

In the autumn following Egil fell sick of the sickness whereof he died. When he was dead, then Grim had Egil dressed in goodly raiment, and carried down to Tjalda-ness; there a sepulchral mound was made, and in it was Egil laid with his weapons and his raiment.

Chapter 91

Grim Takes the Christian Faith

Grim of Moss-fell was baptized when Christianity was established by law in Iceland. He had a church built there, and 'tis common report that Thordis had Egil moved to the church. And this proof there is thereof, that later on, when a church was built at Moss-fell, and that church which Grim had built at Bush-bridge taken down, the churchyard was dug over, and under the altar-place were found human bones. They were much larger than the bones of other men. From the tales of old people it is thought pretty sure that these were Egil's bones. Skapti the priest, Thorarin's son, a wise man, was there at the time. He took then the skull of Egil, and set it on the churchyard fence. The skull was wondrous large, but still more out of the common way was its heaviness. It was all wave-marked on the surface like a shell. Skapti then wished to try the thickness of the skull. He took a good-sized hand-axe, and brandishing it aloft in one hand, brought down the back of it with force on the skull to break it. But where the blow fell the bone whitened, but neither was dented nor cracked. Whence it might be gathered that this skull could not easily be harmed by the blows of weak men while skin and flesh were on it. The bones of Egil were laid in the outer part of the churchyard at Moss-fell.

Chapter 92

Of Thorstein's Descendants

Thorstein Egil's son received baptism when Christianity came to Iceland, and he had a church built at Borg. He was true to the faith, and a good man. He lived to be old, and died in his bed; he was buried at Borg by the church which he had built.

From Thorstein have come numerous descendants; many great men, many poets: they are of the stock of the Myra-men, as are all who sprang from Skallagrim. It long held good of that kin that the men were tall, and great warriors, some too were of prophetic sight. They were of two distinct types: for in that stock have been born the handsomest men in Iceland, such were Thorstein Egil's son, and Kjartan Olaf's son, sister's son of Thorstein, and Hall Gudmund's son, also Helga the fair, Thorstein's daughter (about whom Gunnlaug Worms-tongue and Skald-raven quarrelled). But the more part of the Myra-men were very ill-favoured.

Of the brothers, sons of Thorstein, Thorgeir was the strongest, Skuli was the tallest. He dwelt at Borg after the days of Thorstein his father. Skuli was long time out freebooting. He was forecastleman of earl Eric on the Iron Ram when king Olaf Tryggvason fell. Skuli was in seven battles, and was deemed a great warrior and a brave. He afterwards came out to Iceland, settled in the house at Borg, and dwelt there till old age; many have been his descendants. And so ends this story.

THE SAGA OF ERIK THE RED

Chapter 1

Olaf, who was called Olaf the White, was styled a warrior king. He was the son of King Ingjald, the son of Helgi, the son of Olaf, the son of Gudred, the son of Halfdan Whiteleg, king of the Uplands (in Norway).

He led a harrying expedition of sea-rovers into the west, and conquered Dublin, in Ireland, and Dublinshire, over which he made himself king. He married Aud the Deep-minded, daughter of Ketil Flatnose, son of Bjorn the Ungartered, a noble man from Norway. Their son was named Thorstein the Red.

Olaf fell in battle in Ireland, and then Aud and Thorstein went into the Sudreyjar (the Hebrides). There Thorstein married Thorid, daughter of Eyvind the Easterling, sister of Helgi the Lean; and they had many children.

Thorstein became a warrior king, and formed an alliance with Earl Sigurd the Great, son of Eystein the Rattler. They conquered Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, and Moray, and more than half Scotland. Over these Thorstein was king until the Scots plotted against him, and he fell there in battle.

Aud was in Caithness when she heard of Thorstein's death. Then she caused a merchant-ship to be secretly built in the wood, and when she was ready, directed her course out into the Orkneys. There she gave in marriage Thorstein the Red's daughter, Gro, who became mother of Grelad, whom Earl Thorfinn, the Skullcleaver, married.

Afterwards Aud set out to seek Iceland, having twenty free men in her ship. Aud came to Iceland, and passed the first winter in Bjarnarhofn (Bjornshaven) with her brother Bjorn. Afterwards she occupied all the Dale country between the Dogurdara (day-meal river) and the Skraumuhlaupsa (river of the giantess's leap), and dwelt at Hvamm. She had prayer meetings at Krossholar (Crosshills), where she caused crosses to be erected, for she was baptised and deeply devoted to the faith. There came with her to Iceland many men worthy of honour, who had been taken captive in sea-roving expeditions to the west, and who were called bondmen.

One of these was named Vifil; he was a man of high family, and had been taken captive beyond the western main, and was also called a bondman before Aud set him free. And when Aud granted dwellings to her ship's company, Vifil asked why she gave no abode to him like unto the others. Aud replied, "That it was of no moment to him, for," she said, "he would be esteemed in whatever place he was, as one worthy of honour." She gave him Vifilsdalr (Vifilsdale), and he dwelt there and married. His sons were Thorbjorn and Thorgeir, promising men, and they grew up in their father's house.

Chapter 2

There was a man named Thorvald, the son of Asvald, the son of Ulf, the son of Yxna-Thoris. His son was named Eirik. Father and son removed from Jadar (in Norway) to Iceland, because of manslaughters, and occupied land in Hornstrandir, and dwelt at Drangar.

There Thorvald died, and Eirik then married Thjodhild, daughter of Jorund, the son of Atli, and of Thorbjorg the Ship-breasted, whom afterwards Thorbjorn, of the Haukadalar (Hawkdale) family, married; he it was who dwelt at Eiriksstad after Eirik removed from the north. It is near Vatzhorn.

Then did Eirik's thralls cause a landslip on the estate of Valthjof, at Valthjofsstadr. Eyjolf the Foul, his kinsman, slew the thralls beside Skeidsbrekkur (slopes of the race-course), above Vatzhorn. In return Eirik slew Eyjolf the Foul; he slew also Hrafn the Dueller, at Leikskalar (playbooths). Gerstein, and Odd of Jorfi, kinsman of Eyjolf, were found willing to follow up his death by a legal prosecution; and then was Eirik banished from Haukadalar.

He occupied then Brokey and Eyxney, and dwelt at Tradir, in Sudrey, the first winter. At this time did he lend to Thorgest pillars for seat-stocks, Afterwards Eirik removed into Eyxney, and dwelt at Eiriksstad. He then claimed his pillars, and got them not. Then went Eirik and fetched the pillars from Breidabolstadr, and Thorgest went after him. They fought at a short distance from the hay-yard at Drangar, and there fell two sons of Thorgest, and some other men.

After that they both kept a large body of men together. Styr gave assistance to Eirik, as also did Eyjolf, of Sviney, Thorbjorn Vifilsson, and the sons of Thorbrand, of Alptafjorðr (Swanfirth). But the sons of Thord Gellir, as also Thorgeir, of Hitardalr (Hotdale), Aslak, of Langadalr (Longdale), and Illugi, his son, gave assistance to Thorgest.

Eirik and his people were outlawed at Thorsnes Thing. He prepared a ship in Eiriksvagr (creek), and Eyjolf concealed him in Dimunavagr while Thorgest and his people sought him among the islands. Eirik said to his people that he purposed to seek for the land which Gunnbjorn, the son of Ulf the Crow, saw when he was driven westwards over the ocean, and discovered Gunnbjarnarsker (Gunnbjorn's rock or skerry). He promised that he would return to visit his friends if he found the land. Thorbjorn, and Eyjolf, and Styr accompanied Eirik beyond the islands. They separated in the most friendly manner, Eirik saying that he would be of the like assistance to them, if he should be able so to be, and they should happen to need him.

Then he sailed oceanwards under Snæfellsjokull (snow mountain glacier), and arrived at the glacier called Blaserkr (Blue-shirt); thence he journeyed south to see if there were any inhabitants of the country.

He passed the first winter at Eiriksey, near the middle, of the Vestribyggð (western settlement). The following spring he proceeded to Eiriksfiordr, and fixed his abode there. During the summer he proceeded into the unpeopled districts in the west, and was there a long time, giving names to the places far and wide. The second winter he passed in Eiriksholmar (isles), off Hvarfsgnupur (peak of disappearance, Cape Farewell); and the third summer he went

altogether northwards, to Snæfell and into Hrafnfjörðr (Ravensfirth); considering then that he had come to the head of Eiríksfjörðr, he turned back, and passed the third winter in Eiríksey, before the mouth of Eiríksfjörðr.

Now, afterwards, during the summer, he proceeded to Iceland, and came to Breidafjörðr (Broadfirth). This winter he was with Ingolf, at Holmlatr (Island-litter). During the spring, Thorgest and he fought, and Eirik met with defeat. After that they were reconciled. In the summer Eirik went to live in the land which he had discovered, and which he called Greenland, "Because," said he, "men will desire much the more to go there if the land has a good name."

Chapter 3

Thorgeir Vífilsson married, and took to wife Arnora, daughter of Einar, from Laugarbrekka (the slope of the hot spring), the son of Sigmund, the eon of Ketil-Thistil, who had occupied Thistilsfjörðr.

The second daughter of Einar was named Hallveig. Thorbjorn Vífilsson took her to wife, and received with her the land of Laugarbrekka, at Hellisvollr (the cave-hill). To that spot Thorbjorn removed his abode, and became great and worshipful. He was the temple-priest, and had a magnificent estate. Thorbjorn's daughter was Gudrid, the fairest of women, and of peerless nobility in all her conduct.

There was a man named Orm, who dwelt at Arnarstapi (eagle-rock), and he had a wife who was named Halldis. He was a well-to-do franklin, a great friend of Thorbjorn, and Gudrid lived at his house as his foster-child for a long time.

There was a man named Thorgeir, who dwelt at Thorgeirsfjall (fell). He was mighty rich in cattle, and had been made a freedman. He had a son, whose name was Einar, a handsome man, well mannered, and a great dandy. Einar, at this time, was a travelling merchant, sailing from land to land with great success; and he always passed his winter either in Iceland or in Norway.

Now after this, I have to tell how that one autumn, when Einar was in Iceland, he proceeded with his wares along Snæfellsnes, with the object of selling; he came to Arnarstapi; Orm invited him to stay there, and Einar accepted his invitation, because there was friendship between him and Orm's people, and his wares were earned into a certain outhouse. There he unpacked his merchandise, showed it to Orm and the housemen, and bade Orm take therefrom such things as he would. Orm accepted the offer, and pronounced Einar to be a goodly gallant traveller, and a great favourite of fortune. When now they were busy with the wares, a woman passed before the door of the outhouse.

Einar inquired of Orm who that fair woman might be, passing before the door. "I have not seen her here before," said he.

"That is Gudrid, my foster-child," said Orm, "daughter of Thorbjorn the franklin, from Laugarbrekka."

"She must be a good match," said Einar; "surely she has not been without suitors who have made proposals for her, has she?"

Orm answered, "Proposals have certainly been made, friend, but this treasure is not to be had for the picking up; it is found that she will be particular in her choice, as well as also her father."

"Well, in spite of that," quoth Einar, "she is the woman whom I have it in my mind to propose for, and I wish that in this suit of mine you approach her father on my part, and apply yourself to plead diligently for me, for which I shall pay you in return a perfect friendship. The franklin, Thorbjorn, may reflect that our families would be suitably joined in the bonds of affinity; for he is a man in a position of great honour, and owns a fine abode, but his personal property, I am told, is greatly on the decrease; neither I nor my father lack lands or personal property; and if this alliance should be brought about, the greatest assistance would accrue to Thorbjorn."

Then answered Orm, "Of a surety I consider myself to be thy friend, and yet am I not willing to bring forward this suit, for Thorbjorn is of a proud mind, and withal a very ambitious man."

Einar replied that he desired no other thing than that his offer of marriage should be made known. Orm then consented to undertake his suit, and Einar journeyed south again until he came home.

A while after, Thorbjorn had a harvest-feast, as he was bound to have because of his great rank. There were present Orm, from Arnarstapi, and many other friends of Thorbjorn.

Orm entered into conversation with Thorbjorn, and told him how that Einar had lately been to see him from Thorgeirsfjall, and was become a promising man. He now began the wooing on behalf of Einar, and said that an alliance between the families would be very suitable on account of certain interests. "There may arise to thee, franklin," he said, "great assistance in thy means from this alliance."

But Thorbjorn answered, "I did not expect the like proposal from thee, that I should give my daughter in marriage to the son of a thrall. And so thou perceivest that my substance is decreasing; well, then, my daughter shall not go home with thee, since thou considerest her worthy of so poor a match."

Then went Orm home again, and each of the other guests to his own household, and Gudrid remained with her father, and stayed at home that winter.

Now, in the spring, Thorbjorn made a feast to his friends, and a goodly banquet was prepared. There came many guests, and the banquet was of the best. Now, at the banquet, Thorbjorn called for a hearing, and thus spake: - "Here have I dwelt a long time. I have experienced the goodwill of men and their affection towards me, and I consider that our dealings with one another have been mutually agreeable. But now do my money matters begin to bring me uneasiness, although to this time my condition has not been reckoned contemptible. I wish, therefore, to break up my household before I lose my honour; to remove from the country before I disgrace my family. So now I

purpose to look after the promises of Eirik the Red, my friend, which he made when we separated at Breidafjördr. I purpose to depart for Greenland in the summer, if events proceed as I could wish."

These tidings about this design appeared to the guests to be important, for Thorbjorn had long been beloved by his friends. They felt that he would only have made so public a declaration that it might be held of no avail to attempt to dissuade him from his purpose. Thorbjorn distributed gifts among the guests, and then the feast was brought to an end, and they departed to their own homesteads.

Thorbjorn sold his lands, and bought a ship which had been laid up on shore at the mouth of the Hraunhofn (harbour of the lava field). Thirty men ventured on the expedition with him. There was Orm, from Arnarstapi, and his wife, and those friends of Thorbjorn who did not wish to be separated from him.

Then they launched the ship, and set sail with a favourable wind. But when they came out into the open sea the favourable wind ceased, and they experienced great gales, and made but an ill-spiced voyage throughout the summer. In addition to that trouble, there came fever upon the expedition, and Orm died, and Halldis, his wife, and half the company. Then the sea waxed rougher, and they endured much toil and misery in many ways, and only reached Herjolfsnes, in Greenland, at the very beginning of winter.

There dwelt at Herjolfsnes the man who was called Thorkell. He was a useful man and most worthy franklin. He received Thorbjorn and all his ship's company for the winter, assisting them in right noble fashion. This pleased Thorbjorn well and his companions in the voyage.

Chapter 4

At that time there was a great dearth in Greenland; those who had been out on fishing expeditions had caught little, and some had not returned.

There was in the settlement the woman whose name was Thorbjorg. She was a prophetess (spae-queen), and was called Litolvolva (little sybil). She had had nine sisters, and they were all spae-queens, and she was the only one now living.

It was a custom of Thorbjorg, in the winter time, to make a circuit, and people invited her to their houses, especially those who had any curiosity about the season, or desired to know their fate; and inasmuch as Thorkell was chief franklin thereabouts, he considered that it concerned him to know when the scarcity which overhung the settlement should cease. He invited, therefore, the spae-queen to his house, and prepared for her a hearty welcome, as was the custom wherever a reception was accorded a woman of this kind. A high seat was prepared for her, and a cushion laid thereon in which were poultry-feathers.

Now, when she came in the evening, accompanied by the man who had been sent to meet her, she was dressed in such wise that she had a blue mantle over her, with strings for the neck, and it was inlaid with gems quite down to the skirt.

On her neck she had glass beads. On her head she had a black hood of lambskin, lined with ermine. A staff she had in her hand, with a knob thereon; it was ornamented with brass, and inlaid with gems round about the knob. Around her she wore a girdle of soft hair, and therein was a large skin-bag, in which she kept the talismans needful to her in her wisdom. She wore hairy calf-skin shoes on her feet, with long and strong-looking thongs to them, and great knobs of latten at the ends. On her hands she had gloves of ermine-skin, and they were white and hairy within.

Now, when she entered, all men thought it their bounden duty to offer her becoming greetings, and these she received according as the men were agreeable to her. The franklin Thorkell took the wise-woman by the hand, and led her to the seat prepared for her. He requested her to cast her eyes over his herd, his household, and his homestead. She remained silent altogether.

During the evening the tables were set; and now I must tell you what food was made ready for the spae-queen. There was prepared for her porridge of kid's milk, and hearts of all kinds of living creatures there found were cooked for her. She had a brazen spoon, and a knife with a handle of walrus-tusk, which was mounted with two rings of brass, and the point of it was broken off.

When the tables were removed, the franklin Thorkell advanced to Thorbjorg and asked her how she liked his homestead, or the appearance of the men; or how soon she would ascertain that which he had asked, and which the men desired to know. She replied that she would not give answer before the morning, after she had slept there for the night.

And when the (next) day was far spent, the preparations were made for her which she required for the exercise of her enchantments. She begged them to bring to her those women who were acquainted with the lore needed for the exercise of the enchantments, and which is known by the name of Weird-songs, but no such women came forward. Then was search made throughout the homestead if any woman were so learned.

Then answered Gudrid, "I am not skilled in deep learning, nor am I a wise-woman, although Halldis, my foster-mother, taught me, in Iceland, the lore which she called Weird-songs."

"Then art thou wise in good season," answered Thorbjorg; but Gudrid replied, "That lore and the ceremony are of such a kind, that I purpose to be of no assistance therein, because I am a Christian woman."

Then answered Thorbjorg, "Thou mightest perchance afford thy help to the men in this company, and yet be none the worse woman than thou wast before; but to Thorkell give I charge to provide here the things that are needful."

Thorkell thereupon urged Gudrid to consent, and she yielded to his wishes. The women formed a ring round about, and Thorbjorg ascended the scaffold and the seat prepared for her enchantments. Then sang Gudrid the weird-song in so beautiful and excellent a manner, that to no one there did it seem that he had ever before heard the song in voice so beautiful as now.

The spae-queen thanked her for the song. "Many spirits," said she, "have been present under its charm, and were pleased to listen to the song, who before

would turn away from us, and grant us no such homage. And now are many things clear to me which before were hidden both from me and others. And I am able this to say, that the dearth will last no longer, the season improving as spring advances. The epidemic of fever which has long oppressed us will disappear quicker than we could have hoped. And thee, Gudrid, will I recompense straightway, for that aid of thine which has stood us in good stead; because thy destiny is now clear to me, and foreseen. Thou shalt make a match here in Greenland, a most honourable one, though it will not be a long-lived one for thee, because thy way lies out to Iceland; and there, shall arise from thee a line of descendants both numerous and goodly, and over the branches of thy family shall shine a bright ray. And so fare thee now well and happily, my daughter."

Afterwards the men went to the wise-woman, and each enquired after what he was most curious to know. She was also liberal of her replies, and what she said proved true. After this came one from another homestead after her, and she then went there. Thorbjorn was invited, because he did not wish to remain at home while such heathen worship was performing.

The weather soon improved when once spring began, as Thorbjorg had said, Thorbjorn made ready his ship, and went on until he came to Brattahlid (the steep slope). Eirik received him with the utmost cordiality, saying he had done well to come there. Thorbjorn and his family were with him during the winter. And in the following spring Eirik gave to Thorbjorn land at Stokknes, and handsome farm buildings were there built for him, and he dwelt there afterwards.

Chapter 5

Eirik had a wife who was named Thjodhild, and two sons; the one was named Thorstein, and the other Leif. These sons of Eirik were both promising men. Thorstein was then at home with his father; and there was at that time no man in Greenland who was thought so highly of as he. Leif had sailed to Norway, and was there with King Olaf Tryggvason.

Now, when Leif sailed from Greenland during the summer, he and his men were driven out of their course to the Sudreyjar. They were slow in getting a favourable wind from this place, and they stayed there a long time during the summer ... reaching Norway about harvest-tide.

He joined the body-guard of King Olaf Tryggvason, and the king formed an excellent opinion of him, and it appeared to him that Leif was a well-bred man. Once upon a time the king entered into conversation with Leif, and asked him, "Dost thou purpose sailing to Greenland in summer?"

Leif answered, "I should wish so to do, if it is your will." The king replied, "I think it may well be so; thou shalt go my errand, and preach Christianity in Greenland."

Leif said that he was willing to undertake it, but that, for himself, he considered that message a difficult one to proclaim in Greenland. But the king said that he

knew no man who was better fitted for the work than he. "And thou shalt carry," said he, "good luck with thee in it." "That can only be," said Leif, "if I carry yours with me."

Leif set sail as soon as he was ready. He was tossed about a long time out at sea, and lighted upon lands of which before he had no expectation. There were fields of wild wheat, and the vine-tree in full growth. There were also the trees which were called maples; and they gathered of all this certain tokens; some trunks so large that they were used in house-building. Leif came upon men who had been shipwrecked, and took them home with him, and gave them sustenance during the winter. Thus did he show his great munificence and his graciousness when he brought Christianity to the land, and saved the shipwrecked crew. He was called Leif the Lucky.

Leif reached land in Eiriksfiordr, and proceeded home to Brattahlid. The people received him gladly. He soon after preached Christianity and catholic truth throughout the land, making known to the people the message of King Olaf Tryggvason; and declaring how many renowned deeds and what great glory accompanied this faith. Eirik took coldly to the proposal to forsake his religion, but his wife, Thjodhild, promptly yielded, and caused a church to be built not very near the houses. The building was called Thjodhild's Church; in that spot she offered her prayers, and so did those men who received Christ, and they were many. After she accepted the faith, Thjodhild would have no intercourse with Eirik, and this was a great trial to his temper.

After this there was much talk about making ready to go^[17] to the land which Leif had discovered. Thorstein, Eirik's son, was chief mover in this, a worthy man, wise and much liked. Eirik was also asked to go, and they believed that his luck and foresight would be of the highest use. He was [for a long time against it, but did not say nay], when his friends exhorted him to go. They made ready the ship which Thorbjorn had brought there, and there were twenty men who undertook to start in her. They had little property, but chiefly weapons and food. On the morning when Eirik left home he took a little box, which had in it gold and silver; he hid the money, and then went forth on his journey.

He had proceeded, however, but a little way, when he fell from his horse, and broke his ribs and injured his shoulder, and cried out, "Aiai!" At this accident he sent word to his wife that she should take away the money that he had hidden, declaring his misfortune to be a penalty paid on account of having hid the money. Afterwards they sailed away out of Eiriksfiordr with gladness, as their plan seemed to promise success. They were driven about for a long time on the open sea, and came not into the track which they desired. They came in sight of Iceland, and also met with birds from the coast of Ireland. Then was their ship tossed to and fro on the sea. They returned about harvest-tide, worn out by toil and much exhausted, and reached Eiriksfiordr at the beginning of winter.

Then spake Eirik, "You were in better spirits in the summer, when you went forth out of the firth, than you are in now, and yet for all that there is much to be thankful for." Thorstein replied, "It is a chieftain's duty now to look after some arrangement for these men who are without shelter, and to find them food." Eirik answered, "That is an ever-true saying, 'You know not until you have got your answer.' I will now take thy counsel about this." All those who had no other

abodes were to go with the father and the son. Then came they to land, and went forth home.

Chapter 6

Now, after this, I have to tell you how Thorstein, Eirik's son, began wooing Gudrid, Thorbjorn's daughter. To his proposals a favourable answer was given, both by the maid herself, and also by her father. The marriage was also arranged, so that Thorstein went to take possession of his bride, and the bridal feast was held at Brattahlid in the autumn. The banquet went off well, and was numerously attended. Thorstein owned a homestead in the Vestribygd on the estate known as Lysufjorðr (shining firth).

The man who was called Thorstein owned the other half of the homestead. His wife was called Sigrid. Thorstein went, during the autumn, to Lysufjorðr, to his namesake, both he and Gudrid. Their reception was a welcome one. They were there during the winter. When little of the winter was past, the event happened there that fever broke out on their estate. The overseer of the work was named Garth. He was an unpopular man. He took the fever first and died. Afterwards, and with but little intermission, one took the fever after another and died. Then Thorstein, Eirik's son, fell ill, and also Sigrid, the wife of his namesake Thorstein. And one evening Sigrid left the house, and rested awhile opposite the outer door; and Gudrid accompanied her; and they looked back towards the outer door, and Sigrid screamed out aloud.

Gudrid said, "We have come forth unwarily, and thou canst in no wise withstand the cold; let us even go home as quickly as possible." "It is not safe as matters are," answered Sigrid. "There is all that crowd of dead people before the door; Thorstein, thy husband, also, and myself, I recognise among them, and it is a grief thus to behold." And when this passed away, she said, "Let us now go, Gudrid; I see the crowd no longer."

Thorstein, Eirik's son, had also disappeared from her sight; he had seemed to have a whip in his hand, and to wish to smite the ghostly troop. Afterwards they went in, and before morning came she was dead, and a coffin was prepared for the body. Now, the same day, the men purposed to go out fishing, and Thorstein led them to the landing places, and in the early morning he went to see what they had caught.

Then Thorstein, Eirik's son, sent word to his namesake to come to him, saying that matters at home were hardly quiet; that the housewife was endeavouring to rise to her feet and to get under the clothes beside him. And when he was come in she had risen upon the edge of the bed. Then took he her by the hands and laid a pole-axe upon her breast. Thorstein, Eirik's son, died near nightfall. Thorstein, the franklin, begged Gudrid to lie down and sleep, saying that he would watch over the body during the night. So she did, and when a little of the night was past, Thorstein, Eirik's son, sat up and spake, saying he wished Gudrid to be called to him, and that he wished to speak with her.

"God wills," he said, "that this hour be given to me for my own, and the further completion of my plan." Thorstein, the franklin, went to find Gudrid, and waked

her; begged her to cross herself, and to ask God for help, and told her what Thorstein, Eirik's son, had spoken with him; "and he wishes," said he, "to meet with thee. Thou art obliged to consider what plan thou wilt adopt, because I can in this issue advise thee in nowise."

She answered, "It may be that this, this wonderful thing, has regard to certain matters, which are afterwards to be had in memory; and I hope that God's keeping will test upon me, and I will, with God's grace, undertake the risk and go to him, and know what he will say, for I shall not be able to escape if harm must happen to me. I am far from wishing that he should go elsewhere; I suspect, moreover, that the matter will be a pressing one."

Then went Gudrid and saw Thorstein. He appeared to her as if shedding tears. He spake in her ear, in a low voice, certain words which she alone might know; but this he said so that all heard, "That those men would be blessed who held the true faith, and that all salvation and mercy accompanied it; and that many, nevertheless, held it lightly."

"It is," said he, "no good custom which has prevailed here in Greenland since Christianity came, to bury men in unconsecrated ground with few religious rites over them. I wish for myself, and for those other men who have died, to be taken to the church; but for Garth, I wish him to be burned on a funeral pile as soon as may be, for he is the cause of all those ghosts which have been among us this winter." He spake to Gudrid also about her own state, saying that her destiny would be a great one, and begged her to beware of marrying Greenland men. He begged her also to pay over their property to the Church and some to the poor; and then he sank down for the second time.

It had been a custom in Greenland, after Christianity was brought there, to bury men in unconsecrated ground on the farms where they died. An upright stake was placed over a body, and when the priests came afterwards to the place, then was the stake pulled out, consecrated water poured therein, and a funeral service held, though it might be long after the burial.

The bodies were removed to the church in Eiriksfjodr, and funeral services held by the priests.

After that died Thorbjorn. The whole property then went to Gudrid. Eirik received her into his household, and looked well after her stores.

Chapter 7

There was a man named Thorfinn Karlsefni, son of Thord Horsehead, who dwelt in the north (of Iceland), at Reynines in Skagafjodr, as it is now called. Karlsefni was a man of good family, and very rich. His mother's name was Thorun. He engaged in trading journeys, and seemed a goodly, bold, and gallant traveller.

One summer Karlsefni prepared his ship, intending to go to Greenland. Snorri, Thorbrand's son, from Alptafjodr, resolved to travel with him, and there were thirty men in the company.

There was a man named Bjarni, Grimolf's son, a man of Breidafjörðr (Broadfirth); another called Thorhall, son of Gamli, a man from the east of Iceland. They prepared their ship the very same summer as Karlsefni, with intent also to go to Greenland. They had in the ship forty men.

The two ships launched out into the open sea as soon as they were ready. It is not recorded how long a voyage they had. But, after this, I have to tell you that both these ships came to Eiríksfjörðr about autumn.

Eirik rode down to the ships with other men of the land, and a market-fair was promptly instituted. The captains invited Gudrid to take such of the merchandise as she wished, and Eirik displayed on his part much magnificence in return, inasmuch as he invited both these ships' companies home with him to pass the winter in Brattahlíð. The merchants accepted the invitation, and went home with Eirik. Afterwards their merchandise was removed to Brattahlíð, where a good and large outhouse was not lacking in which to store the goods. The merchants were well pleased to stay with Eirik during the winter.

When now Yule was drawing nigh, Eirik began to look more gloomy than he was wont to be.

Presently Karlsefni entered into conversation with him, and said, "Art thou in trouble, Eirik? it appears to me that thou art somewhat more taciturn than thou hast been; still thou helpst us with much liberality, and we are bound to reward thee according as we have means thereto. Say now what causes thy cheerlessness."

Eirik answered, "You receive hospitality well, and like worthy men. Now, I have no mind that our intercourse together should be expensive to you; but so it is, that it will seem to me an ill thing if it is heard that you never spent a worse Yule than this, just now beginning, when Eirik the Red entertained you at Brattahlíð, in Greenland."

Karlsefni answered, "It must not come to such a pass; we have in our ships malt, meal, and corn, and you have right and title to take therefrom whatever you wish, and to make your entertainment such as consorts with your munificence."

And Eirik accepted the offer. Then was preparation made for the Yule-feast, and so magnificent was it that the men thought they had scarcely ever seen so grand a feast.

And after Yule, Karlsefni broached to Eirik the subject of a marriage with Gudrid, which he thought might be under Eirik's control, and the woman appeared to him to be both beautiful and of excellent understanding. Eirik answered and said, that for his part he would willingly undertake his suit, and said, moreover, that she was worthy of a good match. It is also likely, he thought, that she will be following out her destiny, should she be given to him; and, moreover, the report which comes to me of him is good.

The proposals were now laid before her, and she allowed the marriage with her to be arranged which Eirik wished to promote. However, I will not now speak at length how this marriage took place; the Yule festival was prolonged and made into a marriage-feast. Great joy was there in Brattahlíð during the winter. Much

playing at backgammon and telling of stories went on, and many things were done that ministered to the comfort of the household.

Chapter 8

During this time much talk took place in Brattahlid about making ready to go to Vinland the Good, and it was asserted that they would there find good choice lands. The discourse came to such conclusion that Karlsefni and Snorri prepared their ship, with the intention of seeking Vinland during the summer. Bjarni and Thorhall ventured on the same expedition, with their ship and the retinue which had accompanied them.

There was a man named Thorvard; he married Freydis, natural daughter of Eirik the Red; he set out with them likewise, as also Thorvald, a son of Eirik.] There was a man named Thorvald; he was a son-in-law of Eirik the Red. Thorhall was called the Sportsman; he had for a long time been Eirik's companion in hunting and fishing expeditions during the summers, and many things had been committed to his keeping. Thorhall was a big man, dark, and of gaunt appearance; rather advanced in years, overbearing in temper, of melancholy mood, silent at all times, underhand in his dealings, and withal given to abuse, and always inclined towards the worst. He had kept himself aloof from the true faith when it came to Greenland. He was but little encompassed with the love of friends, but yet Eirik had long held conversation with him. He went in the ship with Thorvald and his man, because he was widely acquainted with the unpeopled districts. They had the ship which Thorbjorn had brought to Greenland, and they ventured on the expedition with Karlsefni and the others; and most of them in this ship were Greenlanders. There were one hundred and sixty men in their ships.

They sailed away from land; then to the Vestribygd and to Bjarneyjar (the Bear Islands). Thence they sailed away from Bjarneyjar with northerly winds. They were out at sea two half-days. Then they came to land, and rowed along it in boats, and explored it, and found there flat stones, many and so great that two men might well lie on them stretched on their backs with heel to heel. Polar-foxes were there in abundance. This land they gave name to, and called it Helluland (stone-land).

Then they sailed with northerly winds two half-days, and there was then land before them, and on it a great forest and many wild beasts. An island lay in the south-east off the land, and they found bears thereon, and called the island Bjarney (Bear Island); but the mainland, where the forest was, they called Markland (forest-land). Then, when two half-days were passed, they saw land, and sailed under it. There was a cape to which they came. They cruised along the land, leaving it on the starboard side. There was a harbourless coast-land, and long sandy strands. They went to the land in boats, and found the keel of a ship, and called the place Kjalar-nes (Keelness). They gave also name to the strands, calling them Furdustrandir (wonder-shore), because it was tedious to sail by them. Then the coast became indented with creeks, and they directed their ships along the creeks.

Now, before this, when Leif was with King Olaf Tryggvason, and the king had requested him to preach Christianity in Greenland, he gave him two Scotch people, the man called Haki, and the woman called Hækja. The king requested Leif to have recourse to these people if ever he should want fleetness, because they were swifter than wild beasts. Eirik and Leif had got these people to go with Karlsefni. Now, when they had sailed by Furdustrandir, they put the Scotch people on land, and requested them to run into the southern regions, seek for choice land, and come back after three half-days were passed. They were dressed in such wise that they had on the garment which they called biafal. It was made with a hood at the top, open at the sides, without sleeves, and was fastened between the legs. A button and a loop held it together there; and elsewhere they were without clothing. Then did they cast anchors from the ships, and lay there to wait for them. And when three days were expired the Scotch people leapt down from the land, and one of them had in his hand a bunch of grapes, and the other an ear of wild wheat.

They said to Karlsefni that they considered they had found good and choice land. Then they received them into their ship, and proceeded on their journey to where the shore was cut into by a firth. They directed the ships within the firth. There was an island lying out in front of the firth, and there were great currents around the island, which they called Straums-ey (Stream-island). There were so many birds on it that scarcely was it possible to put one's feet down for the eggs. They continued their course up the firth, which they called Straumsfjorðr, and carried their cargo ashore from the ships, and there they prepared to stay. They had with them cattle of all kinds, and for themselves they sought out the produce of the land thereabout. There were mountains, and the place was fair to look upon.

They gave no heed to anything except to explore the land, and they found large pastures. They remained there during the winter, which happened to be a hard one, with no work doing; and they were badly off for food, and the fishing failed. Then they went out to the island, hoping that something might be got there from fishing or from what was drifted ashore. In that spot there was little, however, to be got for food, but their cattle found good sustenance. After that they called upon God, praying that He would send them some little store of meat, but their prayer was not so soon granted as they were eager that it should be. Thorhall disappeared from sight, and they went to seek him, and sought for three half-days continuously.

On the fourth half-day Karlsefni and Bjarni found him on the peak of a crag. He lay with his face to the sky, with both eyes and mouth and nostrils wide open, clawing and pinching himself, and reciting something. They asked why he had come there. He replied that it was of no importance; begged them not to wonder thereat; as for himself, he had lived so long, they needed not to take any account of him. They begged him to go home with them, and he did so. A little while after a whale was driven ashore, and the men crowded round it, and cut it up, and still they knew not what kind of whale it was. Even Karlsefni recognised it not, though he had great knowledge of whales. It was cooked by the cook-boys, and they ate thereof; though bad effects came upon all from it afterwards.

Then began Thorhall, and said, "Has it not been that the Redbeard has proved a better friend than your Christ? this was my gift for the poetry which I

composed about Thor, my patron; seldom has he failed me." Now, when the men knew that, none of them would eat of it, and they threw it down from the rocks, and turned with their supplications to God's mercy. Then was granted to them opportunity of fishing, and after that there was no lack of food that spring. They went back again from the island, within Straumsfjodr, and obtained food from both sides; from hunting on the mainland, and from gathering eggs and from fishing on the side of the sea.

Chapter 9

When summer was at hand they discussed about their journey, and made an arrangement. Thorhall the Sportsman wished to proceed northwards along Furdustrandir, and off Kjalarnes, and so seek Vinland; but Karlsefni desired to proceed southwards along the land and away from the east, because the land appeared to him the better the further south he went, and he thought it also more advisable to explore in both directions. Then did Thorhall make ready for his journey out by the islands, and there volunteered for the expedition with him not more than nine men; but with Karlsefni there went the remainder of the company. And one day, when Thorhall was carrying water to his ship, he drank, and recited this verse:

"The clasher of weapons did say when I came here that I should have the best of drink (though it becomes me not to complain before the common people). Eager God of the war-helmet! I am made to raise the bucket; wine has not moistened my beard, rather do I kneel at the fountain."

Afterwards they put to sea, and Karlsefni accompanied them by the island. Before they hoisted sail Thorhall recited a verse:

"Go we back where our countrymen are. Let us make the skilled hawk of the sand-heaven explore the broad ship-courses; while the dauntless rousers of the sword-storm, who praise the land, and cook whale, dwell on Furdustrandir."

Then they left, and sailed northwards along Furdustrandir and Kjalarnes, and attempted there to sail against a wind from the west. A gale came upon them, however, and drove them onwards against Ireland, and there were they severely treated, enthralled, and beaten. Then Thorhall lost his life.

Chapter 10

Karlsefni proceeded southwards along the land, with Snorri and Bjarni and the rest of the company. They journeyed a long while, and until they arrived at a river, which came down from the land and fell into a lake, and so on to the sea. There were large islands off the mouth of the river, and they could not come into the river except at high flood-tide.

Karlsefni and his people sailed to the mouth of the river, and called the land Hop. There they found fields of wild wheat wherever there were low grounds; and the vine in all places where there was rough rising ground. Every rivulet

there was full of fish. They made holes where the land and water joined and where the tide went highest; and when it ebbed they found halibut in the holes. There was great plenty of wild animals of every form in the wood. They were there half a month, amusing themselves, and not becoming aware of anything. Their cattle they had with them. And early one morning, as they looked around, they beheld nine canoes made of hides, and snout-like staves were being brandished from the boats, and they made a noise like flails, and twisted round in the direction of the sun's motion.

Then Karlsefni said, "What will this betoken?" Snorri answered him, "It may be that it is a token of peace; let us take a white shield and go to meet them." And so they did. Then did they in the canoes row forwards, and showed surprise at them, and came to land. They were short men, ill-looking, with their hair in disorderly fashion on their heads; they were large-eyed, and had broad cheeks. And they stayed there awhile in astonishment. Afterwards they rowed away to the south, off the headland.

Chapter 11

They had built their settlements up above the lake. And some of the dwellings were well within the land, but some were near the lake. Now they remained there that winter. They had no snow whatever, and all their cattle went out to graze without keepers.

Now when spring began, they beheld one morning early, that a fleet of hide-canoes was rowing from the south off the headland; so many were they as if the sea were strewn with pieces of charcoal, and there was also the brandishing of staves as before from each boat. Then they held shields up, and a market was formed between them; and this people in their purchases preferred red cloth; in exchange they had furs to give, and skins quite grey. They wished also to buy swords and lances, but Karlsefni and Snorri forbid it. They offered for the cloth dark hides, and took in exchange a span long of cloth, and bound it round their heads; and so matters went on for a while. But when the stock of cloth began to grow small, then they split it asunder, so that it was not more than a finger's breadth. The Skrælingar (Esquimaux) gave for it still quite as much, or more than before.

Chapter 12

Now it came to pass that a bull, which belonged to Karlsefni's people, rushed out of the wood and bellowed loudly at the same time. The Skrælingar, frightened thereat, rushed away to their canoes, and rowed south along the coast. There was then nothing seen of them for three weeks together. When that time was gone by, there was seen approaching from the south a great crowd of Skrælingar boats, coming down upon them like a stream, the staves this time being all brandished in the direction opposite to the sun's motion, and

the Skrælingar were all howling loudly. Then took they and bare red shields to meet them. They encountered one another and fought, and there was a great shower of missiles. The Skrælingar had also war-slings, or catapults.

Then Karlsefni and Snorri see that the Skrælingar are bringing up poles, with a very large ball attached to each, to be compared in size to a sheep's stomach, dark in colour; and these flew over Karlsefni's company towards the land, and when they came down they struck the ground with a hideous noise. This produced great terror in Karlsefni and his company, so that their only impulse was to retreat up the country along the river, because it seemed as if crowds of Skrælingar were driving at them from all sides. And they stopped not until they came to certain crags. There they offered them stern resistance.

Freydis came out and saw how they were retreating. She called out, "Why run you away from such worthless creatures, stout men that ye are, when, as seems to me likely, you might slaughter them like so many cattle? Let me but have a weapon, I think I could fight better than any of you." They gave no heed to what she said. Freydis endeavoured to accompany them, still she soon lagged behind, because she was not well; she went after them into the wood, and the Skrælingar directed their pursuit after her. She came upon a dead man; Thorbrand, Snorri's son, with a flat stone fixed in his head; his sword lay beside him, so she took it up and prepared to defend herself therewith.

Then came the Skrælingar upon her. She let down her sark and struck her breast with the naked sword. At this they were frightened, rushed off to their boats, and fled away. Karlsefni and the rest came up to her and praised her zeal. Two of Karlsefni's men fell, and four of the Skrælingar, notwithstanding they had overpowered them by superior numbers. After that, they proceeded to their booths, and began to reflect about the crowd of men which attacked them upon the land; it appeared to them now that the one troop will have been that which came in the boats, and the other troop will have been a delusion of sight. The Skrælingar also found a dead man, and his axe lay beside him. One of them struck a stone with it, and broke the axe. It seemed to them good for nothing, as it did not withstand the stone, and they threw it down.

Chapter 13

[Karlsefni and his company] were now of opinion that though the land might be choice and good, there would be always war and terror overhanging them, from those who dwelt there before them. They made ready, therefore, to move away, with intent to go to their own land. They sailed forth northwards, and found five Skrælingar in jackets of skin, sleeping [near the sea], and they had with them a chest, and in it was marrow of animals mixed with blood; and they considered that these must have been outlawed. They slew them. Afterwards they came to a headland and a multitude of wild animals; and this headland appeared as if it might be a cake of cow-dung, because the animals passed the winter there. Now they came to Straumsfjorðr, where also they had abundance of all kinds. It is said by some that Bjarni and Freydis remained there, and a hundred men with them, and went not further away. But Karlsefni and Snorri journeyed southwards, and forty men with them, and after staying no longer than scarcely

two months at Hop, had come back the same summer. Karlsefni set out with a single ship to seek Thorhall, but the (rest of the) company remained behind. He and his people went northwards off Kjalarnes, and were then borne onwards towards the west, and the land lay on their larboard-side, and was nothing but wilderness. And when they had proceeded for a long time, there was a river which came down from the land, flowing from the east towards the west. They directed their course within the river's mouth, and lay opposite the southern bank.

Chapter 14

One morning Karlsefni's people beheld as it were a glittering speak above the open space in front of them, and they shouted at it. It stirred itself, and it was a being of the race of men that have only one foot, and he came down quickly to where they lay. Thorvald, son of Eirik the Red, sat at the tiller, and the One-footer shot him with an arrow in the lower abdomen. He drew out the arrow. Then said Thorvald, "Good land have we reached, and fat is it about the paunch." Then the One-footer leapt away again northwards. They chased after him, and saw him occasionally, but it seemed as if he would escape them. He disappeared at a certain creek. Then they turned back, and one man spake this ditty:

"Our men chased (all true it is) a One-footer down to the shore; but the wonderful man strove hard in the race.... Hearken, Karlsefni."

Then they journeyed away back again northwards, and saw, as they thought, the land of the One-footers. They wished, however, no longer to risk their company. They conjectured the mountains to be all one range; those, that is, which were at Hop, and those which they now discovered; almost answering to one another; and it was the same distance to them on both sides from Straumsfjodr. They journeyed back, and were in Straumsfjodr the third winter. Then fell the men greatly into backsliding. They who were wifeless pressed their claims at the hands of those who were married.

Snorri, Karlsefni's son, was born the first autumn, and he was three winters old when they began their journey home. Now, when they sailed from Vinland, they had a southern wind, and reached Markland, and found five Skrælingar; one was a bearded man, two were women, two children. Karlsefni's people caught the children, but the others escaped and sunk down into the earth. And they took the children with them, and taught them their speech, and they were baptized. The children called their mother Vætildi, and their father Uvægi. They said that kings ruled over the land of the Skrælingar, one of whom was called Avalldamon, and the other Valldidida. They said also that there were no houses, and the people lived in caves or holes. They said, moreover, that there was a land on the other side over against their land, and the people there were dressed in white garments, uttered loud cries, bare long poles, and wore fringes. This was supposed to be Hvitramannaland (whiteman's land). Then came they to Greenland, and remained with Eirik the Red during the winter.

Chapter 15

Bjarni, Grimolf's son, and his men were carried into the Irish Ocean, and came into a part where the sea was infested by ship-worms. They did not find it out before the ship was eaten through under them; then they debated what plan they should follow. They had a ship's boat which was smeared with tar made of seal-fat. It is said that the ship-worm will not bore into the wood which has been smeared with the seal-tar. The counsel and advice of most of the men was to ship into the boat as many men as it would hold. Now, when that was tried, the boat held not more than half the men. Then Bjarni advised that it should be decided by the casting of lots, and not by the rank of the men, which of them should go into the boat; and inasmuch as every man there wished to go into the boat, though it could not hold all of them; therefore, they accepted the plan to cast lots who should leave the ship for the boat. And the lot so fell that Bjarni, and nearly half the men with him, were chosen for the boat. So then those left the ship and went into the boat who had been chosen by lot so to do.

And when the men were come into the boat, a young man, an Icelander, who had been a fellow-traveller of Bjarni, said, "Dost thou intend, Bjarni, to separate thyself here from me." "It must needs be so now," Bjarni answered. He replied, "Because, in such case, thou didst not so promise me when I set out from Iceland with thee from the homestead of my father." Bjarni answered, "I do not, however, see here any other plan; but what plan dost thou suggest?" He replied, "I propose this plan, that we two make a change in our places, and thou come here and I will go there." Bjarni answered, "So shall it be; and this I see, that thou labourest willingly for life, and that it seems to thee a grievous thing to face death." Then they changed places. The man went into the boat, and Bjarni back into the ship; and it is said that Bjarni perished there in the Worm-sea, and they who were with him in the ship; but the boat and those who were in it went on their journey until they reached land, and told this story afterwards.

Chapter 16

The next summer Karlsefni set out for Iceland, and Snorri with him, and went home to his house in Reynines. His mother considered that he had made a shabby match, and she was not at home the first winter. But when she found that Gudrid was a lady without peer, she went home, and their intercourse was happy. The daughter of Snorri, Karlsefni's son, was Hallfrid, mother of Bishop Thorlak, the son of Runolf. (Hallfrid and Runolf) had a son, whose name was Thorbjorn; his daughter was Thorun, mother of Bishop Bjarn. Thorgeir was the name of a son of Snorri, Karlsefni's son; he was father of Yngvild, the mother of the first Bishop Brand. And here ends this story.

THE SAGA OF THE ERE-DWELLERS

Chapter 1

Herein Is Told How Ketil Flatneb Fares To West-Over-Sea

Ketil Flatneb was hight a famous hersir in Norway; he was the son of Biorn Rough-foot, the son of Grim, a hersir of Sogn. Ketil Flatneb was a wedded man; he had to wife Yngvild, daughter of Ketil Wether, a hersir of Raumarik; Biorn and Helgi were hight their sons, but their daughters were these, Auth the Deep-minded, Thorun the Horned, and Jorun Manwitbrent. Biorn, the son of Ketil, was fostered east in lamtaland with that earl who was called Kiallak, a wise man, and most renowned; he had a son whose name was Biorn, and a daughter hight Giaflaug. That was in the days when King Harald Hairfair came to the rule of Norway. Because of that unpeace many noble men fled from their lands out of Norway; some east over the Keel, some West-over-the-sea. Some there were withal who in winter kept themselves in the South-isles, or the Orkneys, but in summer harried in Norway and wrought much scathe in the kingdom of Harald the king.

Now the bonders bemoaned them of that to the king, and prayed him deliver them from that unpeace. Then Harald the king took such rede that he caused dight an army for West-over-the-sea, and said that Ketil Flatneb should be captain of that host. Ketil begged off therefrom, but the king said he must needs go; and when Ketil saw that the king would have his will, he betook himself to the faring, and had with him his wife and those of his children who were at home. But when Ketil came West-over-the-sea, some deal of fighting had he and his, and ever got the victory. He laid under him the South-isles, and made himself chief over them. Then he made peace with the mightiest chiefs West-over-the-sea, and made alliances with them, and therewithal sent the army back east. But when they met Harald the king, they said that Ketil Flatneb was lord of the South-isles, but that they wotted not if he would drag the rule west of the sea to King Harald. But when the king knew that, he took to himself those lands that Ketil owned in Norway.

Ketil Flatneb gave his daughter Auth to Olaf the White, who at that time was the greatest war-king West-over-the-sea; he was the son of Ingiald, the son of Helgi; but the mother of Ingiald was Thora, the daughter of Sigurd Worm-in-eye, the son of Ragnar Hairy-breeks. Thorun the Horned he gave in wedlock to Helgi the Lean, the son of Eyvind the Eastman and Rafarta, the daughter of Kiarfal, King of the Irish.

Chapter 2

Of Biorn Ketilson and Thorolf Most-Beard

Biorn the son of Ketil Flatneb was in lamtaland till Kiallak the earl died; he gat to wife Giaflaug the earl's daughter, and thereafter fared west over the Keel, first to Thrandheim and then south through the land, and took to himself those lands which his father had owned, and drove away the bailiffs that King Harald had set over them. King Harald was in the Wick when he heard that, and thereon he fared by the inland road north to Thrandheim, and when he came there he summoned an eight-folks' mote; and at that mote he made Biorn Ketilson outlaw from Norway, a man to be slain or taken wheresoever he might be found. Thereafter he sent Hawk High-breeks and other of his warriors to slay him if they might find him. But when they came south beyond Stath, the friends of Biorn became ware of their journey and sent him tidings thereof. Then Biorn got him aboard a bark which he owned, with his household and chattels, and fled away south along the land, because that this was in the heart of winter, and he durst not make for the main. Biorn fared on till he came to the island called Most which lies off South-Hordaland, and there a man hight Rolf took him in, who was the son of Ornof the Fish-driver. There lay Biorn privily the winter through. But the king's men turned back when they had settled Biorn's lands and set men over them.

Chapter 3

Thorolf Most-Beard Outlawed By King Harald Hairfair

Rolf was a mighty chief, and a man of the greatest largesse; he had the ward of Thor's temple there in the island, and was a great friend of Thor. And therefore he was called Thorolf. He was a big man and a strong, fair to look on, and had a great beard; therefore was he called Most-beard, and he was the noblest man in the island.

In the spring Thorolf gave Biorn a good long-ship manned with a doughty crew, and gave him Hallstein his son to bear him fellowship; and therewith they sailed West-over-the-sea to meet Biorn's kindred.

But when King Harald knew that Thorolf Mostbeard had harboured Biorn Ketilson the king's outlaw, then sent he men to see him and bade him begone from his lands, and fare as an outlaw even as Biorn his friend, but if he come and meet the king and lay the whole matter in his hand. This was ten winters after Ingolf Arnarson had fared out to take up his abode in Iceland, and that faring was grown to be very famous, because that those men who came out from Iceland told of good choice of land therein.

Chapter 4

Thorolf Most-Beard Comes Out To Iceland, And Sets Up House There

Thorolf Most-Beard made a great sacrifice, and asked of Thor his well-beloved friend whether he should make peace with the king, or get him gone from out the land and seek other fortunes. But the Word showed Thorolf to Iceland; and thereafter he got for himself a great ship meet for the main, and trimmed it for the Iceland-faring, and had with him his kindred and his household goods; and many friends of his betook themselves to faring with him. He pulled down the temple, and had with him most of the timbers which had been therein, and mould moreover from under the stall whereon Thor had sat.

Thereafter Thorolf sailed into the main sea, and had wind at will, and made land, and sailed south along and west about Reekness, and then fell the wind, and they saw that two big bights cut into the land.

Then Thorolf cast overboard the pillars of his high-seat, which had been in the temple, and on one of them was Thor carven; withal he spake over them, that there he would abide in Iceland, whereas Thor should let those pillars come a-land.

But when they drifted from off the ship they were borne towards the westernmost firth in sight, and folk deemed that they went in sooth no slower than might have been looked for.

After that came a sea breeze, and they sailed west about Snowfellsness and stood into the firth. There see they that the firth is mighty broad and long, with great fells rising on either side thereof. Then Thorolf gave name to the firth and called it Broadfirth. He took land on the south side of the firth, nigh the midmost, and laid his ship in the creek, which thereafter they called Templewick.

Thereafter they espied the land and found on the outermost point of a ness north of the bay that Thor was come a-land with the pillars. That was afterwards called Thorsness.

Thereafter Thorolf fared with fire through his land out from Staff-river in the west, and east to that river which is now called Thors-river, and settled his shipmates there. But he set up for himself a great house at Templewick which he called Templestead. There he let build a temple, and a mighty house it was. There was a door in the side-wall and nearer to one end thereof. Within the door stood the pillars of the high-seat, and nails were therein; they were called the Gods' nails. Therewithin was there a great frith-place. But off the inmost house was there another house, of that fashion whereof now is the choir of a church, and there stood a stall in the midst of the floor in the fashion of an altar, and thereon lay a ring without a join that weighed twenty ounces, and on that must men swear all oaths; and that ring must the chief have on his arm at all man-motes.

On the stall should also stand the blood-bowl, and therein the blood-rod was, like unto a sprinkler, and therewith should be sprinkled from the bowl that blood

which is called "Hlaut", which was that kind of blood which flowed when those beasts were smitten who were sacrificed to the Gods. But round about the stall were the Gods arrayed in the Holy Place.

To that temple must all men pay toll, and be bound to follow the temple-priest in all farings even as now are the thingmen of chiefs. But the chief must uphold the temple at his own charges, so that it should not go to waste, and hold therein feasts of sacrifice.

Now Thorolf called that ness Thorsness which lieth between Swordfirth and Templewick; on the ness is a fell, and that fell Thorolf held in such worship that he laid down that no man unwashed should turn his eyes thither, and that nought should be done to death on the fell, either man or beast, until it went therefrom of its own will. That fell he called Holy Fell, and he trowed that thither he should fare when he died, and all his kindred from the ness. On the tongue of the ness whereas Thor had come a-land he made all dooms be held, and thereon he set up a county Thing.

And so holy a place that was, that he would nowise that men should defile the field with blood-shedding, and moreover none should go thither for their needs, but to that end was appointed a skerry called Dirtskerry.

Now Thorolf waxed of great largesse in his housekeeping, and had many men about him; for in those days meat was good to get both from the isles and from the take of the sea.

Chapter 5

Biorn Ketilson Comes West-Over-The-Sea, But Will Not Abide There

Now must we tell of Biorn, the son of Ketil Flatneb, that he sailed West-over-the-sea when he and Thorolf Most-beard sundered as is aforesaid.

He made for the South-isles; but when he came West-over-the-sea, then was Ketil Flatneb his father dead, but he found there Helgi his brother and his sisters, and they offered him good entertainment with them.

But Biorn saw that they had another troth, and nowise manly it seemed to him that they had cast off the faith that their kin had held; and he had no heart to dwell therein, and would not take up his abode there. Yet was he the winter through with Auth his sister and Thorstein her son.

But when they found that he would not be at one with his kindred, they called him Biorn the Easterner, and deemed it ill that he would not abide there.

Chapter 6

Biorn Comes Out To Iceland

Biorn was two winters in the South-isles before he dight him to fare to Iceland; with him in that faring was Hallstein Thorolfson; and they made haven at Broadfirth, and took land out from Staff-river, betwixt that and Lavafirth, by Thorolf's rede. Biorn dwelt at Burgholt in Bearhaven, and he was the most noble-hearted of men.

Hallstein, the son of Thorolf, deemed it less than manly to take land at the hands of his father; so he fared west over Broadfirth, and there took to himself land, and dwelt at Hallsteinsness.

Certain winters thereafter came out Auth the Deep-minded; and the first winter she was with Biorn her brother, but afterwards she made her own all the Dalelands in Broadfirth between Skraumuhlaups-river and Daymeal-water, and dwelt at Hvamm.

In those days was all Broadfirth settled; but little need there is to speak of the land-taking of those men who come not into the story.

Chapter 7

Of The Kin Of Kiallak

There was a man hight Geirrood who took land from Thors-river eastward unto Longdale, and dwelt at Ere; with him came out Ulfar the Champion, to whom Geirrood gave lands round about Ulfar's-fell; with him too came Fingeir, son of Thorstein Snowshoe. He dwelt in Swanfirth, and his son was Thorfin, the father of Thorbrand of Swanfirth.

There was a man hight Vestar, son of Thorolf Bladderpate; he brought to Iceland his father, a man well on in years, and took land west away from Whalefirth, and dwelt at Onward-ere. His son was Asgeir, who dwelt there afterwards.

Biorn the Easterner died the first of these land-settlers, and was buried at Burgbrook. He left behind two sons: one was Kiallak the Old, who dwelt at Bearhaven after his father. Kiallak had to wife Astrid, daughter of Rolf the Hersir, and sister of Steinolf the Low. They had three children: Thorgrim the Priest was a son of theirs, and their daughter was Gerd, she whom Thorrood the Priest, son of Odd the Strong, had to wife; their third child was Helga, whom Asgeir of Ere had to wife.

From the children of Kiallak is sprung a great kindred, which is called the Kiallekings.

Ottar was the name of another son of Biorn; he married Gro, the daughter of Geirleif of Bardstrand. Their sons were these: Helgi, the father of Osvif the

Wise, and Biorn, the father of Vigfus of Drapalith; but Vilgeir was the third son of Ottar Bjornson.

Thorolf Most-beard married in his old age, and had to wife her who is called Unn; some say that she was daughter of Thorstein the Red, but Ari the Learned, son of Thorgils, numbers her not among his children. Thorolf and Unn had a son who was called Stein; that lad Thorolf gave to Thor his friend, and called him Thorstein, and the boy was very quick of growth.

Now Hallstein Thorolfson had to wife Osk, daughter of Thorstein the Red; Thorstein was their son; he was fostered at Thorolf's, and was called Thorstein the Swart; but his own son Thorolf called Thorstein Codbiter.

Chapter 8 Of Thorolf Halt-Foot

In those days came out Geirrid, the sister of Geirrod of Ere, and he gave her dwelling in Burgdale up from Swanfirth. She let build her hall athwart the highway, and all men should ride through it who passed by. Therein stood ever a table, and meat to be given to whomsoever had will thereto, and therefore was she deemed to be the greatest and noblest of women. Biorn, son of Bolverk Blinding-snout, had had Geirrid to wife, and their son was called Thorolf, and was a mighty viking; he came out some time after his mother, and was with her the first winter. Thorolf deemed the lands of Burgdale but too narrow, and he challenged Ulfar the Champion for his lands, and bade him to the holm-gang because he was an old man and a childless. But Ulfar had liefer die than be cowed by Thorolf. They went to holm in Swanfirth, and Ulfar fell, but Thorolf was wounded in the leg, and went halt ever after, and therefore was he called Halt-foot. Now he set up house in Hvamm in Thorsriverdale. He took to himself the land after Ulfar, and was the most wrongful of men. He sold land to the freedmen of Thorbrand of Swanfirth; Ulfar's-fell to Ulfar, to wit, and Orligstead to Orlig; and they dwelt there long after. Thorolf Halt-foot had three children; his son was called Arnkel, but his daughter Gunnfrid, whom Thorbein of Thorbeinstead up on Waterneck east from Drapalith had to wife; their sons were Sigmund and Thorgils, but their daughter was hight Thorgerd, whom Vigfus of Drapalith had to wife. Another daughter of Thorolf was Geirrid, whom Thorolf the son of Heriolf Holkinrazi had to wife. They dwelt at Mewlithe; their children were Thorarin the Swart and Gudny.

Chapter 9 Of Thorstein Codbiter. Battle At Thorsness Thing

Thorolf Most-Beard died at Templestead, and then Thorstein Codbiter took his inheritance after him. He then took to wife Thora, daughter of Olaf Feilan and sister of Thord the Yeller, who dwelt at Hvamm in those days.

Thorolf was buried at Howness, west of Templestead.

At that time so great was the pride of the kin of Kiallak, that they thought themselves before all other men in that countryside; and so many were the kinsmen of Biorn that there was no kindred so mighty in all Broadfirth.

In those days Barne-Kiallak, their kinsman, dwelt in Midfell-strand, at the stead which is now called Kiallakstead, and a many sons he had who were of good conditions; they all brought help to their kin south of the firth at Things and folk-motes.

On a spring-tide at Thorsness Thing these brothers-in-law Thorgrim Kiallakson and Asgeir of Ere gave out that they would not give a lift to the pride of the Thorsness-folk, and that they would go their errands in the grass as elsewhere men do in man-motes, though those men were so proud that they made their lands holier than other lands of Broadfirth. They gave forth that they would not tread shoe for the going to the out-skerries for their easements.

But when Thorstein Codbiter was ware of this, he had no will that they should defile that field which Thorolf his father had honoured over all other places in his lands.

So he called his friends to him, and bade them keep those folk from the field by battle if they were minded to defile it.

In this rede were with him Thorgeir the son of Geirrod of Ere, and the Swanfirthers Thorfin and Thorbrand his son, Thorolf Halt-foot, and many other thingmen and friends of Thorstein.

But in the evening when the Kiallekings were full of meat they took their weapons and went out on to the ness; but when Thorstein and his folk saw that they turned off from the road that lay skerry-ward, they sprang to their weapons and ran after them with whooping and egging on. And when the Kiallekings saw that, they ran together and defended themselves.

But those of Thorsness made so hard an onset that Kiallak and his men shrunk off the field and clon to the foreshore, and then they turned against them therewith, and there was a hard battle between them; the Kiallekings were the fewer, but they had a chosen band. But now the men of Woodstrand were ware of this, Thorgest the Old and Aslak of Longdale; they ran thereto and went betwixt them; but both sides were of the fiercest, nor could they sunder them before they gave out that they would aid those who should hearken to their bidding to sunder.

Therewith were they parted, but yet in such wise that the Kiallekings might not go up on to the field; so they took ship, and fared away from the Thing.

There fell men of either side, the most of the Kiallekings; and a many were hurt. No truce could be struck, because neither side would handsel it, but swore to fall on each other as soon as it might be brought about. The field was all bloody whereas they fought, as well as there whereas the men of Thorsness had stood while the fight was toward.

Chapter 10

Peace Made

After the Thing the chiefs on either side sat at home with many men about them, and much ill blood there was between them. Their friends took this rede, to send word to Thord the Yeller, who was then the greatest chief in Broadfirth: he was akin to the Kiallekings, but closely allied to Thorstein; therefore he seemed to be the likeliest of men to settle peace between them. But when this message came to Thord, he fared thither with many men, and strove to make peace. He found that far apart were the minds of them; yet he brought about truce between them, and a meeting to be summoned. The close of the matter was that Thord should make it up, on such terms that whereas the Kiallekings laid down that they would never go their errands to Dirts Kerry, Thorstein claimed that they should not defile the field now more than aforesaid. The Kiallekings claimed that all they who had fallen on Thorstein's part should be fallen unhallowed, because they had first set on them with the mind to fight. But the Thorsnessings said that all the Kiallekings had fallen unhallowed because of their law-breaking at a Holy Thing.

But though the terms laid down were hard for the award, yet Thord yeasaid the taking it on him rather than that they should part unappeased. Now Thord thus set forth the beginning of the award: "Let hap abide as hap befell"; said that for no manslayings nor hurts which had happened at Thorsness should man-gild be paid. The field he gave out unhallowed because of the blood shed in wrath that had fallen thereon, and that land he declared now no holier than another, laying down that the cause thereof were those who first bestirred them to wounding others. And that he called the only peace-breaking that had betid, and said withal that no Thing should be held there thenceforward. But that they might be well appeased and friends thenceforth, he made this further award, that Thorgrim Kiallakson should uphold the temple half at his own costs, and answer for half the temple toll, and the Thingmen the other half. He should also help Thorstein thenceforth in all law-cases, and strengthen him in whatso hallowing he might bestow on the Thing, wherso it should next be set up.

Withal Thord the Yeller gave to Thorgrim Kiallakson Thorhild his kinswoman, the daughter of Thorkel Main-acre his neighbour; and thenceforth was he called Thorgrim the Priest. Then they moved the Thing up the ness, where it now is; and whenas Thord the Yeller settled the Quarter Things, he caused this to be the Quarter Thing of the Westfirthers, and men should seek to that Thing from all over the Westfirths. There is yet to be seen the Doom-ring, where men were doomed to the sacrifice. In that ring stands the stone of Thor over which those men were broken who were sacrificed, and the colour of the blood on that stone is yet to be seen.

And at that Thing was one of the holiest of steads, but there men were not forbidden to go their errands.

Chapter 11

Of Thorgrim The Priest, The Death Of Thorstein Codbiter

Thorstein Codbiter became a man of the greatest largesse; he had ever with him sixty freedmen; he was a great gatherer of household stuff, and was ever going a-fishing.

He first let raise the homestead at Holyfell, and brought thither his household, and it was the greatest of temple-steeds of those days.

Withal he let make a homestead on the ness near to where had been the Thing. That homestead he let make well arrayed, and he gave it afterwards to Thorstein the Swart, his kinsman, who dwelt there thenceforth, and was the wisest of men. Thorstein Codbiter had a son who was called Bork the Thick. But on a summer when Thorstein was five-and-twenty winters old, Thora bore him a man-child who was called Grim, and sprinkled with water. That lad Thorstein gave to Thor, and said that he should be a Temple- Priest, and called him Thorgrim.

That same harvest Thorstein fared out to Hoskuldsey to fish; but on an evening of harvest a shepherd-man of Thorstein's fared after his sheep north of Holyfell; there he saw how the fell was opened on the north side, and in the fell he saw mighty fires, and heard huge clamour therein, and the clank of drinking-horns; and when he hearkened if perchance he might hear any words clear of others, he heard that there was welcomed Thorstein Codbiter and his crew, and he was bidden to sit in the high-seat over against his father.

That foretoken the shepherd told in the evening to Thora, Thorstein's wife; she spake little thereon, and said that might be a foreboding of greater tidings.

The morning after came men west-away from Hoskuldsey and told these tidings: that Thorstein Codbiter had been drowned in the fishing; and men thought that great scathe. Thora went on keeping house there afterwards, and thereto joined himself with her he who is called Hallward; they had a son together, who was called Mar.

Chapter 12

Of Arnkel The Priest And Others

The sons of Thorstein Codbiter grew up at home with their mother, and they were the hopefulest of men; but Thorgrim was the foremost of them in all things, and was a chief as soon as he had age thereto. Thorgrim wedded west in Dyrafirth, and had to wife Thordis Sur's daughter, and betook himself west to his brothers- in-law Gisli and Thorkel.

Now Thorgrim slew Vestein Vesteinson at the harvest feast in Hawkdale; but the autumn next after, when Thorgrim was five-and- twenty years old, even as his

father, Gisli his brother-in-law slew him at the harvest feast at Seastead. Some nights after Thordis his wife brought forth a son, and the lad was called Thorgrim after his father. A little thereafter Thordis was wedded to Bork the Thick, Thorgrim's brother, and betook her to housekeeping with him at Holyfell. Then fared Thorgrim her son to Swanfirth, and was there at fostering with Thorbrand; he was somewhat reckless in his youth, and was called Snerrir, but afterwards Snorri. Thorbrand of Swanfirth had to wife Thurid, daughter of Thorfin Selthorison from Redmell.

These were their children: Thorleif Kimbi was the eldest, the second was Snorri, the third Thorod, the fourth Thorfin, the fifth Thormod; their daughter was called Thorgerd; all these were foster-brethren of Snorri Thorgrimson.

At that time Arnkel, son of Thorolf Haltfoot, dwelt at Lairstead by Vadils-head; he was the biggest and strongest of men, a great lawman and mighty wise, and was a good and true man, and before all others, even in those parts, in luck of friends and hardihood; he was withal a Temple-Priest, and had many Thingmen.

Thorgrim Kiallakson dwelt at Bearhaven as is aforesaid, and he and Thorhild had three sons: Brand was the eldest; he dwelt at Crossness by Sealriver head. Another was Arngrim; he was a big man and a strong, large of nose, big-boned of face, bleak-red of hair, early bald in front; sallow of hue, his eyes great and fair; he was very masterful, and exceeding in wrongfulness, and therefore was he called Stir.

Vermund was the name of the youngest son of Thorgrim Kiallakson; he was a tall man and a slender, fair to look on; he was called Vermund the Slender. The son of Asgeir of Ere was called Thorlak; he had to wife Thurid, the daughter of Audum Stote of Lavafirth. These were their children: Steinthor, Bergthor, Thormod, Thord Wall-eye, and Helga. Steinthor was the foremost of the children of Thorlak; he was a big man and a strong, and most skilled in arms of all men, and he was the best knit of men, and meek of mood in every-day life. Steinthor is held for the third best man-at-arms of Iceland, along with these, Helgi, the son of Droplaug, and Vermund Kogr.

Thormod was a wise man and a peaceful. Thord Wall-eye was a very masterful man. Bergthor was the youngest, yet had he all the makings of a man in him.

Chapter 13

Of Snorri Thorgrimson

Snorri Thorgrimson was fourteen winters old when he fared abroad with his foster-brothers Thorleif Kimbi and Thorod. Bork the Thick gave him fifty hundreds in silver for his voyage. They had a good voyage, and came to Norway in harvest, and were the winter through in Rogaland.

Snorri abode with Erling Skialgson at Soli, and Erling was good to him because of the ancient friendship between their former kinsmen, Horda-Karl and Thorolf Most-beard to wit.

The summer after they fared out to Iceland and were late-ready. They had a hard outing of it, and came a little before winter to Hornfirth; but when the Broadfirthers dight them from shipboard, far asunder showed the array of the twain, Snorri and Thorleif Kimbi. Thorleif bought the best horse he could get, and had withal a fair-stained saddle, and glittering and fair-dight sword, and gold-inlaid spear, and his shield was dark blue and much gilded about; and all his clothes were well wrought withal. He had spent thereon pretty much all his faring-money; but Snorri was clad in a black cape, and rode a black mare, a good one. He had an ancient trough-saddle, and his weapons were little wrought for show. But the array of Thorod was between the two.

They rode from the east over the Side, and then as the road lay, west to Burgfirth, and so west across the Flats, and gusted at Swanfirth. Thereafter Snorri rode to Holyfell, and was minded to abide there the winter through. Bork, however, took that matter slowly, and folk had much laughter over his array. Bork let out so much as that he had done unhappily with the faring-money, since it was all gone.

But one day in the beginning of winter, at Holyfell in came twelve men all armed. And there was come Eyolf the Gray, a kinsman of Bork and son of Thord the Yeller; he dwelt at Otterdale west in Ernirfirth. But when folk asked for tidings, they said that they had slain Gisli Surson, and told of the men who were fallen before him or ever he fell. At these tidings was Bork exceeding glad, and bade Thordis and Snorri welcome Eyolf at their best, as a man who had thrust off so much shame from the hands of them and their kin.

Snorri let out little over those tidings, but Thordis said: "Cheer good enough for Gisli's bane if grout is given him."

Bork answered: "I meddle not with meals."

So Bork set Eyolf in the high-seat, and his fellows out from him, and they cast their weapons on the floor. Bork sat inside of Eyolf, and then Snorri Thordis bare in dishes of grout to the board, and had spoons withal; but when she set one before Eyolf, one of the spoons fell down for her. She stooped after it, and took Eyolf's sword therewith and drew it swiftly, and thrust it up under the board, and the thrust smote Eyolf's thigh, but the hilt caught against the board; yet was the hurt sore. Bork thrust the table away and smote at Thordis, but Snorri thrust Bork away, so that he fell over, and caught hold of his mother and set her down beside him, and said that enough were her heart-burnings though she were left unbeaten.

Then sprang up Eyolf and his men, and man caught hold of man; but such was the end of these matters that Bork handselled self-doom to Eyolf, and much fee he awarded himself for his hurt; and withal he fared away. But thereof waxed much ill-will betwixt the twain, Bork and Snorri.

Chapter 14

Snorri Gets Holyfell

At the Spring Thing the next summer Snorri claimed his father's heritage from Bork. Bork answered that he would yield him his heritage. "But I am loth," said he, "to share Holyfell asunder, though I see that it is meet for us not to dwell in one stead together. So I will redeem my share of the land." Snorri answered: "It is most fair that thou shouldst lay the land at as dear a price as thou wilt, but fair also that I choose which of us shall redeem it."

Bork thought over that matter, and so deemed that Snorri would not have loose money to give for the land if he should have to redeem it speedily, and he laid the worth of half the land at sixty hundreds of silver, having first set aside the islands, because he thought that he should get them at but little price when Snorri should have set up house and home elsewhere.

There followed therewith that the money should be straightway paid up, and nought of the money should be borrowed from other folk. "And choose thou now, Snorri, here on the spot which thou wilt take," said Bork.

Snorri answered: "This know I now, kinsman Bork, that thou deemest me sick of purse when thou layest down the land of Holyfell so good cheap; yet I choose to take to me my father's land at that price, so reach me out thine hand, and handsel me now the land."

"That shall not be," said Bork, "before every penny is first yolden."

Then said Snorri to Thorbrand his foster-father: "Did I hand over to thee any money last autumn?" "Yea," said Thorbrand, and therewith drew a purse from under his cape. Then was the silver told, and every penny paid for the land, and after that was left in the purse sixty hundreds of silver.

Bork took the money, and gave handsel to Snorri of the land.

Then said Bork: "More of silver hast thou got, kinsman, than we wotted; now I will that we give up the ill-will which was between us; and I will add this to thy well-doing, that we keep house both together at Holyfell these seasons, since thou hast little of live-stock."

Snorri answered: "Well then, thou shalt make the most of thy live-stock; but yet from Holyfell shalt thou get thee gone." And so must it be even as Snorri would.

But when Bork was ready to depart from Holyfell, Thordis went forth and named witnesses to this for herself, that she gave out that she was parted from Bork her husband, and gave that for the cause that he had smitten her, and she would not lie under his hand. Then were their goods divided, and Snorri stood forth for his mother because he was her heir. Then Bork took the lot which he had minded for another, that he got but a little price for the islands.

Thereafter Bork fared away from Holyfell, and west to Midfell- strand, and dwelt first at Borkstead between Orris-knoll and Tongue.

Chapter 15

Of Snorri The Priest, Of The Mewlithe-Folk

Snorri Thorgrimson set up house at Holyfell, and his mother was over the housekeeping. Mar Hallwardson, his father's brother, betook himself thither with much live-stock, and was head over Snorri's household and husbandry. There Snorri held a thronged house of the greatest largesse.

Snorri was middling in height and somewhat slender, fair to look on, straight-faced and of light hue; of yellow hair and red beard; he was meek of mood in his daily ways; little men knew of his thought for good or ill; he was a wise man, and foreseeing in many things, enduring in wrath and deep in hatred; of good rede was he for his friends, but his unfriends deemed his counsels but cold.

He was now Warden of the Temple there; therefore was he called Snorri the Priest, and a great chief he became; but for his rule he was much envied, because there were many who for the sake of their kin thought they were of no less worth than he, but had more to fall back upon, because of their strength and proven hardihood.

Now Bork the Thick and Thordis Sur's daughter, had a daughter who was called Thurid, and was at this time wedded to Thorbiorn the Thick, who dwelt at Frodis-water. He was the son of Worm the Slender, who had dwelt there and had settled the land of Frodis-water; he had before had to wife Thurid of Broadwick, daughter of Asbrand of Combe; she was sister to Biorn, the Champion of the Broadwickers, who hereafter cometh again into this tale, and to Arnbiorn the Strong. These were the sons of Thorbiorn and Thurid: Ketil the Champion, Gunnlaug, and Hallstein.

But Thorbiorn of Frodis-water was overbearing and reckless with men lesser than he.

In those days dwelt at Mewlithe, Geirrid, daughter of Thorolf Halt-foot, with Thorarin the Swart, her son. He was a big man and a strong; ugly he was, and moody and quiet in his daily guise: he was called the Peace-maker. He had not much wealth to boast of, yet was his housekeeping gainful. So little of a meddler was he, that his foes said that he had no less the heart of a woman than a man. He was a married man, and his wife was called Aud; Gudny was his sister, whom Vermund the Slender had to wife.

At Holt, west of Mewlithe, dwelt a widow who was called Katla. She was fair to look upon, but yet not to all men's minds. Her son was called Odd; he was a big man and of good pith, a mighty brawler, and babbling, slippery, and slanderous.

Now Gunnlaug, the son of Thorbiorn the Thick, was eager to learn; he often stayed at Mewlithe, and learned cunning from Geirrid, Thorolt's daughter, because she knew much wizard lore. But on a day Gunnlaug came to Holt on his way to Mewlithe, and talked much with Katla; but she asked if he were minded once more for Mewlithe to pat the old carline's belly there. Gunnlaug said that was not his errand, "but thou art not so young, Katla, that it befits thee to cast Geirrid's eld in her teeth."

Katla answered: "I did not deem that we were so like herein; but it matters not," said she; "ye men deem that there is no woman beside Geirrid, but more women know somewhat than she alone."

Odd Katlason fared often to Mewlithe with Gunnlaug; but when they happened to go back late, Katla would often bid Gunnlaug to abide there at Holt, but he went home ever.

Chapter 16

Gunnlaug Is Witch-Ridden, Geirrid Summoned, Of Thorarin

On a day at the beginning of that winter wherein Snorri first kept house at Holyfell, it befell that Gunnlaug Thorbiornson fared to Mewlithe, and Odd Katlason with him. Gunnlaug and Geirrid talked long together that day, and when the evening was far spent Geirrid said to Gunnlaug: "I would that thou go not home this evening, for there will be many ride-by-nights about, and oft is a fiend in a fair skin; but methinks that now thou seemest not over-lucky to look upon."

Gunnlaug answered: "No risk may there be to me," says he, "since we are two together."

She said: "No gain will Odd's help be to thee, and withal thou wilt thyself have to pay for thine own wilfulness."

Thereafter they went out, Gunnlaug and Odd, and fared till they came to Holt. Katla was by then in her bed; she bade Odd pray Gunnlaug to abide there. He said he had so done, "and he must needs fare home," said he. "Let him fare then as his fate he shapes," says she.

Gunnlaug came not home in the evening, and folk talked it over that he should be searched for; but the search came not off. But in the night, when Thorbiorn looked out, he found Gunnlaug his son before the door; and there he lay witless withal. Then was he borne in and his clothes pulled off; he was all black and blue about the shoulders, and the flesh was falling from the bones. He lay all the winter sick of his hurts, and great talk there was over that sickness of his. Odd Katlason spread that about that Geirrid must have ridden him; for he said that they had parted with short words that evening. And most men deemed that it was even thus.

This was about the summoning days. So Thorbiorn rode to Mewlithe and summoned Geirrid for this cause, that she was a ride-by-night and had brought about Gunnlaug's trouble. The case went to the Thorsness Thing, and Snorri the Priest took up the case for Thorbiorn his brother-in-law; but Arnkel the Priest defended the case for Geirrid his sister: a jury of twelve should give a verdict thereon. But neither of the two, Snorri or Arnkel, were deemed fit to bear witness, because of their kinship to the plaintiff and defendant.

Then was Helgi, the Priest of Templegarth, the father of Biorn, the father of Gest, the father of Shald-Ref, called to give out the twelve men's finding. Arnkel

the Priest went to the doom and made oath on the stall-ring that Geirrid had not wrought the hurt of Gunnlaug; Thorarin made oath with him and ten other men, and then Helgi gave the verdict for Geirrid. And the case of Thorbiorn and Snorri came to nought, and thereof gat they shame.

Chapter 17

Strife At The Thorsness Thing; Snorri Goes Between

At this Thing Thorgrim Kiallakson and his sons strove with Illugi the Black about the jointure and dowry of Ingibiorg, Asbiorn's daughter, the wife of Illugi, which Tilforni had had in wardship.

At the Thing great storms befell, so that no man could come to the Thing from Midfell-strand, and a great drawback to Thorgrim's strength it was that his kin might not come.

Illugi had a hundred men and those a chosen band, and he pushed the case forward; but the Kiallekings went to the court, and would fain break it up.

Then there was a mighty throng, and men made it their business there to part them; but so the matter went, that Tinforni had to give up the money according to Illugi's claim. So says Odd the Skald in Illugi's lay:

"It was west at the Thorsness Thing fray was there foughten,
And there was the man by hap ever upholden;
The staff of the song from the helm that upriseth
Was a-claiming the dowry amidst of the Mote.
So the fair load of Fornir's scrip fell in the ending
To the keen-witted wight one, the warrior that feedeth
The swart swallow's brother that flits o'er the fight.
But no easy matter was peace unto menfolk."

Chapter 18

Men Will Ransack At Mewlithe; Thorarin Falls To Fight

That summer died Thorgrim Kiallakson, whereon Vermund the Slender, his son, took the homestead at Bearhaven; he was a wise man, and marvellous wholesome of redes. Stir also had by then dwelt for some time at Lava, up from Bearhaven; he was a wise man and a hardy. He had to wife Thorbiorg, daughter of Thorstein Windy-Nose. Thorstein and Hall were their sons; Asdis was the name of their daughter, a manly-souled woman, and somewhat high-minded. Stir was a masterful man in the countryside, and had a many folk about him; he was held guilty at many men's hands, for that he wrought many slayings and booted none.

That summer came out a ship to the Salteremouth: half of it was owned by Northmen, and their skipper was called Biorn; he went to dwell at Ere with Steinthor. The other half was owned by South- islanders, and Algeir was their

skipper; he went to dwell at Mewlithe with Thorarin the Swart, and with him a fellow of his who was called Nail, a big man, and swift of foot; he was Scotch of kin.

Now Thorarin had a good fighting horse up in the fells; and Thorbiorn the Thick withal had many stud horses together, which he kept on the fell-pastures, and he was wont to choose out of them in autumn horses for slaughter. But in the autumn it befell that Thorbiorn's horses were not to be found, though they were searched for far and wide: and that autumn the weather was somewhat hard.

In the beginning of winter Thorbiorn sent Odd Katlason south over the heath to a stead called Under-the-Lava, where there dwelt a man called Cunning-Gils, a foreseeing man, and a great man for spying after thefts and such like other matters as he was wistful to pry into. Odd asked whether it was outland men or out-parish men or neighbours who had stolen Thorbiorn's horses.

Cunning-Gils, answered: "Say thou to Thorbiorn even as I say, that I deem that those horses will not have gone far away from their pastures; but risky it is to tell of men's names, and it is better to lose one's own than that great troubles should arise therefrom."

Now when Odd came to Frodis-water, Thorbiorn deemed that Cunning-Gils had made a thrust at the Mewlithers in that matter. Odd said too that he had said as much as that they were the likeliest for the horse-stealing who were themselves penniless, and yet had lately got them increase of servants more than was their wont. In these words Thorbiorn thought that the Mewlithers were clearly meant.

After that rode Thorbiorn from home with eleven men. Hallstein, his son, was in that journey, but Ketil the Champion, another son of his, was then abroad; there was Thorir, the son of Ern of Erknoll, a neighbour of Thorbiorn's and the briskest of men; Odd Katlason, too, was in this journey; but when they came to Holt to Katla, she did on Odd her son an earth-brown kirtle, which she had then newly made.

Thereafter they fared to Mewlithe, and there stood Thorarin and the home men out in the door when they saw the men coming.

Then they greeted Thorbiorn and asked for tidings. Thorbiorn said: "This is our errand here, Thorarin," says he, "that we are seeking after the horses which were stolen from me in the autumn; therefore we claim to ransack thine house."

Thorarin answered: "Is this ransacking taken up according to law; or have ye called any lawful law-seers to search into this case; or will ye handsel truce to us in this ransacking; or have ye sought further elsewhere for the doing of this ransacking?"

Thorbiorn answered: "We deem not that any ransacking need be pushed further."

Thorarin answered: "Then will we flatly refuse this ransacking, if ye begin and carry on the search lawlessly."

Said Thorbiorn: "Then shall we take that for sooth, that thou wilt be found proven guilty, if thou wilt not have the matter thrust off thee by the ransacking."

"Ye may do as ye please," said Thorarin.

Thereafter Thorbiorn made a door-doom, and named six men for that doom; and then Thorbiorn gave forth the case at Thorarin's hands for the horse-stealing.

Then came Geirrid out to the door, and saw what betid, and said: "Overtrue is that which men say, Thorarin, that thou hast more of the mind of a woman than a man, when thou bearest from Thorbiorn the Thick all shame soever; nor wot I why I have such a son."

Then said Alfgeir the Skipper, "We will give thee aid in whatsoever thou wilt bestir thyself."

Thorarin answered: "No longer will I stand here;" and therewith Thorarin and his folk ran out and would break up the court. They were seven in all, and therewithal both sides rushed into the fight. Thorarin slew a house-carle of Thorbiorn's, and Alfgeir another, and there fell also a housecarle of Thorarin's; but no weapons would bite on Odd Katlason.

Now the goodwife Aud calls out on her women to part them, and they cast clothes over the weapons.

Thereafter Thorarin and his men went in, but Thorbiorn rode off with his folk, and they put off the case to the Thorsness Thing. They rode up along the Creeks, and bound up their wounds under a stackyard that is called Combe-Garth.

But in the home-field at Mewlithe men found a hand whereas they had fought, and it was shown to Thorarin; he saw that it was a woman's hand, and asked where Aud was; it was told him that she lay in bed. Then he went to her, and asked whether she were wounded; she bade him pay no heed to that, but he was ware withal that her hand had been hewn off. Then he called to his mother, and bade her bind up the wound.

Then Thorarin rushed out with his fellows and ran after those of Thorbiorn, and when they were but a little from the garth they heard the babble of Thorbiorn and his folk; and Hallstein took up the word and said:

"Thorarin has thrust off from him the reproach of cowardice to-day."

"Boldly he fought," said Thorbiorn; "yet many become brave when brought to bay, but natheless are not over-brave between whiles."

Then said Odd: "Thorarin must needs be the bravest of men, but luckless will it be deemed that he so wrought as to cut off his wife's hand."

"Is that sure?" said Thorbiorn.

"Sure as day," says Odd. With that they jumped up, and made great shouting and laughter thereover.

In that very nick of time came up Thorarin and his folk, and Nail was the foremost; but when he saw them threaten with their weapons, he blenched and ran forth and up into the fell, and there became one witless with fear. But Thorarin rushed at Thorbiorn and smote his sword into his head, and clave it

down to the jaw-teeth. Then Thorir Ernson with two others set on Thorarin, and Hallstein and another on Alfgeir. Odd Katlason with another man gat on to a fellow of Alfgeir's, and three of Thorbiorn's fellows on two of Thorarin's folk; and the fight was joined both fierce and fell. But so their dealings ended, that Thorarin cut the leg from Thorir at the thickest of the calf, and slew both his fellows. Hallstein fell before Alfgeir wounded to death; but when Thorarin was free, Odd Katlason fled with two men; he was not wounded, because no weapon might bite on his kirtle; all their other fellows lay on the field; and there too were slain two housecarles of Thorarin.

Then Thorarin and his men took the horses of Thorbiorn and his folk and rode home; and then they saw where Nail was running along the upper hill-side. And when they came to the home-field, they see that Nail had passed by the garth and made inward towards Buland's-head. There he found two thralls of Thorarin, who were driving their sheep from the Head; he told them of the meeting, and what odds in number of men there was; he said he knew for sure that Thorarin and his men were slain; and therewithal they see how men ride away from the homestead over the field.

Then Thorarin and his folk took to galloping in order to help Nail, that he might not run into the sea or over the cliffs; but he and those others, when they saw men riding eagerly, deemed that there must Thorbiorn be going. Then they all betook themselves to running afresh up on to the Head, till they came to that place which is now called Thrall-scree, and there Thorarin and his folk got Nail taken, because he had well-nigh broken his wind, but the thralls leapt over from the Head and were lost, as was like to be, because the Head is so high, that whatsoever leaps thereover must perish.

Thereafter Thorarin and his men rode home, and there was Geirrid in the door, and she asked how they had fared; but Thorarin sang this stave:

"The word of a woman wherewith I was wited
Have I warded away now where war dared the warrior,
He who slayeth the fire-flaught flaming in fight:
(The share of the eagle was corpse-meat new slaughtered.)
No yielding forsooth did I bear about yonder,
Where, amidst of the corpse-worms I met him,
The praiser manly the prayer of War-god beworshipped,
Not often I boast me of deeds of my doing."

Chapter 19

The Lay Of The Mewlithers

For one night was Thorarin at home at Mewlithe, but in the morning Aud asked him what shift he was minded to seek for himself. "No will have I to turn thee out of my house," said she; "but I fear that there will be many a door-doom holden here this winter, for well I wot that Snorri the Priest must needs take up the case for Thorbiorn his brother-in-law." Then sang Thorarin:

"The wakener of law-wrong shall nowise meseemeth
This winter that waneth lay blood-wite on me,
For yonder is Arnkel, and there, as my hope is,
My life-warden liveth all praise-worth to win.
Might I come but to Vermund and fare with the feeder
Of the flame of the God of the field where the corpses
Lie fallen in slaughter, then surely for me
Might Hugin's son feed fat on field of the slain."

Chapter 20 The End Of Katla And Odd

Now Geirrid, the goodwife at Mewlithe, sent word to Lirstead that she was ware of this, that Odd Katlason had stricken off the hand from Aud; she said that she had Aud's own word therefor, and that Odd had made boast of it before his friends.

But when Arnkel and Thorarin heard this, they rode from home out to Mewlithe, twelve men all told, and were there through the night; but in the morning they rode out to Holt, from whence their going was seen.

Now at Holt was no man at home but Odd. Katla sat on the dais, and span yarn. She bade Odd sit beside her; "and be thou as near to me as thou may'st." She bade her women sit in their seats, "and be ye silent," quoth she, "and I will have words with them."

So when Arnkel and his folk came, they went in there, and when they came into the chamber, Katla greeted Arnkel and asked for tidings. Arnkel said he had nought to tell, and asked where was Odd. Katla said he had gone south to Broadwick. "Nor would he have foregone meeting thee if he had been at home, for that we trust thee well for thy manliness."

"That may be," said Arnkel, "but we will have a ransacking here."

"That shall be as ye will," said Katla, and bade her cookmaid bear light before them and unlock the meat bower, "that is the only locked chamber in the stead."

Now they saw, how Katla span yarn from her rock, and they searched through the house and found not Odd; and thereafter they fared away.

But when they were come a short space from the garth, Arnkel stood still and said:

"Whether now has Katla cast a hood over our heads, and was Odd her son there whereas we saw but a rock?"

"She is not unlike to have so done," said Thorarin, "so let us fare back." And that they did.

But when it was seen from Holt that they turned back, then said Katla to her women:

"Ye shall still sit in your seats, but I will go with Odd out into the fore-chamber." So when they were come out through the chamber door, she went into the porch over against the outer door, and combed Odd her son, and sheared his hair.

Then Arnkel and his folk fall in at the door, and saw where Katla was, and played with a he-goat of hers, and stroked his head and beard, and combed out his fell. Arnkel and his men went into the stove and saw Odd nowhere, but there lay Katla's rock on the bench, and thereby they deemed that Odd could never have been there.

Thereafter they went out and fared away. But when they came nigh to where they had turned before, Arnkel said: "Is it not in your mind that Odd was there in the likeness of that he-goat?"

"I wot not," said Thorarin, "but if we turn back now, then shall we lay hands on Katla."

"We will try once more then," said Arnkel, "and see what will happen;" and therewith they turned again.

But when their faring was seen, Katla asked Odd to come with her; and when they came out, she went to the ash-heap, and bade Odd lie down thereunder, "and abide thou there, whatsoever may come to pass."

Now when those of Arnkel came to the house, they ran in, and so into the chamber, and there sat Katla on the dais and span. She greeted them, and said that their visits came thick and fast. Arnkel said it was so; and therewith his fellows took the rock and hewed it asunder.

Then said Katla: "Ye will not have to say at home this eve that ye had no errand at Holt, since ye have slaughtered my rock."

Then went Arnkel and his folk and sought for Odd within and without, and saw nought quick save a house-boar that Katla owned, which lay under the ash-heap; and thereafter they fared away.

But when they were come halfway to Mewlithe, came Geirrid to meet them, with a workman of hers, and asked, how they had fared. Thorarin told her all about it. She said they had ill sought for Odd: "But I will that ye turn back again once more, and I will fare with you; nought will it avail to sail with leaf-sails whereas Katla is."

With that they turned back. Geirrid had a blue mantle over her; and when their coming was seen from Holt, Katla was told that now they were fourteen folk altogether, and one of them in coloured raiment.

Then said Katla: "Must not Geirrid the troll be coming there? Then may glamour only nowise be brought to bear."

With that she got up from the dais, and took the seat from under her, and there was a lid under that, and the dais was hollow within; therein she made Odd to go, and set everything right as it was before, and sat thereover; but she said withal that she felt somewhat uncouth.

But when those folk came into the chamber, it came to no greetings between them. Geirrid cast off her cloak and went up to Katla, and took a sealskin bag which she had had with her, and did it over Katla's head; and then her fellows bound it fast beneath. Then bade Geirrid break open the dais, and there was Odd found, and bound sithence; and after that those twain were brought up to Buland's-head.

There was Odd hanged, and as he spurned the gallows Arnkel said: "Ill is thy lot from thy mother; and so it is that thou hast verily had an ill mother."

Katla said: "True it may be that he has had no good mother, but the ill lot that he has had from me has not been by my will; but it is my will that all ye may have ill hap from me, and I hope withal that that may come to pass; nor shall it be hidden from you that I wrought that harm to Gunnlaug Thorbiornson wherefrom all these troubles have arisen.

"But thou, Arnkel," said she, "may'st have no ill hap from thy mother, because thou hast none alive; but herein were I fain that my spell may stand fast, that from thy father thou mightest have a lot as much the worse than Odd has had from me, as thou hast the more to risk than he; and I hope that this may be said before all is over, that thou hast an ill father."

Thereafter they stoned her with stones that she died under the Head there; and fared afterwards to Mewlithe, and were there through the night; but the next day they rode home. Now were all these tidings known at one time, and of that tale no folk thought harm: and so the winter wore.

Chapter 21

They Take Rede About The Blood-Feud

The next spring on a day Arnkel called to him for a talk Thorarin his kinsman, Vermund, and Alfgeir, and asked them what kind of help they deemed the friendliest for them: whether they would ride to the Thing; "and that we expend therein all our other friends," said he, "and then one of two things may hap: either that peace will be brought about, and then will your purses be shaken in atoning all who were slain there, or were hurt before you. That too may hap for one thing if the riding to the Thing is risked, that the troubles may wax, if so be the case is defended over-fiercely. But the other choice is to turn all our thoughts to this, that ye may fare abroad with all your loose goods, and let the lands be dealt with as fate may have it, such of them as may not be sold."

Of this kind of help was Alfgeir most fain. Thorarin also said that he saw not how he might have means to atone with money all those guilts which had been wrought in these matters. Vermund said that he would not part from Thorarin whether he would that he should fare abroad with him, or give him fighting-help here in the land. But Thorarin chose that Arnkel should help them to going abroad; so thereafter was a man sent out to Ere, to Biorn the Skipper, to turn all his mind to get the ship ready for them as soon as might be.

Chapter 22

Snorri Summons Thorarin

Now it must be told of Snorri the Priest that he took up the blood-feud for the slaying of Thorbiorn his brother-in-law; he also made Thurid his sister fare home to Holyfell, because the rumour ran that Biorn, the son of Asbrand from Combe, was wont to wend thither to meet her for her beguiling.

Now Snorri deemed that he saw through all the counsel of Arnkel and his friends, as soon as he learned of that ship getting ready for sea, namely, that they had no mind to deliver money atonements for those slayings; because that as yet no biddings of peace were coming forward from their hands; yet was all quiet up to the summoning days. But when that time came round Snorri gathered men, and rode up into Swanfirth with eighty men, because it was then the law to give out the summons for blood-guilt in the hearing of the slayers, or at their home, and not to summon the neighbours till the Thing.

But when Snorri's faring was seen from Lairstead; then men talked together whether they should set on him forthwith, because there were many men there together; but Arnkel said that that should not be; "Snorri's law shall we bear," said he, and he said that only that should be wrought as things stood which need drove them to.

So when Snorri came to Lairstead, no greetings there were betwixt them, and then Snorri summoned Thorarin and all those who had been at the slayings, to the Thorsness Thing.

Arnkel hearkened duly to the summoning, and thereafter Snorri and his band rode away and up into Ulfar's-fell, and when they were gone away, then Thorarin sang:

"O ground whereon groweth the fair flame of hands,
Nought is it as if men were even now robbing
The flinger abroad of the flame of the sword-storm,
Of the law of the lands-folk, for me made all guilty.
Though they, deft in dealing with roof-sun of Odin,
Should lay me down guilty, and out of the law.
Forsooth I can see it that more is their manflock;
But yet may God give us the gain o'er the foemen."

Chapter 23

Of Vigfus And Biorn And Mar

Vigfus, the son of Biorn, the son of Ottar, dwelt at Drapalith, as is aforesaid; he had to wife Thorgerd, Thorbein's daughter; he was a mighty bonder, but exceeding violent. A sister's son of his dwelt with him who was called Biorn; he was a rash-spoken man and unyielding.

Now in the autumn, after the closing of the Mewlithe suits, were found the horses of Thorbiorn the Thick in the mountain, and the stallion had not been able to hold his pasture-ground before a stallion of Thorarin's, who had driven the other horses, which were all found dead.

That same autumn folk held a thronged sheep-folding at Tongue up from Holyfell, betwixt it and Lax-river; thither went to the folding the home-men of Snorri the Priest, and Mar Hallwardson, the father's brother of Snorri, was at the head of them. Helgi was the name of Snorri's shepherd. Biorn, the kinsman of Vigfus, lay on the fold-garth; he had a pike-staff in his hand. Now Helgi drew out sheep. Biorn on a time asked what sheep was that which he drew; and when that was looked to, there was the mark of Vigfus on the sheep.

Then said Biorn: "Thou art in a hurry to slip out the sheep to-day, Helgi."

"That is more like to befall thee," said Helgi, "who abide in the sheep-walks of men."

"Well, thief, what knowest thou of that?" said Biorn, and sprang up and drove at him with the staff so that he fell stunned. But when Mar saw that, he drew his sword and cut at Biorn, and the stroke fell on the arm up by the shoulder, and a great wound that was. Thereat men ran into two bands, but some went betwixt them, and they were parted, so that nought else happed to tell of. But the next morning rode Vigfus down to Holyfell and claimed boot for this shaming, but Snorri spoke, saying that he saw no odds between those haps that had befallen.

That Vigfus liked ill enough, and they parted with the greatest ill-will.

In the spring Vigfus brought a suit for the wounding to the Thorsness Thing, but Snorri set forth, that Biorn should be made guilty for the blow with the staff; and the end of the case was that Biorn was made guilty, because of the onslaught on Helgi, and got no boot for his wound, and his arm he bare ever after in a sling.

Chapter 24

Of Eric the Red

At this same Thing Thorgest the Old and the sons of Thord the Yeller brought a case against Eric the Red for the slaughter of the sons of Thorgest, who had been slain in the autumn when Eric fetched the settles to Broadlairstead; and very thronged was that Thing; but before it they had sat at home with crowded followings. While the Thing was toward, Eric fitted out a ship for the main in Eric's-creek in Oxisle, and in aid of Eric stood Thorbiorn Vifil's son, and Slaying-Stir, and the sons of Thorbrand of Swanfirth, and Eyolf, son of Aesa of Swineisle. But out of those that furthered Eric, Stir alone was at the Thing, and drew away from Thorgest all the men he might.

Stir prayed Snorri the Priest not to set on Eric after the Thing with those of Thorgest, and gave his word to Snorri in return, that he would help him another time, should he be holden by great troubles; and because of this promise Snorri

let the case pass by. After the Thing those of Thorgest sailed with many ships into the islands; but Eyolf, son of Aesa, hid Eric's ships in Dimon's bay, and thither came Stir and Thorbiorn to meet Eric; and then did Eyolf and Stir after the fashion of Arnkel, for they went in company with Eric, each in his own skiff, as far as past Ellidis-isle.

In the voyage Eric the Red found Greenland, and was there three winters, and then he went to Iceland, and abode there one winter before he fared out to settle Greenland; but this befell fourteen winters before Christ's faith was made law in Iceland.

Chapter 25

Of Vermund And Thorarin In Norway; Of Those Bareserks

Now is it to be said of Vermund and Thorarin the Swart that they came up from the main as far north as Throndeim-mouth, and stretched in for Throndeim. In those days Earl Hakon, son of Sigurd, ruled over Norway; so Vermund went to the Earl, and became his man, but Thorarin went thence straightway that same autumn West-over-the-sea with Alfgeir, and Vermund gave them his share in the ship; and henceforward Thorarin has nought to do with this tale.

Earl Hakon abode at Hladir that winter, and Vermund was with him holden in great friendship, and the Earl did well to him, because he wotted that Vermund was of great kin out in Iceland.

With the Earl were two brothers, Swedes of kin, one called Halli, the other Leikner; they were big men of stature and strength, nor at that time were their peers herein to be found in Norway, nor far and wide elsewhere. They wrought Bareserkgang, and were not of the fashion of men when they were wroth, but went mad like dogs, and feared neither fire nor steel; but their daily wont was to be not ill to deal with, if nought was done to cross them; but they were straightway the most overreckless of men if anyone should beard them. Eric the Victorious, King of Sweden, had sent these Bareserks to the Earl, and gave him this warning therewith, that he should treat them well, and said, as was true, that of them might be the greatest avail if folk gave heed to their moods.

Now in the spring, when Vermund had been one winter with the Earl, he yearned for Iceland, and prayed the Earl for leave to fare thither. The Earl bade him go since he would, and bade him thus: "Think if there be anything in my power more than another which thou wilt take for thy furtherance, such as may be worthy and honourable for both of us."

But when Vermund had thought thereover, what thing he should ask of the Earl, it came into his mind that his ways would be greatly furthered in Iceland if he had such followers as those Bareserks were; and settled in his mind that he would pray the Earl to give him the Bareserks for his following; and this urged him to ask for them, that he deemed that his brother Stir lay heavy on his fortune, and dealt unjustly with him as with most others when he could bring his

strength to bear on him. So he thought that Stir would deem it less easy to deal with him if he had such fellows as those two brothers were.

Now says Vermund to the Earl that he will take that honour from his hands, if he will give him for his safeguard and fellowship those Bareserks.

The Earl answered: "Now hast thou asked me for that which seems to me will in nowise be to thy gain, though I grant it thee. I deem that they will be to thee hard and high-minded as soon as thou hast aught to deal with them. I deem it beyond the power of most bonders: sons to curb them or hold them in fear, though they have been yielding enough in their service to me."

Vermund said that he would take them with that risk if the Earl would give him them into his power. The Earl bade him first ask the Bareserks if they would follow him. He did so, and asked if they would fare with him to Iceland, and give him fellowship and service; but he promised in return that he would do well to them in such matters as they deemed of need to them, and of which they knew how to tell him.

The Bareserks said that they had not set their minds on going to Iceland, and they wotted not if there were such chiefs there as would be meet for them to serve; "but if thou art so eager, Vermund, that we should fare to Iceland with thee, thou must look for it that we shall take it ill if thou givest not that which we ask for, if thou hast wherewithal." Vermund said that should never be, and thereafter he gat their yea to go to Iceland with him, if that were with the Earl's will and consent.

Now Vermund tells the Earl how things had gone, and the Earl settled that the Bareserks should fare with him to Iceland, "if thou deemest that most to thine honour;" but he bade him bethink him that he should deem that a cause for enmity if he ended ill with them, so utterly as they were now in his power; but Vermund said there was no need that things should come thereto.

Thereafter Vermund fared to Iceland with the Bareserks, and had a good voyage, and came home to his house in Bearhaven the same summer that Eric the Red went to Greenland, as is written afore.

Soon after Vermund came home, Halli the Bareserk fell to talk with Vermund about getting him a seemly match, but Vermund said he saw no hope that any woman of good kin would bind herself or her fortune to a Bareserk; so he hung back in that matter. But when Halli knew that, he burst out into wolfish mood and ill-will, and all went athwart betwixt them, and the Bareserks made themselves right big and rough with Vermund, so that he began to rue it that he had gotten him those Bareserks on hand.

Now in the autumn had Vermund a great feast, and bade Arnkel the Priest to him, and the men of Ere, and Stir his brother; and when the feast was over he offered to give the Bareserks to Arnkel, and calls that a thing of the fittest; but he will not take them.

Then Vermund asked Arnkel for counsel as to how he should rid himself of this trouble; but he put in a word that he had better give them to Stir, and said ir rather befitted him to have such men because of his overweening and iniquitous ways.

So when Stir was ready to go away, Vermund went to him and said: "Now will I, brother, that we lay aside the coldness which was between us before I fared abroad, and take to faithful kinship and loving-kindness; and therewith will I give thee those men that I have brought out, for thy strength and fellowship, nor do I know any men will dare to trust themselves to strife with thee if thou hast such followers as they are."

Stir answered: "I have good will, brother, to better our kinship; but that only have I heard about those men whom thou hast brought out hither, that by taking them, one shall rather get trouble than furtherance or good luck from them; nor will I that they ever come into my house, for full enough are my enmities though I get me no trouble from these."

"What counsel givest thou then, kinsman," said Vermund, "that I may put off this trouble from me."

"That is another case," said Stir, "to loose thee from thy troubles, than taking these men of thine hand as a friendly gift, and thus I will not take them; but it is the due of no man more than me to put off this thy trouble from thee, if we both have one way of thinking about it."

But though Stir spake so, Vermund chose that he should take to him the Bareserks, and the brothers parted in good love. Stir went home and the Bareserks with him, though they were not willing to this at first, and bade Vermund know that he had no right to sell or give them like unfree men; yet they said withal that it was more to their mood to follow Stir rather than Vermund; and things went very hopefully between them and Stir at first. The Bareserks were with Stir when he went west over Broadfirth to slay Thorbiorn Jaw who dwelt at Jawfirth. A lock-bed he had made exceeding strong with beams of timber, but the Bareserks brake that up, so that the naves outside sprang asunder; yet was Stir himself the bane of Thorbiorn Jaw.

Chapter 26

Of Vigfus And Swart The Strong. The Slaying Of Vigfus

The autumn when the Bareserks came to Stir, this happed withal, that Vigfus of Drapalith went to burn charcoal to the place called Selbrents, and three thralls with him, one of whom was Swart the Strong; but when they came into the wood Vigfus said: "Great pity it is, and so thou wilt deem it thyself, Swart, that thou shouldst be an unfree man, strong as thou art, and manly to look upon."

"Truly I deem it a great trouble," said Swart; "but it is not so with my will."

Vigfus said: "What wilt thou do that I give thee thy freedom?"

"I may not buy it with money, for I have it not," said he; "but such things as I may do I will not spare."

Said Vigfus: "Thou shalt go to Holyfell and kill Snorri the Priest, and thereafter shalt thou verily have thy freedom, and therewith will I give thee good fortune."

"Nay, I may not bring that about," said Swart.

"I shall give thee counsel," said Vigfus, "so that this may be brought about without any risk of thy life."

"Well, I will listen to it," said Swart.

"Thou shalt go to Holyfell and get into the loft that is over the outer door, and pull up the boards of the floor, so that thou may'st thrust a bill therethrough; then when Snorri goes out to his privy, thou shalt thrust the bill through the floor of the loft into his back so hard that it may come out at his belly; and then leap off out on to the roof and so over the wall, and let the mirk night cover thee."

So with this counsel went Swart to Holyfell, and broke open the roof over the outer door, and went into the loft thereby; and that was at such time as Snorri and his folk sat by the meal-fires. But in those days were the places of easement outside the houses. But when Snorri and his folk went from the fires they were minded for the place of easement, and Snorri went first, and got off out into the outer door before Swart could bring his onset about; but Mar Hallwardson came next, and Swart thrust the bill at him, and it smote the shoulder-blade, and glanced off out towards the armpit, and there cut itself through, and no great wound it was. Then Swart sprang out and over the wall, but the causeway stones were slippery under him, and he fell a great fall when he came down, and Snorri got hold of him before he got up.

Then they had a true tale of him, and he told them all that had been twixt him and Vigfus, and withal that he was burning charcoal under Selbrents.

Then was Mar's wound bound up, and thereafter Snorri set out with six men to Drapalith. And when they came up the hill-side they saw the fire whereat Vigfus and his folk burned charcoal. Withal they came unawares upon Vigfus and his men, and slew him, but gave life to the house-carles, and thereafter Snorri went back home; but the house-carles of Vigfus told these tidings at Drapalith.

Vigfus was laid in cairn the next day, and that same day went Thorgerd his wife into Lairstead to tell the tidings to Arnkel her kinsman, and bade him take up the blood-suit for the slaying of Vigfus. But he put that off from him, and said that that belonged to the Kiallekings, the kin of Vigfus; and above all would he have the case go to Stir, and said that it was fittest to him to take up the cause for Vigfus his kinsman; "for," said he, "he is a man who is fain to meddle in many things."

Now Thormod Trefilson sang this song about the slaying of Vigfus:

First the Folk-wielder
Felled there the feller
Of fight-boar gold-bristled,
Vigfus men hight him.
The wound-mews thereafter
There were they tearing
Full meat of fight-god,
Biorn's heirship wearer.

Chapter 27

Arnel Takes Up The Blood-Feud For Vigfus

Thereafter went Thorgerd out under Lava, and bade Stir take up the suit for Vigfus his kinsman. He answered: "But I promised Snorri the Priest last spring, when he sat those suits of ours with the Thorgestlings, that I would not go against him with enmity in cases for the taking up of which there were many as nigh of kin as I. Now wert thou best to seek to Vermund my brother for this matter, or other kinsmen of ours."

So then Thorgerd fared out to Bearhaven, and prayed Vermund for aid, and said that the case came most home to him, "because Vigfus was wont to trust in thee the best of all his kin."

Vermund answered: "Now am I bound to lay down some good counsel for thee; yet am I loth to go into these matters instead of other kinsmen of ours, but I shall give thee help both with furtherance and counsel such as I may get done; but first I will that thou fare west to Ere and find Steinthor, Vigfus's kinsman; he is now at ease to fight, and it is now high time for him to try himself in some kind of case."

Thorgerd answered: "Much ye make me do for this suit, but I will not spare my labour if it be to its furtherance."

Thereafter she went west to Ere and found Steinthor, and bade him be leader of the case.

Steinthor answered: "Why dost thou bid me this? I am but a young man, and have had nought to do with the cases of men. But there are kinsmen of Vigfus nearer to him than I am, who are more forward than I withal; neither is it to be anywise hoped that I should take this case from their hands; but I shall not part myself from those of my kin who may have this blood-suit to look to."

No other answer got Thorgerd than this. So she made for home thereafter and then east again along the firths to find Vermund, and told him what things had come to, and said that the whole matter would be thrown over unless he became leader thereof.

Vermund answered: "It is not unlikely that some stir will be made concerning these matters for thy comforting. However, I shall now once more lay down a rede for thee if thou wilt but do thine utmost."

She answered: "Most things would I undergo therefor."

"Now shalt thou go home, and let dig up Vigfus thy husband, and take his head and bring it to Arnel, and say to him thus, that that head would not have weighed with others the taking up of the blood-suit after him, if need there had been thereof."

Thorgerd said she wotted not where these things were coming to in the end, but she saw well enough that they spared her neither labour nor heartburn. "Yet

even this will I undergo," said she, "if thereby the lot of my foes be made heavier than before."

Thereafter she fared home, and went in about this business as she was taught in all wise; and when she came to Lairstead she told Arnkel that the kin of Vigfus would that he should be the leader in taking up the blood-suit for the slaying of Vigfus, and that they all promised their help.

Arnkel said that he had said before whereto his mind was given about the suit.

Therewithal Thorgerd drew from under her cloak the head of Vigfus, and spake: "Here is now a head," said she, "that would not have begged off from taking up the suit for thee, if there had been need thereof."

Arnkel started back thereat, and thrust her from him, and said: "Go," says he, "and say so much to the kin of Vigfus, that henceforward they waver not more in their help against Snorri the Priest, than I shall in the leading of the suit; but so my mind tells me that, however the case goes, they shall lay land under foot or ever I do. But I see that these thy doings are by Vermund's counsel; but no need will he have to egg me on wheresoever we brothers-in-law are in one place."

Then went Thorgerd home. The winter wore, and in the spring Arnkel set afoot the case for the slaying of Vigfus against all those who had been at the slaying, except Snorri the Priest; but Snorri set forth a cross-suit for the unhallowing of Vigfus for plotting against his life and for the wounding of Mar; and men came thronging on both sides to the Thorsness Thing.

All the Kiallekings gave help to Arnkel, and theirs was the biggest company; and Arnkel pushed on the case with great eagerness.

But when the cases came into court, men went thereto, and the cases were laid to award by the urging and peace-making of men of good will; and so it befell that Snorri the Priest made a handsel as to the slaughter of Vigfus, and great fines were awarded; but Mar should be abroad for three winters. So Snorri paid up the money, and the Thing came to an end in such wise, that peace was made in all the suits.

Chapter 28

Of The Bareserks And The Wooing of Asdis, Stir's Daughter

Now that happed to tell of next which is aforewritten, that the Bareserks were with Stir, and when they had been there awhile, Halli fell to talking with Asdis, Stir's daughter. She was a young woman and a stately, proud of attire, and somewhat high-minded; but when Stir knew of their talk together, he bade Halli not to do him that shame and heartburn in beguiling his daughter.

Halli answered: "No shame it is to thee though I talk with thy daughter, nor will I do that to thy dishonour; but I will tell thee straightly that I have so much love in my heart for her, that I know not how to put it out of my mind. And now," said

Halli, "will I seek for fast friendship with thee, and pray thee to give me thy daughter Asdis, and thereto in return will I put my friendship and true service, and so much strength through the power of my brother Leikner, that there shall not be in Iceland so much glory from two men's services as we two shall give thee; and our furtherance shall strengthen thy chieftainship more than if thou gavest thy daughter to the mightiest bonder of Broadfirth, and that shall be in return for our not being strong of purse. But if thou wilt not do for me my desire, that shall cut our friendship atwain; and then each must do as he will in his own matter; and little avail will it be to thee then to grumble about my talk with Asdis."

When he had thus spoken, Stir was silent, and thought it somewhat hard to answer, but he said in a while:

"Whether is this spoken with all thine heart, or is it a vain word, and seekest thou a quarrel?"

"So shalt thou answer," said Halli, "as if mine were no foolish word; and all our friendship lies on what thine answer will be in this matter."

Stir answered: "Then will I talk the thing over with my friends, and take counsel with them how I shall answer this."

Said Halli: "The matter shalt thou talk over with whomsoever pleases thee within three nights, but I will not that this answer to me drag on longer than that, because I will not be a dangler over this betrothal."

And therewithal they parted.

The next morning Stir rode east to Holyfell, and when he came there, Snorri bade him abide; but Stir said that he would talk with him, and then ride away.

Snorri asked if he had some troublous matter on hand to talk of. "So it seems to me," said Stir.

Snorri said: "Then we will go up on to the Holy Fell, for those redes have been the last to come to nought that have been taken there."

"Therein thou shalt have thy will," said Stir.

So they went upon to the mount, and there sat talking all day till evening, nor did any man know what they said together; and then Stir rode home.

But the next morning Stir and Halli went to talk together, and Halli asked Stir how his case stood.

Stir answered: "It is the talk of men that thou seemest somewhat bare of money, so what wilt thou do for this, since thou hast no fee to lay down therefor?"

Halli answered: "I will do what I may, since money fails me."

Says Stir: "I see that it will mislike thee if I give thee not my daughter; so now will I do as men of old, and will let thee do some great deed for this bridal."

"What is it, then?" said Halli.

"Thou shalt break up," says Stir, "a road through the lava out to Bearhaven, and raise a boundary-wall over the lava betwixt our lands, and make a burg here at

the head of the lava; and when this work is done, I will give thee Asdis my daughter."

Halli answered: "I am not wont to work, yet will I say yea to this, if thereby I may the easier have the maiden for wife."

Stir said that this then should be their bargain.

Thereafter they began to make the road, and the greatest of man's-work it is; and they raised the wall whereof there are still tokens, and thereafter wrought the burg. But while they were at the work, Stir let build a hot bath at his house at Lava, and it was dug down in the ground, and there was a window over the furnace, so that it might be fed from without, and wondrous hot was that place.

Now when either work was nigh finished, on the last day whereon Halli and his brother were at work on the burg, it befell that thereby passed Asdis,

Stir's daughter, and close to the homestead it was. Now she had done on her best attire, and when Halli and his brother spake to her, she answered nought.

Then sang Halli this stave:

"O fair-foot, O linen-girt goddess that beareth
The flame that is hanging from fair limbs adown!
Whither now hast thou dight thee thy ways to be wending,
O fair wight, O tell me, and lie not in telling?
For all through the winter, O wise-hearted warden
Of the board of the chess-play, not once I beheld thee
From out of the houses fare this-wise afoot,
So goodly of garments, so grand of array."

Chapter 29

Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Of Biorn Asbrandson, And Of The Slaying Of The Sons Of Thorir Wooden-Leg

There was a man called Thorod, who was of the Midfell-strand kindred. He was a trustworthy man and a great seafarer, and had a ship afloat. Thorod had sailed on a trading voyage west to Ireland and Dublin.

At that time Sigurd Lodverson, Earl of the Orkneys, had harried in the South-Isles, and all the way west to Man. He had laid a tribute on the dwellers in Man; and when peace was made, the Earl left men to wait for the scat (and the more part thereof was paid up in burned silver), but he himself sailed away north to the Orkneys.

Now when they who had awaited the scat were ready to sail, the wind blew from the south-west, but when they had been at sea a while, it shifted to the south-east and east, and blew a great gale, and drove them north of Ireland. Their ship was broken to pieces on an unpeopled island there; and when they were in this plight there bore down on them Thorod the Icelander, late come from Dublin. The Earl's men hailed the chapmen for help, and Thorod put out a

boat and went therein himself; and when they met, the Earl's men prayed him for aid, and promised him money to bring them home to the Orkneys to Earl Sigurd. But Thorod deemed he might not do that, since he was already bound for Iceland. But they prayed him hard, because they deemed that their wealth and their lives lay on their not being taken prisoners in Ireland or the South-isles, where they had harried erst. So the end of it was that he sold them his boat from his big ship, and took therefor a good share of the scat; and thereon they laid their boat for the Orkneys, but Thorod sailed boatless for Iceland.

He came upon the south coast of the land, and stretched west along the shore, and sailed into Broadfirth, and came safe and sound to Daymeal-ness, and in the autumn went to dwell with Snorri the Priest at Holyfell, and ever after was he called Thorod Scat-catcher.

Now this was a little after the slaying of Thorbiorn the Thick. And that winter was Thurid, the sister of Snorri the Priest, whom Thorbiorn the Thick had had to wife, abiding at Holyfell. A little while after his coming back to Iceland Thorod put forth the word and prayed Snorri to give him his sister Thurid; and seeing that he was wealthy of money, and that Snorri knew his conditions well, and that he saw that she needed much some good care, with all this it seemed good to Snorri to give him the woman; and he held their wedding in the winter there at Holyfell. But the spring after Thorod betook himself to keeping house at Frodis-water, and he became a good bonder and a trustworthy.

But so soon as Thurid came to Frodis-water Biorn Asbrandson got coming thither, and it was the talk of all men that there was fooling betwixt him and Thurid, and Thorod began to blame Biorn for his comings, yet that mended matters in no-wise.

At that time dwelt Thorir Wooden-leg at Ernknoll, and his sons Ern and Val were grown up by then, and were the hopefulest of men. Now they laid reproach on Thorod in that he bore with Biorn such shame as he dealt him, and they offered to follow Thorod if he would put an end to Biorn's comings and goings.

On a time Biorn came to Frodis-water and sat talking with Thurid. And Thorod was ever wont to be within doors when Biorn was there; but now they saw him nowhere. Then Thurid said: "Take thou heed to thy faring, Biorn; whereas I deem that Thorod is minded to put an end to thy coming hither; and I guess that they have gone to waylay thee; and he will be minded that ye two shall not meet with an equal band."

Then Biorn sang this song:

"O ground of the golden strings, might we but gain it
To make this day's wearing of all days the longest
That ever yet hung twixt earth's woodland and heaven --
Yea, whiles yet I tarried the hours in their waning --
For, O fir of the worm that about the arm windeth,
This night amongst all nights, 'tis I and no other
Must turn me to grief now, and drink out the grave-ales
Of the joys of our life-days, full often a-dying."

Chapter 30

Of The Evil Dealings Of Thorolf Halt-Foot

Now must it be told of Thorolf Halt-foot that he began to get exceeding old, and became very evil and hard to deal with by reason of his old age, and full of all injustice, and things went uneasily enough betwixt him and Arnkel his son.

Now on a day Thorolf rode in to Ulfar's-fell to find Ulfar the bonder. He was a great furtherer of field-work, and much spoken of for this, that he saved his hay quicker than other men, and was so lucky with sheep withal, that his sheep never died of clemming or from storms.

So when Thorolf met him, he asked him what counsel he gave him as to how he should set about his husbandry, and what his mind told him about the summer, if it would be dry or not.

Ulfar answered: "No better rede can I give thee than what I follow myself. I shall let bear out the scythe to-day, and mow down all I may this week, because I deem it will be rainy; but I guess that after that it will be very dry for the next half month."

So things went as he had said, for it was often seen that he could foretell the weather better than other men.

So Thorolf went home, and he had with him many workmen, and now he let straightway begin the out-meadow mowing; and the weather was even as Ulfar had said.

Now Thorolf and Ulfar had a meadow in common upon the neck, and either of them at first mowed much hay, and then they spread it, and raked it up into big cocks. But one morning early when Thorolf arose, he looked out and saw that the weather was thick, and deemed that the dry tide was failing, and called to his thralls to rise and carry the hay together, and work daylong all they might, "for it seems to me," quoth he, "that the weather is not to be trusted."

The thralls did on their clothes and went to the hay-work. But Thorolf piled up the hay and egged them on to work at their most might that it might speed at its fastest.

That same morning Ulfar looked out early, and when he came in, the workmen asked him of the weather, but he bade them sleep on in peace. "The weather is good," said he, "and it will clear off to-day. Therefore to-day shall ye mow in the home-field, but to-morrow will we save such hay as we have up on the neck."

Now the weather went even as he said; and when the evening was wearing on, Ulfar sent a man up to the neck, to look to the hay that stood there in cocks. But Thorolf Halt-foot carried hay with three draught-oxen the day through, and by the third hour after noontide they had saved all the hay that was his. Then he bade carry Ulfar's hay withal into his garth; and they did as he bade them.

But when Ulfar's messenger saw that, he ran and told his master. Then Ulfar went up on to the neck, and was exceeding wroth, and asked Thorolf why he

robbed him. Thorolf said he heeded not what he said, and raved and was ugly to deal with, and they well-nigh came to blows. But Ulfar saw that he had no choice but to go away. So he went straightway to Arnkel, and told him of his scathe, and prayed for his warding, "else," he gave out, "all would be gone by the board."

Arnkel said he would bid his father pay boot for the hay, but said that none the less it sorely misgave him that nought would come of it.

So when father and son met, Arnkel bade his father pay Ulfar boot for the taking of the hay; but Thorolf said the thrall was far too rich already. Arnkel prayed him to do so much for his word as to atone for that hay. Then said Thorolf that he would do nought therefor but worsen Ulfar's lot; and therewith they parted.

Now when Arnkel met Ulfar, he told him of Thorolf's answer; but Ulfar deemed that Arnkel had followed up his case coldly, and said that he might have had his way with his father if he had chosen to do so.

So Arnkel paid Ulfar what he would for the hay; and when father and son next met, Arnkel claimed the price of the hay from his father, but Thorolf gave no better answers, and they parted in great wrath. But the next autumn Arnkel let drive from the fells seven oxen of his father's, and had them all slaughtered for his own household needs. That misliked Thorolf beyond measure, and he claimed their price of Arnkel; but he said that they should be in return for Ulfar's hay. Then Thorolf liked matters a great deal worse than before, and laid the whole thing on Ulfar, and said he should feel him therefor.

Chapter 31

Of Thorolf Halt-Foot And Snorri The Priest

That winter at Yule-tide had Thorolf a great drinking, and put the drink round briskly to his thralls, and when they were drunk, he egged them on to go up to Ulfar's-fell and burn Ulfar in his house, and promised to give them their freedom therefor. The thralls said they would do so much for their freedom if he would hold to his word. Then they went six of them together to Ulfar's-fell, and took a brushwood stack, and dragged it to the homestead, and set fire therein.

At that time Arnkel and his men sat drinking at Lairstead, and when they went to bed they saw fire at Ulfar's-fell. Then they went thereto forthwith, and took the thralls, and slaked the fire, and the houses were but little burned.

The next morning Arnkel let bring the thralls to Vadils-head, and there were they all hanged.

Thereafter Ulfar handselled all his goods to Arnkel, who became guardian over him. But this handselling misliked the sons of Thorbrand, because they deemed that to them belonged all the goods after Ulfar their freedman, and much ill-will arose here from between Arnkel and Thorbrand's sons. Nor might they henceforth have games together, which they had hitherto held, turn and turn about; in which games was Arnkel the strongest, but that man was the best to set against him, and the next strongest, who was called Freystein Rascal, and

was the foster-son of Thorbrand, and his adopted son; for it was the talk of most men that his own son he was, but that his mother was a bondmaid. He was a manly man, and mighty of his hands.

Thorolf Halt-foot took it very ill of Arnkel that those thralls had been slain, and claimed atonement for them, but Arnkel flatly refused to pay a penny for them, and then was Thorolf worse pleased than afore.

But on a day he rode out to Holyfell to find Snorri the Priest, and Snorri bade him abide. But Thorolf said he had no need to eat his meat. "Therefor am I come, because I am fain thou shouldst set my matters straight, for I call thee chief of this countryside, and it is thy part to set right the lot of such men as have been wronged already."

"By whose means is thy lot brought low, goodman?" said Snorri.

"Through Arnkel, my son," answers Thorolf.

Said Snorri: "Thou shouldst not make plaint of that, because that thou shouldst be of one mind with him in all things: withal he is a better man than thou."

"That is not the way of it," says he, "because now of all men he tramples most on me, and now will I be thy close friend, Snorri, if thou wilt but take up the blood-suit for my thralls whom Arnkel let slay, nor will I bespeak all the blood-fines for myself."

Snorri answered: "I will not enter into the strife betwixt thee and thy son."

Says Thorolf: "Thou art no friend of Arnkel's; but mayhap thou deemest me niggard of my money. But it shall not be so now," says he. "I know thou wouldst fain have Crownness, and the wood thereon, which is the best possession in the countryside. Lo, I will handsel thee all that, if thou wilt but take up the suit for my thralls, and follow it up so mightily that thou shalt grow greater thereby, but they shall deem themselves put in the wrong who have wrought me shame; nor will I spare any man who has had part therein, be he more or less my kinsman."

Now Snorri deemed that he needed the wood greatly; and so it is said that he took handsel of the land, and took over the blood-suit for the thralls. But Thorolf rode home thereafter, and was well pleased therewith. But that was not talked of over-well by other folk.

In the spring Snorri set forth a case for the Thorsness Thing, at the hand of Arnkel, for the slaying of the thralls. Both sides came thronging to the Thing, and Snorri pushed forward the case. But when the suit came into court, Arnkel claimed for himself a verdict of not guilty, and set that forth as a defence that the thralls were taken with quickfire for the burning of a homestead.

Then Snorri set forth that the thralls were indeed out of the law on the field of deed, "but whereas thou didst bring them in to Vadils-head and slay them there, I deem that there they were not out of the law."

So Snorri pushed the case on, and set aside Arnkel's claim to a verdict of not guilty; and thereafter men busied themselves to make peace, and a bargain was come to, and those brethren, Stir and Vermund, should be umpires in the case; and they put the thralls at twelve ounces each, and the money should be paid there and then at the Thing. And when it was paid, Snorri gave the purse to

Thorolf, who took it and said: "I had no mind when I gave thee my land, that thou wouldst follow up my suit with so little manhood, and I wot that Arnkel would not have withheld from me such boot for my thralls if I had left the matter to him."

"Now I say," said Snorri, "that thou hast no shame herein, but I will not stake my worth against thy evil lust and foul deeds."

Thorolf answers: "Most like it is that I shall not seek to thee in cases again; nor yet shall the woes of you folk of this country lie utterly asleep."

Thereafter men depart from the Thing, and Arnkel and Snorri disliked them of this end to the matter, but Thorolf thought worse yet of it, as was well meet.

Chapter 32

The Slaying Of Ulfar; Thorbrand's Sons Claim The Heritage

So it is said that this happened next to be told of, that Orlig of Orligstead fell sick, and when his sickness grew heavy on him, Ulfar his brother sat ever by him. Now of that sickness he died; but when he was dead, Ulfar sent forthwith for Arnkel, who went straightway to Orligstead, and he and Ulfar took to them all the goods that lay together there. But when Thorbrand's sons knew of the death of Orlig, they went to Orligstead, and laid claim to those same goods that there lay together, and claimed as their own what their freedman had had; but Ulfar said that it was his due to take the heritage after his brother. They asked what part Arnkel would take in this matter. Arnkel said that Ulfar should not be robbed of any man while their fellowship lasted and he might have his will.

Then Thorbrand's sons fare away, and first out to Holyfell, and told this to Snorri the Priest, and prayed him for his help in the case; but he said that he would not thrust into strife with Arnkel for this case, whereas they had done their part so slippery, that Arnkel and Ulfar had first laid hands on the goods. Then Thorbrand's sons said that he would rule there no longer if he did not heed such things as this.

The next autumn Arnkel had a great autumn feast in his house, and ever his wont was to ask Ulfar his friend to all biddings, and to see him off with gifts.

Now the day that men should depart from the feast at Lairstead, Thorolf Halt-foot rode from home, and went to see his friend Cunning-Gils, who dwelt at Thorswater-dale at Cunning-Gils- stead, and bade him ride with him east to Ulfar's-fell-neck, and a thrall of Thorolf's went with him, and when they came on to the neck Thorolf said:

"There will be Ulfar going from the feast, and belike he will journey with seemly gifts about him. Now would I, Cunning-Gils," said he, "that thou go meet him and waylay him under the garth at Ulfar's-fell, and slay him, and therefor will I give thee three marks of silver, and pay all weregild for the slaying; and then, when thou hast slain Ulfar, thou wilt have of him those good things which he has had of Arnkel. Then shalt thou run along Ulfar's-fell out to Crowness, and if

any pursue thee let the wood cover thee, and then come and see me, and I shall see to thee that thou shalt take no harm."

Now whereas Cunning-Gils was a man of many children and very poor, he took the bait and went out under the towngarth at Ulfar's-fell, and there he saw how Ulfar came up from below with a good shield and a fair-dight sword that Arnkel had given him. So when they met, Cunning-Gils prayed to see the sword, and flattered Ulfar much, and said he was a great man, since he was deemed worthy to have such seemly gifts from chiefs. Ulfar wagged his beard, and handed to him the sword and shield. Cunning-Gils straightway drew the sword and thrust Ulfar through, and then took to his heels and ran out along Ulfar's-fell to Crowness.

Arnkel was out a-doors and saw how a man ran bearing a shield, and thought he should know the shield, and it came into his mind that Ulfar would not have given it up of his own good will. Then Arnkel called to his folk to run after the man; "and therewith," says he, "if this has befallen by my father's redes, and this man is Ulfar's banesman, then shall ye slay him, whoso he is, and not let him come before my eyes."

Then went Arnkel up to Ulfar's-fell, and there they found Ulfar dead. Thorolf Halt-foot saw Cunning-Gils run out along Ulfar's-fell with the shield, and thought he knew how it had fared between him and Ulfar. Then said he to his thrall that followed him: "Now shalt thou go to Karstead, and tell Thorbrand's sons to fare in to Ulfar's-fell, and not let themselves be robbed this time of their freedman's heritage as before; because Ulfar is now slain." So thereafter Thorolf rode home, and deemed he had done a good piece of business.

But those who ran after Cunning-Gils took him beneath a cliff which leads up from the sea. There they had a true tale out of him, and when he had told them all as it was, they slew him, and thrust him into earth beneath the cliff, but took his spoil and brought it to Arnkel.

Now the thrall of Thorolf came to Karstead, and told Thorbrand's sons the message of Thorolf, and so they went in to Ulfar's-fell; but when they came there, lo, there was Arnkel before them and many men with him. Then Thorbrand's sons gave out their claim to the goods that Ulfar had owned; but Arnkel brought forward against it the witness of those who were near at the handsel Ulfar had given him, and said that he would uphold it, because he said it had never been lawfully called in question, and bade them make no claim to the money; for he said he would hold to it, even as if it were his father's heritage.

Then Thorbrand's sons saw no choice but to come away, and they went once more out to Holyfell and found Snorri the Priest, and told him how things had befallen, and prayed for his help. Snorri said things had gone as before, that they had been one move too late in the game for Arnkel; "and ye shall not," said he, "grip out of Arnkel's hands aught of these goods, seeing that he has already got the chattels to him; and as to the lands, they lie about as near to one as to the other, and he will have them who has the strongest hand. And this is to be looked for herein that Arnkel will have the greater share of that, as in other dealings with you; and to tell truth, ye may well bear what many endure,

because Arnkel rules now over every man's fortune in this countryside, and will do while he lives, whether that be longer or shorter."

Thorleif Kimbi answered: "True say'st thou, Snorri, and I deem it is to be excused in thee, though thou dost not set our matter with Arnkel right, since thou hast never held thine own against him in any due case that ye have had to do with together."

Thereafter Thorbrand's sons fared home, and took these things right heavily.

Chapter 33

Of The Death Of Thorolf Halt-Foot

Now Snorri the Priest let work Crowness wood, and let much wood cutting go on. Thorolf Halt-foot thought that the wood was spoilt thereby, and rode out to Holyfell, and bade Snorri give back the wood, and said that he had lent the wood and not given it. Snorri said that would be clearer when they bore witness who were by at the handselling, and said that he would not give up the wood unless they gave it against him. Then Thorolf took himself off, and was in the worst of minds. He rode in to Lairstead to see his son Arnkel.

Arnkel gave his father good welcome, and asked his errand there. Thorolf answered: "This is my errand, that I see it is amiss that there should be ill-liking betwixt us, and now I will that we lay that aside, and take to kindly ways. For unseemly it is for us to be at enmity together; and moreover it seems to me that we should be great men here in the district with thy hardihood and my good counsel."

"The better it would like me," said Arnkel, "the closer we should draw together."

"Now will I," says Thorolf, "that this shall be the beginning of our peace-making and friendship, that we two claim Crowness wood of Snorri the Priest. It seems to me very ill that he should rule our fortune, but now he will not give up to me my wood, and says I gave it him; and therein he lies," says he.

Arnkel answers: "Thou didst that for no friendship to me when thou gavest Snorri the wood, nor shall I do so much as for thy slandering to quarrel with Snorri about it; and though I wot that he has no due title to the wood, yet will I not that thou have so much for thy lust for evil as to gladden thee by strife twixt me and Snorri."

"Methinks," said Thorolf, "that this comes rather from thy poor heart than because thou begrudgest me sport over your strife."

"Think whatso true thou wilt," said Arnkel, "but as things stand, no strife will I have with Snorri for the wood."

Therewith father and son parted, and Thorolf fared home and liked his lot exceeding ill, and thought that now he might scarce get his oar in.

Thorolf Halt-foot came home in the evening and spake to no man, but sat down in his high-seat and would eat no meat that night, and he sat there after men

went to bed, and in the morning, when men arose, there he sat on still, and was dead.

Then the housewife sent a man to Arnkel, and bade him tell him of the death of his father. Then Arnkel rode up to Hvamm, and some of his home-men with him. And when they came to Hvamm, then was Arnkel ware that his father was dead, and sat in his high-seat. But the folk were all full of dread, because to all folk his face seemed loathsome.

Now Arnkel went into the fire-hall, and so up along it behind the seat at Thorolf's back, and bade all beware of facing him before lyke-help was given to him. Then Arnkel took Thorolf by the shoulders, and must needs put forth all his strength before he brought him under. After that he swept a cloth about Thorolf's head, and then did to him according to custom. Then he let break down the wall behind him, and brought him out thereby, and then were oxen yoked to a sledge, and thereon was Thorolf laid out, and they drew him up into Thorswater-dale, and it was not without hard toil that he came to the stead whereas he should lie.

There they laid Thorolf in howe strongly; and then Arnkel rode to Hvamm and took to himself all the goods that were heaped up there, and which his father had owned. Arnkel was there three nights, and nought happed to tell of the while, and thereafter he rode home.

Chapter 34

Thorolf Halt-Foot Walks; The Second Burial Of Him

After the death of Thorolf Halt-foot many folk deemed it worse to be abroad as soon as the sun was getting low. But as the summer wore, men were ware of this, that Thorolf lay not quiet, and men might never be in peace abroad after sunset. And this happed withal that those oxen which had been yoked to Thorolf were troll-ridden, and all such cattle as came nigh to Thorolf's howe went mad, and bellowed till they died. Now the herdsman at Hvamm often came home in such wise that Thorolf had given chase to him. And so it befell in the autumn at Hvamm that one day neither herdsman nor beasts came home; and in the morning men went to seek them, and found the herdsman dead, a little way from Thorolf's howe, and he was all coal-blue, and every bone in him was broken. He was buried beside Thorolf. And of all the cattle that had been in the dale, some were found dead, and some fled into the mountains, and were never found again; and if fowls settled on Thorolf's howe, they fell down dead.

But so great trouble befell from this that no man durst feed his flocks up in the dale. Oft too was heard huge din abroad at Hvamm, and they were ware withal that the hall was ofttimes ridden. And when the winter came on Thorolf was seen home at the house many a time, and troubled the goodwife the most. And great hurt gat many from this, but she herself was well-nigh witless thereat; and such was the end of it all, that the goodwife died from these troublings, and was brought up to Thorswater-dale and buried beside Thorolf.

Thereafter men fled away from the homestead, and now Thorolf took to walking so wide through the dale that he laid waste all steads therein, and so great was

the trouble from his walking that he slew some men, and some fled away; but all those who died were seen in his company.

Now men bewailed them much of that trouble, and deemed that it was Arnkel's part to seek rede to better it. So Arnkel bade all those abide with him who had liefer be there than elsewhere; but whereso Arnkel was, no harm befell from Thorolf and his company.

So afeard were all men of this walking of Thorolf's that none durst go a journey that winter, what errands soever they had in the countryside. But when the winter had worn away the spring was fair; and when the ice was off the earth, Arnkel sent a man into Karstead for the sons of Thorbrand, and bade them go with him and bring Thorolf away from Thorswater-dale, and search for another abode for him.

Then, according to the laws of that time, it was due, as now, for all men, to bring dead folks to burial, if they were so summoned.

But when the sons of Thorbrand heard that, they said it lay nowise on them to put away the troubles of Arnkel or Arnkel's men; but thereat the old carle Thorbrand answered and said: "Nay, need there is," says he, "to fare on all such journeys as all men are bound in law to do, and that is now bidden of you which it beseemeth you not to gainsay."

Then said Thorod to the messenger: "Go thy ways and tell Arnkel that I will go on behalf of my brethren, and come to Ulfar's-fell and meet him there."

Now the messenger goes, and tells Arnkel, and he got ready to go, and he and his were twelve in all, and had with them yoke-oxen and digging tools; and they went first to Ulfar's-fell and met there Thorod, Thorbrand's son, and he and his were three.

They went up over the neck, and came into Thorswater-dale unto Thorolf's howe, and broke it open, and found Thorolf all undecayed, and most evil to look on.

They took him up from the grave, and laid him on a sledge, and yoked two strong oxen to it, and drew him up to Ulfar's-fell- neck, and by then were the oxen foundered, and others were taken that drew him up on to the neck, and Arnkel was minded to bring him to Vadils-head, and lay him in earth there. But when they came to the hill's brow the oxen went mad, and broke loose forthright, and ran thence away over the neck, and made out along the hillside above the garth of Ulfar's-fell, and so out to sea, and by then were both bursten.

But Thorolf was by then so heavy, that they could bring him no further; so they bore him to a little headland that was there beside, and laid him in earth there, and that is called sithence Halt-foot's Head.

Then let Arnkel raise a wall across the headland landward of the howe, so high that none might come thereover but fowl flying, and there are yet signs thereof. There lay Thorolf quiet as long as Arnkel lived.

Chapter 35

Arnel Slays Hawk

Snorri the Priest let work Crownness wood for all that Thorolf Halt-foot had raised question about it; but that was seen of Arnel that he deemed that the title of that wood had not gone according to law, and he deemed that Thorolf had beguiled him of his heritage in that he had given the wood to Snorri the Priest.

Now one summer Snorri the Priest sent his thralls to work in the wood, and they cut there much timber and piled it together, and then went home. Now while the timber was seasoning, the rumour ran that Arnel would go fetch it. So it fell not out; but he bade a herdsman of his watch when Snorri the Priest let fetch the timber, and tell him thereof. But when the wood was dry, Snorri sent three thralls of his to fetch it; and he got Hawk, his follower, to go with the thralls for their aid. So they go, and bind the wood on twelve horses, and then take their way home. Arnel's herdsman was ware of their ways, and told him thereof. He took his weapons and went after them, and came up with them west of Svelgriver twixt it and the Knolls, but as soon as he came up with them, Hawk leapt off his horse and thrust at Arnel with a spear, and smote his shield, yet he gat no wound. Then Arnel sprang from his horse and thrust with a spear at Hawk, and smote him in the midst, and he fell there on the place which is now called Hawks-river.

But when the thralls saw the fall of Hawk, they took to their heels and ran off on their way home, and Arnel chased them all along beyond Oxbrents, and then turned back and drave home with him the wood-horses, and took the wood off them, and then let them loose, and bound the load-ropes on them, and they were then turned on their way out along the fell, and they went till they came home to Holyfell.

Now were these tidings told, but all was quiet through those seasons; but the next spring Snorri the Priest set on foot a suit for the slaying of Hawk to be heard at the Thorsness Thing, and Arnel another for an onslaught for the unhallowing of Hawk. Both sides had great followings at the Thing, and men pushed forward the cases eagerly, but such was the end of it that Hawk was made guilty for the onslaught, and Snorri the Priest was nonsuited.

Therewith men ride home from the Thing, and there was much ill- blood betwixt men throughout the summer.

Chapter 36

Thorleif Would Slay Arnel, And Is Slain

There was a man called Thorleif, an Eastfirther, who had been found guilty of an affair with a woman. He came to Holyfell in the autumn, and prayed Snorri the Priest to take him in, but he put him off, and they talked long together or ever he got him gone. Thereafter Thorleif went to Lairstead, and came there in the evening, and was there the next night.

Now Arnkel got up early in the morning and set to nailing together the boards of his outer door; and when Thorleif arose, he went to Arnkel, and prayed him to take him in.

He answered somewhat slowly, and asked if he had been to see Snorri the Priest.

"Yea, I have seen him," said Thorleif, "and he would nowise take me in; 'and indeed, it is little to my mind,' says he, 'to give following to such a man as will ever let himself be trodden underfoot by every man with whom he has to do.'"

"Meseems," says Arnkel, "that Snorri would nowise mend his bargains though he give thee meat and drink for thy following."

"Nay, here whereas thou art will I have leave to dwell, Arnkel," said Thorleif.

"It is not my wont," said Arnkel, "to take in out-country men."

So there they gave and took in talk awhile, and Thorleif ever held fast by his prayer, but Arnkel put him off.

Now Arnkel fell to boring holes in the door-ledge, and laid his adze down the while. Thorleif took it up, and heaved it up swiftly over his head with the mind to bring it down on Arnkel's skull, but Arnkel heard the whistle of it and ran in under the stroke, and heaved up Thorleif by the breast, and soon was proven the measure of either's strength, for Arnkel was wondrous strong. So he cast Thorleif down with so great a fall that he lay stunned, and the adze flew out of his hand, and Arnkel got hold thereof and smote it into Thorleif's head, and gave him his death-wound.

So the rumour ran that it was Snorri the Priest who sent that man for Arnkel's head, but Snorri made as if the story had nought to do with him, and let folk say what they would. And so those seasons slipped away that nought else is to be told of.

Chapter 37

The Slaying Of Arnkel

The autumn after, at winter-nights, Snorri the Priest had a great autumn-feast, and bade his friends thereto. Ale drinking they had thereat, and folk drank fast and were very merry with ale.

Now the talk fell on pairing men together by their worth, and as to who was the noblest man in the countryside or the greatest chief, and thereon were men not at one, as oft it haps when the talk falls on likening man to man. To most of them indeed it seemed that Snorri was the noblest man, but some named Arnkel, and Stir forsooth.

But as they talked hereover, then Thorleif Kimbi answered and said:

"Why do men bicker over such a matter," says he, "when all may see how it is?"

"What wilt thou say hereon, Thorleif," said they, "if thou splittest the case into so many fragments?"

"Much the greatest do I deem Arnkel," said he.

"What hast thou to back this with?" said they.

"That which is true," says he. "For I call Snorri the Priest and Stir but as one man, because of their affinity; but of Arnkel's home-men that Snorri has killed, none lie by his garth unatoned like as Hawk, Snorri's follower, whom Arnkel slew, lies here by Snorri's garth."

This men deemed a big word, true though it were, since the talk had gone so far; but hereat dropped that talk.

But whenas men went from the bidding, Snorri the Priest chose gifts for his friends. He led Thorbrand's sons down to their ship at Redwick-head; and as they parted Snorri went to Thorleif Kimbi and said:

"Here is an axe, Thorleif, which I will give thee; it is the longest handled of all I have, yet will it not reach Arnkel's head when he stacks his hay at Orligstead, if thou heaviest it at him all the way from Swanfirth."

He took the axe and said: "Deem well," says he, "that I will not hang back in heaving this axe on Arnkel whenas thou hast wrought the revenge for Hawk thy follower."

Snorri answered: "That methinks is due from you to me, sons of Thorbrand, that ye have spies out to watch for a chance at Arnkel, but blame me then if I come not to meet you when aught may be done if ye make me ware thereof."

Therewith they parted, and both gave out that they were ready to plot against Arnkel's life, and Thorbrand's sons were to have a spy on his goings.

Early that winter was there much ice, and all firths were overlaid therewith. Freystein Rascal watched sheep in Swanfirth, and he was set to spy out an occasion against Arnkel.

Arnkel was a great man for work, and made his thralls work all day from sunrise to sunset. He had under him both the lands of Ulfar's-fell and Orligstead, for no one could be got to dwell on the lands for fear of the violence of Thorbrand's sons. Now in the winter it was Arnkel's wont to carry hay from Orligstead in the night in the new moons, because the thralls did other work at home by day. Nor did he heed if Thorbrand's sons were unaware of the carrying of hay. Now on a night of winter before Yule, Arnkel arose and waked three of his thralls, one of whom was called Ofeig. Goodman Arnkel went with them up to Orligstead. Four oxen they had, and two sledges withal.

The sons of Thorbrand were ware of Arnkel's ways, and Freystein Rascal went that night over the ice to Holyfell, and came there by then men had been abed for a space. He took Snorri by the foot and waked him, and Snorri asked what he would. He answers: "Now has the old eagle taken flight to his quarry at Orligstead."

Snorri rose up and bade men clothe themselves. So when they were clad, they took their weapons and fared nine of them altogether over the ice to Swanfirth.

And when they came to the bottom of the firth, Thorbrand's sons came to meet them, and were six in company.

Then they fared up to Orligstead, and by then they came there, one of the thralls had gone home with a load of hay, and Arnkel and the others were busy on a second.

Then saw Arnkel and his folk how armed men came up from the sea, and Ofeig said thereon that unpeace was at hand, and there was nought for it but to get them gone homeward.

Arnkel answered: "Good rede can I give thereto, and now shall we each of us do what each best liketh. Ye shall run home and wake up my following, and they will come quickly to meet me, but here in the rickyard is a good place to make a stand, and from hence will I defend myself if they come in warlike wise, for that meseems is better than running; nor shall I soon be overcome, and speedily will my men come to me, if ye do your errands in manly wise."

So when Arnkel had thus made an end of speaking, the thralls set off a-running; and Ofeig was the swiftest, but so afeard he was that he well-nigh went out of his wits, and ran off into the mountain and fell into a force there and was lost, and that is since called Ofeig's-force. The other thrall ran home to the stead, and when he came to the haybarn there was his fellow- thrall before him carrying in the hay. He called to the thrall as he ran to help bear in the hay to him, and belike the thrall was nowise loth of that work, so he went to help him.

Now it is to be said of Arnkel that he knew how Snorri the Priest and his folk went there, and he tore the runner from under the sledge, and had it up into the garth with him. The garth was very high outside, and within it was heaped up high as well; and a good fighting-stead it was. Hay was in the garth, but the garth-pieces of the stacks were cleared off.

Now when Snorri and his folk came to the garth, it is not told that any words befell there, but straightway they set on Arnkel, and chiefly with spear-thrust, which Arnkel put from him with the sledge-runner, and many of the spear-shafts were broken thereby, nor was Arnkel wounded; but when they had spent their shot-weapons, then Thorleif Kimbi ran at the garth and leapt up on to it with sword drawn, and Arnkel smote at him with the sledge-runner, and Thorleif dropped down away from the stroke out of the garth, and the runner smote against the garth wall, and up therefrom flew a piece of frozen turf; but the sledge-runner was broken at the mortice, and part thereof fell out over the garth. Arnkel had laid his sword and shield against a hayrick, and now he took up his weapons and defended himself therewith; but now he began to gather wounds, and withal they came up into the garth about him. Then Arnkel leapt up on to the hayrick, and defended himself thence for a space, but such was the end of the matter that he fell, and they covered him over there in the garth with hay; and thereafter Snorri and his folk fared home to Holyfell.

Over the slaying of Arnkel, Thormod Trefilson made this stave:

"Snorri the fight-strong
Fetched for the wound-fowl
Full feed with war-sword --
Young he, and fame-fulfilled.

O feeders of battle-fowl,
Wild-fire of battle-storm
Clave the life's coffer,
Where Snorri felled Arnkel."

Chapter 38

The Blood-Suit For Arnkel

After the slaying of Arnkel, the heritage and blood-suit fell to women, and for this reason the blood-suit was not pushed forward so strongly as men deemed they might have looked for over so noble a man. But atonement was settled for the slaying at the Thing, and the only outlawry was that Thorleif Kimbi should abide abroad for three winters, because on him was laid the death-wound of Arnkel.

But because the blood-suit was not so seemly as men deemed befitted such a chief as was Arnkel, the rulers of the land made this law, that for the time to come no woman and no man under sixteen winters old should be suitors in a blood-suit. And that law has ever been holden to since.

Chapter 39

Of Thorleif Kimbi And His Dealings With Arnbiorn

Thorleif Kimbi took ship that same summer with chapmen who got ready in Streamfirth, and was a messmate of the masters. In those days was it the wont of chapmen to have no cooks, but the messmates chose by lot from amongst themselves who should have the ward of the mess day by day. Then too was it the wont of all the shipmen to have their drink in common, and a cask should stand by the mast with the drink therein, and a locked lid was over it. But some of the drink was in tuns, and was added to the cask thence as soon as it was drunk out.

Now when they were nigh ready there came one forth upon the ledge of rock by the booths. This man was great of growth, and had a bundle on his back, and seemed to men somewhat uncouth. He asked for the ship-master, and he was shown to his booth. So he laid down his bag at the booth-door and went into the booth, and asked if the skipper would give him a passage over the sea.

They asked him of his name, and he called himself Arnbiorn, the son of Asbrand of Combe, and said he fain would fare out and seek Biorn his brother, who had gone out some winters before, and had not been heard of since he went to Denmark.

The Eastmen said that the bulk was bound down, and they deemed it might not be undone. He said he had not more faring goods than might lie on the top of the bulk. But whereas they deemed him to have great need of faring, they took him to them, but he found himself in victual, and abode on the forecastle.

In his bag were three hundreds in wadmal, and twelve skins for sale, and his victual.

Now Arnbiorn was of good help and a brisk man, and the chapmen held him of good account.

They had a fair passage out and made Hordaland, and took land at an outskerry, and dight their victuals on land.

Thorleif Kimbi was the allotted mess-ward, and had to make porridge. Arnbiorn was aland and made porridge for himself, and had the mess-kettle which Thorleif was to have afterwards. Then went Thorleif aland and bade Arnbiorn give him his kettle, but he had not yet made his own porridge, but stirred the kettle while Thorleif stood over him. Now the Eastmen called aland from the ship and bade Thorleif get ready the meat, and said that he was just an Icelander because of his laziness. Then Thorleif lost his temper, and caught up the kettle and cast out Arnbiorn's porridge, and then turned away.

Arnbiorn had the stirring-stick in his hand, and therewith he smote at Thorleif and caught him on the neck, and the blow was not great, but whereas the porridge was hot, Thorleif was scalded on his neck. Then Thorleif said:

"These Northmen shall not mock us, since we be here two fellow- countrymen together, that they must needs drag us apart like dogs; but I shall mind me of this when we are together in Iceland."

Arnbiorn answered nought. So they lay there three nights before they had a wind for land; then they brought their goods ashore.

Thorleif gusted there, but Arnbiorn took ship with certain traders east to Wick, and thence to Denmark to seek for his brother Biorn.

Chapter 40 Of Biorn, The Champion Of The Broadwickers, And His Dealings With Thurid Of Frodis-Water

Thorleif Kimbi was two winters in Norway, and then went back to Iceland with the same chapmen as he had fared out with. They made Broadfirth and came to Daymeal-ness, and Thorleif went home to Swanfirth in the autumn, and made much of himself as his manner was.

That same summer came out to Lavahaven-mouth those brothers Biorn and Arnbiorn, and Biorn was afterwards called the Champion of the Broadwickers. Arnbiorn had by then brought home a pretty penny; and as soon as he came aland that summer he bought him land at Bank in Lavahaven, and set up house there the next spring. That winter he spent at Cnear with Thord Walleye, his brother-in-law. Arnbiorn was not a man for show, and was of few words in most matters, yet the stoutest and manliest of men in every wise. But Biorn his brother was a very stately man when he came out, and fair was his mien, for that he had shaped himself after the customs of outland chiefs. A far goodlier

man was he than Arnbiorn, and in nothing of less skill than he, and in hardihood far more proven, for thereby he had gained renown in the outlands.

Now in the summer, when these were new come out, was appointed a great meeting of men north of the heath under Howebrent, in from Frodismouth. So those chapmen rode thither all of them, in coloured raiment, and when they came to the assembly, there were many there before them, and Thurid withal the goodwife of Frodis-water, and Biorn went to talk with her; and no man laid a word on them therefor, for they deemed that it was to be looked for that they should have much to say to each other, so long as it was since they met last.

Now that day men gave and took wounds, and one man from the Northcountry-men was brought to his death, and he was borne into a copse that was on the ere, and much blood ran from his wounds, and there stood a pool of blood in the copse. There was the youngling Kiartan, the son of Thurid of Frodis-water, with a little axe in his hand; he ran to the copse, and dipped the axe in the blood.

But when the folk from the south side of the heath rode south from the meeting, Thord Walleye asked Biorn how things had gone in the talk betwixt him and Thurid of Frodis-water. Biorn seemed well pleased thereabout. Then Thord asked Biorn if he had seen that day the youngling Kiartan, the son of Thurid and Thorod and them all together.

"Yea, I saw him," cried Biorn.

"In what wise didst thou deem of him?" said Thord.

Then sang Biorn this stave:

"The young tree I saw there, the eager-eyed sapling,
The youngling, the very own image of her,
That gem-bestrewn table; he ran to the tree-grove,
Whence the brook of the Wolf, even Fenrir, was welling.
They who waste wide the flame of Morn's river, meseemeth
Have been hitherto heedful to hide from the stripling
The name of the father who erewhile begat him,
He who speedeth the steeds of the streams of the Ocean."

Chapter 41

Of Thorleif Kimbi And Thord Wall-Eye

That same spring at the Thorsness Thing, Thorleif Kimbi fell to wooing a wife, and prayed for Helga, daughter of Thorlak of Ere, and sister of Steinthor of that ilk; and Thormod her brother pressed this forward most, he who had to wife Thorgerd, daughter of Thorbrand, and sister of Thorleif Kimbi. But when the matter came before Steinthor, he took it up coldly, and must ask counsel of his brothers. So then they went to Thord Wall-eye, and when the matter was laid before him, he answered thus:

"I will not put this affair off on to other men, for herein may I be the shaper; so this I have to say to thee, Thorleif, that first must the porridge spots on thy neck be healed, wherewith thou wast burnt when thou wast beaten in Norway three winters ago, or ever I give thee my sister."

Thorleif answered: "I know not what my fortune may be therein; but whether that be avenged or not," says he, "my will it is that three winters pass not ere thou be beaten."

Thord answered: "I sit without fear in despite of thy threats."

But the next morning men had a turf-play beside the booth of the sons of Thorbrand, and as Thorlak's sons passed by, forth flew a great piece of turf, and smote Thord Wall-eye under the poll, and so great was the stroke, that he fell heels over head; but when he arose, he saw that Thorbrand's sons were laughing at him hugely. Then Thorlak's sons turned back and drew their swords, and they ran to meet one another, and forthwithal they fought together, and some were wounded, but none slain.

Steinthor had not been there, for he had been in talk with Snorri the Priest. So when they were parted, folk strove to bring about peace; and so it was settled that Snorri and Steinthor should be umpires in the matter. So the wounds of men and the onset were set one against the other, but the remnant over was atoned for; and all were called at one again whenas they rode home.

Chapter 42

Thorbrand's Sons Make An Onslaught On Arnbiorn

That summer a ship came out into Lavahaven-mouth, and another to Daymealness. Snorri the Priest rode to the ship at Lavahaven, and fourteen men with him; but when they came south over the heath to Dufgusdale, six men all-armed rode after them, and there were the sons of Thorbrand. Snorri asked whither they were minded to fare, but they said they would go to the ship at Lavahaven-mouth. Snorri said that he would do their errands for them, and bade them go back home and not raise quarrels betwixt men; and he said that often little was needed for that matter among those who were unfriends together already, if they should chance to meet.

Thorleif Kimbi answered: "It shall not be told of us that we durst not ride through the countryside because of the Broadwickers; but thou mayest well ride home, if thou darest not to ride on thy ways when thou hast an errand."

Snorri answered nought, and so they rode forth over the necks, and so forth to Templegarth, and then west over the sands along the sea; but when they came anigh to the Mouth, Thorbrand's sons rode from the company up to Bank; and when they came to the homestead they leapt off their horses and were minded to enter, but might not break open the door. Then they leapt up on to the house, and fell to unroofing it.

Arnbiorn took his weapons, and warded himself from the inside of the house. He thrust out through the thatch, and that became woundsome to them. This

was early in the morning, and the weather was bright and clear; and that morning had those of Broadwick arisen early, with the mind to ride to the ship; but when they came west of the shoulder of the fell, then saw they a man in coloured clothes up on the house-roof at Bank, and they wotted well that it was not the attire of Arnbiorn. Then Biorn and his folk spurred on their horses, and turned their way thitherward.

But when Snorri the Priest was ware that the sons of Thorbrand had ridden away from his company, he rode after them, and by then he and his came to Bank were those others working at their maddest for the unroofing of the house. Then Snorri bade them begone thence, nor work any unpeaceful deeds in his company, so whereas they had got no entrance there, they even gave up the onset as Snorri bade, and rode thereafter to the ship with Snorri.

Now those of Broadwick came to the ship that same day, and either side went with their own band, and great ill-will there was, and cross looks enow, but neither side set on another, yet the men of Broadwick were the most in number at the market. Snorri the Priest rode in the evening south to Templegarth, whereas Biorn dwelt as then with his son Guest, who was the father of Templegarth-Ref. The folk of Biorn the Champion of the Broadwickers offered Arnbiorn to ride after those of Snorri the Priest, but Arnbiorn would not have it so, but said that each should have what he had got. Those of Snorri rode home the next day, and the sons of Thorbrand were worse content with their lot than heretofore. And now the autumn began to wear.

Chapter 43

Of Egil The Strong

Now goodman Thorbrand had a thrall who was called Egil the Strong, the biggest and strongest of men, and he thought his life ill in that he was no free man, and would oft pray Thorbrand and his sons to give him his freedom, and offered to do therefor any such work as he might. So one evening Egil went with his sheep out to Burgdale in Swanfirth, and as the evening grew late, he saw an erne fly from the west over the firth. Now a great deerhound was with Egil, and lo, the erne swooped on the hound, and took him up in her claws, and flew back west over the firth straight for the howe of Thorolf Haltfoot, and vanished there, under the mountain; and a foreboding of tidings Thorbrand deemed this.

Now it was the wont of the Broadwickers in autumn, about the time of winter-nights, to have ball-play under the shoulder south of Cnear, and the place thereafter was called the Playhall-meads, and men betook themselves thither from all the countryside, and great play-halls were made there, wherein men abode and dwelt there a half month or more. Many chosen men there were as then in the countryside, and it was thickly peopled. Most of the young men were at the plays, except Thord Wall-eye; but he might not deal therein because of his too great eagerness, though he was not so strong that he might not play for that cause. So he sat on a chair and looked on the play. Those brethren withal, Biorn and Arnbiorn, were not deemed meet to play because of their strength, unless they played one against the other.

That same autumn Thorbrand's sons fell to talk with Egil that he should go to the ball-play and slay some one of the Broadwickers, either Biorn or Thord or Arnbiorn, in some wise, and that he should have his freedom after therefor; and some men say that that was done by Snorri's rede, and that he had so counselled that the thrall should try if he might get into the hall by stealth, and thence whereas he lurked do somewhat for the wounding of men; and he bade him go down the pass which is above Playhalls, and go down thence when the meal-fires were kindled; for he said it was mostly the way of the weather that a wind would blow off the lava in the evening and drive the smoke up into the pass. So he bade him abide his time to go down till the pass should be full of smoke.

Egil betook himself to this journey, and went first west over the firths, and asked after the sheep of the Swanfirthers, and made as if he were going a sheep-gleaning.

Now whilst he was on his way, Freystein Rascal was to watch the sheep in Swanfirth. So in the evening, when Egil had gone from home, Freystein went west over the river to the sheep, and when he came to that scree which is called Geirvor, and which goes down west of the river, he saw a man's head lying trunkless there and uncovered, and the head sang this stave:

"With man's blood Geirvor
Is reddened over,
The skulls of men-folk
Shall she cover."

Chapter 44 The Battle In Swanfirth

Snorri the Priest had sent word to his neighbours that they should bring their boats under Redwick-head; and he went thither with his home-men as soon as Steinthor's messenger was gone; and he went not before, because he thought he saw that the man had been sent to spy over his doings. So Snorri went up Swanfirth, and had nigh fifty men with three keels, and came to Karstead before Steinthor and his men. But when folk saw the coming of Steinthor and his men, the sons of Thorbrand cried out to go meet them, "and let them not get entry into the home-field, for that we have both a great company and a goodly."

Now they who were there were eighty men. But Snorri said: "Nay, we will not ward the homestead from them, and Steinthor shall have the law, for peaceably and wisely will he fare in his redes. So I will that all men abide within, and let no man cast any vain words at them in such wise as that the troubles of men be eked thereby."

With that all men went into the chamber, and men sat on the benches. But the sons of Thorbrand walked up and down the floor.

Now Steinthor and his folk rode up to the door; and for him it is said that he was in a red kirtle, and had pulled up the front skirts through his belt. A fair shield he

had, and a helm, and was girt with a sword that was cunningly wrought; the hilts were white with silver, and the grip wrapped round with the same, but the strings thereof were gilded.

Steinthor and his folk leapt off their horses, and he went up to the door, and made fast to the doorpost a purse wherein were twelve ounces of silver. Then he named witnesses to the thrall's-gild being brought home according to law. The door was open, and a certain handmaid stood thereby, and heard the naming of the witnesses. Then she went into the chamber and said:

"Yea, both things are true, that Steinthor of Ere is a manly man, and moreover that he spoke well when he brought the thrall's- gild."

But when Thorleif Kimbi heard that, he ran out with the other sons of Thorbrand, and then all went forth who were in the chamber. Thorleif came first to the door, and saw where Thord Walleye stood before the doorway with his shield; but even therewith Steinthor went forth into the homefield. Thorleif took a spear which stood there in the doorway, and thrust it at Thord Wall-eye, and the thrust smote his shield and glanced off it unto the shoulder, and that was a great wound. After this men ran out and there was battle in the home-mead, and Steinthor was of the eagerest, and smote on either hand of him. But when Snorri the Priest came out he bade men stay the unpeace, and bade Steinthor ride away from the homestead, and said that he would not suffer men to ride after them. So Steinthor and his folks fared adown the mead, and men parted in such wise.

But when Snorri the Priest came back to the door, there stood Thorod his son with a great wound in his shoulder, and he was then twelve winters old. Snorri asked who had brought that about.

"Steinthor of Ere," said he.

And Thorleif Kimbi answered and said: "Now has he rewarded thee in meet wise, for that thou wouldst not have us chase him; but my rede it is that we part not thus."

"Yea, so shall it be now," said Snorri, "that we shall have more dealings with them." And he bade Thorleif withal tell the men to follow after them.

Now Steinthor and his folk were come down from the field when they saw the chase, and therewith they crossed the river and turned up on to the scree Geirvor, and made them ready for a stand; for a good fighting-stead was that because of the stones. But as Snorri's company came up the scree, Steinthor cast a spear over Snorri's folk for his good luck, according to ancient custom; but the spear sought a mark for itself, and in its way was Mar, the kinsman of Snorri, who was straightway put out of the fight. So when that was told Snorri the Priest, he answered: "It is well that men should see," says he, "that he is not always in the best case that goeth the last."

So then befell a great battle, and Steinthor was at the head of his own folk, and smote on either hand of him; but the fair- wrought sword bit not whenas it smote armour, and oft he must straighten it under his foot. He made most for the place whereas was Snorri the Priest.

Stir Thorgrimson set on fiercely with Steinthor his kinsman, and his first hap was that he slew a man of the folk of Snorri the Priest, his son-in-law; but when Snorri saw that he cried to Stir:

"Thus, forsooth, thou avengest Thorod, the son of thy daughter, whom Steinthor of Ere has brought unto death; the greatest of dastards art thou."

Stir looked on him and said: "Speedily I may atone for that;" and he shifted his shield withal, and turned to the side of Snorri the Priest, and slew another man, but this time a man of Steinthor's band.

Now even herewith came up from Longdale the father and son, Aslak and Illugi the Red, and sought to go between them. Thirty men they had with them, and to that company joined himself Vermund the Slender.

So then they prayed Snorri the Priest to let stay the slaughter of men, and Snorri bade the Ere-dwellers come up and make a truce. Then Aslak, he and his, bade Steinthor take truce for his men. So Steinthor bade Snorri reach forth his hand, and he did so; but therewith Steinthor raised his sword aloft and cut at Snorri's arm, and great was the clatter of the stroke, for it smote the stall-ring, and well-nigh struck it asunder, but Snorri was nowise wounded.

Then cried out Thorod Thorbrandson: "No truce will they have! Well then, let us set on, and stay not till all the sons of Thorlak are slain."

But Snorri the Priest answered: "Turmoil enow it would bring to the countryside if all sons of Thorlak were slain, and the truce shall be holden to if Steinthor will, after the word aforesaid."

Then all bade Steinthor take the truce; and things went so far, that a truce was declared betwixt man and man until such time as they came back each one to his home.

Now it is to be told of the Broadwick folk that they knew how Snorri the Priest had fared with a flock to Swanfirth. So they take their horses and ride after Steinthor at their swiftest, and they were on Ulfar's-fell-neck whiles the fight was on the scree; and some men say that Snorri the Priest saw Biorn and his folk as they came up on the hill's brow, whenas he happened to turn and face them, and that for that cause he was so easy in the terms of the truce with Steinthor and his men.

So when Biorn and Steinthor met at Orligstead, Biorn said that matters had gone even after his guessing. "And my rede it is," said he, "that ye turn back now, and drive them hard."

But Steinthor said: "Nay, I will hold to the truce I have made with Snorri the Priest, in whatso ways matters may go betwixt us hereafter."

Thereafter they ride each to his own home, but Thord Wall-Eye lay wounded at Ere. In the fight at Swanfirth five men had fallen of Steinthor's company, and two of Snorri the Priest; but many were wounded on either side, for the fight had been of the hardest. So says Thorrood Trefilson in his Raven-lay:

"The feeder of swans
Of wound-wave, in Swanfirth
Made the erne full

With feeding of wolfs' meat.
There then, let Snorri
Of five men the life-days
Cut off in sword-storm:
Such way shall foes pay."

Chapter 45 The Battle In Swordfirth

That summer, before the fight was in Swanfirth, a ship had come to Daymealness, as is aforesaid. Now Steinthor of Ere had bought a ten-oarer at the ship; but when he was to bring it home there fell on him a great gale from the west, and they drave east past Thors-ness, and landed at Thinghall-ness, and laid the keel up in Gruflunaust, and went thence afoot over the necks to Bank, and thence fared home in a boat; but the ten-oarer he had not been able to go fetch through the autumn, so it lay still at Gruflunaust.

But one morning a little before Yule, Steinthor rose early, and said that he would go fetch his craft that lay east at Thinghall-ness; and there betook them to faring with him his brothers Bergthor and Thord Wall-eye, whose wound was by now pretty much healed, so that he was meet enow to carry weapons. Withal in Steinthor's company were two Eastmen, and they were eight in all.

So they were ferried over the firth into Dairyhead, and they went afoot in towards Bank, and thence came Thormod, their brother, who made the ninth of them. Now the ice stretched from Templesteadwick right up to Much Bank, and they went up along the ice, and so over the neck to Swordfirth, which lay all under ice. Such is the way of it, that when the sea ebbs, it leaves it all dry, and the ice lies on the mud at the ebb; but the skerries that were in the firth stood up above the ice, which was much broken about one of them, and the icefloes sloped down steeply from the skerry. Loose snow withal had fallen on the ice, and very slippery it was thereon.

Now Steinthor and his folk went to Thinghall-ness, and pushed out the boat from the boatstand, and took out of her both oars and deck, and laid them down on the ice, together with their clothes and the heaviest of their weapons. Then they dragged the craft in along the firth, and then west over the low neck to Templesteadwick, and right out to the edge of the ice; and then went after their clothes and the other matters. But as they went back into Swordfirth, they saw six men going from the south from Thinghall-ness, who went a great pace over the ice, and made for Holyfell. Then Steinthor and his men misdoubted them, that there would be going the sons of Thorbrand minded for the Yule-feast at Holyfell. Then Steinthor with his folk went swiftly out over the firth to the place where lay their clothes and weapons; and so it was as Steinthor had deemed, and these men were the sons of Thorbrand.

So when these beheld men running down the firth, they deemed they knew who they were, and thought the men of Ere were fain to meet them. So they fell to going at a great pace, and made for the skerry with the mind to make a stand

there; and in this wise each came nigh to meeting the other, yet the sons of Thorbrand reached the skerry first. But as Steinthor and his folk came forth past the skerry, Thorleif Kimbi let drive a spear against their flock, and it smote Bergthor, son of Thorlak, in the midst, and straightway was he put out of the fight. Then he went away out on to the ice, and lay down, and Steinthor and his folk set on toward the skerry, but some went after their weapons. The sons of Thorbrand warded themselves well and in manly wise, and a good fighting-stead they had there, because the floes sloped steeply from the skerry and were wondrous slippery; thus wounding went slowly betwixt men, before those came back who had gone to fetch the weapons.

Steinthor and his men set on, six together, on the skerry, but the Eastmen went out on to the ice within bowshot, for they had bows, and there with they shot against those on the skerry, and gave many a wound.

Thorleif Kimbi cried out when he saw Steinthor draw his sword: "White hilts dost thou still wield aloft, Steinthor," says he; "but I wot not if thou raisest yet again a soft brand withal, as thou didst last autumn at Swanfirth."

Steinthor answers: "Ah! I will that thou prove ere we part whether I bear a soft brand or not."

Now slow work was the winning of the skerry, but when they had been thereat a long while, Thord Wall-eye made a dash at it, and would thrust at Thorleif Kimbi with a spear, for he was ever the foremost of his men. The thrust smote the shield of Thorleif, but even as Thord Wall-eye laboured over the blow his feet failed him on the slippery floe, and he fell on his back and slipped headforemost down from the skerry. Thorleif Kimbi leapt after him to smite him dead before he could get to his feet again, and Freystein Rascal followed Thorleif, and he had shoe-spikes on his feet. Then Steinthor ran thereto, and cast his shield over Thord even as Thorleif fetched a blow at him, and with the other hand he smote at Thorleif Kimbi, and smote the leg from him below the knee; and while that was a-doing Freystein Rascal thrust at Steinthor, aiming at his middle; and when Steinthor saw that, he leapt up aloft, and the thrust went between his legs, and these three things, whereof we have told even now, he did in one and the same nick of time. Then he ran to Freystein, and smote him on the neck with his sword, and loud was the clatter of that stroke. So he cried withal: "Art smitten, Rascal?"

"Smitten forsooth," said Freystein, "but yet no more than thou didst deem, for no wound have I therefrom." For in a hooded hat of felt was Freystein, with horn sewn into the neck thereof, and on that had the stroke fallen.

Then Freystein Rascal turned back skerryward, but Steinthor bade him run not, since he had no wound, and Freystein turned him round on the skerry, and now they made at each other hard and fast. Steinthor was in great risk of falling, for the floe was both steep and slippery, but Freystein stood firm on his spiked shoes, and smote both hard and oft; but such was the end of their dealings, that Steinthor brought his sword down on Freystein above his hips, and smote the man asunder in the midst.

Then they went on to the skerry, and stayed not till all Thorbrand's sons were fallen. Then cried out Thord Wall-eye that they should go betwixt head and

trunk of all the sons of Thorbrand, but Steinthor said he had no will to bear weapons on men who lay a low.

So they came down from the skerry, and went to where Bergthor lay, who scarce had might to speak. So they brought him with them in over the ice, and so over the neck to the boat, and rowed in the boat out to Bank in the evening.

Now a shepherd of Snorri's had been at Oxbrents that day, and saw thence the fight at Swordfirth. So he went home straightway, and told Snorri the Priest how there had been a meeting that day at Swordfirth nowise friendly. So Snorri and his folk took their weapons, and went into the firth nine in company; but when they came there, Steinthor and his men had gone their ways and come aboard off the ice of the firth.

Then Snorri looked to the wounded men, and there was none slain save Freystein Rascal, but they were all nigh wounded to death.

Thorleif Kimbi cried out to Snorri, bidding go after Steinthor and his folk, and let no one of them escape. So Snorri the Priest went there whereas Bergthor had lain, and saw there great gouts of blood. Then he took up in his hand together blood and snow, and crushed it up, and put it in his mouth, and asked who had bled there. And Thorleif said it was Bergthor who had bled. Then Snorri said it was life-blood. "Like enow," said Thorleif; "from a spear it came."

"Methinks," says Snorri, "that is the blood of a doomed man; so we will not follow after them."

Then were Thorbrand's sons brought home to Holyfell and their wounds bound up. Thorod Thorbrandson had so great a wound in the back of his neck that he might not hold his head straight; he had on hose-breeches withal, and they were all wet with blood. A home-man of Snorri the Priest was about pulling them off; but when he fell to stripping them he could not get them off. Then he said: "No lie is that concerning you sons of Thorbrand, when folk say ye are showy men, whereas ye wear clothes so tight that they may not come off you."

Thorod said: "Belike thou pullest slovenly." And therewith the home-man set his feet against the bed-stock and pulled with all his might, but yet gat them off none the more.

Then Snorri the Priest went thereto, and felt along his leg, and found a spear stuck through his leg between the hough sinew and the leg bone, that had nailed together the leg and the breeches. Then said Snorri that the thrall was a measureless fool not to have thought of such a thing.

Snorri Thorbrandson was the briskest of those brothers, and he sat at table beside his namesake that evening. Curds and cheese they had to meat, but Snorri noted that his namesake made but little play with the cheese, and asked why he eat so slowly.

Snorri Thorbrandson answered that lambs found it the hardest to eat when they were first gagged.

Then Snorri the Priest drew his hand down his throat, and found an arrow sticking athwart his gullet and the roots of the tongue. Then Snorri the Priest

took drawing-tongs and pulled out the arrow, and then Snorri Thorbrandson fell to his meat.

Then Snorri the Priest healed all the sons of Thorbrand. But when Thorod's neck grew together his head sat somewhat drawn backwards on his trunk, and he said that Snorri would heal him into a maimed man. Snorri said that he deemed the head would come straight when the sinews were knit together; but Thorod would have nought but that the wound should be torn open again, and the head set straighter. But all went as Snorri had guessed, and as soon as the sinews were knit together the head came right; yet little might Thord lout ever after. Thorleif Kimbi thenceforth went mostly with wooden leg.

Chapter 46

The Peace-Making After These Battles

Now when Steinthor of Ere and his men came to the boatstand at Bank, there they put up their craft, and the brothers went home to their steading, and the body of Bergthor was covered over with a tilt for the night. It is told that goodwife Thorgerd would not go to bed that night to Thormod her husband. But even therewith a man came up from the boatstand and told how Bergthor was dead; and when that was known she went to bed, nor is it said that any quarrel fell out betwixt them afterwards.

Steinthor went home to Ere in the morning, and no more fighting there was thenceforth through the winter. But in the spring, whenas time wore on to the days of summoning, men of good will bethought them that things had got to a sad plight, inasmuch as those men were unappeased and at strife together, who were the greatest in the countryside. So the best men who were friends of either side so brought it about that it came to seeking for peace betwixt them. And Vermund the Slender was chief of these, and with him were many men of good will, such as were allied to one side or the other, and thereof it came afterwards that truce was settled and they were brought to peace, and most men tell that these cases fell under Vermund's dooming; but he gave forth the award at the Thorsness Thing, and had with him the wisest men who were come there.

Now it is told of the peace-making that the slayings of men and onslaughts on either side were set off one against the other. The wound of Thord Wall-eye at Swanfirth was set against the wound of Thorod, son of Snorri the Priest. Against the wound of Mar Hallwardson and the stroke that Steinthor fetched at Snorri the Priest, were set the slayings of three men who fell in Swanfirth. The manslaughters which Stir made in either band were equalled; but in Swordfirth the slaughter of Bergthor and the wounds of Thorbrand's sons were set one against the other. But the slaying of Freystein Rascal met the death of one of those unnamed above who fell in Swanfirth out of Steinthor's company. Thorleif Kimbi had atonement for his lost leg; but the man who died out of Snorri's company in Swanfirth was set against the onset wherewith Thorleif Kimbi had set the fight agoing there.

Then were the wounds of other men set against each other, and what was deemed to be left over was booted for duly, and so men parted from the Thing appeased.

And that peace was well holden while Steinthor and Snorri were both alive.

Chapter 47

Of Thorod Scat-Catcher And Snorri And Biorn The Champion Of The Broad-Wickers

That same summer Thorod Scat-catcher bade Snorri his brother-in-law to a homefeast at Frodis-water, and Snorri went thither with eight men; but while Snorri was at the feast, Thorod complained to him that he deemed he had both shame and grief from the goings of Biorn Asbrandson, wherein he went to see his wife Thurid, the sister of Snorri the Priest, and said that it was Snorri's part to find rede for that trouble. So Snorri was at the feast certain nights, and Thorod led him away with seemly gifts. Snorri rode over the heath thence, and gave out that he would ride to the ship in Lavahavenmouth; and that was in summer at the time of mowing in the home-field. Now when he came south unto Combheath, then said Snorri: "Now shall we ride down from the heath unto Comb; and I will have you to know," says he, "that I will make an onset on Biorn, and take his life if occasion may serve; but not set on him in his house, because here are strong houses, and Biorn is brave and hardy, and we have but little strength. But hard have such great men as he is been to win in their houses, even when they were set on with more men; as the case of Geir the Priest and Gizur the White shows well enow; for with eighty men they fell on Gunnar of Lithend in his house when he was all alone, and some were hurt, and some slain, and they must needs draw off till Geir the Priest by his cunning found that Gunnar's shot was spent. Now, therefore," says he, "if Biorn is without, as is like, since the day is dry and good, I will that thou, kinsman Mar, fall to work on Biorn, but take heed of this first, that he is no mannikin, and therefore a greedy wolf will have a gripe, whereas he is, if he get not such a wound at the first onset as will speedily work his bane."

So when they rode down from the heath to the stead, they saw that Biorn was without in the home-mead working on a wain, and no man by him, and without weapons, save a little axe and a big whittle, with which he was widening the mortices of the wain; the whittle was a span long from the haft down.

Now Biorn saw how Snorri the Priest and his men rode down from the heath on to the mead, and straightway knew the men. Snorri the Priest was in a blue cape and rode first.

Such hasty rede took Biorn that he caught up the knife and turned swiftly to meet them, and when he came up to Snorri he caught hold of the sleeve of his cape with one hand, and held the knife in the other, in such wise as it was handiest to thrust it into Snorri's breast if need should be.

So Biorn hailed them when they met, and Snorri took his greeting; but Mar let his hands fall, because he deemed that Biorn looked like to do Snorri a mischief speedily if aught were done to break the peace against him.

Then Biorn turned on the road with Snorri and his folk, and asked for the common tidings; and still kept the hold he had got at the first. Then he fell to speech: "So it is, goodman Snorri, that I will not hide that I have played such a game with thee that ye may well hold me guilty, and it is told me that thy mind is heavy against me. Now best it is to my mind," says he, "if ye have any errand with me other than folk who go their ways hereby, that ye now show it forth; but if that be not so, then will I that ye say yea to my asking for truce, and then will I turn back, because I will not be led about like a fool."

"So lucky a hold thou hast of me in this our meeting," says Snorri, "that truce must thou have as at this time, whatever my mind was erst; but this I pray thee, that thou keep thyself henceforth from the beguiling of Thurid, for the wound betwixt us will not be healed if thou abidest as thou hast begun therein."

Biorn answered: "That only will I promise thee which lies in my might; nor do I wot if I have might enow for this, if Thurid and I are in one country together."

Snorri answered: "Nought holds thee here so much as that thou may'st not well take up thine abode away from this countryside."

Biorn answers: "True it is, even as thou say'st, and so shall it be, since thou thyself hast come to meet me thus; and whereas our meeting has gone in such wise, I will promise thee that thou and Thorod shall have no more grief of heart from the meetings of me and Thurid for the next winters."

"Then doest thou well," saith Snorri.

Therewithal they parted, and Snorri rode to the ship and then home to Holyfell. Next day Biorn rode south to the ship at Lavahaven, and took a berth for himself there that summer. Somewhat late ready were they, and they fell in with a northeaster, which prevailed long that summer, and nought was heard of that ship for long after.

Chapter 48 Of Thorbrand's Sons In Greenland

After the peace between the men of Ere and the Swanfirthers, Thorbrand's sons Snorri and Thorleif went out to Greenland. After Thorleif is called Kimbi's Bay in Greenland, betwixt the jokuls. So Thorleif lived to be old in Greenland, but Snorri went to Vineland the Good with Karlsefni, and in battle with the Skraelings in Vineland there fell Snorri Thorbrandson, the bravest of men.

Thorod Thorbrandson abode behind in Swanfirth, and had to wife Ragnhild, daughter of Thord, son of Thorgils the Eagle, who was the son of Hallstein, the Priest of Hallstein-ness, the thrall- owner.

Chapter 49

Of The Coming Of Christ's Faith To Iceland

Next it befell that Gizur the White and Hiallti his son-in-law came out to preach Christ's law; and all men in Iceland were christened, and the Christian faith was made law at the Althing. And Snorri the Priest brought it chiefly about with the Westfirthers that Christ's faith was taken of them; and as soon as the Thing was over, Snorri let build a church at Holyfell, and Stir, his father-in-law, another at Under-the-Lava. Now this whetted men much to the building of churches, that it was promised them by the teachers, that a man should have welcome place for so many men in the kingdom of Heaven as might stand in any church that he let build. Thorod Scat-catcher withal let make a church at his homestead of Frodis-water, but priests could not be got for the serving at the churches, though they were built, for in those days but few mass-priests there were in Iceland.

Chapter 50

Of Thorgunna And How She Came To Frodis-Water

The same summer that Christ's faith was made law in Iceland, a ship came from over the sea to Snowfell-ness, a keel of Dublin, whose folk were Erse and South-islanders, and a few Northmen. They lay off the Reef long through the summer, biding a wind to sail in over the firth to Daymeal-ness; so many men of the Ness went to chaffer with them. Now among her folk was a South-island woman named Thorgunna, and of her the shipmen told that she had such things among her faring-goods that the like of them would be hard to get in Iceland; but when Thurid the goodwife of Frodis-water heard thereof, she became exceeding wishful to see those fair things, for she was very fain of glitter and show. So she fared to the ship and found Thorgunna, and asked her if she had any woman's attire, something out of the common way. She said that she had no goods for sale, but let out that she had certain fair things, which she might show without shame at feasts or other meetings of men. Thurid prayed to see her fair things, and she granted it to her; and the wares seemed good to Thurid, and exceeding well shaped, but not beyond price.

Thurid offered to deal for the goods, but Thorgunna would not sell them, so Thurid bade her come dwell with her, for she knew that Thorgunna was rich of raiment, and thought to get the goods at her leisure.

Thorgunna answered: "I have good will to go dwell with thee, but I give you to know that I am loth to pay much for myself, because I am exceeding handy at work, and willing enough thereto; but no wet work will I do; and I myself too shall rule what I am to pay for myself from the wealth that I have."

So Thorgunna talked it all over unyieldingly enough, but Thurid would that she should go thither none the less, and her goods were borne from the ship: a great locked ark and a light chest, and they were brought to the house at Frodis-water.

So when Thorgunna came there she prayed to have a bed, and a berth was given to her in the inward part of the hall. There she unlocked her ark, and drew thereout bed-clothes all excellently wrought.

She covered over the bed with English sheets and a silken quilt, and took from the ark bed-curtains and all other bed-gear withal; and so good an array that was, that men deemed that of such goods they had never seen the like.

Then said goodwife Thurid: "Put a price for me on thy bed-gear."

But Thorgunna answered: "Nay, I will not lie in straw for thee, courteous though thou be, and grand of array."

That misliked the goodwife, and never after did she bid for the goods.

Thorgunna worked at the weaving day by day when no haymaking was, but when it was dry she worked at the saving of hay in the home-mead, and let make for herself a rake, which she alone must handle.

Thorgunna was a woman great of growth, thick and tall, and right full of flesh; dark-browed and narrow-eyed; her hair dark-red and plenteous; of exceeding good manners was she in her daily ways, and she went every day to church before she went about her work; yet not easy of temper was she, or of many words in her daily conversation. Most men deemed that Thorgunna must have come into her sixth ten of years, yet was she the halest of women.

In those days was Thorir Wooden-leg come to be harboured at Frodis-water, and Thorgrima Witchface his wife with him, and things went somewhat ill betwixt her and Thorgunna. Kiartan the goodman's son was the one with whom Thorgunna would have most dealings, and she loved him much, yet was he cold to her, wherefore she was often cross-grained of mood. Kiartan was by then of thirteen or fourteen winters, and was both great of growth, and noble to look on.

Chapter 51

It Rains Blood At Frodis-Water. Of Thorgunna, And How She Died And Was Buried At Skalaholt

The summer was something wet, but nigh autumn befell good drying weather, and the haymaking at Frodis-water was by then come so far that all the home-mead was mown, and nigh half thereof was fully dry. Then befell a good drying day, calm and clear, so that no cloud was seen in the heavens.

Goodman Thorod got up early in the morning and set folk awork, and some fell to carrying the hay, while others ricked it. But Thorod set the women to spreading it, and the work was shared betwixt them, and Thorgunna set to work at as much as a neat's winter-fodder.

So the work went on well the day long, but when it had well-nigh worn three hours from noon, a black cloud-fleck came across the heaven from the north above Skor, and swiftly drew over the heavens, and thitherward straight over the stead. Folk deemed they saw rain in that cloud, and Thorod bade men rake

up the hay. But Thorgunna brought hers into ridges, nor would she fall to rake it up though she were so bidden.

The cloud-fleck came up swiftly, and when it stood over the homestead of Frodis-water, there followed therewith so great a darkness, that men might not see out of the home-field, or scarce their hands before them. Then fell so great a rain from the cloud that all the hay that was spread was wetted; but the cloud drew off swiftly and the weather cleared. Then men saw that it had rained blood in that shower. But that evening good drying weather set in again, and the blood dried off all the hay but that which Thorgunna had spread; that dried not, or the rake either which she had handled. Thurid asked Thorgunna what she thought that wonder might forbode. She said that she wotted not. "But that seems to me most like," says she, "that it will be the weird of some one of those that are here."

Thorgunna went home in the evening and into her berth, and put off her bloodied clothes, and then lay down in her bed and sighed heavily, and men deemed that she had fallen sick.

Now that shower had come nowhere else but to Frodis-water.

But Thorgunna might eat no meat that evening, but in the morning goodman Thorod came to her and asked her what end she looked to have of her ailing. She said that she was minded to think that she would not fall sick again.

Then she said: "I deem thee the wisest man of the homestead, therefore will I tell thee all my will as to what I would have made of the goods I leave behind me and of myself. For things will go," says she, "even as I say, though ye think there is little to be noted in me, and I deem it will avail but little to turn away from my behests; for things have begun in such wise, that to no narrow ends deem I they will come, if strong stays be not raised thereagainst."

Thorod answered and said: "Methinks there is no little likelihood that thou wilt have deemed aright about this; yet I will promise thee," says he, "to turn not from thy behests."

Then said Thorgunna: "This would I have done: I would be borne to Skalaholt if I die of this sickness, because my mind tells me that that stead will be for one while the most worshipped stead in the land; and I wot also," says she, "that there will be priests to do the singing over me; so I pray thee to bring me there, and of my goods shalt thou have so much as that thou wilt have no loss thereby; but from my undivided goods shall Thurid have the scarlet cloak that I own; and this I do to the end that she may be content that I see to my other goods in such wise as I will; but I will that thou take for the cost thou hast for me that which thou wilt, or that pleases her, from such things alone as I leave thereto. A gold ring I have which shall go to church with me, but I will that my bed and my bed-hangings be burned up with fire, for that they will be of no good to any man; and I say this not because I grudge anyone to enjoy those good things, if I knew that they would be of good avail to any; but now I say so much thereover," says she, "because I deem it ill that folk should have so much heavy trouble from me, as well I wot will be, if ye turn away from that which I now ordain."

Thorod promised to do after her bidding; and so the sickness grew on her after that, and Thorgunna lay there not many days before she died.

The corpse was first borne into the church there, and Thorod let make a chest for the corpse, and the next day he had the bed-gear borne out into the air, and brought faggots together, and let pile up a bonfire there beside. Then goodwife Thurid went to him and asked what he was minded to do with the bed-gear. He said that he would burn it up with fire, even as Thorgunna had charged.

She answered: "It mislikes me that such precious things should be burned."

Thorod said: "She spake much thereon, and how it would not do to turn aside from that she had laid down."

Thurid said: "Such words were of nought but her envious mind; she grudged that any should enjoy these, therefore did she lay such charge on thee; but nought ill-omened will come of it, in whatsoever way such things are departed from."

"I know not," said he, "that things will go well but if we do as she has bidden."

Then Thurid put her arms round his neck, and prayed him not to burn the bed-gear, and pressed him so eagerly that he changed his mind and she brought matters about in such wise that Thorod burned the bolster and the mattress, but she took to her the quilt and sheets, and all the hangings; and yet withal it misliked them both.

Thereafter was the burial journey got ready, and trusty men got to go with the corpse, and good horses that Thorod owned. The body was swathed in linen, but not sewn up, and then laid in the chest. So then they went south over the heath as the road lies, and nought is told of their journey till they came south past Valbiorns-vales. There they got amongst flows exceeding soft, and the corpse was often upset. Then they went south to Northwater, and crossed it by Isleford. Deep was the river, and a storm befell with much rain; but they came at last to a stead that was within Staffholts-tongue and is called Nether-ness, and there asked for guesting, but the bonder would give them no cheer; so whereas the night was at hand, they deemed they might go no further, for belike it was nought easy to deal with Whitewater by night; so they unloaded their horses, and bore the corpse into a house over against the outer door, and then went into the hall and did off their clothes, and deemed they would abide there unfed that night. But the home-men went to bed by daylight, and when they were abed, they heard a great clatter in the buttry, and so they went to see what was toward, if perchance thieves had not broken in there, and when they came to the buttry there was to behold a tall woman, naked, with nothing on her, busied at bringing out victuals. So when they saw her, they were so afeard they durst go nowhere anigh.

But when the corpse-bearers knew thereof they went there, and saw what was toward, that thither was Thorgunna come, and good it seemed to all not to meddle with her. So when she had wrought such things there as she would, she bore meat into the hall, and laid the table and set out meat thereon. Then spake the corpse-bearers to the bonder: "Maybe things will end so or ever we part that thou wilt deem that thou hast paid dear enough for not giving us any cheer."

Then said the goodman and goodwife: "We will surely give you meat, and do for you all other things that ye may need."

And forthwith, when the goodman had bidden them good cheer, Thorgunna went out of the hall and out adooors, and was not seen after. And after that, light was brought into the hall, and the wet clothes pulled off from the guests and dry clothes got them in their stead, and they went to table and crossed the meat, while the goodman had all the house besprinkled with holy water.

So the guests eat the meat, and none had harm therefrom, though Thorgunna had set it out.

There they slept through the night, and were in a most hospitable place belike; but in the morning they got them ready for their journey, and right well it sped with them; but wheresoever these haps were known, there it seemed best rede to most folk to give them all the cheer they stood in need of.

So after this nought befell to tell of in their journey. And when they came to Skalaholt, the good things were yielded up which Thorgunna had given thereto, and the priests took them, corpse and all, gladly enow, and there was Thorgunna laid in earth, but the corpse-bearers fared home, and all went well with their journey, and they all came home in good case.

Chapter 52

The Beginning Of Wonders At Frodis-Water

At Frodis-water was there a great fire-hall, and lock-beds in therefrom, as the wont then was. Out from the hall there were two butteries, one on either hand, with stock-fish stored in one, and meal in the other. There were meal-fires made every evening in the fire-hall, as the wont was, and men mostly sat thereby or ever they went to meat.

Now that same night that the corpse-bearers came home, as men sat by the meal-fires at Frodiswater, they saw how by the panelling of the house-wall was come a half-moon, and all might see it who were in the house; and it went backward and withershins round about the house, nor did it vanish away while folk sat by the fires. So Thorod asked Thorir Wooden-leg what that might bode.

Thorir said it was the Moon of Weird, "and the deaths of men will follow thereafter," says he.

So a whole week this thing endured, that the Moon of Weird came in there evening after evening.

Chapter 53

Now Men Die At Frodis-Water, More Wonders

This happed next to tell of at Frodis-water, that the shepherd came in exceeding hushed. Little he said, and what he said was peevish; so men deemed it most

like that he was bewitched, for he fared in distraught wise, and was ever talking to himself; and so things went on awhile.

But when two weeks of winter were worn, the shepherd came home on a night, and went straight to his bed and lay down, and in the morning when men came to him he was dead. So he was buried at the church there.

A little after that great hauntings befell; and on a night as Thorir Wooden-leg went out for his needs, and turned off aside from the door, when he would go in again, he saw how the shepherd was come before the door. Then would he go in again, but the shepherd would nowise have it so; and Thorir was fain to get away, but the shepherd went at him, and got hold of him, and cast him homeward up against the door. At this he was affrighted exceedingly; yet he got him to his bed, and he was by then grown coal-blue all over.

Now from this he fell sick and died, and was buried there at the church; but ever after were the twain, the shepherd and Thorir Wooden-leg, seen in company, and therefrom were folk full of dread, as was like to be.

After Thorir's death a house-carle of Thorod fell sick, and lay there three nights or ever he died. Then one after another died, till six were dead; and by then it was hard on the Yule-fast, though at that time there was no fasting in Iceland.

Now the pile of stock-fish was so heaped up in the buttery that it filled it up, so that the door might not be opened, and it went right up to the tie-beam, and a ladder was needed to get the stock-fish from the top.

So one evening when men sat by the meal-fires, they heard how the stock-fish was being riven out of its skin, but when men looked thereto, they found there nought quick. But in the winter a little before Yule, goodman Thorod went out to Ness after his stock-fish. They were six together in a ten-oarer, and were out there night-long.

The same evening that Thorod went from home, it fell out at Frodis-water, when the meal-fires were lighted and men came gathering into the hall, that they saw how a seal's head came up through the floor of the fire-hall. A certain home-woman came forth first and saw that hap, and caught up a club that lay in the doorway, and drave it at the seal's head; but it rose up under the blow, and glared up at Thorgunna's bed-gear.

Then went a house-carle thereto, and beat on the seal, but at every blow it kept rising till it was up as far as below the flappers. Then fell the house-carle swooning, and all that were thereby were fulfilled of mighty dread.

Then the swain Kiartan ran thereto, and took up a great sledge-hammer and smote on the seal's head, and great was that blow, but the seal only shook its head and looked round about; but Kiartan smote one blow on another till the seal sank down therewith, as if he were at the knocking down of a peg; but he smote on till the seal went down so far that he might beat down the floor over the head of him. And so indeed it fell out the winter through, that all the portents dreaded Kiartan the most of all.

Chapter 54

The Death Of Thorod Scat-Catcher; The Dead Walk At Frodis-Water

The morning that Thorod and his men went out westaway from Ness, they were all lost off Enni; the ship and the fish drave ashore there under Enni, but the corpses were not found. But when this news was known at Frodiswater, Kiartan and Thurid bade their neighbours to the arvale, and their Yule ale was taken and used for the arvale. But the first evening whenas men were at the feast, and were come to their seats, in came goodman Thorod and his fellows into the hall, all of them dripping wet. Men gave good welcome to Thorod, for a good portent was it deemed, since folk held it for sooth that those men should have good cheer of Ran if they, who had been drowned at sea, came to their own burial-ale; for in those days little of the olden lore was cast aside, though men were baptized and were Christian by name.

Now Thorod and his company went down the endlong sitting-hall, which was double-doored, and went into the fire-hall, and took no man's greeting, and set them down by the fire. Then the homemen fled away from the fire-hall, but Thorod and his folk sat behind there till the fires slaked, and then gat them gone. And thus it befell every evening while the arvale lasted, that they came to the fire. Much talk was hereover at the arvale, and some guessed that it would leave off when the feast was over. The guests went home after the feast, and somewhat dreary was that household left.

Now the evening that the guests went away were the meal-fires made as wont was. But when they burned up, in came Thorod and his company all dripping wet, and they sat down by the fire and fell to wringing their raiment. And so when they were sat down, in came Thorir Wooden-leg and his six followers, and they were all be-moulded, and they shook their raiment and cast the mould at Thorod and his folk.

Then the home-men fled away from the fire-hall, as might be looked for, and had neither light nor warm stones nor any matter wherewith they had any avail of the fire.

But the evening next after were fires made in another chamber, and it was deemed that they would be less likely to come thither, but it fell not out so, and all went in the same way as the night before, and both companies came to the fires. The third evening Kiartan gave counsel to make a long fire in the fire-hall, and meal-fires in another chamber. So was it done, and this availed thus much, that Thorod and his folk sat by the long fire and the home-men by the little fire; and so things went till over Yuletide.

Now it befell that more and more were things going on in the stock-fish heap, and night and day men might hear how the stock-fish was torn. And after this the time came when need was of stock-fish, and men went to search the heap; and the man who went up thereon saw this to tell of, that up from the heap came a great tail as big as a singed neat's tail, and it was short-haired and seal-haired; he who went up on to the heap caught at the tail and tugged, and

called on other men to come help, him. So folk fared up on to the heap, both men and women, and tugged at the tail, and got nought done, and they thought none otherwise than that the tail was dead; but lo, as they pulled, the tail drew down through their hands, so that the skin came off the palms of those who had the firmest hold thereon, and nought was known afterwards of that tail.

Then was the stock-fish heap taken down, and every fish therein was found torn from the skin, so that there was no fish found in his skin in the lower part of the heap; but nought quick was found therein.

After these haps Thorgrima Witch-face, the wife of Thorir Wooden- leg, fell sick and lay but a little while or she died, and the very same evening that she was buried, she was seen in the company of Thorir her husband. Then the sickness fell on folk anew after the tail was seen, and more women than men died; and yet six men died in that brunt. But some fled before those hauntings and ghosts. At harvest-tide there had been thirty serving-folk there, but eighteen were dead, and five fled away, and but seven were left behind at Goi.

Chapter 55

A Door-Doom At Frodis-Water

Now when those wonders had gone so far, one day Kiartan went east unto Holyfell to go see Snorri the Priest, his mother's brother, and asked rede of him what he should do in the matter of those wonders that had fallen on them. At that time was come to Holyfell the priest that Gizur the White had sent to Snorri the Priest. So Snorri sent the priest out to Frodis-water with Kiartan, as well as his son Thord Kausi, and six men more. Thereto he added the counsel to burn Thorgunna's bed-gear, and summon all those who walked, to a door-doom; and he bade the priest sing the hours there, and hallow water and shrive all folk. So these summoned men from the nighest steads on the road, and came to Frodis-water on the eve of Candlemas at such time as the meal-fires were lighted.

By then had goodwife Thurid fallen sick even in such wise as those who had died.

Now Kiartan went in straightway and saw how Thorod and his folk sat by the fire as their wont was. So he took down Thorgunna's bed-gear, and went into the fire-hall, and caught up brands from the fire, and went out therewith, and then was all the bed-array burned that Thorgunna had owned.

Thereafter Kiartan summoned Thorir Woodenleg, and Thord Kausi summoned goodman Thorod, in that they went about that household without leave, and despoiled men both of life and luck; all were summoned who sat by the fires.

Then was a door-doom named, and these cases put forward; and it was done in all matters even as at a doom of the Thing: verdicts were delivered, cases summed up, and doom given.

But as soon as the sentence on Thorir Woodenleg was given out, he arose and said: "Here have I sat while sit I might;" and thereafter he went out by the door before which the court was not set.

Then was the sentence on the shepherd passed. But when he heard it he stood up and said: "Go I now hencefrom; I ween erst it had more seemly been."

And when Thorgrima Witch-face heard the doom on her ended, she also arose and said: "Here while abiding was meet I abode."

Then they charged one after the other, and each arose as the sentence fell on him, and all said somewhat at their going forth; but ever it seemed by the words of each that they were all loth to depart. At last was judgment given on goodman Thorod, and when he heard it he stood up and said: "Meseems little peace is here; so get us all gone elsewhere ;" and therewith he went out.

Then in walked Kiartan and his folk, and the priest bare hallowed water and the holy things throughout the house, and on the next day they sang all the hours and mass with great solemnity, and so there was an end thereafter to all walkings and hauntings at Frodis-water. But Thurid got better of her sickness so that she was healed.

In the spring after these wonders Kiartan took to him serving- folk, and dwelt long after at Frodis-water, and was the greatest of the doughty.

Chapter 56 Of Snorri The Priest And The Blood-Suit After Stir

Snorri the Priest dwelt at Holyfell eight winters after Christ's faith was made law in Iceland. The last winter he dwelt there was the one wherein his father-in-law Stir was slain at Iorvi in Flisa-wharf. Then Snorri the Priest went south thither after the corpse; and he went against Stir in the women's bower at Horseholt, whenas he was sitting upright and was holding the bonder's daughter by the middle.

That spring Snorri changed lands with Gudrun Osvif's daughter, and brought his household to Tongue in Saelings-dale; that was two winters after the slaying of Bolli Thorleikson, Gudrun's husband.

The same spring Snorri went south to Burgfirth with four hundred men to follow up the suit for the slaying of Stir. In his company was Vermund the Slender, the brother of Stir, who dwelt as then at Waterfirth; Steinthor of Ere withal, and Thorod Thorbrandson of Swanfirth; Thorleik Brandson of Crossness, the brother's son of Stir, also, and many other men of worth.

The furthest south they came was to Whitewater at Howeford over against By. There they found before them, south of the river, Illugi the Black, Kleppiam the Old, Thorstein Gislison, Gunnlaug the Wormtongue, Thorstein Thorgilson of Hafsfirthisle, who had to wife Vigdis, the daughter of Illugi the Black; and many other men of account were there, with a band of more than five hundred men.

So Snorri the Priest and his folk might nowise ride south over the river, but set forth the suit when they had gone the furthest they might without risk, and Snorri summoned Guest for the slaying of Stir.

But this same suit Thorstein Gislison brought to nought for Snorri the Priest in the summer at the Althing.

The same summer Snorri the Priest rode south to Burgfirth, and took the life of Thorstein Gislison and Gunnar his son; and still was Steinthor of Ere with him, and Thorod Thorbrandson, and

Brand Hoskuldson, and Thorleik Brandson, and they were fifteen in all.

The next spring they met at the Thing of Thorsness, Snorri the Priest to wit, and Thorstein of Hafsfirthisle, the son-in-law of Illugi the Black. Thorstein was the son of Thorgils, the son of Thorfinn, the son of Seal-Thorir of Redmel, but his mother was Aud, the daughter of Alf-a-dales; but Thorstein was the cousin of Thorgils Arison of Reek-knolls, and Thorgeir Havarson, and Thorgils Hallason, and Bitter-Oddi, and those Swanfirthers, Thorleif Kimbi and the other sons of Thorbrand.

Thorstein had at that time set on foot many cases for the Thorsness Thing. So one day on the Thing-brent, Snorri the Priest asked if Thorstein had set on foot many suits for the Thing. Thorstein answered that he had set on foot certain ones.

Then said Snorri: "Now belike wilt thou that we further thy cases for thee, even as ye Burgfirthers furthered ours last spring."

Thorstein said: "I nowise long for this."

But when Snorri had so spoken, his sons and many other kinsmen of Stir laid heavy words thereto, and said that it would serve Thorstein right well, if every one of his suits there should come to an end as it now stood, and said it was right meet that he himself should now pay for that shame which he and Illugi his father-in-law had done to them the past summer.

Thorstein answered few words thereto, and men went therewith from the Thing-brent. However, Thorstein and his kin, the men of Redmel, had brought together a great company, and when men should go to the courts, Thorstein got ready to push forward all these suits of his which he had set on foot for the courts to adjudge. But when the kin of Stir and folk allied to him knew that, they armed themselves, and went betwixt the courts, and the Redmel-folk as they would go to the courts, and a fight befell betwixt them.

Thorstein of Hafsfirthisle would pay no heed to aught but making for the place whereas Snorri the Priest was. Both big and stark was Thorstein, and a deft man-at-arms, but when he fell fiercely on Snorri, Kiartan of Frodis-water, Snorri's sister's son, ran before him, and Thorstein and he fought long together, and their weapon-play was exceeding hard-fought.

But thereafter friends of both sides came thither, and went between them, and brought about truce.

After the battle spake Snorri to Kiartan his kinsman, and said: "Well wentest thou forth today, Broadwicking!"

Kiartan answered somewhat wrathfully: "No need to throw my kin in my teeth," said he. In this fight fell seven of Thorstein's men, but many were wounded on either side.

These matters were settled straightly at the Thing, and Snorri the Priest was the more generous in all peace-makings, because he would not that these matters should come to the Althing, whereas the slaughter of Thorstein Gislison was yet unatoned for; and it seemed to him that he would have full enough to answer to at the Althing, though this were not brought against him. About all these things, the slaying of Thorstein Gislison, and Gunnar his son, and also about the battle at the Thorsness Thing, thus sings Thorrood Trefilson in the Raven-song:

"Again now the great-heart,
The Rhine-fires waster,
Slew two men in spear-storm
South over the water.
Thereafter lay seven
Life-bereft on the Ness
Of the bane of the troll-wives.
Thereof are there tokens."

Chapter 57

Of Uspak Of Ere In Bitter And Of His Injustice

Whenas Snorri the Priest had dwelt a few winters at Saelings- dale-Tongue, there dwelt a man at Ere in Bitter called Uspak. He was a married man, and had a son called Glum, who was young in those days. Uspak was the son of Kiallak of Kiallak's-river of Skridinsenni. Uspak was the biggest and strongest of men; he was unloved and the most unjust of men, and had with him seven or eight carles who were much in the way of picking quarrels with men in those northern parts; they had ever a ship off the land, and took from every man his goods and his drifts as it seemed them good.

A man called Alf the Little dwelt at Thambardale in Bitter. He had wealth enow, and was the greatest of men in his housekeeping; he was a Thingman of Snorri the Priest, and had the ward of his drifts round Gudlaugs-head. Alf, too, deemed himself to feel cold from Uspak and his men, and made plaint thereof to Snorri the Priest whensoever they met.

Thorir, son of Gullhard, dwelt at Tongue in Bitter in those days. He was a friend of Sturla Thiodrekson, who was called Slaying-Sturla, who dwelt at Stead-knoll in Saurby. Thorir was a rich bonder, and a foremost man among those of Bitter, and had withal the wardship of Sturla's drifts there in the north. Full oft was grey silver in the fire betwixt Thorir and Uspak, and now one now the other came off best.

Uspak was the foremost man there about Crosswater-dale and Enni.

One winter the hard weather came on early, and straightway was there earth-ban about Bitter, whereof men had great loss of live-stock; but some drave their beasts south over the heath.

The summer before had Uspak let build a work at his stead of Ere, a wondrous good fighting-stead, if men were therein for defence.

In the winter at Goi came on a great snowstorm and held on for a week; a great northern gale it was. But when the storm abated, men saw that the ice from the main was come thither all over the outer firth, but no ice was as then come into Bitter, so men went to scan their foreshores.

Now it is to be told, that out betwixt Stika and Gudlaugs-head was a great whale driven ashore; in that whale Snorri the Priest and Sturla Thiodrekson had the greatest share; but Alf the Little and more bonders yet had certain shares in it also. So men from all Bitter go thither and cut up the whale under the ordering of Thorir and Alf.

But as men were at the cutting they saw a craft come rowing from the other side of the firth from Ere, and knew it for a great twelve-oarer that Uspak owned.

Now these landed by the whale and went up there, fifteen men all- armed in company; and when Uspak came aland he went to the whale and asked who had the rule thereover. Thorir said that he was over the share that Sturla had, but Alf over his share and that of Snorri the Priest; and that of the other bonders each saw to his own share. Uspak asked what they would hand over to him of the whale. Thorir answers: "Nought will I give thee of the portion that I deal with; but I wot not but that the bonders will sell thee of that which they own. What wilt thou pay therefor?"

"Thou knowest, Thorir," said Uspak, "that I am not wont to buy whale of you men of Bitter."

"Well," said Thorir, "I am minded to think that thou gettest none without price."

Now such of the whale as was cut lay in a heap, and was not yet apportioned out; so Uspak bid his men go thereto and bear it down to his keel; and those who were at the whale had but few weapons except the axes wherewith they were cutting it up. But when Thorir saw that Uspak and his folk went at the whale, he called out to the men not to let themselves be robbed. Then they ran to the other side of the heap, and those about the uncut whale ran therefrom, and Thorir was the swiftest of them.

Uspak turned to meet him and fetched a blow at him with his axe- hammer, and smote him on the ear so that he fell swooning; but those who were nighest caught hold of him and dragged him to them, and stood over him while he lay in the swoon, but then was the whale not guarded.

Then came up Alf the Little and bade them not take the whale. Uspak answered: "Come not nigh, Alf; thin is thy skull and heavy my axe, and far worse than Thorir shalt thou fare, if thou makest one step further forward."

This wholesome counsel thus taught him Alf followed. Uspak and his folk bore the whale down to their keel, and had got it done or ever Thorir woke up. But when he knew what had betid, he blamed his men that they had done slothfully in standing by him while some were robbed and some beaten; and therewith he sprang up. But Uspak had by then got his keel afloat, and they thrust off from the land. Then they rowed west over the firth to Ere, and Uspak let none go from him who had been in this journey; but there they had their abode and got matters ready in the work.

Thorir and his folk shared the whale, and let the loss of that which was taken fall equally on all, even according to the share which each man owned in the whale, and thereafter all went home.

And now full great enmity there was betwixt Thorir and Uspak, but whereas Uspak had a many men, the booty was soon on the wane.

Chapter 58

Uspak Robs Alf The Little. Thorir Chases Uspak

Now on a night Uspak and his men went into Thambardale fifteen in company, and set on the house of Alf the Little, and drove him and all his men into the hall while they robbed there, and bore thence four horseloads of goods.

From Firth-horn men had gotten ware of their goings, and therefore was a man sent to Tongue to tell Thorir. Thorir gathered men, and he was eighteen strong, and they went down to the firth-bottom. Then Thorir saw where Uspak and his men had passed him, and went east on the other side of Firth-horn; and when Uspak saw the chase, he said:

"Men are coming after us, and there will Thorir be going," says he; "and now will he be minded to pay me back for my blow wherewith I smote him last winter. They are eighteen, but we fifteen, yet better arrayed. Now it will not be easy to see which of us will be fainest of blows; but those horses which we have taken from Thambardale will be fain of home, yet never will I let that be taken from me which we have laid hands on; so two of us who are the worst armed shall drive the laden horses before us out to Ere, and let those men who are at home come to meet us; but we thirteen will withstand these men even as we may."

So they did as Uspak bade. But when Thorir came up, Uspak greeted him, and asked for tidings, and was soft-spoken, that so he might delay Thorir and his folk. Thorir asked whence they had those goods. Uspak says: "From Thambardale."

"How camest thou thereby?" says Thorir.

Says Uspak: "They were neither given, nor paid, nor sold at a price."

"Will ye let them go, and give them into our hands?" said Thorir.

Uspak said he could not bring himself to that, and therewith they ran each at each, and a fight befell; and Thorir and his men were of the eagerest, but Uspak and his folk defended themselves well and manly, yet some were wounded, and some slain.

Thorir had a bear-bill in his hand, and therewith he ran at Uspak and smote at him, but Uspak put the thrust from him, and whereas Thorir had thrown all his might into the blow, and there was nought before the bill, he fell on his knees and louted forward. Then Uspak smote Thorir on the back with his axe, and loud rang the stroke; and Uspak said: "That shall stay thy long journeys, Thorir," says he.

"Maybe," says Thorir; "yet methinks a full day's journey may I go for all thee and that stroke of thine."

For Thorir had a chain-knife round his neck, as the fashion then was, and had cast it aback behind him, and the blow had come thereon, and he had but been scratched in the muscles on either side of his spine, and little enough withal.

Then ran up a fellow of Thorir's and smote at Uspak, but he thrust forth his axe, and the blow took the shaft thereof and struck it asunder, and down fell the axe. Then cried out Uspak, and bade his men flee away, and himself fell to running; but as soon as Thorir arose, he cast his bill at Uspak and smote him on the thigh, and cut through it on the outer side of the bone. Uspak drew the bill from the wound and cast it back, and it smote the man in the midst who had erst cut at Uspak, and down he fell dead to the earth.

Thereafter away ran Uspak and his following, and Thorir and his company chased them out along the foreshores well-nigh to Ere. Then came folk from the homestead, both men and women, and Thorir and his folk turned back.

And no more onslaughts were made on either side thenceforth through the winter.

At that meeting fell three of Uspak's men and one of Thorir's, but many were wounded on either side.

Chapter 59

Uspak And His Men At The Strands. They Give Up Their Work

Snorri the Priest took up all the cases of Alf the Little at the hands of Uspak and his men, and made all those guilty at the Thorsness Thing; and after the Thing he went home to Tongue, and sat at home until the time came for the court of forfeiture to sit; and then he went north to Bitter with a great company. But when he came there, then was Uspak gone with all his; and they had gone north to the Strands fifteen in company, and had five keels. They were at the Strands through the summer, and did there many unpeaceful deeds.

They set them down north in Wrackfirth, and gathered men to them, and thither came he who is called Raven and was bynamed the Viking. He was nought but an ill-doer, and had lain out north about the Strands. There they wrought great warfare with robbing and slaying of men, and held all together till towards winter-nights.

Then gathered together the Strand-men, Olaf Eyvindson, of Drangar, and other bonders with him, and fell on them. They had there a work once more about their stead in Wrackfirth, and were well-nigh thirty in company. Olaf and his folk sat down before the work, and hard to deal with they deemed it to be. So both sides talked together, and the evil-doers offered to get them gone from the Strands, and do no more unpeaceful deeds there henceforth, while the others should depart from before the work; and whereas they deemed it nowise an

easy play to have to do with them, they took that choice, and both sides bound themselves by oath to this settlement, and the bonders fared home withal.

Chapter 60

Uspak Goes Back To Ere In Bitter: He Robs And Slays

Now is it to be told of Snorri the Priest that he went to the court of forfeiture north in Bitter, as is written afore, but when he came to Ere, then was Uspak gone. So Snorri held the court of forfeiture there according to law, and laid hands on all the forfeit goods, and divided them betwixt those men as had had the most ill deeds done them, Alf the Little to wit, and the other men who had had harm from robberies. Thereafter Snorri the Priest rode home to Tongue, and so wore the summer.

Now Uspak and his men went from the Strands about the beginning of winter-nights, and had two big boats. They went in past the Strands, and then south across the bay to Waterness. There they went up and robbed, and loaded both the boats up to the gunwale, and then stretched north away over the bay into Bitter and landed at Ere, and bore their spoil up into the work. There had Uspak's wife and his son Glum abode the summer through, with but two cows. Now on the very same night that they came home, they rowed both the boats down to the firth-bottom, and went up to the farm at Tongue, and broke into the house there, and took goodman Thorir from his bed, and led him out and slew him. Then they robbed all the goods that were stored there within doors, and brought them to the boats, and then rowed to Thambardale, and ran up and brake open the doors there, as at Tongue.

Alf the Little had lain down in his clothes, and when he heard the door broken open, he ran out to the secret door that was at the back of the house, and went out there through and ran up the dale. But Uspak and his folk robbed all they might lay hands upon, and brought it to their boats, and then went home to Ere with both boats laden, and brought both the liftings into the work. They brought the boats into the work withal, and filled them both with water, and then closed the work, and the best of fighting-steeds it was. So thereafter they sat there the winter long.

Chapter 61

Snorri Sends For Thrand The Strider

Alf the Little ran till he came to Tongue to Snorri the Priest, and told him of his troubles, and egged him on hard to go north against Uspak and his folk. But Snorri the Priest would first hear from the north what more they had done than driving Alf from the north, or whether they meant to have a settled abode there in Bitter. A little after came tidings from Bitter in the north of the slaying of Thorir and the array which Uspak had there, and it was heard tell of men that they would not be easily won.

Then Snorri the Priest let fetch Alf's household and such goods as were left behind, and all those matters came to Tongue and were there the winter long. Snorri's unfriends laid blame on him, in that he was held by folk slow to set Alf's matters right. Snorri let them say what they would about it, and still was nought done.

Now Sturla Thiodrekson sent word from the west that he would straightway get ready to set on Uspak and his company as soon as Snorri would, and said that it was no less due of him than of Snorri to go that journey. The winter wore on till past Yule, and ever were ill deeds of Uspak and his company heard of from the north. The winter was hard, and all the firths were under ice.

But a little before Lent, Snorri the Priest sent out to Ness to Ingiald's-knoll, where dwelt a man called Thrand the Strider, and was the son of that Ingiald by whom the homestead is named at Ingiald's-knoll. Thrand was the biggest and strongest of men, and the swiftest of foot. He had been before with Snorri the Priest, and was said to be not of one shape whiles he was heathen; but the devilhood fell off from most men when they were christened.

Now Snorri sent word to Thrand, bidding him come thither to Tongue to meet him, and to get ready his journey in such guise as though he was to have certain trials of manhood on his hands. So when Thrand got Snorri's word he said to the messenger: "Thou shalt rest thyself here such time as thou wilt, but I will go at Snorri's message, so we may not journey together."

The messenger said that would be known when it was tried. But in the morning when the man awoke, lo, Thrand was clean gone. He had taken his weapons and gone east under Enni, and so as the road lay to Bulands-head, and then east across the firths to the stead called Eidi. There he took to the ice and went over Coalpit-firth and Selifirth, and thence into Swordfirth, and so in over the ice right to the firth-end, and to Tongue in the evening, whenas Snorri was set down and at table.

Snorri welcomed him lovingly, and Thrand took his greeting and asked what he would of him, and said he was ready to go whither he would, if Snorri had will to set him about somewhat. Snorri bade him abide in peace through the night, and Thrand's wet clothes were pulled off him.

Chapter 62

Snorri And Sturla Win The Work At Ere In Bitter

The same night Snorri the Priest sent a man west to Stead-knolls to Sturla Thiodrekson, and bade him come meet him at Tongue north in Bitter the next day. Withal Snorri sent to the farmsteads thereabout, and summoned men to him, and then they went north over Gablefell-heath with fifty men, and came to Tongue in Bitter in the evening, and there was Sturla abiding them with thirty men.

They fared thence out to Ere in the night-tide, and when they were come there, Uspak and his folk went on to the wall of the work, and asked who ruled that

company. They told him, and bade him give up the work, but Uspak said he would nowise yield it up.

"But we will give you the same choice that we gave to the men of the Strands," said he, "that we will get us gone from the countryside, and ye shall depart from our castle."

Then Snorri bade him offer no more of such guileful choices.

But the next day, as soon as it was light, they apportioned out the work amongst them for onset, and Snorri the Priest got that part of the work that Raven the Viking guarded, and Sturla the guard of Uspak; the sons of Bork the Thick, Sam and Thormod, fell on at one side, but Thorod and Thorstein Codbiter, the sons of Snorri the Priest, on the other.

Of weapons that they could bring to bear, Uspak and his folk had for the most part stones for their defence, and they cast them forth against their foes unsparingly; for those in the work were of the briskest.

The men of Snorri and Sturla dealt chiefly with shot, both shafts and spears; and they had got together great plenty thereof, because that they had long been getting ready for the winning of the work.

So the onset was of the fiercest, and many were wounded on either side, but none slain. Snorri and his folk shot so thick and fast, that Raven with his men gave back from the wall. Then Thrand the Strider made a run at the wall, and leaped up so high that he got his axe hooked over the same, and therewith he drew himself up by the axe-shaft till he came up on to the work. But whenas Raven saw that a man had got on to the work, he ran at Thrand, and thrust at him with a spear, but Thrand put the thrust from him, and smote Raven on the arm close by the shoulder, and struck off the arm. After that many men came on him, and he let himself fall down outside the wall, and so came to his own folk.

Uspak egged on his men to stand stoutly, and fought himself in right manly wise; and when he cast stones he would go right out on the wall.

But at last whenas he was putting himself very forward and casting a stone at Sturla's company, at that very nick of time Sturla shot a twirl-spear at him, which smote him in the midst, and down he fell outside of the work. Sturla straightway ran to him, and took him to himself, and would not that more men should be at the slaying of him, because he was fain that there should be but one tale to tell of his having been the banesman of Uspak. Another man fell on that same wall where the sons of Bork fell on.

Thereon the Vikings offered to give up the work, life and limb saved, and therewithal that they would lay all their case under the doom of Snorri the Priest and Sturla.

So whereas Snorri and his men had pretty much spent their shot, they said yea to this. So the work was given up, and those within rendered themselves to Snorri the Priest, and he gave them all peace of life and limb, even as they had claimed. Both Uspak and Raven died forthwith, and a third man withal of their company, but many were wounded on either side. So says Thormod in the Raven-song:

"Fight fell there in Bitter;
The maker of stir meseems
For the choughs of the war-maidens
Brought home the quarry.
Three leaders of sea-wain
Lay life-void before him,
The fanner of fight-pith.
There Raven gat resting.

Chapter 63

Of The Walking Of Thorolf Halt-Foot. He Is Dug Up And Burned. Of The Bull Glossy

In those days dwelt Thorod Thorbrandson in Swanfirth, and had the lands both of Ulfar's-fell and of Orligstead; but to such a pass had come the haunting of Thorolf Halt-foot, that men deemed they might not abide on those lands. Lairstead withal was voided, because Thorolf straightway took to walking as soon as Arnkel was dead, and slew both men and beasts there at Lairstead; nor has any man had a heart to dwell there, by reason of these things.

Then when all things were waste there, Haltfoot betook himself to Ulfar's-fell, and wrought great trouble there, and all folk were full of dread as soon as they were ware of Halt-foot's walking. At last the bonder fared in to Karstead, and bemoaned himself of that trouble to Thorod, because he was tenant of him, and he said that it was the fear of men that Halt-foot would not leave off before he had wasted all the firth both of man and beast, "and if no rede is tried I can no longer abide there, if nought be done herein."

But when Thorod heard that, he deemed the matter ill to deal with. But the next morning he let bring his horse, and called his house-carles to him, and gathered men to him from the nighest steads withal; and then they fare out to Haltfoot's-head, and come to Thorolf's howe; and he was even yet unrotten, and as like to a fiend as like could be, blue as hell, and big as a neat; and when they went about the raising of him, they could in nowise stir him. So Thorod let set lever-beams under him, and thereby they brought him up from the howe, and rolled him down to the seaside, and cut there a great bale, and set fire to it, and rolled Thorolf thereinto, and burned all up to cold coals; yet long it was or ever the fire would take on him. There was a stiff breeze, which scattered the ashes wide about as soon as the bale began to burn; but such of the ashes as they might, they cast out seaward; and so when they had made an end of the business they went home.

Now it was the time of the night-meal whenas Thorod came home, and the women were at the milking; but as Thorod rode by the milking-stead a certain cow started from before him, and brake her leg. Then was she felt, but was found so meagre that it was not deemed good to slaughter her; so Thorod let bind up her leg; but she became utterly dry.

So when the cow's leg was whole again, she was brought out to Ulfar's-fell to fatten, because there the pasture was good, as it might be in an island.

Now the cow went often down to the strand and the place: whereas the bale had been litten, and licked the stones on which the ashes thereof had been driven; and some men say, that whenas the island-men went along the firth with lading of stockfish, they saw there the cow up on the hillside, and another neat with her, dapple-grey of hide, of which neat no man knew how it might be there.

So in the autumn Thorod was minded to slaughter the cow, but when men went after her, she was nowhere to be found. Thorod sent after her often that autumn, but found her not, and men deemed no otherwise than that the cow was dead or stolen away.

But a little short of Yule, early on a morning at Karstead, as the herdsman went to the byre according to his wont, he saw a neat before the byre-door, and knew that thither was come the broken-legged cow which had been missing. So he led the cow into the boose and bound her, and then told Thorod. Thorod went to the byre and saw the cow, and laid his hand on her, and now finds that she is with calf, and thinks good not to kill her; and withal he had by then done all the slaughtering for his household whereof need was.

But in the spring, when summer was a little worn, the cow bore a calf, a cow-calf, and then a little after another which was a bull, and it went hardly with her, so big he was, and in a little while the cow died. So this same big calf was borne into the hall; dapple-grey of hue he was and right goodly.

Now whenas both the calves were in the hall, this one and that first born, there was therein withal an ancient carline, Thorod's foster-mother, who was as then blind. She was deemed to have been foreseeing in her earlier days, but as she grew old, all she said was taken for doting; nevertheless, things went pretty much according to her words.

So as the big calf was bound upon the floor, he cried out on high, and when the carline heard that, she started sorely, and spoke: "The voice of a troll," quoth she, "and of nought else alive; do the best ye can and slay this boder of woe straight-way.

Thorod said he would nowise slay the calf; for that it was well worthy to be nourished, and that it would turn out a noble beast if it were brought up; therewith the calf cried out yet again.

Then spake the carline, all a-flutter: "Fair foster-son," says she, "prithee kill the calf, for ill shall we have of him if he be brought up."

So he answers: "Well, I will kill him if thou wilt have it so, foster-mother."

Then were both the calves borne out, and Thorod let kill the cow-calf, and bear the other out to the barn, and withal he bade folk take heed that the carline was not told that the bull-calf was yet alive.

Now this calf grew greater day by day, so that in spring when the calves were let out, he was no less than those which had been born in the early winter. He ran about the home-mead bellowing loudly when he was let out, even as a bull might, so that he was heard clearly in the house. Then said the carline: "Ah, the

troll was not slain then, and we shall have more harm of him than words can tell."

The calf waxed speedily, and went about the home-mead the summer long, and by autumn-tide was so big, that few yearling neats were equal to him; well horned he was, and the fairest of all neat to look on, and he was called Glossy. When he was two years old, he was as big as a five-year-old ox, and he was ever at home with the cows; and when Thorod went to the milking-stead, Glossy would go to him and sniff at him and lick his clothes all about, and Thorod would pat and stroke him. He was as tame both to man and beast as a sheep, but ever when he bellowed he gave forth a great and hideous voice, and when the carline heard, she started sorely thereat. When Glossy was four winters old, he would not be driven by women, children, or young men; and if the carles went up to him, he would rear up, and go on in perilous wise, and yet would give way before them if hard pressed.

Now on a day Glossy came home to the byre and bellowed wondrous loud, so that he was heard as clearly in the house as though he were hard thereby. Thorod was in the hall and the carline by him, who sighed heavily and said:

"Of no account dost thou hold my word concerning the slaughtering of the bull, foster-son."

Thorod answered: "Be content, foster-mother," says he; "Glossy shall live on till autumn, and then be slaughtered, when he has got the summer's flesh oil him."

"Over-late will it be then," says she.

"That is a hard matter to tell," says Thorod. But as they spake, again the bull gave forth a voice, bellowing yet worse than before. Then sang the carline this song:

"O shaker of snow on the hair's hall that shineth,
Forth out of his head is the herd-leader sending
A voice and a crying that bodeth us blood;
And the life-days of men now his might overlayeth.
He who shaketh the green-sward will teach thee the heeding
Of the place where thine earth-gash for thee is a-gaping.
O foster-son mine, now full clearly I see it,
That the horned beast in fetters is laying thy life."

Chapter 64

The Last Tidings Of Biorn

The Champion Of The Broadwickers

There was a man named Gudleif, the son of Gunnlaug the Wealthy of Streamfirth, the brother of Thorfin, from whom are come the Sturlungs. Gudleif was much of a seafarer, and he owned a big ship of burden, and Thorolf, the son of Loft-o'-th'-Ere, owned another, whenas they fought with Gyrd, son of Earl Sigvaldi; at which fight Gyrd lost his eye.

But late in the days of King Olaf the Holy, Gudleif went a merchant voyage west to Dublin, and when he sailed from the west he was minded for Iceland, and he sailed round Ireland by the west, and fell in with gales from east and north-east, and so drove a long way west into the main and south-westward withal, so that they saw nought of land; by then was the summer pretty far spent, and therefore they made many vows, that they might escape from out the main.

But so it befell at last that they were ware of land; a great land it was, but they knew nought what land. Then such rede took Gudleif and his crew, that they should sail unto land, for they thought it ill to have to do any more with the main sea; and so then they got them good haven.

And when they had been there a little while, men came to meet them whereof none knew aught, though they deemed somewhat that they spake in the Erse tongue. At last they came in such throngs that they made many hundreds, and they laid hands on them all, and bound them, and drove them up into the country, and they were brought to a certain mote and were doomed thereat. And this they came to know, that some would that they should be slain, and othersome that they should be allotted to the countryfolk, and be their slaves.

And so, while these matters are in debate, they see a company of men come riding, and a banner borne over the company, and it seemed to them that there should be some great man amongst these; and so as that company drew nigh, they saw under the banner a man riding, big and like a great chief of aspect, but much stricken in years, and hoary withal; and all they who were there before, worshipped that man, and greeted him as their lord, and they soon found that all counsels and awards were brought whereas he was.

So this man sent for Gudleif and his folk, and whenas they came before him, he spake to them in the tongue of the Northmen, and asked them whence of lands they were. They said that they were Icelanders for the more part. So the man asked who the Icelanders might be.

Then Gudleif stood forth before the man, and greeted him in worthy wise, and he took his greeting well, and asked whence of Iceland he was. And he told him, of Burgfirth. Then asked he whence of Burgfirth he was, and Gudleif told him. After that he asked him closely concerning each and all of the mightiest men of Burgfirth and Broadfirth, and amidst this speech he asked concerning Snorri the Priest, and his sister Thurid of Frodiswater, and most of all of the youngling Kiartan, who in those days was gotten to be goodman of Frodiswater.

But now meanwhile the folk of that land were crying out in another place that some counsel should be taken concerning the ship's crew; so the big man went away from them, and called to him by name twelve of his own men, and they sat talking a long while, and thereafter went to the man-mote.

Then the big man said to Gudleif and his folk: "We people of the country have talked your matter over somewhat, and they have given the whole thing up to my ruling; and I for my part will give you leave to go your ways whithersoever ye will; and though ye may well deem that the summer wears late now, yet will I counsel you to get you gone hence, for here dwelleth a folk untrusty and ill to deal with, and they deem their laws to be already broken of you."

Gudleif says: "What shall we say concerning this, if it befall us to come back to the land of our kin, as to who has given us our freedom?"

He answered- "That will I not tell you; for I should be ill- content that any of my kin or my foster-brethren should make such a voyage hither as ye would have made, had I not been here for your avail; and now withal," says he, "my days have come so far, that on any day it may be looked for that eld shall stride over my head; yea, and though I live yet awhile, yet are there here men mightier than I, who will have little will to give peace to outland men; albeit they be not abiding nearby whereas ye have now come."

Then this man let make their ship ready for sea and abode with them till the wind was fair for sailing; and or ever he and Gudleif parted, he drew a gold ring from off his arm, and gave it into Gudleif's hand, and therewithal a good sword, and then spake to Gudleif: "If it befall thee to come back to thy fosterland, then shalt thou deliver this sword to that Kiartan, the goodman at Frodiswater; but the ring to Thurid his mother."

Then said Gudleif: "And what shall we say concerning the sender of these good things to them?"

He answered: "Say that he sends them who was a greater friend of the goodwife of Frodiswater than of the Priest of Holyfell, her brother; but and if any shall deem that they know thereby who owned these fair things, tell them this my word withal, that I forbid one and all to go seek me, for this land lacks all peace, unless to such as it may befall to come aland in such lucky wise as ye have done; the land also is wide, and harbours are ill to find therein, and in all places trouble and war await outland men, unless it befall them as it has now befallen you."

Thereafter they parted. Gudleif and his men put to sea, and made Ireland late in the autumn, and abode in Dublin through the winter. But the next summer Gudleif sailed to Iceland, and delivered the goodly gifts there, and all men held it for true that this must have been Biorn the Broadwick Champion; but no other true token have men thereof other, than these even now told.

Chapter 65

The Kindred Of Snorri The Priest; The Death Of Him

Snorri the Priest dwelt at Tongue for twenty winters, and at first had a power there somewhat begrudged, while those brawlers were alive, Thorstein Kuggison to wit, and Thorgils the son of Halla, besides other of the greater men who bore him ill-will. Withal he cometh into many stories, and of him the tale also telleth in the story of the Laxdale men, as is well known to many; whereas he was the greatest friend of Gudrun, the daughter of Osvif, and of her sons. He also hath to do with the story of the Heathslaughters, and most of all men, next indeed to Gudmund the Rich, lent aid to Bardi after the manslayings on the Heath.

But as he grew older, ill-will against him began to wane, chiefly by reason of those who bore him envy growing fewer. His friendships were greatly bettered

by his knitting alliances with the greatest chiefs in Broadfirth and wide about elsewhere.

He married his daughter Sigrid to Brand the Bounteous, the son of Vermund the Slender; Kolli, the son of Thormod, the son of Thorlak, the brother of Steinthor of Ere, had her to wife thereafter; and they, Kolli and Sigrid, had house in Bearhaven.

His daughter Unn he married to Slaying-Bardi; Sigurd, the son of Thorir Hound of Birch-isle in Haloga[land], had her to wife afterwards, and their daughter was Ranveig, whom Jon, the son of Arni, the son of Arni, the son of Arnmod, had to wife; their son was Vidkunn of Birch-isle, whilome one of the foremost among the barons of Norway.

His daughter Thordis, Snorri married to Bolli, son of Bolli, and from them is sprung the race of the Gilsbeckings.

His daughter Hallbera, Snorri married to Thord, the son of Sturla Thiodrekson, whose daughter was Thurid, the wife of Hafliði Marson, and from them a mighty kindred has sprung.

Thora his daughter, Snorri married to Keru-Bersi, the son of Haldor, the son of Olaf of Herdholt; Thorgrim the Burner afterwards had her to wife, and from them a great and a noble kin has sprung.

The other daughters of Snorri were married after his death. Thurid the Wise, the daughter of Snorri, Gunnlaug, the son of Steinthor of Ere, had for wife; but Gudrun, the daughter of Snorri the Priest, was wedded to Kalf of Sunhome. Thorgeir of Asgarths-knolls married Haldora, Snorri's daughter. Alof, Snorri's daughter, Jorund Thorfinnson had to wife; he was brother to Gudlaug of Streamfirth.

Haldor, the son of Snorri the Priest, was the noblest of his sons; he kept house in Herdholt in Laxdale. From him are come the Sturlungs and the Waterfirth folk. The second noblest son of Snorri the Priest was Thorod, who abode at Spaewife's-fell in Skagastrand.

Mani, the son of Snorri, dwelt at Sheepfell; his son was Liot, who was called Mana-Liot and was accounted of as the greatest among the grandsons of Snorri the Priest.

Thorstein, the son of Snorri, dwelt at Bathbrent, and from him are sprung the Asbirnings in Skagafjord, and a great stock withal.

Thord Kausi, Snorri's son, dwelt in Dufgusdale.

Eyolf, the son of Snorri, dwelt at Lambstead on the Mires.

Thorleif, the son of Snorri the Priest, dwelt on Midfell-strand; from him are sprung the men of Ballara.

Snorri, the son of Snorri the Priest, dwelt in Tongue after his father.

Klepp was hight a son of Snorri whose abiding-place men wot nought of, nor know men any tales to tell of him.

Snorri died in Saelings-dale-Tongue one winter after the fall of King Olaf the Holy. He was buried at the church he let rear at Tongue; but at the time the church was moved, his bones were taken up and brought down to the place whereas the church now is; and a witness thereat was Gudny, Bodvar's daughter, the mother of those sons of Sturla: Snorri, Thord, and Sighvat, to wit; and she said that they were bones of a man of middle height, and not right big. At that same time were also taken out of earth the bones of Bork the Thick, the father's brother of Snorri the Priest; and she said that they were mighty big. Then, too, were dug out the bones of the carline Thordis, the daughter of Thorbiorn Sur, the mother of Snorri the Priest; and Gudny said that they were small bones of a woman, and as black as if they had been singed.

All these bones were buried again in earth where the church is now.

And herewith endeth the Story of the Thornessings, the Ere-Dwellers and the Swanfirthers.

THE SAGA OF THROND OF GATE

Chapter 1

There was a man named Grim Camban. He first settled the Færeys in the days of Harold Fairhair. For before the king's overbearing many men fled in those days. Some settled in the Færeys and began to dwell there, and some sought to other waste lands. And the deeply wealthy fared to Iceland, and on her way thither she came to the Færeys, and there she gave Olof the daughter of Thorstan the Red in marriage: whence is come the greatest lineage of the Færey-folk, whom they call the Gatebeards, that dwell in Eastrey.

Chapter 2

Thorbeorn was the name of a man who was nicknamed Gatebeard. He dwelt in Eastrey in the Færeys; Gudrun was the name of his wife. They had two sons. The elder was named Thorlac, but the younger Thronð. They were likely men. Thorlac was both tall and strong; so far Thronð was like him when he was full grown, but there was a great unlikeness between the two brothers. Thorbeorn was a wealthy man, and was already old when these things came to pass. Thorlac took him a wife there in the islands, but he dwelt at home with his father at Gate. Now, soon after Thorlac was married, Thorbeorn Gate-beard died, and he was laid in the barrow and buried after the old way; for in those days all the Færey-folk were heathens. His sons shared the heritage between them, and each of them wanted to have the homestead at Gate, for that was the greatest treasure. So they cast lots for it, and the lot fell to Thronð. After the lot fell,

Thorlac begged Thronð to let him have the homestead, and himself take the more part of the chattels; but Thronð would not do that. Then Thorlac went abroad, and gat him another dwelling there in the islands. Thronð let out the land at Gate to many men, and took the highest rent; and in the summer he took ship, albeit he had little merchandise, and fared to Norway, and there he had his dwelling through the winter, seeming always moody of mind.

In those days Harold Grayfell was ruling over Norway. Next summer Thronð fared south to Denmark with certain merchantmen, and came to Haleyre while the summer still lasted. There was at that time a very great gathering of people. And it is said that ever there comes thither the greatest gathering of men of all the Northlands while the market stands. In those days King Harald Gormsson, who was called Blue-tooth, ruled over Denmark. King Harald was at Haleyre that summer, and a great following with him. Two of the king's henchmen [brethren] are named of them that were there with him. The one was named Sigurd, the other Harec. These brothers went together into the market to buy them the best and biggest gold ring they could find. They came into a booth that was right well stocked, and in it there sat a man who greeted them well, and asked them what they would buy. They said they wished to buy a gold ring, both big and good. He said that there was a good choice there. Then they asked him his name, and he said his name was Holmgar the Wealthy. Then he unpacked his treasures, and showed them a thick gold ring. The greatest treasure it was, but it was so dear they could not see how they were to get all the silver that he wanted for it there on the spot; so they begged him to wait till the morrow for it, and he agreed to do so. And with that they went off, and so the night passed. Now in the morning Sigurd went forth out of his booth, but Harec stayed behind; and after a while Sigurd came outside to the edge of the tilt and called out. "Kinsman Harec," said he, "give me here quickly the purse with the silver in it, that we got ready for buying the ring, for the bargain is just struck; but do thou wait here the while and take care of the booth. "Then he [Harec] gave him the silver out through the edge of the tilt.

Chapter 3

Now not long after this Sigurd came into the booth to his brother, and said, "Take thou now the silver, for the bargain is just struck. "He answered him, "I gave thee the silver a short while ago. ""Nay," said Sigurd, "I have had none of it. "Then they began to wrangle about it, but afterwards they went and told the king about it, and the king and other folk soon saw that their money had been stolen. Then the king laid his ban on all that were there, that no ship should sail thence while things stood in this way. And many thought this a great hinderance that they should be bound to stay there after the market was over. Whereupon the Northmen held a meeting among themselves to take counsel over it. Thronð was at their meeting, and he called out, "Men are sorely lacking in counsel here. "Then they asked him, "Knowest thou counsel for this case?""So it seems," says he. "Put forth thy counsel!" said they. "It must be paid for, then," he said. They asked him what he wanted for it. He answered, "Each of you must give me an ounce of silver. "They said that was a great deal. But they made this bargain withal, that each man should give him half an ounce there in hand, and

another half ounce afterwards if his counsel turned out well. Now the next day after this the king held a moot, and spake to this end there, that no man whatever should leave the haven till all about the theft was found out. Then there stood up to speak a certain young man; he had a shock head of red hair, and was freckled of face and right grim of look, and he called out, "Men are mighty badly off for counsel here," says he. The king's counsellors asked him what counsel he saw for the matter. He answered, "This is my counsel, that every man that is come here lay down so much silver as the king shall say, and when that money is got together in one place, then they shall be paid out of it who have suffered this harm, and that which remains over the king shall take to himself for his fee, and I know he will be well pleased with his share; and men will lie here no longer as though they were weather-bound, to their great hinderance, such a crowd as have come together here." This was quickly taken up by the whole people, and they said they would sooner lay out their money in feeing the king than sit there to their hinderance. And this counsel was taken, and the money was got together; and it was a great sum. And straightaway upon this a great many of the ships sailed abroad. Then the king held a moot, and there they looked through that great sum of money, and the brothers were paid for their loss out of it. Then the king talked with his men of what was to be done with this great sum. Then a man got up to speak, and said, "My lord, what think ye he deserves that gave the counsel?" Then they looked about to find the young man who had given the counsel in this matter, and there he was before the king. Then spake King Harold, "This money shall be dealt into two halves; my men shall have one half, and the other half I shall deal into two lots, and this young man shall have one lot, and I will look after the other." Thronð thanked the king with fair words and blithe. And it was such a great sum of money that Thronð got that it was hard work to tell it out into marks. Then King Harold sailed away, and all the multitude of men that had been there also. Thronð fared to Norway with the merchants that had come thither with him, and they paid him the money he had asked for; and he bought him there a merchant ship both big and good, and loaded it with the great goods that he had gotten on that voyage. Then he held on his course in this ship to the Færeys, and came thither with all his goods safe and sound. And he took up his dwelling in Gate the spring after; and he felt no lack of chattels now. Thronð was a big man of growth, and red-haired he was, and red-bearded, freckled and grim of look, gloomy of mind, cunning and shrewd towards all men, bad to deal with, and ill-natured to most folk, yet fair of speech to greater men than himself; but in his heart he was ever false.

Chapter 4

Hafgrim was the name of a man that dwelt in Southrey in the Færeys; he was a mighty man and hard to deal with, and wealthy in goods. Guðrið was his wife's name; she was Snæulf's daughter. Hafgrim was chief over half the islands, and held his half on loan from King Harold Grayfell, who in those days ruled over Norway. Hafgrim was a very nimble-witted man, but was not counted a man of wisdom. Einar was the name of his head houseman; he was nicknamed the Southrey-man. There was another man, called Eldearn Combhood, who also lived with Hafgrim. He was a man of many words, and evil of speech withal, dull

and ill-willed, lazy and quarrelsome, and a liar and backbiter to boot. Two brothers are named in the story also, and they dwelt in Scufey, the one was named Breste and the other Beine; they were the sons of Sigmund. Now Sigmund, their father, and Thorbeorn Gatebeard, Thronð's father, were brothers. Breste and Beine were famous men; they were chiefs over half the islands, and held that in loan of Earl Hacon Sigurd's son, who in those days held, as it were, a kingdom in Thronðham. Now these two men, Breste and his brother, were henchmen of Earl Hacon, and very dear friends of his. There was a coldness between them and Thronð, although their kinship was near. The two brothers had another homestead in Dimun, but it was a smaller place. Snæulf, Hafgrim's father-in-law, dwelt in Sandey; he was a Southrey man by blood; he had fled out of the Southreys for manslaughter and masterful deeds that he had done there, into the Færeys. He had been a sea-rover the greater part of his life, and he was even now a masterful man, and hard to stand against.

Chapter 5

Bearne was the name of a man that dwelt in Swiney; he was called Swiney-Bearne. He was a great franklin, and had a great estate; a very guileful man he was. He was Thronð of Gate's mother's brother. The Færey people's mootstead was in Streamsey, at a haven there called Thorshaven. Hafgrim dwelt in Southrey at a homestead that is called Temple; he was a great sacrificer, for in those days all the Færey people were heathens.

One day at harvest-tide, it happened at Hafgrim's homestead in Southrey, that Einar the Southrey-man and Eldearn Combhood were sitting together over a singeing fire, and they fell to matching men against the other. Einar took his two kinsmen Breste and Beine, and Eldearn took Hafgrim, and said that he was the better man. And at last it went so between them that Eldearn sprang up and struck at Einar with the stick he had in his hand, and it fell on Einar's shoulder and hurt him. And Einar caught up an axe and swung it onto Combhood's head, so that he fell down senseless, and spake never word more. And when Hafgrim came to know this, he drove Einar away, and bade him fare "to his kinsmen the men of Scufey, since he had thought most of them." "And we must needs," says Hafgrim, "sooner or later come to grips with the men of Scufey." "So Einar went away, and came to the two brothers, and told them why he was come. They received him well, and he was with them through the winter, and well cared for. Then Einar begged Breste, his kinsman, to take up his case, and he did so. Now Breste was a wise man and well skilled in the law. That same winter Hafgrim fared in a ship to Scufey, and then he sought the two brethren, and asked them how they would answer for the harm that Einar had done to Eldearn Combhood. Breste answered that they would lay the suit to the best man's umpirage, so that it might be fairly settled. Hafgrim answered, "There shall be no settlement between us, unless I am left to fix the award myself." "But Breste answered him, "That is no fair settlement, and thou shalt not have it so." Then Hafgrim summoned Einar to the Streameymoot; and so they parted withal. But Breste had made Combhood's assault on Einar known soon after it had happened. Now both parties came to the moot, and many with them. But when Hafgrim came into court on the one side, and laid the charge against Einar as

the wrongdoer, the two brethren, Breste and Beine, came in on the other side with a great following; and Breste quashed the charge Hafgrim had made and unhallowed Combhood, by the old law of the land, for smiting a sackless man; and the judgment was given against Hafgrim, and they condemned Eldearn to outlawry and the full fine. Hafgrim said that he would have vengeance for this. Breste said that he would hold himself ready, and that he cared nothing for his threats; and with that they parted.

Chapter 6

A little while after this Hafgrim left home, and there went with him six men and Guðrið his wife. They took a boat and fared to Sandey, where his kinsmen Snæulf dwelt, the father of Guðrið his wife. When they reached the island, they could see no one out of doors on the farm, nor any one out on the island. Then they went up to the homestead and into the house, and there they found no one. Then they went into the hearth-room, and there was the board set out, and meat and drink on it, but there was no one to be found, and they wondered at that. They stayed there that night, but next morning they made them ready to leave, and rowed away along the island. Then from the other side of the island there rowed out to meet them a boat full of people, and they saw that it was yeoman Snæulf and all his household. So Hafgrim rowed towards them, and greeted Snæulf, his father-in-law, but he answered him not a word. Then Hafgrim asked him what counsel he would give him on his suit with Breste and his brother, so that he might win honour by it. Snæulf answered him: "It is ill-done of thee," says he, "to have meddled without a cause with better men than thyself; but ever the lowest lot fell to thee." "Methinks I should get something better than blame from thee," says Hafgrim, "and I will not listen to thee." Then Snæulf snatched up a spear and cast it at Hafgrim, but Hafgrim covered himself with his shield, and the spear stood fast in it, and he was not wounded. So they parted, and Hafgrim fared home to Southrey, and was ill-pleased with his luck.

Hafgrim and Guðrið his wife had a son whose name was Ossur. He was nine winters old, and a most promising lad when these things happened.

Now after some time had passed. Hafgrim fared from home to Eastrey to Thronð, and Thronð welcomed him kindly; and then Hafgrim sought counsel of Thronð as to what he would have him do in the matter of the suit with Breste and Beine, the men of Scufey. He said, moreover, that Thronð was the wisest man in the islands, and that he would gladly give him some fee for his counsel. Thronð said that he was seeking a strange boon of him in asking him to put himself at odds with his own kinsman. "And thou surely canst not be in earnest; yet I guess that it is so with thee, that thou wouldst fain have other men in the matter with thee, but art grudging to do what is in thy power to get thy business forwarded." "It is not so," quoth Hafgrim, "and I will make thee a great offer now, if thou wilt be in counsel with me in this case, so that I may take those brethren's lives." Thronð answered him: "I will be with thee in thy doings against these brethren, but thou shalt promise to give me two cows' worth every spring, and two hundreds worth in meat every fall, and this payment shall go on all thy life's day, and it shall not cease at thy death. Moreover, I am not willing to stand

with thee in this case without more men are bound up in it. And I will have thee seek to Bearne my mother's brother in Swiney, and get him to be with thee in the case. "Hafgrim agreed to the bargain, and fared out thence to Swiney, and found Bearne, and besought him for his help in the matter, as Thronnd had counselled him. Bearne answered him to the intent that he was not willing to go into the matter without he got some gain at his hands. Then Hafgrim bade him tell him his mind; and Bearne said, "Thou shalt give me three cows' worth every spring, and every fall three hundreds' worth in meat,"Hafgrim took this offer, and the matter being settled so, went home again.

Chapter 7

Now it must be told of the two brethren, Breste and Beine, that they had two homesteads, one in Scufey and the other in Dimun. Breste had a wife whose name was Cecilia. She was of Northern kin. They had a son whose name was Sigmund, and he was nine winters old when these things came to pass. He was both big and handsome. Beine had a leman whose name was Thora, and a son by her whose name was Thore, and he was eleven winters old at this time, and the hopefulest of lads.

Now it must be told that once on a time, while the two brothers Breste and Beine were dwelling at their homestead at Dimun, they were minded to fare out to little Dimun, whereon no man dwelt, and there they were wont to let their sheep feed, and the cattle they meant to kill. The two boys, Sigmund and Thore, begged to go with them, and the brethren suffered them to go, and they all went out to the island. The brethren had their weapons with them. Of Breste it is said that he was both big and strong, and a better swordsman than any other man, and a wise man withal, and beloved of all his friends. Beine, his brother, was a good man of his hands, and well skilled in feats, but he was not a match for his brother. Now soon they put out from the little Dimun, and as they steered their course for the greater Dimun, which men dwell in, they saw three boats with twelve men. They knew the men when they saw them. In one boat was Hafgrim of Southrey, Thronnd of Gate was in another, and Bearne of Swiney in the third. They steered in between the brothers and the island, and cut them off from their landing-place; but the brethren brought up their boat at a place on the foreshore. There was a jutting rock above them, and they sprang up on it with their weapons in their hands, and set the two boys down beside them on the cliff. The cliff hung over both sides down to the sea, and here they stood, and it was a good place of vantage. Soon Hafgrim and they that were with him came up in their three boats and leapt out of the boats on to the foreshore where the cliff was; and Hafgrim and Swiney-Bearne made an onslaught upon the two brothers, but they defended themselves well and manfully. Thronnd and his boat's crew reached the shore after the others, and they were not in that onset. Breste held the rock where it was easier to set on him and the worse to keep. Now they fought for a while, but could do little against the brethren. Then spake Hafgrim: "I thought thou, at least, Thronnd, wouldst give me thy help, and that is why I gave thee my fee." Thronnd answered him, "Thou art the greatest of cowards surely, that canst not get the better of two men though thou hast two dozen with thee. But it is ever thy way to have others for targets before thee,

and little thou carest to come near where any risk is. It were the best thing, if there be any heart in thee, for thee to set on Breste first, and let the others follow thee. Otherwise I see that thou canst do no good. "And he egged him on as hotly as he could. Then Hafgrim sprang up on the rock before Breste, and made at him with a spear, and drove it at his middle, and thrust him through. And when Breste felt that he had got his death-wound, he thrust himself forward on the spear towards Hafgrim, and hewed at him with his sword, and the stroke fell on Hafgrim's left shoulder, and clove down through shoulder and side, so that his arm fell down on the ground, and Hafgrim dropt down dead off the cliff, and Breste over him, and there they both lost their life. Then in the second place they set upon Beine, and he defended himself well; but the end was that he also lost his life there. Men say that Breste killed three men before he slew Hafgrim; Beine also slew two men there before he died. And when they were dead, Thronð bade slay the two boys, Sigmund and Thore. Bearne answered him, "They shall not be slain!" "Yea," said Thronð, "nevertheless, if they are saved they will be the death of most of the men that are here today. "But Bearne said, "Ye shall slay me first!" Then said Thronð, "I never meant what I said; I only spake to try how thou wouldst take it; and now I will make it up to the boys for my being here today at this fight, and I offer to foster them. "The two boys were sitting on the cliff looking on while all these things happened, and Thore wept, but Sigmund said, "Do not let us weep, kinsman, but let us think on it the longer. "In the end they all went off, and Thronð took the boys home to Gate with him. Hafgrim's body was borne to Southrey, and there laid to earth after the old way; and the friends of Breste and Beine took their bodies home to Scufey, and buried them there after the old way. Now these things were spread abroad over all the Færeys, and every one mourned for the two brethren.

Chapter 8

That summer there came a ship from Norway to the Færeys, and the skipper's name was Raven. He was a Wick-man by kin, and owned a homestead at Tunsberg. He often sailed to Holmgard, and he was nicknamed Holmgard-farer. His ship came into Thorshavn, and when the chapmen were bound again for sailing, it must be told that one morning Thronð o'Gate put off in a skiff, and he came on board and led Raven aside, and told him that he had two young thralls to sell him. Raven said he would not buy them before he saw them. Then Thronð led forward two boys with cropped heads in white cowls. They were handsome boys to look on, but their faces were swollen with rage. When Raven saw the boys, he asked Thronð, "These boys are the sons of Breste and Beine, whom you slew a short while ago; is it not so, Thronð?" "I think it is so, indeed," said Thronð. "Then they shall never come into my power," said Raven, "if I am to give money for them. "Then let us come to an understanding," said Thronð, "Do thou take these two marks of silver, which I will give thee, if thou wilt take them on board with thee, so that they never come back again to the Færeys. "Then he poured the silver into the skipper's lap, and told it out for him to see. And Raven saw that the silver was good, and in the end matters went so that he took the boys with him. As soon as he got a fair wind he put to sea, and made

land off Norway, as he wished, east of Tunsberg, and there he stayed through the winter, and the boys with him, and they were well cared for.

Chapter 9

In the spring he got his ship ready for the eastward voyage and asked the boys how they thought they had come off. "Well," Sigmund answered, "if we think on the time when we were in Thronð's power. "Then asked Raven, "Do you know the bargain that was made between us two, Thronð and me?" "We are well aware of that," said Sigmund. "I guess," said Raven, "the best thing will be for you two to go where you like for me. And as for the silver that Thronð gave into my hand along with you, I guess the best thing will be for you to have it for your keep, and ye are far too helpless withal in an unknown land. "Sigmund thanked him, and said that he had treated them like a man as long as they had known him.

Now of Thronð it must be told that he took under him the whole lordship of the Færeys, and all the goods and holdings that those brethren, Breste and Beine, his kinsmen, had owned. And he took the boy Ossur Hafgrim's son home to himself into fosterage. Ossur was then ten winters old. And now Thronð ruled alone over all the Færeys, and no man dared gainsay him.

Chapter 10

The summer the two brothers, Breste and Beine, were slain, there was a change of kings in Norway. Harold Grayfell was slain off the land and Earl Hacon came in his stead, and at first he was tributary Earl to King Harold Gormsson, and held the realm of him. And with this the rule of the sons of Gundhild was clean ended; some were slain and some were driven out of the land.

Now of Sigmund and Thore it must be told that they stayed two winters in the Wick after Raven let them go free, and by that time all the money that Raven had given them was spent. Sigmund was then twelve winters old and Thore fourteen. They heard of Earl Hacon's getting the kingdom, and it seemed to them the best thing to go and see him if they could win thither, for they thought they would most likely get some good by it, inasmuch as their fathers had served him. So they went out of the Wick into Upland, and then away east over Heath-mark, and north on to the Dover-fells; and by the time they got there it was winter, and they met with snowstorms and bad weather. Then they went up on the fells with little counsel, and fared wild and badly, and lay out many days without food. At last Thore lay down, and begged Sigmund to save his own life and seek down off the fell. Sigmund told him they would get down both together or neither of them. And so unlike were they in strength, that Sigmund took up Thore on his back and walked on farther still. And now they were both sore weary. But one evening they came to a little dale off the fell, and they went down it, and at last they smelt a smell of smoke, and close by they found a

house. They went in, and found a room wherein two women were sitting; one was of middle age, but the other was a young girl; both were fair of face. They received the boys kindly, and took off their clothes and brought them dry clothes instead, and quickly gave them food to eat, and afterwards sent them to sleep, treating them kindly, and telling them that they must not be in the way when the goodman came home, "for," said they, "he is quick of temper. "But Sigmund woke as a man came in; great of growth he was, and clad in a reindeer hide, and he was carrying a reindeer on his back. He drew his nostrils up and frowned, and asked what was come thither. The goodwife said that there were two boys come, "little boys, cold, and almost tired to death. "He answered her, "Thou art taking the best way to let folks know where we are by taking folk into our house, and so I have often told thee. ""I could not bear," said the goodwife, "that two such pretty boys should die here beside our house. "The yeoman let the matter pass, and they went to meat and afterward to sleep. There were two beds in the sleeping-room---the yeoman and the goodwife lay in one, and the yeoman's daughter in the other. But they made a place for the boys somewhere in the house. In the morning the yeoman was early afoot and he spoke to the two boys: "Since the women wish it, I am content for you to stay here today, if it please you. "They said they would gladly stay.

Chapter 11

All that day the yeoman was abroad, and at even he came home and was very merry with Sigmund and Thore. And next morning he came to the boys and spake: "It was fate that you should take your way to my house, and now I think it best for you to dwell here all the winter, if it seems best to you. The women feel kindly toward you, and you have travelled out of your way, and it is far hence every way to any dwelling. "Sigmund and Thore thanked the yeoman for his offer, and said that they would gladly stay there. The yeoman said that they must pay good heed to the goodwife and her daughter, and lay hands to anything they wanted done. "But," said he, "I must abroad every day to get food for us, if it may hap. "

So the two boys stayed there, and they were well cared for, and the two women were kind to them, and they deemed themselves in luck. But ever the yeoman would be abroad all day. The house was good and strong and well kept. The yeoman named Wolf, his wife Ragnhild, and their daughter Thurið. She was the fairest of women to look on and high of heart. There was good love between Sigmund and Thurið, and they would be often talking together, but the goodman and goodwife said nothing to this. And now the winter passed by, and the first day of summertide was come. Then Wolf the yeoman fell into talk with Sigmund, and spake: "It has so happened that ye two have stayed here the winter with me; now, if nothing please you better than to stay here, ye shall stay here, and grow up to manhood here. And indeed it may be that our lots are cast together for the time to come also. But there is one thing I will warn you against; go not into the wood that lies north of the homestead. "They agreed to this, and thanked yeoman Wolf for his offer and accepted it gladly.

Chapter 12

There was a tarn that lay hard by the homestead, and thither the yeoman used to go and teach them swimming: then they would fall to butt-shooting, and were trained in shooting. And Sigmund soon became skilled in all the feats that Wolf could do, so that he became a very skillful man in all feats. Thore became skillful also, though he never got to be Sigmund's match. Wolf was a big man and strong, and the brothers could see that he was a very skillful man at all feats. They had now been there three winters, and Sigmund was fifteen and Thore seventeen winters old. Sigmund was now a man full grown of body, and Thore also, but Sigmund was ever the foremost in all things, although he was the younger by two winters.

Now it came to pass one day in the summer that Sigmund fell to talking with Thore. "What would happen," said he, "though we were to go into the woods that lies north of the homestead?" Thore answered, "I have no mind to try. ""It is not so with me," says Sigmund, "and thither I am minded to go. ""Thou must needs have thy way," said Thore, "but we are breaking the bidding of our foster-father. "So they went on their way. Now Sigmund had a wood-axe in his hand. They got into the wood and came to a fair ride, and when they had been there but a short while, they heard a great breaking in the wood, and soon they saw a bear, mighty great and grim to look on; a great wood-bear it was, wolf-grey of hue. They sprang back at once into the path by which they had come thither, but the path was small and narrow, so that Thore ran first, and Sigmund behind him. The beast ran after them down the path, and the path was all too narrow for it, and it broke the oaks before it. Now Sigmund turned swiftly aside out of the path into the midst of the trees, and waited there till the beast came up even with him. Then he hewed at the bear right between the ears with both his hands, so that the axe stuck into its head, and the beast fell forward and died there without any struggle. And when Thore was aware of it he spake out, "This valiant deed was to be thy lot, kinsman, not mine, and it seems most like to me that I shall be thy after-boat in many things. "Then said Sigmund, "Let us try and get the bear raised up. "And they did so, and got it upright, and bound it to a tree, so that it could not fall, and stuck a peg in its mouth, so that the bear should seem to be gaping with its mouth. Then they went home. And when they got home, there was Wolf, their foster-father, at the house in the garth before it, and was going off to seek them. He frowned on them, and asked them where they had been. Sigmund answered, "Ill has happened, foster-father mine; we have broken thy bidding, and the bear has chased us. "Wolf answered him, "This was to be looked for, that things would turn out so; yet I wish the bear had not followed you, for this bear is of such a kind that I have no great wish to meddle with it; however we will try it now," said he. Then Wolf turned into the house, and took a spear into his hand, and then ran into the wood, and Sigmund and Thore with him; and now he catches sight of the bear, and runs up to it and drives his spear at it, and with that the bear falls down. And Wolf saw that the bear was dead before, and said, "Do you mock me? Which of you has slain the bear?" Thore answered him, "I cannot take it on myself, foster-father," said he; "Sigmund slew the bear. ""It is the greatest of valiant deeds," said Wolf, "and many another valiant deed shall surely follow this first deed of

thine, Sigmund. "After this they went home, and Wolf had even a greater liking for Sigmund than he had before.

Chapter 13

The two kinsmen stayed with Wolf till Sigmund was eighteen and Thore twenty winters old. Sigmund at that time was a wonderful man for bigness and might, and all feats of skill and strength, so that the quickest way to tell of him is to say that he came nearest of any man to Olave Tryggvesson in all feats of strength and skill.

And now it came to pass on a day that Sigmund told his foster-father Wolf that he would fain go abroad, "for methinks," said he, "life will yield but a mean outcome for us two if we do not seek to know other men. ""It shall be even as thou wilt," says Wolf. Now, they had found that every harvest and every spring they had been there Wolf would be abroad for seven nights or thereabout, and then bring home much stores and linen and clothes, or such other things as they needs must have. So Wolf had clothes made for them, and fitted them out well for their departure. It could be seen that the two women took the parting near to heart, and chiefly the younger one. And now they took leave of them and fared forth, and Wolf went on the way with them, and was with them over the Doverfell, till they could see north over Orcdale. Then Wolf sat down, and told them that he would rest awhile. So they all sat down. Then spake Wolf, "I have a mind to know now whom I have fostered, and of what kin ye be, and what is your land of birth. "Then they told him all their life that was past, and Wolf was very sorry for them. Then spake Sigmund, "Now I would have thee, foster-father," said he, "tell us thy life, and what has happened in it. ""So it shall be, then," said Wolf.

Chapter 14

Then I betake me to my story. There was once a franklin whose name was Thoralf, dwelling in Heathmark in the Uplands. He was a mighty man, and reeve to the Upland kings. He was a married man, and his wife's name was Idun, and the name of his daughter Ragnhild, and she was well-nigh the fairest of all women to look on. Not far off there dwelt a yeoman whose name was Stangrim, a good yeoman and a wealthy. Thora was the name of his wife. They had a son whose name was Thorkell. He was a likely man, big and strong. And this was Thorkell's work while he was at home with his father: every fall, when the frost took and the ice lay on the water, he would lie out in the wilds, and certain fellows of his with him, hunting the wild beasts and he was the best of bowmen. This was his work when the dry frost took, and therefore he was nicknamed Thorkell Dry-frost. Now on a day Thorkell fell to talk with his father, and told him that he wished he would get him a match, and ask for Ragnhild, daughter of franklin Thoralf in marriage for him. His father told him that he was leaping high. But matters went so that father and son fared over to franklin Thoralf, and did their errand of asking his daughter Ragnhild of him in marriage for Thorkell.

Thoralf was slow in answering them, and said that he had looked higher for her than Thorkell, but that he would give them a good answer for the sake of the friendship that was between him and Stangrim; nevertheless that this could not be: and with that they left and fared home.

Chapter 15

A little after this Thorkell went from home with another man one night, when he heard that Thoralf was away from home on his work as reeve, and went in with his mates by night where Ragnhild was sleeping, caught her up in his arms, and bore her out, and carried her home with him. His father was ill pleased at it, and told him he had got hold of a stone that was too heavy for him, and bade him take her back again quickly. But he answered, "I will not do that." Then Stangrim his father bade him go away. And Thorkell did so, and went off with Ragnhild and lay out in the wood, and there were with them on their path twelve men, fellows and mates of Thorkell. When franklin Thoralf came home and was aware of these tidings, he gathered men to him till they were an hundred together, and went up to yeoman Stangrim's, and bade him yield up his son and give back his daughter into his hands. Stangrim told him they were not there. And Thoralf and his men ransacked the homestead, but found not that they sought. After this they went up into the wood, and sought them there, and they dealt out the search between them, and there were over thirty men with Thoralf. Now it came to pass one day that Thoralf saw twelve men in the wood together, and a woman with them the thirteenth, and it seemed to him that he knew them, and he made towards them. But Thorkell told his fellows that there were men coming towards them; and they asked Thorkell what counsel or plan he would have them take. "There is a hillock hard by here," said he, "let us, therefore, all fare thither, for it is a good coign of vantage. We will get up stones ready on it, and defend ourselves as manfully as we can." So they all fared to the hillock, and made them ready there. Thoralf and his men quickly came up with them, and made at them with their weapons, but Thorkell and his men defended themselves well and manfully, and their meeting ended in this wise, that there fell twelve of Thoralf's men and six of Thorkell's, but the other five of those that were with him were wounded. Franklin Thoralf was hurt to the death. Then Thorkell fled into the woods, and his five fellows with him, and in this wise they parted. But Ragnhild stayed behind, and she was taken to the homestead with her father. But when Thoralf was come to his homestead, he died there of the wound that he had got, and it was said that Thorkell was his slayer, and these things were spread abroad. Thorkell went home to his father. He was but lightly hurt, but most of his fellows were badly wounded, yet they were all healed there.

Chapter 16

Now after these things the Upland folk called a moot, and at that moot Thorkell Dry-frost was made an outlaw; and when father and son heard of it, Stangrim told Thorkell that he must not bide at home while they were seeking most hotly after him. "But thou shalt go, kinsman," says he, "to the river that falls hard by the homestead, for there are great cliffs along the river, and in those river-cliffs caves, and no man knows of that hidingplace but myself only. Thither shalt thou

go, and take food with thee. "And so did Thorkell, and he was in the caves while the search was hottest after him, but they found him not. But it seemed to him very dismal there, so that after some time he went abroad out of the caves, and up to the homestead that Yeoman Thoralf had owned, and carried off Ragnhild for the second time, and set forth for the fells and the wastes. "And here I took up my dwelling," said he, "and here I have been ever since with Ragnhild my wife, eighteen winters, and that is the age of my daughter Thurið. And now I have told you the story of my life. ""This story of thine is, to my mind, no light one, foster-father," said Sigmund, "and now I must tell thee that I have ill repaid thee thy kindness and fostering, for thy daughter told me when we two parted that she was with child, and there is no other man in the case save myself, wherefore also I was the more willing to leave you, for I feared lest this matter should part us. ""Long have I known that there were thoughts of love between you and her," answered Thorkell, "and I would not forbid it. "Then said Sigmund, "I will beg this boon of thee, foster-father mine, that thou give thy daughter Thurið to no man else, for I mean to have her to wife, and no other will I wed. "Thorkell answered him, "My daughter could not wed a better man, but I will ask this of thee, Sigmund, if thou find favour with any prince, that thou remember my name, and bring me into the law again and to a settlement with my countrymen, for I am become very weary of this desert. "Sigmund told him that he surely would do so if he were able to bring it about.

With that they parted. And the kinsmen fared on till they came to Earl Hacon at Lathe, for there he had his seat as Earl. Then they went up before the Earl and greeted him, and he took it well, and asked them who they were. Sigmund told him he was the son of Breste, "he that was thy reeve whilom in the Færeys, and was slain there. Therefore, lord, have I sought to find thee, for I hoped for thy good favour, and I would fain be bound in service to thee, lord, and my kinsman with me. "Earl Hacon said that he wist not rightly who they were, "yet thou art not unlike Breste, but thou must prove thy kinship thyself. In the meantime I will not grudge thee thy meat at my board. "And he showed them a seat beside his Guests. Now Sweyn, Hacon's son, was then a young man, and he was with his father's following in those days.

Chapter 17

Now Sigmund came to talk with Sweyn, the Earl's son; many feats of skill also he did before him, and the Earl's son took great pleasure in his company. And Sigmund brought his case before Sweyn, and begged him to lend him his help that he might find favour in his father's eyes. Sweyn asked him what he sought at his father's hands. "I would fain go a warring," said Sigmund, "if thy father would help me. "

"That was well thought of," says Sweyn.

So the winter passed on till Yule, and at Yuletide Earl Eric, Hacon's son, came there east from the Wick, for there his Earl's seat was, and Sigmund fell into talk with Earl Eric, and set forth his desire to him. Eric promised him his goodwill with his father Hacon, and said that he would give him no less help than Earl Hacon did. And after Yule Sigmund brought the matter up before Earl Hacon,

and begged him to give him some help, and favour his prayer for the sake of Breste his father, who was sometime his liegeman. Then answered Earl Hacon, "Surely, I took the loss of a good follower when Breste my henchman was slain, that was a right brave man, and right worthy of ill at my hands are they that slew him; but to what end dost thou speak now?" Sigmund said that he was most fain to go on a Wiking-cruise, and get thereby some good report before men, or else death. The Earl said that he had spoken well, "and thou shalt know in the spring, when men get ready for seafaring, what I think of thy words. "

And when the winter was gone Sigmund begged Earl Hacon to make good his friendly words. And the Earl answered him, "I will give thee a long-ship, and on board of her forty weaponed men. But the crew will not be picked men, because few men will be willing to follow thee, an outland man and unknown. "Sigmund thanked the Earl, and told Eric what help his father had given him. "That was not a great venture," said Eric, "yet it may bring thee gain, and I will give another ship and forty men aboard of her. "Now the ship that Eric gave him was well found in every way. Then he told Sweyn what help his kinsfolk had given him. Sweyn made answer: "Things go so with me now that it is not as easy for me as for my kinsmen to venture much on my friends; nevertheless, I will give thee a third ship and forty men aboard of her, my own liegemen they shall be, and I think they will follow thee best of all the men that have been given thee for thy crews. "

Chapter 18

Then Sigmund got him ready for his cruise, and his men with him, and set sail when he was bound, east to the Wick, and thence to Denmark and through Eyre Sound and right into the East Sea. And there he cruised all the summer and gat little booty, for he dared not, with the small strength he had, hold on his course where there might be much odds against him. Moreover, he let merchants go their way in peace.

As the summer passed on, he sailed eastward till he came under Elf Scaur, where is ever a great lair of Wickings. And when they had laid their ships in a berth under an island, Sigmund went upon the cliff to look around. He saw five ships lying under the island on the other side, and the fifth was a dragon-ship. With that he went down to his men and told them that five Wiking-ships were lying under the cliff on the other side. "And now I will tell you this," says he, "that I am no whit minded to fly from meeting them without trying their might; for we shall never win any renown unless we put our plans to the stake. "They bade him look to it. "Then let us now get up stones aboard the ships," says Sigmund, "and make us ready in the best way we may. We will lay our ships on the outer side of the bay to which we are now come, for it is smallest there, and it seemed to me on the evening when we sailed in, that no ship could take up a berth inside near us, if we were to lay our three ships forward there side by side, for it may be good to us that they cannot lay at us on all sides. "And this they do. On the morning, when they had laid their ships in the outermost part of the bay, there rowed in towards them the five Wiking-ships, and on the poop of the dragon-ship there stood a big strong-looking man, who called out to them,

and asked who was the master of their ships. Sigmund gave him his name and asked for his. He said that he was called Randwer, and that he came of kindred east in Holmgard, and he told them they had now two ways to choose between, either to give up their ships and themselves into his hands, or to defend themselves. Sigmund said that was no fair choice, and they must needs first try their weapons. Randwer bade his men lay him alongside of the three ships, since they could not all come at them, and he would fain see first how things would go. Sigmund steered the ship that Sweyn Earlssohn had given him, and Thore the one that Earl Eric had owned. Then they lay aboard of one another, and the fight began. And Sigmund and his men let fly with the stones so fast that Randwer's folk could do nothing but cover themselves, and when the stones were gone they kept up a shower of arrows hard and fast; and therewith a great many of the Wickings fell, and many were wounded. Then Sigmund and his men betook them to their cutting weapons. And the fight began to turn against Randwer's crew; and when he saw how ill it sped with his men, he told them they must be very worthless fellows not to get the better of men who, he said, were not men at all. They told him he egged them on enough but covered himself, and bade him venture forth himself. He said he would do so. Then he laid the dragon aboard, and another ship, on which were men that had rested awhile, and the third ship he manned with unwounded men. And now they lay aboard of one another for the second time, and the fight began. And this was a much more stubborn onset than before. Sigmund was foremost of all men aboard his ship, and he hewed both hard and fast, and Thore, his kinsman, went well forward. They fought long so evenly that no man could tell which side would have the best of it. At last Sigmund said to his men: "We shall never beat them thoroughly without we venture ourselves farther forward. I shall try to board the dragon. Do you follow me like men." Then Sigmund boarded the dragon, and eleven men with him, and there he slew man after man as quick as could be, and the men that were with him followed him up well. Thore also boarded the dragon, and four men with him, and all gave way before them.

Now, when Randwer saw that, he ran out against Sigmund, and they met and fought a good while. Then Sigmund showed his skill of fence, for he cast his sword up, flinging it into the air, and caught it again in his left hand and caught his shield in his right, and then hewed at Randwer with his sword, and took off his right leg below the knee. With that Randwer fell down. Sigmund gave him another blow on the neck that took off his head. Then Sigmund's men shouted the war-shout, and at that the Wickings fled in the three other ships, but Sigmund and they that were with him chased the dragon in such fashion that they slew every man born of woman that was on board. Then they told over their crew, and there were fallen of Sigmund's crew thirty men. After that they lay their ship in its berth, and bound up their wounds and rested there for two or three nights. Sigmund took the dragon for his own and the other ship that was with it. They took there great wealth both in weapons and other goodly gear. After that they sailed away for Denmark and so north to the Wick, and there they found Earl Eric; he greeted Sigmund kindly, and bid him stay with him. Sigmund thanked the Earl for his offer, but said that he must first go north to Earl Hacon. He left two of his ships there behind him in the Earl's keeping, as he was light-handed. When they got to Earl Hacon, he greeted Sigmund and his fellows kindly. And Sigmund stayed with the Earl through the winter and he became a very able man.

And at Yule-tide that winter Sigmund became one of Earl Hacon's house-carles and Thore with him, and there for a while they sat in peace with good welcome.

Chapter 19

There ruled over Sweden at that time King Eric the Victorious, the son of Beorn, the son of Eric, the son of Eywind. He was a mighty king. One winter twelve Northern merchants had fared eastward over the Keel into Sweden, and when they came into Sweverick, they held a fair among the folk of the land, and at the fair men fell out and a Northerner slew a Swede. When the king was ware of it, he sent his Guests thither and let slay those twelve men. Now when the spring was come, Earl Hacon asked Sigmund where he was thinking of holding his course that summer. Sigmund said that it should lay with the Earl to fix that. Earl Hacon spake thus: "I wish this, that thou shouldst fare somewhat nearer to the Swede king's realm, and bear this in thy mind of the Swedes, that they slew twelve of my men in the winter not long ago, and there hath been no vengeance yet got for this." Sigmund said it should be done if he could bring it about. Earl Hacon then gave Sigmund a picked band of his own house-carles and of the fyrd, and all were now ready enough to follow Sigmund. Then he held on his course to the Wick, and found Earl Eric, and he gave Sigmund a fine band of men, and now Sigmund had full three hundred men and five ships well found. They sailed thence southward to Denmark, and so eastward off Sweden, till they laid their ships off Sweden east of the land. Then said Sigmund to his men: "We must make a landing here, and let us go up like men of war." Then they landed and went up three hundred men together and came to a land where men dwelt; and there they slew men and took gear, and burnt homesteads. And the country folk fled far away into the waste and the wood as far as they could go. Not far thence from where they followed those that fled there ruled a reeve of King Eric whose name was Beorn. He gathered the armed men to him when he heard of their harrying, and they came together a great host and got between Sigmund's men and their ships. And one day they were ware of this land-host, and they told Sigmund of it, and asked him what counsel they should take. "There are many counsels still, and good ones withal," said he; "often times they have not gotten the victory who were the most men, if only the others have gone briskly to meet them. Now we will take this plan, we will draw up our array and make a battle-wedge. I and my kinsman Thore will be the foremost men, then shall come three and then five, and so on, but the shielded men shall be outside on the shoulders of the host on either side. And this is the counsel I would have us take, to run right upon their array and try if we can get right through them in this way; and I think the Swedes will not stand fast in the field." And they did so. They ran at the Swedish array and went right through them, and there began a great fight, and many of the Swedes fell. And Sigmund went well forward and hewed away on either hand; and he got up to Beorn's banner-bearer and dealt him his deathblow. Then he egged on his men to break the shield wall that was shut round Beorn, and they did so. Sigmund got up to Beorn and they came to blows. But Sigmund soon got the better of him, and gave him his death-wound. Then the Wickings set up the whoop of victory and the country-folk's host fled. Sigmund told his men not to follow those that fled,

for that they had not might enough for this in an unknown land, and they hearkened to him. They got much wealth there and fared with it to their ships; then they sailed away from Sweden and held eastward to Holmgard, and harried there round the islands and nesses.

There are two brothers spoken of that were of the Swede king's realm, the name of the one was Wandil, and of the other Aðil. They were landwardens of the Swede king's, and had never less than eight ships and two dragon-ships with them. Now the Swede king heard these tidings, that there had been a raid made in his land, and he sent word to these brethren and bade them take the life of Sigmund and his fellows. They told him they would do so. And about harvest-tide Sigmund and his men were sailing east, and came under an island that lies off Sweden. Then spake Sigmund to his men: "We have not got among friends here, for they are Swedes that dwell here; let us therefore beware of them. So now I will go upon the island here, and look about me." And he did so, and saw where ten ships lay on the other side of the island; two dragon-ships there were, and eight other ships.

Then Sigmund told his men to make them ready, and get all their goods out of the ships and get stones on board instead. And they made them ready so in the night-time.

Chapter 20

And early in the morning they rowed toward the ten ships, whereupon the masters called out to them to tell who was their leader. Sigmund told them his name, and when they knew what men they were, there was no need of seeking any further cause, but they got up their weapons and began the fight at once. And Sigmund and his men had never been put anywhere to such a proof as they were now. Wandil laid his dragon alongside of Sigmund's, and they withstood him stoutly. And when they had fought for awhile, Sigmund said to his men: "Right as before we shall not get the better of them unless go nearer. I shall leap on board of the dragon here, do you follow me well." With that, Sigmund leapt on board the dragon, and there followed him a great band, and there he slew one man after another as soon as he was on board, till the crew gave way before them. Then Wandil sought to meet Sigmund, and they came to blows and fought for a long time. Sigmund tried the same sleight as before, he shifted his weapons in his hands, and hewed at Wandil with his left hand, and smote off his right hand, and down fell the sword he had fought with. Sigmund made short work with him then and slew him. Then his men set up the whoop of victory. Then said Aðil, "Things have turned; Wandil must be slain. We must betake us to flight. Let every man look out for himself!" So Aðil fled, and they that were with him, with five ships, but four were left behind, and the dragon the fifth. And they slew every man born of woman that was on board of those five. And Sigmund took the dragon with him and the other ships also.

Afterwards they sailed away till they came to the Dane king's realm, where they thought themselves safe and sheltered. Then they rested awhile and bound up their wounds. And when they were in good case again they sailed till they came to the Wick, and found Earl Eric, and there they were welcomed. They stayed

there but a little while, and then fared north to Throndeim, where they found Earl Hacon. He welcomed Sigmund and his men, and thanked them for this work they had wrought in the summer. The kinsmen, Sigmund and Thore, stayed with the Earl through the winter, and a good many of their men with them, but their crew was lodged in other places. They lacked nought for chattels.

Chapter 21

When the spring came, Earl Hacon asked Sigmund where he was minded to harry that summer. Sigmund said that should lay with the Earl. "I will not set thee on to put the Swedes to shame" said the Earl, "but I would fain have thee fare west over the deep near the Orkneys. There is a man wont to dwell called Harold Ironpate; he is an outlaw of mine, and one of my greatest foes. He was done many a lawless deed here in Norway. He is a mighty man; him I would have thee kill, if thou can bring it about." Sigmund said that he would meet him if he could get at him.

Sigmund sailed from Norway with eight ships. Thore steered the dragon Wandilsloom and Sigmund Randwersloom. They sailed westward over the Main, and got no good all the summer. And at the end of the summer they ran under Angelsay with their ships, which island lies in the English Sea. There they saw lying before them ten ships, and with them was a great dragonship. Sigmund right soon saw that Harold Ironpate led those ships. They settled the next morning for the fight. And the night passed, and at sunrise in the morning they handed up their weapons, and all that day they fought till night, when the darkness parted them, and they settled to fight next morning. And when the morning came Harold hailed Sigmund's ship, and asked him whether he would fight again. He said, he had a mind to do nothing else. "Then I will say now," says Harold, "what I have never said before, that I would we two should become mates and fight no longer. "The men on both sides spoke up for this, and said that they must need be set at one and make one fleet, and that there were few that could withstand them then. Sigmund said that one thing stood in the way against their being set at one. "What is that?" says Harold. Sigmund answers, "Earl Hacon sent me after thy head. ""Ill is my wont at his hands," says Harold, "and ye two are right unlike, for thou art the bravest of men, but Hacon is one of the worst of men. ""We two shall not think the same way about that," says Sigmund. But now their men bestirred them to get them set at one, and it came about that they were set at one, and they lay all their war-booty together in one lot. That summer they harried far and wide, and few could withstand them. But when harvest-tide was come, Sigmund said that he should steer from Norway. "Then we two must part," answers Harold. "That shall not be," said Sigmund. "I would have us both fare to Norway, for then I shall have done something of what I gave my word on to Earl Hacon if I could find thee. ""Why should I go to meet my greatest foe?"

"Let me be counsellor in this matter," said Sigmund. "Well," said Harold, "inasmuch as I trust thee well, and also in that thou art well used to such things, therefore thou shalt be my counsellor here. "

Whereon they steered north for Norway, and made it off Hordaland, where they were told that Earl Hacon was in North Mæri at Bergund. They held on their way thither, and laid their ships in Stone-voe. Then Sigmund went ashore at Bergund with twelve men in a row-boat, for he would be the first to go to Earl Hacon, but Harold lay in Stone-voe the while. And he went up to see Earl Hacon when he was sitting at the board drinking, and he came into the hall before the Earl and greeted him well. The Earl welcomed him blithely, and asked him for tidings, and bade them set a stool for him, and they did so. They talked for a while and Sigmund told him of his cruise, but he did not let out that he had found Ironpate. But the story seemed to Hacon to hang overlong, till at last he asked whether he had found Harold. "Yea, of a truth," said Sigmund. And he told him how it had come about, that they two were set at one. When the Earl heard it he spake not a word, but grew red to look on, and after a while he said, "Thou hast often done my errands better than this, Sigmund. ""The man is here now, lord," said Sigmund, "in thy power, and I would have thee take his offers for my sake and give him quarter or grith for life and limb, and for his abiding here. "

"There shall not go that way," said the Earl, "but I shall have him slain as soon as I can get at him. ""I will offer thee my handsel for him, Lord," said Sigmund, "and as great fee as ever thou wilt withal. "

"He shall never get peace from me," said the Earl. Then answered Sigmund, "I have served thee for little and for no good, inasmuch as I cannot even get grith and peace for one man; I shall fare abroad out of this land and serve thee no longer, and I only wish that it may cost you something at his hands before he is slain. "With that Sigmund sprung up and walked out of the room, but the Earl sat still and held his peace, and no man dared pray for Sigmund. Then the Earl began to speak, "Wroth was Sigmund then," said he, "and scathe will there be to my kingdom if he goes abroad; but that cannot have been said in earnest. ""It surely was said in earnest," say his men. "Go now after him," then says the Earl, "and we will make peace withal as he begged; "with that the Earl's men went to Sigmund and told him this, whereon Sigmund goes to the Earl, and the Earl was foremost to greet him telling him that he would make peace as he had begged him at first, "for I will not have thee go abroad away from me. "Then Sigmund took grith and peace for Harold from Earl Hacon, and he went to find Harold, and told him what had happened and how the matter was settled.

Harold said it was little good to trust the Earl; however, they went together to meet him, and he and the Earl were set at one together. After this Harold went off north to Halgoland, but Sigmund was with the Earl all the winter in great favour, and his kinsman there also, and a great following with them. Sigmund kept his men well both in clothes and weapons.

Chapter 22

Now of the men of the Færeys it must be told that Ossur Hafgrimson grew up with Thron of Gate till he was now a fullgrown man; he was a frank-looking man and a manly. Thron gat him a match in the island, the daughter of one of the best franklins; moreover he told him that they should share the power and

rule of the island into two halves, and that he should have the half his father had had, and Thronð the half which the brothers Breste and Beine had had.

Thronð also told Ossur that he thought it most meet that he should take all the fee, both lands and chattels, which those brothers had owned, and hold it as weregeld for his father. And all was done as Thronð had counselled. Ossur now had two or rather three homesteads, one at the Temple on his father's heritage in Southrey, another in Scufey, the third at Dimun on the heritage of Sigmund and Thore. The Færeý folk had heard tell of Sigmund that he has become a famous man, and made great readiness against him. Ossur had an earthwork cast up round the homestead in Scufey, and was there the most of his time. Scufey is shapen so from its height that there is the best vantage ground there. There is but one path up it, and men say that the island cannot be got at though there came twenty men against it, yea, thirty even, for that same there never so many they could not win it if they had not that path free. Ossur went about his homestead with twenty men, but there were over thirty men, counting workmen, up at the houses. No man in the Færeys was as mighty as he was save Thronð. The great silver that Thronð gat at Haleýre never came to an end, and he was the wealthiest man in the islands, and he ruled all things in the Færeys at this time, although he and Ossur were not at all alike.

Chapter 23

Of Sigmund it must now be told that he fell to talk with Earl Hacon, and told him that he was minded to leave warring and hie out to the Færeys; for he said he would not hear it said any longer that he had not avenged his father and be upbraided therefor. And he begged the Earl to help him to this end and give him his counsel how he might bring it about. Hacon answered and said that the deep was hard to fare over to the islands, and that the surf ran high, "and no long-ship can hold thither, but I will let make two round-ships for thee and give thee men to go with thee, so that ye may be well found to both our minds. "Sigmund thanked him for his good deed, and through the winter they got ready for the cruise, and in the spring the ships were finished and the men found. Harold came to meet him in the spring and settled to fare with him.

And when he was fully bound, Earl Hacon said to him, "One should speed him well one would fain welcome back. "And he went out of doors with Sigmund. Then spake Hacon, "What sayest thou to this? In what dost thou put thy trust?" "I put my trust in my own might and main," said Sigmund. "That must not be," the Earl answered, "but thou shalt put thy trust where I have put all my trust, namely, in Thorgerð Shinebride," said he. "And we will go and see her now and seek luck for thee at her hands. "Sigmund bade him settle this matter as he would. They set forth along a certain path to the wood, and thence by a little bypath into the wood, till they came where a ride lay before them, and a house standing in it with a stake fence round it. Right fair was that house, and gold and silver was run into the carvings thereof. They went into the house, Hacon and Sigmund together, and a few men with them. Therein were a great many gods. There were many glass roof-lights in the house, so that there was no shadow anywhere. There was a woman in the house over against the door,

right fairly decked she was. The Earl cast him down at her feet, and there he lay long, and when he rose up he told Sigmund that they should bring her some offering and lay the silver thereof on the stool before her. "And we shall have it as a mark of what she tinks of this, if she will do as I wish and let the ring loose which she holds in her hand. For thou, Sigmund, shalt get luck by that ring. "Then the Earl took hold of the ring, and it seemed to Sigmund that she clasped her hand on it, and the Earl got not the ring. The Earl cast him down a second time before her, and Sigmund saw that the Earl was weeping. Then he stood up again and caught hold of the ring, and now, behold, it was loose; and he took it and gave it to Sigmund gave him his word on it. With that they parted.

And Sigmund went to his ships; and it is said that there were fifty men on board each of them. Then they put to sea and gat a fair wind till they saw the fowl off the islands, and the ships kept together. Harold Ironpate was on board Sigmund's ship, and Thore steered the other ship. But now a storm drove against them and swept the two ships apart, and they drifted a great way, so that many days passed.

Chapter 24

Of Sigmund and they with him it must now be told that at last they gat a fair wind, and made sail for the islands; but they found that they had made the east of the islands, for there were men on board with Sigmund that knew the lay of the land, and were almost got to Eastrey. Sigmund said that he would of all things choose to get Thronð into his hands. But as they bore up for the island, both wind and storm got up against them, so that it was not at all likely that they could make the island; nevertheless, they brought up at Swiney, for the men were keen and handy. They got there as the night was dying, and forty men went straightway up to the homestead, and ten took care of the ship. They went to the homestead and broke in, and took franklin Bearne in his bed and led him out. Bearne asked who were the leaders of this raid. Sigmund said he was. "Then thou shalt needs be grim with them who showed thee nought but ill at the fight when thy father was slain. And I will not deny that I was there. But dost thou remember at all what side I took in thy case when it was counselled that thou shouldst be slain, and thy kinsman, Thore, with thee, and I spoke and said they should slay me first?" "Surely, I mind me of that," said Sigmund. "When shall I be repaid?" said Bearne. "Now," said Sigmund, "thou shalt have peace, but I will give one thing more. ""Yea, surely," said Bearne. "Thou must go with us to Eastrey, then," Sigmund said. "Thou shalt as easily win into heaven as thither," says Bearne, "while the weather is in this quarter. ""Then thou shalt fare to Scufey, if Ossur is at home. ""Thou shalt have thy will here," says Bearne, "and I guess Ossur will be there. "

The next night they went to Scufey, and made the island as the night was dying, as before. It happened in such timely wise for Sigmund, that there was no man on the watch at the One-Man's-Path on Scufey. So up they went straightway, and fifty men with them which Bearne gave them. They got to the earthwork, and by this Ossur and his men were at work, and Ossur asked what manner of men they were that they come thither. Sigmund told them his name. "Thou

mayst well be deemed to have business with us," said Ossur, "and now I will offer thee this settlement, that the best man in the Færeys give doom on our case. ""There shall no settlement be between us two," said Sigmund, "save I alone make it. ""I will not have things settled that way," says Ossur, "by giving thee self-doom. I do not see that there is so little likeness between us two men or our cases that I should brook that. "Sigmund answered and said to his men, "Do you make for this banterer in the work; but I will seek a plan to follow. "Harold Ironhead was sturdy in counsel; he would have no settlement.

And now Sigmund's men made an onslaught on the work, and the others held it. But Sigmund went up to the work and looked well at it. He was armed in this wise that day: he had a helm on his head, and he was girt with a sword; he had an axe in his hand, silver-mounted and snag-horned, with the haft covered; the best of weapons it was. He was clad in a red kirtle, and a light mail-jack over it; and it was the talk of both friends and foes that there had never yet come into the Færeys such a man as he was.

Now Sigmund spied a place where the wall of the work had tumbled down a little, and it was somewhat easier to win in there than in another place. With that he stepped back from the work and then took a run at it, and got so far up that he stuck the crook of the axe on to the wall of the work, and then let himself up quickly by the axe-shaft, and in this way got inside the work. A man ran upon him quickly, and hewed at him with his sword. Sigmund warded the blow off him with the axe, and then drove at him with the axe-horn, so that the axe stood deep in his breast, and he fell dead with the blow. Ossur saw it and ran quickly upon Sigmund, and hewed at him, but Sigmund put the blow aside again, and hewed at Ossur with his axe, and struck off his right hand, and his sword fell down with it. Then he struck him again in the breast, so that the axe went right into him, and then Ossur fell.

And now men rushed at Sigmund, but he sprang out backwards off the wall of the work, and came down on his feet. They made much ado over Ossur's body till he was dead. Then Sigmund told the men that were still inside the work that they had two choices in their hands, namely, that he should cut them off from food in the work or burn them therein, or else they should come to a settlement, and let him have the awarding of it. So they let him take self-doom and gave themselves up.

Of Thore it must be told that he bore up for Southrey, and met Sigmund after these things had happened.

And now messages passed between Sigmund and Thronð about a settlement, and peace was made for the time, and a meeting set between them in Streamsey at Thorshaven, for there is the Færeyyfolks' moot-stead. Thither came Sigmund, Thronð, and a great gathering. Thronð was very cheerful, and a settlement was talked of. Thronð said, "It cannot be gainsaid that I was at the fight when thy father, kinsman Sigmund, was slain. I will give thee now," said he, "such a settlement as shall be of the greatest honour to thee, and thou thyself shalt be best pleased with, namely, I will that thou fix the whole settlement between us as thou wilt. ""I will not have that," said Sigmund, "but I will have Earl Hacon make the award between us, or else we will not be set at one at all, and this I think best of all; but if we are to be set at one, we will both go and seek Earl Hacon. ""I had far rather, kinsman," said Thronð, "that thou should

make the award; but I must lay down one thing, namely, that I keep my holding here and my headship as I have them now. ""There shall be no settlement," said Sigmund, "save the one that I have given thee. "And when Thronð saw that the other was the stronger, then they settled it between them in that way, and they were both to go to Norway in the summer.

The second ship fared out to Norway at harvest-tide, and aboard her many of the men that had followed Sigmund out. Sigmund was out in Scufey all through the winter, and Thore his kinsman with him, and Harold Ironhead also, and many men with them. Sigmund kept great state and store at his homestead. The winter passed, and Sigmund got his ship ready. Thronð got ready a merchantman that he had. And each knew what the other was doing. Sigmund sailed as soon as he was bound. There were with him on this cruise Thore and Harold Ironhead, and nigh twenty men aboard. They made land at Norway off South Mære, and asked after Earl Hacon, and he was not far off, and they went to him at once. Earl Hacon welcomed Sigmund and his fellows, and Sigmund told him about the settlement between Thronð and himself. The Earl said, "Thou and Thronð are not a match in cunning, and I fear that he is not likely to come and see me very soon. "

The summer went by, and Thronð never came. A ship came out from the Færeys and brought news that Thronð had been driven back, and his ship so broken that it was not seaworthy.

Chapter 25

Then Sigmund told the Earl he would fain have him make his award between him and Thronð, albeit he was not come. The Earl said it should be so: "I will give thee a weregild for each of the two brethren, a third weregild for Thronð's counsel against you, when he would have had you slain after he had slain your fathers, a fourth weregild you shall have because Thronð sold you into thralldom. To the headship over a quarter of the Færeys, which thou now hast, thou shalt add as much out of Thronð's lot and of Ossur's heritage as shall make thine own lot half the islands. And half shall fall to my keeping, because Hafgrim and Thronð slew my house-carles Breste and Beine. Halfgrim shall go without weregild, because of the slaying of Breste, and his onslaught on sackless men. There shall no weregild be paid for Ossur, because he wrought no uprightly when he sat him down in thy heritage, where also he was slain. Thou shalt share the weregilds between thee and Thore thy kinsman as it likes thee. Thronð shall have his holding if he keeps this settlement. Thou shalt hold all the islands in fee of me,"said the Earl, "and pay me scot for my part. "Sigmund thanked the Earl for this award, and abode with him all the winter. In the spring he went out to the Færeys, and Thore his kinsman with him, but Harold Ironhead stayed behind. Sigmund made a good passage and came to the Færeys and summoned Thronð to meet him at a moot at Thorshaven in Streamsey. Thither came Thronð and much people. Sigmund said that Thronð had taken but little heed of the settlement they had made, and gave out the Earl's award, and bade Thronð do one thing or the other, "now either keep the settlement or break it. "Thronð bade Sigmund give his own award himself, and

said that he would be best pleased, and also that he should come off best by so doing. Sigmund said that he would not shrink in this matter, and bade him "do quickly one thing or the other, yea or nay." Moreover, he told him that he was every whit as fain they should stay at odds as they were. Thronð chose rather to take the award, and prayed him to tarry a while for the paying of the fee, for the Earl had given it that the fee should be paid within a half-year. And at men's request Sigmund let it go so that the fee should be paid within three years. Thronð said that he thought it very well that his kinsman Sigmund should have the headship as long as he had had it before, and that it was fair that it should be so. Sigmund said that he need not use such vain compliments, and that he should never take them to himself. They parted with all men set at one. Thronð asked Laf Ossursson home to Gate to be fostered there, and there he grew up.

In the summer Sigmund got his ship ready to fare to Norway, and Thronð paid up a third of the fee, but he stumbled a good deal over it. Sigmund got together Earl Hacon's scot before he sailed from the islands. He made a good passage and made Norway with his ship, and went straightway to see Earl Hacon and bring him his scot. The Earl welcomed Sigmund and Thore his kinsman and all their fellows, and they abode with the Earl all that winter.

Chapter 26

The summer after this winter, when he became Earl Hacon's liegeman at Yuletide, Sigmund fared up country with the Earl to the Frosta-moot, and there Sigmund opened the case of Thorkel his father-in-law to the Earl praying him that he would inlaw him and give him his land to hold freely. And Earl Hacon quickly gave Sigmund his asking. Moreover, he let send for Thorkel and his kindred, and Thorkel and his wife stayed with Earl Hacon that winter, and Thurið their daughter also. She had brought forth a woman-child the summer that Sigmund went away, and the maid was called Thora. The next spring Earl Hacon gave Thorkel Dryfrost a reeveship out in Orkdale, and there Thorkel set up his homestead, and there he abode all the time that this story tells of. Soon after this Sigmund rode out to Orkdale to see Thorkel, and he welcomed him kindly. Then Sigmund did his errand and asked for Thurið in marriage. Thorkel took his request well, and thought that honour and worship would come of it both to himself and his daughter and to them all. Sigmund drank his bride-ale with Earl Hacon at Hlathe, and the Earl kept the feast up for seven nights; and Thorkel Dryfrost was made Earl Hacon's henchman and became a dear friend of his. After that they fared home, but Sigmund and his wife abode with the Earl till the harvest-tide, when he went out to the Færeys, and Thurið his wife and Thora his daughter with him.

There was peace in the islands that winter. In the spring men fared to the moot in Streamsey, and much people came thither, Sigmund also and his following with him. Thronð came thither, and Sigmund asked for the second third of his money, and told him that he ought by right to have all, but he would not, for the sake of them that begged him not to require it now. Thronð answered, "It hath so happened, kinsman," said he, "that the man named Laf the son of Ossur is abiding with me. I bade him to my home when we two were set at one. Now I

pray thee, kinsman, give Laf some set-off for the sake of his father Ossur, whom thou slewest, and let me pay him the money of thine that I owe thee. ""I shall not do so," said Sigmund, "but thou shalt pay me my money. ""Nay, but it must seem best to thee [to do as I say]," said Thronð. Sigmund answered, "Pay thou the money or worse shall come of it. "Then Thronð told out a half of the third, and then said that he was not ready to pay any more. Then Sigmund went up to Thronð, and he had the silver-mounted axe in his hand that he slew Ossur with, and set the axe-horn to Thronð's breast, and told him that he would thrust it deep enough for him to feel it sorely unless he told him out the money then and there. Then spake Thronð, "A troublesome man art thou," said he, and bade his men go into his booth for the money-bag that lay there and see whether there was any silver still over. He went and brought the money-bag to Sigmund, and the money was weighed and it did not come up to what Sigmund ought to have had. With that they parted.

That same summer Sigmund fared to Norway with Earl Hacon's scot, and was welcomed of him there, and abode a short while with the Earl, and then fared back to the Færeys and sat there through the winter. His kinsman Thore was ever with him. Sigmund was much beloved out there in the islands. He and Swiney-Bearne kept the settlement that was between them well, and Bearne ever came between Sigmund and Thronð or worse would have happed. In the spring men fared to the Streamsey-moot, and much people came thither. Sigmund asked Thronð for his money, but Thronð asked for weregild in the name of Laf Ossursson for his father. And many men spoke up in the matter that they should make a good settlement. Sigmund answered, "Thronð will pay Laf no better than he pays me, but for the sake of good men's words the debt shall stand over, but I do not give it up and I do not pay it as weregild. "With that they parted and went home from the moot.

Sigmund gat him ready to fare to Norway in the summer with Earl Hacon's scot, and was late bound. He sailed for the deep sea as soon as he was bound. Thurið his wife stayed behind, but Thore his kinsman went with him. They made a good run, and made Thronðham late in the harvest-tide. Sigmund went straight to Earl Hacon and was welcomed by him.

Sigmund was seven and twenty winters old when this happened. He stayed on with Earl Hacon.

Chapter 27

That winter the Wickings of Iom came to Norway and fought there with Earl Hacon and his sons. The kinsmen Sigmund and Thore were in the fight with Earls Hacon and Eric, and it is said that Sigmund was the first man to board the warship of Bue the Thick, who was fighting in the fiercest wise, and Thore was the next with thirty men after him. And when Sigmund and Bue came to sword-play with one another, Sigmund saw that he could not match Bue in main strength and great strokes, and betook him to his feat of arms, and cast his shield and sword up in the air, and so shifted them in his hands, as he was often wont to do. Bue had not warded himself against this, and Sigmund with his left hand hewed off Bue's hand at the wrist, and then leapt back to his ship

and seven men with him, for all the rest were slain of them that had followed him and Thore. Then Bue leapt overboard and his ship was cleared. Next spring Earl Hacon gave great gifts to Sigmund before they parted, and the kinsmen sailed out to the Færeys and sat down there in peace, and Sigmund alone held sway over all.

Chapter 28

It must now be told that when King Olave had been two winters in Norway, and had christened all Throntham that winter, he sent a message out to the Færeys to Sigmund Brestesson bidding him come and see him, and he had it put in the message that Sigmund should win worship and become the greatest man in the Færeys if he would become his man.

Chapter 29

As the summer passed, King Olave fared north of Throntham and came to South Mære, and as he lay at guesting with a rich franklin, there came out of the Færeys, according to the king's bidding, Sigmund Brestesson and Thore his kinsman. When Sigmund came to the king, the king welcomed him as blithely as might be, and they soon fell to talk together. The king said, "Thou hast done well, Sigmund, not to sleep over this cruise; and for this cause chiefly did I bid thee here, for that much was told me of thy boldness and skill, and I will gladly be thy friend indeed, if thou wilt hearken to me in the one thing that I think of most worth. Some men say that fellowship between us two would not be unbecoming, because we are both called men of prowess, and have long toiled toil and trouble before we won the worship we ought to have, for we two have had no unlike lots in our outlawry and bondage. Thou wert a child, and sat by when thy father was slain sackless, but I was in my mother's womb when my father was betrayed and slain for nothing that he had done, but for the wickedness and greed of his kinsmen. It hath also been told me that, far from offering thee boot for thy father, thy kinsmen bade slay thee as well as thy father, and that thou wert afterward sold into thralldom, yea, that money was paid that thou mightest become a bondsman and a thrall and an outcast and a wanderer withal from thine own and from thine own land; and that thou hadst no helper in an unknown land for a long while, save that men who knew thee not showed thee mercy by His help who is mighty in all things. But things not unlike those I have heard tell of thee have happened to me. As soon as I was born ambush was laid for me, and I was hunted for, nay, my life was compassed by my own countrymen, so that my mother was brought low and had to fly with me from her father's countrymen and her kinsmen and all that she had. So passed the first three winters of my life. Then we were both taken by Wickings, and then I parted with my mother, so that I never saw her again. I was thrice sold into thralldom. Then I was in England with men that I knew not till I was nine winters old. Then came thither one of my kinsmen who knew my kindred, and he loosed me out of bondage and took me away with him east into Garthric, and there I

was other nine winters in outlawry, though I was at that time held a free man. Then I grew somewhat near manhood, and won greater honour and worship at King Waldemar's hand than would seem likely for an outlander, though it was after the manner of the honour thou gottest at the hands of Earl Hacon. And now it hath so come about after all, that each of us is come into his father's heritage and to the land of his birth after long lack of happiness and honour. And now, above all, inasmuch as I have heard that thou hast never slain offerings to false gods after other heathen men's guise, therefore have I good hope that the high King of heaven, Maker of all things, will lead thee by my words to the knowledge of His holy Name and holy Faith, and make thee my fellow in the right faith, as thou art my match in strength and all feats of skill, and other of His merciful gifts which He hath given to thee as He did to me, long before I had any knowledge of His glory. Now the same all-swaying God grant that I bring thee to the true Faith and into His service, so that thereafter thou mayst by His mercy, after my example and at my urging, bring all thy liegemen to His glory; which thing also shall, I think, come to pass. Thou shalt also, if thou wilt hearken to my words, as I have before said, and serve God truly with steadfastness, get friendship and worship of me, although that is nothing worth by the side of the honour and bliss that Almighty God will give thee, and every other man who keeps His commandments for the love of His Holy Ghost, to reign together in the highest glory of His heaven. "When the king had done speaking, Sigmund answered, "It is known to you, lord, moreover it was told of in your speech, that I was bound in service to Earl Hacon. He gave me his good favour, and I was right well pleased with my way of life, for he was faithful and wise of counsel and loving to his friends, as he was grim and false to his foes. But great unlikeness is there between your two faiths, and as far as I can guess from your fair words, this faith that thou holdest is in all ways better and fairer than that which thou heathen men hold, therefore I am willing to follow your counsel and win your friendship. And I would not offer sacrifices to false gods, because I saw long ago that that usage was of no good, although I knew none better." King Olave was glad, when he heard the words that Sigmund spake, that he took his counsel so wisely. And Sigmund was baptized and all his fellows, and the king had them taught the holy lore. Sigmund was then with the king through the winter in great honour.

Chapter 30

When the spring was coming in, the king fell on a day to talk with Sigmund, and said that he was minded to send him out to the Færeys to christen the folk that dwelt there. Sigmund said that he would rather not do that errand, but at last said he would do the king's will. Then the king made him lord over all the islands, and gave him wise men to baptize the folk and teach them the needful lore. Sigmund sailed when he was bound, and sped well on his way. When he came to the Færeys he summoned the franklins to a moot in Streamsey, and much folk came thither. And when the moot was set, Sigmund stood up and set forth his business at length, telling all that had happened since he had gone eastward to Norway to see King Olave Tryggvesson. Moreover, he said that the king had laid all the island under his lordship, and most of the franklins took this

very well. Then Sigmund went on, "I would likewise have you know that I have taken another faith, and am become a Christian man. I have also this errand and bidding from King Olave, to turn all folk in the island to the true faith. "Thronð answered his speech, and said that it was right the franklins should talk over this hard matter among themselves. The franklins said this was well spoken. Then they went to the other side of the moot-field, and Thronð told the franklins that the right thing clearly was to refuse to fulfil this command, and brought things so far by his fair speeches that they were all of one mind thereon. But when Sigmund saw that all the folk had crowded over to Thronð's side, so that there was none stood by him save his own men who were christened, he said, "Too much might have I given Thronð today. "And now men began to crowd back to where Sigmund was sitting; they bore their weapons aloft, and carried themselves in no peaceful wise. Sigmund and his men sprang up to meet them. Then spake Thronð, "Let men sit down and carry themselves more quietly. Now I have this to tell thee, kinsman Sigmund; we franklins are all of one mind on this errand thou hast done, namely, that we will by no means change our faith, and we will set on here in the moot and slay thee, unless thou give it up and bind thyself fast never more to carry this bidding to the islands. "And when Sigmund saw that he could not then bring this matter of the faith about, and was not strong enough to deal with all the folk that was come together there by the strong hand, it ended in his binding himself to what they wished with witnesses and hand-pledge. And with that the moot broke up.

Sigmund sat at home in Scufey that winter, and was right ill-pleased that the franklins had cowed him, although he did not let his mind be known.

Chapter 31

One day in the spring, what time the races ran faster and men thought no ship could live on the main or between the islands, Sigmund set out from home in Scufey with thirty men and two ships, saying that he would run the risk and carry out the king's errand or else die. They ran for Eastrey and made the island; they got there at nightfall without being seen, made a ring round the homestead at Gate, drove a trunk of wood at the door of the house where Thronð slept, and broke it down, then laid hands on Thronð and led him out. Then said Sigmund, "It happens now, as it often does, Thronð, that things go by turns. Thou didst cow me last harvest-tide, and gave me two hard things to choose between; and now I will give thee two very unlike things to choose between: the one is good--that thou take the true faith and let thyself be baptized, or else thou shalt be slain here on the spot; and that is a bad choice for thee to make, for thereby thou shalt swiftly lose thy wealth and earthly bliss in this world, and get instead woe and the everlasting torments of hell in the other world. "But Thronð said, "I will not fail my old friends. "Then Sigmund sent a man to kill Thronð, and put a great axe in his hand; but as he went up to Thronð with the axe on high, Thronð looked at him and said, "Strike me not so quickly. I have something to say first. Where is my kinsman Sigmund?" "Here am I," said he. "Thou alone shalt settle between me and thee, and I will take thy faith as thou wilt. "Then said Thronð, "Hew at him, man!" But Sigmund said, "He shall not be cut down this time. " "It will be thy bane and thy friends' as well if

Thronð get off today!" said Thore. But Sigmund said that he would risk that. Then Thronð was baptized by the priest and all his household. Sigmund made Thronð come with him when he was baptized. And then he went through all the Færeys and stayed not till the whole people was christened. Then he gat his ship ready in the summer, and was minded to sail to Norway to take King Olave his scot and bring Thronð of Gate to him. Now, when Thronð was aware that Sigmund meant to take him to the king, he would fain have begged off going; but Sigmund would not have it, and struck the land-tents as soon as the wind was fair. But before they had gone far on the main they were met by a great swell and storm, and were driven back thereby to the Færeys, and their ship was wrecked and all their gear lost. But of the men most were saved. Sigmund saved Thronð and many others. Thronð said that they would never make a smooth run if they made him go with them against his will. Sigmund said he should go all the same, though he did take it ill. Then he took another ship and goods of his own to give the king instead of his scot, for he had no lack of gear. They put to the sea for the second time, and got a little farther on their way than before, when there met them a great wind blowing in their teeth that drove them back again to the Færeys and wrecked their ship. Then Sigmund said that he thought some stoppage must have been laid upon their cruise. Thronð said it would be so as often as they tried it if they took him with them against his will. So Sigmund let him loose on the understanding that he should swear a holy oath to have and hold the Christian faith, and to be trusty and true to King Olave and to Sigmund, not to hold back or hinder any man in the islands from keeping faith and homage to them, to forward and fulfil the bidding of King Olave, and any other thing that he should bid him do in the Færeys. And Thronð swore freely the fullest oaths that Sigmund could put to him. Then Thronð fared home to Gate, and Sigmund sat in Scufey at his homestead through the winter, and it was late in harvest-tide when they were driven back the second time. And he let mend the ship that was least hurt. And the winter was quiet and tidingless in the Færeys.

Chapter 32

When Sigmund Brestesson had christened all the Færeys, according to the word of King Olave Tryggvesson, he thought to take Thronð of Gate east with him, but was twice driven back as is above written. Albeit he got himself bound again and made a good run, and got to Norway and found King Olave north in Nithoyce, and brought him the money which he had made ready instead of the Færeys' scot that he had lost the summer before, and also the scot that was to be paid up then. The king welcomed him, and he dwelt with the king many days that spring. Sigmund told the king clearly all that had happened, and of the change that was wrought in Thronð and the other islanders. The king answered, "Ill it is that Thronð hath not come to see me, and it is a mischief to your home there in the islands that he is not driven abroad, for it is my belief that he is the worst man in all the Northlands. "

One day in the spring King Olave said to Sigmund, "We will amuse ourselves today, and prove our feats of skill. ""I am not the man for that, lord," said Sigmund, "but thou shalt have thy way in this as in all other things that are in my

hands. "Then they tried their might in swimming and shooting and other feats or skill and strength, and men say that Sigmund came very nigh King Olave in many feats, albeit he came short of him in all, as did every other man that was then living in Norway.

Chapter 33

It is said that once on a time as King Olave sat at drink, for he had given a feast to his house-carles, and there were many men bidden to it, Sigmund also was there, for he was in great favour with the king, and there sat but two men between the king and Sigmund. And it happened that Sigmund stretched forth his arm on the board. The king looked and saw that Sigmund had a thick gold ring on his arm, and he said, "Let me see the ring, Sigmund." He took the ring off his arm and handed it to the king. Then the king said, "Wilt thou give me this ring?" "It was in my mind, lord," said Sigmund, "never to part with that ring. ""I will give thee another instead," said the king, "that shall be no less and no uglier than this. ""I cannot part with this," said Sigmund, "for I gave my word to Earl Hacon with all my heart when he gave me the ring that I never would, and I must hold to it, for the sake of his goodwill to me that gave it, for the Earl also dealt well with me in many ways. "Then said the king, "Think as well of him as thou wilt, both of the ring and of him that gave it thee, but from this day thy luck shall leave thee and this ring shall be thy bane. I know that no less clearly than I know how thou gottest it and whence it came to thee; and, when I asked thee for it, it was rather because I wished to save my friend from ill than from any wish to have thy ring. "The king was as red as blood in the face. And with that the talk dropped, but the king was never afterward so blithe to Sigmund as before. Yet he dwelt with the king for a time, but fared out to the Færeys early that summer. King Olave and he took leave of each other in all friendship, and Sigmund never saw him again. When Sigmund was come out to the Færeys he sat down in his homestead in Scufey.

Chapter 34

Now when King Olave fell at Swold before Earl Eric and the two kings, the Earls Sweyn and Eric sent word out to Sigmund Brestesson in the Færeys, bidding him come and see them. Sigmund did not sleep over it, but fared to Norway, and went to see the Earls north at Hlathe in Thronham. They welcomed him with all their hearts, and brought to mind their former friendship. Sigmund was made their house-carle, they gave him the Færeys in fee, and parted with him in blithe and friendly wise. Sigmund fared out to the Færeys at harvest-tide.

Chapter 35

There are three men told of in the story that all grew up at Gate with Thronð. One was named Sigurd; he was the son of Thorlac, and brother's son to Thronð. He was a big man and strong, a comely man to look on; he had light hair that fell in curls; he was skilled in all feats, and it is said that he came nighest of all men to Sigmund Brestesson in feats of skill. Thord was the name of his brother. He was called the Low. He was very stoutly built and strong of his body. The third was named Geat the Red; he was Thronð's sister's son. They were all three big strong men. Laf was fostered at Gate also, and they were all about the same age.

These were the children of Sigmund and Thurið. Thora was their eldest daughter; she was born on the fells. She was a big, brave-looking woman, not very pretty, but of wisdom above her years. Thoralf was the name of their eldest son, the second was Stangrim, the third Brand, the fourth Here. They were all hopeful men.

It fared now with Christendom in the Færeys as it did in other parts of the Earl's realm---each man lived as he would, but they themselves held fast to their faith. Sigmund held fast to his faith and all his household with him, and let build a church at his homestead. Of Thronð it is told that he changed his faith a good deal and all his company with him.

In those days the Færey folk called a moot; thither came Sigmund and Thronð of Gate and much people. Thronð spoke and said to Sigmund, "Things have turned out so, kinsman Sigmund, that I shall ask thee now for boot in the name of Laf Ossursson, which thou shalt give him for his father." Sigmund answered that they ought to keep to the award that Earl Hacon had made between them on all the matters that were at issue between them. Thronð said that it would be most seemly to give Laf such boot for his father as the best men out in the island should fix on. Sigmund said it was no good pulling and hauling over it, for he would never have it so. Then Thronð said, "It is most true that thou art a hard man to take by the loins, but it may yet be that my kinsmen who are growing up in my house will think thee by no means fair in thy dealing, in that thou wilt not share thy lordship with them, though no more than half that thou hast is thine own by right, and it is not likely that men will let this go on long. Thou hast brought me to shame these many times," said he, "but the greatest was when thou cowedst me into changing my faith; that hour I think the worst of all that I have ever passed. And thou mayst brood over it well, for men will not always be willing to have their rights cut short by thee." Sigmund said that he should sleep soundly in spite of all his threats. With that they parted.

Chapter 36

It is told that one day in the summer Sigmund Brestesson fared out to little Dimun in a boat, and Thore and Einar the Southrey-man with him. For Sigmund wished to get some of the sheep on that island for slaughter. Sigmund and Thore were on the island when they saw some men landing on the island and

the glittering of their bright shields. They counted them, and they were twelve men that had landed. Sigmund asked who they could be. Thore said he could tell that they were the Gate-Beardies, Thronð and his kinsmen. "And what shall we do now?" said he. "That is not hard to tell," said Sigmund; "we will go all together and meet them with our weapons in our hands, and if they make for us, we will run down, each by himself, and get together where the path is that goes up the island. "Thronð and his men fixed it among them that Laf should set on Sigmund and the Thorlacssons with him, and a fourth man with him. Sigmund and they that were with him heard it. They went towards each other, and Thronð and his men ran towards them, but Sigmund and they that were with him ran down, each his own way, and got into the path. But one man had got there before them. Sigmund was the first to get at him, and he made short work of him. Then Sigmund kept the path, but Thore and Einar ran down to Thronð's boat. There was one man there holding the painter and another on board. Thore ran at the man that was holding the painter and slew him. Einar ran to Sigmund's boat and launched it. Sigmund was keeping the path, but now he leapt down to the sea on to the shore to try and get at their boat and felled one of their crew on the shore. Then he leapt on board their boat and Thore after him, and threw the man overboard that was in it. Then they rowed away in the two boats, but the man that Sigmund threw overboard swam ashore. Thronð and his men lit a beacon-fire, and men rowed out to them and took them home to Gate. Sigmund gathered men to him and was minded to lay hands on Thronð and his kinsmen on their island, before he heard that they had got away.

A little later on that summer Sigmund and the other two took boat to go and see after his rents. They rowed down a narrow sound between some islands, and when they got out of the sound they saw a ship sailing towards them, and it was very near them already. They could tell who the men were; they were the Gate-Beardies Thronð and eleven men with him. Then speaks Thore: "They are mighty near us," said he, "and what shall we do now, kinsman Sigmund?" "No need of much craft," said Sigmund; "but we will do this; row towards them; then they will strike their sail, and when our boat is close alongside of theirs, do you two handle your swords and cut away the stays on the side the sail is not lying, and I will do what I see best to do meanwhile. "So they rowed towards them, and when they lay close alongside of Thronð's, Thore and Einar shore away all the stays on the side the sail was not lying. But Sigmund caught up a fork that lay in his boat and drove it so hard at the hull of their boat that the keel came up out of the water as she heeled over; then he shifted the fork to the side of the boat on which the sail lay, for she had heeled over on that side, and bore on it with all his might. With that the boat capsized suddenly, and five of Thronð's crew were drowned there. Thore said that they ought to kill every one they could come up with. But Sigmund said he would not have that, but that he would rather put them to as much shame as he could. With that they left them. Sigurd Thorlacsson called out, "We shall fare as ill at Sigmund's hands this time as the last. "Then he righted the boat and saved many of the men. When Thronð got on board he said, "Luck must have shifted from Sigmund to us, for it must have warped his eyes just now so that he slew us not, though he could have done as he liked with us; let us therefore fear no ill henceforward, and never stay till we have Sigmund in hell. "They said they were right fain of that, and so they went home to Gate. The summer went by, and they had no more dealings with each other for that time.

Chapter 37

It came to pass that one day, as the winter was drawing nigh, Thronð gathered men to him, and there came to him sixty men, and he told them they should go to seek Sigmund, for he said that he had dreamed they would get very near him this time. They had two ships and a picked crew. There were with Thronð on this raid Laf Ossursson, Sigurd Thorlacsson, Thord the Low, Geat the Red, an Eastrey franklin named Stangrim, and Eldearn Combhood, who had been long with Thronð. Swiney-Bearne took no part in these things ever since he and Sigmund were set at one. Thronð and his men set out and got to Scufey, and drew up their ships, and went up altogether till they came to the path on to the island. Scufey is such good vantage-ground that they say the island could never be won if there were but ten men to keep the path; came there never so many, they should never win it. Eldearn Combhood went up first, and met Sigmund's warder by the path; they made at each other at once, and the end of their struggle was that they fell over the cliff together and got their death there both of them. Then Thronð went up and they all, and came to the homestead and made a ring round it: and their coming was so unawares that they within knew nought of it till they broke down the doors. Sigmund and his men ran quickly to their weapons, and all those that were in the house did likewise. Yea, Thurið the goodwife took weapon in hand, and did as well as any man of them. Thronð and his fellows set fire to the houses, and set on the homestead with fire and weapons, and made a hard onslaught; but when they had been fighting for some time, goodwife Thurið went out to the doors and called out, "How long are you going to fight with the headless men, Thronð?" said she. Thronð answered, "As true as day," said he, "Sigmund must have got away." Then he went round the houses withershins whistling after them, till he came to the mouth of an earth-house a little way off the homestead. There he stopped and put his other hand down on the ground, and then brought it up to his nose once or twice. At last he said, "Three men have gone this way---Sigmund, Thore, and Einar. "Then he went about for a little snuffling as if he were tracking their slot like a hound; then bidding none follow him, he went on till he came to a rift. Now this rift runs across the island of Scufey. Then he said, "They have gone this way, and Sigmund must have leapt over here, whatever they have done with themselves. Now we will deal out our company," says Thronð; "Laf Ossursson and Sigurd Thorlacsson shall go to the other end of the rift and some of the men with them, but I will go to the other end, and we will meet on the other side of the rift. "They did so. Then Thronð called out, "Now is the time, Sigmund, to show thyself if thou hast as brave a heart and wouldst be thought as bold a man as thou hast long been held. "It was then as dark as it could be. Soon after this a man leapt over the rift to where Thronð and his men were, and hewed at Stangrim Thronð's neighbour with his sword, and clove him down to the shoulders. It was Sigmund. Then he leapt swiftly backward over the rift again. "There goes Sigmund," says Thronð; "let us keep after them to the end of the rift. "They did so, and there Laf and Thronð and all their men met. Sigmund and his fellows had now got to a rock that jutted over the sea, and could hear men's voices all round them. Then Thore said, "Let us stand at bay here, as fate will have it. ""I am not fit for fighting," said Sigmund, "for I lost my sword when I leapt backward over the rift; let us therefore leap off the rock and betake us to swimming. ""We will do as it pleases thee," said Thore. They took that counsel,

and leapt off the cliff into the sea. And when Thronð heard the splash he said, "There they go! Let us take boat as we can and follow them, some on sea and some on land. "And so did they, but found them not.

Chapter 38

Now it must be told of Sigmund and his friends that they swam for a while, heading for Southrey, for that was the nearest land. But it was a long sea-mile, and when they had swum halfway Einar said, "We must part here. "Sigmund said that should never be. "And do thou, Einar, lean on my shoulders!" And he did so. So Sigmund swam on for a while. Then Thore said, as he swam behind him, "Kinsman Sigmund, how long wilt thou flit a dead man on thy back?" "I don't see that I need," said Sigmund. They swam on till they had only a fourth of the way to go, when Thore said, "All our lives long we have been together, kinsman Sigmund, and great love have we twain had towards each other; but now it looks as if our life together was come to an end. I have pushed on as far as I can, and now I would have thee look to thyself and thine own life and give no heed to me, for thou wilt risk thine own life, kinsman, if thou art cumbered with me. "But Sigmund said, "It shall never be that we two part so, kinsman Thore. We will both of us come to land or neither. "Then Sigmund took him on his shoulders, but Thore was so worn out that he could do hardly anything to help himself. Then Sigmund swam on till he got to Southrey. There was a surf running on the island, and Sigmund was so worn out by this time that he was now driven from the land, and another time borne towards it. And Thore slipped off his shoulders there and was drowned, but Sigmund got to land at last, and he was so worn out that he could not walk, but he crawled up the shore and lay down on a heap of seaweed. This was at daybreak, and he lay there till it was quite light. There was a farmstead called Sandwick on the island a little way up, where dwelt a man named Thorgrim the Wicked, a big strong man, who held under Thronð of Gate. He had two sons, Ormstan and Thorstan, both hopeful men. Thorgrim the Wicked went down to the shore that morning, and he had a pole-axe in his hand. As he went by he saw red clothes sticking out of the seaweed heap; he pushed away the wrack and saw a man lying there. He asked him who he was. Sigmund told him his name. "Low lies our lord," said he, "but what hath wrought this?" Sigmund told him all that had happened. With that his sons came up. Then Sigmund prayed them to help him. Thorgrim did not answer at once, but began to talk to his sons in a low voice. "Sigmund has so much gear on him as it seems to me we have never owned the worth of, and his gold ring is mighty thick. The best thing we can do, it seems to me, is to slay him and then hide his body; it will never be known. "His sons spake against it for a while, but at last they were of the same mind. Then they went up to where Sigmund lay and caught hold of his hair, while Thorgrim the Wicked hewed off his head with the pole-axe. In this way Sigmund, that was so good a man in all ways, lost his life. They stripped off his clothes and gear, and then dragged him up under an earth-bank and buried him there. Thore's dead body was cast ashore, and they buried it beside Sigmund, and hid them both.

Chapter 39

Of Thronð and his fellows it must be told that they made homeward after what had happened, and the homestead in Scufey was saved by the time men got to it; it was not much burned, and few had lost their lives there. Goodwife Thurið, who was ever after called the Mighty Widow, kept the homestead at Scufey after her husband Sigmund, and there the children they two had had grew up, and they all promised to be good men. Thronð and Laf Ossursson now got all the Færeys into their hands, and held sway over them. Thronð offered Thurið the Mighty Widow to be set at one with her and her sons, but they would have nothing to do with it. Yet Sigmund's sons sought no help of the Lords of Norway, for they were but young as yet. And so two or three years went by, and there was peace in the Færeys.

One day Thronð told Laf Ossursson that he wished to seek a match for him. "Where shall we seek?" said Laf. "Where Thora Sigmund's daughter is," answered Thronð. "I don't think that is a likely look-out," says Laf. "You will never get a wife if you don't ask for one," said Thronð. They set out to Scufey with a few men, and were coldly welcomed. Thronð and Laf offered Thurið and her sons to be set at one with them according to the award of the best men in the islands. They did not answer at once. Then Thronð spoke for Laf and asked Thora Sigmund's daughter for him in marriage, saying that he thought it the most likely way to get a firm peace, and promising to better Laf's lot with much wealth. This was taken well by them all, but Thora herself made answer, saying, "Ye must think me right eager to marry; now I will set this price on my hand. If Laf will take his oath that he was not my father's bane, and that he set no men to slay him; then will I give you this task, that he shall find out what was my father's bane, or who wrought his death; and when these things are fulfilled, then we will be set at one with you, as it shall please my brothers and my mother, and all our kinsmen and friends." They all thought this well said and wisely thought of, and it was settled so that Laf and Thronð promised what she wished: and with that they parted.

Chapter 40

A little after this Thronð gat him ready to set out from Gate, and Laf [would go] with him. They took ship and went twelve together. They got to Southrey and landed at Sandwick, Thorgrim the Wicked's homestead. This was some winters after Sigmund and his friend had lost their lives. They went up the island and came to the homestead. Thorgrim welcomed Thronð and his men, and they went in. Thronð and yeoman Thorgrim went into the inner room, but Laf and the others sat outside in the house by a fire that was kindled for them. Thronð and Thorgrim had a long talk. Thronð said, "What do men guess was Sigmund Brestesson's bane?" "Men don't think that is clearly known," answered Thorgrim, "but some guess that you must have found him on the shore or swimming off and slain him." "That is a wicked guess and unlikely to boot," said Thronð, "for all men know that we wished to slay Sigmund, and why should we wish to murder him? And such things are not spoken with friendly intent." "Others say,"

said Thorgrim, "that they must have sunk in their swim, or that Sigmund may have got to land somewhere, for he was a passing good man in many ways, and have been slain there, as he reached the land weak and worn out, and murdered!" "That is a likely tale," says Thronð, "and it is my belief it was so; but come, fellow mine, is it as I think or not, that thou art he that wrought Sigmund's death?" Thorgrim denied it as strongly as he could. "It will do thee no good to deny it," said Thronð, "for I think I know that thou art guilty of this deed." He denied it as before. Then Thronð let call Laf and Sigurd to him and commanded that Thorgrim and his sons should be fettered; and it was done, and they were fettered and fast bound. Thronð had had a great fire kindled in the fire-house, and had four lattices set up, one at each corner; he drew also nine squares out all ways from the lattices. Then he sat down on a stool between the fire and the lattices and bade no man speak to him, and they did as he bid them. He sat so for a time, and after a while there walked a man into the fire-house; he was dripping wet; they knew the man for Einar the Southrey-man. He walked up to the fire and stretched out his hands to it for a short time, then turned and went out again. After a while another man walked into the fire-house; he walked up to the fire also, stretched his hands to it, and then went out. They knew him for Thore. Soon after that a third man came into the fire-house; he was a big man, all bloody he was, and he had his head in his hand; they all knew him for Sigmund Brestesson. He stood for a while on the hearth, and then went out again. After this Thronð rose off his stool and drew a deep breath, and said, "Ye can see now what was these men's bane. Einar lost his life first, frozen to death or drowned, for he was the weakest of them; and Thore must have lost his next, and Sigmund must have carried him, and that must have tired him most of all; but he must have came ashore very weak, and these men have slain him, since he showed himself to us bloody and headless." Thronð's fellows held that he had spoken truly, and that it must have happened as he said. Then Thronð said that they must ransack everything, and so they did, but found no trace of aught. Thorgrim and his sons denied it all, and said they had not wrought the deed. Thronð told them it was no good for them to deny it, and bade his men ransack the house thoroughly, and they did so again. There was a big old ark standing in the fire-house. Thronð asked them whether they had ransacked the ark. They said they had not, and broke it open, but they could see nought but rubbish therein, though they searched it through for some time. Then said Thronð, "Turn the ark upside down," and they did so, and found a rag bag that had laid in the ark, and brought it to Thronð. He untied it, and there were a great many rags wrapped together in it, but at last Thronð found a great gold ring, and knew it was the ring that had belonged to Sigmund Brestesson, the one Earl Hacon had given him. And when Thorgrim saw this, he acknowledged the murder of Sigmund, and told all that had happened. He showed them also where Sigmund and Thore were buried; and they took their bodies away with them. Thronð likewise brought Thorgrim and his sons away with him. And afterwards they were both laid to earth, Sigmund and Thore, in the church at Scufey that Sigmund had built.

Chapter 41

After these things Thronð had a full moot gathered at Thorshavn in Streamsey, where the Færeys folks' moot-stead is, and there Thorgrim the Wicked and his sons told the slaying and death of Sigmund, so that all men at the moot heard them tell how they had slain him and afterwards murdered him. And when they had told their story, they were hanged there at the moot, and so ended their lives. Then Laf and his foster-father Thronð took up the matter of Thora's wooing, offering her folk such a settlement withal as they should be pleased with: and the matter ended so that Laf took Thora Sigmund's daughter to wife, and they were set at one with a full settlement. Laf took up his abode on his father's heritage at Temple in Southrey, and there was peace in the Færeys for some time. Thoralf Sigmund's son likewise took unto himself a wife, and set up his homestead in Dimun, and became a good franklin.

Chapter 42

Rightly have wise men written and truly told that King Olave had scot of all the lands that now lie under Norway, save Iceland only, first of the Orkneys and also of Shetland, the Færeys and Greenland. It is also told that, in the ninth year of his kingship, there came out from the Færeys to Norway, at the king's command, Lawman Gille, Laf Ossursson, Thoralf of Dimun, and many other franklins' sons. Thronð of Gate gat him ready to go, but when he was bound the falling sickness took him, so that he could not go, so that he stayed behind. But when the Færeys men were come out to King Olave, he called them to him to talk with him and held a meeting of them, where he showed forth his business with them, that was the reason of his bidding them come to him, and spake to this end --- that he would have scot from the Færeys, and also that the Færeys people must keep the law that king Olave gave them. At this meeting also it was shown by the king's words that he meant to take surety in this matter of those Færeys men that were come thither, so that they should bind themselves with oaths to do these things. And he offered those men that were there these terms --- that the richest of them should set their hands in his and become his men, and take honour and friendship at his hands. The words of the king gave the Færeys men an inkling of the way things would go if they would not do as the king wished; and though there were many meetings held on the matter, things went at last as the king wished. Laf, Gille, and Thoralf set their hands in his and became his hench-men, and all the Færeys men swore oaths to King Olave that they would keep the law and right in the Færeys that he should set them, and pay the scot that he fixed. Then the Færeys men gat them ready to fare home, and when they took leave of him the king gave gifts of friendship to them that had become his men. They went on their way when they were bound, and the king got a ship ready and men, and sent them out to the Færeys to take the scot there which the Færeys people were to pay him. They were very soon bound, but of their faring there is nought but this to tell, that they never came back nor the scot either next summer. Men say that they never reached the Færeys, nor asked any man there for the scot. [And when he sent a second ship things went no better.]

Chapter 43

The [next] spring a ship had come out from Norway to the Færeys bearing messenges from King Olave to this end, that one of his house-carles in the Færeys, Laf Ossursson, Lawman Gille, or Thoralf of Dimun, should come to him. And when this bidding was brought to the Færeys and was told to those men, they took counsel among themselves what might be the meaning of it, and they all thought the same about it, namely, that the king must be wanting to know whether, as some men held for truth, any one in the islands had a hand in the ill fate of the king's messengers in those two ships, seeing that none of them had ever come back. They agreed that Thoralf should go, and he made him ready, and fitted out a merchant-ship that he had and manned it. They were ten or twelve on board, and when they were bound and waiting for a fair wind, it happened in Eastrey, one day when the weather was fair, that Thrond went into the hall, and Sigurd and Thord and Geat were lying there on the dais-benches. Then said Thrond, "Many things come about in a man's lifetime. It was a rare thing when we were young for able-bodied men to lie or sit about when it was fair weather, and it would not have seemed likely to your forefathers that Thoralf of Dimun would be a manlier wight than you. The merchant-man, too, which I have standing here in the boat-house, I reckon it is getting so old that it is rotting under the tar. Every house here, too, is full of wool that is turned to no account. Things should not go so if I were only a few years younger." Sigurd leapt up and went out and called Thord and Geat, saying that he would not stand such taunts. They went out, and the housemen with them, and fell to work and launched the merchant-man, and brought up her lading, and loaded the ship and fitted her out in a few days. They were also ten or twelve on board of her. Thoralf and they sailed out with the same wind, and kept in sight of each other all the time they were at sea. They brought up at Hern one day at dark. Sigurd lay farther out from the strand, but there was little space between them. It came to pass that evening when it was quite dark, that Thoralf and his men got ready to sleep, but before he slept he was minded to go ashore, so he landed and another man with him, and they went about their business, and when they were ready to go on board again, the man that was with him said that a cloth was suddenly cast over his head and he was lifted off the ground, and at the same time he heard a blow; then he was taken up and swung round off his feet over the sea beneath him and then thrown into it, and when he got ashore he went up to the place where he had left Thoralf, and found him there cloven down to the shoulders and dead. When Thoralf's crew were ware of this, they bare his body out to the ship and watched the body that night. King Olave was then in guesting at Lyger, and when news of this was brought him an arrow-moot was called, and the king came to the moot. He had summoned all the Færey men from both ships, and they were there at the moot. When the moot was set, the king stood up and spoke: "The tidings which have been brought to us here are such that it is well the like are seldom heard of. Here is a brave man's life taken, a man whom we believe sackless; now is there any man here at this moot who knows the doer of this deed?" But no man came forward. Then the king said, "I will not hide my mind on this matter, namely, that I lay it at these Færey men's doors. And it seems to me that it is most likely that Sigurd Thorlacsson smote the man, and Thord the Low threw the other into the sea; moreover, I should guess that it must have come about through this --- that they

did not wish Thorlaf to tell of their wickedness, which they must have known they were guilty of, as indeed we have always thought, in the matter of the murder and evil deeds they wrought when my messengers were murdered out there. "When the king had done speaking, Sigurd Thorlacsson stood up and said, "I have never spoken before at a moot, so that I cannot be very ready of speech, but for all that I think that there is need enough now for me to answer something. I can guess well enough that this tale the king has just set forth must have come from under the tongues of more foolish and worse men than he is. It cannot indeed be gainsaid that those men are truly our foes; but it is a very unlikely tale that I should wish to do any harm to Thoralf, who was my foster-brother and very good friend; and were there any other reason for it, or any quarrel between Thoralf and us, I have wit enough to make me choose to do such a deed at home out in the Færeys, rather than here under thy very hands, O king! And here I deny the deed for myself and all of us ship-mates, and I will take such oath on it, as your law wills, or, if it seems fuller proof to thee, I will bear iron, and thou thyself shall be there at the ordeal. "

And when Sigurd had finished his speech, there were many that pleaded with the king that he would let Sigurd clear himself, for they thought that Sigurd had spoken well, and that he could not be guilty of the deed that was laid at his hands. The king answered, "There are two ways of looking at this man. If he is belied in this matter, he must be a good man; but, on the other hand, if it is not so, he must be a bolder man than any we have heard of; and that is rather what I think of him; but I guess he will soon bear witness himself to the truth in this matter. "Howbeit, at the prayer of men, the king took surety of Sigurd that he would bear the iron: he was to come next morning to Lyger, and the Bishop was to give him his ordeal there; and with that the moot broke up. The king went back to Lyger, but Sigurd and his mates went back to their ship. By this time the night was beginning to fall. Sigurd said to his fellows, "I may truly say that we have got into great danger, having no light deeds laid to our charge; moreover, the king is so crafty that our weird is clear enough if his wishes are to carry it. He first let slay Thoralf, and now he would make us bootless men, for it is a light thing he that risks himself with him will come off worst. There is a breeze from the fells blowing in here down the Sound, and my counsel is that we run our sail up to the truck and stand out to sea. Let Thronð come himself another summer to sell his wool if he likes; but if I get away, I do not think I shall ever come to Norway again. "This seemed good counsel to the Færey men, and they set to work to hoist their sail. They ran out to sea that night as fast as they could and never stopped till they got to the Færeys. Thronð showed them that he was not pleased with their cruise, but they answered him roughly enough.

Chapter 44

King Olave soon heard that Sigurd and his mates were away. There was heavy talk held over their departure, and some there were that now held it likely that Sigurd and his mates were guilty of that which they denied that they had done. King Olave spoke little of the matter, but he thought that he now knew the truth of that which he guessed before. He went on his way thereafter, and took the guesing that was made ready for him. In the spring King Olave gat him ready to

go out of Nithoyce, and gathered a great host to him, both out of Throntham and from other parts of the land farther north; and when he was ready to set out, he fared first south to Mœere with his host and called together his levy, and so fared out of Reamsdale, and afterward south to South Mœere, and lay in the Hereys and waited for his levy. He would often hold a house-moot there; and many things came to his ears that he thought needed to be talked over. One moot that he held he had set forth the matter, and told of the manscath that he had gotten in the Færeys. "And the scot," said he, "that they promised me never comes. Now I am minded to send men thither after that scot." "He asked one man after another to take it up and get him ready for that errand, but gat ever the same answer, for they excused themselves from going. Then a man stood up in the moot, big and bold to look on; he had on a red kirtle, a helm [was] on his head; he was girt with a sword and had a halbert in his hand; he began to speak. "To tell the truth," quoth he, "there is little likeness between men here, for ye have a good king, but he has bad servants; ye say nay to the errand that he would send you on, but ye have often taken friendly gifts and many like things at his hands. As for me, hitherto I have not been the king's friend and he has been my foe, and he says he has good cause for being so. But now, O king, I offer to go on this errand for thee, if no better man can be got." "The king answered, "Who is this bold man that answers our speech? Dost thou lift thyself up over all the other men that are here, for thou art willing to go, but they excuse themselves, when I thought they would surely yield to my wish? As to thee, I know thee not at all, and I wot not even thy name." "He answered, "My name is not far to seek, O king, and it is my belief that thou must have heard my name. I am called Carl the Mœere-man." "The king answered, "So it is, Carl; I have heard talk of thee, and, to tell the truth, there have been times when, if we two had met, thou shouldst not have been able to tell tidings thereof; but now I will not behave worse than thou, and as thou offerest me thy help, I will take it willingly. And thou shalt come to me today, Carl, and be among my guests, and we will talk over this matter." "Carl said it should be so, and with that the moot broke up.

Chapter 45

Carl, the Mœere-man had been a great Wicking and the worst of robbers, and the king had often set men after him to try and take his life, but Carl of Mœere was of great lineage, and a man skilled in all manners of feats. But now he had undertaken this business, the king was reconciled to him, and took him to his closest friendship. He made all things ready for his cruise in the best way that might be. There were twenty men on board with him. The king sent word to his friends in the Færeys, and intrusted Carl to their good help --- that is, to Laf Ossursson and Lawman Gille --- and to this end he sent tokens to them. Carl set out as soon as he was bound; he had fair winds, and made the Færeys, and lay to in Thorshaven in Streamsey.

Then there was a moot called, and much folk came thither. Thronth of Gate came with a great following, and thither came also Laf and Gille, and many men with them. And when they had pitched their tents and made ready, they went to meet Carl the Mœere-man, and they greeted each other in goodly wise. Then

Carl gave them the message and tokens that King Olave had sent, and his greeting to Laf and Gille. They were glad of this, and asked Carl to their houses, and promised to do his errand and give him such good help thereto as they could. He took their offer thankfully. A little later Thronnd came up and welcomed Carl. "I am right glad," said he, "that such a mighty man should have come here to this land with our king's errand, which we are all bound to fulfill; and I want one thing more --- for thee to take up thy winter quarters with me, and as many of thy crew as thou wilt, and so shall thy worship be higher even than before. "Carl said that he had undertaken to stay with Laf, "else would I gladly have accepted thy bidding. "Thronnd answered, "Laf will win great worship by this; but is there nothing else that I can do to help you?" Carl said that he should think it a great boon if Thronnd would get the scot together for him from Eastrey, and also from the other Northern Islands. Thronnd said that he was bounden and holden by law to further the king's command so far. Then Thronnd went back to his booths, and nothing more happened at that moot. Carl went in to guesting with Laf Ossursson, and was with him all the winter. Laf got together the scot from Streamsey and from all the islands to the south of it.

Next spring Thronnd took a great sickness: he had great pains in the eyes and other great ills beside; nevertheless, he got him ready to go to the moot, as was his wont. But when he came to the moot and his tent was pitched, he had a black tilt pitched underneath the other inside, so that it might be less dazzling. Now, when some days of the moot had gone by, Laf and Carl went to Thronnd's tent, and took many men with them.

Chapter 46

When they got to Thronnd's tent, there were some men standing outside. Laf asked whether Thronnd was in his booth, and they said he was. Laf told them to ask him to come out. "Carl and I have business with him. "When they came back, they said that Thronnd had the pains in his eyes so bad that he could not come out, and asked Laf and those with him to come in. Laf told his fellows to fare warily when they went into the tent. "Do not crowd, but let him go out first that came in last. "Laf went in first, and after him Carl and his fellows, and they went all-weaponed as if they were going into battle. Laf went in under the black tilt and asked where Thronnd was. Thronnd answered and greeted Laf. He took his greeting and then asked whether he had gathered any scot from the Northern Islands, and if the money would be paid. Thronnd answered that what he had promised Carl had not slipped his mind, and that the scot should be rightly paid. "Here is a money-bag, Laf, that thou shalt take; the silver is in it. "Laf looked round the tent and saw few men there; there were a few lying on the dais-benches, but very few sitting up. Then Laf went up to Thronnd and took the bag and carried it out of the tent into the light and poured out the silver into his shield, and turned the money over in his hands and told Carl to look over it. They looked it through for a little, and then Carl asked what Laf thought of the money. He answered, "I think every one of these pennies here is as bad a one as could be picked out in all the Northern Islands. "Thronnd heard that and called out, "Is not the money good?" Laf answered him, "It is not," said he. Thronnd said, "My kinsmen are great nithings, who cannot be trusted in anything. I sent them

out in the spring to get the scot in from the Northern Islands, for I have been good for nothing this spring; but they must have taken bribes from the yeomen to take bad money for the scot which was not good enough to pass. But the next thing to do, Laf, is to look at the money which was paid me for my land-rent. "Laf gave back the silver, and took the other bag and carried it to Carl, and they ransacked it through. Then Carl asked what Laf thought of that money. "It is lacking," said he, "but not so that it would not be taken where what should be paid was carelessly laid down, but I will never take such money as this to King Olave. "With that a man that was lying on the dais-benches threw the hood off his head and said, "Sooth is the old saw, Age cows a man; and it is so with thee, Thronð, since thou lettest Carl the Mœre-man cast back thy money to thee all day. "This was Geat the Red. Thronð leapt up at Geat's speech and began to use foul words and to rebuke his kinsmen mightily. And when he stopped at last, he told Laf to give him back that money, "and do thou take this bag of money here, which my farmers brought me in the spring, and though my sight is now bad, yet a man's own hand is his best help. "With that a man rose up from the dais-benches --- Thord the Low it was --- and said, "We have got no little scolding for this Carl of Mœre's sake, and he shall be well repaid for it. "Laf took the silver and carried it to Carl, and they looked through it. Then Laf said, "No need to look long at this money. Send a man, Thronð, to see it weighed. "Thronð answered that he thought the best thing would be for Laf to see to it for him. Then Laf and his fellows went out a little way from the tent, and they sat down and weighed the silver. Carl took the helm off his head and put the silver in it as they weighed it out. [As they were weighing the money] they saw a man walking close to them with a pike-staff in his hand; he had a hat on his head, a green cloak, his feet were bare, and he had linen breeches bound on his legs; he stuck the pike-staff into the ground and left it there, saying as he walked off, "Look to it, Mœre-Carl, that thou get no hurt from my pike-staff. "

Chapter 47

A little after that some weaponed men came up, calling lustily for Laf Ossursson to come as quick as he could to Lawman Gille's booth. "Sigurd Thorlacsson has just ran in under the tent-edge and wounded a man to the death. "Laf leapt up and went off to see Lawman Gille, and all the men from his booth went with him, but Carl stayed behind and the Eastmen were standing in a ring round him. Geat the Red suddenly ran up and smote him with a hand-axe over men's shoulders, and the stroke lighted on Carl's head, but made no great wound. But Thord the Low caught up the pike-staff that was standing in the ground, and brought it down on the hammer of the axe, so that it drove the axe right into his head. With that a lot of men crowded out of Thronð's tent. Carl was carried off dead. Thronð was as wrath as could be at this deed as far as words went, but he offered money that his friend might be atoned for. Laf and Gille held out against it, and would not take money for atonement. Sigurd was outlawed for the ill deed he had wrought for killing Gille's booth-man, and Thord and Geat for the slaughter of Carl. The Eastmen got ready the ship which Carl had brought over there, and went back to meet King Olave, but it was not fated that any

vengeance should be taken for those things, because of the war that was then in Norway.

And now the tale is ended of those things which came about through King Olave seeking scot from the Færeys. Howbeit there were great deeds done in the Færeys after Carl the Mære-man's death, but they touch Thronð of Gate, Laf Ossursson, and Lawman Gille, and of them there are great stories told, which shall now be set forth.

Chapter 48

After the killing of Carl of Mære and the evil deed wrought on Lawman Gille's booth-man, Thronð's kinsmen, Sigurd Thorlacsson, Thord the Low, and Geat the Red, were driven abroad and thrust out of the Færeys. Thronð gave them a sea-going ship and some chattels, but they thought they were poorly treated, and had high words with Thronð, saying that he had got hold of their father's heritage and would not give them any shares of it. Thronð said they had had much more than they had any right to, and told them that he had kept them for a long while, and often shared out goods and chattels among them, but got ill thanks for it. And now Sigurd and his mates put to sea. They were twelve together on board, and it was given out that they were going to make for Iceland. But when they had been a short while at sea a great storm sprung up, and the bad weather held on for nigh a week. All on land saw very well that this would be dead against Sigurd and his mates, and men boded ill of their cruise; and when the harvest-tide was over, wrecks of their ship were found on Eastrey. But when the winter came, ghosts were said to have been seen at the Gate and far and wide over Eastrey, and Thronð's kinsmen showed themselves pretty often, and men got great damage at their hands; some got their bones broken, and others bodily hurts. They beset Thronð so hard that he dared not go anywhere alone. There was great talk about this all the winter.

When the winter was gone, Thronð sent word to Laf Ossursson to fix a meeting between them, and they did so. And when they met Thronð said, "We got into great danger last summer, fosterson, and it nearly went as far as the whole folk-moot coming to blows. Now, fosterson mine," said Thronð, "I should like a law to be made by our advice, that no man shall bear any weapon to the moot when men are talking over their law business and peaceful matters." Laf said that was well said, "And I will talk over the matter with my kinsman, Lawman Gille." Now Gille and Laf were sisters' sons. So they met together and talked it over between them. Gille answered Laf in those words: "It seems to me risky to trust Thronð, but we will agree to this, that all we king's-men have our weapons, and some of them that follow us, but that the commonalty go weaponless." They settled between them that it should be so.

The winter passed, and in the summer men came to the moot at Streamsey. Now it happened one day that Laf and Gille walked from their booths to a height that there was on the island, and were talking together there, when they saw on the east of the island, under the sun, men walking up, a goodly company, to a headland there; they could see thirty in all go up. Fair shields and fine helms, axes and spears, glittered in the sunshine --- a most warlike troop it was. They

saw, walking foremost, a big bold-looking man in a red kirtle, with a shield painted half blue and half gold. He had a helm on his head and a great halbert in his hand, and they thought they could tell him to be Sigurd Thorlacsson. Next to him walked a strong-built man in a red kirtle; he had a red shield withal; they thought they knew well enough who he was, namely, Thord the Low. The third man had a red shield with a man's face drawn thereon, and a great axe in his hand; this was Geat the Red. Laf and Gille went straight home to their booths. Sigurd and his men soon came up thither; they were all well weaponed. Thronnd walked out of his booth to meet Sigurd and his fellows, and many men walked with him, all with their weapons. Laf and Gille had but few men against those that were with Thronnd, but this was the greatest lack that few of them had any weapons. Thronnd and his kinsmen now went up to Laf and Gille's following, and spake Thronnd: "It hath so happened, fosterson Laf," quoth he, "that my kinsmen, who were driven so hastily out of the Færeys last time we met, have come hither, but we do not intend to be worsted by thee Gille this time. There are now two choices before you: the one to let me alone judge between you, but if ye will not have that, I will not stay my kinsmen from setting upon you as they will. "Laf and Gille saw that they had not enough men to be a match for Thronnd and his friends' host; they chose rather to handsel the whole matter to Thronnd for him to make the award; and he gave his award at once, saying that he could do it as well then as later. "This is my award,' says he; "first, I will that my kinsmen be free to dwell in the Færeys where they like, though they have been driven out of the land. Weregeld I will take none from either side. The lordship over the Færeys I will settle in this way. I will have one third, Laf shall have another, and the sons of Sigmund the third, for this lordship has long been a bone of contention, a cause of ill-will. And I will offer thee, fosterson Laf," said Thronnd, "to foster thy son Sigmund, and this I will do for thine own good. "Laf answered, "As to the fostering of the child, that shall be as Thora wills, whether she will have her son go to thee or abide with us. "So they parted. When Thora heard of the fostering, she said, "It may be that this looks otherwise to me than it does to you, but I cannot but choose this fosterage for my son Sigmund, if I am to have my way, for methinks Thronnd in many ways outdoes other men. "So Sigmund, the son of Thora and Laf, went to Gate to be fostered by Thronnd. He was then three winters old, and bid fair to become a fine man; and there he grew up.

Chapter 49

In the days when Sweyn was king in Norway and Alfifa his mother with him, Thronnd was at home in Gate, and his kinsmen Sigurd, Thord, and Geat the Red with him. It was said that Thronnd was never married; howbeit he had a daughter whose name was Gudrun. When Thronnd's kinsmen had been there some time, he fell into talk with them, and told them that he would not have them there any longer with their unthrift and idleness. Sigurd answered him ill, saying that he did nought but evil to all his kinsmen, and that he was sitting withal in their father's heritage. So they goaded each other to rage with hard words. And after this the three kinsmen left and went away into Streamsey, that is the thickest dwelt in of all the Færeys.

A certain man had his dwelling there, whose name was Thorhall the Wealthy; he had a wife whose name was Birna; she was forenamed Streamsey-Birna; she was a very proud, handsome woman. Thorhall was then an old man. Birna had been wedded to him for the sake of his goods. Thorhall had money out on loan with nearly every man about, and got little for it in most cases. Sigurd, Thord, and Geat came to Streamsey and went up to talk with Thorhall. Sigurd offered him to get in his money from those who paid him worst, if he would give them the half of all he got; but if he had to go to law with them, he was to have what was needed for going to law paid besides, and the franklin was to have half of what he got. Thorhall thought it a hard bargain, but they drove it at last. And now Sigurd would go far and wide on the Færeys getting together Thorhall's money, and going to law over it when he thought it needful to do so; so that he soon got together a great deal of money and became very wealthy. Sigurd and all those kinsmen were now with Thorhall for a long time. Sigurd and Birna would be often talking together, and men said that all was not right between them. They were there all the winter. In the spring Sigurd told Thorhall that he should like to set up housekeeping with him, but Thorhall was not very eager over it, till the goodwife put in her word, then the goodman gave in and let her have her way. They took their own way greedily. Thorhall was thrown overboard, and she and Sigurd managed everything just as they liked.

Chapter 50

That summer it happened that a ship came out to the Færeys and was knocked to pieces off Southrey, and much of the lading was lost. There were twelve men on board, and five were lost, but seven came safe to land. One of these was called Hafgrim, and Bearngrim and Hergrim were with him; they were all brothers, and masters of the ship. They were hard put to it for food and everything else that they needed. Sigurd, Thord, and Geat went to meet them, and Sigurd said that they were in evil plight and bade them all home to his house. Thorhall talked to Birna about it, and said that he thought it was a rash thing to do. Sigurd said he would keep them at his own smart. So there they abode, and were right well kept, yea, better than Thorhall. Goodman Thorhall was stingy, and there were often words between him and Bearngrim. One evening, as men were sitting in the hall, goodman Thorhall and Bearngrim had words. Thorhall was sitting on a bench and he had a stick in his hand; he was waiving it about talking angrily, and his sight was bad, and the staff came down on Bearngrim's nose. He grew mad with rage, and caught at his axe to drive it into Thorhall's head. Sigurd leapt up at once and caught hold of Bearngrim, and said that he would set them at one, and brought it about that they were set at one. They were there all through the winter, but they were never very friendly with Thorhall after that. The winter passed; then Sigurd said that he would give them something towards their cruise, and gave them a good merchant-ship which he and Thorhall owned together. Thorhall took this very ill till the goodwife talked him over. Sigurd gave them food for their cruise also, and they went on board; they lay on board their ship all night, but lived at the homestead in the daytime. When they were bound, it happened one morning that they went up to the homestead. Sigurd was not at home that day, but abroad on his stewardship

after some business that was pressing. They were up there all day. But when Sigurd came home and went to meat, the merchants had already gone down to their ship. When Sigurd sat down to the board he asked where yeoman Thorhall was; they told him he must be asleep. "It is an unkindly sleep," says Sigurd. "Is he clad or not? We will wait for him to meat." Then they went to the hall, and there lay Thorhall in his bed fast asleep. When they told Sigurd this, he sprang up and went to Thorhall's room, and it was soon seen that Thorhall was dead. Sigurd stripped the clothes off him, and saw that the bed was bloody all over, and found a wound under his left arm. He had been smitten to the heart with a thin blade. Sigurd said this was the worst of evil deeds, and that that wretch Bearngrim must have done it, thinking to revenge himself for the blow he got from the stick. "And we will now go down to the ship and be revenged on them, if we can." The kinsmen took their weapons, Sigurd having a great axe in his hand, and ran down to the ship. Sigurd called out in wrath and sprang on board the ship. The brothers jumped up at once when they heard the cursing and swearing. Sigurd ran at Bearngrim and hewed straight at his breast with the axe in both hands, so that the axe-blade went right into his body, and so he got his death wound. Thord the Low hewed at Hafgrim's shoulder with his sword, and clove him down to the ribs, so that his arm fell down, and there he got his death. Geat the Red hewed at Hergrim's head with his axe, and clove him down to the shoulders. When they three were all dead, Sigurd said that they would go no further with the others that were yet alive, but that he would have the goods the brothers had left; and right little it was. Sigurd and his kinsmen went home with the goods, and Sigurd makes out that he has well avenged goodman Thorhall. Nevertheless Sigurd and his kinsmen were ill-spoken of in the matter of the slaying of Thorhall.

Sigurd now took Birna to wife, and set up his homestead with her. Thorhall and Birna had a good many children.

Chapter 51

Thorwald was the name of a man that dwelt in Sandey; his wife's name was Thorbera. He was a wealthy man in goods and chattels, and was stricken in years when these things came to pass. Geat the Red came to Thorwald and offered to gather in his money for him, for he got little profit from the money he let out, and the bargain they made was of the same kind as the one between Thorhall and Sigurd. Geat stayed with Thorwald as much as with Sigurd, and it was soon said that Geat had beguiled Thorwald's wife: he got together a good deal of money. Once upon a time a man came to the homestead with whom Thorwald had money out on loan; he was a fisherman. It was in the evening, and it was dark in the hall where men were sitting. Thorwald asked the fisherman for his money, but he answered him slowly and rather ill. Geat was walking up the room in the dark with some of the men, and when they looked least for it, Thorwald cried out, "Most wretched man, wilt thou drive thy knife into the breast of an old and sackless man?" then he fell back against the wainscot dead.

When Geat heard this, he ran straight at the fisherman and smote him his death-blow on the spot, saying that he should do no more ill deeds. Afterwards Geat sat down in the homestead with the widow and took her to wife.

Chapter 52

There was a man whose name was Laf; he was the son of Thore Beine's son; he went merchant-cruises between Norway and the Færeys, and did very well. When he was in the Færeys, he used by turns to stay with Laf Ossursson and with Thurid the Mighty Widow and her sons. Now, once upon a time it happened, when Laf Thoresson came out with his ship to the Færeys, that Sigurd Thorlacsson bade him home to his house in Streamsey, and they settled he should go. Laf Ossursson came down to the ship, and was not very well pleased that his namesake had settled to stay with Sigurd. He said it was not by his counsel that he should go, and told him that he might have had free quarters in Southrey with him. Laf said it must be now as it was fixed, and went to stay with Sigurd, and Sigurd set him next himself, and treated him well; and he was through the winter with him, and held in great honour.

Chapter 53

One day in the following spring, as it is told, Sigurd said that he was going out to get in his money from a neighbour of his whose name was Beorn. "And I would fain have thee, Laf, go with me, that thou mayest stand between us; for Beorn is very short-tempered, and I have long lacked my money at his hands. "Laf said that he would go as he wished. So they twain walked together to Beorn's, and Sigurd asked for his money, but Beorn answered him ill. With that a great stir began, and Beorn hewed at Sigurd, but Laf ran between them, and Beorn's axe came down on Laf's head, and that stroke was the death of him then and there. Sigurd ran at Beorn and dealt him his death blow. These tidings were now spread abroad. Sigurd was the only man who could tell the truth about it, and he became evil-spoken of.

Thurid the Mighty Widow and Thora her daughter taunted Laf Ossursson a good deal, saying that he would never lift his hands, no matter what shame was laid upon them; and showed him coldness and hatred; and he bore it well and manfully: but they said that his forbearance sprang from cowardice and lack of heart. The two kinswomen took the death of Laf Thore's son very deeply to heart, thinking that of a surety Sigurd had slain him.

It is told that on a time goodwife Thurid dreamed that Sigmund Brestesson, her husband, came to her in his guise as he had lived and spake to her, saying, "It is as it seems to thee; and I am come hither, having got leave from God himself. But do thou think neither ill nor hardly of Laf, thy daughter's husband, for it is fated that he shall avenge the wrongs of you both. "After this Thurid awoke, and told her dream to her daughter, Thora, and from thenceforth they behaved better to Laf than before.

Chapter 54

It must next be told that a ship came over the main to the Færeys and lay off Streamsey, not far from Sigurd's homestead. They were Northmen, and the master's name was Arnleot; they were eighteen in all on board. A man whose name was Scafte dwelt hard by the ship's berth. He worked for the chapmen and served them well, and they behaved well to him. The master fell to talk with Scafte, and thus he spake: "I will tell thee what is in my heart," says he. "They were my sons, Bearngrim and his brothers, whom Sigurd Thorlacsson slew, and I would fain have thee with me in this matter, that I may get at Sigurd and his mates and avenge my sons. Scafte said that he owed Sigurd no goodwill, and promised Arnleot that he would give him warning when they might best get hold of them. Now, upon a day in the summer, the three kinsmen, Sigurd, Thord, and Geat, took a boat and fared out to an island to get some sheep for slaughtering, for it is the wont of the Færey folk to have fresh meat at all seasons. And when they had put to sea, Scafte gave Arnleot warning thereof. Then the merchantmen gat them ready at once and set out, fifteen of them, in the ship's boat, and reached the island where Sigurd and his kinsmen were, and landed, twelve of them together, but three watched the boat. When Sigurd and his kinsmen saw the men that had landed on the island, they talked among themselves as to who they could be. They could see that they were in light raiment and weaponed. "May be," said Sigurd, "these are the chapmen that have lain here all the summer, and they may have some other errand than to chaffer with us, for they must be seeking us; so let us make ready for them. We will go to meet them, and follow Sigmund Brestesson's plan --- let every man run down his own way, and let us all meet at our boat. "So they went to meet each other. Arnleot egged on his shipmates, bidding them avenge his sons. Sigurd and his kinsmen ran down every man his own way, and met down on the shore at their boat. Arnleot and his men came then after them and ran at them. Sigurd hewed at the man who set on him and cut off both his legs at the knee, and so he gat his death. Thord slew another man, and Geat a third. Then they sprang on board their boat and rowed along the island, and there they came upon the ship's boat with the three men aboard of her. Sigurd sprang into her, slew one of them, and threw the other two into the sea. Then he took their boat, and they rowed away home with the two boats. Then he gathered men to him and went out to the island again and landed. The Eastmen ran together to try and guard themselves. Thord the Low said, "The best thing to do, kinsman Sigurd, is to give these men quarter, now we can do as we like with them, for we have done great hurt to Arnleot already. "Sigurd answered, "That is well spoken, but I will have them give up all into my hands, if they would have quarter. "And so it came to pass they gave Sigurd self-doom, and he gave Arnleot three weregelds for each [of his sons]. Arnleot was paid all of his money as weregeld for his sons and took it abroad with him out of the Færeys. He was a South-islander. Sigurd became aware also of Scafte's treason, and he told him he should have his life, but that he should go abroad out of the Færeys. So he went out to Norway, and was outlawed from the Færeys.

Chapter 55

Now this must be told, that Sigurd Thorlacsson began to egg on his brother Thord to marry. Thord asked him where he saw a wife that would do for him. "I will not pass over the woman," says Sigurd, "whom I think the best match in the Færeys, namely, Thurid the Mighty Widow. ""I don't aim so high," says Thord. "Thou wilt never wed any one without asking," says Sigurd. "I will not try this, and she will be far enough from wishing to wed me," said Thord; "but thou shalt try it if thou wilt. "So next day Sigurd fared over to Scufey, and told his tale to Thurid. She did not answer him at once, but he pleaded his cause, and it went so far that she promised she would talk it over with her friends and sons, and that she would send him word how things stood then. So Sigurd fared home with that, and said her answer was likely enough. "That is wonderful indeed," says Thord, "and I rather suspect she was not saying what she thought. "Thurid went to Laf her son-in-law and Thora her daughter, and told them of her wooing. Thora asked what she had answered. She said she had spoken strongly against it, but less strongly than she thought. "But what dost thou think the best thing to do, daughter?"She answered, "Thou shalt not say no, if I am to have my way in the matter, if it is at all in your mind to work for revenge on them that have shamed us, and I do not see any other bait by which they are more likely to be caught than this. I need not put words into my mother's mouth, since she has before her many ways to bring it about that they do not have their will this time. "Laf was of the same mind as Thora in this matter, and said that he would take thought how they might set about giving them what they deserved. Then they appointed a day for them to come and look after this business. Then Laf said, "Thronð foresaw this long ago when he offered to foster our son, and I hold thee guilty in this matter, Thora; and it will be death of our son Sigmund if he is with Thronð and anything falls out between us and Sigurd. ""I don't mean him to be much longer there," said Thora, "and the thing is for us to go to Eastrey, where thou shalt see thy foster-father, Thronð. "They all thought this the best thing.

Chapter 56

Laf and they all set out together, seven of them, on board the boat, and got to Eastrey. They had the water coming into the boat all day, and Laf and his men were very wet, but Thora was dry. They went up to the homestead at Gate, and Thronð welcomed them, and bade kindle a fire for Laf and the men; but Thora was led into a room where the boy Sigmund, her son, should be with her. He was then nine years old, and very quick and big to look at. His mother asked him what Thronð had taught him, and he said that he had learned "how to bring all kinds of lawsuits, and to get my own rights and those of others. "And all this he had clear in his head. Then she asked what his foster-father had taught him of Holy Faith. Sigmund said that he had learned the Pater Noster and Creed. She said she would like to hear them, and he did as she wished; and it seemed to her that he sang the Pater Noster through pretty well, but Thronð's creed was

"[God giveth angels]: I walk not alone;

These follow my feet: five of God's angels:

A prayer for myself I pray: they bear my prayer o Christ:

Psalms seven I sing: God see to my lot!"

While he was singing thus, Thronnd came into the room and asked what they were talking about. Thora answered and said that Sigmund her son had been showing her the lore he had taught him. "And methinks the Creed is not of the right kind," says she. "It was so, as thou knowest," says Thronnd, "that Christ had twelve disciples, or more, and each of them had his own creed: so also I have my creed, and thou hast the one that thou hast learnt. And there are creeds many, and they need not all be alike to be right. "So their talk ended.

In the evening they were treated like guests in the best way, and there was hard drinking, and Thronnd was very merry. Thronnd told them that they would lodge them in the room, and make a bed for them on the floor. Laf said that would do very well. Thora said that she wished Sigmund to sleep with her that night, that he might tell her of all he had learnt. "That cannot be," says Thronnd, "for then I should never sleep all night. ""Thou wilt let this be to please me, my dear Thronnd," she says. And so it came about that the boy slept with her and Laf.

Now Thronnd had a little chamber for himself, and he always slept there and the boy by his side, and few beside. And Thronnd went to his chamber, and it was then deep in the night. Laf made ready to sleep and lay down and turned from his wife. She stretched forth her hand to his back and bade him not sleep. "Stand up," says she, "and go round about Eastrey tonight, and scuttle every boat so that there be not one seaworthy. And so they did. Laf knew every creek there, and they scuttled every craft that could float, so that it was not seaworthy. They did not sleep that night, and early in the morning they rose, and Thora and Sigmund went down to the boat, but Laf walked over to the chamber and bade Thronnd farewell, and thanked him for his good welcome, and told him that Thora wished Sigmund to go home with her. Thronnd had slept little that night; he said that that might not be --- that Sigmund should go away. Then Laf walked hastily down to the boat, but now Thronnd thought he could see Laf's whole plan. So he bade his house-carles take a row-boat he had and man her well. They did so, but in came the coal-black sea, and they were fain to get to land. There was not a seaworthy craft on the island, so that Thronnd must need bide there whether he liked it or not. Laf went on till he reached home, and then he gathered men to him. This was the day before that on which Sigurd and Thord were to meet them.

Chapter 57

Now of Sigurd Thorlaksson and his kinsmen it must be told that they got ready on the day to leave home, and Sigurd urged them on to be smart. Thord says that he is little bent on going, "And I think thou must be fey," says he, "since thou art so mightily stirring over this matter. ""Be not so strange!"says Sigurd, "and be not so afraid where is no jeopardy. But do not let us advisedly break the

appointment that we have agreed upon together. "Thou shalt have thy way," says Thord, "but it will not come on me unawares if we do not all get back in the evening whole. They set out in a boat, twelve of them together, well weaponed all. They had stormy weather through the day and a terrible stream, but they bore up well and made Scufey. Then Thord said that he would go no farther. Sigurd said he would go up to the homestead, if he went up alone, but Thord said he must be fey. So Sigurd landed; he was clad in a red kirtle, and he had a blue tie-mantle on his shoulders; he was girt with a sword and had a helm on his head. He went up the island, and when he drew nigh to the house, he saw that the doors were to. The church that Sigmund had built stood in the garth over against the doors, and as Sigurd came up between the big house and the church, he saw that the church was open, and that a woman in a red kirtle and a blue mantle over her shoulders was coming out of it. Sigurd knew that it was goodwife Thurid, and walked up to her. She greeted him blithely, and they went up to a tree that lay in the garth, and sat them down on the tree together. She wished to turn towards the church, but he wished to turn towards the house-doors with his back to the church, but she had her way, and they had their faces towards the church. Sigurd asked her what men there were come there. She said there were very few. He asked her then if Laf were there. She said he was not there. "Are thy sons at home?" says he. "One may say so," says she. "What have they said about our business lately?" said Sigurd. "We have talked it over," says she, "and all we women think best of thee, and there would be little refusal of my hand if thou wert unfettered!" "Then I have missed a great match," says Sigurd, "but it will not take much time to make me a free man. "That is as may be," says she. Then he tried to draw her to him and got hold of her hands, but she gathered the tie-mantle to her, and with that the door opened and a man leapt out with a drawn sword. It was Here Sigmundsson. When Sigurd saw him he ducked down out of the mantle and so got loose, but Thurid still kept hold of the mantle. By this time more men were come out; so Sigurd leapt over the wall. Here caught up a spear and leapt over the wall after him, and he was the swiftest. Then he shot the spear at Sigurd; but when Sigurd saw that the spear was coming at his shoulders, he throw himself down on the ground, and the spear flew over him and stuck in the ground. Sigurd jumped up at once, caught up the spear and sent it back, and it hit Here in the middle of his body, and he gat his death at once. Then Sigurd ran down the little path; but when Laf came up where Here lay, he turned sharp off and ran down the island, and sprung off the first place he came to; and men say that it is fifteen fathoms down to the shore from where he leapt off. Laf came down on his feet, and ran out to the brothers' ship. By this time Sigurd had got up to the boat, and was just springing on board when Laf drove his sword at him and smote at his side, and he turned against him and the sword went into his body, as it seemed to Laf. Then Sigurd sprang on board the boat, and they put off from land; and so they parted. Laf went up the island to his men, and bade them get on board as quickly as they could, "for we will hold on after them. They asked him if he knew of Here's death, and whether he had lit on Sigurd. He said he had no time now for much talking. They got on board two boats. Laf had eighty men with him; and there was no small difference in the time these boats took and the other. Sigurd and his men came ashore at Streamsey; he had steered the boat himself, and had spoken little to them. As he landed from the boat Thord asked if he was badly wounded. He said he did not surely know. He went up to the boat-house wall that was near the sea, and laid his arms upon it, while the others cleared the

boat, and then went up to the boat-house, and there they saw Sigurd standing stiff and dead. They bore his body home, and told no man these tidings. Then they went to supper.

And as they were at meat, Laf and his folk came up to the homestead and made an onslaught against it, and set it on fire. They defended themselves well; they were eleven in all, but there were thirty men come against them. When the fire took hold on the house, Geat ran out, for he could not bear it any longer. Stangrim Sigmundsson and two other men set on him, but he defended himself well. Geat cut at Stangrim's knee, and hewed off his kneecap, and a great wound it was, so that he went halt ever after. He also slew one of his men with him. Then Laf Ossursson came up, and they drove at each other with their weapons, and it ended by Laf slaying Geat. Thord the Low was the next man to run out, and Brand Sigmundsson and two other men met him and set on him, and the end of their meeting was that Thord slew Brand and both his fellows. Then Laf Ossursson came up and drove the same sword through Thord that he had smitten his brother Sigurd with, and Thord died straightway.

Chapter 58

After these things Laf went home, and he became a man of renown because of these deeds; but when Thord heard these tidings, he took it so much to heart that he died of grief. So now Laf alone ruled over all the Færeys; and this was in the days of King Magnus the Good, the son of Olave. Laf went over to Norway to see King Magnus, and took the Færeys in fee of him, and came home to the Færeys, and dwelt there till he was an old man. Sigmund his son dwelt in Southrey after his father Laf, and he was held a great man. Goodwife Thurid and Laf died in the days of King Magnus, but Thora lived on with her son Sigmund, and was always thought to be the greatest paragon of a woman. Sigmund's son was named Hafgrim, and from him are come Einar and Scegge, his sons, who were reeves over the Færeys a short while ago. Stangrim the Halt, the son of Sigmund, abode in Scufey and was held a good franklin. And it is not set down here that there has been any more to be told of Sigmund Brestesson or of them that came of him.

THE SAGA OF GISLI THE OUTLAW

Chapter 1 The Thrall's Curse

AT the end of the days of Harold Fairhair there was a mighty lord in Norway whose name was Thorkel Goldhelm, and he dwelt in Surnadale in North

Mæren. He had a wedded wife, and three sons by her. The name of the eldest was Ari, the second was called Gisli, and the third Thorbjorn. They were all young men of promise. There was a man too, named Isi, who ruled over the Fjardarfolk. His daughter's name was Ingibjorga, and she was the fairest of women. Ari, Thorkel's son, asked her to wife, and she was wedded to him. He got a great dower with her, and amongst the rest that she brought with her from her home was a man named Kol: he was of high degree, but he had been taken captive in war, and was called a Thrall. So he came with Ingibjorga to Surnadale. Thorkel gave over to his son Ari a rich farm up in the dale, and there he set up his abode, and was looked on as a most rising man.

But now our story goes on to tell of a man named Bjorn, nicknamed Bjorn the Black. He was a Bearsark, and much given to duels. Twelve men went at his heel, and besides he was skilled in the black art, and no steel could touch his skin. No wonder he was unbeloved by the people, for he turned aside as he listed into the houses of men, and took a way their wives and daughters, and kept them with him as long as he liked. All raised an outcry when he came, and all were fain when he went away. Well, as soon as this Bjorn heard that Ari had brought home a fair wife with a rich dower, he thought he would have a finger in that pie. So he turned his steps thither with his crew, and reached the house at eventide. As soon as Ari and Bjorn met, Bjorn told him that he wanted to play the master in that house, and that Ingibjorga, the housewife, should be at his beck and call whenever he chose. As for Ari, he said he might please himself, go away or stay, so he let Bjorn have his will. But Ari said he would not go away, nor would he let him play the master there.

"Very well!" says Bjorn, "thou shalt have another choice. I will challenge thee to fight on the island, if thou darest, three days from this, and then we will try whose Ingibjorga shall be; and he, too, shall take all the other's goods who wins the day. Now, mind, I will neither ransom myself with money, nor will I suffer any one else to ransom himself. One shall conquer and the other die."

Ari said he was willing enough to fight; so the Bearsarks went their way and busked them to battle. To make a long story short, they met on the island, and the end of their struggle was, that Ari fell; but the Bearsark was not wounded, for no steel would touch him.

Now Bjorn thought he had won wife, and land, and goods, and he gave out that he meant to go at even to Ari's house to claim his own. Then Gisli, Ari's brother, answered and said: "It will soon be all over with me and mine if this disgrace comes to pass, that this ruffian tramples us under foot. But this shall never be, for I will challenge thee at once to battle to-morrow morning. I would far rather fall on the island than bear this shame."

"Well and good," says Bjorn; "thou and thy kith and kin shall all fall one after the other, if ye dare to fight with me."

After that they parted, and Gisli went home to the house that Ari had owned. Now the tidings were told of what had happened on the island, and of Ari's death, and all thought that a great blow to the house. But Gisli goes to Ingibjorga, and tells her of Ari's fall, and how he had challenged Bjorn to the island, and how they were to fight the very next morning.

"That is a bootless undertaking," said Ingibjorga, "and I fear it will not turn out well for thee, unless thou hast other help to lean on."

"Ah!" said Gisli, "then I beg that thou and all else who are likeliest to yield help will do their best that victory may seem more hopeful than it now looks."

"Know this," says Ingibjorga, "that I was not so very fond of Ari that I would not rather have had thee. There is a man," She said, "who, methinks, is likeliest to be able to help in this matter, so that it may be well with thee."

"Who is that?" asks Gisli.

"It is Kol, my foster-father," was the answer; "for I ween he has a sword that is said to be better than most others, though he seems to set little store by it, for he calls it his 'Chopper;' but whoever wields that sword wins the day."

So they sent for Kol, and he came to meet Gisli and Ingibjorga.

"Hast thou ever a good sword?" asked Gisli.

"My sword is no great treasure," answers Kol; "but yet there are many things in the churl's cot which are not in the king grange."

"Wilt thou not lend me the sword for my duel with Bjorn?" said Gisli.

"Ah!" said Kol, "then will happen what ever happens with those things that are treasures--you will never wish to give it up. But for all that, I tell thee now that this sword will bite whatever its blow falls on, be it iron or aught else; nor can its edge be deadened by spells, for it was forged by the Dwarves, and its name is 'Graysteel.' And now make up thy mind that I shall take it very ill if I do not get the sword back. when I claim it."

"It were most unfair," says Gisli, "that thou shouldst not get back the sword after I have had the use of it in my need."

Now Gisli takes the sword, and the night glides away, Next morn, ere they went from home to the duel, Thorbjorn called out to Gisli his brother, and said:

"Which of us twain now shall fight with the Bearsark to-day, and which of us shall slaughter the calf?"

"My counsel," said Gisli, "is, that thou shalt slaughter the calf while I and Bjorn try our strength." He did not choose the easiest task.

So they set off to the island, and Gisli and Bjorn stood face to face on it. Then Gisli bade Bjorn strike the first blow. "No one has ever made me that offer before," said Bjorn; "indeed no one has ever challenged me before this day save thou." So Bjorn made a blow at Gisli, but Gisli threw his shield before him, and the sword hewed off from the shield all that it smote from below the handle. Then Gisli smote at Bjorn in his turn, and the stroke fell on the tail of the shield and shore it right off, and then passed on and struck off his leg below the knee. One other stroke he dealt him and took off his head. Then he and his men turned on Bjorn's followers, and some are slain and some chased away into the woods.

After that Gisli goes home and got good fame for this feat, and then he took the farm as his heritage after Ari his brother; and he got Ingibjorga also to wife, for

he would not let a good woman go out of the family. And time rolls on, but he did not give up the good sword, nor had Kol ever asked for it.

One day they two met out of doors, and Gisli had "Graysteel" in his hand, and Kol had an axe. Kol asked whether he thought the sword had stood him in good stead, and Gisli was full of its praises. "Well now" said Kol, "I should like to have it back if thou thinkest it has done thee good service in thy need."

"Wilt thou sell it?" says Gisli.

"No," says Kol.

"I will give thee thy freedom and goods, so that thou mayest fare whither thou wilt with other men."

"I will not sell it," says Kol.

"Then I will give thee thy freedom, and lease or give thee land, and besides I will give thee sheep and cattle and goods as much as thou needest."

"I will not sell it a whit more for that," says Kol.

"Indeed," says Gisli, "thou art too wilful to cling to it thus. Put thine own price on it--any sum thou chooseth in money--and be sure I will not stand at trifles if thou wilt come to terms in some way. Besides, I will give thee thy freedom and a becoming match if thou hast any liking for any one."

"There is no use talking about it," says Kol; "I will not sell it whatsoever thou offerest. But now it just comes to what I feared at first, when I said it was not sure whether thou wouldest be ready to give the sword up if thou knewest what virtue was in it."

"And I too;" says Gisli, "will say what will happen. Good will befall neither of us, for I have not the heart to give up the sword, and it shall never come into any other man's hand than mine if I may have my will."

Then Kol lifts up his axe, while Gisli brandished "Graysteel;" and each smote at the other. Kol's blow fell on Gisli's head, so that it sank into the brain, but the sword fell on Kol's head, and did not bite; but still the blow was so stoutly dealt that the skull was shattered and the sword broke asunder. Then Kol said:

"It had been better now that I had got back my sword when I asked for it; and yet this is but the beginning of the ill-luck which it will bring on thy kith and kin." Thus both of them lost their lives.

Chapter 2

Kolbein's Killing

Now after that Ingibjorga longed to get away from Surnadale, and went home to her father with her goods. As for Thorbjorn, he looked about for a wife, and went east across the Keel to Fressey, and wooed a woman named Isgerda, and got her. After that he went back home to Surnadale and set up housekeeping with his father. Thorkel Goldhelm lived but a little while afterwards ere he fell sick

and died, and Thorbjorn took all the heritage after his father. He was afterwards called Thorbjorn Soursop, and he dwelt at Stock in Surnadale. He and Isgerda had children. Their eldest son was Thorkel, the second Gisli, and the third Ari, but he was sent at once to be fostered at Fressey, and he is little heard of in this story. Their daughter's name was Thordisa. She was their eldest child. Thorkel was a tall man and fair of face, of huge strength, and the greatest dandy. Gisli was swarthy of hue, and as tall as the tallest: 'twas hard to tell how strong he was. He was a man who could turn his hand to anything, and was ever at work-mild of temper too. Their sister Thordisa was a fair woman to look on, high-minded, and rather hard of heart. She was a dashing, forward woman.

At that time there were two young men in Surnadale, whose names were Bard and Kolbein. They were both well-to-do, and though they were not akin, they had each a little before lost their father on a cruise to England. Hella was the name of Bard's house, and Granskeid was where Kolbein dwelt. They were much about the same age as Thorbjorn's sons, and they were all full of mirth and frolic. This was just about the time when Hacon Athelstane's foster-child was king of Norway.

Well, we must go on to say that this Kolbein, of whom we have spoken, grew very fond of coming to Thorbjorn's house, and when there thought it best sport of all to talk with Thordisa. Before long other folk began to talk about this; and so much was said about it that it came to her father's ears, and he thought he saw it all as clear as day. Then Thorbjorn spoke to his sons, and bade them find a cure for this. Gisli said it was easy enough to cure things in which there was no harm.

"If we are to speak, don't say things which seem as though you wanted to pick a quarrel."

"I see," said Thorbjorn, "that this has got wind far too widely, and that it will be out of our power to smother it. Nevertheless, too, it seems much more likely that thou and thy brother are cravens, with little or no feeling of honour."

Gisli went on to say, "Don't fret thyself, father, about his coming. I will speak to him to stop his visits hither."

"Ah!" cried out Thorbjorn, "thou art likelier to go and beg and pray him not to come hither, and be so eager as even to thank him for so doing, and to show thyself a dastard in every way, and after all to do nothing if he does not listen to thy words!"

Now Gisli goes away, and he and his father stayed their talk; but the very next time that Kolbein came thither, Gisli went with him on his way home when he left, and spoke to him, and says he will not suffer him to come thither any longer; "for my father frets himself about thy visits: for folks say that thou beguilest my sister Thordisa, and that is not at all to my father's mind. As for me, I will do all I can, if thou dost as I wish, to bring mirth and sport into thy house."

"What's the good;" said Kolbein, "of talking of things which thou knowest can never be? I know not whether is more irksome to me, thy father's fretfulness, or the thought of giving way to his wish. 'Verily the words of the weak are little worth.'"

"That is not the way to take it," answers Gisli. "The end of this will be, that at last when it comes to the push I will set most store by my father's will. Methought now it was worth trying whether thou wouldest do this for my word's sake; then thou mightest have asked as much from me another time; but I am afraid that we shall not like it, if thou art bent on being cross-grained."

To that Kolbein said little, and so they parted. Then Gisli went home, and so things rested for a while, and Kolbein's visits were somewhat fewer and farther between than they had been. At last he thinks it dull at home, and goes oftener to Thorbjorn's house. So one day when he had come thither Gisli sat in the hall and smithied, and his father and his brother and sister were there too. Thorkel was the cheeriest towards Kolbein; and these three--Thorkel, and Thordisa, and Kolbein--all sat on the cross-bench. But when the day was far spent, and evening fell, they rose up and went out. Thorbjorn and Gisli were left behind in the hall, and Thorbjorn began to say:

"Thy begging and praying has not been worth much; for both thy undertaking was girlish, and indeed I can scarce say whether I am to reckon thee and thy brother as my sons or my daughters. Tis hard to learn, when one is old, that one has sons who have no more manly thoughts than women had in olden times, and ye two are utterly unlike my brothers Gisli and Ari."

"Thou hast no need," answered Gisli, "to take it so much to heart; for no one can say how a man will behave till he is tried."

With this Gisli could not bear to listen longer to his father's gibes, and went out. Just then Thorkel and Kolbein were going out at the gate, and Thordisa had turned back for the hall. Gisli went out after them, and so they all walked along together. Again Gisli besought Kolbein to cease his visits, but Kolbein said he weened that no good would come of that. Then Gisli said:

"So you set small store by my words, and now we shall Jay down our companionship in a worse way than I thought."

"I don't see how I can help that," said Kolbein.

"Why," said Gisli, "one of two things must happen: either that thou settest some store by my words, or if thou dost not, then I will forsake all the friendship that has been between us."

"Thou must settle that as thou pleasest," says Kolbein; "but for all that I cannot find it in my heart to break off my visits."

At that Gisli drew his sword and smote at him, and that one stroke was more than enough for Kolbein.

Thorkel was very vexed at the deed, but Gisli bade his brother be soothed. "Let us change swords," he said; "and take thou that with the keenest edge." This he said, mocking; but Thorkel was soothed, and sate down by Kolbein.

Then Gisli went home to his father's hall, and Thorbjorn asked:

"Well, how has thy begging and praying sped?"

"Well," says Gisli, "I think I may say that it has well sped; because we settled ere we parted just now that Kolbein should cease his visits, that they might not anger thee."

"That can only be," said Thorbjorn, "if he be dead."

"Then be all the better pleased," says Gisli, "that thy will hath been done in this matter."

"Good luck to thy hand," said Thorbjorn. "Maybe after all that I have not daughters alone to my children."

Chapter 3

The Burning of the Old House

As for Thorkel, who had been Kolbein's greatest friend, he could not bear to be at home, nor would he change swords with Gisli, but went his way to a man called Duelling Skeggi, in the isle of Saxa. He was near akin to Kolbein, and in his house Thorkel stayed. In a little while Thorkel egged Skeggi on to avenge his kinsman, and at the same time to woo his sister Thordisa. So they went to Stock--for that was the name of Thorbjorn's farm--twenty of them together; and when they came to the house, Skeggi began to talk of King Thorbjorn's son-in-law, and of having Thordisa to wife. But Thorbjorn would not hear of the match. The story went that Bard, Kolbein's friend, had settled it all with Thordisa; and, at any rate, Skeggi made up his mind that Bard was to blame for the loss of the match. So he set off to find Bard, and challenged him to fight on the isle of Saxa. Bard said he would be sure to come; he was not worthy to have Thordisa if he did not dare to fight for her with Skeggi. So Thorkel and Skeggi set out for Saxa with twenty-one men in all, and waited for the day fixed for the duel. But when three nights had come and gone, Gisli went to find Bard, and asks whether he were ready for the combat. Bard says, Yes; and asked whether, if he fought, he should have the match.

"Twill be time to talk of that afterwards," says Gisli.

"Well," says Bard, "methinks I had better not fight with Skeggi."

"Out on thee for a dastard!" says Gisli; "but though thou broughtest us all to shame, still for all that I will go myself."

Now Gisli goes to the isle with eleven men. Meantime Skeggi had come to the isle and staked out the lists for Bard, and laid down the law of the combat, and after all saw neither him nor any one to fight on the isle in his stead. There was a man named Fox, who was Skeggi's Smith, and Skeggi bade Fox to carve likenesses of Gisli and Bard: "And see," he said, "that one stands just behind the back of the other, and this laughingstock shall stand for aye to put them to shame."

These words Gisli heard in the wood, and called out:

"Thy house-carles shall have other handier work to do. Here behold a man who dares to do battle with thee!"

Then they stepped on the isle and fought, and each bore his own shield before him. Skeggi had a sword called "Warflame," and with it he smote at Gisli till the blade sang again, and Skeggi chanted:

"Warflame fierce flickered,
Flaring on Saxa."

But Gisli smote back at him with his battle-axe, and took off the tail of his shield, and Skeggi's leg along with it; and as he smote he chanted:

"Grimly grinned Ogremaw,
Gaping at Skeggi."

As for Skeggi, he ransomed himself from the island, and went ever after on a wooden leg. But Thorkel went home with his brother Gisli, and now their friendship was pretty good, and Gisli was thought to have grown a great man by these dealings.

That same winter Einar and Sigurd, the sons of Skeggi, set off from their house at Flydroness, with nigh forty men, and marched till they came in the night to Surnadale. They went first to Bard's house at Hella, and seized all the doors. Two choices were given him: the first, that he should lose his life; the other, that he should go with them against Thorbjorn and his sons. Bard said there were no ties between him and Thorbjorn and his sons. "I set most store on my life," he says; "as for the other choice, I think nothing of doing it."

So he set out with them, and ten men followed him. They were then in all fifty men. They come unawares on Thorbjorn's house at Stock. His men were so arranged that some of them were in the hall and some in the store-room. This store-room Gisli had built some years before, and made it in such wise that every plank had been cut asunder, and a loose panel left in the middle, and on the outside they were all fitted together, while within they were held by iron bolts and bars, and yet on the outside the planks looked as if they were all one piece. The weather that night was in this wise: the air was thick, and the wind sharp; and the blast stood right on to the store-room. Einar and Sigurd heaped a pile of wood both before the hall and the store-room, and set fire to them. But when those in the store-room were ware of this, they threw open the outer door. By the entry stood two large pails or casks of whey, and they took the whey in goat-skins and threw it on the fire, and quenched it thrice. But the foe made the pile up again a little way from the door on either side, and then the fire soon began to catch the beams of the house. The heads of the household were all in that store-room--Thorbjorn, and Thorkel, and Gisli, and Isgerda, and Thordisa. Then Gisli stole away from the doorway to the gable-end, and pushed back the bolts, and thrust out a plank. After that he passed out there, and all the others after him. No men were on the watch there, for they were all guarding the door to see that none came out; but no man was ware of what was happening. Gisli and his kindred followed the smoke away from the house, and so got to the woods, and when they got so far they, turned and looked back, and saw that the hall and the whole homestead were ablaze. Then Gisli chanted--

"Flames flare fierce o'er roof and rafter,
High the hubbub, loud the laughter;
Hist with croak, and bark with howl,
Ravens flit and gray wolves prowl:

Father mine, for lesser matter
Erst I fleshed my maiden steel
Hear me swear amid this clatter,
Soon our foes my sword shall feel."

Now these are there in the waste, but their house burns to cold ashes. Those brothers, Einar and Sigurd, never left the spot till they made up their minds that Thorbjorn and his sons, and all his household, had been burnt inside. They were thirty souls who were burnt inside the hall. So wherever those brothers went they told this story, that Thorbjorn was dead and all his household. But Gisli and his kindred never showed themselves till the others were well away. Then they got force together by stealth, and afterwards they fare by night to Bard's house, and set fire to the homestead, and burnt it up, and the men who were inside it. When they had done that deed, they went back and set about rebuilding their house. All at once Gisli took himself off, and no man knew what had become of him; but when spring came he came with it. Then they set to work and sold their lands secretly, but their goods and chattels they carried off. Now it was plain that Thorbjorn and his sons meant to change their abode and leave Norway; and that was why Gisli had gone away, that he might be busy building their ship. And all this was done so silently that few knew they had broken up their household before they had gone on shipboard, thirty men told, besides women. After that they hold on their course for the sea, and lay to in a haven under the lee of an island, and meant to wait there for a fair wind.

One day when the weather was good Gisli and his brother got into their boats. Ten men stayed behind with their ship, and ten got into each of the boats; but Thorbjorn stayed by the ship. Gisli and his brother row north along the land, and steer for Flydroness; for Gisli says he wishes to look those brothers up ere he leaves Norway for good and all. But when they got to Flydroness they hear that Einar and Sigurd had gone from home to gather King Hacon's dues. So Gisli and his men turned after them, and lay in wait for them in the path which they knew they must take. Those brothers were fifteen in all, and so they met, and there was a hard light. The end of it was that Einar and Sigurd fell, and all their followers. Gisli slew five men and Thorkel three. When the fight was over, Gisli says he has got an errand to do up at the farm. And Gisli went up to the farm, and into the hall, and sees where Skeggi lies, and comes on him, and hews off his head. They sacked the house, and behaved as much like enemies as they could, and took all they could carry with them. After that they row to their ships, and landed on the island, and made a great sacrifice, and vowed vows for a fair wind, and the wind comes. So they put to sea, and have Iceland in their mind's eye.

Chapter 4

The Soursofs in Iceland

Well, they had a long and hard passage, and are out more than a hundred days: they made the north of the island, and coasted it westward along the Strand, and so on west off the firths. At last they ran their ship into Dyrafirth, at the mouth of the Hawkdale river. Then they unlade their ship and set up tents,

and it was soon noised abroad that a ship had come. There was a man named Thorkel who dwelt at Alvidra, on the north side of Dyrafirth: he was a wealthy man of good birth. In Springdale, on the south side of the firth, dwelt another Thorkel, the son of Eric. At that time all the land round the west firths was settled. This Thorkel, Eric's son, sold land in Hawkdale to Thorbjorn Soursop, for he was so called after he quenched the fire with the sour whey; the inner bight of the stream was already settled, and Thorgrim Bottlenose was the name of the man who lived there. Far up the dale dwelt another Thorkel, and his nickname was "Faulty." He had a wife, and her name was Thorhalla; she was a sister of Thorgrim Bottlenose. Thorkel the Faulty was just what his nickname called him, but it could not be said that Thorhalla made any of his faults better, for she was worse than her husband. They had a son called Thorstein: he was tall and strong. In Tweendale, that turns aside from Hawkdale, dwelt a man whose name was Aunund: he was well to do, and a trustworthy man. So there, at Sæbol in Hawkdale, Thorbjorn, and Gisli, and Thorkel took up their abode, and Gisli built their house.

In the same neighbourhood dwelt Vestein, the son of Vestein. He was a seafaring man, but he had a house under Hest, a hill in Aunundarfirth. His sister's name was Auda. Just about this time Thorbjorn Soursop and Isgerda his wife died, and were buried in a howe in Hawkdale. Thorkel and Gisli took the homestead at Sæbol after him. A little after, Thorkel looked out for a wife. There was a man named Thorbjorn Sealnip. He dwelt at Talknafirth. His wife's name was Thordisa, and Asgerda was their daughter. Thorkel Soursop asked Asgerda to wife, and got her; but his brother Gisli wooed Auda, the sister of Vestein, and got her. So both of them went on living under the same roof at Sæbol in Hawkdale, and did not part their goods though they were married. The story goes on to say that one spring Thorkel of Alvidra had to make a journey south to Thorsness Thing, and Gisli and Thorkel, the Soursops, went with him. At that time Thorstein Codbiter dwelt on Thorsness. He was the son of Thorolf Mosttrarskegg. Thorgrim and Bork the Stout were the sons of Thorstein, and his daughter's name was Thordisa. When Thorkel had got through his business at the Thing, Thorstein Codbiter asked him and the Soursops to come to his house, and gave them good gifts, and ere they parted they asked Thorstein's sons to come and see them the spring after, west at the Dyrafirth Thing. So the winter passed over, and there were no tidings. Now the next spring comes, and the sons of Thorstein fared from home--Thorgrim and Bork and fourteen men more. When they came west to the Valsere Thing they met the Soursops there, and they asked the sons of Thorstein to come home with them after the Thing, for up to that time they had been guests of Thorkel of Alvidra. So they accepted the bidding, and fared home with the Soursops. But Thordisa, the sister of those brothers, seemed fair in the eyes of Thorgrim, and he lifted up his voice and asked for her, and she was then and there betrothed to Thorgrim, and the wedding-feast took place at once, and it was settled that she should have Sæbol for her dower, the farm where these brothers had dwelt before. Then Gisli and Thorkel went to Hol and set up their abode there; but Thorgrim took up his abode there in the west, and dwelt at Sæbol. Bork, his brother, had the management in Thorsness when his father Thorstein died, and there with him dwelt his nephews Quarrelsome Stein and Thorodd.

So those brothers-in-law dwell hard by as neighbours in Hawkdale, and are great friends. Thorkel. and Gisli built a fine house at Hol, so that it was soon no less a homestead than Sæbol: their lands touched and their friendship seemed likely to last. Thorgrim had the priesthood, and he was a great stay to those brothers. Now they fare in spring-time to the leet, forty men of them together and they were all in holiday clothes. There too, was Vestein, Gisli's brother-in-law, and every man of the Soursops

following. Gest, the son of Oddleif, the wisest man in Iceland, had also come to that leet, and he turned into the booth of Thorkel the Wealthy of Alvidra. The Hawkdalemen sit at drink, while the rest of the freemen were at the court, for it was a Thing for trying suits. All at once there came into the Hawkdale booth a great oaf, Arnor by name, who spoke and said: "You Hawkdalemen are strange fellows, who take heed for naught but drink, and never go near the court where your followers have suits to settle. This is what all think, though I alone utter it."

Then Gisli said: "Let us go to the courts as soon as ever we can; maybe that others than Arnor utter this."

Now they go to the courts, and Thorgrim asks if there were any there who stood in need of their help, "for we will leave nothing undone to help our men, and they shall never be shorn of their rights so long as we stand straight."

Then Thorkel the Wealthy spoke and said: "This business that we have in hand is little worth. We will send and tell you as soon as we need your help."

Now men fell to talking about their band, how brave it was in attire, and about Thorgrim's haughty speech, and about his gallant bearing; and when men went home to their booths Thorkel the Wealthy said to Gest the Wise: "How long thinkest thou that the spirit of these Hawkdalemen will last? How long will they bear all before them?"

"They will not," said Gest, "be all of one and the same mind as they are now three springs hence."

But Arnor the oaf was by when Gest said this, and ran at once to the Hawkdale booth, and told these words which had passed between Thorkel and Gest.

Then Gisli answered: "He must have said this because all feel it; but let us beware that it does not turn out true, for Gest says sooth about many things; and now methinks I see a plan by which we may well guard against it."

"What is that?"

"We shall bind ourselves by more lasting utterances than ever. Let us four take the oath of foster-brothers."

Well, they all thought that good counsel; and after that they went out of their booth to the point of the "ere," and there cut up a sod of turf in such wise that both its ends were still fast to the earth, and propped it up by a spear scored with runes, so tall that a man might lay his hand on the socket of the spear-head. Under this yoke they were all four to pass--Thorgrim, Gisli, Thorkel, and Vestein. Now they breathe each a vein, and let their blood fall together on the mould whence the turf had been cut up, and all touch it; and afterwards they all

fall on their knees and were to take hands, and swear to avenge each the other as though he were his brother, and to call all the gods to witness.

But now, just as they were going to take hands, Thorgrim said: "I shall have quite enough on my hands if I do this towards Thorkel and Gisli, my brothers-in-law; but towards Vestein I have no tie to bind me to so great a charge." As he said this he drew back his hand.

"Then more will do the like," says Gisli, and drew back his hand. "I will be bound by no tie to the man who will not be bound by the same tie to my brother-in-law Vestein."

Now men began to think there was some weight in Gest's spaedom. But Gisli said to Thorkel: "All this happened as I foreboded, and this which we have done is of no good, for I guess that fate rules in this too."

Now men fare home from the leet, and all is still and tidingless.

Chapter 5

The Soursops Abroad

That summer, there came a ship from the sea into Dyrafirth, owned by two brothers, Norsemen. One's name was Thorir, and the other's Thorarinn. They were men from "the Bay," in South Norway. The story runs that Thorgrim the Priest rides to the ship, and buys of the captains wood worth four hundreds in woollen, and pays some of the price down, and promises to pay the rest. So the Easterlings made their ship snug at Sandwater-mouth and got winter-quarters for themselves and their men at the house of a man called Oddi who lived in Skutilsfirth. Now Thorgrim sends his son Thorodd to fetch home the wood, and bade him reckon it and know well every plank as he took it. So, he comes up to the ship, and thought the terms of the bargain were not so clear as Thorgrim had told him; for now the Easterlings were unwilling to keep to what they had agreed at first, and the end was that Thorodd spake ill words to the Easterlings. That they would not stand, and fell on him, and slew him there and then. After that the Easterlings left the ship, and took horse, and went to ride to their quarters in Skutilsfirth. They rode all that day and the night after, till they came to the dale which turns off from Skutilsfirth. Here they break their fast, and afterwards rode on again. Meanwhile Thorgrim had heard what had happened; how his son was slain, and the wood not handed over. Then he busked him for a journey, and had himself put across the firth. After the Easterlings he goes, all alone, and comes upon them as they lay and slept on a bit of mead. Thorgrim wakes Thorarinn, and prods him with the butt of his spear. He springs up, and was about to draw his sword, for he knows Thorgrim, but Thorgrim thrusts his spear through him. Now Thorir wakes and would avenge his brother, but Thorgrim slew him too with his spear. So that is called Breakfastdale, where they broke their fast, and the, Easterlingsfall, where they lost their lives. Now Thorgrim goes home, and is famous for this deed. All that winter he stayed at home; but next spring the two brothers-in-law, Thorgrim and Thorkel, fitted out the ship which the Easterlings had owned for a foreign cruise, and they lade her with their goods, and were to sail for Norway. As for those Easterlings, they had

been ill-doers in Norway, and were under a ban there. So they set sail the same summer, and Gisli also went aboard with his brother-in-law Vestein, and they sailed from Skeljawick in Steingrimsfirth. Aunund of Tweendale had care of Thorkel's and Gisli's farm while they were away, and Quarrelsome Stein took charge of Thorgrim's farm at Sæbol, along with his wife Thordisa.

At that time Harold Grayfell ruled over Norway. Thorgrim and Thorkel went north to Drontheim, and met the king there. They went in before him, and hailed him, and he was gracious to them. They became his thanes. They were well off both for goods and honour. As for Gisli and Vestein they were more than a hundred days out, and about the first day of winter came upon the coast of Hordaland in Norway, in a great fog and storm, at dead of night. Their ship was dashed to pieces, but they saved their goods and crew. There was a man off the coast called Beard-Bjalf. He owned a ship, and was on his way to Denmark. So Gisli and Vestein dealt with him for half the ship. He heard they were brave fellows, and gave them half the ship, and they repaid him at once by giving him more than half her worth in goods. So they held on their course for Denmark to that mart called Viborg. They stayed there that winter with a man called Sigrhadd. There they were all three in good fellowship--Gisli, Vestein, and Bjalf. They were great friends, and many gifts passed between them. At that time Christianity had come into Denmark, and Gisli and his companions were marked with the cross, for it was much the wont in those days of all who went on trading voyages; for so they entered into full fellowship with Christian men. Early the spring after, Bjalf fitted out his ship for Iceland. Now there was a man named Sigurd, a Norseman: he was a trading partner of Vestein's, and was then away west in England. He sent word to Vestein, and said he wished to cease partnership with him, for he thought he needed his goods no longer. So Vestein asked leave of Gisli to go to meet him; "for," he said, "I have money and goods to seek in that country."

"Thou shalt pledge me thy word first," said Gisli, "never to leave Iceland again, if thou comest safe back, unless I give thee leave."

To that Vestein agreed.

Next morning Gisli rises up early and goes to the smithy. He was the handiest of men, and had the quickest wit. So Gisli smithies a silver coin which weighed an ounce. He bent back the coin and broke it in two, and forged it with twenty teeth. When it was in two pieces there were ten teeth on one bit and ten on the other, but when they were put together it looked as though it were one whole; yet it might be taken asunder at once. Now Gisli takes the coin in two, and gives one half into Vestein's hand, and the other he keeps himself. He bids him keep that as a token if anything befell them which they thought of weight. "And," says Gisli, "we will only send these tokens between us if our life is at stake; and in truth my heart tells me we shall need to send them, though we do not see each other face to face."

With that they parted, and Vestein sails to England, but Gisli and Bjalf to Norway. That summer they set sail for Iceland, and had thriven well in goods and honour, and they ceased their partnership, and Bjalf bought back the half of the ship that Gisli owned. So Gisli goes home to his house in Dyrafirth with twelve men. That same spring Thorgrim and Thorkel fitted out their ship and came to Dyrafirth in the summer; and the very same day that Gisli had sailed

into the mouth of the Hawkdale river Thorgrim and Thorkel sailed into it after him. So those brothers, Gisli and Thorkel, met; and that was a very joyful meeting.

So each of them went to his own home.

Chapter 6

Gisli and Thorkel Part

Thorkel the Soursop was very fond of dress and very lazy; he did not do a stroke of work in the housekeeping of those brothers; but Gisli worked night and day. It fell on a good drying day that Gisli set all the men at work hay-making, save his brother Thorkel. He alone of all the men was at home, and he had laid him down after breakfast in the hall, where the fire was, and gone to sleep. The hall was thirty fathoms long and ten broad. Away from it, and to the south, stood the bower of Auda and Asgerda, and there the two sat sewing. But when Thorkel wakes he goes toward the bower for he heard voices, and, lays him down outside close by the bower. Then Asgerda began to speak, and said:

"Help me, Auda dear; and cut me out a shirt for my husband Thorkel."

"I can't do that any better than thou," says Auda; "nor wouldst thou ask me to do it if thou wert making aught for my brother Vestein."

"All that touches Vestein is a thing by itself," says Asgerda; "and so it will be with me for many a day; for I love him more

than my husband Thorkel, though we may never fulfil our love."

"I have long known," said Auda, "how Thorkel fared in this matter, and how things stood; but let us speak no more of it:"

"I think it no harm," says Asgerda; "though I think Vestein a good fellow. Besides I have heard it said that ye two--thou and Thorgrim--often had meetings before thou wert given away in marriage."

"No wrong came of it to any man," said Auda, "nor has any man found favour in my eyes since I was given to Gisli. There has been no disgrace. Do pray stop this idle talk."

And so they did; but Thorkel had heard every word they spoke, and now he raised his voice and said:

"Hear a great wonder,
Hear words of doom;
Hear matters mighty,
Murders of men!"

After that he goes away indoors. Then Auda went on to say:

"Oft comes ill from women's gossip, and it may be so, and much worse, from this thing. Let us take counsel against it."

"Oh," says Asgerda, "I have bethought me of a plan which will stand me in good stead."

"What is it, pray?" says Auda.

"I will throw my arms round Thorkel's neck when we go to bed this evening, and be as kind to him as I can; and his heart will turn at that, and he will forgive me. I will tell him too that this was all stories, and that there is not a word of truth in what we chattered. But if he will be cross and hold me to it, then tell me some other plan; or hast thou any plan?"

"I will tell thee my plan in the twinkling of an eye," says Auda. "I will tell my husband Gisli all that gives me any trouble, whether it be good or ill. He will know how to help me out of it, for that will be best for me in the end."

At even Gisli came home from the hay-field. It was Thorkel's wont to thank his brother Gisli every day for the work he had done, but now he did not, and never a word said he to Gisli.

Then Gisli went up to Thorkel and said: "Does aught ail thee, brother, that thou art so silent?"

"I have no sickness," says Thorkel; "but this is worse than sickness."

"Have I done aught, brother," says Gisli, "that displeases thee?"

"Thou hast done nothing of the sort."

"That makes me glad at once; for the last thing that I wish is that anything should come between our love. But still I would so like to know what is at the root of thy sadness."

"Thou wilt know it soon enough," says Thorkel, "though thou dost not know it now."

Then Gisli goes away and says no more, and men go to bed when night came. Thorkel ate little that night, and was the first to go to bed. But when Asgerda came to his bedside and lifted the bed-clothes, then Thorkel said to her:

"I do not mean to let thee sleep here to-night."

"Why, what is more fitting," she said, "than that I should sleep by my husband? Why hast thy heart so soon changed, and what is the matter?"

"Thou knowest very well, and I know it. It has been long hidden from me, but thy good name will not be greater if I speak it out."

"What's the good of talking like that?" she said. "Thou oughtest to know better than to believe the silly talk of us women, for we are ever chattering when we are alone about things without a word of truth in them; and so it was here."

Then Asgerda threw both her arms round his neck, and was soft and kind, and bade him never believe a word of it.

But Thorkel was cross, and bade her be off. -

"Then," says Asgerda, "I will not strive with thee any longer for what thou wilt not grant. But I will give thee two choices: the first is, to treat all this as if it had

been unspoken--I mean all that we have joked about, and to lay no faith on what is not true; the other is, that I take witness at once and be parted from thee. Then I shall do as I please, and maybe thou wilt then have something to tell of true hatred; and as for me, I will make my father claim at thy hand my dower and portion, and then surely thou wilt no longer be troubled with me as thy bed-fellow."

Thorkel was tongue-tied for a while. At last he said:

"My counsel to thee is to creep in on the side of the bed that belongs to thee. I can't waste all the night in keeping thee out."

So she goes to bed at once, and they make up their quarrel as though it had never happened. As for Auda, when she went to bed with her husband Gisli, she tells him all that she and Asgerda had said just as it happened, and begged him not to be wroth with her, but to give her good counsel if he saw any.

"For I know," she said, "that Thorkel will wish to see my brother Vestein dead, if he may have his way."

"I do not see," says Gisli, "any counsel that is good; but I will throw no blame on thee for this, because when things are once doomed, some one must utter the words that seem to bring them about."

Now that half-year passes away, and the flitting-days come. Thorkel tells his brother Gisli that he wishes to share all their goods between them, for he is going to join housekeeping with his brother-in-law Thorgrim.

"Brothers' goods are fairest to look on when they lie together, brother. Many things I see which whisper, 'Do not part.' It gladdens my heart to let things bide as they are. Do not let us part."

"Things cannot go on as they are," says Thorkel. "We cannot keep house together any longer, for there is great harm in this, that thou shouldst have all the toil and trouble about the farm, while I turn my hand to nothing which brings in any gain."

"Do not thou talk about that," says Gisli, "so long as I say never a word. I am well pleased with things as they are. Besides, we have gone through much together. We have been good friends and bad friends. We have borne bad luck and good luck as brothers. But we were always best off when we stood shoulder to shoulder, Do not let us change now."

"Well," says Thorkel, "there's no use in talking. I have made up my mind to share our goods, and they shall be shared. As I ask for them to be shared, thou shalt have the house and heritage, and I the goods and chattels."

"As for that," says Gisli, "if it must come to that, and we are to part, do as thou likest--share or choose. I care not what I do."

The end of it was that Gisli shared; and Thorkel chose the goods and chattels, and Gisli kept the land. In their household were two poor children whom they had taken in, the offspring of their kinsman Ingjald, and these two they parted: the boy's name was Geirmund, and the girls Gudrida. She stayed with Gisli, but Geirmund went with Thorkel. So Thorkel went away to his brother-in-law Thorgrim, and took up his abode with him; but Gisli had the farm at Hol to

himself, and the household lacked nothing, but went on as well as before. And now the summer slips away, and the first winter night was nigh at hand.

Chapter 7

Vestein Comes Back to Iceland

Gisli made a feast, and bade his friends to it he wished to have a gathering, and so to welcome both the winter and his friends; but he had left off all heathen sacrifices since he had been in Viborg with Sigrhadd. He bade to the feast both the Thorkels and his cousins, the sons of Bjartmar. So that the day that the guests were looked for Gisli made ready his house. Then Auda, the housewife, spoke and said: "Now, methinks but one thing is wanting."

"What is that?" asked Gisli.

"This alone," said Auda, "that my brother Vestein is not here."

"Well," said Gisli, "we do not look at things in the same way. I would give much goods that he were not here, as I now ween he is."

There was a man of whom we have spoken before, Thorgrim Bottlenose; he dwelt at Nebstead, in the inner bight of the river. He was full of witchcraft and sorcery, and he was a wizard and worker of spells. This man Thorgrim, and Thorkel asked to their feast, for they had as large a gathering as Gisli Thorgrim, the priest of Frey, was a man well skilled in forging iron. So those three went aside together--the two Thorgrims and Thorkel. Then Thorkel brings out the broken bits of "Graysteel," which had fallen to his lot when they parted their heritage, and Thorgrim forged out of it a spear, and that spear was all ready by even and fitted to its haft. It was a great spear-head, and runes were on it, and it was fitted to a haft a span long.

And when this was being done there came Aunund of Tweendale to Gisli's house; and took him aside to talk, and tells him that Vestein his brother-in-law has come into the land, and is now at his house under Hest, and that he will be with him that evening. Then Gisli called his two house-carles, Hallvard and Havard, and bids them go on a message north to Aunundarfirth.

"Find now my brother-in-law Vestein; I am told he has come home. Bear him my greeting, and bid him sit quietly at home till I come to see him; for my will is, that he should not come to this feast." Gisli gives them into their hands a purse, and in it half of the silver coin, for a token in case Vestein should not believe their story. Now the house-carles set off, and take ship out of Hawkdale, and row across to Brooksmouth. There they land, and go to a farmer named Bessi, who dwelt at Bessastead. To him Gisli had sent word that he should lend them two horses which he had, which were called "the Pair of Gloves." They were the fleetest horses in all the firths. He lent them the horses, and they got on their backs and rode till they came to Mossvale. After that they turned and rode along the firth.

But at the same time Vestein had started from home, and had got as far as beneath the sandhill at Mossvale, and then on to Holt. But the house-carles had

ridden the upper road, and so they rode by and missed each other. There was a man named Thorvard who lived at Holt, and his house-carles were quarrelling over their work, and were striking at one another with their scythes, and gave one another bad wounds. Then Vestein came up and made them good friends again, so that both sides were well pleased. Then he rode on for Dyrafirth, and two Easterlings with him. By this time Gisli's house-carles had reached Hest. There they learn of Vestein's journey-how he had left home; and now they turn back after him as fast as they can. And when they come to Mossvale they see a train of men riding in the midst of the dale, and then a jutting crag hid them from their view. So they ride on up the dale, and when they come to Arnkelsbrink both their horses were foundered. But the house-carles run on on foot, and call out. Vestein and his men heard them cry, and by that time they had got up on Gemladaleheath. So Vestein waited there till the others come up. But when they meet, the house-carles tell him their errand and show him the token. Then he takes the other half of the coin out of his purse, and put the two bits together, and grew red, as he said:

"Tis sooth every word of it, and I would have turned back had ye found me before; but now all the streams fall towards Dyrafirth, and I will ride thither, for I am eager to see my brother-in-law and my sister; 'tis long since we parted; but these Easterlings shall turn back. As for ye, ye shall go the shortest way, as ye are afoot; but tell Gisli and my sister that I am coming to them, for I hope to get there safe and sound."

Now they cross the firth, and come to Hol, and tell Gisli all that had happened on their journey, and that Vestein was on his way thither.

"So it must be, then," said Gisli.

Now Vestein rides the inner road round Dyrafirth, but the house-carles had a boat, as was said before, and so they were far quicker. Vestein comes to Luta, his kinswoman, in Lambdale--that is far up in the bight of the firth. She had him ferried across the top of the firth, and said to him:

"Beware of thyself, kinsman. Thou wilt need to take all care."

He said he would do all he could. Thence he was ferried over to Thingere, where a man dwelt whose name was Thorhall. Vestein went up to his house, and he lent him a horse. Vestein had with him his saddle and saddle-cloth, and rode with a streamer to his spear. Thorhall went with him on the way as far as Sandmouth, and offers to go with him as far as Gisli's house. Vestein said there was no need of that.

"Ah!" said Thorhall, "there have been many changes in Hawkdale since thou wert last here, and beware of thyself"

With these words they parted. Now Vestein rides till he comes to Hawkdale, and the evening was bright and starlit. But it so happened as he rode by Thorgrim's house at Sæbol in the dusk that they were tethering the cattle--Geirmund the lad, the kinsman of Thorkel and Gisli, and along with him a woman whose name was Rannveiga. She makes up the beds for the cattle, while he drives them into her; and so as they were at that work there rides Vestein round the 'town' and meets Geirmund. Then Geirmund said: "Come not thou in here at Sæbol, but go to Gisli, and beware of thyself."

Just then Rannveiga came out of the byre, and looked at the man and thought she knew him, for she had often seen Vestein. So when they had tethered the cattle in the byre they fell to wrangling about the stranger, who he could have been, and they were hard at it when they reached the house. Thorgrim and Thorkel were sitting before the fire when they came in-doors, and Thorgrim asks if they had seen any one, and about what they were wrangling

"Oh!" said Rannveiga, "I thought I saw that Vestein rode here round our 'town,' and he had on a blue cape and held a big spear in his hand with a streamer fluttering on it."

"What sayest thou to that, Geirmund?" asked Thorgrim.

"I did not see clearly," he answered; "but I thought it was the house-carle of Aunund of Tweendale, and he had on Gisli's cape, and rode one of his master's horses, and in his hand he had a salmon-spear with a landing-net bound on it."

"Now one of you must be telling lies," said Thorgrim. "Go now over to Hol, Rannveiga, and find out what strangers have come thither."

So she went and stood at the door. Outside the doorway

was Gisli, who greeted her and asked her to stay there, but she said she must go back home.

"What's thy errand?" he asked.

"I only wanted to have a word with Gudrida," she answered.

So Gisli called Gudrida, but when she came Rannveiga had nothing to say to her. Then Rannveiga said: "Where is the mistress Auda?"

"She is here," says Gisli, "inside the house. Auda, come and see Rannveiga," he calls out.

Then Auda went out to see Rannveiga, and asked what she wanted. But she said it was only about a little thing, and still she could not say what that little thing was.

So Gisli bade her do one thing or the other--stay there or go away; "for," he said, "tis now getting so late that thou oughtest not to go back alone though the way be short."

Then she went home and was half as silly as she had been before, and she could tell nothing of any stranger that had come to Gisli's house.

Next morning Vestein made them bring in two bags which some of his lading was in, and which he had given over to Hallvard and Havard to bring. Out of these Vestein took seventy ells of hangings and a kerchief twenty ells long, all woven with a pattern of gold in three stripes. He also brought out two gilded basons. These treasures he took out, and to his sister he gave the kerchief, but to Gisli and Thorkel he gave the hangings and the basons between them, if Thorkel would take them. After that Gisli goes over to Sæbol, and both the Thorkels with him, to see his brother Thorkel; and now Gisli says that Vestein has come to stay with him, and he shows Thorkel the treasures, and tells him how they were given between them, and bade him take them; but Thorkel says:

"Thou art worthy to have them all alone, and I will not take them. It is not so very plain how I shall repay them."

So Gisli goes home, and Thorkel will not touch the gifts; and Gisli thought that things all went in one and the same way.

Chapter 8

Vestein's Slaying

It came out, too, at that feast that Gisli was restless at night, two nights together. He would not say what dreams he had, though men asked him.

Now comes the third night, and men go to their beds, and when they had slumbered a while a whirlwind fell on the house with such strength that it tore all the roof off on one side, and in a little while all the rest of the roof followed. Then rain fell from heaven in such a flood the like was never seen before, and the house began to drip and drip, as was likely when the roof was off Gisli sprang out of bed and called on his men to show their mettle, and save the hay-stacks from being washed away; and so he left the house, and every man with him, except a thrall, whose name was Thord the Hareheart, who was nearly as tall as Gisli. Vestein wanted to go with Gisli, but Gisli would not suffer it. So when they were all gone Auda and Vestein draw their beds from the wall, where the water dripped down on them, and turn them end on to the benches in the midst of the hall. The thrall too stayed in the house, for he had not heart enough to go out of doors in such a storm.

And a little before dawn some one stole softly into the hall, and stood over against Vestein's bed. He was then awake, and a spear was thrust then and there into his chest, right through his body. But when Vestein got the thrust, he sprang up and called out: "Stabbed! stabbed!" and with that he fell dead on the floor.

But the man passed out at the door.

Meanwhile Auda awakes, and sees what work was being done. Now Thord the Hareheart comes up, and she told him to pluck the weapon out of the wound, for in those days it was a settled thing that the man was bound to avenge the slain who took the weapon out of the wound, and it was called secret slaying, but not murder, if, when the deed was done, the weapon were left behind. But Thord was so afraid of the dead that he did not so much as dare to come nigh the spot. Then Gisli came in, and Spoke to the thrall, and bade him let it alone; and then Gisli went up and took the spear away, and cast it, all bloody as it was, into a chest, and let no man see it. After that he sat down on the bedside, and laid out the body as was the wont; and Gisli thought he had suffered a great loss, and many others with him.

Then Gisli said to Gudrida, his foster-child:

"Thou must go over to Sæbol, and find out what men are about there; and I send thee because I trust thee best of all in this and in all other things."

So she went to Sæbol, and found them already risen when she got there, and they were all sitting with their weapons.

There were both the Thorgrims and Thorkel. They were slow to greet her, for most of them had scarce a word to say. At last they ask her what news, and she tells them that Vestein was slain or murdered.

"We should have thought that great news once," said Thorkel.

Then Thorgrim went on: "We are bound to bury Vestein as worthily as we can. We will come and help to lay him in his howe. Tell Gisli we will come, too, this very day. Sooth to say, such a man's death is a great loss."

After that she went home, and tells Gisli that Thorgrim the priest sat with his helm on his head and his sword at his belt, and all his war-gear, when she went in; that Thorgrim Bottlenose had a pole-axe in his hand, and that Thorkel had a sword in his hand half-drawn. All men were up and about, and some of them armed, when she reached Sæbol.

"Just as I thought," said Gisli.

Now Gisli made ready to lay Vestein in his howe, and they meant to lay him in the sandhill which looks down on the tarn just below Sæbol, and as they were on their way with the body Thorgrim came up with many men to meet them. And when they had heaped up the howe, and were going to lay the body in it, Thorgrim the priest goes up to Gisli, and says, "Tis the custom, brother-in-law, to bind the hellshoe on men, so that they may walk on them to Valhalla, and I will now do that by Vestein."

And when he had done it, he said

"I know nothing about binding on hellshoon if these loosen."

Then they sat down outside the howe and talked, and Gisli asks if any one thought he knew who had done that deed, but all thought it most unlikely that any there knew who had done this crime.

Thorkel asks Gisli: "How Auda bore her brother's death? Does she weep much?"

"I should think thou knowest well how she bears it. She shows it little and feels it much. I dreamed a dream," says Gisli, "the night before last, and last night too, but I will not tell it, nor say who did this slaying, but my dreams all point to it. Methought I dreamt the first night that an adder crept out of a house I know, and stung Vestein to death. And last night I dreamt that a wolf ran from the same house and tore Vestein to death; but I told neither dream up to this time, because I did not wish that any one should interpret them." Then he chaunted a song:

"Twice I dreamt it! thrice I could not
Vestein, Woden's darling, would not
Have been wakened thus I ween,
When we sat in Vibjorg drinking,
Never from the wine-cup shrinking,
No man sitting us between."

Again Thorkel asks: "How bore Auda her brother's death? Does she weep sore?"

"Oft askest thou the same thing, kinsman," said Gisli, "and thou art very eager to know this."

Again Gisli chaunted a song:

"Deep beneath her golden veil
Rides her grief that lady pale
Still down fields where roses blush
Streams from slumber's fountain gush.
From her heart dim mists arise,
Filling all her beauteous eyes,
Down her cheeks tears chase each other:
Thus Auda mourneth for her brother."

And again he chaunted:

"She the goddess, ring-bestowing,
Sets the waves of sorrow flowing;
From her golden eyebrows pressed,
Down they dash upon her breast.
Vestein's voice no longer singeth,
Pearl on pearl his sister stringeth;
Gems that round her dark eyes glisten
My song is o'er--no longer listen!"

Now these brothers go away both together, and as they went Thorkel said:

"These have been great tidings, and to thee they must seem more mournful than to us; but after all, everyone must bear his own burden, for every one walks farthest with his own self. Now I would, brother, that thou dost not let this take such hold on thee that men should fall to wondering about it; and so my wish is, that we take to some sports, and that now everything should be with us as it hath been when we were the best friends.

"That is well spoken," said Gisli, "and I will willingly do that--only with this bargain, that if anything ever befalls thee which thou feelest as much as I do this, then thou shalt give me thy word to behave just as thou askest me to behave now."

To that Thorkel agreed, and after that they each go home, and Vestein's ale of heirship was brewed and drunk, and when that was done each man went to his own home, and all was quiet.

But men say that all that great storm was the work of Thorgrim Bottlenose, with his sorcery and witchcraft, and that he had so framed his spells as to get a good chance at Vestein while Gisli was not near him; for they did not dare to fall on him if Gisli were by. But after the storm Thorgrim, the priest of Frey, did the deed, and slew Vestein, as we have already said.

So now the sports were set afoot as though nothing had happened. Those brothers-in-law, Thorgrim and Gisli, were very often matched against each other, and men could not make up their minds which was the stronger, but most

thought Gisli had most strength. They were playing at the ball on the tarn called Sedgetarn. On it there was ever a crowd. It fell one day when there was a great gathering that Gisli bade them share the sides as evenly as they could for a game.

"That we will with all our hearts," said Thorkel; "but we also wish thee not to spare thy strength against Thorgrim, for the story runs that thou sparest him; but as for me I love thee well enough to wish that thou shouldst get all the more honour if thou art the stronger."

"We have not put that yet to the proof," says Gisli maybe the time may come for us to try our strength."

Now they began the game, and Thorgrim could not hold his own. Gisli threw him and bore away the ball. Again Gisli wished to catch the ball, but Thorgrim runs and holds him and will not let him get near it. Then Gisli turned and threw Thorgrim such a fall on the slippery ice that he could scarce rise. The skin came off his knuckles, and the flesh off his knees, and blood gushed from his nostrils. Thorgrim was very slow in rising. As he did so he looked towards Vestein's howe, and chanted:

"Right through his ribs,
My spear-point went crashing;
Why should I worry?
Twas well worth this thrashing."

Gisli caught the ball on the bound, and hurled it between Thorgrim's shoulders so that he tumbled forwards, and threw his heels up in the air, and Gisli chanted:

"Bump on his back
My big ball went dashing;
Why should I worry?
Twas I gave the thrashing."

Thorkel jumps up and says: "Now we can see who is the strongest or is the best player. Let us break off the game." And so they did.

Chapter 9

Thorgrim's Slaying

Now the games ceased, and the summer comes on, and there was rather a coldness between Thorgrim and Gisli. Thorgrim meant to have a harvest feast on the first night of winter, and to sacrifice to Frey. He bids to it his brother Bork, and Eyjolf the son of Thord, and many other great men. Gisli too made ready a feast, and bids to it his brothers-in-law from Arnafirth, and the two Thorkels; so that there were full sixty men at his house. There was to be a drinking-bout at each house, and the floor at Sæbol was covered with sedge won from Sedgetarn. Now when Thorgrim and his men were busy putting up the hangings in the hall, Thorgrim all at once said to Thorkel Those hangings would come in well--those fine ones I mean--that Vestein wished to give thee; methinks there is

great difference between your having them for a day or having them altogether. I wish thou wouldst send for them now."

"The man," said Thorkel, "who knows how to forbear is master of all knowledge. I will not send for them."

"Then I wilt" said Thorgrim; and with that he bade Geirmund go and fetch them.

"I have work to do," said Geirmund, "and I have no mind to go."

Then Thorgrim. goes up to him, and gave him a great buck-horse on the ear, and said:

"Be off with thee now, if thou likest it better."

"So I will," he said; "though I have less mind than ever but be sure I'll do my best to give thee the gray mare instead of thy horse. Then we shall be quits."

So he went away; but when he gets to Gisli's house, Gisli and Auda were hard at work putting up the hangings. Geirmund told his errand, and the whole story.

"Well, Auda," said Gisli, "wilt thou lend them the hangings?"

"Why ask me at all," says Auda, "when thou knowest that I would neither grant them this nor aught else that would do them any honour?"

"Did my brother Thorkel wish it?" asks Gisli.

"He was well pleased that I came for them."

"That alone is quite enough," said Gisli; and with that he gives him the rich hangings, and went back with him on the way. Gisli goes with him right up to the farm-yard, and then said:

"Things now stand in this wise: I think I have made thy errand turn out well, and now I wish thou wouldst be yielding to me in what I want. for gift answers to gift, you know, and one hand washes the other. My wish is, that thou wouldst push back the bolts of the three doors to-night. Think how thou wast bidden to set out."

"Will there be any risk to thy brother Thorkel?" said Geirmund.

"None at all," said Gisli.

"Then that shall come to pass," said Geirmund.

And now when he comes home he casts down the costly hangings, and Thorkel said:

"Unlike is Gisli to other men in long-suffering. He is far better than we."

"For all that," said Thorgrim. "we need these pretty things so let us e'en put them up."

After that the guests who were bidden came at even. Now the weather thickens, and a snow-drift falls that night and covers all paths.

Bork and Eyjolf came to the feast with a hundred and twenty men, and there were half as many at Gisli's house. Men took to drinking in the evening, and after that they go to bed and sleep.

Then Gisli said to Auda his wife:

"I have not given fodder to Thorkel the Wealthy's horse. Come now with me and undo the locks at the gate, and watch while I am away, and undo the locks again when I come back."

He takes the spear "Graysteel" out of the chest, and is clad in a blue cape, and in his kirtle and linen breeks and shoes. So he goes to the brook which runs between the farms, whence each drew water for its cattle. He goes down to the brook by the path, and then wades along it to the other path that led up to the other farm. Gisli knew all the ins and outs of the house at Sæbol, for he had built it himself. There was a way from the water into the byre. That was where he got in. There in the byre stood thirty cows, back to back; he knots together the tails of the kine, and locks up the byre, and makes it so fast that it cannot be opened if any one came from the inside. After that he goes to the dwelling-house, and Geirmund had done his work well, for there was not a bolt to any of the doors. Now he goes in and shuts the door again, just as it had been locked the evening before. Now he takes his time, and stands and spies about if any were awake, and he is soon aware that all men are asleep. There were three lamps in the hall. Then he takes some of the sedge from the floor, and makes a wisp of it, and throws it on one of the lights, and quenches it. Again he stands awhile, and spies if any man had awoke, and cannot find that any are awake. Then he takes another wisp and throws it at that light which stood next, and quenches that. Then he became aware that all men cannot be asleep; for he sees now a young man's arm comes toward the third light, and pulls down the lamp; and puts out the light.

Now he goes farther in along the house till he comes to the shut bed where Thorgrim and his sister Thordisa slept. The lattice was ajar, and there they are both in bed. Then he goes thither, and puts out his hand to feel, and touches her breast; for she slept on the outside.

Then Thordisa said: "Why is thy hand so cold, Thorgrim?" and wakes him up.

"Wilt thou that I turn to thee?" asked Thorgrim.

She thought he had laid his hand on her.

Then Gisli bides awhile, and warms his hand in his shirt but they two fell asleep again.

Now he takes hold of Thorgrim gently, so that he woke and turned towards Thordisa, for he thought she had roused him.

Then Gisli lifts the clothes off them with one hand, while with the other he thrusts Thorgrim through the body with "Graysteel," and pins him to the bed.

Now Thordisa, cries out: "Wake up men in the hall; my husband Thorgrim is slain!"

Gisli turns short away to the byre. He goes out where he had meant, and locks it up strongly behind him. Then he goes home by the same way, and his

footsteps cannot be seen. Auda pushes back the bolts when he came home, and he gets into bed, and makes as though nothing had happened, or as though he had naught to do but sleep.

But down at Sæbol all the men were mad with drink, and knew not what to do. The deed came on them unawares, and so no course was taken that was of any good.

At last Eyjolf of Otterdale said: "Here have happened ill tidings, and great tidings, and all the folk have been bereft of their wits. It seems to me the best thing were to light the lamps, and run to the doors, that the manslayer may not get out."

And so it was done, and men thought when they could not lay hands on the manslayer, that it must have been some one in the house who had done the deed.

So time runs on till day came. Then they took Thorgrim's body and plucked out the spear, and he was laid out for burial, and sixty men followed him. So they fare to Gisli's house at Hol. Thord the Hareheart was out of doors early, and when he sees the band, he runs in and says that a host of men were marching on the house, and was quite out of breath.

"That is well," said Gisli, and chaunted a stave

"Mighty man! my mind is easy;
Too many have I done to death
To be scared by tidings queasy,
Uttered by idiots out of breath.
No! I lie and take my slumber;
Though this lord is stretched on earth
Idle rumours without number
Vex the folk and mar their mirth."

Now they come to the farm, Thorkel and Eyjolf, and go up to the shut-bed where Gisli and his wife slept; but Thorkel, Gisli's brother, stepped up first on to the floor, and stands at the side of the bed, and sees Gisli's shoes lying all frozen and snowy. He kicked them under the footboard, so that no other man should see them.

Now Gisli greets them and asks the news. Thorkel said there were both great and bad news, and asks what it might mean, and what counsel was best to take.

"Then there has been scant space between two great and ill deeds," said Gisli: "but we shall be ready enough to lay Thorgrim in his howe, and you have a right to ask that of us, for it is our bounden duty to do it with all honour."

They took that offer gladly, and all together went to Sæbol to throw up the howe, and lay Thorgrim in his ship.

Now they heap up the howe after the fashion of the olden time, and when they were just about to close the howe Gisli goes to the mouth of the stream, and takes up a stone so big that it looked like a rock, and dashes it down on the

ship, so that every timber cracked again, and the whole ship creaked and groaned. As he did that he said:

"I know nothing of making a ship fast if any weather stirs this!"

Some now said that this looked very like what Thorgrim had done to Vestein when he spoke about the hellshoon.

Now they made them ready to go home from the howe, and Gisli said to his brother:

"Methinks I have a right to call on thee, brother, that our friendship should now be as good as when it was best. Now let us set some sports afoot."

Thorkel took that well enough, and they parted and went home. Gisli's house was now quite full, and the feast came to an end, and Gisli gives good gifts to his guests.

Chapter 10

Gisli Betrays Himself

Now Thorgrim's ale of heirship is brewed and drunk, and Bork gives good gifts to many of his friends. The next thing we have to say is, that Bork bargains with Thorgrim Bottlenose that he should work spells and charms, by which no man should be able to house or harbour him that had slain Thorgrim, however great their will might be, and that the slayer should have no rest on land. An ox nine winters old was given him for this; and now Thorgrim sets about his spells over his cauldron, and makes him a high-place, and fulfils his work with all witchcraft and wickedness. After that, the guests broke up, and each man went to his own abode.

And now, too, a thing happened which seemed strange and new. No snow lodged on the south side of Thorgrim's howe, nor did it freeze there. And men guessed it was because Thorgrim had been so dear to Frey for his worship's sake that the god would not suffer the frost to come between them.

Now Bork sets up his abode with Thordisa, and takes his brother's widow to wife, with his brother's goods; that was the rule in those days--wives were heritage like other things. But Thordisa was not single when this happened, and after a while she bears a son to Thorgrim, and he is sprinkled with water, and at first called Thorgrim, after his father; but as he grew up he was thought snappish and unyielding in temper, and so his name was changed to suit his mood, and he was called Snerrir the Snarler, and afterwards Snorro.

So Bork abode there that half-year, and the sports they had spoken of were set afoot. There was a woman named Audbjorga who dwelt at the top of the Dale at Anmarkstead. She was sister to Thorgrim Bottlenose. Her husband had been that Thorkel of whom we have spoken. Her son's name was Thorstein, and he was about the strongest man in all the west country, save Gisli. They are partners in the game at ball, Gisli and Thorstein and against them were matched Bork and Thorkel. One day a host of men came to see the game, for many were eager to behold the sport, and all wanted to know who was the

strongest man and the best player. But here, as elsewhere, it happened that the players played with greater spirit when there were many lookers-on. It is said that Bork could not stand against Thorstein that day, and at last Bork got wroth, and broke asunder Thorstein's bat; but Thorstein gave him a fall, and sent him spinning along the slippery ice. But when Gisli sees that he says:

"Thorstein shall go on playing with Bork with all his might. I will change bats with thee."

So they changed bats, and Gisli sate him down and tries to put the broken bat to rights, and then he looks at Thorgrim's howe. There was snow on the ground, but on the south side of the howe there was no snow; and there, up on the steep brink sat Thordisa and many other women, who thought it fun to look on the game.

Then Gisli--woe worth the day!--chaunted this song:

"O'er him who Thor's grim vizard wore
Melt, wreath by wreath, snow-hangings hoar.
Few have the wit to understand
The riddle of this mound of land.
I harmed him? No! I harmed him not;
A mansion bright is here his lot;
The priest unto his god I gave,
And Frey now warms his servant's grave."

Thordisa heard these verses, and learned them by heart. She goes home, and understood their meaning at once.

Now they leave off playing, and Thorstein sets out to go home. There was a man named Thorgeir, called Thorgeir the Gorcock. He lived at Gorcockstead. There was another man named Berg; his nickname was Shortshanks. He lived at Shortshanks-mire, west of the river. Now as men fare home they talk about the games; and Thorstein and Berg from talking fell to quarrelling. Berg takes Bork's side, but Thorstein stands up for himself. At last Berg smote Thorstein with the back of his axe; but Thorgeir threw himself between them, so that Thorstein could not avenge himself. So he goes home to his mother Audbjorga, who binds up his wound, for the skin was broken, and she is ill-pleased at his plight.

All that night the carline could not sleep, so much did she take it to heart. The weather was cold, but still and bright.

But she goes once or twice round the house widdershins, and snuffs to all airs, and draws in the air. And as she did this the weather began to change, and there was a driving sleet, and after that a thaw; and a flood poured down the hillside; and a snowslip fell on the farm of Berg, and there twelve souls lost their lives, and the tokens of the landslip are still to be seen.

Now Thorstein goes to Gisli, and he sheltered him, and sent him south to Borgarfirth, and so abroad. But as soon as Bork heard of this black deed, he went straight to Anmarkstead, and made them seize Audbjorga, and takes her out to Saltness, and stones her with stones till she dies. And when this is noised abroad, Gisli goes from home to Nebstead, and seizes Thorgrim Bottlenose,

and brings him to Saltness, and there a goatskin is drawn over his head, that his evil eye may be harmless, and he too is stoned to death, and buried by his sister's side, on the ridge between Hawkdale and Tweendale. And now all is quiet, and the spring draws on.

Now Bork makes up his mind to set off south to Thorsness, and thinks to change his abode thither, and thinks he has made rather a sorry figure there away west: lost such a man as Thorgrim was, and got no amends for it. Still he makes ready to go, and means first to set his house to rights, and then to make another journey to fetch his wife and goods. Thorkel too, the Soursop, makes up his mind to go with his brother-in-law Bork.

So men say that Thordisa, Gisli's sister, went with Bork a bit of the way, and as they went Bork said:

"I wish now thou wouldst tell me why thou wast all at once so sad last autumn when we broke up the games. Thou knowest thou saidst thou wouldst tell me ere I went away."

They had just then come to Thorgrim's howe as he uttered these words.

Then she stamps her foot on the ground, and says it was no use to fare farther. And now she tells him of the verses that Gisli had chaunted as he mended the bat and looked at Thorgrim's howe; and recites the verses.

"I ween," she said, "thou hast no need to look anywhere else for Thorgrim's manslayer, and thou mayst sue him for it with a safe heart, for he took the slaying on himself in those verses."

Then Bork grew awfully angry, and said:

"I will now turn back at once and slay Gisli. The best way is to waste no more time."

But Thorkel says he will not agree to that. "I am not quite sure whether this be true or not. Bear in mind the saw that says 'Women's counsel is always unlucky.' For even though this should be as bad as she has said, surely, Bork, it is better to follow the law of the land in this matter and make the man an outlaw; for thou hast the cause so made to thy hand that Gisli must be found guilty, even though he had some excuse. So that we shall be able to manage this suit as we choose if we take the right steps, and that is far better than spoiling everything by rushing on so madly against all reason."

The end was, that he had his way.

Chapter 11

Gisli an Outlaw

So Bork and his men rode on after that by the path over the sands till they get across the mouth of Sandwater; there they get off their horses and bait. Then Thorkel says he wishes to see his brother-in-law Aunund, and that he will ride on hard before them. But as soon as ever he was out of sight he rides straight

for Hol, and says what had happened, and how Thordisa had given out that Gisli slew Thorgrim.

"Now," he says, "the story is in every man's mouth."

Gisli was silent a while, and then chanted:

"My sister loves to tire her head,
But little thinks of Gudrun dead--
Gudrun, that high-souled Gjuki's child,
Who saw her husband slain, and smiled;
Another husband she might have,
But barren lies a brother's grave ;
And so, to 'venge her brother's fall,
She slew her husband, sons, and all.

[paragraph continues] "And yet I never thought she would do this, for I think I have often shown that her dishonour was not a whit less felt by me than my own. Sometimes, too, I have had my life in peril for her sake, but now she deals me this death-blow. But what am I to look for at thy hands, kinsman, now that I have done such a deed?"

"This," said Thorkel, "I will warn thee if I am myself aware that men are about to lie in wait for thy life, but I will give thee no other help for which I may get into trouble. Methinks, too, thou hast much misdome against me--slain both my brother-in-law, and partner, and bosom friend."

"Well," says Gisli, "was it not to be looked for, for such a man as Vestein was, that some revenge must be had for his loss? I would not answer thee as thou answerest me; nor would I do as thou doest."

So those brothers parted, and now Thorkel rides back to meet Bork, and they ride west across the heath. Bork does not draw bridle till he comes south to Thorsness, and sets his house in order there. As for Thorkel Soursop he buys him land at Bardastrand at a place called "the Combe."

But when the summoning days are coming on Bork sets out with sixty men for the west firths, and means to summon Gisli to take his trial at Thorsness Thing, and Thorkel went with him, and Thorodd and Quarrelsome Stein, Bork's nephews, the sons of Thordisa, the daughter of Thorstein Codbiter. There was an Easterling too, named Thorgrim, who went with them.

So they all fared till they came to Sandwatermouth. Then Thorkel says that he has some debts to call for at a farm called Hol, farther on in their way.

"I will ride on first," he says; and so he does. But as soon as ever he reached the farm he bade the housewife change horses with him.

"But let this horse of mine stand outside before the door,

saddled and bridled, and when they come by--my fellow-travellers--say I am indoors telling silver."

She did as he bade her--got him another horse; and he rides might and main to Hol, sees Gisli, and tells what was about to befall him. Gisli asks Thorkel again what counsel was best to take, and what countenance he will give him. But

Thorkel answers as before that he will do naught else but warn him if any danger is about to befall him.

Now Thorkel rides away, and so shapes his course that he rode round behind Bork and his fellows, mounts his own horse, and overtakes them. He delays them as much as he can, and makes them lose much time. But as soon as those brothers parted--Thorkel and Gisli--Gisli takes two sledges, and drives off with them into the wood, with all his goods and chattels: he had already sold his land to Thorkel, Erie's son: and he takes Thord the Hareheart, his thrall, with him. Then Gisli said to Thord:

"Oft hast thou been faithful and obedient to me, and done my bidding, and I am bound to repay thee well." It was ever Gisli's wont to wear a blue cape, and he was often well clad; and now Gisli goes on to say:

"I will give thee this cape, friend; put it on at once, and get up on the last sledge. But I will lead the horses and wear thy cloak." So they did that, and Thord thanks him over and over again for the gift.

Again Gisli said:

"Bear in mind, though men may follow on our heels, never to answer a word if they call out to thee! But if the worst comes to the worst, and they try to do thee harm, jump down and run away into the wood, and let it shield us."

So they changed clothes. Thord was something like Gisli in bearing and gait, and a tall, proper man, but as to his courage and wit there was not a pin to choose between them; he had not a spark of either.

Now, Bork and his friends see Gisli going off into the wood, and run after them as hard as they can. But when Thord sees that, he jumps off the sledge in a trice, and runs nimbly among the trees. They all thought they knew Gisli, and press on after him, and call out to him, but he utters never a word. Then Thorgrim the Easterling hurls his spear after him, and hit the thrall between the shoulders, and he fell flat on his face, and needed no more.

Then Bork bawled out "Good luck. to thee for thy shot, thou happy man!"

As for the brothers Thorodd and Quarrelsome Stein, they spoke together and said: "We will e'en hold on after the thrall, and see if he shows any sport."

So they turned after him.

But when Bork and his friends came to the man in the blue cape they stripped him of it, and saw who it was. And now they think the deed not so lucky as they weened at first, for they saw it was only Thord the Hareheart.

As for those brothers, it is said they saw Gisli near enough to know him among the trees. Then one of them hurled a spear at

him, but he catches it in the air, and hurls it back, and it comes towards Thorodd's waist, and flies right through him. Then Stein turns back to meet his companions, and tells them what had happened.

After that they all went into the wood to beat it for Gisli. And lo! the Easterling sees that the twigs stirred in one place, and he casts a spear at a venture

thither, and hits Gisli in the calf. But he sends the spear back again to its owner, and aims so that it struck the Easterling in the breast, and slew him there and then.

Now Bork and his men beat about the wood and cannot find him.; and then they turn back to Gisli's house and set the suit on foot against him, for now the proofs were as plain as day, and they had more than guesswork to go on. They did not plunder anything there. So Bork fares back home, little pleased with his journey.

Now Gisli goes up to the fell which stands by his farm, and there he binds his wounds. He stays there so long as Bork and his men are in his homestead, and thence he sees all that passes. As soon as they are gone he goes home and makes ready to leave Hol with all his household. He takes a boat and so flits his goods and cattle. Auda his wife went with him and Gudrida, his foster-child. He sails out of Dyrafirth as far as Husaness, and there lands. Gisli goes up to the farm, and meets a man, who asks him what man he was. Gisli told him what he pleased, but not the real truth. With that Gisli takes up a stone and throws it out on to the Holm, which lies off the land there, and bade the churl's son do the like when he got home, and said perhaps he would then know what man had been there. But there was never a man who could throw a stone so far; and here again it came out that Gisli was better than most others in feats of strength. After that he went on board his boat and rows round the ness, and across Arnarfirth, and across that firth that turns aside from Arnarfirth, and is called Geirthiofsfirth. There he set up his abode, and built a whole homestead, and dwelt there that winter.

The next thing that happens is that Gisli sends word to his brothers-in-law, Helgi, and Sigurd, and Vestgeir, to go to the Thing and offer an atonement for him, that he might not be outlawed. So they set off for the Thing the sons of Bjartmar, and could bring nothing to pass about the atonement; and men go so far as to say that they behaved very ill, so that they almost burst out into tears ere the suit was over. They were then very young, and Bork the Stout was so wroth they could do nothing with him.

When the Thing was over they went west and saw Thorkel the Wealthy of Alvidra, and tell him all that had happened, and begged him to see Gisli and tell him, for they said they did not dare to say to his face that he was an outlaw.

So Gisli was outlawed. That was the great news at that Thing. And Thorkel the Wealthy went and told Gisli. Then Gisli chaunted this stave:

"At Thorsness Thing
My suit at law
Had never failed
For quirk or flaw,
Had Vestein's heart,
That never blenched,
In Bjartmar's babies
Burned unquenched.

"They quailed, those kinsmen of my wife,
When all their souls should warm with strife.
To think that here was work to do,

And foes to foil and conquer too.
And so they fled the throng of men,
As when, with addle egg of hen,
The base-born thrall is pelted down
By all the riff-raff of the town.

"Evil tidings from the North,
An outlaw now I wander forth
A forfeit life by land and sea
None dares to speak a word for me
But still, O man in battle tried,
O bounteous man, whate'er betide,
Know this, that vengeance shall be mine
On those two caitiffs, Bork and Stein."

Both those namesakes, the Thorkels, say they will give him all the shelter they can, so that they run no risk of losing life or land. After that they went home.

Chapter 12

Gisli Begins to Dream

The next three years Gisli was sometimes in his house at Geirthiofsfirth, and sometimes with Thorkel the Wealthy, harboured by stealth. Other three years he spent in roaming over the land, and going from house to house asking help and countenance from great chiefs; but something always tripped him up everywhere, so that naught came of it. So mighty was that spell that Thorgrim's witchcraft had thrown on him that it was fated no chief should shelter him, and no one ever went heartily into his cause. After those six years were over he spent his time for the most part in Geirthiofsfirth, sometimes in his house, over which Auda ruled, and sometimes in the hiding-place which he had hollowed out for himself. That was on the north bank of the river. But he had another lair on the south bank among the crags, and there he lurked for the most part.

Now when Bork hears this, he set off from home, and seeks Eyjolf the Gray, who then dwelt in Arnarfirth in Otterdale, and begs him to hunt for Gisli, and slay him as an outlaw, and if he slew him, he said he would give him three hundreds in silver of the very best, and bade him leave no stone unturned to find him out. He takes the money, and gives his word to do his best. There was a man with Eyjolf named Helgi--Spy-Helgi by nickname; he was both swift of foot and sharp of eye, and he knew every inch of the firths. This man is sent to Geirthiofsfirth to find out if Gisli be there. He soon is aware of a man in hiding, but he knows not whether it be Gisli or another. So he goes back and tells Eyjolf how things stand. Eyjolf says at once it must be Gisli, and loses no time, but sets off with six men for Geirthiofsfirth; but he cannot find Gisli, and goes bootless back.

Gisli was a foresighted man and a great dreamer, and dreamt true. All wise men are of one mind that Gisli lived an outlaw longest of all men, save Grettir, the son of Osmund. Eighteen years was Grettir an outlaw. It is told that one autumn night Gisli was very restless as he slept, while he was in Auda's house, and when he wakes she asks him what he had dreamt?

"I have two women who are with me in my dreams," he answers; "one is good to me, but the other tells me naught but evil, and her tale is every day worse and worse, and she spaes me downright ruin. But what I just dreamed was this: Methought I came to a house or hall, and into that hall I went, and there I saw many of my friends and kinsfolk: they sat by fires and drank. There were seven fires; some had burnt very low, but some still burned as bright as bright could be. Then in came my better dream-wife, and said these were tokens of my life, how much of it was still to come; and she counselled me so long as I lived to leave all old unbeliefs and witchcraft, and to be good to the deaf and the halt, and the poor and the weak. "Bear in mind," she said, "thou hast so many years yet to live as thou sawest fires alight." My dream was no longer than that. Then Gisli chaunted several staves:

"Fires seven, the bard remembers,
Lady, blazed within that hall;
Men around those glowing embers
Sate and drank like brothers all.
One and all those inmates gladly
Greeted Gisli as their guest;
Gisli hailed them soft and sadly,
Fitting words his thanks expressed.

"Thus that weird wife, wise and witty,
Spoke, and said to Norway's friend--
Soft her voice and full of pity,--
'Man! behold thy journey's end;
Mark those seven fires burning,
Seven years to thee remain;
Then, to this abode returning,
Make thee merry, free from pain.'

"'Noble man!' the voice continues,
'Shun the wizard's hateful lore;
Hero bold, of strongest sinews,
Seek the muse's golden store.
Bear in mind this precept hoary--
Naught so much defileth hearts
As wicked wit, as idle story;
Vile is witchcraft, black her arts.

"'Stay thy hand, be slow to slaughter;
Rouse not men to seek thy life:
Come! thy word to wisdom's daughter
Be not first in stirring strife.
Man of noble nature, ever
Help the weak, the halt, the blind;
Hard the hand that opens never,
Bright and blest the generous mind.'"

Now Bork presses Eyjolf hard, and thinks he has not done so much as he said he would, and that there had been small return for the silver he had given him. He said he was quite sure Gisli was in Geirthiofsfirth, and if Eyjolf did not send some one to take Gisli's life, Bork said he must come and hunt him down

himself: "For 'tis a shame that two such champions and chiefs as we think ourselves cannot get Gisli put out of the way."

Eyjolf was all alive again, and sends Spy-Helgi again round Geirthiofsfirth; and now he takes food with him, and is away a week, and lies in wait to catch sight of Gisli. At last one day he sees a man come out of a hiding-place, and knows Gisli at once. As soon as he sees him he goes back and tells Eyjolf what he had seen.

Now Eyjolf sets off with eight men, and makes for Auda's house in Geirthiofsfirth; but they do not find Gisli there, and now they beat all the thickets thereabouts, and still cannot find Gisli. Then they go back to Auda's house, and Eyjolf offers her a great sum of money if she will betray Gisli; but she would do nothing of the kind. Then they threatened to maim her, but it was all no good, and they had to go back as wise as they came. This was thought a most shameful journey for them; and Eyjolf stays at home all that autumn.

But though Gisli had not been hunted down, he sees plain enough that he must be taken, and that very soon, if he stays there. So he breaks up from home, and goes along the coast to Strand, and rides to see his brother Thorkel at "the Combe." He knocks at the door of the sleeping-house in which Thorkel is abed, and he gets up, goes out, and greets Gisli.

"I want to know, now," said Gisli, "if thou wilt yield me any help? I look to thee for comfort and countenance, for now I am hard pressed, and I have forborne to do this for a long time."

But Thorkel gave him the old answer, and said outright he would give him no help that might get himself into trouble. Silver and horses he would give him, if he needed them, or anything else, as he said before, but nothing besides.

"Now I see," said Gisli, "that thou wilt not help me. Give me now three hundred in wadmél, and make up your mind that henceforth I shall not often ask thy aid."

Thorkel does as he wishes, and gives him the woollen and some silver. Gisli said he would take what was given him, but added he would not behave so meanly were he in Thorkel's place. At their parting Gisli was very down-hearted.

Now he goes out to Vadil, to the mother of Gest, the son of Oddleif, and reaches her house before dawn, and knocks at the door. The housewife goes to the door. She was often wont to harbour outlaws, and she had an underground room. One end of it opened on the river-bank and the other below her hall. One way see the ruins of it still. Thorgerda--for that was heir name--made Gisli welcome. "I am willing enough thou shouldst stay here awhile, but I am sure I can't tell whether this is not mere old wife's talk."

Old wife's talk or not, Gisli was willing to take it as it was meant, and said he had not been so well treated by men that better things were not to be hoped for from women.

So Gisli stays there that winter, and he was never better cared for in all his outlawry than there.

As soon as ever the spring came Gisli fares back to Geirthiofsfirth, for he could not bear to be any longer away from Auda his wife, so much they loved each

other. He is there that summer by stealth, and up to autumn. And now as the nights lengthen the dreams lengthen with them, and that worse dream-wife comes oftener and oftener to him, and he has hard nights. Once he says to Auda, when she asks him what he had dreamt, and his answer was in verse:

"A weary wife now haunts my slumber;
If dreams be true, as oft they be,
Not many winters shall I number,
No tongue shall 'Graybeard!' shout to me:
This dream-wife bids me peak and pine,
Vain 'tis to try to break her spell
But little care I, darling mine!
I dream, but slumber soft and well."

And now he tells her that that worse dream-wife was ever coming to him, and wishing to sprinkle blood over him, and to smear and bathe him in it; and that she looked spitefully on him. Then he chaunted:

"Still my dreams are heavy-hearted,
Still my evil genius lowers;
All my mirth hath clean departed,
Mine no more are blithesome hours:
Sleep no sooner seals my eyelids
Than a loathly wife appears,
Bathed in blood and gore-bedabbled,
Drenching me with dew of spears."

And again he chaunted:

"Darling wife, I now have uttered
All my mind about my dreams
Nothing hidden, nothing muttered,
Words of truth welled out in streams:
Wrath now riseth hour by hour,
Worse my foes shall feel my hand--
High-born chiefs, whose haughty power,
Marked me with an outlaw's brand."

Chapter 13

Gisli goes to Ingialld

Now all is quiet, and Gisli goes again to Thorgerda, and is with her another winter. But the summer after he goes back to Geirthiofsfirth, and is there till autumn draws near. Then he goes once more to his brother Thorkel and knocks at the door, but Thorkel will not go out of doors; so Gisli takes a staff and scores runes on it, and throws it in through a slit. Thorkel sees it and takes it up and looks at it. After that he arose and went out and greeted Gisli. "What news?" he asks, but Gisli says he has no news to tell.

"Now I am come to see thee, kinsman, for the last time; and now let me have some heartier help, and I will repay thee by never asking any more at thy hand."

But Thorkel answers now as before; offers him horse or boat, but withdraws from all other help. Gisli chooses the boat, and bids Thorkel shove her down with him. He does so, and gives him six measures of food, and a hundred ells of wadmél.

And so when Gisli had got into the boat Thorkel stands on the shore. Then Gisli said:

"Now thou thinkest thou standest with all four feet in the crib, and that thou art the friend of many great chiefs, and darest nothing at all. But I am an outlaw, and have the feud of many men, and know not where to lay my head; but for all that I can tell thee thou wilt be slain before I am slain. And now we must part worse friends than we ought, and never see each other again; but know this, I would not deal so by thee. Shoulder to shoulder, we would both share the same doom."

"I care not for thy ill-boding spaedom, nor how much thou braggest of thy bravery," said Thorkel; and so they parted.

Gisli rows for Hergilsisle in Broadfirth. There he takes out the tholes, and thwarts, and oars, and all that was loose in the boat, and then upsets and lets her drive with the tide in towards Ness. And now men guess who see the boat that Gisli must be drowned, since the boat is shattered and driven on shore; and they think he must have taken it from his brother Thorkel.

Now Gisli goes up to the farm in Hergilsisle. There dwells a man named Ingjalld, and his wife's name was Thorgerda. Ingjalld is Gisli's cousin by kinship, and had come out to Iceland with him. When they met he offered Gisli all the help and aid which he could show him, and Gisli took it gladly, and was quiet there for a time.

In Ingjalld's household were a thrall and a woman slave. The man's name was Swart, and the woman's Bothilda. Ingjalld had a son called Helgi, and he was an idiot, the biggest you ever saw, and utterly witless. He was so treated that a pierced stone was tied round his neck, and he grazed out of doors like a sheep, and he was called Ingjalld's idiot. He was tall of growth, almost like a giant. So Gisli is there that winter, and builds a boat for Ingjalld and many other things. But all that he did was easy to ken, for he was handier than almost any other man. Men wondered and wondered how it was that everything was so well made that Ingjalld had, for he was not a skilful carpenter himself. Every summer Gisli went to Geirthiofsfirth; and so things go on for three winters since he had first began to dream, and the help Ingjalld gave him stood him in the greatest stead. At last men began to lay their heads together about all this, and made up their minds after all that Gisli must be still alive, and have lived with Ingjalld, and not be drowned as had been said. It strengthened what they said when they saw that Ingjalld had three boats, all of them well built. So this gossip comes to the ears of Eyjolf the Gray, and it is again Spy-Helgi's lot to set off; and so he comes to Hergilsisle. Gisli is always in his earth-house whenever strangers come to the isle; but Ingjalld is a good host, and offers Helgi shelter. So he stays there that night. Ingjalld was a very busy man; he rowed out to sea every day that a boat would swim. So next morning, when he was ready to row away,

he asks whether Helgi is not eager to be forwarded on his way, and why he lies a-bed. He says he is not quite himself, and puffs and blows, and rubs his forehead. Ingjalld bade him lie there as still as he could, and goes off to sea, while Helgi groans and moans.

Now, it is said that Thorgerda goes to the earth-house and means to give Gisli his breakfast, but there was a panel between the larder and the room where Helgi lay. As soon as Thorgerda goes out of the larder Helgi climbs up to the top of the panel and sees that there is a meal of meat dished up for some one. Just then Thorgerda comes back, and Helgi turns him round as fast as he can, and topples down from the panel. Thorgerda asks why he behaves so, and why he clammers up to the roof like a thief, and cannot be still. He said he was so mad with pain that he couldn't be still: "Be so good as to lead me to my bed! So she led him back to bed, and then she goes away with the dish of meat. But Helgi rises up straightway and follows her, and now he sees what is in the wind. Then he goes back, and lays him down again and sleeps in bed that day. Ingjalld comes home at even, and goes to Helgi's bed and asks whether he were easier. He said he was on the way to be well, and begged to be put over from the isle next morning. So he is put across to Flat Isle, and thence he fares south to Thorsness, and says he has found out that Gisli is harboured by Ingjalld. After that, Bork sets out from home, and there are fifteen of them in all, and they get on board a sailing boat, and sail from the south over Broadfirth. That day Ingjalld had rowed out to the deep-sea fishing and Gisli with him; but his thrall and his maid were in another boat, and they lay near some islands called Skutilisles.

Now Ingjalld sees a boat sailing from the south, and said: "I see something to my mind. Yonder sails a boat, and I think in that ship must be Bork the Stout, for her sails are striped with red."

"What's to be done now?" asks Gisli. "I want to know whether thou art so deep-thoughted as thou art brave and manly."

"My plan is soon made," said Ingjalld, "though I am no long-headed fellow. Let us row as hard as we can to the isle, and then go up to the top of Vadsteinberg, and stand at bay so long as we can keep our feet."

"Just as I thought," said Gisli. "I knew thou wouldst choose what would show thy bravery; but I shall be paying thee a worse meed for all thy help than I mean if for my sake thou art to lose thy life. That shall never be; we must think of something else. Thou shalt row to the island and the thrall with thee, and ye two shall climb the hill and make ready to hold your own, and then they who are sailing round the Ness from the south will think I am the second man. But I will change clothes with the thrall, as I did once before, and I will get into the boat with Bothilda."

Then Ingjalld did as Gisli advised, and he showed plainly enough that he was very wroth, and when they part Bothilda asked:

"What's to be done next?" and Gisli sang a stave

"Maiden mine, what plan to take,
Since we Ingjalld must forsake;
Now my tongue bursts forth in song,

Maid in black, of muscle strong
My heart is set to skim the seas,
To ply the oar, to hug the breeze
But know, whatever be my doom;
I care not whensoever it come."

Now they row south to meet Bork and his men, and show no token of being in any strait. Then Gisli laid it down how they were to behave.

"Thou shalt say that here on board the boat is the idiot, but I will sit in the stern and mock what thou sayest, and wrap me up in the nets, and every now and then almost throw myself overboard, and behave as madly as I can, and as soon as ever they have got a little way from us I will row with all my might, and try to put as much water between us as I can."

So now she rows to meet Bork and his men, and yet gave them a wide berth, and made as though she were seeking a fishing-bank. Now Bork calls out to her and asks if Gisli were on the isle.

"I don't know," she said, "but this I know, there is a man yonder who bears away the bell from all other men on the isle both in height and handicraft."

"Say you so?" said Bork. "Is he there now?"

"He was when I left home," she says.

"Pray, is Master Ingjalld at home?" asked Bork.

"He rowed back to land long since," she said, "and his thrall with him, as I thought."

"That cannot have been," said Bork; "it must have been Gisli. Let us row after them as fast as we can."

"We think it fine fun," they answered, "to look at the idiot and all his mad pranks."

The men said she was in a sad plight when she had to lead such a fool about.

"I think so too," said she, "but I feel hurt that you laugh at him, and give me little pity."

"Have done with this stuff," said Bork. "Let us get on our course, for the prey is almost in our hands."

Chapter 14

Gisli Slips Through Bork's Fingers

So they parted; and Bork and his men row to the isle, and land, and see the men on the Vadsteinberg, and make thither, and think they have done a good stroke of business. But all the while it was only Ingjalld and his thrall who were up there.

Bork was the first to know the men, and said to Ingialld: "The best way is to give up Gisli, or tell where he is. Thou art a hound, and nothing else, when thou hast hidden away my brother's murderer, and all the while art my tenant. 'Twere well if thou gottest some harm, and it were best that thou wert slain."

"Well," says Ingialld, "I wear work-a-day clothes, and I don't care a button if they are torn to bits. I will sooner lose my life than not do Gisli all the good in my power, and keep him out of harm's way."

Men say that Ingialld gave most help to Gisli, and was the greatest gain to him; and it is also said that when Thorgrim Bottlenose worked his spells he used the words that "naught should help Gisli, though men tried to shelter him here on land;" but he forgot to add the out isles, and so his charm was only partly fulfilled, though it was fated to be fulfilled at last.

Bork thinks it not seemly to fall on his tenant Ingialld; so he turns away to the homestead and there seeks for Gisli, and cannot find him, as was likely. Then they roam over the isle, and come at last to a spot where the idiot lay and grazed in a hollow, with the stone tied round his neck.

Then Bork says: "Well, I always heard strange stories about Ingialld's idiot, but I never thought he could be in two places at once. There's no use hunting here, and we have been so heedless, I never knew the like, nor do I know how we shall ever set it right. Why! that must have been Gisli in the boat alongside us, and he must have passed himself off as the idiot, for he is ready at everything, and is the biggest mockbird. 'Tis a shame to so many men if he slip through our fingers this time. Let us hasten after him, and let him not escape our clutches."

Then they jump into their boat and row after them, and ply the oars fast. They soon see that Gisli and the maid with a fair tide have got a good way across the sound, and each boat rowed smartly. But that boat goes faster through the water which has most men to pull, and they overhauled them so much that Bork and his men were just a spear's throw behind them when they got to land.

Then Gisli spoke to the maid, and said: "Now we must part, and here is a ring which thou shalt carry to Ingialld, and another to his wife, and tell them I say thou must have thy freedom, and send them these as tokens. My wish also is that Swart should be set free. Thou mayest well be called my deliverer, and I wish thee to profit by it,"

Now they part. Gisli leaps on shore and into some crags. It was at Hjardarness that he landed. The maid rowed off all dripping and reeking with her hard pull. Bork and his men had no time to waste on her alone in her boat, but rowed straight to shore, and Quarrelsome Stein was first out of the boat, and runs off to seek for Gisli. But as he clomb the crags Gisli stood in his path with his sword drawn, and smote him on the head, and cleft him to the chine, and down he toppled a dead man. Bork and his men land on the isle also for it was an island just off the mainland; but Gisli plunges into the strait and tries to swim to the main. Just then Bork hurled a spear at him, and smote him on the calf, and cut a piece out of it, and that was a great wound. Gisli gets rid of the spear, but loses his sword; for he was so weary he could not hold it. It was then dark and night. As soon as he came to land he runs into the wood, for then the land thereabouts was overgrown with trees. Now Bork and his men row to land and hunt for Gisli, and pen him up in the wood; for the wood was not deep, and he is

so weary and stiff he can scarce walk a step, and is now ware of men on all sides of him. Now he takes a plan and goes down to the shore, and so comes along the water's edge in the dark to a farm called "the Howe" and there seeks a farmer named Ref (the Fox), who was the craftiest of men. Ref greets him, and asks the news. Gisli told him the whole truth, and all that had happened between him and Bork. Now Ref had a wife whose name was Elfdisa, fair of face, but the greatest shrew, and altogether a downright scold. That was her wont with others, but she and Ref hit it off very well together.

So when he had told Ref how things stood Gisli asks him for help.

"They will be here in the twinkling of an eye," said Gisli. "Now I am hard pressed, and there are few to stand by me."

"I will only help thee," says Ref, "if I may settle how thou art to be helped. Thou shalt have no share in it."

"With all my heart," says Gisli, "for I can't stir a step farther."

"Go indoors, then," says Ref; and so they did.

Then Ref said to Elfdisa:

"I must be so free as to send a man into thy bed."

And with that he takes all the clothes off the box-bed, and says that Gisli must crouch down in the straw at the bottom. Then he heaps the clothes and bedding on him, and last of all Elfdisa lies down atop of him.

"Stay where thou art, whatever happens," says Ref. At the same time he bids Elfdisa be as cross and snappish as ever she could be.

"Don't spare, but pour out all the bad words thou knowest--curses and oaths. But I will take the lead in talking with them, and turn my words as I think best."

Next time he goes out of doors he sees men coming. They were eight of Bork's band; but Bork himself stayed at Forcewater. But these were to come and seek for Gisli, and seize him if he had come thither.

So Ref stays out of doors and asks, "What tidings?"

"None but what thou must already know. Knowest thou aught of Gisli, or if he has passed this way."

"He hasn't passed by here," says Ref. "If he had tried it he would not have lived long. I don't know now why ye should think me less ready to slay Gisli than any other man; but I have just wit enough to see that the favour and friendship of such a man as Bork would be well worth winning."

"Well," they answered, "will it be against thy will if we search the house?"

"With all my heart! why not?" says Ref; "for I know ye will hunt all the more steadily in other places if ye know of a truth that he is not here. Pray, step in, and search for him as narrowly as ye can."

So they go indoors, but when Elfdisa heard their stamping, she bawled out what band of blackguards that might be, and what pack of fools it could be that knocked men up at night. Ref begged her to keep a smooth tongue in her

mouth, but she did not spare them one of her foul words, and she yelled and hooted at them, so that they might be less able to hunt. Still they searched and searched, but still less than they would otherwise have done if the Goody had not pelted them with so much slang.

After that they go away and find nothing, and bid the farmer farewell, and he wished them a safe journey home. So they go back to Bork, and are sore grieved at their journey, and think they have got both harm and shame, and after all done nothing. Now all this was noised about the countryside, and men thought it was still the same story, and that Bork had still the same ill-luck at Gisli's hand.

Now Bork goes home and tells Eyjolf what ought to be done. Gisli stays with Ref half a month, and after that he goes away. They parted good friends, and Gisli gives him a knife and belt, and they were great treasures, though he had nothing else with him. After this Gisli goes to his wife in Geirthiofsfirth, and his fame waxed much after these deeds; and truth to say there never has been a man of readier hand or more daring heart than Gisli, but he was not a lucky man, as was proved from the very first.

Chapter 15

Thorkel's Slaying

Now the story goes on that next spring Bork fares to Thorskafrith Thing with a great company, and means to meet his friends there. Gest sails from the west from his house at Redsand on Bardastrand, and Thorkel Soursop comes too, each in his own ship. But just as Gest was ready to start two lads came to him ill-clad, with beggars staves in their hands. Men know this, that these two lads had a talk aside with Gest, that they beg a passage over the firth, and that he grants it. So they sail with him, and he takes them as far as Hallsteinsness. They landed just beyond the farm where Hallstein offered up his son, that a tree of sixty feet might be thrown up by the sea, and there are still to be seen the pillars of his high seat which he had made out of that tree. Thence the lads go up into Teigwood, and so go through the wood till they come to Thorskafrith Thing.

There was a man named Hallbjorn: he was a vagabond who roamed over the country, and not fewer men with him than ten or twelve. But when he came to the Thing he built himself a booth. Thither to the Beggar's Booth the lads go and ask for a lodging, and say they are beggars and runagates. He said he will find room for every one who asks him prettily.

"Here have I been," he said, "every year for many a spring, and I know all the chiefs and priests."

The lads said they would be very glad if he would take them under his wing and teach them wisdom.

"We are very curious to see mighty folk about whom great tales are told."

So Hallbjorn says if they will go down with him to the seastrand, that then he would know every ship as it ran in, and tell them all about it. They thanked him much for his gentleness.

Now they go down to the strand and look out at sea, and they soon see ships sailing up to the land. Then the elder lad began to ask:

"Who owns yon ship which now sails up nearest to us?"

"Gest the Wise," he answers, "of Hagi on Bardastrand."

"But who sail next, and run their ship up at the horn of the firth?"

"That is Thorkel Soursop."

They see now that Thorkel lands and sits him down while his men bore the lading from the ship as the tide rose. But Bork was busy setting up their booth; for the two brothers-in-law had one booth between them, and they were always good friends.

Thorkel had on a Greek hat and a gray cloak. He had a gold brooch on his shoulder, and a sword in his hand. In a little while Hallbjorn and the lads went up to where Thorkel was sitting. Now one of the lads, the elder, began to speak, and said:

"Pray who is this mighty man who sits here? Never have I seen a fairer or a nobler man."

He answered: "Thy words fall fair. My name is Thorkel."

The lad went on: "That sword which thou bearest in thy hand must be a treasure. Wilt thou let me look at it?"

"A strange fellow thou art," answers Thorkel; "but still I will let thee see it." And with that he banded him the sword.

The lad grasped the sword, drew off a step or two, snaps the peace-strings, and draws the sword.

But when Thorkel saw that he said:

"That I never gave thee leave to do. Why hast thou drawn the sword?"

"Neither did I ask thy leave," said the lad; and brandishes the sword, and smites Thorkel on the neck, and takes off his head at a stroke.

Now as soon as this happens up jumps Hallbjorn the Runagate; but the lad threw down the sword all bloody as it was, seizes his staff, and so they all ran with Hallbjorn, and all the beggars ran too, for they were almost mad with fright. So they ran by the booth which Bork was setting up.

Now men flocked round Thorkel, and no man could tell who had done the deed. Bork just then asked what was all that stir or fuss down where Thorkel sate. He said this just as the fifteen beggars tore along by his booth; and then the youngest lad, whose name was Helgi--Berg was he that did the deed--said.

"I don't know what they are mooting but methinks they are striving whether Vestein left only daughters behind him, or whether he had ever a son."

So Hallbjorn runs to his booth, but the lads take to the wood which was nigh to the spot, and no one can find them.

Now men run to Hallbjorn's booth, and ask what it all meant; but all the beggars could say was, that two young lads had joined their band, and that they were as much taken unawares as any one else, and hardly thought they should know them again. Yet they say something of their form and feature, and of their speech and discourse, what like it had been. And now Bork thinks he knows from the words which Helgi had uttered that it must have been Vestein's sons. After that he goes to Gest and takes counsel with him as what was best to do.

"I am most bound of all men," says Bork, "to take up the feud for my brother-in-law Thorkel. Methinks 'tis not unlikely that the sons of Vestein must have done this deed, for we know no other men than they who had any quarrel with Thorkel. Now it may well be they have got clear off for this time, but I will give much to have them outlawed at this very Thing; so give us counsel how the suit is to be followed up."

"I think," says Gest, "it is no easy matter to take this suit in hand, for methinks had I done the deed I could so hamper the suit, if it were about to be brought against me, by naming another man instead of myself, that the suit would come to naught. Maybe, methinks, he that did the deed had the same thought running in his head, and so he has thrown the blame on the boys."

And Gest was against bringing the suit against them, and threw cold water on it in every way.

Men thought it sooth that Gest had been in league with the lads all along, for he was their near kinsman. Then they cease talking, and the suit falls to the ground; but Thorkel is laid in his howe, after the fashion of the olden time, and men go away home from the Thing, and nothing else happened at it.

Now Bork is very ill-pleased with his doings, and though he ought to have been used to it, still he got great dishonour and disgrace from this matter of Thorkel.

As for the lads, they fare till they get to Geirthiofsfirth and lie out ten days. They reach Auda's house, and Gisli is at that time there. It was night when they came, and they knock at the door. Auda goes to the door and greets them, and asks what news. But Gisli lay all the while in his earth-house in his bed, and she raised her voice at once if he had need to be warned. They tell her of Thorkel's slaying, and how things stood. They also say how long they had been without food.

"I will send you on," says Auda, "over the ridge into Mossdale to the sons of Bjartmar, and I will give you food and tokens that they may take you under their wing, and I do this because I dare not ask Gisli to take you in."

So the lads go away into the wood, where they cannot be found, and eat their food, for it was long since they tasted any, and then they lay them down and sleep when they are full, for they were much worn with hunger and travel.

As for Auda she goes into Gisli and says

"Now I set great store upon knowing how thou wilt take something, and whether thou wilt honour me more than I am worth."

He caught her up at once and said: "I know thou art about to tell me the slaying of my brother Thorkel."

"So it is as thou guessest," said Auda; "the lads have come hither and wished thee to harbour them here for good and all, for they thought they could find shelter nowhere else."

"No!" he answers, "I cannot bear the sight of my brother's slayers and live under the same roof with them;" and up he jumps, and wants to draw his sword, and burst out into song

"Why should not Gisli draw the sword?
Ha! soon shall vengeance be the word.
What! Thorkel slain, and Gisli cool?
Auda, thou tak'st me for a fool!
All o'er the Thing, with 'bated breath,
Men mourn for Thorkel done to death.
One stalwart blow before I die,
A brother's blood aloud doth cry."

But now Auda told him they had gone away; "for I had wit enough not to let them run this risk."

And Gisli said it was the best way that they never met, and then he soon softened down; and now all is quiet again.

Chapter 16 Spy-Helgi and Havard

It is said that now only two more years were left of those which the dream-wife had said he had to live. And as time goes on, and Gisli is in Geirthiofsfirth, all his dreams come back on him, and he has hard struggles in his sleep; and now the worse dream-wife comes oftener and oftener to him, though the better visits him sometimes. So it fell one night, as Gisli dreamed that the better dream-wife came to him, and she seemed to ride on a gray horse, and bids him go with her to her abode, and he went gladly. So they came to a house which was almost as large as a hall, and she leads him into that house, and he thought there were pillows of down on the benches, and that it was well furnished in everything. She bade him stay there and be happy: "Hither shalt thou fare when thou diest, and pass thy time in bliss and ease."

And now he wakes and chaunted these verses on what he had dreamt:

"Lo ! the goddess shows her power,
Sets me on her palfrey gray,
Makes me ride unto her bower,
Bids me welcome every day:
All her words some comfort bringing,
Vowing ever to befriend;
In my ears soft sounds are ringing,
Still that music knows no end.

"There was many a slumb'rous pillow,
Strewn on benches in that hall,
Soft I sate as swan on billow,
Ah! my heart remembers all:
More--that lovely woman laid me
On a bed of softest down:
Grateful for the cheer she made me,
Straight my face forgot to frown.

"Then outspoke that bounteous woman--
'Mighty chief! thy foeman's bane,
Hither hasten, chased by no man;
Death shall set thee free from pain:
Then shalt thou--her speech pursuing--
'All these treasures call thine own;
Me, too, shalt thou win for wooing;
Happy we as birds new flown."

Now it is next to be said that Helgi the Spy was sent again round Geirthiofsfirth, and men deem it likely that Gisli is there. A man went with him whose name was Havard. He had come to Iceland from Norway the summer before, and was a kinsman of Gest the Wise. They gave out that they were sent into the wood to hew fuel for household use, but though this was the cloak of their journey, hidden under it was the design to hunt out Gisli, and see if they could find out his lurking-place. After they had been three nights in the wood spying about, on the last evening they see a fire burning in the cliffs and crags south of the river. That was just after sundown, and it was as dark as pitch. Then Havard asks Helgi what was to be done, "for thou must be more wont to these things than I can be."

"There is but one thing to be done," said Helgi, "and that is, to pile up a beacon on this hillock which we stand on, and then we shall find it when it is broad daylight, and then we shall see across from the beacon to the cliffs: 'tis but a short way to see."

So they take that plan, and when they had piled up the beacon Havard said he was worn out, and so tired he could scarce keep his eyes open. So he lay down to sleep. But Helgi keeps awake, and heaps up what yet failed to the beacon; and when he had ended his work Havard wakes, and bids Helgi go to sleep and he would watch. So Helgi sleeps awhile, and while he sleeps Havard sets to work and carries off the whole beacon, so that he did not leave one stone upon another in the dark. When he had done that, he takes up a huge stone and dashes it down on the rock close to Helgi's head, so that the earth shook again. Then Helgi jumps up, and is all of a quake and faint-hearted, and asks what ever is the matter.

"Well," said Havard, "there's a man in the wood, and very many such keepsakes have come hither during the night."

"That must have been Gisli. He must have found us out; and know, good fellow, we shall have every bone in our bodies broken if such grit falls on us. There is naught to be done but to be off as fast as possible."

Now Helgi runs off as fast as he can, but Havard follows him, and bids Helgi not to run away from him. But Helgi gave little heed, and ran as fast as he could lay legs to the ground.

At last they came to their boat, and jumped in, and dash the oars into the sea, and row like mad, and do not stay their course till they get to Otterdale, and then Helgi says he has found out where Gisli had hidden himself.

Eyjolf was up and stirring in a trice, and sets off at once with thirteen men, and both Helgi and Havard go with him. So they fare till they come to Geirthiofsfirth, and go through all the woods to search for the beacon and Gisli's lair, and found them nowhere.

Now Eyjolf asks Havard whereabouts they had piled up the beacon.

"I'm sure I can't tell," he answers; "I was so dead tired that I can't call to mind anything. Besides, Helgi piled up the beacon while I slept. Methinks 'tis not unlikely that Gisli was ware of us, and has carried away the beacon when it got light, and we had gone away."

Then Eyjolf said: "Everything seems doomed to go against us in this quest. We may as well turn back;" and so they did; but before they went Eyjolf says he wishes to go and see Auda.

Now they come to the house, and go indoors, and Eyjolf sate him down to talk with Auda. And this was how he began:

"I will make a bargain with thee, Auda. Thou shalt tell me where Gisli is, and I will give thee three hundreds in silver; those very pieces which I have taken as the price of his head. Thou shalt not be bound to stand by while we take his life. Besides all this, I will get thee a match which shall be far better in every way than this bath been. Thou must look also to this--how cheerless it is to be in this barren firth, and be cut off for ever from thy kinsmen and belongings, all because of Gisli's misdeeds."

"As for that," she says, "methinks it most unlikely we should ever agree upon a match which I should think as much worth as this; but still the old saw says: 'Fee is best for a 'fey' man.' Let me see then whether this fee is so much and fine as thou sayest."

So he pours out the silver into her lap, and she touches it with her hand, while he tells it over and presses her hard. Then her foster-daughter, Gudrida, fell a-weeping, and goes out and meets Gisli, and says:

"My foster-mother has now lost her wits, and will betray thee."

"Be of good heart," says Gisli; "that will never be. My brave Auda will never betray me."

With that he chaunted:

"What! the folk, with wicked whisper,
Say that she will me deceive?
Auda faithless to her husband
Never can my heart believe.
No! her heart is staunch as ever;

Auda plots no guile for me
Auda wrongs her Gisli never;
Vain the bribe of silver fee."

After that the lassie went home, and says never a word as to where she had been. By this time Eyjolf had told the silver, and then Auda said:

"This fee is no whit better or worse than thou hast said and now thou wilt no doubt let me do with it as I like."

Eyjolf jumped at that, and bade her do with it just as she chose.

So Auda takes the fee, and puts it into a big purse. After that she rises and runs to Eyjolf, and dashes the purse, silver and all, on Eyjolf's nose, so that the blood gushed out all over him; and as she smote him she said:

"Take that for thy silliness, and bad luck go with it! Didst thou ween I would sell my husband into the hands of such a wretch as thee. Take that, I say, and shame and blame go with it. Thou shalt bear in mind, vile fellow, so long as thou livest, that a woman hath beaten thee, and know thou shalt never work thy will whatever happens."

"Lay hands on," called out Eyjolf, "and slay her, though she be but a weak woman."

Then Havard spoke out and said: "Our journey is about as bad as it can be already without our doing this dastard's deed. Up men, and do not let him work his will."

"Sooth is the saw," said Eyjolf, "There are no foes like those of one's own house."

But Havard had many friends, and many a man was ready to stand by him in this matter, and at the same time to save Eyjolf from disgrace; so he had to swallow his shame, and goes away home. But ere Havard leaves the house Auda said: "The debt that Gisli owes thee must not be long unpaid. Here is a ring which I wish thee to take."

"I would not have looked for this," says Havard.

"But for all that I will repay thee," says Auda. So she gave him the gold down on the nail for his help. So Havard takes horse and fares south to the Strand to Gest the Wise, for he will stay no longer with Eyjolf. As for Eyjolf, he fares home to Otterdale, and is ill-pleased with his journey; and this last seemed to men the most shameful of all.

Chapter 17

Gisli's Evil Dreams

So now that summer glides by, and Gisli abides in his earth-house, and is wary of himself, and does not mean to go away any more. For he thinks that the earths are stopped all round about him, and now the years of his dreaming are all spent. It chanced one night that summer that Gisli suffered much in his

sleep. But when he wakes up Auda asks what he had dreamt. He says that worse dream-wife had come to him again and said thus--

"Now will I utterly crush all that the better dream-wife hath said to thee; and if I may have my way, none of those things that she hath spoken shall be of any good to thee."

Then Gisli chanted:

"Spoke the Valkyr, stern beholding--
'Ne'er shall ye twain woo and kiss,
Day by day your love unfolding,
All the gods forbid your bliss.
Woden, lord of worlds and ages,
Me hath sent to speak his will,
Far from where the battle rages,
Lo! his bidding I fulfil.'

"Again I dreamed," says Gisli, "that yon wife came to me, and bound round my brow a bloody hood, and washed my head first in blood, and poured blood over me, so that I was all over gore." And he chanted a song:

"She, methought, her face all flushing,
Bathed my locks in reddest blood,
Flames of light so rosy blushing,
Woden's balm so bright and good
Still I see her fingers glowing,
Bright with gems and blazing rings,
Steeped in blood so freely flowing,
Welling from the wounds of kings.

Again Gisli chanted:

"Yes! that lady, dark as raven,
Bound my brow with gory hood;
All my hair was shorn and shaven--
Sad the plight in which I stood:
Still her hands were gore-bedabbled,
Still her fingers dropped with blood;
Something in my ear she babbled,
Then I woke--to find thee good."

At last Gisli was so sore pressed with dreams that he grew quite afraid to be alone in the dark, and could not bear to be left by himself, for as soon as ever he shut his eyes the same wife appeared to him. One night it happened that Gisli struggled just a little in his sleep, and Auda asked what had happened.

"I dreamt," says Gisli, "that men came on us, and Eyjolf was along with them and many others beside, and we met, and I knew that there was merry work between us. One of their band came first, grinning and gaping, and methought I cut him asunder in the middle; and methought too he bore a wolf's head. Then many more fell on me, and methought I had my shield in my hand, and held my own a long while."

Then Gisli chanted:

"Methought that early on a morning
My foes within my dwelling stood;
Alone I met them, cravens scorning,
Alone I carved the ravens' food.
Fast and thick they fell around me--
Woe is me! I was aware,
Though chains of death not yet had bound me,
My blood bedewed thy bosom fair.

And again he chaunted:

"Well my trusty shield stood by me,
Bold my heart with peril played
Not a man of them came nigh me,
Blithely sang my tuneful blade:
Till at last my doom was spoken,
Ten to one beat down my shield
Well my death was then ywroken,
Loud clashed swords on fated field.

And again he chaunted:

"Thick I spread the ravens' table,
One I swept like wind away,
Ere those bitter foes were able
Once to wound me in the fray
Nay! my sword with temper eager
Shore a leg from off a wight;
Off he limped, so wan and meagre,
Mine the pledge he lost in fight."

Now the autumn comes on and the dreams do not minish, but they rather go on waxing more and more. One night when Gisli struggled in his sleep Auda asked, as was her wont, what had happened. Gisli chaunted these verses:

"Methought, O wife, the blood was flowing
Down my sides in crimson rill;
Tis but the debt of suffering owing,
The toilsome task I must fulfil.
Fairly won my wounds, no snarling,
Others' wives for me must weep;--
Such my visions, Auda darling,
When my eyelids close in sleep.

"Methought, O wife, with weapons bloody
Both my close-set lips were scored;
Those twin-sisters fair and ruddy
Deeper blushed at kiss of sword.
Still fond hope was ever smiling,
Blooming like the fairest flower;
'Thou shalt scape'--such words beguiling
Cheered me in that darksome hour.

"Methought my foemen, axes wielding
Both my arms at once lopped off;
Wound on wound, no buckler shielding,
Woe on woe, and bitter scoff.
Worse I dreamt--my forehead splitting,
Cleft in twain by force of hand,
O'er my brow, like goblin flitting,
Gaped and grinned the grisly brand.

"Methought that lady wise and witty,
Wearing crown of silver sheen;
O'er me bowed her head in pity,
Fast the pearls fell from her een.
Mistress she of hoards unbroken,
Bound my wounds with gentle skill;
What, my love, doth this betoken?--
Bodes it good or bodes it ill?"

Chapter 18

Gisli's Slaying

Now Gisli had stayed at home all that summer, and all had been quiet. At length the very last night of summer came. Then we are told Gisli could not sleep, nor could any of these three, Gisli, Auda, or Gudrida, sleep. The weather was in that wise that it was very still, and much rime-frost had fallen. Then Gisli says he will up and away from his house to his lurking-place south under the crags, and see if he can get rest there.

So they all three set out, and are clad in long loose kirtles, and the skirts of the kirtles swept the grass and left a track in the dew and rime. Gisli had a staff in his hand, and scored it with runes as he went, and the chips fell down. So they came to the lurking-place. He lays him down and tries to sleep, but the two women watched.

Then slumber steals over him, and he dreams that fowl came into the house called night-hawks: they are larger than ptarmigan, and they looked evil, and had been wallowing in gore and blood. Then Auda asked what he had dreamt.

"Still my dreams were not good," said Gisli, and chaunted a song:

"Wife! what time I rose and hasted,
Forth I wandered on the hills;
O'er these regions wild and wasted
Streams of song I poured in rills.
Then I heard the night-hawk shrieking,
Then I heard his mournful strain;
Soon the dew of Woden reeking
Shall this outlaw shed like rain."

And when this had happened they bear the voices of men, and there is Eyjolf come and fourteen men with him. They had already gone to the house, and see

the trail in the dew, which pointed them out. But when they were ware of those men they clomb the crags hard by, where there was good vantage-ground, and each of the women had in her hand a great club. Now Eyjolf and his men try to come up to them from below, and he called out to Gisli:

"Thy best plan is not to fare farther away, and not to let thyself be hunted down like hare-hearted men, for thou art called a brave fellow. We have often met before, and we now wish this to be the last time."

"Come on like men," answered Gisli, "for I am not going to fare farther away. Besides it is thy bounden duty to be the first to fall on me, for thou hast greater ground for quarrel with me than these others who come along with thee?"

"I'm not going," says Eyjolf, "to leave it in your hands to place my men, but I will draw them up as I choose."

"Well!" says Gisli, "it was likeliest that such a hound as thou would not dare to cross swords with me."

Then Eyjolf said to Spy-Helgi:

"Twould be great fame for thee now wert thou to be first in leading the way up the crags to Gisli. Such a deed of derring-do would long be borne in mind."

"I have often proved," says Helgi, "that thou likest to have others before thee when there is any trial of courage; but now since thou eggest me on so hotly, well I will do my best, but mind thou backest me like a man, and keep as close to me as thou canst if thou art not altogether a milksop."

Now Helgi busks him to the work where he saw the likeliest place, and holds in his hand a big axe. Gisli was armed thus: he had in his hand his axe, and he was girt with a sword, and his shield was at his side. He had on a gray cloak, and had bound it round with a rope.

Now Helgi takes a run and rushes up the crags at Gisli. He hurried to meet him, and brandished his sword, and smote him on the loins, and exit him in two at the waist; and each half of the man fell down from the crags, each on its own side. Eyjolf got up in another place, and there Auda met him, and smites him on the arm with her club so that it lost all strength, and down he topples back again. Then Gisli spoke and said:

"Long ago I knew I was well wedded, though I never knew I was so well wedded as I am. But now thou hast yielded me less help than thou thoughtest, though thy meaning was good, for had I got at him they would both have gone the same path."

Then two men go to hold Auda and Gudrida, and think they have quite enough to do. And now twelve men rush at once on Gisli, and try to get up the crags. But he defends himself both with stones and weapons, so that great glory followed his deeds. And now one of Eyjolf's band runs up and calls out to Gisli:

"Lay down thy good arms that thou bearest, and give up at the same time Auda thy wife."

"Come and take them then like a man," answers Gisli, "for neither the arms I bear nor the wife I love are fit for any one else."

That man thrusts at Gisli with a spear, but Gisli smote off the spear-head from the shaft with his axe, and the blow was so stout that the axe passed on to the rock, and one horn of the edge broke off. Then he throws away the axe and clutches his sword and fights with it, and shields himself with his shield. They attack him bravely, but he kept them off like a man, and now they are hard upon each other.

In that bout Gisli slew two men, and now four in all have fallen.

Still Eyjolf bade them fall on like men.

"We are getting the worst of it, but that would be worth little thought if we could only make a good end of our business."

Just then, when they were least aware, Gisli whisked about and leaps up on a crag that stands alone there, and is called Oneman's Crag. So he got away from the cliffs, and then he turned at bay and fought. This took them quite by surprise, and now they think that affairs are in a worse way than ever--four men dead and all the rest weary and wounded.

And now there is a break in the onslaught. When they had taken breath Eyjolf eggs on his men warmly, and gives his word to get them many fair things, if they will only get at Gisli. It must be owned that Eyjolf had with him picked men both in valour and hardihood.

It was a man named Sweyn who first was ready to attack Gisli, but Gisli smites at him and cleaves him to the chine, and hurls him down from the crag. And now they think they can never tell when this man's man-slayings will stop. Then Gisli called out to Eyjolf:

"I wish to make those three hundreds in silver which thou hast taken as the price of my head as dear-bought as I can. And I rather think thou wouldst give other three hundreds in silver that we had never met, for thou wilt only take disgrace in return for your loss of life."

Now they take counsel, and no one is willing to turn back for his life's sake. So they fall on him from two sides, and two men are foremost in following Eyjolf whose names are Thorir and Thord, kinsmen of Eyjolf. They were very great swordsmen, and their onslaught was both hard and hot; and now they gave him some wounds with spear-thrusts, but he still fought on with great stoutness and bravery; and they got such knocks from him, both with stones and strokes, that there was not one of them without a wound who came nigh him, for Gisli was not a man to miss his mark. Now Eyjolf and his kinsmen press on hard, for they felt that their fame and honour lay on it. Then they thrust at him with spears, so that his entrails fall out; but he swept up the entrails with his shirt and bound the rope round the wound.

Then Gisli called out and said they had better wait a while:

"Wife so fair, so never failing,
So truly loved, so sorely cross'd,
Thou wilt often miss me wailing,
Thou wilt weep thy hero lost.
But my soul is stout as ever ,
Swords may bite, I feel no smart

Father! better heirloom never
Owned thy son than hardy heart."

That was Gisli's last song, and as soon as ever he had suing it he rushes down from the crag and smites Thord, Eyjolf's kinsman, on the head, and cleaves him down to the belt, but Gisli fell down on his body and breathed his last.

But they were all much wounded, Eyjolf's companions. Gisli there lost his life with so many great and sore wounds that it was a wonder to see. They say that he never turned his heel, and none of them saw that his strokes were lighter, the last than the first. There now ends Gisli's life, and it has always been said he was the greatest champion--though he was not lucky in all things.

Now they drag him down to the flat ground, and take away his sword, and bury him there in the gravel, and so go down to the sea. There on the sea-shore the sixth man breathed his last. Eyjolf offered Auda to take her with him, but she would not. After that Eyjolf fares home to Otterdale, and there, that same night, the seventh man breathes his last. An eighth lies bedridden from wounds twelve months, and then dies. As for the rest, they were healed, and got nothing but shame for their pains.

It has been said, in short, by one and all that there never was a more famous defence made by one man in times of which the truth is known.

Chapter 19

Thordisa's Welcome to Eyjolf

Now Eyjolf fares from home with eleven men to see Bork the Stout, and then he told him these tidings and the whole story.

Bork was merry at that, and bade Thordisa make Eyjolf welcome.

"Bear in mind now all thy old love for my brother Thorgrim, and be good to Eyjolf."

"I will weep for my brother Gisli," says Thordisa; "but will it not be welcome enough for Gisli's baneman if I make him some brose and serve it up?"

And that evening when she brought in the food she let fall the tray of spoons. Now Eyjolf had laid the sword that Gisli had borne between the table and his legs. Thordisa knows the sword, and as she stoops after the spoons she caught hold of the sword by the hilt and makes a stab at Eyjolf, and wished to run him through the middle, but she did not reckon that the hilt pointed up and caught the table; so she thrust lower than she would, and bit him on the thigh, and gave him a great wound.

Bork seizes Thordisa, and twists the sword out of her hand. All jump up and push away the board with the meat on it. Bork offered to let Eyjolf make his own award, and he laid it at the full price of a man, and said he would have laid it higher had not Bork behaved so well.

As for Thordisa, she took witness at once, and says she will be parted from Bork, for she will never come into his bed again; and she kept her word. After

that she went and dwelt at Thordisastead, out on the Ere. But Bork stays behind at Helgafell till Snorro the Priest turned him out; and then Bork went to dwell at Glasswaterwood.

As for Eyjolf, he goes back home, and is ill-pleased with all he has done.

The sons of Vestein fare to Gest their kinsman, and call on him to send them, at his cost, abroad with their mother Gunnhillda, and Auda, Gisli's wife, and Gudrida, the daughter of Ingjalld, and Geirmund, her brother. So they all sail for Norway from Whitewater in Borgarfirth. It was Gest who sent them away at his cost. They had a short passage, and came safe to Norway. There Berg walks along the street, and is looking out to hire them booth-room in the town. Two men were with him, and they meet two other men--one was clad in scarlet, and was a tall young man, and he asked Berg for his name. Berg told him at once the truth of himself and his kindred; for he thought it rather likely that he should gain good for his father than smart for him, for Vestein had made many friends on his voyages. But that man clad in scarlet drew his sword straightway and dealt Berg his death-blow. That man was Ari the Soursop, the brother of Gisli and Thorkel. Berg's companions go to the ship, and tell what had happened. The captain got them all out of the way, and Helgi took ship for Greenland. He got thither and throve, and was thought a brave fellow. Men were sent out to take his life, but it was not doomed that he should die so. Helgi was drowned out fishing, and that was thought great scathe. Auda and Gunnhillda go to Denmark to Heathby. There they changed their faith, and went south to Rome, and did not come back. Geirmund stayed in Norway and married, and was well to do. His sister Gudrida was given away to a man, and she was thought a wise woman, and many men have come from her. Ari the Soursop sailed to Iceland, and landed in Whitewater, and sold his ship, and bought him land at Hammer; and there he dwelt some winters. Later on he lived on the Moors, and men have come from him too.

Here we end the Saga of Gisli the Soursop.

Grettir's Saga

Chapter 1

Family and Early Wars of Onund the Son of Ofeig

There was a man named Onund, the son of Ofeig Clumsyfoot, who was the son of Ivar Horsetail. Onund was the brother of Gudbjorg, the mother of Gudbrand Knob, the father of Asta, the mother of King Olaf the Saint. His mother came from the Upplands, while his father's relations were mostly in Rogaland and Hordland. He was a great viking and used to harry away in the West over the sea. He was accompanied on these expeditions by one Balki, the son of Blaeing from Sotanes, and by Orm the Wealthy. Another comrade of theirs was named Hallvard. They had five ships, all well equipped. They plundered the

Hebrides, reaching the Barra Isles, where there ruled a king named Kjarval, who also had five ships. These they attacked; there was a fierce battle between them, in which Onund's men fought with the utmost bravery. After many had fallen on both sides, the battle ended with the king taking to flight with a single ship; the rest were captured by Onund's force, along with much booty. They stayed there for the winter, and spent the succeeding three summers harrying the coasts of Ireland and Scotland, after which they returned to Norway.

Chapter 2

Battle of Hafrsfjord

At that time Norway was very disturbed. Harald Shockhead, the son of Halfdan the Black, till then king of the Upplands, was aiming at the supreme kingship. He went into the North and fought many battles there, in which he was always victorious. Then he marched harrying through the territories to the South, bringing them into subjection wherever he came. On reaching Hordland he was opposed by a motley multitude led by Kjotvi the Wealthy, Thorir Long-chin, and Soti and King Sulki from South Rogaland. Geirmund Swarthyskin was then away in the West, beyond the sea, so he was not present at the battle, although Hordland belonged to his dominion.

Onund and his party had arrived that autumn from the western seas, and when Thorir and Kjotvi heard of their landing they sent envoys to ask for their aid, promising to treat them with honour.

They were very anxious for an opportunity of distinguishing themselves, so they joined Thorir's forces, and declared that they would be in the thickest part of the battle. They met King Harald in a fjord in Rogaland called Hafrsfjord. The forces on each side were very large, and the battle was one of the greatest ever fought in Norway. There are many accounts of it, for one always hears much about those people of whom the saga is told. Troops had come in from all the country around and from other countries as well, besides a multitude of vikings. Onund brought his ship alongside of that of Thorir Long-chin in the very middle of the battle. King Harald made for Thorir's ship, knowing him to be a terrible berserk, and very brave. The fighting was desperate on either side. Then the king ordered his berserks, the men called Wolfskins, forward. No iron could hurt them, and when they charged nothing could withstand them. Thorir defended himself bravely and fell on his ship fighting valiantly. The whole ship from stem to stern was cleared and her fastenings were cut, so that she fell out of the line of battle. Then they attacked Onund's ship, in the forepart of which he was standing and fighting manfully. The king's men said: "He bears himself well in the battle." Onund was stepping out with one foot on to the bulwark, and as he was striking they made a thrust at him with a spear; in parrying it he bent backwards, and at that moment a man on the forecastle of the king's ship struck him and took off his leg below the knee, disabling him at a blow. With him fell the greater number of his men. They carried him to a ship belonging to a man named Thrand, a son of Bjorn and brother of Eyvind the Easterner. He was fighting against King Harald, and his ship was lying on the other side of Onund's. Then

there was a general flight. Thrand and the rest of the vikings escaped any way they could, and sailed away westwards. They took with them Onund and Balki and Hallvard Sugandi. Onund recovered and went about for the rest of his life with a wooden leg, wherefore he was called Onund Treefoot as long as he lived.

Chapter 3

Meeting of Defeated Chiefs in the West and Marriage of Onund

There were then in the western parts many distinguished men who had fled from their homes in Norway before King Harald, for he declared all who fought against him outlaws, and seized their property. As soon as Onund had recovered from his wound, Thrand went with his party to Geirmund Swarthyskin, who was the most eminent of the vikings in the West. They asked him whether he was not going to try and regain his kingdom in Hordland, and offered to join him, hoping by this means to do something for their own properties, for Onund was very wealthy and his kindred very powerful. Geirmund answered that Harald had such a force that there was little hope of gaining any honour by fighting when the whole country had joined against him and been beaten. He had no mind, he said, to become the king's thrall, and to beg for that which he had once possessed in his own right. Seeing that he was no longer in the vigour of his youth he preferred to find some other occupation. So Onund and his party returned to the Southern Islands, where they met many of their friends.

There was a man named Ofeig, nicknamed Grettir. He was the son of Einar, the son of Olvir the Babyman. He was a brother of Oleif the Broad, the father of Thormod Shaft. Another son of Olvir was named Steinolf, the father of Una, whom Thorbjorn the Salmon-man married. A third son of Olvir was Steinmod, who was the father of Konal, the father of Alfdis of the Barra Isles. Konal's son was named Steimnod; he was the father of Halldora, whom Eilif, the son of Ketil the One-handed, married.

Ofeig Grettir married Asny, the daughter of Vestar, the son of Haeing. His sons were Asmund the Beardless and Asbjorn, and his daughters were named Aldis, Aesa, and Asvor. Ofeig had fled from the wrath of King Harald into the West over the sea, along with his kinsman Thormod Shaft and all their families. They ravaged far and wide in the western seas. Thrand and Onund Treefoot were going West to Ireland to join Thrand's brother, Eyvind the Easterner, who had command of the Irish defences. Eyvind's mother was named Hlif; she was the daughter of Hrolf, the son of Ingjald, the son of King Frodi, while Thrand's mother was Helga, the daughter of Ondott Crow. The father of Eyvind and Thrand was Bjorn, the son of Hrolf of Ar. He had had to leave Gautland because he had burnt in his house Sigfast the father-in-law of King Solvi. Then he went to Norway and spent the winter with Grim the Hersir, a son of Kolbjorn the Sneak, who wanted to murder him for his money. Thence Bjorn went to Ondott Crow, who lived in Hvinisfjord in Agdir. There he was well received, stayed the winter, and went campaigning with Ondott in the summer until his wife Hlif died.

Eventually Ondott gave Bjorn his daughter Helga, and Bjorn then no longer went out to fight. Eyvind had taken over his father's ships and become a great chief in the western parts. He married Rafarta, the daughter of the Irish king Kjarval. Their sons were Helgi the Lean and Snaebjorn.

When Thrand and Onund came to the Southern Islands they found there Ofeig Grettir and Thormod Shaft, with whom they became very friendly, for each thought the others had risen from the dead, their last meeting having been in Norway when the war was at its worst. Onund was very silent, and Thrand, when he noticed it, asked what was on his mind. Onund answered with a verse:

"No joy is mine since in battle I fought.
Many the sorrows that o'er me lower.
Men hold me for nought; this thought is the worst
of all that oppresses my sorrowing heart."

Thrand said: "Why, you still seem as full of vigour as ever you were. You may yet settle down and marry. You shall have my good word and my interest if you will only tell me whom you fancy."

Onund said he behaved nobly; but said there had once been a time when his chances of making a profitable marriage had been better.

Thrand said: "Ofeig has a daughter named Aesa; we might mention it if you like."

Onund said he would like it, and soon afterwards Ofeig was approached on the subject. He received the proposal favourably, saying he knew the man to be of good lineage and to have some wealth in movable property, though his lands were not worth much. "But," he said, "I do not think he is very wise. Why, my daughter is quite a child."

Thrand said that Onund was more vigorous than many a man whose legs were sounder.

So with the aid of Thrand the terms were settled. Ofeig was to give his daughter a portion in cash, for neither would reckon anything for his lands in Norway. Soon afterwards Thrand was betrothed to the daughter of Thormod Shaft. Both the maids were to remain plighted for three years.

Then they went on fighting expeditions in the summer, remaining in the Barra Isles during the winter.

Chapter 4

Fight with Vikings Vigbjod and Vestmar

There were two Vikings from the Southern Isles, named Vigbjod and Vestmar; they were abroad both summer and winter. They had eight ships, and harried mostly round the coast of Ireland, where they did many an evil deed until Eyvind undertook the defence of the coast, when they retired to the Hebrides to harry there, and right in to the Scotch firths. Thrand and Onund went out against them and learned that they had sailed to an island called Bot. Onund and Thrand

followed them thither with five ships, and when the vikings sighted them and saw how many there were, they thought their own force was sufficient, so they took to their arms and advanced to the attack. Onund ordered his ships to take up a position between two rocks where there was a deep but narrow channel, open to attack from one side only, and by not more than five ships at once. Onund was a very wily man. He sent his five ships forward into the channel so that, as there was plenty of sea room behind them, they could easily retire by merely backing their oars. One ship he brought under an island lying on their beam, and carried a great stone to a place on the front of the rock where it could not be seen from the enemy's ships. The Vikings came boldly on, thinking they had caught them in a trap. Vigbjod asked who they were that he had hemmed in. Thrand answered that he was a brother of Eyvind the Easterner, and the man with him was his comrade, Onund Treefoot. The vikings laughed and said:

"Trolls take the rascal Treefoot
and lay him even with the ground.

Never yet did I see men go to battle who could not carry themselves."

Onund said that could not be known until it was tried. Then the ships came together. There was a great battle in which both sides fought bravely. When the battle was thick Onund ordered his ships to back their oars. The vikings seeing it thought they were taking to flight, and pushed on with all their might, coming under the rock just at the moment when the party which had been dispatched for that purpose arrived. They launched upon the vikings stones so huge that nothing could hold against them. A number of the vikings were killed, and others were so injured that they could fight no more. Then the vikings tried to escape, but could not, as their ships were in the narrowest part of the channel and were impeded both by the current and by the enemy's ships. Onund's men vigorously attacked the wing commanded by Vigbjod while Thrand engaged Vestmar, but effected little. When the men on Vigbjod's ship had been somewhat reduced, Onund's men, he himself with them, prepared to board her. On seeing that, Vigbjod spurred on his men resolutely. He turned against Onund, most of whose men gave way. Onund was a man of immense strength and he bade his followers observe how it fared with them. They shoved a log under the stump of his leg, so that he stood pretty firm. The viking dashed forward, reached Onund and hewed at him with his sword, which cut right through his shield and into the log beneath his leg, where it remained fixed. As Vigbjod bent down to pull his sword clear again, Onund dealt him a blow on his shoulder, severing his arm and disabling him. When Vestmar saw his comrade fall, he sprang on to the outermost ship and escaped along with all who could get on to her. Then they examined the dead. Vigbjod had already expired. Onund went up to him and said:

"Bloody thy wounds. Didst thou see me flee?
'One-leg' no hurt received from thee.
Braver are many in word than in deed.
Thou, slave, didst fail when it came to the trial."

They took a large quantity of booty and returned to the Barra Isles in the autumn.

Chapter 5

Visit of Onund and Thrand to Eyvind in Ireland

The following summer they made ready for a voyage to the West, to Ireland. At the same time Balki and Hallvard sailed westwards, to Iceland, where they had heard that good land was available for occupation. Balki took up some land at Hrutafjord, and had his abode in two places called Balkastad. Hallvard occupied Sugandafjord and Skalavik as far as Stigi, where he lived.

Thrand and Onund went to visit Eyvind the Easterner, who welcomed joyfully his brother Thrand; but when he heard that Onund had also come, he became very angry and wanted to fight him. Thrand asked him not to do so, and said it would ill become him to quarrel with men from Norway, especially with such as had given no offence. Eyvind said that he had given offence before, when he made war on Kjarval the king, and that he should now pay for it. The brothers had much to say to each other about the matter, till at last Thrand said that he and Onund should share their fortune together. Then Eyvind allowed himself to be appeased. They stayed there a long time in the summer and went with Eyvind on his expeditions. Eyvind found Onund to be a man of the greatest valour. In the autumn they went to the Hebrides, and Eyvind made over to Thrand all his share in their father Bjorn's patrimony in the event of Bjorn dying before Thrand. They stayed in the Hebrides until they married and some years after.

Chapter 6

Death of Bjorn; Disputes Over His Property in Norway

The next thing that happened was the death of Thrand's father Bjorn. When the news of it reached Grim the Hersir he proceeded against Ondott Crow and claimed Bjorn's estate. Ondott held Thrand to be the rightful heir of his father, but Grim contended that Thrand was away in the West. Bjorn, he said, came from Gautland, and the succession to the estate of all foreigners passed to the king. Ondott said that he would hold the property on behalf of Thrand, who was his daughter's son. Grim then departed, having effected nothing by his claim.

Thrand, when he heard of his father's death, prepared to leave the Hebrides, and Onund Treefoot decided to go with him. Ofeig Grettir and Thormod Shaft went to Iceland with all their belongings, landing at Eyrar in the South. They spent the first winter with Thorbjorn the Salmon-man, and then occupied Gnuhverjarepp. Ofeig took the outer part lying between the rivers Thvera and Kalfa, and lived at Ofeigsstad near Steinsholt, while Thormod took the eastern part, living at Skaptaholt. Thormod's daughters were named Thorvor and Thorve; the former afterwards became the mother of Thorodd the Godi at Hjalli, Thorve of Thorstein the Godi the father of Bjarni the Wise.

We now return to Thrand and Onund, who sailed back from the West to Norway. A strong wind blew in their favour, so that they arrived at the house of Ondott

Crow before any one knew of their journey. He welcomed Thrand and told him of the claim which Grim the Hersir had raised for Bjorn's estate.

"To my thinking, kinsman," he said, "it is better that the property should go to you than to the king's thralls. It is a fortunate thing for you that no one knows of your having come here, for I expect that Grim will make an attack upon one or the other of us if he can. I should prefer if you would take over your property and stay in other countries."

Thrand said that he would do so. He took over the property and prepared to leave Norway. Before leaving he asked Onund Treefoot whether he would not come to Iceland. Onund said he wanted first to visit some of his relations and friends in the South.

"Then," said Thrand, "we must part. I should be glad if you would give my kinsmen your support, for our enemies will certainly try to take revenge upon them when I am gone. I am going to Iceland, and I want you to come there too."

Onund said he would come, and they parted with great friendship. Thrand went to Iceland, where he met with a welcome from Ofeig and Thormod Shaft. He took up his dwelling at Thrandarholt to the west of Thjorsa.

Chapter 7

Murder of Ondott Crow, and the Vengeance Therefor

Onund went to Rogaland in the South and visited many of his relations and friends. He lived there in concealment with a man named Kolbeinn. He there learned that King Harald had taken all his property and given it into the charge of a man named Harekr, one of his officials. Onund went by night to Harekr's house and caught him at home; he was led to execution. Then Onund took possession of all the loose property which he found and burnt the building.

That autumn Grim the Hersir murdered Ondott Crow because he had not succeeded in getting the property for the king. Ondott's wife Signy carried off all their loose property that same night to a ship and escaped with her sons Asmund and Asgrim to her father Sighvat. A little later she sent her sons to Hedin, her foster-father in Soknadal, where they remained for a time and then wanted to return to their mother. They left at last, and at Yule-tide came to Ingjald the Trusty at Hvin. His wife Gyda persuaded him to take them in, and they spent the winter there. In the spring Onund came to northern Agdir, having learned of the murder of Ondott. He met Signy and asked her what assistance they would have of him. She said they were most anxious to punish Grim for the death of Ondott. So the sons were sent for, and when they met Onund Treefoot they all joined together and had Grim's doings closely watched.

In the summer there was a beer-brewing at Grim's for a jarl named Audun, whom he had invited. When Onund and the sons of Ondott heard of it, they appeared at his house unexpectedly and set fire to it. Grim the Hersir and about thirty men were burnt in the house. They captured a quantity of valuables. Then Onund went into the forest, while the two brothers took the boat of their foster-father Ingjald, rowed away and lay in hiding a little way off. Soon jarl Audun

appeared, on his way to the feast, as had been arranged, but on arriving he missed his host. So he collected his men around him and stayed there a few nights, quite unaware of Onund and his companions. He slept in a loft with two other men. Onund knew everything that was going on in the house and sent for the two brothers to come to him. On their arrival he asked them whether they preferred to keep watch on the house or to attack the jarl. They chose to attack. They then battered the entrance of the loft with beams until the door gave way. Asmund seized the two men who were with the jarl and threw them to the ground with such violence that they were well-nigh killed.

Asgrim rushed at the jarl and demanded of him weregild for his father, for he had been in league with Grim and took part in the attack when Ondott was murdered. The jarl said he had no money about him and asked for time. Asgrim then placed the point of his spear against his breast and ordered him to pay up on the spot. Then the jarl took a necklace from his neck and gave it to him with three gold rings and a velvet mantle. Asgrim took the things and bestowed a name upon the jarl. He called him Audun Nannygoat.

When the farmers and people about heard of the disturbances they all came out to help the jarl. Onund had a large force with him, and there was a great battle in which many a good farmer and many a follower of the jarl were slain. The brothers returned to Onund and reported what had occurred with the jarl. Onund said it was a pity they had not killed him. It would, he said, have been something to make up for the losses which he had suffered from King Harald. They said the disgrace was far worse for the jarl as it was, and they went off to Surnadal to Eirik Beery, a Landman there, who took them all in for the winter. At Yule-tide they had a great drinking bout with a man named Hallsteinn, nicknamed Stallion. Eirik opened the feast and entertained them generously. Then it was Hallsteinn's turn, and they began to quarrel. Hallsteinn struck Eirik with a deer's horn, for which Eirik got no revenge, but had to go home with it, to the great annoyance of Ondott's sons. A little later Asgrim went to Hallsteinn's house and gave him a severe wound. All the people who were present started up and attacked Asgrim. He defended himself vigorously and escaped in the dark, leaving them under the belief that they had killed him. Onund and Asmund, on hearing that Asgrim had been killed, were at a loss what they could do in the matter. Eirik's advice was that they should betake themselves to Iceland, for it would never do for them to remain in the land where the king could get at them. This they determined to do. Each of them had his own ship and they made ready for the voyage to Iceland. Hallsteinn was laid low with his wound and died before Onund sailed with his party. Kolbeinn, the man who was mentioned before, went in the ship with Onund.

Chapter 8

Onund and Asmund Sail to Iceland

Onund and Asmund set sail directly when they were ready and their ships kept together. Onund said:

"Hallvard and I were aforetime deemed worthy in storm of swords to bear us. With one foot now I step on the ship towards Iceland. The poet's day is o'er."

They had a rough passage with cross winds, mostly from the south, so that they drifted away to the north. They made Iceland right in the North, at Langanes, where they regained their reckonings. The ships were near enough to each other for them to speak together. Asmund said they had better make for Eyjafjord, and this was agreed to. They kept under the land and heavy weather set in from the south-east. Just as Onund was tacking, the yard was carried away; they lowered the sail and were driven out to sea. Asmund got under the lee of Hrisey, where he waited until a fair wind set in which took him up to Eyjafjord. Helgi the Lean gave him the whole of Kraeklingahlid, and he lived at South-Glera. A few years later his brother Asgrim came to Iceland and took up his residence at North-Glera. His son was Ellidagrim the father of Asgrim.

Chapter 9

Onund Settles in Kaldbak

Onund Treefoot was driven away from the shore for several days, after which the wind shifted and blew towards the land. Then they made land again, which those of them who had been there before recognised as the western coast of the Skagi peninsula. They sailed in to Strandafloi, almost to Sudrstrandir. There came rowing towards them a ten-oared boat with six men on board, who hailed the sea-going ship and asked who was their captain. Onund told them his name and asked whence they came. They said they were the men of Thorvald from Drangar. Then Onund asked whether all the land round that coast was occupied; they answered there was very little left at Sudrstrandir and none at all in the North. So Onund asked his men whether they would seek some land further to the West or take that of which they had just been told. They said they would first explore a little further. They sailed in along the coast of the bay and anchored off a creek near Arnes, where they put off in a boat to the shore.

Here dwelt a wealthy man named Eirik Snare, who had taken the land between Ingolfsfjord and Ofaera in Veidileysa. On hearing that Onund had arrived in those parts, he offered to let him have such portion as he needed from his own lands, adding that there was little land which had not already been taken up. Onund said he would first like to see what there was.

Then they went further into the bay past some fjords and came to Ofaera, where Eirik said: "Here is what there is to see. From here down to the lands of Bjorn is unoccupied." A high range of mountains, on which snow had fallen, rose from beside the river. Onund looked at the mountains and spoke a verse:

"My lands and my might have drifted away
as drifts the ship on the ocean.
My friends and my home I have left behind me,
and bartered my acres for Kaldbak."

"Many a man," answered Eirik, "has lost so much in Norway that it may not be mended. I expect too that nearly all the lands in the main districts have been taken, so that I will not urge you to leave these parts and seek elsewhere. I will keep to my word and let you have whatever lands of my own you may require."

Onund said he would take advantage of his offer, and in the end he took some of the Ofaera land and the three creeks Byrgisvík, Kolbeinsvík, and Kaldbaksvík as far as Kaldbak's Cliff. Afterwards Eirik gave him Veidileysa with Reykjarfjord and the outer part of Reykjanes on that side. Nothing was settled about the drift which came to the coast, because there was so much of it that every one could have what he wanted. Onund made his home in Kaldbak and had a large household. His property increased and he had another house in Reykjarfjord. Kolbeinn lived in Kolbeinsvík and for some years Onund lived quietly at home.

Chapter 10

Ofeig Grettir is Killed, Visit of Onund to Aud the Deep-Minded

Onund was a man of such valour that few, even of those whose limbs were sound, could measure themselves against him. His name, too, was renowned throughout the whole country on account of his ancestry. It happened that a dispute arose between Ofeig Grettir and one Thorbjorn called Jarlakappi, which ended in Ofeig being killed by Thorbjorn in Grettisgeil near Haell. The feud was taken up by Ofeig's sons who assembled a large force of men. Onund Treefoot was sent for, and in the spring he rode South to Hvamm, where he stayed with Aud the Deep-Minded. He had been with her over the sea in the West, and she received him with welcome. Her grandson, Olaf Feilan, was then grown up, and Aud was very infirm. She consulted Onund concerning her kinsman Olaf, for whom she wished to ask in marriage Alfdís of the Barra Isles, the cousin of Onund's wife Aesa. Onund thought it a very suitable match, and Olaf rode with him to the South. Then Onund met friends and kinsmen, who made him their guest. The matter of the dispute was talked over between them, and finally laid before the Kjalarnes Thing, for the All-Thing had not yet been established. Eventually it was settled by arbitration and heavy weregilds were imposed for the murder. Thorbjorn Jarlakappi was exiled. His son was Solmund, the father of Svidukari. These kinsmen were long abroad after that. Thrand invited Onund and Olaf with his party to stay with him, as did Thormod Shaft. The matter of Olaf's marriage was then pressed, and an agreement easily arrived at, for Aud's rank and influence were well known to them. The settlement was arranged and Onund's party rode home again. Aud thanked him for his aid in behalf of Olaf, who married Alfdís of the Barra Isles that autumn. Then Aud the Deep-Minded died, as is told in the Laxdaela Saga.

Chapter 11

Death of Onund. Disputes Between the Sons of Onund and of Eirik

Onund and Aesa had two sons; the elder was named Thorgeir, the younger Ofeig Grettir. Soon afterwards Aesa died and Onund married a second wife, Thordis Thorgrim's daughter of Gnuþ in Midfjord, a kinsman of Skeggi of Midfjord. By her Onund had a son named Thorgrim, who grew up quickly to manhood, tall and strong, wise and a good manager. Onund continued to live at Kaldbak until his old age. He died a natural death and lies in Treefoot's howe. He was the boldest and most active one-legged man that ever came to Iceland.

Among Onund's sons Thorgrim was the foremost, although the others were older. When he was twenty-five years old his hair was grey, whence they nick-named him Greyhead. His mother Thordis married again, taking as her second husband Audun Skokull. They had a son named Asgeir of Asgeirsa. Thorgrim Greyhead and his brothers had a large property, which they managed together without dividing it up.

Eirik lived, as was mentioned, at Arnes. He had married Aloh, the daughter of Ingolf of Ingolfsfjord, by whom he had a son named Flosi, a very promising young man with many friends.

There came to that part of Iceland three brothers, named Ingolf, Ofeig, and Eyvind, and took the three fjords which are called by their names, where they lived. Eyvind had a son named Olaf. He at first lived at Eyvindsfjord, but went later to Drangar. He was a most capable man.

So long as their fathers were living no disputes arose among these men; but when Eirik was dead it occurred to Flosi that those of Kaldbak had no legal title to the lands which Eirik had given to Onund. Out of this serious dissensions arose between them. Thorgrim and his brothers continued in possession of the lands as before, but they would not join in games together. Thorgeir, the eldest brother, was managing the farm at Reykjarfjord, and often rowed out fishing, as the fjords were full of fish. The men of Vik now laid their plans. Flosi had a man in Arnes named Thorfinn, and sent him to fetch Thorgeir's head. This man hid himself in the boatshed. One morning when Thorgeir was preparing to row out with two other men, one of whom was named Brand, Thorgeir was walking ahead with a leather skin on his back containing some drink. It was very dark, and as he passed the boat-house Thorfinn sprang out upon him and dealt him a blow with an axe between his shoulders. The axe went into something and made a squeaking noise. Thorfinn let go his axe, feeling quite sure that no bandages would be needed, and being very anxious to escape as fast as he could. He ran North, and reaching Arnes before the day had quite broken, said that he had killed Thorgeir and that Flosi must protect him. The only thing to be done was to offer some compensation in money. "That," he said, "will be the best thing for us after such a terrible piece of work."

Flosi said he must first learn more about it, and that he thought Thorfinn seemed very frightened after his doughty deed.

We must now tell what had happened to Thorgeir. He turned round when he was struck, but the blow had gone into the leather bottle, and he was unhurt. They could make no search for the man because it was dark, so they rowed on down the fjord to Kaldbak, where they told what had happened. People made great game of the affair and called him Thorgeir Bottleback, a name which stuck to him ever after. A verse was made:

"In days gone by men bathed their blades
in the streaming gore of a foeman's wound.
But now a wretch of all honour bereft
reddens his dastard axe in whey."

Chapter 12

Battle at Rifsker

At that time there came over Iceland a famine the like of which had never been seen before. Nearly all the fisheries failed, and also the drift wood. So it continued for many years.

One autumn some traders in a sea-going ship, who had been driven out of their course, were wrecked at Vik. Flosi took in four or five of them with their captain, named Steinn. They all found shelter in the neighbourhood of Vik and tried to rig up a ship out of the wreckage, but were not very successful. The ship was too narrow in the bow and stern and too broad amidships. In the spring a northerly gale set in which lasted nearly a week, after which men began to look for drift.

There was a man living in Reykjanes named Thorsteinn. He found a whale stranded on the south side of the promontory at the place now called Rifsker. It was a large rorqual, and he at once sent word by a messenger to Flosi in Vik and to the nearest farms.

At Gjogr lived a man named Einar, a tenant of the Kaldbak men whom they employed to look after the drift on that side of the fjord. He got to know of the whale having been stranded and at once rowed across the fjord in his boat to Byrgisvik, whence he sent a messenger to Kaldbak. When Thorgrim and his brother heard the news they got ready to go with all speed to the spot. There were twelve of them in a ten-oared boat, and six others, with Ivar and Leif, sons of Kolbeinn. All the farmers who could get away went to the whale.

In the meantime Flosi had sent word to his kinsmen in the North at Ingolfsfjord and Ofeigsfjord and to Olaf the son of Eyvind who lived at Drangar. The first to arrive were Flosi and the men of Vik, who at once began to cut up the whale, carrying on shore the flesh as it was cut. At first there were about twenty men, but more came thronging in. Then there came the men of Kaldbak with four ships. Thorgrim laid claim to the whale and forbade the men of Vik to cut, distribute, or carry away any portion of it. Flosi called upon him to show proof that Eirik had in express words given over the drift to Onund; if not, he said he would prevent them by force. Thorgrim saw that he was outnumbered and would not venture on fighting. Then there came a ship across the fjords, the men rowing with all their might. They came up; it was Svan of Hol from

Bjarnarfjord with his men, and he at once told Thorgrim not to let himself be robbed. The two men had been great friends, and Svan offered Thorgrim his aid, which the brothers accepted, and they attacked valiantly. Thorgeir Bottleback was the first to get on to the whale where Flosi's men were. Thorfinn, who was spoken of before, was cutting it up, standing near the head on the place where he had been carving. "Here I bring you your axe," said Thorgeir. Then he struck at Thorfinn's neck and cut off his head. Flosi was up on the beach and saw it. He urged on his men to give it them back. They fought for a long time and the Kaldbak people were getting the best of it. Most of them had no weapons but the axes with which they were cutting up the whale and short knives. The men of Vik were driven from the whale on to the sandbanks. The men from the East, however, were armed and able to deal wounds. Their captain Steinn cut off the leg of Kolbeinn's son Ivar, and Ivar's brother Leif beat one of Steinn's men to death with a rib of the whale. Then they fought with anything they could get, and men were slain on both sides. At last Olaf came up with a number of ships from Drangar and joined Flosi; the men of Kaldbak were then overpowered by numbers. They had already loaded their ships, and Svan told them to get on board. They therefore retired towards the ships, the men of Vik after them. Svan on reaching the sea struck at Steinn their captain, wounding him badly, and then sprang into his own ship. Thorgrim gave Flosi a severe wound and escaped. Olaf wounded Ofeig Grettir fatally, but Thorgeir carried him off and sprang on to his ship with him. The Kaldbak men rowed into the fjord and the two parties separated.

The following verse was composed on these doings:

"Hard were the blows which were dealt at Rifsker;
no weapons they had but steaks of the whale.
They belaboured each other with rotten blubber.
Unseemly methinks is such warfare for men."

After this they made peace, and the dispute was laid before the All-Thing. On the side of the Kaldbak men were Thorodd the Godi, Skeggi of Midfjord, and many others from the South. Flosi was exiled, along with several others who had been with him. He was put to great expense, for he insisted upon paying all the fines himself. Thorgrim and his brothers were unable to show that they had paid any money either for the land or for the drift which Flosi claimed. The Lawman was Thorkell Mani, and the question was referred to him. He declared that by law something must have been paid, though not necessarily the full value.

"There was a case in point," he said, "between my grandfather Ingolf and a woman named Steinvor the Old. He gave her the whole of Rosmhvalanes and she gave him a dirty cloak for it; the transfer was afterwards held to be valid. That was a much more important affair than this. My advice is that the land be divided in equal portions between the two; and henceforward it shall be legally established that all drift shall be the property of the owner of the land upon which it has been stranded."

This was agreed to. Thorgrim and his brothers were to give up Reykjarfjord with all on that side, and were to keep Kamb. For Ofeig a large sum of money was paid, and Thorfinn was assessed at nothing at all; Thorgeir received compensation for the attack made upon his life, and all the parties were

reconciled. Flosi went to Norway with Steinn the captain and sold his lands in Vik to Geirmund Hvikatimbr, who lived there thenceforward.

The ship which Steinn's sailors had built was rather a tub. She was called Trekyllir--Tree-sack. Flosi went on his journey in her, but was driven back to Oxarfjord; out of this arose the saga of Bodmod the Champion and Grimolf.

Chapter 13

Thorgrim Settles at Bjarg and Marries. His Son Asmund Visits Norway and Marries Twice

After these events Thorgrim and his brothers divided up the property between them. Thorgrim took the movable property and Thorgeir the lands. Then Thorgrim went inland to Midfjord and bought some land at Bjarg with the aid of Skeggi. He married Thordis, the daughter of Asmund from Asmund's peak who had land in Thingeyrasveit. They had a son named Asmund, a great man and strong, also wise, and notable for his abundance of hair, which turned grey very early. He was called Longhair.

Thorgrim occupied himself with the management of his estate and kept all the men of his household hard at work. Asmund did not want to work, so that he and his father got on rather badly together. This continued until Asmund was grown up, when he asked his father to give him the means to go abroad. Thorgrim said he should have little enough, but he gave him some ready cash. So Asmund went away and soon increased his capital. He sailed to divers lands, became a great trader and very wealthy. He was popular and enjoyed good credit, and had many friends among the leading men of Norway.

One autumn Asmund was in the East on a visit to a certain magnate named Thorsteinn. His family came from the Upplands, and he had a sister named Rannveig who had excellent prospects. Asmund asked this girl in marriage and obtained her through the interest of her brother Thorsteinn; he settled there for a time and was highly thought of. He and Rannveig had a son named Thorsteinn, who became a handsome man, strong, and with a powerful voice. He was very tall and rather sluggish in his movements, wherefore he was nicknamed Dromund. When young Thorsteinn was half grown up his mother fell ill and died, and Asmund cared no more for Norway. Thorsteinn was taken over by his mother's relations along with his property, while Asmund went on voyages and became famous.

Asmund came in his ship to Hunavain, where Thorkell Krafla was chief of the Vatnsdalers. On hearing of Asmund's arrival Thorkell went to the ship and invited him to stay, and Asmund went to visit him in Marsstadir in Vatnsdal where he lived. Thorkell was a son of Thorgrim, the Godi of Karnsa, and a man of great experience. This was soon after the arrival of Bishop Fridrek and Thorvald the son of Kodran, who were living at Laekjamot when these events happened, preaching Christianity for the first time in the North of the island. Thorkell and many of his men received the prima signatio. Many things might be told of the dealings between the bishop's men and the Northerners, which, however, do not belong to this saga.

There was a girl named Asdis who was being brought up in Thorkell's house. She was a daughter of Bard the son of Jokull, the son of Ingimund the Old, the son of Thorsteinn, the son of Ketil Raum. Her mother's name was Aldis, whom we have already heard of as the daughter of Ofeig Grettir. Asdis was not betrothed as yet, and was a most desirable match, both on account of her connections and her wealth. Asmund now became sick of travelling about and wanted to settle down in Iceland. So he spoke up and asked for Asdis as his wife. Thorkell knew all about him and knew that he was a man of wealth, able to manage his affairs, so the marriage was arranged. Asmund married Asdis, and became a close friend of Thorkell. He was a great man of affairs, learned in the law and very strenuous. Soon afterwards Thorgrim Greyhead died at Bjarg; Asmund succeeded to his property and took up his residence at Bjarg.

Chapter 14

Asmund's Children. Grettir's Childhood

Asmund Longhair now set up a large and sumptuous household in Bjarg, where he maintained a numerous retinue and became very popular. His children were as follows: The eldest was Atli, an able and accomplished man, tactful and easy to deal with; he was much liked by all. His second son was called Grettir. He was very hard to manage in his bringing up. He spoke little and was rough in his manners and quarrelsome, both in words and deeds. He got little affection from his father Asmund, but his mother loved him dearly. Grettir was a handsome man in appearance, with a face rather broad and short, red-haired and somewhat freckled; not very precocious in his youth. There was a daughter named Thordis, who afterwards married Glum the son of Ospak, Kjallak's son from Skridinsenni. Another daughter was named Rannveig; she married Gamli the son of Thorhall of Vineland, and they dwelt at Melar in Hrutafjord and had a son named Grim. Glum and Thordis had a son named Ospak who fell into a dispute with Odd the son of Ofeig, which is told of in the "Saga of the Banded Men."

Grettir grew up at Bjarg until he was ten years old, when he began to develop a little. Asmund told him that he must do some work. Grettir said that would not suit him very well, but asked what he was to do.

"You must mind the geese," said Asmund.

"That is wretched work, only fit for an idiot," Grettir answered.

"You do that properly," his father said, "and we shall get on better together."

So Grettir went to mind the geese. There were fifty of them, and a number of goslings. Before long he began to find them troublesome, and the goslings would not come on quickly enough. This put him out, for he could never control his temper. Soon afterwards some wanderers found the goslings lying outside dead, and the geese with their wings broken. This was in the autumn. Asmund was very much annoyed and asked Grettir whether he had killed the birds. Grettir grinned and answered:

"Always when winter is coming on
I like to wring the goslings' necks.
If among them there are geese
I treat the creatures all alike."

"You shan't twist any more of their necks," said Asmund.

"The friend eye warns his friend of ill," answered Grettir.

"I will give you other work to do."

"He knoweth most who most hath tried. But what am I to do now?" Grettir asked.

"You shall rub my back when I am sitting by the fire, as I am in the habit of having it done."

"Warm work for the hands," he answered. "It is only fit for an idiot."

This for a time was Grettir's occupation. As the autumn advanced Asmund wanted more warmth, and was constantly telling Grettir to rub his back hard. It was the custom in those days for people to have large rooms with long fires in them in their houses, where men sat by the fire in the evenings on benches, sleeping afterwards at the side away from the fires. By day the women carded their wool there.

One evening when Grettir had to scratch Asmund's back his father said to him: "Now you will have to put aside your laziness, you good-for-nothing you."

Grettir answered: "'Tis ill to rouse a hasty temper."

"You are fit for nothing at all," said Asmund.

Grettir saw some wood-combs lying on one of the benches; he took up one of them and drew it along Asmund's back. Asmund sprang up and was going to thrash him with his stick, but he escaped. His mother came up and asked what they were fighting about. Grettir answered in a verse:

"Oh lady, the giver of treasure, I see,
has dire intent to burn my hands.
With nails uncut I was stroking his back.
Clearly I see the bird of wounds."

His mother was much vexed with Grettir for what he had done and said he would not grow up very prudent. The affair did not improve the relations between Asmund and his son.

Soon after this Asmund spoke to Grettir and told him to look after his horses. Grettir said that would be better than back-fire-warming.

"You are to do what I tell you," said Asmund. "I have a dun mare with a dark stripe down her back whom I call Keingala. She is very knowing about the weather and about rain coming. When she refuses to graze it never fails that a storm will follow. You are then to keep the horses under shelter in the stables, and when cold weather sets in keep them to the north of the ridge. I hope you will perform this duty better than the two which I gave you before."

Grettir said: "That is cold work, and fit for a man to do; but it seems to me rash to trust to the mare, when to my knowledge no one has done so before."

So Grettir took to minding the horses, and went on until Yule-tide was past, when very cold weather set in, with snow, so that grazing was difficult. He was very badly provided with clothes and little hardened to the weather. He began to feel it very cold, and Keingala always chose the windiest places whatever the weather was. She never came to the meadow early enough to get home before nightfall. Grettir then thought he would play a trick upon Keingala to pay her out for her wanderings. One morning early he came to the stables, opened the door and found Keingala standing in front of the manger. She had taken the whole of the fodder which had been given to all the horses for herself. Grettir jumped upon her back, with a sharp knife in his hand which he drew across her shoulder and along her back on both sides. The horse was fat and fresh; she shied back very frightened and kicked out till her hoofs rattled against the walls. Grettir fell off, but picked himself up and tried to mount her again. There was a sharp struggle, which ended in his shaving all the skin on her back down to her flank. Then he drove the horses out to the meadow. Keingala would not take a bite except off her back, and soon after noon she bolted off to the stables. Grettir locked the door and went home. Asmund asked him where the horses were; he said he had looked after them as usual. Asmund said there must be a storm close at hand if the horses would not stay out in such weather as there was then.

Grettir said: "Many seem wise who are lacking in wit."

The night passed and there was no storm. Grettir drove out the horses, but Keingala could not endure the pasture. Asmund thought it very strange that no change came in the weather. On the third morning he went himself to the horses and on seeing Keingala he said: "Ill indeed have the horses fared in this beautiful weather! Thy back will not deceive me, my Bleikala."

"The likely may happen--also the unlikely," said Grettir.

Asmund stroked the back of the horse and all her coat came off on his hand. He could not understand how she had got into that state and thought Grettir must have done it. Grettir grinned and said nothing. Asmund went home and became very abusive. He heard his wife say: "My son's watching of the horses must have prospered well."

Then he spoke a verse:

"He has cheated me sorely, and Keingala shorn.
'Tis the pride of a woman that urges her tongue.
Artful he holds my commands in derision.
Consider my verses, oh wife of my heart."

"I do not know," she said, "which seems to me the more perverse, for you to make him work, or for him always to get out of it in the same way."

"Now there shall be an end to it," said Asmund. "He must have something worse than merely making good the damage."

"Let neither speak of it to the other," said Grettir, and so it remained.

Asmund had Keingala killed. Many more childish pranks did Grettir play which are not told in the saga. He now began to grow very big, but men did not clearly know what strength he had because he had never been tried in wrestling. He kept making verses and ditties which were always a little ironical. He did not sleep in the common room and was generally very silent.

Chapter 15

Games at Midfjordvatn

There were then a good many youths growing up in Midfjord. A certain Skaldtorfa, whose home was in Torfustadir, had a son named Bersi, an accomplished young man and a clever poet. Two brothers named Kormak and Thorgils lived at Mel and had with them a youth named Odd, who was dependent upon them, and was nicknamed Odd the Needy-Skald. Another was named Audun; he grew up in Audunarstad in Vididal, a pleasant good-natured youth and the strongest of his age in the North. Kalf the son of Asgeir and his brother Thorvald lived at Asgeirsa. Grettir's brother Atli was then growing to a man; he was most gracious in manners and universally liked.

These youths used to play at ball together at Midfjord Water. Those from Midfjord and from Vididal used to meet there, and there came many from Vestrhof and Vatnsnes with some from Hrutafjord. Those who came from afar used to lodge there. Those who were about equal in the ball-game were matched together, and generally they had much fun in the autumn. Grettir went to the sports when he was fourteen years old at the request of his brother Atli. The parties were made up. Grettir was matched against Audun, the youth already mentioned, who was a few years the elder. Audun struck the ball over Grettir's head so that he could not reach it, and it bounded far away over the ice. Grettir lost his temper, thinking he had done it out of mischief, but he fetched the ball, brought it back and going up to Audun drove it straight into his forehead, so that the skin was broken.

Audun then struck at Grettir with the bat that he was holding, but Grettir ducked and the blow missed him. Then they seized each other with their arms and wrestled. It was evident to the people around that Grettir was stronger than they had supposed, for Audun was very strong indeed of body. They struggled long together until at last Grettir was thrown. Audun then set his knees on his stomach and dealt unmercifully with him. Atli and Bersi and a number of the others ran up and separated them. Grettir said they need not hold him like a mad dog, and added: "The thrall alone takes instant vengeance, the coward never."

The rest had no mind to let the affair create discord among them, and the brothers Kalf and Thorvald tried to reconcile them. Audun and Grettir were distantly related to each other. The games went on and there was no further disturbance.

Chapter 16

Grettir Kills Skeggi and is Outlawed for Three Years

Thorkell Krafla now began to grow very old. He was a great chieftain and held the Vatnsdal Godord. He was a close friend of Asmund Longhair, as befitted the near relations in which they stood to each other. He had, therefore, been in the habit of riding every year in the spring to Bjarg to visit his kinsmen there, and he did so in the spring which followed the events just related. Asmund and Asdis received him with both hands. He stayed there three nights and many a matter did the kinsmen discuss together. Thorkell asked Asmund what his heart told him about his sons, and what professions they were likely to follow. Asmund said that Atli would probably be a great landowner, very careful and wealthy.

"A useful man, like yourself," said Thorkell. "But what can you tell me of Grettir?"

"I can only say," he replied, "that he will be a strong man; but headstrong and quarrelsome. A heavy trial has he been to me."

"That does not look very promising, kinsman!" said Thorkell. "But how are we to arrange our journey to the Thing in the summer?"

"I am getting difficult to move," he said. "I would rather stay at home."

"Would you like Atli to go for you?"

"I don't think I can spare him," Asmund said, "because of the work and the provisioning. Grettir will not do anything. But he has quite wit enough to carry out the duties at the Thing on my behalf under your guidance."

"It shall be as you please," said Thorkell.

Then Thorkell made himself ready and rode home; Asmund dismissed him with presents.

A little later Thorkell journeyed to the Thing with sixty men. All the men of his godord went with him. They passed through Bjarg, where Grettir joined them. They rode South through the heath called Tvidaegra. There was very little grazing to be had in the hills, so they rode quickly past them into the cultivated land. When they reached Fljotstunga they thought it was time to sleep, so they took the bits from their horses and turned them loose with their saddles. They lay there well on into the day, and when they woke began to look for their horses. Every horse had gone off in a different direction and some had been rolling. Grettir could not find his horse at all. The custom was at that time that men should find their own provisions at the Thing, and most of them carried their sacks over their saddles. When Grettir found his horse its saddle was under its belly, and the sack of provisions gone. He searched about but could not find it. Then he saw a man running very fast and asked him who he was. He said his name was Skeggi and that he was a man from Ass in Vatnsdal in the North.

"I am travelling with Thorkell," he said. "I have been careless and lost my provision-bag."

"Alone in misfortune is worst. I also have lost my stock of provisions; so we can look for them together."

Skeggi was well pleased with this proposal, and so they went about seeking for a time. Suddenly, when Grettir least expected it, Skeggi started running with all his might along the moor and picked up the sack. Grettir saw him bend and asked what it was that he had picked up.

"My sack," he said.

"Who says so besides yourself?" Grettir asked. "Let me see it! Many a thing is like another."

Skeggi said no one should take from him what was his own. Grettir seized hold of the sack and they both pulled at it for a time, each trying to get his own way.

"You Midfjord men have strange notions," said Skeggi, "if you think that because a man is not so wealthy as you are, he is not to dare to hold to his own before you."

Grettir said it had nothing to do with a man's degree, and that each should have that which was his own.

Skeggi replied: "Audun is now too far away to strangle you as he did at the ball-play."

"That is well," said Grettir; "but however that may have been you shall not strangle me."

Skeggi then seized his axe and struck at Grettir, who on seeing it seized the handle of the axe with his left hand and pulled it forward with such force that Skeggi at once let go. The next moment it stood in his brain and he fell dead to the earth. Grettir took the sack, threw it across his saddle and rode back to his companions.

Thorkell rode on, knowing nothing of what had happened. Soon Skeggi was missed in the company, and when Grettir came up they asked him what news he had of Skeggi. He answered in a verse:

"Hammer-troll ogress has done him to death.
Thirsting for blood the war-fiend came.
With hard-edged blade she gaped, o'er his head,
nor spared she his teeth. I saw it myself."

Then Thorkell's men sprang up and said it was impossible that a troll should have taken the man in full daylight. Thorkell was silent for a moment. Then he said: "There must be something more in it. Grettir must have killed him. What was it that really happened, Grettir?"

Grettir then told him all about their fight. Thorkell said: "It is a most unfortunate occurrence, because Skeggi was entrusted to my service, and was a man of good family. I will take the matter upon myself and pay whatever compensation is adjudged. But a question of banishment does not lie with me. Now, Grettir, there are two things for you to choose between. Either you can go on to the Thing with us and take the chance of what may happen there, or you can turn back and go home."

Grettir decided to go on to the Thing, and to the Thing he went. The matter was taken up by the heirs of the man slain. Thorkell gave his hand to pay the compensation and Grettir was to be banished for three years.

On their way back from the Thing all the chiefs halted at Sledaass before they parted company. It was then that Grettir lifted a stone lying in the grass, which is still known as Grettishaf. Many went afterwards to see this stone and were astounded that so young a man should have lifted such a mountain.

Grettir rode home to Bjarg and told his father about his adventures. Asmund was much put out and said he would be a trouble to everybody.

Chapter 17

Grettir Sails for Norway and is Wrecked on Haramarsey

There dwelt at Reydarfell on the banks of the Hvita a man named Hafliði, a mariner, owning a ship of his own which was lying in dock in the Hvita river. He had as his mate a man named Bard who had a young and pretty wife. Asmund sent a man to Hafliði asking him to take Grettir and look after him. Hafliði answered that he had heard that Grettir was very difficult to get on with, but out of friendship for Asmund he took him. Grettir, therefore, prepared to go to sea. His father would not give him any outfit for his voyage beyond his bare provisions and a little wadmal. Grettir asked him to give him some sort of weapon. Asmund answered: "You have never been obedient to me. Nor do I know what you would do with a weapon that would be of any profit. I shall not give you any."

Grettir said: "Work not done needs no reward."

Father and son parted with little love between them. Many wished him a good voyage, but few a safe return. His mother went with him along the road. Before they parted she said: "You have not been sent off in the way that I should have wished, my son, or in a way befitting your birth. The most cruel thing of all, I think, is that you have not a weapon which you can use. My heart tells me that you will want one."

Then she took from under her mantle a sword all ready for use, a valuable possession. She said: "This was the sword of Jokull, my father's father and of the ancient Vatnsdal men, in whose hands it was blessed with victory. I give it to you; use it well."

Grettir thanked her warmly and said it would be more precious to him than any other possession though of greater value. Then he went on his way and Asdis wished him all possible happiness. He rode South over the heath and did not stop till he reached his ship. Hafliði received him well and asked him about his outfit for the voyage. Grettir spoke a verse:

"Oh trimmer of sails I my father is wealthy,
but poorly enough he sent me from home.
My mother it was who gave me this sword.
True is the saying: The mother is best."

Hafliði said it was evident that she had most thought for him.

Directly they were ready and had a wind they got under way. When they were out of shallow water they hoisted their sail. Grettir made himself a corner under the ship's boat, whence he refused to stir either to bale or to trim the sails or to do any work in the ship, as it was his duty to do equally with the other men; nor would he buy himself off. They sailed to the South, rounded Reykjanes and left the land behind them, when they met with stormy weather. The ship was rather leaky and became very uneasy in the gale; the crew were very much exhausted. Grettir only let fly satirical verses at them, which angered them sorely.

One day when it was very stormy and very cold the men called out to Grettir to get up and work; they said their claws were quite frozen. He answered:

"Twere well if every finger were froze
on the hands of such a lubberly crew."

They got no work out of him and liked him even worse than before, and said they would pay him out on his person for his squibs and his mutinous behaviour.

"You like better," they said, "to pat the belly of Bard the mate's wife than to bear a hand in the ship. But we don't mean to stand it."

The weather grew steadily worse; they had to bale night and day, and they threatened Grettir. Hafliði when he heard them went up to Grettir and said: "I don't think your relations with the crew are very good. You are mutinous and make lampoons about them, and they threaten to pitch you overboard. This is most improper."

"Why cannot they mind their own business?" Grettir rejoined. "But I should like one or two to remain behind with me before I go overboard."

"That is impossible," said Hafliði. "We shall never get on upon those terms. But I will make you a proposal about it."

"What is that?"

"The thing which annoys them is that you make lampoons about them. Now I suggest that you make a lampoon about me. Then, perhaps, they will become better disposed towards you."

"About you I will never utter anything but good," said he. "I am not going to compare you with the sailors."

"But you might compose a verse which should at first appear foul, but on closer view prove to be fair."

"That," he answered, "I am quite equal to."

Hafliði then went to the sailors and said: "You have much toil; and it seems that you don't get on with Grettir."

"His lampoons," they answered, "annoy us more than anything else."

Then Hafliði, speaking loud, said: "It will be the worse for him some day."

Grettir, when he heard himself being denounced, spoke a verse:

"Other the words that Hafliði spake
when he dined on curds at Reyðarfell.
But now two meals a day he takes
in the stead of the bays mid foreland shores."

The sailors were very angry and said he should not lampoon Hafliði for nothing. Hafliði said: "Grettir certainly deserves that you should take him down a little, but I am not going to risk my good name because of his ill-temper and caprice. This is not the time to pay him out, when we are all in such danger. When you get on shore you can remember it if you like."

"Shall we not endure what you can endure?" they said. "Why should a lampoon hurt us more than it does you?"

Hafliði said so it should be, and after that they cared less about Grettir's lampoons.

The voyage was long and fatiguing. The ship sprung a leak, and the men began to be worn out. The mate's young wife was in the habit of stitching Grettir's sleeves for him, and the men used to banter him about it. Hafliði went up to Grettir where he was lying and said:

"Arise from thy den! deep furrows we plough!
Remember the word thou didst speak to the fair.
Thy garment she sewed; but now she commands
that thou join in the toil while the land is afar."

Grettir got up at once and said:

"I will rise, though the ship be heavily rolling.
The woman is vexed that I sleep in my den.
She will surely be wrath if here I abide
while others are toiling at work that is mine."

Then he hurried aft where they were baling and asked what they wanted him to do. They said he would do little good. He replied: "A man's help is something." Hafliði told them not to refuse his help. "Maybe," he said, "he is thinking of loosening his hands if he offers his services."

In those days in sea-going ships there were no scuppers for baling; they only had what is called bucket or pot-baling, a very troublesome and fatiguing process. There were two buckets, one of which went down while the other came up. The men told Grettir to take the buckets down, and said they would try what he could do. He said the less tried the better, and went below and filled his bucket. There were two men above to empty the buckets as he handed them. Before long they both gave in from fatigue. Then four others took their places, but the same thing happened. Some say that before they were done eight men were engaged in emptying the buckets for him. At last the ship was baled dry. After this, the seamen altered their behaviour towards Grettir, for they realised the strength which was in him. From that time on he was ever the forwardest to help wherever he was required.

They now held an easterly course out to sea. It was very dark. One night when they least expected it, they struck a rock and the lower part of the ship began to fill. The boats were got out and the women put into them with all the loose property. There was an island a little way off, whither they carried as much of their property as they could get off in the night. When the day broke, they began to ask where they were. Some of them who had been about the country before recognised the coast of Sunnmore in Norway. There was an island lying a little off the mainland called Haramarsey, with a large settlement and a farm belonging to the Landman on it.

Chapter 18

Adventure in the Howe of Kar the Old

The name of the Landman who lived in the island was Thorfinn. He was a son of Kar the Old, who had lived there for a long time. Thorfinn was a man of great influence.

When the day broke, the people on the island saw that there were some sailors there in distress and reported it to Thorfinn, who at once set about to launch his large sixteen-oared boat. He put out as quickly as possible with some thirty men to save the cargo of the trader, which then sank and was lost, along with much property. Thorfinn brought all the men off her to his house, where they stayed for a week drying their goods. Then they went away to the South, and are heard of no more in this story.

Grettir stayed behind with Thorfinn, keeping very quiet and speaking little. Thorfinn gave him his board, but took little notice of him. Grettir held rather aloof, and did not accompany him when he went abroad every day. This annoyed Thorfinn, but he did not like to refuse Grettir his hospitality; he was a man who kept open house, enjoyed life and liked to see other men happy. Grettir liked going about and visiting the people in the other farms on the island. There was a man named Audun, who dwelt at Vindheim. Grettir went to see him daily and became very intimate with him, sitting there all day long.

One evening very late when Grettir was preparing to return home, he saw a great fire shoot up on the headland below Audun's place, and asked what new thing that might be. Audun said there was no pressing need for him to know.

"If they saw such a thing in our country," said Grettir, "they would say the fire came from some treasure."

"He who rules that fire," answered the man, "is one whom it will be better not to inquire about."

"But I want to know," Grettir said.

"On that headland," said Audun, "there is a howe, wherein lies Kar the Old, the father of Thorfinn. Once upon a time father and son had a farm-property on the island; but ever since Kar died his ghost has been walking and has scared away all the other farmers, so that now the whole island belongs to Thorfinn, and no man who is under Thorfinn's protection suffers any injury."

"You have done right to tell me," said Grettir. "Expect me here to-morrow morning, and have tools ready for digging."

"I won't allow you to have anything to do with it," said Audun, "because I know that it will bring Thorfinn's wrath down upon you."

Grettir said he would risk that.

The night passed; Grettir appeared early the next morning, and the bondi, who had got all the tools for digging ready, went with Grettir to the howe. Grettir broke open the grave, and worked with all his might, never stopping until he came to wood, by which time the day was already spent. He tore away the woodwork; Audun implored him not to go down, but Grettir bade him attend to the rope, saying that he meant to find out what it was that dwelt there. Then he descended into the howe. It was very dark and the odour was not pleasant. He began to explore how it was arranged, and found the bones of a horse. Then he knocked against a sort of throne in which he was aware of a man seated. There was much treasure of gold and silver collected together, and a casket under his feet, full of silver. Grettir took all the treasure and went back towards the rope, but on his way he felt himself seized by a strong hand. He left the treasure to close with his aggressor and the two engaged in a merciless struggle. Everything about them was smashed. The howedweller made a ferocious onslaught. Grettir for some time gave way, but found that no holding back was possible. They did not spare each other. Soon they came to the place where the horse's bones were lying, and here they struggled for long, each in turn being brought to his knees. At last it ended in the howedweller falling backwards with a horrible crash, whereupon Audun above bolted from the rope, thinking that Grettir was killed. Grettir then drew his sword Jokulsnaut, cut off the head of the howedweller and laid it between his thighs. Then he went with the treasure to the rope, but finding Audun gone he had to swarm up the rope with his hands. First he tied the treasure to the lower end of the rope, so that he could haul it up after him. He was very stiff from his struggle with Kar, but he turned his steps towards Thorfinn's house, carrying the treasure along with him. He found them all at supper. Thorfinn cast a severe glance at him and asked what he had found so pressing to do that he could not keep proper hours like other men.

"Many a trifle happens at eve," he replied.

Then he brought out all the treasure which he had taken from the howe and laid it on the table. One thing there was upon which more than anything else Grettir cast his eyes, a short sword, which he declared to be finer than any weapon which he had ever seen. It was the last thing that he showed. Thorfinn opened his eyes when he saw the sword, for it was an heirloom of his family and had never been out of it.

"Whence came this treasure?" he asked.

Grettir then spake a verse:

"Scatterer of gold! 'twas the lust of wealth
that urged my hand to ravish the grave.
This know; but none hereafter, I ween,
will be fain to ransack Fafnir's lair."

Thorfinn said: "You don't seem to take it very seriously; no one ever before had any wish to break open the howe. But since I know that all treasure which is hidden in the earth or buried in a howe is in a wrong place I hold you guilty of no misdeed, especially since you have brought it to me."

Grettir answered:

"The monster is slain! in the dismal tomb
I have captured a sword, dire wonder of men.
Would it were mine I a treasure so rare
I never would suffer my hand to resign."

"You have spoken well," Thorfinn answered. "But before I can give you the sword you must display your prowess in some way. I never got it from my father whilst he lived."

Grettir said: "No one knows to whom the greatest profit will fall ere all is done."

Thorfinn took the treasure and kept the sword in his own custody near his bed. The winter came on bringing Yule-tide, and nothing more happened that need be told of.

Chapter 19

Berserks at Haramarsey

The following summer jarl Eirik the son of Hakon was preparing to leave his country and sail to the West to join his brother-in-law King Knut the Great in England, leaving the government of Norway in the hands of Hakon his son, who, being an infant, was placed under the government and regency of Eirik's brother, jarl Sveinn.

Before leaving Eirik summoned all his Landmen and the larger bondis to meet him. Eirik the jarl was an able ruler, and they had much discussion regarding the laws and their administration. It was considered a scandal in the land that pirates and berserks should be able to come into the country and challenge respectable people to the holmgang for their money or their women, no weregild being paid whichever fell. Many had lost their money and been put to shame in this way; some indeed had lost their lives. For this reason jarl Eirik abolished all holmgang in Norway and declared all robbers and berserks who disturbed the peace outlaws. Thorfinn the son of Kar of Haramarsey, being a man of wise counsel and a close friend of the jarl, was present at the meeting.

The worst of these ruffians were two brothers named Thorir Paunch and Ogmund the Bad. They came from Halogaland and were bigger and stronger than other men. When angry they used to fall into the berserk's fury, and nothing escaped that was before them. They used to carry off men's wives, keep them for a week or two and then send them back. Wherever they came they committed robberies and other acts of violence. Jarl Eirik had declared them outlaws throughout Norway. The man who had been most active in getting them outlawed was Thorfinn, and they were determined to pay him out in full for his hostility.

The jarl's expedition is told of in his saga, and the government of Norway was left in the hands of jarl Sveinn, with the regency.

Thorfinn returned home and remained there until about Yule-tide, as has already been told. Towards Yule-tide he made ready to go on a journey to his farm called Slysford on the mainland, whither he had invited a number of his friends. He could not take his wife with him, because their grown-up daughter was lying sick, so they both had to stay at home. Grettir and eight of the serving men remained with them. Thorfinn went with thirty freemen to the Yule festival, at which there was much gladness and merriment.

Yule-eve set in with bright and clear weather. Grettir, who was generally abroad in the daytime, was watching the vessels which came along the coast, some from the North, some from the South, meeting at the places agreed upon for their drinking-bouts. The bondi's daughter was then better and could go out with her mother. So the day passed. At last Grettir noticed a ship rowing up to the island, not large, covered with shields amidships and painted above the water-line. They were rowing briskly and making for Thorfinn's boat-houses. They ran the boat on to the beach and all sprang ashore. Grettir counted the men; there were twelve in all, and their aspect did not look peaceful.

After hauling up their boat out of the water they all made for the boat-house where Thorfinn's great boat, mentioned already, was stowed. She always required thirty men to put her to sea, but the twelve shoved her along the beach at once. Then they brought their own boat into the boat-house. It was very evident to Grettir that they did not mean to wait for an invitation, so he went up to them, and greeting them in a friendly way asked who they were and who was their captain. The man whom he addressed answered him at once, saying his name was Thorir, called Paunch; the others were his brother Ogmund with their companions. "I think," he added, "that your master Thorfinn has heard our names mentioned. But is he at home?"

"You must be men who have luck," said Grettir, "you have come most opportunely, if you are the people I take you for. The bondi has gone from home with all his freedmen and will not be back until after Yule. The goodwife is at home with her daughter, and if I had any grudge to repay, I would come just as you do, for there is everything here which you want, ale to drink and other delights."

Thorir was silent while Grettir went on talking. Then he turned to Ogmund and said: "Has anything not happened as I said it would? I should not be sorry to punish Thorfinn for having got us outlawed. This man seems ready to tell us everything; we don't have to drag the words out of his mouth."

"Every one is master of his own words," said Grettir. "If you will come home with me I will give you what entertainment I can."

They thanked him and said they would accept his invitation. When they reached the house Grettir took Thorir by the hand and led him into the hall. He was very talkative. The mistress was in the hall decorating it and putting all in order. On hearing what Grettir said, she came to the door and asked who it was that Grettir was welcoming so warmly.

Grettir answered: "It will be advisable, mistress, to be civil to these men who have come. They are the bondi Thorir Paunch and his followers, and have come, all twelve of them, to spend Yule-tide here. It is fortunate for us, for we have had little company till now."

She said: "I don't call them bondis, nor are they decent men, but arrant robbers and malefactors. I would gladly pay a large portion of my property for them not to have come just at this time. It is an ill return that you make to Thorfinn for having saved you from shipwreck and kept you this winter like a free man, destitute as you were."

"You would do better," said Grettir, "if you first took off the wet clothes from your guests instead of casting reproaches upon me. You will have plenty of time for that."

Then Thorir said: "Don't be angry, mistress! You shall lose nothing by your husband being away, for you shall have a man in his place and so shall your daughter and all the other women."

"That is spoken like a man," said Grettir. "The women shall be quite contented with what they get."

Then all the women fled and began to weep, being overcome by terror. Grettir said to the berserks: "Give me all the things which you want to lay aside, your weapons and your wet clothes, for the men will not obey us while they are frightened."

Thorir said he cared little for the women's whining. "But," he said, "we mean to treat you in a different way from the other men of the house. It seems to me that we may make a comrade of you."

"See to that yourselves," said Grettir. "But I do not look upon all men alike."

Then they laid aside most of their weapons. Grettir said: "I think now you had better sit down at the table and have some drink. You must be thirsty after your rowing."

They said they were quite ready for a drink, but did not know where the cellar was. Grettir asked whether they would let him arrange for their entertainment, which they willingly agreed to. So Grettir went and fetched some ale which he gave them to drink. They were very tired and drank enormously. He kept them well plied with the strongest ale there was, and they sat there for a long time whilst he told them funny stories. There was a tremendous din amongst them all, and the servants had no wish to approach them.

Thorir said: "I never yet met with a stranger who treated me like this man. What reward shall we give you for all that you have done, Grettir?"

Grettir replied: "I don't expect any reward for my services at present. But if when you depart we are still as good friends as we seem to be now, I should very much like to join your company, and though I may not be able to do as much work as any of you, I will not be a hindrance in any doughty undertaking."

They were delighted, and wanted to swear fellowship with him at once. Grettir said that could not be, "for," he added, "there is truth in the saying that Ale is

another man, and such a thing should not be done hastily, so let it remain at what I said; we are both little in the habit of restraining ourselves."

They declared that they did not mean to go back. The night was now coming on and it was getting very dark. Grettir noticed that they were rather fuddled, and asked whether they did not think it was time to go to bed. Thorir said: "So it is; but I have to fulfil my promise to the mistress." Grettir then went out and called out loud: "Go to bed, women! Such is the will of Thorir the bondi."

The women execrated him and could be heard howling like wolves. The berserks then left the room. Grettir said: "Let us go outside; I will show you the room in which Thorfinn keeps his clothes."

They were agreeable and all went out to an enormous outhouse, which was very strongly built, and had a strong lock on the outer door. Adjoining it was a large and well-built privy, with only a wooden partition between it and the room of the outhouse, which was raised above the ground and had to be reached by steps. The berserks then began skylarking and pushing Grettir about. He fell down the in steps, as if in sport, and in a moment was out of the house, had pulled the bolt, slammed the door to, and locked it. Thorir and his mates thought at first that the door had swung to of itself, and paid little attention; they had a light with them by which Grettir had been showing them all Thorfinn's treasures, and they continued looking at them for some time.

Grettir went off to the homestead, and on reaching the door cried out very loud, asking where the mistress was. She was silent, being afraid to answer. He said: "Here is rather good sport to be had. Are there any arms which are good for anything?"

"There are arms," she said; "but I don't know for what purpose you want them."

"We will talk about that afterwards; but now let each do what he can; it is the last chance."

"Now indeed were God in the dwelling," she said, "if anything should happen to save us. Over Thorfinn's bed there hangs the great halberd which belonged to Kar the Old; there, too, is a helmet and a corselet and a good short sword. The weapons will not fail if your heart holds firm."

Grettir took the helmet and spear, girt the sword about him and went quickly out. The mistress called to her men and bade them follow their brave champion. Four of them rushed to their arms, but the other four durst not go near them.

Meantime the berserks thought that Grettir was a long time away and began to suspect some treachery. They rushed to the door and found it locked. They strained at the woodwork till every timber groaned. At last they tore down the wooden partition and so gained the passage where the privy was, and thence the steps. Then the berserks' fury fell upon them and they howled like dogs.

At that moment Grettir returned, and taking his halberd in both hands he thrust it right through Thorir's body just as he was about to descend the steps. The blade was very long and broad. Ogmund the Bad was just behind pushing him on, so that the spear passed right up to the hook, came out at his back between the shoulderblades and entered the breast of Ogmund. They both fell dead, pierced by the spear. Then all the others dashed down as they reached the

steps. Grettir tackled them each in turn, now thrusting with the spear, now hewing with the sword, while they defended themselves with logs lying on the ground or with anything else which they could get. It was a terrible trial of a man's prowess to deal with men of their strength, even unarmed.

Grettir slew two of the Halogaland men there in the enclosure. Four of the serving-men then came up. They had not been able to agree upon which arms each should take, but they came out to the attack directly the berserks were running away; when these turned against them they fell back on the house. Six of the ruffians fell, all slain by Grettir's own hand; the other six then fled towards the landing place and took refuge in the boat-house, where they defended themselves with oars. Grettir received a severe blow from one of them and narrowly escaped a serious hurt.

The serving-men all went home and told great stories of their own exploits. The lady wanted to know what had become of Grettir, but they could not tell her. Grettir slew two men in the boat-house, but the other four got away, two in one direction, two in another. He pursued those who were nearest to him. The night was very dark. They ran to Vindheim, the place spoken of before, and took refuge in a barn, where they fought for a long time until at last Grettir killed them. By this time he was terribly stiff and exhausted. The night was far spent; it was very cold and there were driving snow-storms. He felt little inclination to go after the two who yet remained, so he went back home. The goodwife kindled a light and put it in a window in the loft at the top of the house, where it served him as a guide, and he was able to find his way home by the light. When he came to the door the mistress came to meet him and bade him welcome.

"You have earned great glory," she said, "and have saved me and my household from a disgrace never to be redeemed if you had not delivered us."

"I think I am much the same person as I was last evening when you spoke so roughly to me," said Grettir.

"We knew not then the might that was in you," she said, "as we know it now. Everything in the house shall be yours, so far as it is fitting for me to bestow and right for you to receive. I doubt not that Thorfinn will reward you in a better way when he comes home."

"There is little that I want as a reward at present," said Grettir. "But I accept your offer until your husband returns. I think now that you will be able to sleep in peace undisturbed by the berserks."

Grettir drank little before he retired and lay all night in his armour. In the morning, directly the day broke, all the men of the island were called together to go forth and search for the two berserks who had escaped. They were found at the end of the day lying under a rock, both dead from cold and from their wounds; they were carried away and buried in a place on the shore beneath the tide, with some loose stones over them, after which the islanders returned home, feeling that they could live in peace. When Grettir came back to the house and met the mistress he spoke a verse:

"Near the surging sea the twelve lie buried.
I stayed not my hand but slew them alone.

Great lady! what deed that is wrought by a man shall be sung of as worthy if this be deemed small."

She answered: "Certainly you are very unlike any other man now living." She set him in the high seat and gave him the best of everything. So it remained until Thorfinn returned.

Chapter 20

Thorfinn's return. Grettir visits the North

When Yule-tide was past, Thorfinn made ready for his homeward journey and dismissed his many guests with gifts. He sailed with all his men and landed near the place where the boat-houses were.

They saw a ship lying on the sand which they at once recognised as his great boat. Thorfinn had heard nothing of the vikings and told his men to put him on shore, "for I suspect," he said, "that they are not friends who have been at work here."

Thorfinn was the first to land, and went straight to the boat-house, where he saw a craft which he knew at once to be that of the berserks. He said to his men: "I suspect that things have taken place here such that I would give the whole island and everything that is in it for them not to have happened."

They asked how that was.

"Vikings have been here, men whom I know as the worst in all Norway, namely Thorir Paunch and Ogmund the Bad. They will not have dealt gently with us. I mistrust that Icelander."

Then he spoke many things to his men. Grettir was at home and detained the men from going down to the shore. He said he did not care if the bondi got a little fright from what he saw. The goodwife asked his leave to go down, and she said she was mistress of her own ways, but that he was not going. So she hurried away to greet Thorfinn and embraced him joyfully. He was rejoiced to see her and said: "God be praised that I see you well and my daughter too. But what has happened to you since I left?"

"It has ended well," she said. "But we were nigh to suffering a disgrace which could never have been wiped out, had not your winter-guest aided us."

Thorfinn said: "Let us sit down and you shall tell me everything."

Then she told him fully all that had happened, praising highly Grettir's courage and resourcefulness. Thorfinn was silent while she was speaking, and when she had finished he said: "True indeed is the word, 'Long shall a man be tried'. But where is Grettir?"

"He is at home in the hall," she answered.

Then they went up to the house. Thorfinn went to Grettir and turned towards him and thanked him with the fairest words for his courageous conduct.

"I will say a word to you," he said, "which few would say to their friend. I would it might happen that you should need the help of a man, for you to know whether I count for anything or not; I cannot repay what you have done for me as long as you are not in straits. You shall have in my house whatever you desire, and shall be in the highest honour in my household."

Grettir thanked him and said he would have accepted his offer even if he had made it earlier.

Grettir stayed there the rest of the winter in high favour with Thorfinn. The fame of his deed spread through all Norway, especially in those parts where the berserks had ravaged most mercilessly. In the spring Thorfinn asked him what he would like to do. He said he would go North to Vagar while the fair was on there. Thorfinn said that any money which he required should be at his service; Grettir said he did not want more just then than enough to pay for his living. Thorfinn said that was his due, and brought him to a ship, where he gave him the excellent short sword. Grettir kept it as long as he lived; it was a most precious possession. Thorfinn bade him come to him if ever he wanted any help.

Grettir then travelled to Vagar, which was crowded with people. Many whom he had never set eyes on before greeted him warmly because of his exploit in killing the vikings, and several of the leading men invited him to stay with them, but he preferred to return to his friend Thorfinn. So he took his passage in a trading ship belonging to one Thorkell, a man of some consideration in Salfiti in Halogaland. Grettir went to visit Thorkell in his home, where he received a hearty welcome and a very pressing invitation to stay there for the winter. Grettir accepted the invitation and stayed the winter with Thorkell, who treated him with great honour.

Chapter 21

Adventure with a Bear

There was a man named Bjorn who was then on a visit to Thorkell. He was of a somewhat violent character of good family and related in some way to Thorkell. He was not generally liked, because he was too much given to talking against the men who were about Thorkell and drove many away from him. He and Grettir did not get on at all. Bjorn thought him of small account compared to himself; Grettir paid him little deference, and it became an open feud. Bjorn was a boisterous swaggering man, and many of the younger men imitated him, loitering about outside in the evenings.

It happened at the beginning of the winter that a savage brown bear broke out of its den and raged about destroying men and cattle. Every one declared that it had been provoked by the noise which Bjorn and his company made. The beast became most mischievous, attacking the flocks in the very face of the men themselves. Thorkell, being the wealthiest man of that part, suffered most. One day he called up his men to come with him and search out the bear's den. They found it in a cliff by the sea where there was a cave under an overhanging rock, with a narrow path leading to the entrance. Below was a sheer precipice down

to the beach, threatening certain death to any one who stumbled. In this den the bear lay in the daytime, going abroad at night. Fences were of no avail against him, nor could the dogs do anything, so that all were in the utmost distress. Thorkell's kinsman Bjorn declared that the main thing was gained now that they had found the den. "Now we shall see," he said, "how the game will go with me and my namesake." Grettir pretended not to hear what he said.

In the evenings when the others retired to bed, Bjorn used generally to go out. One night he went to the bear's den and found the creature inside, growling horribly. He lay down in the path, placing his shield over him, intending to wait until the beast came out as usual. Bruin, however, got wind of him and was rather slow in coming out. Bjorn got very sleepy where he was lying and could not keep awake; in the meantime out came the bear from his den and saw a man lying there. He clawed at him, dragged off his shield and threw it down the cliff. Bjorn woke up, not a little startled, took to his heels and ran off home, narrowly escaping the bear's clutches. His friends knew all about it, having watched his movements; on the next morning they found the shield and made great game of his adventure.

At Yule-time Thorkell himself went out to the den with Bjorn, Grettir and others of his men, a party of eight in all. Grettir had on a fur cape which he put off when they were attacking the bear. It was rather difficult to get at him, since they could only reach him with spear-thrusts, which he parried with his teeth. Bjorn kept urging them on to tackle him, but himself did not go near enough to be in any danger. At last, when no one was looking out, he took Grettir's fur cloak and threw it in to the bear. They did not succeed in getting the bear out, and when night came on turned to go home. Grettir then missed his cloak and saw that the bear had got it into his grip.

"Who has been playing tricks on me?" he cried. "Who threw my cloak into the cave?"

Bjorn answered: "He who did it will not be afraid to say so."

"Things of that sort do not trouble me much," said Grettir.

Then they started on their way home. After they had gone a little way Grettir's garter broke. Thorkell told them to wait for him, but Grettir said it was not necessary. Then Bjorn said: "There is no need to suppose that Grettir will run away from his cloak. He wants to have the honour of killing the beast all alone, and he will say that we eight men went away. Then he would appear to be what he is said to be. He has been backward enough all day."

"I don't know how you stand in that matter," said Thorkell. "You and he are not equal in valour; do not make any to-do about him."

Bjorn said that neither he nor Grettir should choose the words out of his mouth.

There was a hill between them and Grettir, who had turned back along the footpath. Now he had no others to reckon with in making the attack. He drew his sword Jokulsnaut and tied a loop round the handle which he passed over his wrist, because he thought that he could carry out his plans better if his hand were free. He went along the path. When the bear saw a man coming, he charged savagely, and struck at him with the paw that was on the side away

from the precipice. Grettir aimed a blow at him with his sword and cut off his paw just above the claws. Then the creature tried to strike him with his sound paw, but to do so he had to drop on the stump, which was shorter than he expected, and over he fell into Grettir's embraces. Grettir seized the beast by the ears and held him off so that he could not bite. He always said that he considered this holding back the bear the greatest feat of strength that he ever performed. The beast struggled violently; the space was very narrow, and they both fell over the precipice. The bear being the heavier came down first on the beach; Grettir fell on the top of him, and the bear was badly mauled on the side that was down. Grettir got his sword, ran it into the heart of the bear and killed him. Then he went home, after fetching his cloak which was torn to pieces. He also took with him the bit of the paw which he had cut off.

Thorkell was sitting and drinking when Grettir entered. They all laughed at the ragged cloak which he was wearing. Then he laid the piece of the paw upon the table. Thorkell said: "Where is my kinsman Bjorn? I never saw iron bite like that in your hands. Now I would like you to show Grettir some honour to make up for the shame which you cast upon him."

Bjorn said that could wait, and that it mattered little to him whether Grettir was pleased or not. Grettir then spoke a verse:

"Of't returned the watcher at night
trembling home, but sound in limb.
None ever saw me sit in the dusk
at the cave; yet now I am home returned."

"It is true," said Bjorn, "that you have fought well; and also true that our opinions differ. I suppose you think that your taunts hurt me."

Thorkell said: "I should be glad, Grettir, if you would not revenge yourself upon Bjorn. I will pay the full weregild of a man for you to be reconciled."

Bjorn said he might invest his money better than in paying for that; and that it would be better for him and Grettir to go on bickering since "each oak has that which it scrapes from the other." Thorkell said: "But I ask you, Grettir, to do so much for my sake as not to attack Bjorn while you are both with me."

"That I promise," said Grettir.

Bjorn said that he would walk without fear of Grettir wherever they met. Grettir grinned, and would accept no money on account of Bjorn. They stayed there the winter.

Chapter 22

Grettir Kills Bjorn and is Summoned Before Jarl Sveinn

In the spring Grettir went North to Vagar with Thorkell's men. They parted with friendship. Bjorn went West to England in Thorkell's ship, of which he was master, staying there for the summer and transacting the business which Thorkell had entrusted to him. In the end of the autumn he returned from the western parts. Grettir stayed in Vagar till the trading ships left, and then sailed

South with some of the traders, as far as the port of Gatar at the mouth of the Thrandheim's Fjord, where he set up the awnings to make a stay. When they were settled down a ship came up along the coast from the South, which they at once recognised as one of the ships from England. She made fast further out off the coast and her crew landed. Grettir went out with his companions to visit them. On their meeting Grettir found Bjorn amongst the company and said: "It is well that we meet here, for now we can continue our former quarrel. I should like to try which of us is the better man."

Bjorn said that was all past now, as far as he was concerned. "But," he said, "if there has been anything between us I will pay you such compensation that you shall be satisfied." Grettir spoke a verse:

"Time was when the bear was slain by my hand;
my cloak in tatters was torn.
A rascally knave was the cause of it all
but now he shall make me amends."

Bjorn said that weightier matters than this had been settled by payment. Grettir said that few men had any reason to act maliciously towards him; he had accepted no money-atonement, nor would he do so now; that if he had his way they should not both go away unhurt, and that if Bjorn refused to fight he would brand him as a coward. Bjorn saw that excuses would not avail him, so he took his arms and went out. They rushed at each other and fought; soon Bjorn was wounded and then he fell dead to the ground. On seeing that, his men went on board their ship, sailed away to the North along the coast to Thorkell's place and told him what had happened. He said it had not come sooner than he expected. Directly afterwards he sailed to the South to Thrandheim where he found jarl Sveinn.

Grettir, after slaying Bjorn, went to More to his friend Thorfinn and told him exactly what had happened. Thorfinn received him in a most friendly way. "I am glad," he said, "that you will now have need of a friend. You must stay with me until this affair is finished."

Grettir thanked him for his invitation and said he would accept it.

Jarl Sveinn was staying at Steinker in Thrandheim when he heard of the Slaying of Bjorn. With him was a brother of Bjorn named Hjarrandi, as one of his bodyguard. On hearing of Bjorn's death he became very angry and begged the jarl for his support in the matter, which the jarl promised that he should have. He sent messengers to Thorfinn to summon both him and Grettir to appear before him. Immediately on receiving the jarl's commands they both made ready and came to Thrandheim. The jarl held a council on the matter and ordered Hjarrandi to be present. Hjarrandi said he was not going to weigh his brother against his purse, and that he must either follow him or avenge him.

When the case was looked into, it became evident that Bjorn had given Grettir many provocations. Thorfinn offered to pay a fine such as the jarl thought suitable to the position of his kinsman, and dwelt at length upon Grettir's achievement in killing the berserks, and how he had delivered the men in the North from them.

The jarl answered: "Truth do you speak, Thorfinn! that was indeed a cleansing! It would befit us well to accept the compensation for your sake. Grettir, too, is a fine fellow, and noted for his strength and valour."

Hjarrandi, however, would accept no compensation, and the meeting came to an end. Thorfinn appointed one of his kinsmen, Arnbjorn, to accompany Grettir every day, for he knew that Hjarrandi was plotting against his life.

Chapter 23

Grettir kills Hjarrand

One day Grettir and arnbjorn were walking along the road for their diversion when they passed a gate, whence a man rushed out holding an axe aloft with both hands and struck at Grettir, who was not on his guard and was moving slowly. arnbjorn, however, saw the man coming, seized Grettir and pushed him aside with such force that he fell on his knee. the axe struck him in the shoulder-blade and cut down to below the arm, inflicting a severe wound. Grettir turned quickly and drew his sword; he saw that it was hjarrandi who had attacked him. the axe had stuck fast in the road, and hjarrandi was slow in recovering it. Grettir struck at him and cut off his arm at the shoulder. then there came running up five of hjarrandi's followers and a battle began with them. they were soon routed; Grettir and arnbjorn killed the five who were with hjarrandi; one man escaped and bore the tale to the jarl forthwith. the jarl was very angry indeed, and summoned the assembly for the next day. thorfinn and his party appeared thereat. the jarl brought a charge of manslaughter against Grettir, who admitted it and said that he had been obliged to defend himself. "i bear the marks of it," he said. "i should have been killed if arnbjorn had not defended me."

The jarl said it was a pity he had not been killed, for this affair would lead to many a man being slain if he lived.

There had come to the jarl's court Bersi the son of Skaldtorfa, Grettir's comrade and friend. He and Thorfinn stepped before the jarl and begged for pardon for Grettir. They asked that the jarl should decide the matter himself as he thought best, only that Grettir should have his life and the freedom of the country. The jarl was averse to any terms being granted to him, but gave way to their entreaties. He granted immunity to Grettir until the spring, but not absolutely until Gunnar the brother of Bjorn and Hjarrandi should be present. Gunnar was a landed proprietor in Tunsberg.

In the spring the jarl ordered Grettir and Thorfinn to appear at Tunsberg, where he himself intended to be while the shipping was assembled. So thither they went, and found the jarl was already in the town. There Grettir met his brother Thorsteinn Dromund, who greeted him joyfully and invited him to be his guest. He was a landowner in the town. Grettir told him all about his case, and Thorsteinn took his view of it, but told him to beware of Gunnar. So the spring passed.

Chapter 24

Grettir Kills Gunnar. His Friends Rally Round Him and Save Him from the Vengeance of the Jarl

Gunnar was in the town and was plotting against Grettir's life. Wherever he went Gunnar dogged his steps wherever he found a chance of getting near him. One day Grettir was sitting in a booth and drinking, because he wanted to keep out of Gunnar's way. Suddenly there was a bang at the door, so hard that it broke in pieces, and in rushed four men armed and attacked Grettir. They were Gunnar with his followers. Grettir seized his arms which were hanging above his head and ran into a corner, where he defended himself, holding his shield before him, and hewing with his sword. They made little way against him. One blow he succeeded in delivering upon one of Gunnar's followers, who needed nothing more. Then Grettir advanced, driving them before him out of the booth, and killing another of them. Gunnar would fain have got away with his men, but on reaching the door he caught his foot on the doorstep, fell over and was not able to recover himself at once. He held his shield before him and retreated as Grettir pressed him hard. Then Grettir sprang on to the crossbenches near the door. Gunnar's hands and the shield were still inside the door, and Grettir struck down between him and the shield, cutting off both his hands at the wrist. He fell backwards out of the door, and Grettir gave him his death-blow. Then the man who was behind him got on his feet and ran off at once to tell the jarl what had happened. Sveinn was furious, and called the assembly to meet there and then in the town. When Thorfinn and Thorsteinn Dromund heard the news, they called all their followers and friends together and went to the meeting in force. The jarl was very wroth, and it was no easy matter to get speech with him. Thorfinn was the first to come before the jarl, and he said: "I have come to offer an honourable atonement for the man who has been slain by Grettir. The judgment shall remain with you alone if you but spare his life."

The jarl replied in great wrath: "It is too late to beg for Grettir's life, and you have no case that I can see. He has killed three brothers, one at the feet of the other; men of noble minds who would not weigh each other against their purses. Now, Thorfinn, it will not avail you to beg for Grettir; I will not do such a wrong in the land as to accept atonement for such a crime as this."

Then Bersi the son of Skaldtorfa came up and begged the jarl to accept blood-money. "Grettir," he said, "is a man of high birth and is my good friend. I offer you what I possess. May you see, my lord, that it is better by sparing one man to earn the goodwill of many and to fix the penalty yourself than to refuse honourable terms and risk whether you can arrest the man or not."

The jarl replied: "You do right, Bersi; and herein as ever you show your worth. But I do not mean to break the laws of the land by granting life to a man who has forfeited it."

Then Thorsteinn Dromund came forward, and he, too, offered blood-money on behalf of Grettir, adding many fair words thereto.

The jarl asked what moved him to offer blood-money for the man. Thorsteinn said Grettir was his brother. The jarl said he had not known that.

"It shows a manly spirit in you," he said, "that you want to help him. But as I am determined not to accept blood-money in this case, I must treat the requests of all of you alike. I must have Grettir's life whatever it cost, directly I can get him."

Then the jarl rose quickly up and refused to hear any more about atonement. They all went home with Thorsteinn and made their preparations, whereupon the jarl ordered all the men of his guard under arms and went forth with a large force. Before they came up, Grettir's friends had made ready to defend the house. Thorfinn, Thorsteinn, Grettir himself, and Bersi were in the forefront, each with a large force of followers behind him. The jarl summoned them to give up Grettir, and not to bring trouble on themselves. They repeated their former offers, but the jarl would not listen to them. Thorfinn and Thorsteinn said that more was at stake for the jarl than the taking of Grettir's life. "One fate shall fall upon us all," they cried, "and men shall say that you have given much for the life of one man when we are all laid low with the ground."

The jarl said he would spare none of them, and they were on the very verge of a battle when many of the well-disposed men came up to him and begged him not to land himself in such a difficulty. He should bear in mind that these men would work great havoc among his own followers before they fell. The jarl thought this counsel was wise and let himself be somewhat appeased. Then the terms of atonement were settled. Thorfinn and Thorsteinn were ready to pay so long as Grettir's life was spared. The jarl said: "You must know that although I agree to this compromise, I do not consider it a full amnesty. Only I have no mind to fight against my own men, although they appear to hold me of little account in the matter."

Thorfinn said: "Yours is all the greater honour, my lord, that you will have the fixing of the penalty yourself."

The jarl said that Grettir should have leave from him to depart from the country in peace for Iceland, directly there was a ship leaving, if so it seemed good to them. They agreed and paid the money to the jarl to his satisfaction. They parted with little friendship. Grettir went with Thorfinn after bidding an affectionate farewell to his brother Thorsteinn.

Thorfinn earned great honour for the support which he had given Grettir against such odds as he had to deal with. Not one of the men who had helped Grettir was ever received into favour again with the jarl, excepting Bersi.

Grettir then spoke:

"Comrade of Odin, Thorfinn was born
to rescue my life from the fangs of Hel.
No less was Thorsteinn Dromund's aid
when I was doomed to the realm of the dead."

And again:

"The prince's retainers withdrew in fear
when Bersi threatened their hearts to pierce."

Grettir returned with Thorfinn to the North and stayed with him until he found a ship with some traders who were bound for Iceland. Thorfinn gave him many valuable garments and a coloured saddle with a bridle. They parted with

friendship, and Thorfinn invited him to come and see him if ever he returned to Norway.

Chapter 25

Events in Iceland. Thorgils Maksson Attacked by the Foster- Brothers and Slain

Asmund Longhair was in Bjarg whilst Grettir was away, and was much respected as a bondi in Midfjord. Thorkell Krafla had died during Grettir's absence. Thorvald Asgeirsson dwelt in Ass in Vatnsdal and was a great chief. He was the father of Dalla who married Isleif, afterwards bishop in Skalaholt. Asmund had great support from Thorvald in legal suits and in other matters.

There grew up in Asmund's household a youth named Thorgils Maksson, a near kinsman of his. Thorgils was a strong man of his body and made much money under Asmund's guidance; he dwelt at Laekjamot, on a property which Asmund had bought for him. Thorgils was a good manager and went to Strandir every year, where he obtained whales and other things. He was a man of great courage, and went as far as the eastern Almenningar. At that time the two foster-brothers Thorgeir Havarsson and Thormod Coalbrow-Skald were very much to the front; they kept a boat, gathering what they wanted from the country around, and had not the reputation of dealing fairly.

One summer Thorgils Maksson found a whale at the Almenningar and went out at once with his men to cut it up. When the two foster-brothers heard of it they went there too, and at first it seemed as if matters would be settled peaceably. Thorgils proposed that they should share equally that part of the whale which was yet uncut, but they wanted to have all the uncut part or else to share the entire whale. Thorgils positively refused to give up any portion of what had already been cut. They began to use threats and at last took to their arms and fought. Thorgeir and Thorgils fought each of them desperately together without either prevailing. After a long and furious battle Thorgils fell slain by Thorgeir. In another place Thormod was fighting with the followers of Thorgils, and he overcame them, killing three. Those who remained of Thorgils' party went off after he fell to Midfjord, taking his body with them and feeling that they had suffered a great loss. The foster-brothers took possession of the whole whale. The affair is referred to in the memorial poem which Thormod composed upon Thorgeir.

News of the death of his kinsman was brought to Asmund Longhair, on whom as nearest of kin the blood-feud devolved. He went to the spot, called witnesses to testify to the wounds and brought the case before the All-Thing, which appeared to be the proper course in this case where the act had been committed in another quarter. Some time was passed over this.

Chapter 26

Feud with the Foster-Brothers is Taken up by Asmund and Thorsteinn Kuggason

There was a man named Thorsteinn; he was the son of Thorkell Kuggi, the son of Thord Yeller, the son of Olaf Feilan, the son of Thorsteinn the Red, the son of Aud the Deep-Minded. Thorsteinn Kuggason's mother was Thurid, daughter of Asgeir Hothead. Asgeir was the brother of Asmund Longhair's father. Thorsteinn Kuggason was equally responsible in the blood-feud over Thorgils' death with Asmund Longhair, who now sent for him. Thorsteinn was a great warrior and very masterful. He came at once to his kinsman Asmund and they had a talk together about the suit. Thorsteinn was for extreme measures. He said that no blood-money should be accepted; that with their connections they were powerful enough to carry through a sentence of either banishment or death on the slayer. Asmund said he would support any measures whatever that he chose to adopt. They rode then North to Thorvald their kinsman and asked for his support, which he at once promised them. So the suit was begun against Thorgeir and Thormod. Thorsteinn then rode home to his dwelling at Ljarskogar in the Hvamm district. Skeggi in Hvamm also joined Thorsteinn. He was a son of Thorarin Fylsenni, a son of Thord the Yeller. His mother was Fridgerd, a daughter of Thord from Hofdi. They had a large following at the All-Thing and pressed their suit valiantly. Asmund and Thorvald rode from the North with sixty men, halting several days at Ljarskogar.

Chapter 27

Sentences on the Foster-Brothers

There dwelt at Reykjaholar a man named Thorgils, the son of Ari, the son of Mar, the son of Atli the Red, the son of Ulf Squint-Eye, the first settler at Reykjanes. Thorgils' mother was Thorgerd the daughter of Alf of Dalir. Alf had another daughter named Thorelf, who was the mother of Thorgeir the son of Havar. Thorgeir, therefore, had a very strong backing through his connections, for Thorgils was the most powerful chief in the Vestfirding quarter. He was very open-handed and gave hospitality to any free-man for as long as he would. There was consequently always a crowd at Reykjaholar, and he lived in great grandeur. He was both kindly and wise. Thorgeir stayed with him in the winter and went to Strandir in the summer.

After slaying Thorgils the son of Mak, Thorgeir went to Reykjaholar and told Thorgils Arason what had happened. Thorgils told him his house was open to him. "But," he said, "they will press the matter vigorously, and I am most unwilling to involve myself in difficulties. I will send a man now to Thorsteinn and offer him blood-money for the Thorgils affair; if he will not accept it I will not adopt any violent measures."

Thorgeir declared that he would submit to his wisdom. In the autumn Thorgils sent a messenger to Thorsteinn Kuggason to try and arrange a settlement.

Thorsteinn was very disinclined to accept any money in atonement for the slaying of Thorgils, although for the others he was willing to follow the advice of men of counsel. Thorgils on receiving the report of his messenger called Thorgeir to a consultation with him and asked him what support he thought was proper. Thorgeir said that if a sentence of banishment were passed upon him he would go. Thorgils said that his resolve would be put to the trial.

There came a ship into the Nordra river in Borgarfjord, and Thorgils secretly took a passage in her for the two foster-brothers. The winter now passed, and Thorgils heard that Thorsteinn and his party had assembled in great force for the All-Thing and were then in Ljarskogar. So he put off his departure, intending that they should arrive from the North before he came up from the West. So it came to pass. Thorgils and Thorgeir then rode towards the South, Thorgeir killing one Boggul-Torfi on the way at Marskelda and two other men named Skuf and Bjarni at Hundadal. Thormod sings about this affair in his Thorgeir's drapa:

"The hem slew the son of Mak;
there was storm of swords and raven's food.
Skuf and Bjarni he also felled;
gladly he bathed his hands in blood."

Thorgils settled for the slaying of Skuf and Bjarni there and then in the dale, and was delayed by the affair longer than he intended. Thorgeir embarked on the ship and Thorgils went to the Thing, where he did not arrive before they were proceeding to judgment in Thorgils Maksson's case. Asmund Longhair then called for the defence. Thorgils appeared before the court and offered blood-money in atonement on condition of Thorgeir not being sentenced to banishment. He endeavoured to meet the charge by pleading that finds in the Almenningar were free to all. The question whether this was a valid defence or not was referred to the Lawman, who at that time was Skapti. He upheld Asmund's view on account of their kinship together. He declared that this was indeed the law in the case of men equal in position, but that a bondi had precedence over a vagrant. Asmund further urged that Thorgils had offered to share the uncut portion of the whale with the foster-brothers when they arrived. The defendants were non-suited on that point. Then Thorsteinn and his party pressed their suit resolutely and said they would not be satisfied with any sentence short of banishment upon Thorgeir. Thorgils saw that no choice was left to him but either to call up his men and try to carry his case with violence, the issue of which would be uncertain, or else to submit to the sentence demanded by the opposite party, and since Thorgeir was already on board his ship Thorgils had no desire to press the case further. Thorgeir was banished, but Thormod was discharged upon payment of blood-money.

Asmund and Thorsteinn gained great glory by this case. The men rode home from the Thing. There were some who said that Thorgils had not taken much trouble in the case, but he paid little attention and let them say what they pleased.

When Thorgeir heard that he was banished, he said that if he had his way, those who had brought it about should be repayed in full before it was over.

There was a man named Gaut, called the son of Sleita, a kinsman of Thorgils Maksson. He was intending to travel in the same ship with Thorgeir, with whom

he was on very bad terms, and frowned on him. The traders thought it would never do to have them both together in the ship. Thorgeir said he did not care what Gaut did with his eyebrows. Nevertheless they decided that Gaut should leave the ship. He went into the northern districts and for that time nothing happened, but the affair brought about a feud between them which broke out later.

Chapter 28

Grettir's Visit to Audun in Vididal; Offers His Services to Bard

In the course of that summer Grettir Asmundsson returned to Skagafjord. He had such a reputation for strength that none of the younger men was supposed to be his equal. He soon came to his home in Bjarg, and Asmund gave him a fitting welcome. Atli was then managing the property and the brothers agreed well together, but Grettir became so over-weening that he thought nothing was beyond his powers.

Many of the youths with whom Grettir had played at Midfjordsvatn before he left were now grown up. Audun, the son of Asgeir, the son of Audun, was now living at Audunarstad in Vididal. He was a good bondi and a kindly man, and was the strongest of all the men in the northern parts, as well as the most modest.

Grettir had not forgotten how he had seemingly been worsted by Audun at the ball-play, as related above, and he was anxious to try which of them had gained most since. With this object he went at the beginning of the hay-harvest to Audunarstad. Grettir put on all his finery and rode with the coloured and richly ornamented saddle which Thorfinn had given him, on a splendid horse and in his best armour to Audun's place, where he arrived early in the day and knocked at the door. Few of the men were in the house, and to Grettir's question whether Audun was at home, they replied that he had gone to the hill-dairy to bring home some produce. Grettir took the bridle off his horse. The hay had not been mown in the meadow and the horse went for the part where the grass was thickest. Grettir entered the room and sat down on the bench, where he fell asleep. Soon Audun returned home and saw a horse in the meadow with a coloured saddle on its back. He was bringing two horses loaded with curds in skins tied at the mouth--so-called "curd-bags." Audun took the skins off the horses and was carrying them in his arms so that he could not see in front of him. Grettir's leg was stretched out before him and Audun stumbled over it, falling on the curd-bags which broke at the neck. Audun sprang up and asked what rascal that was in his house. Grettir told him his name.

"That was very awkward of you," said Audun. "But what do you want here?"

"I want to fight with you."

"First I must look after my dairy produce," Audun said.

"You can do that," answered Grettir, "if you have no one else to do it for you."

Audun bent down, gathered up the skin and threw it right into Grettir's breast, telling him to take what he sent him. Grettir was all covered with curds, and felt more disgusted than at any wound which Audun could have given him. Then they went for each other and wrestled pretty smartly. Grettir rushed at him, but Audun escaped his grasp. He saw, however, that Grettir had gained upon him. They drove up and down the room, overthrowing everything that was near them. Neither of them spared himself, but Grettir had the advantage, and at last Audun fell, after tearing off all Grettir's weapons. They struggled hard and the din was terrific.

Then there was a loud noise below. Grettir heard a man ride up to the house, get off his horse and come quickly inside. He saw a handsome man in a red jacket wearing a helmet. Hearing the commotion going on in the room where they were wrestling, he came in and asked what was in the room. Grettir told him his name; "but who is it that wants to know?" he asked.

"My name is Bardi," answered the stranger.

"Are you Bardi the son of Gudmund from Asbjarnarnes?"

"The same," he replied. "But what are you after?"

Grettir said: "I and Audun are playing here."

"I don't know about your play," said Bardi. "But you are not alike. You are overbearing and insolent, while he is modest and good-natured. Let him get up at once."

Grettir said: "Many a man seizes the lock for the door. You would do better to avenge your brother Hall than to come between me and Audun when we are contending."

"I am always hearing that," said Bardi, "and I don't know whether I shall ever obtain my vengeance. But I want you to leave Audun in peace, for he is a quiet man."

Grettir said he was willing to do so because of Bardi's intercession, though he did not like it much. Bardi asked what they were contending about. Grettir replied in a verse:

"I know not if for all your pride
he may not try your throat to squeeze.
Thus when within my home I dwelt
did he once belabour me."

Bardi said there was certainly some excuse if he was taking revenge. "Let me now settle it between you," he said. "Let matters remain as they are and cease your strife."

So they consented, for they were kinsmen. But Grettir had little liking for Bardi or his brothers. They all rode away together. On the way Grettir said: "I hear, Bardi, that you intend to go South to Borgarfjord this summer; I propose that I shall go with you, which I think is more than you deserve."

Bardi was very pleased with this offer, and at once accepted it most thankfully. Then they parted. Bardi then turned back and said to Grettir: "I would like it to

be understood that you only come with me if it meets with Thorarin's approval, since all the arrangements for the expedition are with him."

"I thought," said Grettir, "you were competent to make your arrangements for yourself. I do not leave my affairs to other people to settle. I shall take it very ill if you refuse me."

Then each went his own way. Bardi promised to send Grettir word "if Thorarin wished him to go." Otherwise he could remain quietly at home. Grettir then rode to Bjarg and Bardi to his own home.

Chapter 29

Horse-fight at Langafit

That summer there was a great horse-fight at Langafit below Reykir, whither a great many people came together. Atli of Bjarg had a good stallion of Keingala's race; grey with a dark stripe down his back. Both father and son valued the horse highly. The two brothers Kormak and Thorgils in Mel had a very mettlesome brown stallion, and they arranged to match it against that of Atli from Bjarg. Many other excellent stallions were brought. Odd the Needy-Skald, Kormak's kinsman, had the charge of their horse on the day. He had grown into a strong man and had a high opinion of himself; he was surly and reckless. Grettir asked Atli who should have charge of his stallion.

"That is not so clear to me," said Atli.

"Would you like me to back him?"

"Then you must keep very cool, kinsman," he said. "We have men to deal with who are rather overbearing."

"Let them pay for their bluster," he said, "if they cannot control it."

The stallions were led out and the mares tethered together in the front on the bank of the river. There was a large pool just beyond the bank. The horses fought vigorously and there was excellent sport. Odd managed his horse pluckily and Grettir gave way before him, holding the tail of his horse with one hand and with the other the stick with which he pricked it on. Odd stood in the front by his horse, and one could not be sure that he was not pricking off Atli's horse from his own. Grettir pretended not to notice it. The horses then came near the river. Then Odd thrust with his pointed stick at Grettir and caught him in the shoulder-blade which Grettir was turning towards him. He struck pretty hard, and the flesh swelled up, but Grettir was little hurt. At the same moment the horses reared. Grettir ducked beneath the flank of his horse and drove his stick into Odd's side with such violence that three of his ribs were broken and Odd fell into the pool with his horse and all the mares that were tethered there by the bank. Some people swam out and rescued them. There was great excitement about it. Kormak's men on one side and those of Bjarg on the other seized their arms, but the men of Hrutafjord and Vatnsnes came between them and parted them.

They all went home in great wrath, but kept quiet for a time. Atli said very little, but Grettir rather swaggered and said that they should meet again if he had his way.

Chapter 30

Thorbjorn Oxmain and the Fray at Hrutafjardarhals

There was living in Thoroddsstad in Hrutafjord a man named Thorbjorn. He was the son of Arnor Downy-Nose, the son of Thorodd who had settled in that side of Hrutafjord which lies opposite to Bakki. Thorbjorn was of all men the strongest, and was called Oxmain. He had a brother named Thorodd, called Drapustuf. Their mother was Gerd, daughter of Bodvar from Bodvarsholar. Thorbjorn was a great swashbuckler and kept a large troop of followers. He was noted for being worse at getting servants than other men, and scarcely paid them any wages. He was not a man easy to deal with. There was a kinsman of his, also named Thorbjorn, called Slowcoach. He was a mariner, and the two namesakes were in partnership together. He was always at Thoroddsstad and people did not think he made Thorbjorn any better. He liked to talk scandal and spoke offensively of several men.

There was a man named Thorir, a son of Thorkell, at Bordeyr. He first lived at Melar in Hrutafjord, and had a daughter named Helga who married Sleitu-Helgi. After the Fagrabrekka affair Thorir went South to Haukadal and lived in Skard, selling the property at Melar to Thorhall the Winelander, the son of Gamli. Thorhall's son Gamli married Rannveig, the daughter of Asmund Longhair, Grettir's sister. They lived at that time in Melar and had a good establishment. Thorir of Skard had two sons, Gunnar and Thorgeir, both promising men, who took over the property from their father, but were always with Thorbjorn Oxmain, and became very overbearing.

In the summer of that year Kormak and Thorgils rode with a kinsman of theirs named Narfi South to Nordrardal on some business. Odd the Needy-Skald had recovered from the hurts which he had received at the horse-fight and was of the party. While they were south of the heath Grettir was journeying from his home at Bjarg with two of Atli's men. They rode to Burfell and then across the neck to Hrutafjord, reaching Melar in the evening, where they spent three nights. Rannveig and Gamli gave Grettir a friendly reception and invited him to stay, but he wanted to return home. Then Grettir learned of Kormak's company having come from the South, and that they were staying at Tunga at night. He prepared to leave Melar at once, and Gamli offered to send some of his men with him. Gamli's brother Grim, who was very smart and active, and another rode with Grettir. The party, five in number, came to Hrutafjardarhals to the west of Burfell, where the great stone called Grettishaf lies; he struggled a long time with that stone, trying to lift it, and delayed his journey thereby until Kormak's party came up. Grettir went towards them and both alighted from their horses. Grettir said it would be more seemly for free men to set to work with all their might instead of fighting with sticks like tramps. Kormak told them to take up the challenge like men and to do their best. So they went for each other. Grettir was

in front of his men and told them to see that nobody got behind him. They fought for a time and both were hurt.

On the same day Thorbjorn Oxmain had ridden across the neck to Burfell, and as he returned with Thorbjorn Slowcoach, Gunnar and Thorgeir, the sons of Thorir, and Thorodd Drapustuf, he saw the fight going on. On coming up, Thorbjorn called upon his men to go between them, but they were struggling so furiously that nobody could get at them. Grettir was making a clean sweep of everything round him. Before him were the sons of Thorir. He pushed them back and they both fell over. This made them furious, and the consequence was that Gunnar gave a blow to one of Atli's men which killed him. Thorbjorn on seeing that ordered them to separate, saying that he would give his support to whichever side obeyed him. By then two of Kormak's men had fallen. Grettir saw that it would scarcely do if Thorbjorn joined the opposite side, so he gave up the battle. All those who had fought were wounded. Grettir was much disgusted at their being separated, but both parties rode home and were not reconciled on this occasion.

Thorbjorn Slowcoach made great game of all this, and the relations between the men of Bjarg and Thorbjorn Oxmain became strained in consequence, until at last there was a regular feud, which however broke out later. No compensation was offered to Atli for his man, and he went on as if he knew nothing of it. Grettir stayed at Bjarg till the Tvi-month. It is not known that he and Kormak ever met again; at least it is not mentioned anywhere.

Chapter 31

Grettir's Vain Endeavour to Provoke Bard

Bardi the son of Gudmund and his brothers rode home to Asbjarnarnes when they left Grettir. They were the sons of Gudmund the son of Solmund. Solmund's mother was Thorlaug, daughter of Saemund the Southerner, the foster-brother of Ingimund the Old. Bardi was a man of great distinction. Soon he went to see his foster-father Thorarin the Wise, who welcomed him and asked what help he had been able to obtain, for Bardi's journey had been arranged beforehand by them both. Bardi answered that he had engaged a man whose help he thought worth more than that of two others. Thorarin was silent for a moment and then said: "That must be Grettir the son of Asmund."

"The guess of the wise is truth," said Bardi. "That is the very man, my foster-father."

Thorarin answered: "It is true that Grettir is beyond all other men of whom there is now choice in the country; nor will he be easily subdued by arms so long as he is sound. But great arrogance is in him now, and I have misgivings as to his luck. It is important for you that all your men on your expedition are not men of an evil star. It is enough if he does not fare with you. He shall not come if my counsel is followed."

"I did not expect, my foster-father," said he, "that you would deny me the man who is bravest in all that he undertakes. A man in such straits as I seem to be in cannot provide against everything."

"It will be better for you," he replied, "to let me provide."

So it came about that as Thorarin desired, word was not sent to Grettir. Bardi went to the South and the battle of the Heath was fought.

Grettir was at Bjarg when he received the news that Bardi had started on his expedition. He was very angry that word had not been sent to him, and said it should not end there. He found out when they were expected back from the South, and rode off to Thoreyjargnup, where he meant to lie in wait for Bardi and his men as they rode back. He left the homestead behind and remained at the cliffs. On that day rode Bardi back from the battle of the Heath from Tvidaegra; there were six of them in his party, all sorely wounded. When they came to the homestead Bardi said: "There is a man up there on the cliff, very tall and armed. Whom do you take him for?"

They could not say who he was. Bardi said: "I believe it is Grettir the son of Asmund. If it is, he will be wanting to meet us, for I expect he is little pleased at not having been with us. It seems to me that we are not in a very fit condition if he wants to annoy us. I will send home to Thoreyjargnup for some men and not allow myself to be put out by his evil intentions."

They said that was the best thing he could do, and it was done. Bardi's party rode on; Grettir watched where they were going and went there too. They met and greeted each other. Grettir asked what the news was, and Bardi told him without hesitation. Grettir asked who had been with them. Bardi answered that his brothers and Eyjvolf his brother-in-law had been with him.

"You have wiped out your disgrace," said Grettir. "Now the next thing is for us two here to try which is the stronger."

"I have more urgent business," said Bardi, "than to fight with you about nothing. I think I may be excused that now."

"It seems to me that you are afraid, Bardi; that is the reason why you dare not fight me."

"Call it what you please. If you wish to bully, find some one else; that seems to be what you want, for your insolence passes all bounds."

Grettir thought luck was against him. He hesitated now whether he should attack any of them; it seemed rather rash as they were six and he was only one. Then the men from Thoreyjargnup came up and joined Bardi's party, so he left them and went back to his horse. Bardi and his men went on, and there was no greeting between them when they parted. We are not told that any strife arose between Bardi and Grettir after this.

Grettir once said that he would trust himself to fight with most men if there were not more than three against him. Even with four he would not give way without trying, but more he would not attempt, except in self-defence. Thus he says in a verse:

"Oh skilled in war! When three are before me
I yet will endeavour to fight with them all.
But more than four I dare not encounter
in the clashing of arms, if the choice is with me."

On leaving Bardi, Grettir returned to Bjarg, and was much aggrieved at finding nothing to try his strength on. He sought everywhere for something to fight with.

Chapter 32

Spook at Thorhallsstad. Glam the Shepherd Killed by a Fiend. His Ghost Walks

There was a man named Thorhall living in Thorhallsstad in Forsaeludal, up from Vatnsdal. He was the son of Grim, the son of Thorhall, the son of Fridmund, who was the first settler in Forsaeludal. Thorhall's wife was named Gudrun; they had a son named Grim and a daughter named Thurid who were just grown up. Thorhall was fairly wealthy, especially in live-stock. His property in cattle exceeded that of any other man. He was not a chief, but an honest bondi nevertheless. He had great difficulty in getting a shepherd to suit him because the place was haunted. He consulted many men of experience as to what he should do, but nobody gave him any advice which was of any use. Thorhall had good horses, and went every summer to the Thing. On one occasion at the All-Thing he went to the booth of the Lawman Skapti the son of Thorodd, who was a man of great knowledge and gave good counsel to those who consulted him. There was a great difference between Thorodd the father and Skapti the son in one respect. Thorodd possessed second sight, but was thought by some not to be straight, whereas Skapti gave to every man the advice which he thought would avail him, if he followed it exactly, and so earned the name of Father-betterer.

So Thorhall went to Skapti's booth, where Skapti, knowing that he was a man of wealth, received him graciously, and asked what the news was.

"I want some good counsel from you," said Thorhall.

"I am little fit to give you counsel," he replied; "but what is it that you need?"

"It is this: I have great difficulty in keeping my shepherds. Some get injured and others cannot finish their work. No one will come to me if he knows what he has to expect."

Skapti answered: "There must be some evil spirit abroad if men are less willing to tend your flocks than those of other men. Now since you have come to me for counsel, I will get you a shepherd. His name is Glam, and he came from Sylgsdale in Sweden last summer. He is a big strong man, but not to everybody's mind."

Thorhall said that did not matter so long as he looked after the sheep properly. Skapti said there was not much chance of getting another if this man with all his strength and boldness should fail. Then Thorhall departed. This happened towards the end of the Thing.

Two of Thorhall's horses were missing, and he went himself to look for them, which made people think he was not much of a man. He went up under Sledaass and south along the hill called Armannsfell. Then he saw a man coming down from Godaskog bringing some brushwood with a horse. They met and Thorhall asked him his name. He said it was Glam. He was a big man with an extraordinary expression of countenance, large grey eyes and wolfgrey hair. Thorhall was a little startled when he saw him, but soon found out that this was the man who had been sent to him.

"What work can you do best?" he asked.

Glam said it would suit him very well to mind sheep in the winter.

"Will you mind my sheep?" Thorhall asked. "Skapti has given you over to me."

"My service will only be of use to you if I am free to do as I please," he said. "I am rather crossgrained when I am not well pleased."

"That will not hurt me," said Thorhall. "I shall be glad if you will come to me."

"I can do so," he said. "Are there any special difficulties?"

"The place seems to be haunted."

"I am not afraid of ghosts. It will be the less dull."

"You will have to risk it," said Thorhall. "It will be best to meet it with a bold face."

Terms were arranged and Glam was to come in the autumn. Then they parted. Thorhall found his horses in the very place where he had just been looking for them. He rode home and thanked Skapti for his service.

The summer passed. Thorhall heard nothing of his shepherd and no one knew anything about him, but at the appointed time he appeared at Thorhallsstad. Thorhall treated him kindly, but all the rest of the household disliked him, especially the mistress. He commenced his work as shepherd, which gave him little trouble.

He had a loud hoarse voice. The beasts all flocked together whenever he shouted at them. There was a church in the place, but Glam never went to it. He abstained from mass, had no religion, and was stubborn and surly. Every one hated him.

So the time passed till the eve of Yule-tide. Glam rose early and called for his meal. The mistress said: "It is not proper for Christian men to eat on this day, because to-morrow is the first day of Yule and it is our duty to fast to-day."

"You have many superstitions," he said; "but I do not see that much comes of them. I do not know that men are any better off than when there was nothing of that kind. The ways of men seemed to me better when they were called heathen. I want my food and no foolery."

"I am certain," she said, "that it will fare ill with you to-day if you commit this sin."

Glam told her that she should bring his food, or that it would be the worse for her. She did not dare to do otherwise than as he bade her. When he had eaten

he went out, his breath smelling abominably. It was very dark; there was driving snow, the wind was howling and it became worse as the day advanced. The shepherd's voice was heard in the early part of the day, but less later on. Blizzards set in and a terrific storm in the evening. People went to mass and so the time passed. In the evening Glam did not return. They talked about going out to look for him, but the storm was so violent and the night so dark that no one went. The night passed and still he had not returned; they waited till the time for mass came. When it was full day some of the men set forth to search. They found the animals scattered everywhere in the snow and injured by the weather; some had strayed into the mountains. Then they came upon some well-marked tracks up above in the valley. The stones and earth were torn up all about as if there had been a violent tussle. On searching further they came upon Glam lying on the ground a short distance off. He was dead; his body was as black as Hel and swollen to the size of an ox. They were overcome with horror and their hearts shuddered within them. Nevertheless they tried to carry him to the church, but could not get him any further than the edge of a gully a short way off. So they left him there and went home to report to the bondi what had happened. He asked what could have caused Glam's death. They said they had tracked him to a big place like a hole made by the bottom of a cask thrown down and dragged along up below the mountains which were at the top of the valley, and all along the track were great drops of blood. They concluded that the evil spirit which had been about before must have killed Glam, but that he had inflicted wounds upon it which were enough, for that spook was never heard of again. On the second day of the festival they went out again to bring in Glam's body to the church. They yoked oxen to him, but directly the downward incline ceased and they came to level ground, they could not move him; so they went home again and left him. On the third day they took a priest with them, but after searching the whole day they failed to find him. The priest refused to go again, and when he was not with them they found Glam. So they gave up the attempt to bring him to the church and buried him where he was under a cairn of stones.

It was not long before men became aware that Glam was not easy in his grave. Many men suffered severe injuries; some who saw him were struck senseless and some lost their wits. Soon after the festival was over, men began to think they saw him about their houses. The panic was great and many left the neighbourhood. Next he began to ride on the house-tops by night, and nearly broke them to pieces. Almost night and day he walked, and people would scarcely venture up the valley, however pressing their business. The district was in a grievous condition.

Chapter 33

Doings of Glam's ghost. Awful Condition of Vatnsdal

In the spring Thorhall procured servants and built a house on his lands. As the days lengthened out the apparitions became less, until at midsummer a ship sailed up the Hunavatn in which was a man named Thorgaut. He was a foreigner, very tall and powerful; he had the strength of two men. He was travelling on his own account, unattached, and being without money was

looking out for employment. Thorhall rode to the ship, saw him and asked if he would take service with him. Thorgaut said he would indeed, and that there would be no difficulties.

"You must be prepared," said Thorhall, "for work which would not be fitting for a weak-minded person, because of the apparitions which have been there lately. I will not deceive you about it."

"I shall not give myself up as lost for the ghostlings," he said.

"Before I am scared some others will not be easy. I shall not change my quarters on that account."

The terms were easily arranged and Thorgaut was engaged for the sheep during the winter. When the summer had passed away he took over charge of them, and was on good terms with everybody. Glam continued his rides on the roofs. Thorgaut thought it very amusing and said the thrall must come nearer if he wished to frighten him. Thorhall advised him not to say too much, and said it would be better if they did not come into conflict.

Thorgaut said: "Surely all the spirit has gone out of you. I shall not fall dead in the twilight for stories of that sort."

Yule was approaching. On the eve the shepherd went out with his sheep. The mistress said: "Now I hope that our former experiences will not be repeated."

"Have no fear for that, mistress," he said. "There will be something worth telling of if I come not back."

Then he went out to his sheep. The weather was rather cold and there was a heavy snowstorm. Thorgaut usually returned when it was getting dark, but this time he did not come. The people went to church as usual, but they thought matters looked very much as they did on the last occasion. The bondi wanted them to go out and search for the shepherd, but the churchgoers cried off, and said they were not going to trust themselves into the power of trolls in the night; the bondi would not venture out and there was no search. On Yule day after their meal they went out to look for the shepherd, and first went to Glam's cairn, feeling sure that the shepherd's disappearance must be due to him. On approaching the cairn they saw an awful sight; there was the shepherd, his neck broken, and every bone in his body torn from its place. They carried him to the church and no one was molested by Thorgaut.

Glam became more rampageous than ever. He was so riotous that at last everybody fled from Thorhallsstad, excepting the bondi and his wife.

Thorhall's cowherd had been a long time in his service and he had become attached to him; for this reason and because he was a careful herdsman he did not want to part with him. The man was very old and thought it would be very troublesome to have to leave; he saw, too, that everything the bondi possessed would be ruined if he did not stay to look after them. One morning after midwinter the mistress went to the cow-house to milk the cows as usual. It was then full day, for no one would venture out of doors till then, except the cowherd, who went directly it was light. She heard a great crash in the cow-house and tremendous bellowing. She rushed in, shouting that something awful, she knew not what, was going on in the cow-house. The bondi went out

and found the cattle all goring each other. It seemed not canny there, so he went into the shed and there saw the cowherd lying on his back with his head in one stall and his feet in the other.

He went up and felt him, but saw at once that he was dead with his back broken. It had been broken over the flat stone which separated the two stalls. Evidently it was not safe to remain any longer on his estate, so he fled with everything that he could carry away. All the live-stock which he left behind was killed by Glam. After that Glam went right up the valley and raided every farm as far as Tunga, while Thorhall stayed with his friends during the rest of the winter. No one could venture up the valley with a horse or a dog, for it was killed at once. As the spring went on and the sun rose higher in the sky the spook diminished somewhat, and Thorhall wanted to return to his land, but found it not easy to get servants. Nevertheless, he went and took up his abode at Thorhallsstad. Directly the autumn set in, everything began again, and the disturbances increased. The person most attacked was the bondi's daughter, who at last died of it. Many things were tried but without success. It seemed likely that the whole of Vatnsdal would be devastated unless help could be found.

Chapter 34

Grettir Visits his Uncle Jokull

We have now to return to Grettir, who was at home in Bjarg during the autumn which followed his meeting with Warrior-Bardi at Thoreyjargnup. When the winter was approaching, he rode North across the neck to Vididal and stayed at Audunarstad. He and Audun made friends again; Grettir gave him a valuable battle-axe and they agreed to hold together in friendship. Audun had long lived there, and had many connections. He had a son named Egill, who married Ulfheid the daughter of Eyjolf, the son of Gudmund; their son Eyjolf, who was killed at the All-Thing, was the father of Orin the chaplain of Bishop Thorlak.

Grettir rode to the North to Vatnsdal and went on a visit to Tunga, where dwelt his mother's brother, Jokull the son of Bard, a big strong man and exceedingly haughty. He was a mariner, very cantankerous, but a person of much consideration. He welcomed Grettir, who stayed three nights with him. Nothing was talked about but Glam's walking, and Grettir inquired minutely about all the particulars. Jokull told him that no more was said than had really happened.

"Why, do you want to go there?" he asked.

Grettir said that it was so. Jokull told him not to do it.

"It would be a most hazardous undertaking," he said. "Your kinsmen incur a great risk with you as you are. There does not seem to be one of the younger men who is your equal. It is ill dealing with such a one as Glam. Much better fight with human men than with goblins of that sort."

Grettir said he had a mind to go to Thorhallsstad and see how things were. Jokull said: "I see there is no use in dissuading you. The saying is true that Luck is one thing, brave deeds another."

"Woe stands before the door of one but enters that of another," answered Grettir. "I am thinking how it may fare with you yourself before all is done."

"It may be," said Jokull, "that we both see what is before us, and yet we may not alter it."

Then they parted, neither of them well pleased with the other's prophetic saying.

Chapter 35

Fight with Glam's Ghost

Grettir rode to Thorhallsstad where he was welcomed by the bondi.

He asked Grettir whither he was bound, and Grettir said he wished to spend the night there if the bondi permitted. Thorhall said he would indeed be thankful to him for staying there.

"Few," he said, "think it a gain to stay here for any time. You must have heard tell of the trouble that is here, and I do not want you to be inconvenienced on my account. Even if you escape unhurt yourself, I know for certain that you will lose your horse, for no one can keep his beast in safety who comes here."

Grettir said there were plenty more horses to be had if anything happened to this one.

Thorhall was delighted at Grettir's wishing to remain, and received him with both hands. Grettir's horse was placed securely under lock and key and they both went to bed. The night passed without Glam showing himself.

"Your being here has already done some good," said Thorhall. "Glam has always been in the habit of riding on the roof or breaking open the doors every night, as you can see from the marks."

"Then," Grettir said, "either he will not keep quiet much longer, or he will remain so more than one night. I will stay another night and see what happens."

Then they went to Grettir's horse and found it had not been touched. The bondi thought that all pointed to the same thing. Grettir stayed a second night and again the thrall did not appear. The bondi became hopeful and went to see the horse. There he found the stable broken open, the horse dragged outside and every bone in his body broken. Thorhall told Grettir what had occurred and advised him to look to himself, for he was a dead man if he waited for Glam.

Grettir answered: "I must not have less for my horse than a sight of the thrall."

The bondi said there was no pleasure to be had from seeing him: "He is not like any man. I count every hour a gain that you are here."

The day passed, and when the hour came for going to bed Grettir said he would not take off his clothes, and lay down on a seat opposite to Thorkell's sleeping apartment. He had a shaggy cloak covering him with one end of it fastened under his feet and the other drawn over his head so that he could see through the neck-hole. He set his feet against a strong bench which was in front of him.

The frame-work of the outer door had been all broken away and some bits of wood had been rigged up roughly in its place. The partition which had once divided the hall from the entrance passage was all broken, both above the cross-beam and below, and all the bedding had been upset. The place looked rather desolate. There was a light burning in the hall by night.

When about a third part of the night had passed Grettir heard a loud noise. Something was going up on to the building, riding above the hall and kicking with its heels until the timbers cracked again. This went on for some time, and then it came down towards the door. The door opened and Grettir saw the thrall stretching in an enormously big and ugly head. Glam moved slowly in, and on passing the door stood upright, reaching to the roof. He turned to the hall, resting his arms on the cross-beam and peering along the hall. The bondi uttered no sound, having heard quite enough of what had gone on outside. Grettir lay quite still and did not move. Glam saw a heap of something in the seat, came farther into the hall and seized the cloak tightly with his hand. Grettir pressed his foot against the plank and the cloak held firm. Glam tugged at it again still more violently, but it did not give way. A third time he pulled, this time with both hands and with such force that he pulled Grettir up out of the seat, and between them the cloak was torn in two. Glam looked at the bit which he held in his hand and wondered much who could pull like that against him. Suddenly Grettir sprang under his arms, seized him round the waist and squeezed his back with all his might, intending in that way to bring him down, but the thrall wrenched his arms till he staggered from the violence. Then Grettir fell back to another bench. The benches flew about and everything was shattered around them. Glam wanted to get out, but Grettir tried to prevent him by stemming his foot against anything he could find. Nevertheless Glam succeeded in getting him outside the hall. Then a terrific struggle began, the thrall trying to drag him out of the house, and Grettir saw that however hard he was to deal with in the house, he would be worse outside, so he strove with all his might to keep him from getting out. Then Glam made a desperate effort and gripped Grettir tightly towards him, forcing him to the porch. Grettir saw that he could not put up any resistance, and with a sudden movement he dashed into the thrall's arms and set both his feet against a stone which was fastened in the ground at the door. For that Glam was not prepared, since he had been tugging to drag Grettir towards him; he reeled backwards and tumbled hind-foremost out of the door, tearing away the lintel with his shoulder and shattering the roof, the rafters and the frozen thatch. Head over heels he fell out of the house and Grettir fell on top of him. The moon was shining very brightly outside, with light clouds passing over it and hiding it now and again. At the moment when Glam fell the moon shone forth, and Glam turned his eyes up towards it. Grettir himself has related that that sight was the only one which ever made him tremble. What with fatigue and all else that he had endured, when he saw the horrible rolling of Glam's eyes his heart sank so utterly that he had not strength to draw his sword, but lay there well-nigh betwixt life and death. Glam possessed more malignant power than most fiends, for he now spoke in this wise:

"You have expended much energy, Grettir, in your search for me. Nor is that to be wondered at, if you should have little joy thereof. And now I tell you that you shall possess only half the strength and firmness of heart that were decreed to

you if you had not striven with me. The might which was yours till now I am not able to take away, but it is in my power to ordain that never shall you grow stronger than you are now. Nevertheless your might is sufficient, as many shall find to their cost. Hitherto you have earned fame through your deeds, but henceforward there shall fall upon you exile and battle; your deeds shall turn to evil and your guardian-spirit shall forsake you. You will be outlawed and your lot shall be to dwell ever alone. And this I lay upon you, that these eyes of mine shall be ever before your vision. You will find it hard to live alone, and at last it shall drag you to death."

When the thrall had spoken the faintness which had come over Grettir left him. He drew his short sword, cut off Glam's head and laid it between his thighs. Then the bondi came out, having put on his clothes while Glam was speaking, but he did not venture to come near until he was dead. Thorhall praised God and thanked Grettir warmly for having laid this unclean spirit. Then they set to work and burned Glam to cold cinders, bound the ashes in a skin and buried them in a place far away from the haunts of man or beast. Then they went home, the day having nearly broken.

Grettir was very stiff and lay down to rest. Thorhall sent for some men from the next farms and let them know how things had fared. They all realised the importance of Grettir's deed when they heard of it; all agreed that in the whole country side for strength and courage and enterprise there was not the equal of Grettir the son of Asmund.

Thorhall bade a kindly farewell to Grettir and dismissed him with a present of a fine horse and proper clothes, for all that he had been wearing were torn to pieces. They parted in friendship. Grettir rode to Ass in Vatnsdal and was welcomed by Thorvald, who asked him all about his encounter with Glam. Grettir told him everything and said that never had his strength been put to trial as it had been in their long struggle. Thorvald told him to conduct himself discreetly; if he did so he might prosper, but otherwise he would surely come to disaster. Grettir said that his temper had not improved, that he had even less discretion than before, and was more impatient of being crossed. In one thing a great change had come over him; he had become so frightened of the dark that he dared not go anywhere alone at night. Apparitions of every kind came before him. It has since passed into an expression, and men speak of "Glam's eyes" or "Glam visions" when things appear otherwise than as they are.

Having accomplished his undertaking Grettir rode back to Bjarg and spent the winter at home.

Chapter 36

Thorbjorn Slowcoach at Home

Thorbjorn Oxmain gave a great feast in the autumn at which many were assembled, whilst Grettir was in the North in Vatnsdal. Thorbjorn Slowcoach was there and many things were talked about. The Hrutafjord people inquired about Grettir's adventure on the ridge in the summer. Thorbjorn Oxmain praised Grettir's conduct, and said that Kormak would have had the worst of it if no one

had come to part them. Then Thorbjorn Slowcoach said: "What I saw of Grettir's fighting was not famous; and he seemed inclined to shirk when we came up. He was very ready to leave off, nor did I see him make any attempt to avenge the death of Atli's man. I do not believe there is much heart in him, except when he has a sufficient force behind him."

Thorbjorn went on jeering at him in this way. Many of the others had something to say about it, and they thought that Grettir would not leave it to rest if he heard what Thorbjorn was saying.

Nothing more happened at the festivities; they all went home, and there was a good deal of ill-will between them all that winter, though no one took any action. Nothing more happened that winter.

Chapter 37

Grettir Sails for Norway and Kills Thorbjorn Slowcoach

Early in the spring, before the meeting of the Thing, there arrived a ship from Norway. There was much news to tell, above all of the change of government. Olaf the son of Harald was now king, having driven away jarl Sveinn from the country in the spring which followed the battle of Nesjar. Many noteworthy things were told of King Olaf. Men said that he took into favour all men who were skilled in any way and made them his followers. This pleased many of the younger men in Iceland and made them all want to leave home. When Grettir heard of it he longed to go too, deeming that he merited the king's favour quite as much as any of the others. A ship came up to Gasar in Eyjafjord; Grettir engaged a passage in her and prepared to go abroad. He had not much outfit as yet.

Asmund was now becoming very infirm and scarcely left his bed. He and Asdis had a young son named Illugi, a youth of much promise. Atli had taken over all the management of the farm and the goods, and things went much better, for he was both obliging and provident.

Grettir embarked on his ship. Thorbjorn Slowcoach had arranged to travel in the same vessel without knowing that Grettir would be in her. Some of his friends tried to dissuade him from travelling in Grettir's company, but he insisted upon going. He was rather a long time over his preparations and did not get to Gasar before the ship was ready to sail. Before he left home Asmund Longhair was taken ill and was quite confined to his bed. Thorbjorn Slowcoach arrived on the beach late in the day, when the men were going on board and were washing their hands outside near their booths. When he rode up to the rows of booths they greeted him and asked what news there was.

"I have nothing to tell," he said, "except that the valorous Asmund at Bjarg is now dead."

Some of them said that a worthy bondi had left the world and asked how it happened.

"A poor lot befell his Valour," he replied. "He was suffocated by the smoke from the hearth, like a dog. There is no great loss in him, for he was in his dotage."

"You talk strangely about such a man as he was," they said. "Grettir would not be much pleased if he heard you."

"I can endure Grettir's wrath," he said. "He must bear his axe higher than he did at Hrutafjardarhals if he wishes to frighten me."

Grettir heard every word that Thorbjorn said, but took no notice as long as he was speaking. When he had finished Grettir said:

"I prophesy, Slowcoach, that you will not die of the smoke from the hearth, and yet perhaps you will not die of old age either. It is strange conduct to say shameful things of innocent men."

Thorbjorn said: "I have nothing to unsay. I never thought you would fire up like this on the day when we got you out of the hands of the men of Mel who were belabouring you like an ox's head."

Then Grettir spoke a verse:

"Too long is the tongue of the spanner of bows.
Full often he suffers the vengeance due.
Slowcoach! I tell thee that many a man
has paid for less shameful speech with his life."

Thorbjorn said his life was neither more nor less in danger than it was before.

"My prophecies are not generally long-lived," said Grettir, "nor shall this one be. Defend yourself if you will; you never will have better occasion for it than now."

Grettir then struck at him. He tried to parry the blow with his arm, but it struck him above the wrist and glanced off on to his neck so that his head flew off. The sailors declared it was a splendid stroke, and that such were the men for the king. No one would grieve, they said, because a man so quarrelsome and scurrilous as Thorbjorn had been killed.

Soon after this they got under way and towards the end of the summer reached the south coast of Norway, about Hordland, where they learned that King Olaf was in the North at Throndheim. Grettir took a passage thither with some traders intending to seek audience of the king.

Chapter 38

Grettir Fetches Fire--the Sons of Thorir are Burnt

There was a man named Thorir dwelling in Gard in Adaldal. He was a son of Skeggi Bodolfsson, who had settled in Kelduhverfi, on lands extending right up to Keldunes, and had married Helga the daughter of Thorgeir at Fiskilaek. Thorir was a great chief, and a mariner. He had two sons whose names were Thorgeir and Skeggi, both men of promise, and pretty well grown up at that time. Thorir had been in Norway in the summer in which Olaf came East from England, and had won great favour with the king as well as with Bishop Sigurd.

In token of this it is related that Thorir asked the bishop to consecrate a large sea-going ship he had built in the forest, and the bishop did so. Later he came out to Iceland and had his ship broken up because he was tired of seafaring. He set up the figures from her head and stem over his doors, where they long remained foretelling the weather, one howling for a south, the other for a north wind.

When Thorir heard that Olaf had become sole ruler of Norway he thought he might expect favour from him, so he dispatched his sons to Norway to wait upon the king, hoping that they would be received into his service. They reached the south coast late in the autumn and engaged a rowing vessel to take them up the coast to the North, intending to go to the king. They reached a port to the south of Stad, where they put in for a few days. They were well provided with food and drink, and did not go out much because of the bad weather.

Grettir also sailed to the North along the coast, and as the winter was just beginning he often fell in with dirty weather. When they reached the neighbourhood of Stad the weather became worse, and at last one evening they were so exhausted with the snow and frost that they were compelled to put in and lie under a bank where they found shelter for their goods and belongings. The men were very much distressed at not being able to procure any fire; their safety and their lives seemed almost to depend upon their getting some. They lay there in a pitiful condition all the evening, and as night came on they saw a large fire on the other side of the channel which they were in. When Grettir's companions saw the fire they began talking and saying that he who could get some of it would be a happy man. They hesitated for some time whether they should put out, but all agreed that it would be too dangerous. Then they had a good deal of talk about whether there was any man living doughty enough to get the fire. Grettir kept very quiet, but said that there probably had been men who would not have let themselves be baulked. The men said that they were none the better for what had been if there were none now.

"But won't you venture, Grettir? The people of Iceland all talk so much about your prowess, and you know very well what we want."

Grettir said: "It does not seem to me such a great thing to get the fire, but I do not know whether you will reward it any better than he requires who does it."

"Why," they said, "should you take us to be men of so little honour that we shall not reward you well?"

"Well," said Grettir, "if you really think it so necessary I will try it; but my heart tells me that no good will come to me therefrom."

They said it would not be so, and told him that he should have their thanks.

Then Grettir threw off his clothes and got ready to go into the water. He went in a cloak and breeches of coarse stuff. He tucked up the cloak, tied a cord of bast round his waist, and took a barrel with him. Then he jumped overboard, swam across the channel and reached the land on the other side. There he saw a house standing and heard sounds of talking and merriment issuing from it. So he went towards the house.

We have now to tell of the people who were in the house. They were the sons of Thorir who have been mentioned. They had been there some days waiting for a change of weather and for a wind to carry them to the North. There were twelve of them and they were all sitting and drinking. They had made fast in the inner harbour where there was a place of shelter set up for men who were travelling about the country, and they had carried in a quantity of straw. There was a huge fire on the ground. Grettir rushed into the house, not knowing who was there. His cloak had all frozen directly he landed, and he was a portentous sight to behold; he looked like a troll. The people inside were much startled, thinking it was a fiend. They struck at him with anything they could get, and a tremendous uproar there was. Grettir pushed them back with his arms. Some of them struck at him with firebrands, and the fire spread all through the house. He got away with his fire and returned to his companions, who were loud in praise of his skill and daring, and said there was no one like him. The night passed and they were happy now that they had fire.

On the next morning the weather was fine. They all woke early and made ready to continue their journey. It was proposed that they should go and find out who the people were who had had the fire, so they cast off and sailed across the channel. They found no house there, nothing but a heap of ashes and a good many bones of men amongst them. Evidently the house with all who were in it had been burned. They asked whether Grettir had done it, and declared it was an abominable deed. Grettir said that what he expected had come to pass, and that he was ill rewarded for getting the fire for them. He said it was thankless work to help such miserable beings as they were. He suffered much annoyance in consequence, for wherever the traders went they told that Grettir had burned the men in the house. Soon it became known that it was the sons of Thorir of Gard and their followers who had been burned. The traders refused to have Grettir on board their ship any longer and drove him away. He was so abhorred that scarcely any one would do him a service. His case seemed hopeless, and his only desire was at any cost to appear before the king. So he went North to Thrandheim where the king was, and had heard the whole story before Grettir came, for many had been busy in slandering him. Grettir waited several days in the town before he was able to appear before the king.

Chapter 39

Grettir Appears Before the King and Fails to Undergo the Ordeal

One day when the king was sitting in judgment Grettir came before him and saluted him respectfully. The king looked at him and said:

"Are you Grettir the Strong?"

"So I have been called," he replied, "and I have come here in the hope of obtaining deliverance from the slanders which are being spread about me, and to say that I did not do this deed."

The king said: "You are worthy enough; but I know not what fortune you will have in defending yourself. It is quite possible that you did not intend to burn the men in the house."

Grettir said that he was most anxious to prove his innocence if the king would permit him. Then the king bade him relate faithfully all that had happened. Grettir told him everything exactly as it was, and declared that they were all alive when he escaped with his fire; he was ready to undergo any ordeal which the king considered that the law required.

King Olaf said: "I decree that you shall bear iron, if your fate so wills it."

Grettir was quite content with that, and began his fast for the ordeal. When the day for the ceremony arrived the king and the bishop went to the church together with a multitude of people who came out of curiosity to see a man so much talked about as Grettir. At last Grettir himself was led to the church. When he entered many looked at him and remarked that he excelled most men in strength and stature. As he passed down the aisle there started up a very ill-favoured, overgrown boy and cried to him:

"Wondrous are now the ways in a land where men should call themselves Christians, when evil-doers and robbers and thieves walk in peace to purge themselves. What should a wicked man find better to do than to preserve his life so long as he may? Here is now a malefactor convicted of guilt, one who has burnt innocent men in their houses, and yet is allowed to undergo purgation. Such a thing is most unrighteous."

Then he went at Grettir, pointing at him with his finger, making grimaces and calling him son of a sea-ogress, with many other bad names. Then Grettir lost his temper and his self-control. He raised his hand and gave him a box on the ear so that he fell senseless, and some thought he was dead. No one seemed to know whence the boy had come nor what became of him afterwards, but it was generally believed that he was some unclean spirit sent forth for the destruction of Grettir.

There arose an uproar in the church; people told the king that the man who had come to purge himself was fighting with those around him. King Olaf came forward into the church to see what was going on, and said:

"You are a man of ill luck, Grettir. All was prepared for the ordeal, but it cannot take place now. It is not possible to contend against your ill-fortune."

Grettir said: "I expected, oh king, more honour from you for the sake of my family than I now seem likely to obtain."

Then he told again the story as he had done before of what had taken place with the men. "Gladly," he said, "would I enter your service; there is many a man with you who is not my better as a warrior."

"I know," said the king, "that few are your equals in strength and courage, but your luck is too bad for you to remain with me. You have my leave to depart in peace whithersoever you will for the winter, and then in the summer you may return to Iceland, where you are destined to lay your bones."

"First I should like to clear myself of the charge of burning, if I may," said Grettir; "for I did not do it intentionally."

"Very likely it is so," said the king; "but since the purgation has come to naught through your impatience you cannot clear yourself further than you have done. Impetuosity always leads to evil. If ever a man was doomed to misfortune you are."

After that Grettir remained for a time in the town, but he got nothing more out of Olaf. Then he went to the South, intending after that to go East to Tunsberg to find his brother Thorsteinn Dromund. Nothing is told of his journey till he came to Jadar.

Chapter 40

Adventure with the Berserk Snaekoll

At Yule Grettir came to a bondi named Einar, a man of wealth who had a wife and a marriageable daughter named Gyrid. She was a beautiful maiden and was considered an excellent match. Einar invited Grettir to stay over Yule, and he accepted.

It was no uncommon thing throughout Norway that robbers and other ruffians came down from the forest and challenged men to fight for their women, or carried off their property with violence if there was not sufficient force in the house to protect them. One day at Yule-tide there came a whole party of these miscreants to Einar's house. Their leader was a great berserk named Snaekoll. He challenged Einar to hand over his daughter to him or else to defend her, if he felt himself man enough to do so. Now the bondi was no longer young, and no fighter. He felt that he was in a great difficulty, and asked Grettir privately what help he would give him, seeing that he was held to be so famous a man. Grettir advised him to consent only to what was not dishonourable. The berserk was sitting on his horse wearing his helmet, the chin-piece of which was not fastened. He held before him a shield bound with iron and looked terribly threatening. He said to the bondi:

"You had better choose quickly: either one thing or the other. What does that big fellow standing beside you say? Would he not like to play with me himself?"

"One of us is as good as the other," said Grettir, "neither of us is very active."

"All the more afraid will you be to fight with me if I get angry."

"That will be seen when it is tried," said Grettir.

The berserk thought they were trying to get off by talking. He began to howl and to bite the rim of his shield. He held the shield up to his mouth and scowled over its upper edge like a madman. Grettir stepped quickly across the ground, and when he got even with the berserk's horse he kicked the shield with his foot from below with such force that it struck his mouth, breaking the upper jaw, and the lower jaw fell down on to his chest. With the same movement he seized the viking's helmet with his left hand and dragged him from his horse, while with his right hand he raised his axe and cut off the berserk's head. Snaekoll's followers

when they saw what had happened fled, every man of them. Grettir did not care to pursue them for he saw that there was no heart in them. The bondi thanked him for what he had done, as did many other men, for the quickness and boldness of his deed had impressed them much. Grettir stayed there for Yule and was well taken care of till he left, when the bondi dismissed him handsomely. Then Grettir went East to Tunsberg to visit his brother Thorsteinn, who received him joyfully and asked him about his adventures. Grettir told him how he had killed the berserk, and composed a verse:

"The warrior's shield by my foot propelled
in conflict came with Snaekoll's mouth.
His nether jaw hung down on his chest,
wide gaped his mouth from the iron ring."

"You would be very handy at many things," said Thorsteinn, "if misfortune did not follow you."

"Men will tell of deeds that are done," said Grettir.

Chapter 41

Thorsteinn Dromund's Arms

Grettir stayed with Thorsteinn for the rest of the winter and on into the spring. One morning when Thorsteinn and Grettir were above in their sleepingroom Grettir put out his arm from the bed-clothes and Thorsteinn noticed it when he awoke. Soon after Grettir woke too, and Thorsteinn said: "I have been looking at your arms, kinsman, and think it is not wonderful that your blows fall heavily upon some. Never have I seen any man's arms that were like yours."

"You may know," said Grettir, "that I should not have done the deeds I have if I had not been very mighty."

"Yet methinks it would be of advantage," said Thorsteinn, "if your arm were more slender and your fortune better."

"True," said Grettir, "is the saying that no man shapes his own fortune. Let me see your arm."

Thorsteinn showed it to him. He was a tall lanky man. Grettir smiled and said:

"There is no need to look long at that; all your ribs are run together. I never saw such a pair of tongs as you carry about! Why, you are scarcely as strong as a woman!"

"It may be so," said Thorsteinn, "and yet you may know that these thin arms of mine and no others will avenge you some day;--if you are avenged."

"Who shall know how it will be when the end comes?" said Grettir; "but that seems unlikely."

No more is related of their conversation. The spring came and Grettir took a ship for Iceland in the summer. The brothers parted with friendship and never saw one another again.

Chapter 42

Death of Asmund Longhair

We have now to return to where we broke off before. Thorbjorn Oxmain when he heard of the death of Thorbjorn Slowcoach flew into a violent passion and said he wished that more men might deal blows in other people's houses. Asmund Longhair lay sick for some time in the summer. When he thought his end was nigh he called his kinsmen round him and said his will was that Atli should take over all the property after his day. "I fear," he said, "that the wicked will scarce leave you in peace. And I wish all my kinsmen to support him to the best of their power. Of Grettir I can say nothing, for his condition seems to me like a rolling wheel. Strong though he is, I fear he will have more dealing with trouble than with kinsmen's support. And Illugi, though young now, shall become a man of valiant deeds if he remain unscathed."

When Asmund had settled everything with his sons according to his wish his sickness grew upon him. He died soon after and was buried at Bjarg, where he had had a church built. All felt his loss deeply.

Atli became a great bondi and kept a large establishment. He was a great dealer in household provisions. Towards the end of the summer he went to Snaefellsnes to get dried fish. He drove several horses with him and rode from home to Melar in Hrutafjord to his brother-in-law, Gamli. Then Grim, the son of Thorhall, Gamli's brother, made ready to accompany him along with another man. They rode West by way of Haukadalssskard and the road which leads out to the Ness, where they bought much fish and carried it away on seven horses; when all was ready they turned homewards.

Chapter 43

Sons of Thorir of Skard are Slain by Atli and Gri

Thorbjorn Oxmain heard of Atli and Grim having left home just when Gunnar and Thorgeir, the sons of Thorir of Skard, were with him. Thorbjorn was jealous of Atli's popularity and egged on the two brothers, the sons of Thorir, to lie in wait for him as he returned from Snaefellsnes. They rode home to Skard and waited there for Atli returning with his loads. They could see the party from their house as they passed Skard, and made ready quickly to pursue them with their servants. Atli on seeing them ordered his horses to be unloaded.

"Perhaps," he said, "they want to offer me compensation for my man whom Gunnar slew last summer. We will not be the first to attack, but if they begin fighting us we will defend ourselves."

Then they came up and at once sprang off their horses. Atli greeted them and asked what news there was, and whether Gunnar desired to offer him some compensation for his servant. Gunnar answered:

"You men of Bjarg, you deserve something else than that I should pay compensation for him with my goods. Thorbjorn whom Grettir slew is worth a higher atonement than he."

"I have not to answer for that," said Atli, "nor are you the representative of Thorbjorn."

Gunnar said it would have to be so nevertheless. "And now," he cried, "let us go for them and profit by Grettir being away."

There were eight of them, and they set upon Atli's six. Atli led on his men and drew the sword Jokulsnaut which Grettir had given him. Thorgeir cried: "Good men are alike in many things. High did Grettir bear his sword last summer on Hrutafjardarhals."

Atli answered: "He is more accustomed to deeds of strength than I am."

Then they fought. Gunnar made a resolute attack on Atli, and fought fiercely. After they had battled for a time Atli said:

"There is nothing to be gained by each of us killing the other's followers. The simplest course would be for us to play together, for I have never fought with weapons before."

Gunnar, however, would not have it. Atli bade his servants look to the packs, and he would see what the others would do. He made such a vigorous onslaught that Gunnar's men fell back, and he killed two of them. Then he turned upon Gunnar himself and struck a blow that severed his shield right across below the handle, and the sword struck his leg below the knee. Then with another rapid blow he killed him.

In the meantime Grim, the son of Thorhall, was engaging Thorgeir, and a long tussle there was, both of them being men of great valour. When Thorgeir saw his brother Gunnar fall he wanted to get away, but Grim pressed upon him and pursued him until at last his foot tripped and he fell forward. Then Grim struck him with an axe between the shoulders, inflicting a deep wound. To the three followers who were left they gave quarter. Then they bound up their wounds, reloaded the packs on to the horses and went home, giving information of the battle. Atli stayed at home with a strong guard of men that autumn. Thorbjorn Oxmain was not at all pleased, but could do nothing, because Atli was very wary. Grim was with him for the winter, and his brother-in-law Gamli. Another brother-in-law, Glum the son of Ospak from Eyr in Bitra, was with them too. They had a goodly array of men settled at Bjarg, and there was much merriment there during the winter.

Chapter 44

Settlement of the Feud at the Hunavattn Thing

Thorbforn Oxmain took up the suit arising from the death of Thorir's sons. He prepared his case against Grim and Atli, and they prepared their defence on the grounds that the brothers had attacked them wrongfully and were, therefore, "ohelgir." The case was brought before the Hunavattn Thing and both sides

appeared in force. Atli had many connections, and was, therefore, strongly supported. Then those who were friends of both came forward and tried to effect a reconciliation; they urged that Atli was a man of good position and peacefully disposed, though fearless enough when driven into a strait.

Thorbjorn felt that no other honourable course was open to him but to agree to a reconciliation. Atli made it a condition that there should be no sentence of banishment either from the district or the country. Then men were appointed to arbitrate: Thorvald Asgeirsson on behalf of Atli, and Solvi the Proud on behalf of Thorbjorn. This Solvi was a son of Asbrand, the son of Thorbrand, the son of Harald Ring who had settled in Vatnsnes, taking land as far as Ambattara to the West, and to the East up to the Thvera and across to Bjargaoss and the whole side of Bjorg as far as the sea. Solvi was a person of much display, but a man of sense, and therefore Thorbjorn chose him as his arbitrator.

The decree of the arbitrators was that half penalties should be paid for Thorir's sons and half should be remitted on account of the wrongful attack which they made and their designs on Atli's life. The slaying of Atli's man at Hrutafjardarhals should be set off against the two of theirs who had been killed. Grim the son of Thorhall was banished from his district and the penalties were to be paid by Atli. Atli was satisfied with this award, but Thorbjorn was not; they parted nominally reconciled, but Thorbjorn let drop some words to the effect that it was not over yet if all happened as he desired.

Atli rode home from the Thing after thanking Thorvald for his assistance. Grim the son of Thorhall betook himself to the South to Borgarfjord and dwelt at Gilsbakki, where he was known as a worthy bondi.

Chapter 45

Atli Murdered by Thorbjorn Oxmain

There was dwelling with Thorbjorn Oxmain a man whose name was Ali, a servant, rather stubborn and lazy. Thorbjorn told him he must work better or he would be beaten. Ali said he had no mind for work and became abusive. Thorbjorn was not going to endure that, and got him down and handled him roughly. After that Ali ran away and went to the North across the neck to Midfjord; he did not stop till he reached Bjarg. Atli was at home and asked whither he was going. He said he was seeking an engagement.

"Are you not a servant of Thorbjorn?" Atli asked.

"We did not get on with our bargain. I was not there long, but it seemed to me a bad place while I was there. Our parting was in such a way that his song on my throat did not please me. I will never go back there, whatever becomes of me. And it is true that there is a great difference between you two in the way you treat your servants. I would be glad to take service with you if there is a place, for me."

Atli said: "I have servants enough without stretching forth my hands for those whom Thorbjorn has hired. You seem an impatient man and had better go back to him."

"I am not going there of my own free will," said Ali.

He stayed there for the night, and in the morning went out to work with Atli's men, and toiled as if he had hands everywhere. So he continued all the summer; Atli took no notice of him, but allowed him his food, for he was pleased with the man's work. Soon Thorbjorn learned that Ali was at Bjarg. He rode thither with two others and called to Atli to come out and speak with him. Atli went out and greeted him.

"You want to begin again provoking me to attack you, Atli," he said. "Why have you taken away my workman? It is a most improper thing to do."

Atli replied: "It is not very clear to me that he is your workman. I do not want to keep him if you can prove that he belongs to your household; but I cannot drive him out of my house."

"You must have your way now," said Thorbjorn; "but I claim the man and protest against his working for you. I shall come again, and it is not certain that we shall then part any better friends than we are now."

Atli rejoined: "I shall stay at home and abide whatever comes to hand."

Thorbjorn then went off home. When the workmen came back in the evening Atli told them of his conversation with Thorbjorn and said to Ali that he must go his own ways, for he was not going to be drawn into a quarrel for employing him.

Ali said: "True is the ancient saying: The over-praised are the worst deceivers. I did not think that you would have turned me off now after I had worked here till I broke in the summer. I thought that you would have given me protection. Such is your way, however you play the beneficent. Now I shall be beaten before your very eyes if you refuse to stand by me."

Atli's mind was changed after the man had spoken; he no longer wanted to drive him away.

So the time passed until the hay-harvest began. One day a little before midsummer Thorbjorn Oxmain rode to Bjarg. He wore a helmet on his head, a sword was girt at his side, and in his hand was a spear which had a very broad blade. The weather was rainy; Atli had sent his men to mow the hay, and some were in the North at Horn on some work. Atli was at home with a few men only. Thorbjorn arrived alone towards midday and rode up to the door. The door was shut and no one outside. Thorbjorn knocked at the door and then went to the back of the house so that he could not be seen from the door. The people in the house heard some one knocking and one of the women went out. Thorbjorn got a glimpse of the woman, but did not let himself be seen, for he was seeking another person. She went back into the room and Atli asked her who had come. She said she could see nobody outside. As they were speaking Thorbjorn struck a violent blow on the door. Atli said:

"He wants to see me; perhaps he has some business with me, for he seems very pressing."

Then he went to the outer door and saw nobody there. It was raining hard, so he did not go outside, but stood holding both the door-posts with his hands and

peering round. At that moment Thorbjorn sidled round to the front of the door and thrust his spear with both hands into Atli's middle, so that it pierced him through. Atli said when he received the thrust: "They use broad spear-blades nowadays."

Then he fell forward on the threshold. The women who were inside came out and saw that he was dead. Thorbjorn had then mounted his horse; he proclaimed the slaying and rode home. Asdis, the mistress of the house, sent for men; Atli's body was laid out and he was buried beside his father. There was much lamentation over his death, for he was both wise and beloved. No blood-money was paid for his death, nor was any demanded, for his representative was Grettir, if he should ever return to Iceland. The matter rested there during the summer. Thorbjorn gained little credit by this deed, but remained quietly at home.

Chapter 46

Sentence of Outlawry Passed Upon Grettir at the All-Thing

In that same summer before the assembly of the Thing there came a ship out to Gasar bringing news of Grettir and of his house-burning adventure. Thorir of Gard was very angry when he heard of it and bethought himself of vengeance for his sons upon Grettir. Thorir rode with a large retinue to the Thing and laid a complaint in respect of the burning, but men thought nothing could be done as long as there was no one to answer the charge. Thorir insisted that he would be content with nothing short of banishment for Grettir from the whole country after such a crime.

Then Skapti the Lawman said: "It certainly was an evil deed if all really happened as has been told. But One man's tale is but half a tale. Most people try and manage not to improve a story if there is more than one version of it. I hold that no judgment should be passed for Grettir's banishment without further proceedings."

Thorir was a notable person and possessed great influence in the district; many powerful men were his friends. He pressed his suit so strongly that nothing could be done to save Grettir. Thorir had him proclaimed an outlaw throughout the country, and was ever afterwards the most bitter of his opponents, as he often found. Having put a price upon his head, as it was usual to do with other outlaws, he rode home. Many said that the decree was carried more by violence than by law, but it remained in force. Nothing more happened until after midsummer.

Chapter 47

Grettir Returns to Bjarg-Sveinn and his Horse Saddle-Head

Later in the summer Grettir the son of Asmund came back to Iceland, landing in the Hvita in Borgarfjord. People about the district went down to the ship and all the news came at once upon Grettir, first that his father was dead, then that his brother was slain, and third that he was declared outlaw throughout the land. Then he spoke this verse:

"All fell at once upon the bard,
exile, father dead and brother.
Oh man of battle! Many an one
who breaks the swords shall smart for this."

It is told that Grettir changed his manner no whit for these tidings, but was just as merry as before. He remained on board his ship for a time because he could not get a horse to suit him.

There was a man named Sveinn who dwelt at Bakki up from Thingnes.

He was a good bondi and a merry companion; he often composed verses which it was a delight to listen to. He had a brown mare, the swiftest of horses, which he called Saddle-head. Once Grettir left Vellir in the night because he did not wish the traders to know of it. He got a black cape and put it over his clothes to conceal himself. He went up past Thingnes to Bakki, by which time it was light. Seeing a brown horse in the meadow he went up and put a bridle on it, mounted on its back and rode up along the Hvita river below Baer on to the river Flokadalsa and up to the road above Kalfanes. The men working at Bakki were up by then, and told the bondi that a man was riding his horse. He got up and laughed and spoke a verse:

"There rode a man upon Saddle-head's back;
close to the garth the thief has come.
Frey of the Odin's cloud, dreadful of aspect,
appears from his strength to be busy with mischief."

Then he took a horse and rode after him. Grettir rode on till he came to the settlement at Kropp, where he met a man named Halli who said he was going down to the ship at Vellir. Grettir then spoke a verse:

"Tell, oh tell in the dwellings abroad
tell thou hast met with Saddle-head.
The handler of dice in sable cowl
sat on his back; hasten, oh Halli!"

Then they parted. Halli went along the road as far as Kalfanes before he met Sveinn. They greeted each other hurriedly and Sveinn said:

"Saw you that loafer ride from the dwellings?
Sorely he means my patience to try.
The people about shall deal with him roughly;
blue shall his body be if I meet him."

"You can know from what I tell you," said Halli, "that I met the man who said he was riding Saddle-head, and he told me to spread it abroad in the dwellings and the district. He was a huge man in a black cloak."

"Well, he seems to think something of himself," said the bondi. "I mean to know who he is."

Then he went on after him. Grettir came to Deildartunga and found a woman outside. He began to talk to her and spoke a verse:

"Mistress august! Go tell of the jest
that the serpent of earth has past on his way.
The garrulous brewer of Odin's mead
will come to Gilsbakki before he will rest."

The woman learned the verse and Grettir rode on. Soon after Sveinn rode up; she was still outside, and when he came he spoke the verse:

"Who was the man who a moment ago
rode past on a dusky horse in the storm?
The hound-eyed rascal, practised in mischief.
This day I will follow his steps to the end."

She told him as she had been taught. He considered the lines and said: "It is not unlikely that this man is no play-fellow for me. But I mean to catch him."

He then rode along the cultivated country. Each could see the other's path. The weather was stormy and wet. Grettir reached Gilsbakki that day, where Grim the son of Thorhall welcomed him warmly and begged him to stay, which he did. He let Saddle-head run loose and told Grim how he had come by her. Then Sveinn came up, dismounted and saw his horse. Then he said:

"Who has ridden on my mare?
Who will pay me for her hire?
Who ever saw such an arrant thief?
What next will be the cowl-man's game?"

Grettir had then put off his wet clothes, and heard the ditty. He said:

"Home I rode the mare to Grim's,
a better man than the hovel-dweller!
Nothing will I pay for hire!
Now we may be friends again."

"Just so shall it be," said the bondi. "Your ride on the horse is fully paid for."

Then they each began repeating verses, and Grettir said he could not blame him for looking after his property. The bondi stayed there the night and they had great jokes about the matter. The verses they made were called "Saddle-head verses." In the morning the bondi rode home, parting good friends with Grettir. Grim told Grettir of many things that had been done in Midfjord in the North during his absence, and that no blood-money had been paid for Atli. Thorbjorn Oxmain's interest, he said, was so great that there was no certainty of Grettir's mother, Asdis, being allowed to remain at Bjarg if the feud continued.

Grettir stayed but a few nights with Grim, for he did not want it to become known that he was about to travel North across the Heath. Grim told him to come back to visit him if he needed protection. "Yet," he said, "I would gladly avoid the penalty of being outlawed for harbouring you."

Grettir bade him farewell and said: "It is more likely that I shall need your good services still more later on."

Then Grettir rode North over the Tvidaegra Heath to Bjarg, where he arrived at midnight. All were asleep except his mother. He went to the back of the house and entered by a door which was there, for he knew all the ways about. He entered the hall and went to his mother's bed, groping his way. She asked who was there. Grettir told her. She sat up and turned to him, heaving a weary sigh as she spoke:

"Welcome, my kinsman! My hoard of sons has quickly passed away. He is killed who was most needful to me; you have been declared an outlaw and a criminal; my third is so young that he can do nothing."

"It is an ancient saying," said Grettir, "that one evil is mended by a worse one. There is more in the heart of man than money can buy; Atli may yet be avenged. As for me, there will be some who think they have had enough in their dealings with me."

She said that was not unlikely. Grettir stayed there for a time, but few knew of it, and he obtained news of the movements of the men of the district. It was not known then that he had come to Midfjord. He learned that Thorbjorn Oxmain was at home with few men. This was after the hay-harvest.

Chapter 48

Death of Thorbjorn Oxmain

One fine day Grettir rode to the West across the ridge to Thoroddsstad, where he arrived about noon and knocked at the door. Some women came out and greeted him, not knowing who he was. He asked for Thorbjorn, and they told him that he was gone out into the fields to bind hay with his sixteen-year-old son Arnor. Thorbjorn was a hard worker and was scarcely ever idle. Grettir on hearing that bade them farewell and rode off North on the road to Reykir. There is some marsh-land stretching away from the ridge with much grass-land, where Thorbjorn had made a quantity of hay which was just dry. He was just about to bind it up for bringing in with the help of his son, while a woman gathered up what was left. Grettir rode to the field from below, Thorbjorn and his son being above him; they had finished one load and were beginning a second. Thorbjorn had laid down his shield and sword against the load, and his son had his hand-axe near him.

Thorbjorn saw a man coming and said to his son: "There is a man riding towards us; we had better stop binding the hay and see what he wants."

They did so; Grettir got off his horse. He had a helmet on his head, a short sword by his side, and a great spear in his hand without barbs and inlaid with

silver at the socket. He sat down and knocked out the rivet which fastened the head in order to prevent Thorbjorn from returning the spear upon him.

Thorbjorn said: "This is a big man. I am no good at judging men if that is not Grettir the son of Asmund. No doubt he thinks that he has sufficient business with us. We will meet him boldly and show him no signs of fear. We must act with a plan. I will go on ahead towards him and see how we get on together, for I will trust myself against any man if I can meet him alone. Do you go round and get behind him; take your axe with both hands and strike him between the shoulders. You need not fear that he will hurt you, for his back will be turned towards you."

Neither of them had a helmet. Grettir went along the marsh and when he was within range launched his spear at Thorbjorn. The head was not so firm as he had intended it to be, so it got loose in its flight and fell off on to the ground. Thorbjorn took his shield, held it before him, drew his sword and turned against Grettir directly he recognised him. Grettir drew his sword, and, turning round a little, saw the boy behind him; so he kept continually on the move. When he saw that the boy was within reach he raised his sword aloft and struck Arnor's head with the back of it such a blow that the skull broke and he died. Then Thorbjorn rushed upon Grettir and struck at him, but he parried it with the buckler in his left hand and struck with his sword a blow which severed Thorbjorn's shield in two and went into his head, reaching the brain. Thorbjorn fell dead. Grettir gave him no more wounds; he searched for the spear-head but could not find it. He got on to his horse, rode to Reykir and proclaimed the slaying.

The woman who was out in the field with them witnessed the battle. She ran home terrified and told the news that Thorbjorn and his son were killed. The people at home were much taken aback, for no one was aware of Grettir's arrival. They sent to the next homestead for men, who came in plenty and carried the body to the church. The blood-feud then fell to Thorodd Drapustuf, who at once called out his men.

Grettir rode home to Bjarg and told his mother what had happened.

She was very glad and said he had now shown his kinship to the Vatnsdal race. "And yet," she said, "this is the root and the beginning of your outlawry; for certain I know that your dwelling here will not be for long by reason of Thorbjorn's kinsmen, and now they may know that they have the means of annoying you."

Grettir then spoke a verse:

"Atli's death was unatoned;
fully now the debt is paid."

Asdis said it was true: "but I know not what counsel you now mean to take."

Grettir said he meant now to visit his friends and kinsmen in the western regions, and that she should have no unpleasantness on his account. Then he made ready to go, and parted with much affection from his mother. First he went to Melar in Hrutafjord and recounted to his brother-in-law Gamli all his adventure with Thorbjorn. Gamli begged him to betake himself away from

Hrutafjord while the kinsmen of Thorbjorn were abroad with their men, and said they would support him in the suit about Atli's slaying to the best of their power. Then Grettir rode to the West across the Laxardal Heath and did not stop before he reached Ljarskogar, where he stayed some time in the autumn with Thorsteinn Kuggason.

Chapter 49

Grettir Visits Thorsteinn Kuggason and Snorri God

Thorodd Drapustuf now made inquiries who it was who had killed Thorbjorn and his son. They went to Reykir, where they were told that Grettir had proclaimed the slaying. Thorodd then saw how matters stood and went to Bjarg, where he found many people and asked whether Grettir was there. Asdis said that he was gone, and that he would not hide if he were at home.

"You can be well content to leave things as they are. The vengeance for Atli was not excessive, if it be reckoned up. No one asked what I had to suffer then, and now it were well for it to rest."

Then they rode home, and it seemed as if there were nothing to be done. The spear which Grettir had lost was never found until within the memory of men now living. It was found in the later days of Sturla the Lawman, the son of Thord, in the very marsh where Thorbjorn fell, now called Spearmarsh. This is the proof that he was killed there and not in Midfitjar, as has been elsewhere asserted.

Thorbjorn's kinsmen learned of Grettir's being in Ljarskogar and called together their men with the purpose of going there. Gamli heard of this at Melar and sent word to Thorsteinn and Grettir of their approach. Thorsteinn sent Grettir on to Tunga to Snorri the Godi, with whom he was then at peace, and advised Grettir to ask for his protection, and if it were refused to go West to Thorgils the son of Ari in Reykjaholar, "who will surely take you in for the winter. Stay there in the Western fjords until the affair is settled."

Grettir said he would follow his counsel. He rode to Tunga where he found Snorri and asked to be taken in. Snorri answered: "I am now an old man, and have no mind to harbour outlaws, unless in a case of necessity. But what has happened that the old man should have turned you out?"

Grettir said that Thorsteinn had often shown him kindness; "but we shall need more than him alone to do any good."

Snorri said: "I will put in my word on your behalf, if it will be of any use to you. But you must seek your quarters elsewhere than with me."

So they parted. Grettir then went West to Reykjanes. The men of Hrutafjord came with their followers to Samsstad, where they heard that Grettir had left Ljarskogar, and went back home.

Chapter 50

Grettir Winters with Thorgils at Reykjaholar in Company with the Foster-Brothers

Grettir came to Reykjaholar towards the beginning of the winter and asked Thorgils to let him stay the winter with him. Thorgils said he was welcome to his entertainment, like other free men; "but," he said, "we do not pay much attention to the preparation of the food."

Grettir said that would not trouble him.

"There is another little difficulty," Thorgils continued. "Some men are expected here who are a little hot-headed, namely, the foster-brothers Thorgeir and Thormod. I do not know how it will suit you to be together with them. They shall always have entertainment here whenever they wish for it. You may stay here if you will, but I will not have any of you behaving ill to the others."

Grettir said that he would not be the first to raise a quarrel with any man, more especially since the bondi had expressed his wish to him.

Soon after the foster-brothers came up. Thorgeir and Grettir did not take very kindly to one another, but Thormod behaved with propriety. Thorgils said to them what he had said to Grettir, and so great was the deference paid to him that none of them spoke an improper word to the other, although they did not always think alike. In this way the first part of the winter was passed.

Men say that the islands called Olafseyjar, lying in the fjord about a mile and a half from Reykjanes, belonged to Thorgils. He had there a valuable ox, which he had not brought away in the autumn. He was always saying that he wanted him to be brought in before Yule. One day the foster-brothers prepared to go and fetch the ox, but wanted a third man to help them. Grettir offered to go with them and they were very glad to have him. So the three set out in a ten-oared boat. The weather was cold and the wind from the North; the boat was lying at Hvalshausholm. When they left the wind had freshened a little; they reached the island and caught the ox. Grettir asked whether they preferred to ship the ox or to hold the boat, for there was a high surf running on the shore. They told him to hold the boat. He stood by her middle on the side away from the land, the sea reaching right up to beneath his shoulders, but he held the boat firmly so that she could not drift. Thorgeir took the ox by the stern and Thormod by the head, and so they hove him into the boat. Then they started heading for the bay, Thormod taking the bow-oars with Thorgeir amidships and Grettir in the stern. By the time they reached Hafraklett the wind was very high. Thorgeir said: "The stern is slackening."

Grettir said: "The stern will not be left behind if the rowing amidships is all right."

Thorgeir then bent his back to the oars and pulled so violently that both the rowlocks carried away. He said:

"Pull on, Grettir, whilst I mend the rowlocks."

Grettir pulled vigorously whilst Thorgeir mended the rowlocks. But when Thorgeir was about to take over the oars again they were so damaged that on

Grettir giving them a shake on the gunwale they broke. Thormod said it would be better to row less and not to break the ship. Then Grettir took two spars which were on board, bored two holes in the gunwale, and rowed so energetically that every timber creaked. As the boat was well found and the men in good condition they reached Hvalshausholm. Grettir asked whether they would go on home with the ox or whether they would beach the boat. They preferred to beach the boat, and they did so with all the water that was in her all frozen. Grettir got off the ox, which was very stiff in its limbs and very fat and tired; when they got to Titlingsstad it could go no more. The foster-brothers went home, for none of them would help the other at his job. Thorgils asked after Grettir; they told him how they had parted, and he sent men out to him. When they came below Hellisholar they saw a man coming towards them with an ox on his back; it was Grettir carrying the ox. They all admired his great feat, but Thorgeir became rather jealous of Grettir's strength.

One day soon after Yule Grettir went out alone to bathe. Thorgeir knew of it and said to Thormod: "Let us go out now and see what Grettir does if I attack him as he comes out of the water."

"I don't care to do that," Thormod said; "and I do not think you will get any good from him."

"I mean to go," Thorgeir said.

He went down to the bank, carrying his axe aloft. Grettir was just coming out of the water, and when they met Thorgeir said: "Is it true, Grettir, that you once said you would not run away from any single person."

"I don't know whether I did," Grettir said; "but I have scarcely run away from you."

Thorgeir raised his axe. In a moment Grettir ran at him and brought him over with a heavy fall. Thorgeir said to Thormod: "Are you going to stand there while this devil knocks me down?"

Thormod then got Grettir by the leg and tried to drag him off Thorgeir but could not. He was wearing a short sword, and was just about to draw it when Thorgils came up and told them to behave themselves and not to fight with Grettir. They did as he bade and made out that it was all play. They had no more strife, so far as has been told, and men thought Thorgils blessed by fortune in having been able to pacify men of such violent tempers.

When the spring set in they all departed. Grettir went on to Thorskafjord. When some one asked him how he liked his entertainment at Reykjaholar he answered: "Our fare was such that I enjoyed my food very much--when I could get it." Then he went West over the heath.

Chapter 51

Grettir's Case Overborne at the All-Thing

Thorgils, the son of Ari, rode to the Thing with a large following. All the magnates were there from all parts of the country, and he soon met with Skapti the Lawman and had some talk with him. Skapti said:

"Is it true, Thorgils, that you have been giving winter entertainment to three of the most unruly men in the country, all three of them outlaws, and that you kept order so well that none of them did any harm to the other?"

Thorgils said it was true.

Skapti said: "Well, I think it shows what authority you possess. But how did their characters appear to you? Who is the most valorous among them?"

"They are all entirely valiant," he answered, "but of two of them I will not say that they never fear; only there is a difference. Thormod fears God, and is a man of great piety; and Grettir fears the dark. He will not, if he may follow his own inclination, venture anywhere after nightfall. But Thorgeir, my kinsman, he I think cannot fear."

"They must be each of them as you say," said Skapti, and there their conversation ended.

At the Thing Thorodd Drapustuf laid his complaint in the matter of the slaying of Thorbjorn Oxmain, for he had failed in the Hunavatr Thing through the influence of Atli's kinsmen. Here he thought that there was less likelihood of his case being overborne. Atli's party sought counsel of Skapti the Lawman; he said that their defence appeared to him a good one, and that full blood-money would have to be paid for Atli. Then the case was brought before the judges, and the opinion of the majority was that the slaying of Atli was set off by that of Thorbjorn. Skapti when he heard of it went to the judges and asked them on what grounds their decision rested; they said that the two slain bondis were of equal rank.

Skapti asked: "Which happened first, the outlawing of Grettir or the death of Atli?"

They reckoned up and found that a week had elapsed between the two events. Grettir was outlawed at the All-Thing and Atli was killed just after it.

"That was what I expected," Skapti said. "You have overlooked the facts; you have treated as a party to the suit a man who was an outlaw, a man who was stopped from appearing either as plaintiff or defendant. I maintain that Grettir has no standing in the case, and that it must be brought by the kinsmen of the deceased who are nearest at law."

Thorodd Drapustuf said: "Who then is to answer for the slaying of my brother Thorbjorn?"

"See to that yourself," said Skapti. "Grettir's kinsmen are not liable to pay for his deeds unless his sentence be removed."

When Thorvald the son of Asgeir learned of Grettir's status in court having been disallowed, inquiry was made for Atli's nearest of kin, and these were found to be Skeggi the son of Gamli at Melar and Ospak the son of Glum of Eyr in Bitra. Both were valiant and strenuous men. Thorodd was then mulcted in blood-money for the slaying of Atli and had to pay two hundreds of silver.

Then Snorri the Godi spoke:

"Men of Hrutafjord! Are you willing now to agree to the remission of the fine in consideration of Grettir's sentence being commuted? I expect that as an outlaw he will bite you sorely."

Grettir's kinsmen welcomed this proposal, and said they did not care about the money if Grettir could have peace and freedom. Thorodd said he saw that his case was beset with difficulties, and that for his part he was willing to accept the proposal. Snorri said that inquiry must first be made whether Thorir of Gard would agree to Grettir being freed. When Thorir heard of it he was furious, and said that never should Grettir either go or come out of his outlawry. So far from consenting to his being amnestied, he would put a higher price upon his head than was put upon any other outlaw.

When they knew that he would take it so ill, nothing more was said about the amnesty. Ospak and Skeggi took the money that was paid and kept it, while Thorodd Drapustuf got no compensation for his brother Thorbjorn. He and Thorir each offered a reward of three marks of silver for Grettir's head; this seemed to men to be an innovation, for never before had more than three marks in all been offered. Snorri said it was very unwise to make such efforts to keep a man outlawed who could do so much mischief, and that many would suffer for it. Then they parted and men rode home from the Thing.

Chapter 52

Grettir is Captured by Farmers and Released by Thorbjorg

Grettir went over the Thorskafjord Heath to Langadal, where he let his hands sweep over the property of the smaller cultivators, taking what he wanted from every one. From some he got weapons, from others clothes. They gave up their property very variously, but when he was gone all said that they had been compelled to do it.

There dwelt on the Vatnsfjord one Vermund the Slender, a brother of Viga-Styr, who had married Thorbjorg the daughter of Olaf Peacock, the son of Hoskuld, called Thorbjorg the Fat. At the time when Grettir was in Langadal Vermund was away at the Thing. He went across the ridge to Laugabol where a man named Helgi was living, one of the principal bondis. Thence Grettir took a good horse belonging to the bondi and rode on to Gervidal, where dwelt a man named Thorkell. He was well provided but in a small way of business. Grettir took from him what he wanted, Thorkell daring neither to withhold anything nor to protest. Thence Grettir went to Eyr and on to the coast of the fjord, obtaining

food and clothes from every homestead and making himself generally disagreeable, so that men found it hard to live while he was about.

Grettir went boldly on, taking little care of himself. He went on until he came to Vatnsfjardardal and entered a dairy shelter, where he stayed several nights. There he lay sleeping in the forest, fearing for nothing. When the shepherds learned of it they reported in the homesteads that a fiend had come into the place who they thought would be hard to deal with. All the farmers came together and a band of thirty of them concealed themselves in the forest where Grettir could not know of them. They set one of the shepherds to watch for an opportunity of seizing him, without however knowing very clearly who the man was.

One day when Grettir was lying asleep the farmers came up to him.

They considered how they should take him with least danger to themselves, and arranged that ten should fall upon him while others laid bonds round his feet. They threw themselves on to him, but Grettir struggled so violently that he threw them all off and came down on his hands and knees. Then they threw ropes round his feet. Grettir kicked two of them in the ears and they fell senseless. One came on after the other; long and hard he struggled, but at last they succeeded in getting him down and binding him. Then they began to ask themselves what they were going to do with him. They asked Helgi of Laugaból to take him over and look after him until Vermund returned from the Thing.

He said: "I have something better to do than to keep my men guarding him. I have labour enough with my lands, and he shall not come in my way."

Then they asked Thorkell of Gervidal to take him and said he had sufficient means. He objected strongly and said he had no accommodation for him, "I lie at home with my wife, far from other men. You shall not bring your basket to me."

"Then you, Thoralf of Eyr," they said; "you take Grettir and look after him well while the Thing lasts, or else hand him on to the next farm; only be answerable for his not escaping. Give him over bound, just as you receive him."

He said: "I am not going to take Grettir. I have neither means nor money to keep him, nor was he captured on my property. So far as I can see much more trouble than credit is to be got by taking him or having anything to do with him. He shall not enter my house."

Each of the bondis was asked, but all refused. Some witty person wrote a poem about these confabulations and called it "Grettir's Faring," adding many jests of his own for the dilectification of men. After parleying for a long time they all came to an agreement that they would not throw away their luck, and set to work to raise a gallows there and then in the forest upon which Grettir should hang. Their delight over this proposal was uproarious.

Then they saw three people riding along the valley from below, one of them in a dyed dress. They guessed that it must be Thorbjorg the mistress of Vatnsfjord on her way to the dairy, and so it was. Thorbjorg was a person of great magnificence, and tremendously wise. She was the leading personage of the district and managed everything when Vermund was away. She came up to

where the crowd was gathered and was lifted from her horse; the bondis saluted her respectfully. She said:

"What is your meeting about? Who is this thick-necked man sitting there in bonds?"

Grettir told his name and saluted her.

"What has moved you, Grettir," she said, "to commit violence upon my Thingmen?"

"I cannot overlook everything," he said. "I must be somewhere."

"You are indeed unfortunate," she said, "that a pack of churls like these should have captured you and that none of them should have paid for it. What are you men going to do with him?"

The bondis said that they were going to hoist him on to a gallows for his misdeeds.

She said: "It may be that Grettir has deserved it, but it will bring trouble upon you men of Isafjord if you take the life of a man so renowned and so highly connected as Grettir, ill-starred though he be. Now what will you do for your life, Grettir, if I give it to you?"

"What do you wish me to do?"

"You shall swear never to commit any violence here in Isafjord; nor shall you take revenge upon those who have had a hand in capturing you."

Grettir said it should be as she desired, and he was released. He said it was the greatest effort of self-restraint that he ever made that he did not thrash the men who were there triumphing over him. Thorbjorg told him to come home with her and gave him a horse to ride on. So he went to Vatnsfjord and stayed there well cared for by the mistress until Vermund returned. She gained great renown from this deed through the district. Vermund was very much put out when he got home and asked why Grettir was there. Thorbjorg told him everything which had happened with the Isafjord men.

"To what does he owe it that you gave him his life?" he asked.

"Many reasons there were," she said. "The first is that you might be the more respected as a chief for having a wife who would dare to do such a thing. Next, his kinswoman Hrefna will surely say that I could not let him be slain; and thirdly, because he is in many respects a man of the highest worth."

"You are a wise woman," he said, "in most things. I thank you for what you have done."

Then he said to Grettir: "You have sold yourself very cheap, such a man of prowess as you are, to let yourself be taken by churls. This is what always happens to those who cannot control themselves."

Grettir then spoke a verse:

"Full was my cup in Isafjord
when the old swine held me at ransom."

"What were they going to do with you when they took you?" Vermund asked.

"To Sigar's lot my neck was destined
when noble Thorbjorg came upon them."

"Would they have hanged you then if they had been left to themselves?"

"My neck would soon have been in the noose,
had she not wisely saved the bard."

"Did she invite you to her home?"

"She bade me home with her to fare.
A steed she gave me, life and peace."

"Great will your life be and troublous," said Vermund; "but now you have learnt to beware of your foes. I cannot keep you here, for it would rouse the enmity of many powerful men against me. Your best way is to seek your kinsmen; there are not many who will be willing to take you in if they can do anything else; nor are you one who will easily follow the will of another man."

Grettir remained for a time in Vatnsfjord and went thence to the Western fjords and tried several of the leading men there, but something always happened to prevent their taking him in.

Chapter 53

Grettir Winters in Ljarskogar with Thorsteinn Kuggason

During the autumn Grettir returned to the South and did not stop till he came to his kinsman Thorsteinn Kuggason in Ljarskogar, who welcomed him. He accepted Thorsteinn's invitation to stay the winter with him. Thorsteinn was a man who worked very hard; he was a smith, and kept a number of men working for him. Grettir was not one for hard work, so that their dispositions did not agree very well. Thorsteinn had had a church built on his lands, with a bridge from his house, made with much ingenuity. Outside the bridge, on the beam which supported it, rings were fastened and bells, which could be heard from Skarfsstadir half a sea-mile distant when any one walked over the bridge. The building of the bridge had cost Thorsteinn, who was a great worker in iron, much labour. Grettir was a first-rate hand at forging the iron, but was not often inclined to work at it. He was very quiet during the winter so that there is not much to relate.

The men of Hrutafjord heard that Grettir was with Thorsteinn, and gathered their forces in the spring. Thorsteinn then told Grettir that he must find some other hiding-place for himself, since he would not work. Men who did nothing did not suit him.

"Where do you mean me to go to?" asked Grettir.

Thorsteinn told him to go South to his kinsmen, but to return to him if he found them of no use.

Grettir did so. He went to Borgarfjord in the South to visit Grim the son of Thorhall, and stayed with him till the Thing was over. Grim sent him on to Skapti the Lawman at Hjalli. He went South over the lower heaths and did not stop before he reached Tunga, where he went to Thorhall, the son of Asgrim the son of Ellidagrim, and paid few visits to the farms around. Thorhall knew of Grettir through the relations which had been between their ancestors; indeed Grettir's name was well known throughout the country because of his exploits. Thorhall was a wise man and treated Grettir well, but did not want to keep him there for very long.

Chapter 54

Adventure with Lopt

Grettir went from Tunga up the Haukadal valley northwards to Kjol and was there for some time in the summer. For men travelling either to the North or to the South there was no certainty of their not being stripped of what they had on them, for he was hard pressed for the means of living.

One day when Grettir was keeping to the North near Dufunesskeid he saw a man riding South along the Kjol valley. He was a tall man on horseback, riding a good horse with a studded bridle, and was leading another horse loaded with sacks. He had a slouched hat on his head, so that his face was not clearly seen. Grettir was very pleased to see his horse and his property, and went to meet him and asked him his name. He said it was Lopt, and added: "I know what your name is; you are Grettir the Strong, son of Asmund. Whither are you going?"

"I have not made up my mind yet about that," said Grettir. "My present business is to know whether you will lay off some of the property which you are travelling with."

"Why should I give you what belongs to me? What will you give me for the things?"

"Have you not heard that I never pay anything? And yet it seems to most people that I get what I want."

Lopt said: "Make this offer to those who seem good to you; I am not going to give my property away for nothing. Let us each go our own way." Then he whipped on his horse and was about to ride away from Grettir.

"We shall not part so quickly as that," said Grettir, and seized the bridle of Lopt's horse in front of his hands, pulled it from him and held it with both hands.

"Go your own way," said Lopt; "you will get nothing from me as long as I am able to hold it."

"That shall now be tried," said Grettir.

Lopt reached down along the cheek-strap and got hold of the reins between the end ring and Grettir's hands, pulling with such force that Grettir let go, and at last Lopt wrenched the whole bridle away from him. Grettir looked at his palms

and thought that this man must have strength in his claws rather than not. Then he looked at him and said: "Where are you going to now?"

He answered:

"To the storm-driven den, over ice-clad heights,
I ride to the rock and the rest of the hand."

Grettir said: "There is no certainty to be had from asking where your dwelling is if you do not speak more clearly." Then Lopt spake and said:

"I seek not to hide thy ways from thy ken.
'Tis the place which the Borgfirdings Balljokull call."

Then they parted. Grettir saw that he had no strength against this man. Then he spoke a verse:

"Illugi brave and Atli were far.
Never again may such hap be mine!
The bridle was torn away from my hand.
Her tears will flow when I am afeared."

After this Grettir left Kjol and went South to Hjalli where he asked Skapti for shelter. Skapti said: "I am told that you are acting with violence and are robbing men of their property; that ill becomes a man so highly connected as you are. It would be easier to negotiate if you gave up robbing. Now as I am called Lawman of this country, it would not be seemly for me to break the law by harbouring outlaws. I would like you to betake yourself somewhere where you do not need to commit robbery."

Grettir said he would be very glad to, but that he could scarcely live alone owing to his fear of the dark. Skapti said he would have to content himself with something short of the best: "And trust no one so fully that what happened to you in the Western fjords may be repeated. Many have been brought to death by over-confidence."

Grettir thanked him for his good advice and turned back to Borgarfjord in the autumn, when he went to his friend Grim, the son of Thorhall, and told him what Skapti had said. Grim advised him to go to the North to Fiskivotn in the Arnarvatn Heath, and he did so.

Chapter 55

Grettir in the Arnarvatn Heath.

Death of Grim the Forest-man

Grettir went up to the Arnarvatn Heath and built himself a hut there of which the remains are still to be seen. He went there because he wanted to do anything rather than rob, so he got himself a net and a boat and went out fishing to support himself.

It was a weary time for him in the mountains because of his fear of the dark. Other outlaws heard of his having come there and wanted to go and see him, thinking that he would be a great protection to them.

There was an outlaw from the North named Grim. This man was bribed by those of Hrutafjord to kill Grettir. They promised him pardon and money if he succeeded. He went to visit Grettir and asked for his hospitality.

Grettir said: "I do not see how you will be holpen by coming to me, and you men of the forest are untrustworthy. But it is ill to live alone; I have no choice. Only he shall be with me who is willing to work at whatever comes to hand."

Grim said that was just what he wished and pressed Grettir much, until Grettir let himself be persuaded and took him in. He stayed there right into the winter, and watched Grettir closely, but it seemed no easy matter to attack him, for Grettir was suspicious and kept his weapons at hand night and day; when he was awake the man would not venture to approach him.

One morning Grim came home from fishing and went into the hut stamping with his feet and wanting to know whether Grettir was asleep. Grettir lay still and did not move. There was a short sword hanging above his head. Grim thought he would never have a better opportunity. He made a loud noise to see whether Grettir took any notice, but he did not, so Grim felt sure that he was asleep. He crept stealthily to the bed, reached up to the sword, took it down and raised it to strike. Just at the moment when he raised it Grettir sprang up on to the floor, and, seizing the sword with one hand, Grim with the other, hurled him over so that he fell nearly senseless. "This is how you have proved yourself with all your friendly seeming," he said. Then he got the whole truth out of him and killed him. He learned from this what it was to take in a forest-man. So the winter passed. The hardest thing of all to bear was his fear of the dark.

Chapter 56

Treachery and Death of Thorir Redbeard

Thorir of Gard now heard where Grettir had taken up his abode and meant to leave no stone unturned to get him slain. There was a man named Thorir Redbeard, a stout man and a great fighter, on which account he had been declared outlaw throughout the country.

Thorir of Gard sent word to him, and when they met asked Redbeard to undertake the business of slaying Grettir. Redbeard said that was no easy task, as Grettir was very wide awake and very cautious. Thorir told him to try it, saying: "It would be a splendid deed for a valiant man like you; I will get your outlawing removed and give you sufficient money as well."

So Redbeard agreed and Thorir told him how he should go to work to deal with Grettir. Redbeard then went away into the East in order that Grettir might not suspect where he came from. Thence he came to the Arnarvatn Heath, where Grettir had then been for one winter, found Grettir and asked him for entertainment. He said: "I cannot allow people to play with me again as the man did who came here last autumn, pretending to be very friendly; before he had

been here very long he began plotting against my life. I cannot risk taking in anymore forest-men."

"I think you have reason," Thorir said, "to mistrust forest-men. It may be you have heard tell of me as a man of blood and a disturber of peace, but never did you hear of such a monstrous deed of me as that I betrayed my host. Ill is the lot of him who has an ill name; for men think of him but as such; nor would I have come here if I had had any better choice. All is not lost for us if we stand together. You might venture so much to begin with as to try how you like me, and then if you find any unfitness in me turn me away."

"Well," said Grettir, "I will risk it with you; but know of a surety that if I suspect you of any treachery it will be your death."

Thorir agreed. Grettir took him in and found that in whatever he did he had the strength of two men. He was ready for anything that Grettir gave him to do. Nothing did Grettir need to do for himself, and he had never lived so comfortably since he had become an outlaw. Nevertheless he was so wary that Thorir got no chance. Two years was Thorir Redbeard with Grettir on the Heath, and at last he began to weary of it. He thought over what he could do to take Grettir off his guard.

One night in the spring a heavy gale sprang up while they were asleep. Grettir awoke and asked where their boat was. Thorir sprang up, ran to the boat, broke her all in pieces, and threw the fragments about so that it looked as if the storm had wrecked her. Then he returned to the hut and said aloud: "You have had bad luck, my friend. Our boat is all broken in pieces and the nets are lying far out in the lake."

"Get them back then," said Grettir. "It seems to me to be your doing that the boat is smashed."

"Of all things which I can do," said Thorir, "swimming is that which suits me least. In almost anything else I think I can hold my own with any ordinary man. You know very well that I have been no burden to you since I came here; nor would I ask you to do this if I were able to do it myself."

Grettir then arose, took his arms and went to the lake. There was a point of land running out into the lake with a large bay on the further side of it. The water was deep up to the shore. Grettir said: "Swim out to the nets and let me see what you are able to do."

"I told you before," Thorir said, "that I cannot swim. I do not know now where all your boldness and daring are gone to."

"I could get the nets," he said; "but betray me not if I trust you."

"Do not think such shameful and monstrous things of me," said Thorir.

"You will prove yourself what you are," Grettir said.

Then he threw off his clothes and his weapons and swam out to the nets. He gathered them together, returned to the shore and cast them up on to the bank. Just as he was about to land Thorir quickly seized his short sword and drew it. He ran towards Grettir as he stepped on to the bank and aimed a blow at him. Grettir threw himself down backwards into the water and sank like a stone.

Thorir stood by the shore intending to guard it until he came up. Grettir swam beneath the water, keeping close to the bank so that Thorir could not see him, and so reached the bay behind him, where he landed without letting himself be seen. The first Thorir knew of it was when Grettir lifted him up over his head and dashed him down with such violence that the sword fell out of his hand. Grettir got possession of it and without speaking a word cut off his head. So his life ended. After that Grettir refused to take in any forest-men, and yet he could not live alone.

Chapter 57

Attack on Grettir by Thorir of Gard with Eighty Men Repulsed with the Aid of Hallmund

At the All-Thing Thorir of Gard learned of Thorir Redbeard having been killed. It was evident that the matter was not so easy to deal with. He now determined to ride from the Thing in a westerly direction through the lower heath, and with the aid of about eighty men whom he had with him to take Grettir's life. Grim the son of Thorhall heard of his plans and sent word to Grettir, bidding him beware of himself. Grettir therefore continued closely to watch the movements of men who came and went.

One day he saw a number of men coming in the direction of his place of dwelling. He went into a gorge between two rocks, but did not go right away because he did not see the whole of the troop. Thorir then came up with his whole party and bade them go between his head and his body, saying that the scoundrel had but a poor chance now.

"A filled cup is not yet drunk," answered Grettir. "You have come far to seek me, and some of you shall bear the marks of our game before we part."

Thorir urged his men on to attack him. The gorge was very narrow so that he could easily defend it from one end, and he wondered much that they did not get round to his rear to hurt him. Some of Thorir's men fell and some were wounded, but they effected nothing. Then Thorir said: "I always heard that Grettir was distinguished for his courage and daring, but I never knew that he was so skilled in magic as I now see he is; for there fall half as many again behind his back as before his face, and I see that we have to do with a troll instead of a man."

So he bade his men retire, and they did so. Grettir wondered what the explanation could be, but was terribly exhausted. Thorir and his men withdrew and rode into the northern parts. Their expedition was considered very disgraceful. Thorir had left eighteen men on the ground and had many wounded.

Grettir then went up the gorge and found there a man of huge stature sitting up against the rock and sorely wounded. Grettir asked his name, and he said it was Hallmund, adding: "That you may recognise me I may remind you that you thought I gripped the reins rather tightly when I met you in Kjol last summer. I think I have now made that good."

"Indeed," said Grettir, "I think you have done me a manly service; whenever I can I will repay it."

"Now I wish," said Hallmund, "that you may come to my home, for it must seem wearisome to you here on the Heath."

Grettir said he would come willingly, and they both went together to the foot of the Balljokull, where Hallmund had a large cave. There they found his daughter, a fine and well-grown maiden. They treated Grettir well, and the daughter nursed both the wounded men to health again. Grettir stayed there some time that summer. He composed an ode on Hallmund in which the line occurs:

"Hallmund steps from his mountain hall";

further:

"The war-fain sword in Arnarvatn
went forth to hew its bloody path.
Heroes inherit Kelduhverfi.
Hallmund the brave came forth from his den."

It is said that at that encounter Grettir slew six men and Hallmund twelve.

As the summer passed Grettir began to long for the habitations of men, and to see his friends and kinsmen. Hallmund told him to visit him when he returned to the South and Grettir promised to do so. He went westwards to Borgarfjord and thence to Breidafjardardalir and sought counsel of Thorsteinn Kuggason as to where he should go next. Thorsteinn said that his enemies were now becoming so numerous that few would care to take him in; but told him to go to Myrar and see what he found there. So in the autumn he went to Myrar.

Chapter 58

Grettir Visits Bjorn the Hitdale Warrior and Takes Refuge in the Fagraskogafjall

There lived in Holm Bjorn the Hitdale Warrior, who was the son of Arngeir, the son of Bersi the Godless, the son of Balki, who was the first settler in Hrutafjord, as has already been told. Bjorn was a great chief and a valiant man, always ready to take in outlaws. He received Grettir well when he came to Holm on account of the friendship which had existed between their former kinsmen. Grettir asked if he would give him shelter, and Bjorn said that he had so many quarrels throughout the land that men would be reluctant to take him in for fear of being outlawed themselves. "But," he said, "I will give you some help if you will leave the men who are under my protection in peace, whatever you do to others in this part."

Grettir promised that he would, and Bjorn continued: "I have thought of something. In the mountain which stretches away from the Hitara river there is a good position for defence, and likewise a good hiding-place if it is skilfully managed. There is a hole through the mountain from which you can see down upon the high road that lies immediately beneath it, and a sandy slope down to

the road so steep that few could get up it if it were defended above by one doughty man up in the hollow. It may, I think, be worth your while to consider whether you can stay there; it is easy to go down from there to the Myrar to get your supplies, and to reach the sea."

Grettir said he would trust to his foresight if he would help him a little. Then he went to Fagraskogafjall and made himself a home there. He hung some grey wadmal in front of the hole, and it looked from the road below as if one could see through. Then he began to get in his supplies, but the Myramen thought they had an unhappy visitor in Grettir.

Thord the son of Kolbeinn was an excellent poet who dwelt in Hitarnes. There was a great feud between him and Bjorn at that time, and Bjorn thought it would be more than half useful to him if Grettir were to busy himself with Thord's men or his cattle. Grettir was a great deal with Bjorn and they had many games of strength. It is related in Bjorn's saga that they were considered equal in strength, but the opinion of most people is that Grettir was the strongest man that had been in the land since the days when Orin Storolfsson and Thoralf Skolmsson ceased their trials of strength. Grettir and Bjorn swam in one course the whole length of the Hitara from the lake at its head down to the sea. They brought the stepping-stones into the river which neither floods nor freezing nor icedrifts have since moved from their places. Grettir stayed a year in Fagraskogafjall without any attack being made upon him, and yet many lost their property through his means and got nothing for it, because his position was strong for defence and he was always in good friendship with those who were nearest to him.

Chapter 59

Chastisement of Gisli

There was a man named Gisli; he was the son of that Thorsteinn whom Snorri the Godi had caused to be slain. He was a big strong man, very ostentatious in his dress and in his armour, a man with a high opinion of himself and very boastful. He was a mariner, and landed at the Hvita river in the summer after Grettir had spent a winter in the mountains. Thord the son of Kolbeinn rode to his ship and was welcomed by Gisli, who offered him of his wares whatever he cared to have. Thord accepted his offer and they began to have some talk together. Gisli asked: "Is it true what I hear that you are in difficulty how to rid yourself of a forest-man who is doing you much hurt?"

"We have made no attempt yet," said Thord, "because a great many think he is difficult to reach, and have found it so."

"It seems likely that you will have trouble with Bjorn, unless you drive him away. All the worse it is that I must be too far away next winter to give you any help."

"It is better for you to know of him only by hearsay."

"Don't talk to me about Grettir," said Gisli. "I have been in much greater straits in my campaigns with King Knut the Mighty and in the western seas, where I was

always considered to have held my own. Only let me come within reach of him and I will trust myself and my armour."

Thord answered that he should not do it for nothing if he killed Grettir: "There is more money on his head than on that of any other outlaw. First there were six marks of silver, this summer Thorir of Gard added three more, and men think that he who wins it will have had enough trouble."

"Everything will be attempted for money," said Gisli: "especially with us traders. But we must keep quiet about what we have been saying, for Grettir will be more on his guard if he hears that you have taken me into your counsels. I intend next winter to be at Olduhrygg; is there any hiding-place of his on my way there? He will not be prepared for this, and I shall not take many men with me to attack him."

Thord approved of his proposal. He rode home soon after and kept very quiet about it. And now was proved what has often been said, that: Off in the woods is a listener nigh. Men who were friends of Bjorn in Hitardal overheard their conversation and reported it accurately to him. Bjorn told Grettir of it when they met, and said now he should see how to encounter him. "It would be no bad joke," he said, "if you were to injure him in some way without killing him if you can."

Grettir grinned but said little. Towards the time of gathering in the cattle Grettir went down to Flysjuhverfi to get some sheep and got four wethers. The bondis heard of his having come and went after him. They came up just at about the moment when he reached the foot of his mountain and wanted to drive the sheep away from him. But they would not attack him with weapons. There were six of them and they stood across his path to bar his way. He was concerned about his sheep, got angry, seized three of them and threw them down the hill so that they lay senseless. The others when they saw it went at him, but rather halfheartedly. Grettir took the sheep, fastened them together by the horns, threw two over each shoulder and carried them off. Then he went up into his den. The bondis turned back feeling they had had the worst of it, and were more discontented with their lot than ever.

Gisli stayed with his ship that autumn until she was ready to be hauled up. Several things happened to delay him, so that he was late in getting away and rode off very little before the winter nights. Then he rode North and stayed at Hraun on the south bank of the Hitara. Next morning before he rode out he said to his servants: "Now we will ride in red clothes and let the forest-man see that we are not like the other travellers who beat about here every day."

There were three of them and they did as he bade. When they had crossed the river he said: "Here I am told dwells the forest-man, up in that peak; but the way is not an easy one. Would it not please him to come to us and see our array?" They said this was always his habit.

That morning Grettir had got up early. The weather was cold, it was freezing and some snow had fallen, but very little. He saw three men riding from the South across the Hitara, and the light shone from their apparel and from their enamelled shields. It occurred to Grettir who it might be, and he thought he would relieve them of some of their accoutrements. He was very curious to meet a man who went about so ostentatiously. So he took his weapons and

hurried down the hillside. Gisli when he heard the clattering of the stones said: "A man, rather tall, is coming down the hill and wants to meet us. Let us act boldly and we shall have good sport." His men said that this fellow had great confidence in himself to run into their hands; but that he who asked should have. Then they got off their horses. Grettir came up to them and laid hold of a bag of clothes which Gisli had behind him on his saddle, saying:

"I must have this; I often stoop to little things."

Gisli said: "You shall not; do not you know with whom you have to do?"

Grettir said: "No; that is not so clear to me. Nor do I make much difference between one man and another since I claim so little."

"May be it seems little to you," said Gisli; "but I would sooner part with thirty hundred ells of wadmal. It seems that extortion is your way. Go for him, boys! Let us see what he can do."

They obeyed. Grettir fell back a little and reached a stone which is still standing by the side of the way and is called Grettishaf, where he stood at bay. Gisli urged on his men, and Grettir saw that he was not quite so valiant as he pretended to be, for he kept well behind them. Grettir got tired of being hemmed in, so he made a lunge with his sword and killed one of Gisli's men, sprang from his stone and assailed them so vigorously that Gisli fell back all along the foot of the hill. Then his other man was killed.

Grettir said: "One would scarcely see that you have achieved much in the world abroad, and you have shamefully forsaken your comrades."

Gisli answered: "The fire is hottest to him who is in it; it is ill dealing with men from Hel."

They had exchanged few more blows when Gisli threw away his arms and bolted right away along the foot of the mountain. Grettir gave him time to throw away whatever he liked, and at every opportunity he threw off something more of his clothes. Grettir never followed him so closely that there was not some distance between them. He ran right away from the mountains, across Kaldardal, round Aslaug's Cliff, above Kolbeinsstad and out to Borgarhraun.

By that time he had nothing left on him but his shirt, and was terribly exhausted. Grettir still followed, keeping now within reach of him. He pulled off a great branch. Gisli did not stop till he reached Haffjardara river, which was all swollen and difficult to ford. Gisli was going right out into the river when Grettir pressed forward and seized him and showed him the difference in their strength.

Grettir got him down, sat on the top of him and asked: "Are you the Gisli who wanted to meet Grettir?"

"I have found him now," he answered; "but I know not how I shall part with him. Keep what you have taken and let me go free."

Grettir said: "You will not understand what I am going to tell you, so I must give you something to remember it by." Then he pulled up Gisli's shirt over his head and let the rod play on both sides of his back. Gisli struggled to get away, but Grettir gave him a sound whipping and then let him go. Gisli thought that he would sooner not learn anything from Grettir than have another such flogging,

nor did he do anything more to earn it. Directly he got his feet under him again he ran off to a large pool and swam across the river. In the evening he reached the settlement called Hrossholt, very exhausted. There he lay for a week, his body covered with blisters, and afterwards went on to his own place.

Grettir turned back, gathered up all the things which Gisli had thrown away and took them home. Gisli never got them back again; many thought he had only got what he deserved for his noisy boasting. Grettir made a verse about their encounter:

"The horse whose fighting teeth are blunted
runs from the field before his foe.
With many an afterthought ran Gisli.
Gone is his fame, his glory lost!"

In the spring after this Gisli prepared to go on board his ship and forbade in the strongest terms anything which belonged to him being carried South by the way of the mountains; for he said that the Fiend himself was there. Gisli when he went South to join his ship kept all the way along the coast and he never met Grettir again. Nobody considered him worth thinking about, nor do we hear any more of him in this saga. Grettir's relations with Thord the son of Kolbeinn became worse than ever, and Thord tried every means to get Grettir driven away or killed.

Chapter 60

Battle with the Myramen

When Grettir had been two winters in Fagraskogafjall and the third winter had set in, he went South into Myrar to the farm called Laekjarbug, where he took six wethers without their owner's permission. Then he went down to Akrar and drove off two oxen for slaughter with several sheep, and went up South to the Hitara. When the bondis heard of his exploits they sent word to Thord at Hitarnes and asked him to take the lead in the slaying of Grettir. He was rather reluctant, but as they had asked him he sent his son Arnor, afterwards called Jarlsbard, to go with them, and told them not to let Grettir escape. Messengers were then sent round to all the farms.

There was a man named Bjarni who dwelt in Jorvi in Flysjuhverfi. He collected men on the other side of the Hitara; the intention was that each band should keep on its own side. Grettir had two men with him, one named Eyjolf, a stout man, the son of a bondi in Fagraskogar, and another. The party came on, about twenty in number, under Thorarin from Akrar and Thorfinn of Laekjarbug. Grettir tried to get out across the river, but was met by Arnor and Bjarni coming from the coast. There was a narrow point jutting out into the river on Grettir's side, and when he saw the men approaching he drove his animals on to it, for he never would let go anything of which he had once got possession. The Myramen prepared to attack in good order and Grettir told his companions to guard his rear. They could not all come on at once. There was a hard struggle between them; Grettir used his short sword with both hands and they found it not easy to get at him. Some of the Myramen fell and some were wounded. The

men on the other side of the river were rather slow in coming up because there was no ford near. Before they had been fighting very long they fell back. Thorarin of Akrar was a very old man and not able to join in the fighting. When the battle was over there came up his son Thrand, his brother Ingjald's son Thorgils, Finnbogi the son of Thorgeir, the son of Thorhadd of Hitardal, and Steinolf the son of Thorleif of Hraundal. They set on their men and there was a hard struggle.

Grettir saw that there was no choice left but either to flee or else to do his utmost and not spare himself. He pressed on hard and nothing could hold against him, for his foes were so numerous that there was no chance of escaping except by fighting to the last before he fell. He tried always to engage those who seemed most courageous; first he went for Steinolf of Hraundal and cleft his skull down to his shoulders; then he struck at Thorgils the son of Ingjald and almost cut him in two. Then Thrand tried to spring forward and avenge his kinsmen, and Grettir hewed at his right thigh, cutting out all the muscles so that he could fight no more. Next he gave Finnbogi a severe wound. Then Thorarin ordered them off. "The longer you fight," he said, "the worse you will get from him and the more will he choose out the men from your company."

They obeyed and fell back. Ten had fallen; five were wounded to death or crippled, and nearly all who had been in the battle were hurt. Grettir was terribly fatigued but little wounded. The Myramen drew off, having suffered heavy losses, for many a good man had fallen. Those who were beyond the river came over slowly and did not arrive till the fight was over, and when they saw the plight of their men Arnor would not risk himself any further, for which he was much blamed by his father and by others. Men thought he was not much of a warrior. The place where they fought is now called Grettisoddi.

Grettir and his companions were all wounded; they took their horses and rode back along the foot of the mountain. When they reached Fagraskogar Eyjolf was behind. There was a bondi's daughter there and she asked for their tidings, which Grettir told her fully and spoke a verse:

"Goddess of horn-floods! Steinolf's wounds
are such that scarcely may be healed.
Of Thorgils' life is little hope;
his bones are smashed; eight more are dead."

Then Grettir went to his retreat and spent the winter there.

Chapter 61

Grettir Winters Under the Geitland Glacier

The next time that Bjorn met Grettir he told him that this was a very serious affair, and that he would not be able to stay there in peace much longer. "You have killed kinsmen and friends of mine, but I will not depart from my promise to you so long as you are here."

Grettir said he was sorry to have given him offence, but that he had to defend his hands and his life. Bjorn said it would have to remain so. Soon there came

to him some of the men who had lost their kinsmen through Grettir and petitioned him not to allow such a ruffian as he was to stay there any longer and molest them. Bjorn said he would do as they desired directly the winter was over.

Thrand the son of Thorarin of Akrar had now recovered from his wound. He was a man of much worth, and had married Steinunn the daughter of Hrut of Kamsnes. Steinolf's father Thorleif of Hraundal was a great man; from him are sprung the Hraundal men.

No more meetings are told of between Grettir and the Myramen while he was in the mountains. Bjorn continued in friendship with him, but some of Bjorn's other friends fell away from him because of his allowing Grettir to remain there, for they were annoyed at getting no compensation for the slaying of their kinsmen. When the Thing assembled Grettir left the Myrar district and went to Borgarfjord, where he visited Grim the son of Thorhall and sought counsel of him where he should move to next. Grim said he was not powerful enough to keep him there, so Grettir went off to his friend Hallmund and stayed there till the end of the summer.

In the autumn Grettir went to Geitland, where he stayed till bright weather set in. Then he ascended the Geitlandsjokull and turned his steps South-east along the glacier, taking with him a kettle and fuel. It is supposed that he went there by the counsel of Hallmund, who knew the country far and wide. He went on till he came to a long and rather narrow valley in the glacier, shut in on every side by the ice which overhung the valley. He went about everywhere, and found fair grass-grown banks and brushwood. There were hot springs, and it seemed as if volcanic fires had kept the ice from closing in above the valley.

A little stream flowed down the dale with smooth banks on either side. Little did the light of the sun enter there, and the number of sheep in the valley seemed to him countless. They were much better and fatter than any which he had ever seen.

Grettir stayed there and built himself a hut out of logs which he found about. He caught a sheep to eat, and it was better for slaughter than two in other places. There was a ewe there with her lamb; she had a brown head and excelled all the others in size. He was anxious to have the lamb, so he caught it and slaughtered it and got half a measure of suet out of it, and it was better in every way. When Brownhead missed her lamb she came up every night to Grettir's hut and bleated so that he never could get any sleep. He regretted much having killed the lamb on account of the disturbance which she caused him. Every evening when the twilight set in he heard a voice calling in the valley, and then the sheep used to run together into a place of shelter. Grettir has told us that a blending ruled over the valley, a giant named Thorir, under whose protection he remained. Grettir called the valley after him Thorisdal. He said that Thorir had daughters with whom he had some play, and that they were very pleased, because not many people came there. And when the days of fasting came Grettir remembered to tell them that fat and liver should be eaten in Lent. Nothing particular occurred that winter, and Grettir found it so dull that he could not stay there any longer. He left the valley and went to the South through the glacier, reaching the middle of Skjaldbreid from the North. There he took up a stone, cut a hole in it and said that if a man put his eye to the hole he could see

into the gully which flows out of Thorisdal. Then he went across the country South and reached the eastern fjords. He spent the summer and the winter on this journey and visited all the great men, but found them all against him so that nowhere could he get lodging or shelter. So he returned to the North and stayed in various places.

Chapter 62

Hallmund is Killed by a Forest-Man named Grim

Soon after Grettir had left the Arnarvatn Heath there came a man there named Grim, the son of a widow at Kropp. He had killed the son of Eid of Ass, the son of Skeggi, and been outlawed for it. So there he stayed where Grettir had been before him and got plenty of fish out of the lake. Hallmund was not at all pleased at Grim being there instead of Grettir, and said that he should have little advantage from his great catches of fish. One morning Grim had caught a hundred fish, which he brought to the hut and arranged outside. The next morning when he went there every fish was gone. He thought it very strange, but returned to the lake and caught this time two hundred. He carried them home and arranged them; again everything happened as before; in the morning all were gone, evidently through the same agency as before. The third day he caught three hundred, carried them home and kept a watch on his hut. He looked out through a hole in the door to see if any one came, and so he remained for a time. When about one third of the night had passed he heard some one walking near and stepping rather heavily; so he immediately took his axe, which was very sharp, and wanted to know what was the matter. There came a man with a big basket on his back; he put it down and looked round, but saw no one outside. He rummaged about among the fish and seemed to think that they would do for him to lay hands upon. He threw them all into his basket and they quite filled it. The fishes were so large that Grim thought no horse would be able to carry more. This man then took the load and got beneath it. Just as he was about to rise Grim rushed out and taking his axe in both hands struck a blow at his neck which went through the skin. He started in surprise and then ran off towards the south of the hill with his basket. Grim went after him to see whether he had got him. They went south along the foot of the Balljokull where the man entered a cave. There was a bright fire in the cave and a woman standing in it, very tall but shapely. Grim heard her greet her father, calling him Hallmund. He flung down his load and heaved a great sigh. She asked why he was covered with blood. He answered in a verse:

"No man, I see, may trust his might.
His luck and heart will fail at death."

Then she pressed him to say what had happened, and he told her everything.

"Hear now," he said, "what I tell you of my adventure. I will tell it to you in verse, and you shall cut it in runes on a staff."

She did so, and he spoke the Hallmundarkvida, in which the following occurs:

"I was strong when Grettir's bridle I seized
I saw him gazing long at his palms.

Then Thorir came on the Heath with his men. 'Gainst eighty we two had play
with our spears.

Grettir's hands knew how to strike;
much deeper the marks that were left by mine.

Arms and heads then flew as they tried
to gain my rear; eighteen of them fell.

The giant-kind and the grim rock-dwellers, demons and blendings fell before
me,

Many exploits of his did Hallmund recount in the lay, for he had been in every
land.

The daughter said: "That man was not going to let his catch slip away from him.
It was only to be expected, for you treated him very badly. But who is going to
avenge you?"

"It is not certain that anybody will, but I think that Grettir would avenge me if he
were able. It will not be easy to go against this man's luck; he is destined to
great things." Then as the lay continued his strength began to fail. Hallmund
died almost at the moment when he finished the song. She grieved much for
him and wept sorely. Then Grim came forward and bade her be comforted. "All,"
he said, "must depart when their fate calls. It was partly his own fault, for I could
not look on and see myself robbed."

She said he might speak much about that: "The unjust man prospers ill."

She was somewhat cheered by the talk with him. Grim stayed several nights in
the cave and learned the lay; all went well with them. Grim was in the Arnarvatn
Heath all the winter after Hallmund's death. Afterwards Thorkell the son of Eyjolf
came to the heath and fought with him. The meeting ended by Grim having
Thorkell's life in his power, but he would not kill him. Thorkell then took him in,
sent him abroad and supplied him with means; each was considered to have
acted generously towards the other. Grim became a great traveller and there is
a long saga about him.

Chapter 63

Grettir's Meeting with Thorir on the Reykja Heath

We now return to Grettir, who came from the eastern fjords, travelling in
disguise and hiding his head because he did not wish to meet Thorir. That
summer he spent in Modrudal Heath and other places. For a time too he was
on Reykja Heath. Thorir heard of his being on Reykja Heath, gathered his men
and rode thither, determined not to let him escape. Grettir scarcely knew of their
plans before they came upon him. He was in a hill-dairy a little off the road with
another man, and when they saw the troop they had to lay their plans quickly.
Grettir said they should make their horses lie down inside the house, and they

did so. Thorir rode forward across the heath in a northerly direction, missed the place, did not find Grettir and turned back home. When the troop had ridden round to the West, Grettir said: "They will not be pleased with their expedition if they do not meet me. You stay and mind the horses while I go after them. It would be a good jest if they did not recognise me."

His companion tried to dissuade him, but he would go. He changed his dress, put on a wide hat which came down over his face and took a stick in his hand. Then he went along the road towards them. They addressed him and asked whether he had seen any men riding over the heath.

"I have seen the men whom you are seeking," he said, "you very nearly came upon them; they were on your left hand just south of the marshes."

On hearing this they galloped off towards the marshes, which were so swampy that they could not get through and had to spend a great part of the day dragging their horses out. They swore much at the supposed traveller for playing a practical joke upon them.

Grettir returned speedily home to his companion, and when they met spoke a verse:

"I will not ride to the warriors' arms;
too great the danger is.
I dare not meet the storm of Vidri;
but homeward turn my steps."

They rode off as fast as they could westwards towards the homestead in Gard before Thorir could come there with his company. When they were near the place they met a man on the road who did not know them. There was a young woman standing outside, very much dressed up, and Grettir asked who she was. The man who had come up said she was Thorir's daughter. Then Grettir spoke a verse:

"Maiden, when thy father comes
tell him, little though it please him,
how I rode his dwelling past;
only two who with me rode."

From this the man learnt who it was, and rode to the house to tell them that Grettir had come round. When Thorir returned many men thought that he had been bamboozled by Grettir. He then set spies to watch Grettir's movements. Grettir took the precaution of sending his companion to the western districts with his horse, while he himself went North into the mountains at the beginning of the winter, muffling up his face so that no one should recognise him. Every one thought that Thorir had fared no better but even worse than at their former encounter.

Chapter 64

Ghosts in Bardardal

There was dwelling at Eyjardalsa in Bardardal a priest named Steinn, a good farmer and wealthy. His son Kjartan was grown up and was now a fine young man. Thorsteinn the White was a man who dwelt at Sandhaugar to the south of Eyjardalsa; his wife Steinvor was young and of a merry disposition. They had children who at this time were yet young. Their place was generally thought to be much haunted by trolls. Two winters before Grettir came North into those parts, Steinvor the mistress of Sandhaugar went as usual to spend Yule at Eyjardalsa, while her husband stayed at home. Men lay down to sleep in the evening, and in the night they heard a great noise in the room near the bondi's bed. No one dared to get up to see what was the matter because there were so few of them. The mistress of the house returned home the next morning, but her husband had disappeared and no one knew what had become of him. So the next season passed. The following winter the mistress wanted to go to mass, and told her servant to stay at home; he was very unwilling but said she should be obeyed. It happened just as before; this time the servant disappeared. People thought it very strange and found some drops of blood upon the outer door, so they supposed that some evil spirit must have carried off both the men. The story spread all through the district and came to the ears of Grettir, who being well accustomed to deal with ghosts and spectres turned his steps to Bardardal and arrived at Yule-eve at Sandhaugar. He retained his disguise and called himself Gest. The lady of the house saw that he was enormously tall, and the servants were terribly afraid of him. He asked for hospitality; the mistress told him that food was ready for him but that he must see after himself. He said he would, and added: "I will stay in the house while you go to mass if you would like it."

She said: "You must be a brave man to venture to stay in the house."

"I do not care for a monotonous life," he said.

Then she said: "I do not want to remain at home, but I cannot get across the river."

"I will come with you," said Gest. Then she made ready to go to mass with her little daughter. It was thawing outside; the river was flooded and was covered with ice. She said: "It is impossible for either man or horse to cross the river."

"There must be fords," said Gest; "do not be afraid."

"First carry the maiden over," she said; "she is lighter."

"I don't want to make two journeys of it," said he; "I will carry you in my arms."

She crossed herself and said: "That is impossible; what will you do with the girl?"

"I will find a way," he said, taking them both up and setting the girl on her mother's knee as he bore them both on his left arm, keeping his right arm free. So he carried them across. They were too frightened to cry out. The river came up to his breast, and a great piece of ice drove against him, which he pushed

off with the hand that was free. Then the stream became so deep that it broke over his shoulder, but he waded on vigorously till he reached the other bank and put them on shore. It was nearly dark by the time he got home to Sandhaugar and called for some food. When he had eaten something he told the servants to go to the other end of the hall. Then he got some boards and loose logs and laid them across the hall to make a great barricade so that none of the servants could get across. No one dared to oppose him or to object to anything. The entrance was in the side wall of the hall under the back gable, and near it was a cross bench upon which Grettir laid himself, keeping on his clothes, with a light burning in the room. So he lay till into the night.

The mistress reached Eyjardalsa for mass and every one wondered how she had crossed the river. She said she did not know whether it was a man or a troll who had carried her over. The priest said it was certainly a man though unlike other men. "Let us keep silence over it; may be that he means to help you in your difficulties."

She stayed there the night.

Chapter 65

Adventure with a Troll-Woman

We return now to tell of Gest. Towards midnight he heard a loud noise outside, and very soon there walked a huge troll-wife into the room. She carried a trough in one hand and a rather large cutlass in the other. She looked round the room as she entered, and on seeing Gest lying there she rushed at him; he started up and attacked her furiously. They fought long together; she was the stronger but he evaded her skilfully. Everything near them and the panelling of the back wall were broken to pieces. She dragged him through the hall door out to the porch, where he resisted vigorously. She wanted to drag him out of the house, but before that was done they had broken up all the fittings of the outer door and borne them away on their shoulders. Then she strove to get to the river and among the rocks. Gest was terribly fatigued, but there was no choice but either to brace himself or be dragged down to the rocks. All night long they struggled together, and he thought he had never met with such a monster for strength. She gripped him so tightly to herself that he could do nothing with either hand but cling to her waist. When at last they reached a rock by the river he swung the monster round and got his right hand loose. Then he quickly seized the short sword which he was wearing, drew it and struck at the troll's right shoulder, cutting off her right arm and releasing himself. She sprang among the rocks and disappeared in the waterfall. Gest, very stiff and tired, lay long by the rock.

At daylight he went home and lay down on his bed, blue and swollen all over.

When the lady of the house came home she found the place rather in disorder. She went to Gest and asked him what had happened, and why everything was broken to pieces. He told her everything just as it had happened. She thought it a matter of great moment and asked him who he was. He told her the truth, said that he wished to see a priest and asked her to send for one. She did so; Steinn

came to Sandhaugar and soon learnt that it was Grettir the son of Asmund who had come there under the name of Gest. The priest asked him what he thought had become of the men who had disappeared; Grettir said he thought that they must have gone among the rocks. The priest said he could not believe his word unless he gave some evidence of it. Grettir said that later it would be known, and the priest went home. Grettir lay many days in his bed and the lady did all she could for him; thus Yule-tide passed. Grettir himself declared that the trollwoman sprang among the rocks when she was wounded, but the men of Bardardal say that the day dawned upon her while they were wrestling; that when he cut off her arm she broke, and that she is still standing there on the mountain in the likeness of a woman. The dwellers in the valley kept Grettir there in hiding.

One day that winter after Yule Grettir went to Eyjardalsa and met the priest, to whom he said: "I see, priest, that you have little belief in what I say. Now I wish you to come with me to the river and to see what probability there is in it."

The priest did so. When they reached the falls they saw a cave up under the rock. The cliff was there so abrupt that no one could climb it, and nearly ten fathoms down to the water. They had a rope with them. The priest said: "It is quite impossible for any one to get down to that."

Grettir answered: "It is certainly possible; and men of high mettle are those who would feel themselves happiest there. I want to see what there is in the fall. Do you mind the rope."

The priest said he could do so if he chose. He drove a stake into the ground and laid stones against it.

Chapter 66

Grettir Slays a Giant

Grettir now fastened a stone in a loop at the end of the rope, and lowered it from above into the water.

"Which way do you mean to go?" asked the priest.

"I don't mean to be bound when I come into the fall," Grettir said. "So my mind tells me."

Then he prepared to go; he had few clothes on and only a short sword; no other arms. He jumped from a rock and got down to the fall. The priest saw the soles of his feet but after that did not know what had become of him. Grettir dived beneath the fall.

It was very difficult swimming because of the currents, and he had to dive to the bottom to get behind the fall. There was a rock where he came up, and a great cave under the fall in front of which the water poured. He went into the cave, where there was a large fire burning and a horrible great giant most fearful to behold sitting before it. On Grettir entering the giant sprang up, seized a pike and struck at him, for he could both strike and thrust with it. It had a wooden shaft and was of the kind called "heptisax." Grettir struck back with his sword

and cut through the shaft. Then the giant tried to reach up backwards to a sword which was hanging in the cave, and at that moment Grettir struck at him and cut open his lower breast and stomach so that all his entrails fell out into the river and floated down the stream. The priest who was sitting by the rope saw some debris being carried down all covered with blood and lost his head, making sure that Grettir was killed. He left the rope and ran off home, where he arrived in the evening and told them for certain that Grettir was dead, and said it was a great misfortune to them to have lost such a man.

Grettir struck few more blows at the giant before he was dead. He then entered the cave, kindled a light and explored. It is not told how much treasure he found there, but there is supposed to have been some. He stayed there till late into the night and found the bones of two men, which he carried away in a skin. Then he came out of the cave, swam to the rope and shook it, thinking the priest was there; finding him gone he had to swarm up the rope and so reached the top. He went home to Eyjardalsa and carried the skin with the bones in it into the vestibule of the church together with a rune-staff, upon which were most beautifully carved the following lines:

"Into the fall of the torrent I went;
dank its maw towards me gaped.
The floods before the ogress' den
Mighty against my shoulder played";

and then:

"Hideous the friend of troll-wife came.
Hard were the blows I dealt upon him.
The shaft of Heptisax was severed.
My sword has pierced the monster's breast."

There too it was told how Grettir had brought the bones from the cave. The priest when he came to the church on the next morning found the staff and all that was with it and read the runes. Grettir had then returned home to Sandhaugar.

Chapter 67

Visit to Gudmund the Mighty

When the priest met Grettir again he asked him to say exactly what had happened, and Grettir told him all about where he had been. He said that the priest had held the rope very faithfully, and the priest admitted that it was true. Men felt no doubt that these monsters were responsible for the disappearance of the men in the valley, nor was there any haunting or ghost-walking there afterwards; Grettir had evidently cleared the land of them. The bones were buried by the priest in the churchyard. Grettir stayed the winter in Bardardal, but unknown to the general public.

Thorir of Gard heard rumours of Grettir being in Bardardal and set some men on to take his life. Men thereupon advised him to depart, and he went into the

West to Modruvellir, where he met Gudmund the Mighty and asked him for protection. Gudmund said it would not be convenient for him to take him in.

"You must," he said, "find a place to settle in where you need be in no fear for your life."

Grettir said he did not know where such a place was.

"There is an island," Gudmund said, "in Skagafjord, called Drangey. It is excellent for defence; no one can get up to it without a ladder. If once you can reach it there is no chance of any one attacking you there with arms or with craft, so long as you guard the ladder well."

"That shall be tried," said Grettir. "But I am in such dread of the dark that even for the sake of my life I cannot live alone."

"It may be that it is so," said Gudmund; "but trust no man so well that you trust not yourself better. Many are unfit to be trusted."

Grettir thanked him for his excellent advice and departed from Modruvellir. He went on straight to Bjarg, where his mother and Illugi greeted him joyfully. He stayed there several days and heard of Thorsteinn Kuggason having been slain in the autumn before he went to Bardardal. Fate, he thought, was striking hard against him. Then he rode South to Holtavarda Heath, intending to revenge the death of Hallmund if he could meet with Grim. On reaching Nordrardal he learnt that Grim had left two or three years before, as has already been related. Grettir had not received news of it because he had been in hiding there for two years and a third in Thorisdal and had met no one to tell him of what had happened. Then he turned his steps towards the Breidafjord valleys and waylaid those who passed over Brattabrekka. He continued to let his hands sweep over the property of the small farmers during the height of the summer season.

When the summer was passing away, Steinvor at Sandhaugar gave birth to a son who was named Skeggi. He was at first fathered on Kjartan, the son of Steinn the priest at Eyjardalsa. Skeggi was unlike all his family in his strength and stature. When he was fifteen years old he was the strongest man in the North, and then they put him down to Grettir. There seemed a prospect of his growing into something quite extraordinary, but he died when he was seventeen and there is no saga about him.

Chapter 68

Fight with Thorodd the Son of Snorri

After the death of Thorsteinn Kuggason, Snorri the Godi was on bad terms with his son Thorodd and with Sam the son of Bork the Fat. It is not clearly stated what they had done to displease him except that they had refused to undertake some important work which he had given them to do; what is known is that Snorri turned off his son Thorodd and told him not to come back until he had slain some forest-man, and so it remained. Thorodd then went to Dalir. There dwelt at Breidabolstad in Sokkolfsdal a certain widow named Geirlaug; she kept as her shepherd a grown-up youth who had been outlawed for wounding some

one. Thorodd Snorrason heard of this, rode to Breidabolstad and asked where the shepherd was. The woman said he was with the sheep and asked what Thorodd wanted with him.

"I want to take his life," he said; "he is an outlaw and a forest-man."

She said: "Such a warrior as you has nothing to gain by killing a miserable creature like him. I will show you a much doughtier deed, should you have a mind to try it."

"What is that?" he asked.

"Up there in the mountains," she said, "is Grettir the son of Asmund; deal with him; that will be more fitting for you."

Thorodd liked the proposal and said he would do it. Then he put spurs to his horse and rode up along the valleys. On reaching the hills below the Austra river he saw a light-coloured horse saddled, with a big man in armour, and at once directed his steps towards them. Grettir hailed him and asked who he was. Thorodd told his name and asked: "Why do you not rather ask my business than my name?"

"Because," he said, "it is not likely to be very weighty. Are you a son of Snorri the Godi?"

"So it is indeed; we shall now try which of us is the stronger."

"That is easily done," said Grettir, "but have you not heard that I have not proved a mound of wealth to most of those who have had to do with me?"

"I know that; but I mean to risk something on it now."

Then he drew his sword and went valiantly for Grettir, who defended himself with his shield but would not use his weapons against Thorodd. They fought for a time without his being wounded. Grettir then said:

"Let us stop this play; you will not gain the victory in a battle with me."

Thorodd struck at him most furiously. Grettir was tired of it, so he took hold of him and set him down next to himself, saying: "I could do what I liked with you; but I have no fear of your killing me. I am much more afraid of your grey-headed father, Snorri the Godi, and of his counsels, which have brought many a man to his knees. You should take up tasks which you are able to accomplish; it is no child's play to fight with me."

When Thorodd saw that there was nothing to be done he quieted down, and then they parted. He rode home to Tunga and told his father of his encounter with Grettir. Snorri smiled and said: "Many a man has a high opinion of himself; but the odds against you were too great. While you were aiming blows at him he was doing what he pleased with you. But he was wise not to kill you, for it would not have been my purpose to leave you unavenged. I will now rather use my influence on his side if I ever have to do with his affairs."

Snorri showed his approval of Grettir's action towards Thorodd, for his counsels were always friendly to Grettir.

Chapter 69

Grettir's Last Visit to Bjarg and Journey with Illugi to Drangey

Soon after Thorodd left him Grettir rode North to Bjarg and remained there in hiding for a time. His fear of the dark grew so upon him that he dared go nowhere after dusk. His mother offered to keep him there, but said she saw that it would not do for him because of the feuds which he had throughout the land. Grettir said she should not fall into trouble through him, "but," he said, "I can no longer live alone even to save my life."

Illugi his brother was then fifteen years old and was a most goodly young man. He heard what they were saying. Grettir told his mother what Gudmund the Mighty had advised him to do, and declared he would try to get to Drangey if he could. Yet, he said, he could not go there unless he could find some faithful man to stay with him. Then Illugi said: "I will go with you, brother. I know not whether I shall be a support to you, but I will be faithful to you and will not run from you so long as you stand upright. And I shall know the better how it fares with you if I am with you."

Grettir answered: "You are such an one amongst men as I most rejoice in. And if my mother be not against it I would indeed that you should go with me."

Asdis then said: "It has now come to this, that I see two difficulties meeting each other. It is hard for me to lose Illugi, but I know that so much may be said for Grettir's condition that he will find some way out. And though it is much for one to bid farewell to both of you, yet I will consent to it if Grettir's lot is bettered thereby."

Illugi was pleased at her words, for his heart was set upon going with Grettir. She gave them plenty of money to take with them and they made ready for their journey. Asdis took them along the road, and before they parted she said: "Go forth now, my sons twain. Sad will be your death together, nor may any man escape that which is destined for him. I shall see neither of you again; let one fate befall you both. I know not what safety you seek in Drangey, but there shall your bones be laid, and many will begrudge you your living there. Beware of treachery; yet shall you be smitten with weapons, for strange are the dreams which I have had. Guard yourselves against witchcraft, for few things are stronger than the ancient spells."

Thus she spoke and wept much. Grettir said: "Weep not, my mother. It shall be said that you had sons and not daughters if we are attacked with arms. Live well, and farewell."

Then they parted. The two travelled North through the districts and visited their kinsmen while the autumn passed into winter. Then they turned their steps to Skagafjord, then North to Vatnsskard on to Reykjaskard below Saemundarhlid to Langholt, reaching Glaumbaer as the day was waning. Grettir had slung his hat over his shoulder; so he always went when out of doors whether the weather was good or bad. Thence they continued their journey, and when they had gone a short way they met a man with a big head, tall and thin and ill clad. He greeted them and each asked the other's name. They told theirs and he said

his name was Thorbjorn. He was a vagrant, had no mind to work and swaggered much. It was the habit of some to make game of him or fool him. He became very familiar and told them much gossip about the district and the people therein. Grettir was much amused. He asked whether they did not want a man to work for them and said he would much like to go with them. So much he got from his talk that they let him join them. It was very cold and there was a driving snow-storm. As the man was so fussy and talkative they gave him a nickname and called him Glaum.

"The people in Glaumbaer," he said, "were much exercised about your going without a hat in this weather, and wanted to know whether you were any the braver for being proof against the cold. There were two sons of bondis there, men of great distinction; the shepherd told them to come out and mind the sheep with him, but they could scarcely get their clothes on for the cold."

Grettir said: "I saw a young man inside the door putting on his mittens, and another going between the cow-house and the dung-heap. Neither of them will frighten me."

Then they went on to Reynines and stayed the night there; then to the sea-shore to a farm called Reykir where a man, a good farmer, named Thorvald, lived. Grettir asked him for shelter and told him of his intention of going to Drangey. The bondi said that men of Skagafjord would not think his a very friendly visit and drew back. Then Grettir took the purse of money which his mother had given him and gave it to the bondi. The man's brows unbent when he saw the money and he told three of his servants to take them out in the night by the moonlight. From Reykir is the shortest distance to the island, about one sea-mile.

When they reached the island Grettir thought it looked quite pleasant; it was all overgrown with grass and had steep cliffs down to the sea so that no one could get on to it except where the ladders were. If the upper ladder was pulled up it was impossible for any one to get on to the island. There was also a large crag full of sea birds in the summer, and there were eighty sheep in the island belonging to the bondis, mostly rams and ewes, which were meant for slaughter.

There Grettir quietly settled down. He had been fifteen or sixteen years an outlaw, so Sturla the son of Thord has recorded.

Chapter 70

People of Skagafjord

When Grettir came to Drangey the following chiefs were in Skagafjord:

Hjalti lived at Hof in Hjaltadal, the son of Thord, the son of Hjalti, the son of Thord Skalp. He was a great chief, very distinguished and very popular. His brother was named Thorbjorn Angle, a big man, strong and hardy and rather quarrelsome. Thord their father had married in his old age, and his then wife was not the mother of these two. She was very much against her stepsons, especially Thorbjorn, because he was intractable and headstrong. One day

when he was playing at "tables", his stepmother came up and saw that he was playing at "hnettafl"; they played with big peg pieces. She considered that very lazy of him and spoke some words to which he answered hastily. She took up the piece and struck him on the cheek bone with the peg, and it glanced into his eye which hung down on his cheek. He started up and handled her mercilessly so that she was confined to her bed and soon afterwards died; they say that she was pregnant at the time. After that he became a regular ruffian. He took over his property and went first to live in Vidvik.

Halldor the son of Thorgeir, the son of Thord of Hofdi, lived at Hof in Hofdastrand. He married Thordis the daughter of Thord, the sister of Hjalti and Thorbjorn Angle. Halldor was a worthy bondi and wealthy.

Bjorn was the name of a man who lived at Haganes in Fljot, a friend of Halldor of Hof, and the two held together in every dispute.

Tungu-Steinn dwelt at Steinsstadir. He was the son of Bjorn, the son of Ofeig Thinbeard, the son of Crow-Hreidar, to whom Eirik of Guddal gave Tunga below Skalamyr. He was a man of renown.

Eirik was the son of Holmgang-Starri, the son of Eirik of Guddal, the son of Hroald, the son of Geirmund Straightbeard. He lived at Hof in Guddal.

All these were men of high rank. Two brothers dwelt at a place called Breida in Slettahlid, both named Thord. They were very strong men, but peaceable.

All the men now named had a share in Drangey. It is said that the island was owned by no fewer than twenty men, and none of them would part with his share to the others. The largest share belonged to the sons of Thord since they were the richest.

Chapter 71

Bondis Claim Their Property in Drangey

Midwinter was passed, and the bondis prepared to bring in their animals from the island for slaughter. They manned a boat and each had a man of his own on board, some two.

When they reached the island they saw men on it moving about. They thought it very strange, but supposed that some one had been wrecked and had gone on shore there. So they rowed to where the ladders were. The people on the shore pulled the ladders up. This seemed very strange behaviour and they hailed the men and asked who they were. Grettir told his name and those of his companions. The bondis asked who had taken them out to the island.

Grettir answered: "He brought me out who took me here, and had hands, and was more my friend than yours."

The bondis said: "Let us take our animals and come to the land with us. You shall have freely whatever you have taken of our property."

Grettir said: "That is a good offer; but each of us shall have that which he has got. I may tell you at once that hence I go not, unless I am dead or dragged away; nor will I let go that which my hands have taken."

The bondis said no more, but thought that most unhappy visitors had come to Drangey. They offered money and made many fair promises, but Grettir refused them all, and so they had to return home much disgusted, having accomplished nothing. They told all the people of the district of the wolves who had come into the island. This had come upon them unawares and nothing could be done. They talked it over that winter but could think of no way of getting Grettir out of the island.

Chapter 72

Grettir Visits the Thing at Hegranes

The time passed on until the spring, when men assembled at the Hegranes Thing. They came in great numbers from all the districts under its jurisdiction, and stayed there a long time, both palavering and merry-making, for there were many who loved merriment in the country round.

When Grettir heard that everybody had gone to the Thing he laid a plan with his friends, for he was always on good terms with those who were nearest to him, and for them he spared nothing which he was able to get. He said he would go to the land to get supplies and that Illugi and Glaum should remain behind. Illugi thought it very imprudent but he let Grettir have his way. He told them to guard the ladder well since everything depended upon that. Then he went to the land and obtained what he wanted. He kept his disguise wherever he went and no one knew that he had come. He heard of the festivities that were going on at the Thing and was curious to see them, so he put on some old clothes that were rather shabby and arrived just as they were going from the Logretta home to their booths. Some of the young men were talking about the weather, said it was good and fair, and that it would be a good thing to have some games and wrestling; they thought it a good proposal. So they sat down in front of their booths. The foremost men in the games were the sons of Thord. Thorbjorn Angle was very uppish and was arranging everything himself for the sports. Every one had to do as he bade, and he took them each by the shoulders and pushed them into the field. The wrestling was begun by the less strong ones in pairs, and there was great sport. When most of them had wrestled except the strongest, there was much talk as to who should tackle the two Thords mentioned above, and there was no one who would do it. They went round inviting men to wrestle, but the more they asked the more their invitation was declined. Thorbjorn Angle looked round and saw a big man sitting there, but could not clearly see his face. He seized hold of him and gave a violent tug, but the man sat still and did not move.

Thorbjorn said: "Nobody has held so firm against me to-day as you. But who is this fellow?"

"My name is Gest."

Thorbjorn said: "You will be wanting to play with us. You are a welcome Guest."

"Things may change quickly," he said. "I cannot join in your games for I have no knowledge of them."

Many of them said that they would take it kindly of him if he, a stranger, would play a little with the men. He asked what they wanted him to do, and they asked him to wrestle with some one. He said he had given up wrestling, though he once used to take pleasure in it. As he did not directly refuse they pressed him all the more.

"Well," he said, "if you want to drag me in you must do one thing for me and grant me peace here at the Thing until I reach my home."

They all shouted and said they would gladly do that. The man who was foremost in urging that peace should be given was one Haf the son of Thorarin, the son of Haf, the son of Thord Knapp, who had settled in the land between Stifla in Fljot and Tungva. He lived at Knappsstad and was a man of many words. He spoke in favour of the peace with great authority and said:

"Hereby do I declare PEACE between all men, in particular between this man here seated who is named Gest and all Godord's men, full bondis, all men of war and bearers of arms, all other men of this district of the Hegranes Thing whencesoever they have come, both named and unnamed. I declare PEACE and full Immunity in behoof of this newcomer to us unknown, Gest yclept, for the practice of games, wrestling and all kinds of sport, while abiding here, and during his journey home, whether he sail or whether he travel, whether by land or whether by sea. He shall have PEACE in all places, named and unnamed, for such time as he needeth to reach his home in safety, by our faith confirmed. And I establish this PEACE on the part of ourselves and of our kinsmen, our friends and belongings, alike of women and of men, bondsmen and thralls, youths and adults. Be there any truce-breaker who shall violate this PEACE and defile this faith, so be he rejected of God and expelled from the community of righteous men; be he cast out from Heaven and from the fellowship of the holy; let him have no part amongst mankind and become an outcast from society. A vagabond he shall be and a wolf in places where Christians pray and where heathen worship, where fire burneth, where the earth bringeth forth, where the child lisbeth the name of mother, where the mother beareth a son, where men kindle fire, where the ship saileth, where shields blink, sun shineth, snow lieth, Finn glideth, fir-tree groweth, falcon flieth the live-long day and the fair wind bloweth straight under both her wings, where Heaven rolleth and earth is tilled, where the breezes waft mists to the sea, where corn is sown. Far shall he dwell from church and Christian men, from the sons of the heathen, from house and cave and from every home, in the torments of Hel. At PEACE we shall be, in concord together, each with other in friendly mind, wherever we meet, on mountain or strand, on ship or on snow-shoes, on plains or on glaciers, at sea or on horseback, as friends meet in the water, or brothers by the way, each at PEACE with other, as son with father, or father with son, in all our dealings.

"Our hands we lay together, all and every to hold well the PEACE and the words we have spoken in this our faith, in the presence of God and of holy men, of all who hear my words and here are present."

Many said that a great word had been spoken. Gest said: "You have declared and spoken well; if you go not back upon it, I will not delay to show that of which I am capable."

Then he cast off his hood and after that all his upper garments. Each looked at the other and woe spread over their lips; for they knew that it was Grettir who had come to them, by his excelling all other men in stature and vigour. All were silent and Haf looked foolish. The men of the district went two and two together, each blaming the other, and most of all blaming him who had declared the peace. Then Grettir said: "Speak plainly to me and declare what is in your minds, for I will not sit here long without my clothes. You have more at stake than I have, whether you hold the peace or not."

They answered little and sat themselves down. The sons of Thord and their brother-in-law Halldor then talked together. Some wished to uphold the peace and some not. Each nodded to the other. Then Grettir spoke a verse:

"Many a man is filled with doubt.
A twofold mask has the prover of shields.
The skilful tongue is put to shame.
They doubt if they shall hold the troth."

Then said Tungu-Steinn: "Think you so, Grettir? Which then will the chieftains do? But true it is that you excel all men in courage. See you not how they are putting their noses together?"

Grettir then said:

"Together they all their noses laid;
they wagged their beards in close converse.
They talked with each other by two and two,
regretting the peace they afore declared."

Then said Hjalti the son of Thord: "It shall not be so; we will hold the peace with you although our minds have altered. I would not that men should have the example of our having broken the peace which we ourselves gave and declared. Grettir shall depart unhindered whithersoever he will, and shall have peace till such time as he reach his home from this journey. And then this truce shall have expired whatever happen with us." They all thanked him for his speech, and thought he had acted as a chieftain should under such circumstances. Thorbjorn Angle was silent. Then it was proposed that one or the other of the Thords should close with Grettir, and he said that they might do as they chose.

One of the two brothers Thord then came forward. Grettir stood upright before him and Thord went for him with all his might, but Grettir never moved from his place. Then Grettir stretched over across his back and seizing his breeches tripped up his foot and cast him backwards over his head so that he fell heavily upon his shoulders. Then the people said that both the brothers should tackle him together, and they did so. There arose a mighty tussle, each in turn having the advantage, although Grettir always had one of them down. Now one, now the other was brought to his knees or met with a reverse. So fiercely they gripped that all of them were bruised and bloody. Everybody thought it splendid sport, and when they ceased thanked them for their wrestling. Those that were

sitting near judged that the two together were no stronger than Grettir alone, although each had the strength of two strong men. They were so equal that when they strove together neither gained the advantage. Grettir did not stay long at the Thing. The bondis asked him to give up the island, but this he refused to do, and they accomplished nothing.

Grettir returned to Drangey where Illugi rejoiced much at seeing him again. They stayed there in peace and Grettir told them of his journeys; so the summer passed. All thought the men of Skagafjord had acted most honourably in upholding their peace, and from this may be seen what trusty men lived in those days, after all that Grettir had done against them. The less wealthy ones among the bondis began to talk amongst themselves and say that there was little profit in keeping a small share of the island, and now offered to sell their holdings to the sons of Thord, but Hjalti said he did not want to buy them. The bondis stipulated that any one who wanted to buy a share should either kill Grettir or get him away. Thorbjorn Angle said that he was ready to take the lead, and would spare no pains to attack Grettir if they would pay him for it. Hjalti his brother resigned to him his share of the island because Thorbjorn was the more violent and was unpopular. Several other bondis did the same, so that Thorbjorn Angle got a large part of the island at a small price, but he bound himself to get Grettir away.

Chapter 73

Visit of Thorbjorn Angle to Drangey

At the end of the summer Thorbjorn Angle went with a boat fully manned to Drangey. Grettir and his party came forward on the cliff and they talked together. Thorbjorn begged Grettir to do so much for his asking as to quit the island. Grettir said there was not much hope of that. Thorbjorn said: "It may be that I can give you some assistance which will make it worth your while to do this. Many of the bondis have now given up the shares which they had in the island to me."

Grettir said: "Now for the very reason that you have just told me, because you own the greater part of the island, I am determined never to go hence. We may now divide the cabbage. It is true that I thought it irksome to have the whole of Skagafjord against me, but now neither need spare the other, since neither is suffocated with the love of his fellows. You may as well put off your journeys hither, for the matter is settled so far as I am concerned."

"All abide their time," he said, "and you abide evil."

"I must risk that," he said. And so they parted. Thorbjorn returned home again.

Chapter 74

Fire Goes out in Drangey

Grettir had, it is said, been two years in Drangey, and they had slaughtered nearly all the sheep. One ram, it is told, they allowed to live; it was grey below and had large horns. They had much sport with it, for it was very tame and would stand outside and follow them wherever they went. It came to the hut in the evening and rubbed its horns against the door. They lived very comfortably, having plenty to eat from the birds on the island and their eggs, nor had they much trouble in gathering wood for fire. Grettir always employed the man to collect the drift, and there were often logs cast ashore there which he brought home for fuel. The brothers had no need to work beyond going to the cliffs, which they did whenever they chose. The thrall began to get very slack at his work; he grumbled much and was less careful than before. It was his duty to mind the fire every night, and Grettir bade him be very careful of it as they had no boat with them. One night it came to pass that the fire went out. Grettir was very angry and said it would only be right that Glaum should have a hiding. The thrall said he had a very poor life of it to have to lie there in exile and be ill-treated and beaten if anything went wrong. Grettir asked Illugi what was to be done, and he said he could think of nothing else but to wait until a ship brought them some fire.

Grettir said that would be a very doubtful chance to wait for. "I will venture it," he said, "and see whether I can reach the land."

"That is a desperate measure," said Illugi. "We shall be done for if you miscarry."

"I shall not drown in the channel," he said. "I shall trust the thrall less in future since he has failed in a matter of such moment to us."

The shortest passage from the island to the mainland is one sea-mile.

Chapter 75

Grettir Swims to the Mainland for Fire

Grettir then prepared for his swim. He wore a cloak of coarse material with breeches and had his fingers webbed. The weather was fine; he left the island towards the evening. Illugi thought his journey was hopeless. Grettir had the current with him and it was calm as he swam towards the fjord. He smote the water bravely and reached Reykjanes after sunset. He went into the settlement at Reykir, bathed in the night in a warm spring, and then entered the hall, where it was very hot and a little smoky from the fire which had been burning there all day. He was very tired and slept soundly, lying on right into the day. When it was a little way on in the morning the servants rose, and the first to enter the room were two women, the maid with the bondi's daughter. Grettir was asleep, and his clothes had all fallen off on to the floor. They saw a man lying there and recognised him. The maid said:

"As I wish for salvation, sister, here is Grettir the son of Asmund come. He really is large about the upper part of his body, and is lying bare. But he seems to me unusually small below. It is not at all in keeping with the rest of him."

The bondi's daughter said: "How can you let your tongue run on so? You are more than half a fool! Hold your tongue!"

"I really cannot be silent, my dear sister," said the maid; "I would not have believed it if any one had told me."

Then she went up to him to look more closely, and kept running back to the bondi's daughter and laughing. Grettir heard what she said, sprang up and chased her down the room. When he had caught her he spoke a verse:

(VERSE MISSING IN MANUSCRIPT)

Soon afterwards Grettir went to the bondi Thorvald, told him his difficulty and asked him to take him out to the island again, which he did, lending him a ship and taking him over. Grettir thanked him for his courtesy. When it became known that Grettir had swum a sea-mile, every one thought his courage extraordinary both on sea and on land. The men of Skagafjord blamed Thorbjorn Angle much for not having ridded Drangey of Grettir, and all wanted their shares back again. That did not suit him and he asked them to have patience.

Chapter 76

Adventure of Haering in Drangey

That summer a ship came to Gonguskardsos, on board of which was a man named Haering. He was a young man and very active; he could climb any cliff. He went to visit Thorbjorn Angle and stayed there into the autumn. He pressed Thorbjorn much to take him to Drangey, that he might see whether the cliff was so high that he could not get up there. Thorbjorn said it should not be for nothing if he succeeded in getting up on to the island and either killing or wounding Grettir; he made it appear attractive as a task for Haering to undertake.

One day they went to Drangey and he put the Easterner ashore in a certain place, telling him not to let himself be seen if he got to the top. Then they set up the ladder and began a conversation with Grettir's people. Thorbjorn asked him whether he would not leave the island. He said there was nothing on which he was so determined.

"You have played much with us," said Thorbjorn, "and we do not seem likely to have our revenge, but you have not much fear for yourself."

Thus they disputed for long, but came to no agreement.

We have now to tell of Haering. He climbed all about on the cliffs and got to the top in a place which no other man ever reached before or since. On reaching the top he saw the two brothers standing with their backs turned to him. He hoped in a short time to win money and glory from both. They had no inkling of

his being there, and thought that nobody could get up except where the ladders were. Grettir was occupied with Thorbjorn's men, and there was no lack of derisive words on both sides. Then Illugi looked round and saw a man coming towards them, already quite close. He said: "Here is a man coming towards us with his axe in the air; he has a rather hostile appearance."

"You deal with him," said Grettir, "while I look after the ladder." Illugi then advanced against the Easterner, who on seeing him turned and ran about all over the island. Illugi chased him to the furthest end of the island; on reaching the edge he leaped down and broke every bone in his body; thus his life ended. The place where he perished was afterwards called Haering's leap. Illugi returned and Grettir asked him how he had parted with his man.

"He would not trust me to manage for him," he said. "He broke his neck over the cliff. The bondis may pray for him as for a dead man."

When Angle heard that he told his men to shove off. "I have now been twice to meet Grettir," he said. "I may come a third time, and if then I return no wiser than I am now, it is likely that they may stay in Drangey, so far as I am concerned. But methinks Grettir will not be there so long in the future as he has been in the past."

They then returned home and this journey seemed even worse than the one before. Grettir stayed in Drangey and saw no more of Thorbjorn that winter. Skapti the Lawman died during the winter, whereby Grettir suffered a great loss, for he had promised to press for a removal of his sentence when he had been twenty years an outlaw, and the events just related were in the nineteenth year. In the spring died Snorri the Godi, and much more happened during this winter season which does not belong to our saga.

Chapter 77

Grettir's Case Before the All-Thing

That summer at the All-Thing Grettir's friends spoke much about his outlawry, and some held that his term was fulfilled when he had completed any portion of the twentieth year. This was disputed by the opposite party, who declared that he had committed many acts deserving of outlawry since, and that, therefore, his sentence ought to be all the longer. A new Lawman had been appointed, Steinn the son of Thorgest, the son of Steinn the Far-traveller, the son of Thorir Autumn-mist. The mother of Steinn the Lawman was Arnora, the daughter of Thord the Yeller. He was a wise man, and was asked for his opinion. He told them to make a search to find out whether this was the twentieth year of his outlawry, and they did so. Then Thorir of Gard went to work to put every possible difficulty in the way, and found out that Grettir had spent one year of the time in Iceland, during which he must be held to have been free of his outlawry. Consequently it had only lasted nineteen years.

The Lawman declared that no man could be outlawed for longer than twenty years in all, even though he committed an outlaw's acts during that time. But before that he would allow no man to be freed.

Thus the endeavour to remove his sentence broke down for the moment, but there seemed a certainty of his being freed in the following summer. The men of Skagafjord were little pleased at the prospect of Grettir being freed, and they told Thorbjorn Angle that he must do one of the two, resign his holding in the island or kill Grettir. He was in great straits, for he saw no way of killing Grettir, and yet he wanted to keep the island. He tried everything he could think of to get the better of Grettir by force or by fraud or in any other way that he could.

Chapter 78

Thorbjorn's Foster-Mother

Thorbjorn Angle had a foster-mother named Thurid. She was very old and of little use to mankind, but she had been very skilled in witchcraft and magic when she was young and the people were heathen. Now she seemed to have lost it all. Still, although the land was Christian, many sparks of heathendom remained. It was not forbidden by the law of the land to sacrifice or perform other heathen rites in private; only the one who performed them openly was sentenced to the minor exile. Now it happened to many as it is said: The hand turns to its wonted skill, and that which we have learned in youth is always most familiar to us. So Thorbjorn Angle, baffled in all his plans, turned for help to the quarter where it would have been least looked for most people, namely, to his foster-mother, and asked her what she could do for him.

She replied, "Now it seems to me to have come to this, as the saying is: Many go to the goat-house to get wool. What would I less than to think myself above the other men of the country, and then to be as nothing when it comes to the trial? I see not that it fares worse with me than with you, even though I scarce rise from my bed. If you will have my counsel then I must have my way in all that is done."

He consented, and said that she had long given him counsel for his good. The "double month" of the summer was now approaching. One fine day the old woman said to Angle: "The weather is now calm and bright; I will that you go to Drangey and pick a quarrel with Grettir. I will go with you and learn what caution is in his words. I shall have some surety when I see how far they are prospering, and then I will speak over them such words as I please."

Angle said: "Let us not go to Drangey. It is always worse in my mind when I leave that place than when I arrive."

The woman said: "I will not help you if you will not let me do as I like."

"Far be that from me, my foster-mother. I have said that I will go there a third time, that something may come of it for us."

"You may venture it," she said, "much labour will you have before Grettir is laid in the earth; often your lot will be doubtful and hard will it go with you before it is finished. And yet you are so bound that somehow you must get yourself out of it."

Then Thorbjorn Angle had a ten-oared boat manned and went on board with eleven men. The woman was with them and they rowed out to Drangey. When the brothers saw them coming they came forward to the ladder and began once more to talk about their case. Thorbjorn said he had come once more to hear their answer whether Grettir would leave the place. He said he would treat the destruction of his property and Grettir's stay there as a light thing, provided they parted in peace. Grettir said he had no intention of coming to any terms about his going away. "I have often told you," he said, "that there is no use in talking to me about it. You may do whatever you please; I mean to stay here and abide what happens."

Thorbjorn saw that his end would not be gained this time, and said: "I knew very well with what men of Hel I had to do. It is most likely that some days will pass before I come here again."

"It would not hurt me if you never came at all," said Grettir.

The woman was lying in the stern sheets covered up with clothes. Then she began to stir and said:

"These men are brave and unfortunate; there is much difference between you; you offer them good and they refuse everything. There are few more certain tokens of evil than not to know how to accept the good. Now I say this of you, Grettir, that you be deprived of health, of all good luck and fortune, of all protection and counsel, ever the more the longer you live. I wish that your days may be less happy in the future than they have been in the past."

When Grettir heard that he started violently and said: "What fiend is that in the ship with them?"

Illugi said: "I think that must be the old woman, Thorbjorn's foster-mother."

"Curse the hag!" he said. "I could have thought of nothing worse! Nothing that was ever said startled me more than her words, and I know that some evil will befall me from her and her spells. She shall have something to remind her of her visit here."

Then he took up an enormous stone and threw it down into the boat. It fell into the heap of clothes. Thorbjorn had not thought that any man could throw so far. A loud scream was heard, for the stone had struck her thigh and broken it.

Illugi said: "I wish you had not done that."

"Do not blame me for it," said Grettir. "I fear it has been just too little. One old woman would not have been too great a price for us two."

"How will she pay for us? That will be a small sum for the pair of us."

Thorbjorn then returned home; no greeting passed between them when he left. He spoke to the old woman and said: "It has happened as I expected. Little credit has the journey to the island brought you. You have been injured for the rest of your life, and we have no more honour than we had before; we have to endure unatoned one insult after another."

She answered: "This is the beginning of their destruction; I say that from this time onwards they will go downwards. I care not whether I live or not, if I do not have vengeance for the injury they have done me."

"You seem to be in high spirits, foster-mother," he said. Then they arrived home. The woman lay in bed for nearly a month before her leg was set and she was able to walk again. Men laughed much over the journey of Thorbjorn and the old woman. Little luck had come from the meetings with Grettir, first at the peace declaration at the Thing, next when Haering was killed, and now the third time when the woman's thigh was broken, while nothing had been done on their side. Thorbjorn Angle suffered much from their talk.

Chapter 79

Spell Takes Effect

The autumn passed and but three weeks remained till the winter. The old woman asked to be driven to the sea-shore. Thorbjorn asked what she was going to do.

"A small thing only," she said, "yet maybe the signal of greater things to come."

They did as she asked them. When they reached the shore she hobbled on by the sea as if directed to a spot where lay a great stump of a tree as large as a man could bear on his shoulder. She looked at it and bade them turn it over before her; the other side looked as if it had been burned and smoothed. She had a small flat surface cut on its smooth side; then she took a knife, cut runes upon it, reddened them with her blood and muttered some spells over it. After that she walked backwards against the sun round it, and spoke many potent words. Then she made them push the tree into the sea, and said it should go to Drangey and that Grettir should suffer hurt from it. Then she went back to Vidvik. Thorbjorn said he did not know what would come of it. The woman said he would know more clearly some day. The wind was towards the land up the fjord, but the woman's stump drifted against the wind, and not more slowly than would have been expected.

Grettir was sitting in Drangey with his companions very comfortably, as has been told. On the day following that on which the old woman had cast her spells upon the tree they went down from the hill to look for firewood. When they got to the western side of the island they found a great stump stranded there.

"Here is a fine log for fuel," cried Illugi, "let us carry it home." Grettir gave it a kick with his foot and said: "An ill tree and ill sent. We must find other wood for the fire."

He pushed it out into the sea and told Illugi to beware of carrying it home, for it was sent for their destruction. Then they returned to their hut and said nothing about the tree to the thrall. The next day they found the tree again, nearer to the ladder than on the day before. Grettir put it back into the sea and said he would never carry it home. That night passed and dirty weather set in with rain, so that they did not care to go out and told Glaum to fetch fuel. He grumbled very much and declared it was cruel to make him plague himself to death in every kind of

weather. He descended the ladder and found there the woman's log. He thought himself lucky, laboured home with it to the hut and threw it down with a great noise which Grettir heard.

"Glaum has got something; I must go out and see what it is," he said, and went out, taking his wood-cutting axe with him.

"Let your cutting up of it be no worse than my carrying of it home!" said Glaum.

Grettir was irritated with the thrall; he used his axe with both hands and did not notice what tree it was. Directly the axe touched the tree it turned flat and glanced off into Grettir's right leg. It entered above his right knee and pierced to the bone, making a severe wound. Grettir turned to the tree and said: "He who meant me evil has prevailed; it will not end with this. This is the very log which I twice rejected. Two disasters have you now brought about, Glaum; first you let our fire go out, and now you have brought in this tree of ill-fortune. A third mistake will be the death of you and of us all."

Illugi then bound the wound. It bled little; Grettir slept well that night and three days passed without its paining him. When they opened the bandages the flesh had grown together and the wound was almost healed. Illugi said: "I do not think that you will suffer very long with this wound."

"That would be well," said Grettir; "it has happened strangely however it ends; but my mind tells me otherwise."

Chapter 80

Spell Continues to Work

One evening they all went to bed, and about midnight Grettir began to toss about. Illugi asked him why he was so restless. Grettir said his leg was hurting him and he thought there must be some change in its appearance. They fetched a light, unbound the wound and found it swollen and blue as coal. It had opened again and was much worse than at first. He had much pain after that and could not keep quiet, nor would any sleep come to his eyes.

Grettir said: "We must be prepared for it. This illness of mine is not for nothing; there is witchcraft in it. The old woman has meant to punish me for the stone which I threw at her." Illugi said: "I told you that no good would come of that old woman."

"It will be all the same in the end," said Grettir, and spoke a verse:

"Often when men have threatened my life
I have known to defend it against the foe:
but now 'tis a woman has done me to death.
Truly the spells of the wicked are mighty."

"Now we must be on the watch; Thorbjorn Angle will not leave it to end here. You, Glaum, must in future guard the ladder every day and pull it up in the evening. Do this trustily, for much depends thereon. If you betray us your end will be a short one."

Glaum promised most faithfully. The weather now became severe. A north-easterly wind set in and it was very cold. Every evening Grettir asked if the ladder was drawn in.

"Are we now to look for men?" said Glaum. "Is any man so anxious to take your life that he will lose his own for it? This weather is much worse than impossible. Your warlike mood seems to have left you utterly if you think that everything is coming to kill you."

"You will always bear yourself worse than either of us," said Grettir, "whatever happens. But now you must mind the ladder however unwilling you may be."

They drove him out every morning, much to his disgust. The pain of the wound increased, and the whole leg was swollen; the thigh began to fester both above and below the wound, which spread all round, and Grettir thought he was likely to die. Illugi sat with him night and day, paying no heed to anything else. They were now in the second week of his illness.

Chapter 81

Thorbjorn Again Visits Drangey

Thorbjorn Angle was now at home in Vidvik, much put out at not having been able to overcome Grettir. When about a week had passed from the day when the old woman had bewitched the log, she came to speak with Thorbjorn and asked whether he did not mean to visit Grettir. He said there was nothing about which he was more determined.

"But do you wish to meet him, foster-mother?" he asked.

"I have no intention of meeting him," she said; "I have sent him my greeting, which I expect he has received. But I advise you to set off at once and go quickly to see him, otherwise it will not be your fate to overcome him."

He replied: "I have made so many inglorious journeys there that I am not going again. This weather is reason enough; it would not be possible, however pressing it were."

"You are indeed without counsel if you see not through these wiles. Now, I will advise you. First go and collect men; ride to your brother-in-law Halldor in Hof and get help from him. Is it too wild a thing to suppose that I may have to do with this breeze that is now playing?"

Thorbjorn thought it might be that the woman saw further than he supposed, so he sent through the country for men. Answer came very quickly that none of those who had given up their shares would do anything to help him. They said that both the island and the Grettir affair were Thorbjorn's. Tungu-Steinn gave him two men, Hjalti his brother three, Eirik in Guddal sent him one. Of his own he had six. These twelve rode out from Vidvik to Hof, where Halldor invited them to stay and asked their news. Thorbjorn told him everything fully. Halldor asked who had done it all; he said his foster-mother had urged him much.

"That will lead to no good. She is a sorceress, and sorcery is now forbidden."

"I cannot overlook everything," said Thorbjorn; "I am determined that it shall now be brought to an end somehow. But how shall I go to work to get on to the island?"

"It seems to me," said Halldor, "that you are relying upon something, but I know not whether it is anything good. If you want to accomplish anything go out to my friend Bjorn in Haganes in Fljot. He has a good boat; ask him from me to lend it to you, and then you will be able to sail on to Drangey. It seems to me that if you find Grettir well and hearty your journey will have been in vain. One thing know for certain: do not slay him in open fight, for there are enough men to avenge him. Do not slay Illugi if you can help it. I fear that my counsel may not appear altogether Christian."

Halldor then gave him six men; one was named Kar, another Thorleif, the third Brand. The names of the others are not mentioned.

These eighteen men then went to Fljot, reached Haganes, and gave Halldor's message to Bjorn. He said it was his duty to do it for Halldor's sake, but that he was under no obligation to Thorbjorn.

He said it was an insane journey to make, and tried hard to dissuade them. They answered that they could not turn back, so they went down to the sea and launched the boat, which was ready with all her gear in the boat-house. Then they made ready to sail. All those who were standing on the shore thought it impossible to cross. They hoisted the sail and the boat was soon under way, far out in the fjord. When they got right out to sea the weather quieted and was no longer too heavy. In the evening as it was getting dark they reached Drangey.

Chapter 82

Last Battle -- Death of Grettir and Illugi

It has now to be told how Grettir became so ill that he could not stand on his feet. Illugi sat with him and Glaum had to hold watch. He still continued to object, and said they might think their lives were going to fall out of them, but there was no reason for it. He went out, but most unwillingly. When he came to the ladder he said to himself that there was no need to draw it up. He felt very sleepy, lay down and slept all day, and did not wake until Thorbjorn reached the island. They saw then that the ladder was not drawn up. Thorbjorn said: "The situation has changed from what it used to be; there are no men moving about, and the ladder is in its place. It may be that more will come of our journey than we expected at first. Now let us go to the hut and not let our courage slacken. If they are well we may know for certain that there will be need for each to do his very best."

They went up the ladder, looked round and saw close to the ascent a man lying and snoring aloud. Thorbjorn recognised Glaum, went up to the rascal and told him to wake up, striking his ear with the hilt of his sword and saying: "Truly he is in a bad case whose life is entrusted to your keeping."

Glaum looked up and said: "They are going on as usual. Do you think my freedom such a great thing while I am lying here in the cold?"

Angle said: "Have you lost your wits? Don't you see that your enemies are upon you and about to kill you all?"

Glaum said nothing, but on recognising the men cried out as loud as he could.

"Do one thing or the other," said Angle; "either be silent this moment and tell me all about your household, or be killed."

Glaum was as silent as if he had been dipped in water.

Thorbjorn said: "Are the brothers in the hut? Why are they not about?"

"That would not be so easy," said Glaum, "for Grettir is sick and nigh to death and Illugi is sitting with him."

Thorbjorn asked about his condition, and what had happened. Then Glaum told him all about Grettir's wound.

Angle laughed and said: "True is the ancient saying that Old friends are the last to break away, and also this, that it is ill to have a thrall for your friend--such a one as you, Glaum! You have shamefully betrayed your liege lord, though there was little good in him."

Then the others cast reproaches at him for his villainy; they beat him almost helpless and left him lying there. Then they went on to the hut and knocked violently at the door.

Illugi said: "Greybelly is knocking at the door, brother."

"He is knocking rather loud," said Grettir; "most unmercifully." Then the door broke in pieces. Illugi rushed to his arms and defended the door so that they could not get in. They assailed it long, but could get nothing in but the points of their spears, all of which Illugi severed from their shafts. Seeing that they could do nothing, they sprang on to the roof and began to break it in. Then Grettir got on to his feet, seized a spear and thrust it between the rafters. It struck Kar, Halldor's man from Hof, and went right through him. Angle told them to go to work warily and be careful of themselves. "We shall only overcome them," he said, "if we act with caution."

Then they laid open the end of one of the timbers and bore upon it until it broke. Grettir was unable to rise from his knees, but he seized the sword Karsnaut at the moment when they all sprang in from the roof, and a mighty fray began. Grettir struck with his sword at Vikar, a man of Hjalti the son of Thord, reaching his left shoulder as he sprang from the roof. It passed across his shoulder, out under his right arm, and cut him right in two. His body fell in two parts on the top of Grettir and prevented him from recovering his sword as quickly as he wished, so that Thorbjorn Angle was able to wound him severely between the shoulders. Grettir said: "Bare is his back who has no brother!"

Illugi threw his shield before Grettir and defended him so valiantly that all men praised his prowess.

Grettir said to Angle: "Who showed you the way to the island?"

"Christ showed us the way," he said.

"I guess," said Grettir, "that it was the wicked old woman, your foster-mother, who showed you; hers were the counsels that you relied upon."

"It shall now be all the same to you," said Angle, "upon whom I relied."

They returned to the attack; Illugi defended himself and Grettir courageously, but Grettir was unfit for fighting, partly from his wounds, partly from his illness. Angle then ordered them to bear Illugi down with their shields, saying he had never met with his like amongst older men than he. They did so, and pressed upon him with a wall of armour against which resistance was impossible. They took him prisoner and kept him. He had wounded most of those who were attacking him and killed three. Then they went for Grettir, who had fallen forward on his face. There was no resistance in him for he was already dead from his wounded leg; his thigh was all mortified up to the rectum. Many more wounds they gave him, but little or no blood flowed.

When they thought he was quite dead Angle took hold of his sword, saying he had borne it long enough, but Grettir's fingers were so tightly locked around the hilt that he could not loosen them. Many tried before they gave it up, eight of them in turn, but all failed. Angle then said: "Why should we spare a forest-man? Lay his hand upon the log."

They did so, and he hewed off the hand at the wrist. Then the fingers straightened and were loosed from the hilt. Angle took his sword in both hands and hewed at Grettir's head. So mighty was the blow that the sword could not hold against it, and a piece was broken out of the edge. When asked why he spoil a good weapon, he replied: "It will be more easily known if there be any question."

They said this was unnecessary, as the man was dead before. "I will do more," he said, and struck two or three blows at Grettir's neck before he took off his head. Then he said:

"Now I know for certain that Grettir is dead; a great man of war have we laid even with the earth. We will take his head with us, for I have no wish to lose the money which was put upon it. There shall not be any doubt that it was I who slew Grettir."

They said he might do as he pleased, but they felt much disgusted, and thought his conduct contemptible.

Then Angle said to Illugi: "It is a great pity that a man so valiant as you should have committed such a folly as to cast in your lot with this outlaw and follow his evil ways, at last to die unatoned."

Illugi answered: "When the All-Thing is over next summer you shall know who are outlawed. Neither you nor the woman, your foster-mother, shall judge this case, for it is your spells and sorcery that have killed Grettir, though you bore your iron weapons against him when he was at the door of death. Many a base deed did you do over and above your witchcraft."

Angle said: "You speak bravely, but it shall not be so. I will show how I value you by sparing your life if you will swear by your honour to take no vengeance upon any person who has been with us on this occasion."

"I might have thought of it," he said, "if Grettir had been able to defend himself or if you had killed him in honourable battle. But now you need not hope that I will try to save my life by becoming a poltroon like you. I tell you at once that if I live no man shall be more burdensome to you than I. Long will it be before I forget how you have dealt with Grettir; far sooner will I choose to die."

Then Thorbjorn consulted with his companions whether they should allow Illugi to live. They said he should decide their doings himself, as he was the leader of the expedition. Angle said he was not going to have a man threatening his head who would not promise to hold faith. When Illugi knew that they intended to slay him he laughed and said: "Now you have resolved upon that which was nearest to my heart."

When the day broke they led him to the eastern side of the island and there slew him. All praised his courage, and said there was no man of his years who was like him. They buried both the brothers in the island, but took Grettir's head with all weapons and clothes which had any value away with them. His good sword Angle would not allow to come amongst the spoils for division, but bore it long himself. They took Glaum with them, still complaining and resisting. The weather had calmed down in the night, and in the morning they rowed to the mainland. Angle sailed for the most convenient place, and sent the ship on to Bjorn. When they came near to Osland, Glaum became so obstreperous that they refused to carry him any further and slew him there where he was, crying as loud as he could until he was killed. Angle went home to Vidvik and considered that on this journey he had been successful. They laid Grettir's head in salt and put it for the winter in the out-house called Grettisbur in Vidvik. Angle was much blamed for this affair when men came to know that Grettir had been overcome by sorcery. He remained quietly at home till after Yule. Then he went to seek Thorir in Gard and told him of the slayings, adding that he considered that he had a right to the money which had been put on Grettir's head.

Thorir said that he would not deny that he had brought about Grettir's sentence. "I have often suffered wrong from him; but I would not to take his life have become an evil-doer as you have done. I will not pay the money to you, for you seem to me as one who will be doomed to death for magic and witchcraft."

Angle said: "I think it is much more avarice and meanness on your part than any scruples about the way in which Grettir was killed."

Thorir said there was an easy way of settling it between them; they need only wait for the All-Thing and accept what seemed right to the Lawman. They then parted with nothing but ill-feeling between Thorir and Thorbjorn Angle.

Chapter 83

Thorbjorn Visits Grettir's Mother at Bjarg

The kinsmen of Grettir and Illugi were deeply grieved when they heard of their death. They held that Angle had done a dastardly deed in slaying a man at the point of death, and they also accused him of practising sorcery. They applied to the most learned men, and Angle's case was ill-spoken of.

Four weeks after the beginning of summer he rode Westwards to Midfjord. When Asdis heard of his being in the neighbourhood she gathered her men around her. She had many friends, Gamli and Glum, Skeggi, called Short-hand, and Ospak, who was mentioned before. So much beloved was she that the whole of Midfjord rose to help her, even those who had once been Grettir's enemies. Chief among these was Thorodd Drapustuf, who was joined by most of the Hrutafjord men.

Angle reached Bjarg with a following of twenty men, bringing Grettir's head with him. All those who had promised their support had not yet come in. Angle's party entered the room with the head and set it on the floor. The mistress of the house was there and several others; no greeting passed between them. Angle spoke a verse:

"Grettir's head I bring thee here.
Weep for the red-haired hero, lady.
On the floor it lies; 'twere rotten by this,
but I laid it in salt. Great glory is mine."

She sat silent while he spoke his verse; then she said:

"The swine would have fled like sheep from the fox
if Grettir had stood there hearty and strong.
Shame on the deeds that were done in the North!
Little the glory you gain from my lay."

Many said it was small wonder that she had brave sons, so brave was she herself before the insults which she had received. Ospak was outside and was talking with those of Angle's men who had not gone in. He asked about the fray, and they all praised Illugi for the defence that he had made. They also told of Grettir's firm grip on his sword after he was dead, and the men thought it marvellous. Then a number of men were seen riding from the West; they were the friends of Asdis with Gamli and Skeggi, who had come from Melar.

Angle had intended to have an execution against Illugi and to claim all his property, but when all these men came up he saw that it would not do. Ospak and Gamli were very forward in wanting to fight with Angle, but the wiser heads told them to get the advice of their kinsmen Thorvald and other chiefs, and said that the more men of knowledge occupied themselves with the affair the worse it would be for Angle. Through their intervention Angle got away and took with him Grettir's head, which he intended to produce at the All-Thing. He rode home thinking that matters were going badly for him, for nearly all the chiefs in the land were either relations or connections of Grettir and Illugi.

That summer Skeggi Short-hand married the daughter of Thorodd Drapustuf, who then took part in the case on the side of Grettir's kinsmen.

Chapter 84

Thorbjorn is Exiled at the Thing

Men now rode to the Thing. Angle's party was smaller than he had expected, because the matter had come to be badly spoken of. Halldor asked whether they were to take Grettir's head with them to the All-Thing. Angle said he meant to take it.

"That is an ill-advised thing to do," said Halldor; "there are quite enough men against you as it is, without your doing such a thing as that to re-awaken their grief."

They were then on the road, and meant to ride South by Sand, so Angle let him take the head and bury it in a sand-hill, which is now called Grettisthuf.

The Thing was very full. Angle brought forward his case, making the most of his own deeds. He told them how he had killed the forest-man on whose head the highest price had been laid, and he claimed the money. Thorir replied as before. Then the Lawman was asked for his opinion. He said that he wished to hear whether any counter-charge was made, by which Angle should forfeit the outlaw money; if not, the money offered for Grettir's head must be paid. Then Thorvald the son of Asgeir asked Short-hand to bring the case before the court, and he declared a first summons against Thorbjorn Angle for witchcraft and sorcery through which Grettir had met with his death, and a second for having killed a man who was half dead, crimes which he said were punishable with outlawry.

There was a great division of parties, but those who supported Thorbjorn were few. It went very unexpectedly for him, for Thorvald and his son-in-law Isleif held that to do a man to death by sorcery was a crime worthy of death. Finally, by the counsel of wise men sentence was passed that Thorbjorn was to leave Iceland that summer and not to return during the lifetime of any of the men concerned in the case on the side of Illugi and Grettir. It was enacted as a law that all sorcerers should be outlawed.

When Thorbjorn saw what his fate was going to be he got away from the Thing, for Grettir's friends were making preparations to attack him. None of the money that was set upon Grettir's head did he get; Steinn the Lawman would not allow it because of his dishonourable conduct; nor was any blood-money paid for the men who had fallen on his side in Drangey; they were set off against Illugi, an arrangement, however, with which Illugi's kinsmen were not at all pleased.

Men rode home from the Thing, and all the feuds which had arisen on Grettir's account were now at an end. Skeggi the son of Gamli, son-in-law of Thorodd Drapustuf and sister's son of Grettir, went North to Skagafjord with the assistance of Thorvald Asgeirsson and of his son-in-law Isleif, who afterwards became bishop of Skalaholt. After obtaining the consent of the whole community he took ship and went to Drangey, where he found the bodies of Grettir and Illugi and brought them to Reykir in Reykjastrand and buried them in the church. Testimony of Grettir lying there is in the fact that in the days of the Sturlungs, when the church at Reykir was moved to another place, Grettir's bones were dug up, and were found to be enormously big and strong. Illugi was

buried later on the north side of the church, and Grettir's head was buried in the church at his home in Bjarg.

Asdis remained in Bjarg and was so beloved that no one molested her any more than they did while Grettir was an outlaw. The property at Bjarg passed after her death to Skeggi Short-hand, who became a great man. His son was Gamli, the father of Skeggi of Skarfsstad and of Alfdís the mother of Odd the Monk, from whom many are descended.

Chapter 85

Thorbjorn Goes to Norway and Constantinople

Thorbjorn Angle embarked at Gasar with as much of his own property as he was able to get. His lands went to his brother Hjalti, including Drangey, which Angle gave him. Hjalti became a great chief later on, but is not mentioned again in our story.

Angle went to Norway and still made himself very important. He was supposed to have done a great deed of valour in slaying Grettir, and many who did not know how it really happened honoured him accordingly; but there were some to whom Grettir's fame was known. He only told so much of the story as tended to his own glory, but whatever was less creditable to him he omitted. In the autumn his account reached Tunsberg and came to the ears of Thorsteinn Dromund, who kept very quiet, for he had been told that Angle was a very doughty man and valiant. He remembered the talk which he had had with Grettir in days long past about his arms, and obtained news of Angle's movements. They were both in Norway that winter, but Thorbjorn was in the North and Thorsteinn in Tunsberg, so that they did not see each other. Angle knew, however, that Grettir had a brother in Norway, and did not feel very secure in a strange country; so he asked advice as to what he had better do. In those days many of the Norsemen used to go to Mikligard to take service. Thorbjorn thought it would suit him very well to go there and earn wealth and glory instead of staying in the northern parts where there were relations of Grettir. So he made ready to leave Norway, embarked, and did not stop until he reached Constantinople, and obtained service there.

Chapter 86

Grettir's Death Avenged by his Brother Thorsteinn Dromund

Thorsteinn Dromund was a wealthy man and highly thought of. On hearing of Angle's departure to Constantinople he handed over his property to his kinsmen and followed him, dogging his movements as he went, without Angle knowing. He reached Constantinople very soon after Angle, intending at all costs to kill him. Neither knew of the other.

Both wanted to be received into the Varangian Guards, and their offer was well received directly it was known that they were Norsemen. At that time Michael Catalactus was king over Constantinople. Thorsteinn Dromund watched for an opportunity of meeting Angle where he might recognise him, but failed amidst the crowd, so he kept on the watch, caring little for his own well-being and ever thinking how much he had lost.

The next thing that happened was that the Varangians were ordered on field service for the defence of the country. The custom and the law were that before they marched a review was held for the inspection of their weapons; this was done on the present occasion. On the day appointed for the review all the Varangians and all who were marching with them had to appear and show their arms. Thorsteinn and Angle both presented themselves. Thorbjorn was the first to show his weapons and he presented the sword Grettisnaut. As he showed it all marvelled and declared that it was indeed a noble weapon, but said it was a bad fault that a piece was out of the middle of the edge, and they asked how that had come about. Angle said that was a tale worth telling.

"The first thing I must tell you," he said, "is that out in Iceland I slew a hero named Grettir the Strong. He was a tremendous warrior and so valorous that no one could succeed in killing him until I came. But as I was destined to be his slayer, I overcame him, although he was many times stronger than I am. I cut off his head with this sword and broke a piece out of the edge."

Those who stood by said he must have had a hard skull, and they showed the sword round. From this Thorsteinn came to know which was Angle, and asked to be shown the sword with the others. Angle willingly showed it to him, for they were all praising his strength and courage, and he, having no notion of its being Thorsteinn or any relation of Grettir, thought he would do likewise. Dromund took the sword, at once raised it aloft and struck a blow at Angle. It came into his head with such force that it penetrated to his jaw and Thorbjorn fell dead to the ground. Thereupon all the men became silent. The officer of the place put Thorsteinn under arrest and asked him why he had committed such a breach of discipline in the sanctity of the Assembly. Thorsteinn said he was a brother of Grettir the Strong and that he had never been able to obtain his vengeance till that moment. Then many of them stood up for him and said there was much excuse for a man who had come such a long way to avenge his brother. The elders of the town thought that this might be true, but as there was no one present to bear out his word they fell back upon their own law, which declared that any man who slew another should lose nothing else than his life.

Judgment was quickly passed upon Thorsteinn, and it was rather hard. He was to sit in a dark chamber in a dungeon and there await his death unless some one came to pay a ransom for him. When he reached the dungeon he found a man who had been there a long time and was all but dead from misery. It was both foul and cold. Thorsteinn asked him: "How do you find your life?"

"Most evil," he replied; "no one will help me, for I have no kinsmen to pay a ransom."

"There are many ways out of a difficulty," said Thorsteinn, "let us be happy and do something to cheer ourselves."

The man said he had no joy in anything.

"We will try it," said Thorsteinn.

Then he began to sing songs. He was such a singer that it would be hard to find his like, and he spared nothing. The dungeon was close to the public road and Thorsteinn sang so loud that it resounded from the walls; the man who before was half dead had much joy therefrom. In this way he sang every evening.

Chapter 87 Lady Spes

There was a very distinguished lady in that town, the owner of a large establishment, very rich and highly born. Her name was Spes. Her husband's name was Sigurd; he too was wealthy, but of lower birth than she was. She had been married to him for his money. There was not much love between them, and the marriage was thought an unhappy one. She was very proud, and had much dignity.

One evening when Thorsteinn was diverting himself she happened to pass along the street near the dungeon and heard singing so sweet that she declared she had never heard the like. She was walking with several retainers, and told them to go in and find out who it was that had such a magnificent voice. They called out and asked who was there in such close confinement. Thorsteinn told his name. Spes said:

"Are you as good at other things as you are at singing?"

He said there was not much in that.

"What have you done," she asked, "that they should torture you here to death?"

He said he had killed a man and avenged his brother; "but I have no witness to prove it," he said; "so I have been put here unless some one comes to release me, of which there seems little hope, since I have no relations here."

"A great loss would it be if you were killed," she said. "Was your brother then a man of such renown, he whom you avenged?"

Thorsteinn said he was half as good a man again as himself.

She asked what token there was of that. Then Thorsteinn spoke this verse:

"Goddess of rings! No eight could meet him,
or gain the sword from his vanquished hand.
Brave was Grettir; his foemen doughty
severed the hand of the ruler of ships."

Those who understood the song declared that it told of great nobility. When she heard that she asked:

"Will you receive your life at my hands if the choice is offered you?"

"Indeed I will," he said, "if this companion of mine sitting here is released along with me. If not, we must both remain sitting here together."

She answered: "I think you are more worth paying for than he is."

"However that may be," he said, "either we both of us come out from here together or neither of us comes out."

So she went to the Varangians' quarters and asked for the release of Thorsteinn, offering money. They agreed. With her interest and her wealth she brought it about that both of them were released. Directly Thorsteinn came out of the dungeon he went to pay his respects to the lady Spes. She welcomed him and kept him there secretly. From time to time he went campaigning with the Varangians, and was distinguished for his courage in all their engagements.

Chapter 88

Adventures of Thorsteinn and Spes

At that time Harald the son of Sigurd was in Constantinople, and Thorsteinn became friendly with him. Thorsteinn was now a very great personage, for Spes kept him well supplied with money, and they became very much attached to one another. She was a great admirer of his skill. Her expenses were very great because she tried to keep up many friends. Her husband noticed a great change in her character and her behaviour, and especially that she had become very extravagant. Treasures of gold and other property which were in her keeping disappeared. One day her husband Sigurd spoke with her and said that he was much surprised at her conduct. "You pay no attention to our affairs," he said, "and squander money in many ways. You seem as if you were in a dream, and never wish to be where I am. I am certain that something is going on."

She replied: "I told you as I told my kinsmen when we married that I meant to be my own mistress in all matters which concern myself; that is why I do not spare your money. Or is there anything more than this that you wish to speak about with me? Do you accuse me of anything shameful?"

He said: "I am not without my suspicions that you are keeping some man whom you prefer to me."

"I do not know," she said, "that there would be very much in that; and yet of a surety there is no truth in what you say. I will not speak with you alone if you bring such improper accusations against me."

He dropped the subject for the time. She and Thorsteinn continued to carry on as before, and were not very heedful of the talk of evil-minded people; they relied upon her wits and her popularity. They were often sitting together and diverting themselves.

One evening when they were sitting in an upper room in which her treasures were kept she asked Thorsteinn to sing something, and thinking that her husband was as usual sitting at drink she fastened the door. When he had sung for a time there was a banging at the door, and some one called to them to open it. It was her husband with a number of his followers. The lady had opened a large chest to show Thorsteinn the treasures. When she knew who

was outside she refused to open the door, and said to Thorsteinn: "Quickly! Jump into the chest and keep very quiet."

He did so. She locked the chest and sat upon it. Her husband then entered, having forced his way in. She said:

"What are you coming here for with all this uproar? Are there robbers after you?"

He said: "Now it is well that you yourself give proof of what you are. Where is the man who was letting his voice run on so grandly? No doubt you think his voice is better than mine."

"No man is a fool if he keeps silence," she said; "that applies to you. You think yourself very cunning, and would like to fasten your lies on to me, as in this case. Well, if you have spoken the truth, find the man. He will not escape through the walls or the roof."

He searched all through the room and found nothing.

"Why don't you take him," she said, "if you are so certain?"

He was silent and knew not how he could have been deceived. He asked his men whether they had not heard what he heard, but when they saw that the lady was displeased there was nothing to be got out of them; they said that one was often mistaken about sounds. He then went away, not doubting that he knew the truth, though he could not find the man. After that he ceased for some time to pry into his wife's concerns.

On another occasion, much later, Thorsteinn and Spes were sitting in a tiring-room where dresses were kept which belonged to them, both made up and in the piece. She showed many of the cloths to Thorsteinn and spread them out. When they were least expecting it her husband came up with a troop of men and broke into the room. While they were forcing their way in she covered Thorsteinn up with a bundle of clothes and leaned against the heap when they entered.

"Do you again deny," he said, "that there was a man here with you? There are those present here now who saw you both."

She told him not to be so violent. "You will not fail to catch him now," she said. "Only leave me in peace and do not push me about."

They searched the room, but finding nothing had to give it up.

"It is always good to have better proofs than people suppose. It was only to be expected that you would not find what was not there. Now, my husband, will you admit your folly and free me from this slanderous accusation?"

"By no means will I free you," he said, "for I know that what I have accused you of is true, and it will cost you an effort to free yourself of the charge."

She said she was quite ready to do that, and therewith they parted.

After this Thorsteinn remained entirely with the Varangians. Men say that he acted by the advice of Harald the son of Sigurd, and it is thought that they

would not have got out of it as they did if they had not made use of him and his wits.

After a time Sigurd gave out that he was about to go abroad on some business. His wife did not try to dissuade him. When he was gone Thorsteinn came to Spes and they were always together. Her house was built on the very edge of the sea and there were some of the rooms under which the sea flowed.

Here it was that Spes and Thorsteinn always sat. There was a small trap-door in the floor, known to no one but these two, and it was kept open in case of its being wanted in a hurry.

Sigurd, it must be told, did not go away, but concealed himself so as to be able to watch his wife's doings. One evening when they were sitting unconcernedly in the room over the sea and enjoying themselves, in came her husband with a party of men, taking them by surprise. He had taken some of the men to the window of the room that they might see whether it was not as he had said. They all said that he had spoken truly, and that it must have been so too on the former occasions. Then they rushed into the room.

On hearing the noise Spes said to Thorsteinn: "You must go down here whatever it costs. Give me some sign that you have got away from the house."

He promised that he would, and descended through the floor. The lady closed the trap-door with her foot, and it fell back into its place so that no one could see any mark of the floor having been touched. Sigurd entered the room with his men, searched, and of course found nothing. The room was uninhabited and there was no furniture in it, but only the bare floor and a bed, on which the lady was sitting and twirling her fingers. She paid little attention to them and seemed as if their business did not concern her. Sigurd thought it altogether ridiculous and asked his followers if they had not seen the man. They declared that they had seen him most assuredly.

The lady said: "Now we may say as the proverb has it: All good things are in threes. This is your case, Sigurd. Three times you have disturbed me, if I remember rightly; and now are you any the wiser than you were in the beginning?"

"This time I am not alone to tell the story," he said. "For all that you will have to clear yourself, for on no terms will I allow your shameful deeds to go unpunished."

"It seems," she said, "that you require the very thing which I would myself propose. It will please me well to show the falsehood of this accusation, which has been so thoroughly aired that I shall be disgraced if I cannot refute it."

"At the same time," he said, "you will have to deny that you have expended my money and my property."

She replied: "At the time when I clear myself I will refute all the matters which you brought against me, and you may consider how it will all end. I mean to go at once, to-morrow morning, before the bishop that he may grant me full compurgation from this charge."

Her husband was satisfied with this and went away with his men.

In the meantime Thorsteinn had swum away from the house and landed at a convenient place, where he got a firebrand and held it aloft so that it could be seen from the lady's house. She stayed long outside in the evening and the night, for she was anxious to know whether Thorsteinn had reached the land. When she saw the light she knew that he had landed, for that was the signal which they had agreed upon.

The next morning Spes proposed to her husband that they should speak with the bishop on their matter. This he was quite ready to do, so they went before the bishop and Sigurd repeated his accusation. The bishop asked whether she had ever been accused of misbehaviour before, but nobody had heard of such a thing. Then he asked upon what evidence this charge was brought against her, and Sigurd produced the men who had seen her sitting in a room with the door locked and a man with her. Her husband said that this was ground enough for supposing that the man meant to seduce her.

The bishop said that she might very well purge herself from this accusation if she so desired. She replied that she desired it very much. "I hope," she said, "that I shall have many women to swear for me on this charge."

The form of the oath which she was to swear was then communicated to her and the day for the compurgation fixed. She returned home and was quite happy. She and Thorsteinn met and laid their plans.

Chapter 89

Ordeal

The day now arrived when Spes was to make oath. She invited all her friends and relations, and appeared in the finest clothes that she possessed, with many a fine lady in her train. It was raining heavily and the roads were flooded; on the way to the church there was a swamp to be passed. When Spes came with her company to the swamp there was a great crowd on the high road, and a multitude of poor people asking for alms, for all who knew her thought it a duty to give her a greeting and wish her well because of the kindnesses which they had often received from her.

Amongst these poor people there was a beggar very large of stature and with a long beard. The women halted at the swamp; being people of high rank they did not like to cross the dirty slough. The big beggar, seeing that Spes was better dressed than the other ladies, said to her: "Good lady, have the condescension to allow me to carry you over the swamp. It is the duty of us gaberlunzies to serve you in whatever way we can."

"How can you carry me," she said, "when you can scarcely carry yourself?"

"Nevertheless, it would be a great condescension. I cannot offer you more than I have, and you will prosper the better in other things for having had no pride with a poor man."

"Know then for a surety," she said, "that if you carry me not properly the skin shall be flayed from your back."

"Gladly will I venture upon that," he said, and waded out into the stream. She pretended to dislike very much being carried by him; nevertheless, she got upon his back. He staggered along very slowly, using two crutches, and when they reached the middle he was reeling in every direction. She told him to pull himself together. "If you drop me here," she said, "it shall be the worst journey that you ever made."

The poor wretch gathered up all his strength and still went on. By dint of a valiant effort he had all but reached the shore when he struck his foot against something and fell forwards, projecting her on to the bank while he himself fell into the mire up to his armpits. There as he lay he put out his hands, not on her clothes, but on her legs. She sprang up cursing and said she always suffered ill from low vagabonds. "It would only be right that you should have a good beating," she said, "were I not ashamed to beat such a miserable creature as you are."

He said: "Unequal is the lot of man. I thought to earn some benefit and to receive alms from you, and you only give me abuse and insult without any reward." And he pretended to be very much disgusted. Many felt pity for him, but she said he was a very cunning rascal. When they all began to beg for him she took out her purse, wherein was many a golden penny. She shook out the money, saying: "Take that, fellow! It would not be right that you should go unpaid for all my scoldings. You are now paid for what you have done."

He gathered up the money and thanked her for her liberality. Spes then went to the church, which was full of people. Sigurd proceeded with energy and told her to clear herself of the charge which he had brought against her.

"I pay no heed to your accusation," she said; "but I want to know what man it was whom you pretend to have seen in the room with me, because there is always some proper man near me; there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. But this I will swear, that to no man have I given money and that by no man has my body been defiled excepting by my husband and by that beggar, who put his muddy hands upon my leg to-day when I was carried over the ditch."

Many then were satisfied and declared that her oath was perfectly good and that she was in no way disgraced by a man having touched her unwittingly. She said she had to tell the story just as it happened, and then she swore the oath in the words appointed for her. Many said that she would be observing the saying that: Nothing should be omitted from an oath. But she replied that wise men would hold that there was no cause for suspicion. Then her relations began to talk with her and said that it was a great insult to a woman of high birth that such lies should be told about her and go unpunished, for they said it was an offence punishable with death if a woman were proved to have been unfaithful to her husband. So Spes asked the bishop to divorce her from Sigurd, saying that she would not endure the lies which he had told. Her kinsmen supported her, and with their help her request was granted. Sigurd got little of the property and had to leave the country. So it happened as usual that the weaker had to bow, nor could he accomplish anything although the right was on his side. Spes took all the money and was held in high esteem, but when men came to consider her oath they thought it was not altogether above suspicion, and they concluded that very skilful men had composed the Latin formula for her. They

ferreted out that the beggar who carried her was Thorsteinn Dromund. But Sigurd got no redress.

Chapter 90

Thorsteinn and Spes Return to Norway

While the affair was being talked about Thorsteinn Dromund remained with the Varangians, where he was held in such high estimation that his prowess was considered to be beyond that of nearly every man who had come to them. Especially Harald the son of Sigurd did him honour, and claimed kinship with him; it was supposed to have been by his advice that Thorsteinn had acted.

Soon after Sigurd was driven from the country Thorsteinn proposed marriage to Spes; she was quite agreeable, but referred it to her kinsmen. There were family meetings and all agreed that she herself ought to decide. Matters were settled between them; their union was most prosperous and they had plenty of money. Thorsteinn was considered lucky to have got out of his difficulties in such a way. After they had lived together for two years in Constantinople, Thorsteinn told her that he would like to visit his property once more in Norway. She said he should do as he pleased, and he then sold his property so as to have some ready money. They left the country with a good company of followers and sailed all the way to Norway. Thorsteinn's kinsmen welcomed them both, and soon saw that Spes was both generous and noble; accordingly she quickly became very popular. They had three children, and remained on their property very well contented with their condition.

The king of Norway was at that time Magnus the Good. Thorsteinn soon went to meet him, and was well received because of the fame which he had earned through having avenged Grettir the Strong. Scarcely an example was known of a man from Iceland having been avenged in Constantinople, excepting Grettir the son of Asmund. It is said that Thorsteinn entered his bodyguard. Thorsteinn remained nine years in Norway, both he and his wife being in high honour. After that King Harald the son of Sigurd returned from Constantinople, and King Magnus gave him the half of Norway. Both kings were together in Norway for a time. After Magnus's death some who had been his friends were less contented, for he was beloved of all, but Harald was not easy to get on with, since he was hard and severe. Thorsteinn Dromund then began to grow old, but was still very vigorous. Sixteen winters had now passed since the death of Grettir.

Chapter 91

Absolution in Rome

There were many who urged Thorsteinn to visit King Harald and become his man, but he would not. Spes said to him: "I would not, Thorsteinn, that you go to Harald, for a larger debt remains unpaid to another King, whereto we must now turn our thoughts. Our youth is now passed; we are both becoming old, and we have lived more after our desires than after Christian doctrine or regard

for righteousness. Now I know that neither kinsmen nor wealth may pay this debt if we pay it not ourselves. I would therefore that we now change our way of life and leave the country to betake ourselves to Pafagard. I have hope that so I shall be absolved from my sin."

Thorsteinn answered: "The matter of which you speak is as well known to me as it is to you. It is right that you should rule now, and most seemly, since you allowed me to rule when our matter was much less hopeful. And so shall it be now in all that you say."

This resolve of theirs took men by surprise. Thorsteinn was then two years past of sixty-five, but still vigorous in all that he undertook. He summoned all his kinsmen and connections to him and told them his plans. The wiser men approved of his resolve, while holding his departure a great misfortune for themselves. Thorsteinn said there was no certainty of his return. He said:

"I wish now to thank you all for the care of my goods which you took while I was absent. Now I ask you to take over my children along with my property, and to bring them up in your own ways; for I am now come to such an age that even if I live there is much doubt about whether I shall return. Manage all that I leave behind as if I should never return to Norway."

The men answered that matters would be more easily managed if his wife remained to look after them.

She answered: "I left my own country and came from Mikligard with Thorsteinn, I bade farewell to my kinsmen and my possessions, because I wished that one fate should befall us both. And now it has seemed pleasant to me here, but no desire have I to remain in Norway or in these Northern lands after he has departed. There has always been goodwill between us and no dissension. Now we must both depart together; for we ourselves know best about many things which have happened since we first met."

When they had thus dealt with their own condition, Thorsteinn appointed certain impartial men to divide his property in two parts. Thorsteinn's kinsmen took over the half which was to go to the children, and brought them up with their father's relations. They became in time men of the utmost valour, and a large posterity in the Vik is sprung from them. Thorsteinn and Spes divided their share, giving some to the church for the good of their souls and keeping some for themselves. So they set off for Rome, bearing the good wishes of many with them.

Chapter 92

End of Thorsteinn and Spes

They travelled then the whole way to Rome, and appeared before him who was appointed to hear confessions. They related truly all that had happened, all the cunning tricks wherewith they had achieved their union. They submitted with humility to the penances laid upon them, and by reason of their having voluntarily turned their hearts to desire absolution from their sins, without any pressure from the elders of the church, their penance was lightened so far as it

was possible, and they were gently admonished to arrange their lives with wisdom for the well-being of their souls, and, after receiving absolution in full, to live henceforward in purity. They were declared to have acted wisely and well.

Then the lady Spes said: "Now, I think it has gone well; and now we have not suffered only misfortune together. It may be that foolish men will follow the example of our former lives. Let us now end in such way that we may be an example to the good. We will come to an agreement with some men skilled in building to erect for each of us a stone retreat, thus may we atone for all the offences which we have committed against God."

So Thorsteinn advanced money to stone-masons and such other persons as might be needed, that they might not be without the means of subsistence. When these works were completed and all matters were settled, a fitting time was chosen for them to part company with each other, each to live alone, in order more surely to partake of the eternal life in another world. They remained each in their own retreat, living as long as it pleased God to spare them, and thus ending their lives.

Most men consider Thorsteinn Dromund and Spes to have been most fortunate in escaping from the difficulties which they had fallen into. None of their children or posterity are mentioned as having come to Iceland.

Chapter 93

Testimony of Sturla the Lawman

Sturla the Lawman has declared that no outlaw was ever so distinguished as Grettir the Strong. For this he assigns three reasons. First, that he was the cleverest, inasmuch as he was the longest time an outlaw of any man without ever being captured, so long as he was sound in health. Secondly, that he was the strongest man in the land of his age, and better able than any other to deal with spectres and goblins. Thirdly, that his death was avenged in Constantinople, a thing which had never happened to any other Iclander.

Further, he says that Thorsteinn Dromund was a man who had great luck in the latter part of his life.

Here endeth the story of Grettir the son of Asmund.

