THE VIKINGS
12 Juvenile fiction stories

Paul du Chaillu
IVAR THE VIKING
a romantic history based upon authentic facts of the third and fourth centuries

TO GEORGE W. CHILDS

My Dear Childs: Years of our unbroken friendship, going back more than a quarter of a century, have passed away, and the recollection of all your kindnesses during that time comes vividly before my mind. Many a time your home in Philadelphia, at the sea-side, or at Wootton has been my home, and many of the happy days of my life have been spent with you and your kind wife. Three years ago I lay on a sick-bed at your house, and all that tender nursing, the skill of the physician, and loving hands could do that winter was done for me, and for all that I am indebted to you and to Mrs. Childs. Now a twenty miles' walk day after day does not fatigue me. "Ivar the Viking" was partly written, after my recovery, under

the shade trees of Wootton and in the midst of the perfume of its flowers. To you, my dear old friend, I dedicate the book as a token of the esteem and high regard I have for your noble character, and in grateful remembrance of all you have done for me.

PAUL DU CHAILLU.

New York, September, 1893

INTRODUCTION

The story of "Ivar the Viking" depicts the actual life of Norse chiefs who ruled at the period therein described, and also gives the customs, religion, life, and mode of thinking which prevailed among the people. My object in writing this story is to give a view, in a popular way, of the life of these early ancestors of the English-speaking peoples, whose seat of power was on the islands situated in the basin of the Baltic and the countries known to-day as Scandinavia.

The reader of this volume will gain a correct idea of the civilization of the Norsemen of that period, the men who came to the gates of Rome, and settled in Britain, Gaul, Germania, on the shores of the Mediterranean, and other countries.

I begin the story of my hero with his birth, accompanied by the characteristic ceremonies attending

it; then I tell of his fostering, his education, his coming of age, of the precepts of wisdom he is taught, of his foster-brothers, of the sacred ceremony of foster-brotherhood, of his warlike expeditions and commercial voyages, of the death and funeral of his father, of his accession to rule, and other similarly typical Viking events.

I speak in the narrative of the dwellings of the people; how they lived; of their "bys," or burgs; of the different grades making up society; of their feasts; of their temples; of their worship, religious ceremonies, and sacrifices; of funerals; of Amazons; of athletic games; of women and maidens; of love; of duels and sports; of dress; of men and women; of marriages. In a word, the book is a life-like picture of the period. The time which I have chosen is the epoch when the Norsemen were most surely and swiftly sapping the power of Rome, and engaged in colonization on the largest scale.

There is not an object, a jewel, either Norse, Roman, or Greek, or a coin mentioned, that has not been found in the present Scandinavia, and is not seen to-day in its museums, and often in great numbers.

The descriptions of customs interwoven in the narrative are derived from authentic records, the sagas, the evidence of graves, and of antiquities in general. These are more fully, scientifically, and technically described in my work published three years ago, "The

Viking Age."

The descriptions of dresses of the women have been most carefully drawn from the sagas, and from the handles of three keys seen in "The Viking Age," where three women in full dress are represented. The materials and jewels with which I have adorned them are those found in their graves. The attire of the men is from the garments, weapons, and ornaments of that early period, found in graves and bogs, and from descriptions in the sagas.

"The Viking Age" had hardly been published in England, when a storm of protests and adverse criticisms arose from many quarters of that conservative country; for it is there that the old belief in the Angle and Anglo-Saxon descent of the modern English-speaking peoples is most rooted, having indeed become a religion with many Englishmen.

I fully expected opposition to the new views I propounded. Had not my former accounts of African travels been received with incredulity? Did not the people laugh when I told that I had seen a race of pigmies and been in their villages? Did they not doubt my descriptions of the great equatorial forest, of gorillas, cannibals, etc.? I was before the time. I was too young; and these circumstances were against me. But then, as in the case of "The Viking Age," I found warm supporters and defenders in England itself.

I knew that it was bold on my part to attack the

Saxon idol which had been worshipped so long among Englishmen, and to try to destroy the faith in which they and their fathers had believed. Was the glorious Anglo-Saxon name which the people had been shouting for so long, even in America, to be overthrown? What, then, would become of the sturdy qualities claimed as inherited from the so-called Anglo-Saxon race? The qualities are there, only the name of Anglo-Saxon ought to be changed to that of Norse.

Nothing but absolute conviction made me take this bold step. I had never been satisfied with the assertions of historians, and could see no evidence in their writings for the conclusions at which they had arrived in regard to the name Anglo-Saxon and as to who were the conquerors and settlers of Britain.

When I travelled in the Norselands, to the northern part of which I gave the name of "The Land of the Midnight Sun," a name which has been generally adopted since, I became convinced that the conquerors of Britain were Norse; for while visiting their museums, which contained the Norse antiquities, I saw that these objects were the same as those called in England by antiquarians, Angle, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Roman, and in France, Frankish. These facts set me thinking, and ultimately produced "The Viking Age."

As soon as I brought before the public the evidence I had collected, many voices rose and

exclaimed: “Woe to him who tries to dispel our belief and destroy our faith!” The world is full of such examples in the treatment of new ideas. How could I escape hostility when I proclaimed that the antiquities called in England by archæologists and others, and classified in the museums as Angle, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Roman, are Norse, consequently that the ancestors of the English-speaking people are from the basin of the Baltic and present Scandinavia, and that it is only there that one sees the antiquities of a most warlike and sea-faring race of the period of the so-called *Saxon* maritime expeditions?

Many apply the name of Anglo-Saxon to the people who settled in Britain, without knowing why, except that they had been taught to believe it from their school and college days, or because the majority believe so. I maintain that the earlier England, popularly placed at the southern part of the peninsula of Jutland, is mythical; that such antiquities pointed out as Angle are not found there; that the word “eng” (Swedish äng) is a common appellation all over Scandinavia; that “england,” or “äng land,” to this day, is the name given to flat, grassy land by the Norse people, as it was in earlier times. The probability is, that the Norsemen, seeing the flat shores of Britain on the North Sea, called it “England,” or Land of Meadows; and the people, in the course of time, were called meadow-men, as we say mountaineers, in

speaking of people inhabiting mountainous regions.

Some of my critics took up the question of language. The reason they gave for not agreeing with me was, that the English had the definite article "the," and the Icelandic saga-writings did not possess it; this was, according to them, the most positive proof that the earlier English people were not Norse. One might as well have argued that the French language was not derived in great part from the Latin, as it has the definite article, and the Latin had not. Who can ever tell when the definite article was dropped or added in those languages?

I never expected that the appearance of "The Viking Age" would convert to my views men who had spent their lives in trying to prove, or in maintaining the belief in, the Anglo-Saxon myth, and who believed in the diffuse, contradictory, and often incomprehensible writings of Bede and Nennius, or in the earlier English chronicles, the authorship of which cannot be traced. But I have often wondered why no one has compared thoroughly the Norse archæology of that period with that of Britain, which is claimed as that of the Angle, Anglo-Saxon, as being the early settlers of Britain; and the only reason I could discover that anyone had for calling these antiquities by those names was because of blind confidence that these settlers were what the historians claimed them to be.

Those who cling to the Anglo-Saxon belief point

to here and there a few graves in the ancient Friesland, similar to those found in England, as a proof that the earlier settlers of Britain did not come from the Baltic. As if it were possible that none of these Norsemen, who used to visit Friesland as far back as before the time of Tacitus, could have failed to die there during several centuries! They forget, also, that the Romans never mentioned the people of that country as sea-faring. On the contrary, the maritime tribes that harassed them "were living on the most northern shores of the sea-in the ocean itself." The antiquities left by these sea-faring tribes are those that must give us light on the subject.

One might just as well assert one thousand years from now that the people of English descent of the present time living at the Cape of Good Hope were the ones that held sway over India, because they were nearer than England to India, or that the solitary graves or little English cemeteries found between England and India were those of the people who governed India. A little more research would prove to them that the great seat of power was in England. We learn from archæology where Egypt, Greece, Rome, and many other fallen empires held their sway. So we may know, from the traces left, where the Norsemen held theirs also, and that nowhere did they hold it more firmly than in Britain.

The controversy, to me, seems very plain. I have maintained in "The Viking Age," and shall continue to

do so, until I am shown to be mistaken, that: It is in the basin of the Baltic, and in the Norselands, that we see incontestable proofs as to who were the sea-faring people whom the Romans called first Sueones and then Saxons, as shown by the tens of thousands of graves of that period still existing; that these graves and their antiquities are the same, and of the same type, as those of a similar period in England; that in these Norse graves a great many Roman coins of gold and silver, and many Roman and Greek objects are found, showing that these sea-faring people had intercourse with Rome, Greece, and the Mediterranean. Nay, do not the coins antedating the Roman Empire, when patrician families of Rome coined their own money, tell the tale of how early Norsemen went into the Mediterranean? Are not Norse graves often seen on its shores, by the side of the graves of the Etruscans?

I also maintain that neither at the mouth of the Elbe, nor anywhere else out of the Norselands, do we see the remains of a dense, warlike, and maritime population-a population which has left traces in the number of its graves far greater than has Rome itself.

How could the host miscalled Saxon by the later Romans, which overran Europe, till the downfall of the empire, for four centuries, avoid leaving such traces? Their population must have been very dense in order to allow them to send forth such vast fleets to fight and conquer the Romans. How is it that the Saxons, whom

we know as Saxons, were not a sea-faring people in the time of Charlemagne, as we know they were not? Simply because they never had been. How is it that in Charlemagne's time, on the other hand, the Sueones who must have been the Saxons of the later Romans were dreaded by him as powerful at sea, just as they are described by Tacitus?

Have not the races which have disappeared in America or elsewhere left traces, and must we make an exception of the so-called Saxons of the Romans? This would be against the evidence of everything before us.

It is by comparing the graves and antiquities of the Norselands with those of England that we have the proof that the early settlers of Britain were Norsemen. The scene in this volume, of Ivar going to visit his kinsmen on the banks of the River Cam, in England, has been described, because there is a cemetery there whose antiquities show its Norse origin, and the Roman coins buried with them, of Trajanus, 98-117 A.D.; of Hadrianus, 117-138; Faustina, wife of Antoninus Pius, 138-161; Marcus Aurelius, 161-180; of Maximianus, 286-305, show how early Norse settlements began.

What are the objects found in that cemetery, and described in the beautiful work of the Honorable R. C. Neville, "Saxon Obsequies, Illustrated by Ornaments and Weapons Discovered in a Cemetery near Little Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire," printed in 1852? Swords, axes, umbos, cinerary urns with burned bones, wooden

buckets with bronze hoops, bronze tweezers, spear and arrow heads of iron, ear picks, iron knives, iron shears, brooches, beads of glass, and other material fired by cremation.

I will quote the words of Mr. Neville himself: "That so large a number of urns containing human remains should have been discovered in conjunction with skeletons, affords a remarkably satisfactory confirmation of the coexistence of these two modes of burial. My experience enables me to state with confidence that the urns now discovered differ entirely from any [Roman] I had before encountered, and resemble closely those usually met with in Anglo-Saxon burying-grounds, etc."

If the reader opens "The Viking Age," and looks over its thirteen hundred and sixty illustrations, he will see the same objects as those described and illustrated by Mr. Neville, and the same descriptions of graves.

It is time that the views of antiquarians and historians of the old school should be entirely set aside or remodelled; and that the old England, placed popularly as existing in the southern part of the peninsula of Jutland, and comprising a territory of a few square miles, be considered a myth that had no reality, except in the brain of its inventors. When I say that the antiquities found in England are the same and of the same type as those found in the Norselands, I call this a fact and not a theory; and when I say also that

these are not found in the Saxon lands, I call this a fact and not a theory. When I say that the antiquities found in England are not found in the so-called earlier England of the historian, I call this a fact and not a theory; and if I am wrong it can be easily disproved.

But let me add, that after the appearance of "The Viking Age," everybody was far from being against me in England. I found there many adherents to my views, and some even went so far as to write to me, that after the publication of the work, and upon seeing its illustrations, they did not believe that Stonehenge was Druidical, but was simply of Norse origin, for there were many graves containing Viking remains in the country round about.

The Roman records are correct. No countries but the islands of the Baltic and Scandinavia correspond to their description. It is there that we find a great number of Roman objects. Coins are there found from the time of the foundation of the empire-those of Augustus 29 B.C. to 14 A.D., of Tiberius 14-37, Claudius 41-54; then in increased number those of Nero 54-68, Vitellius 69, Vespasian 69-79, of Titus 79-81; in still greater number those of Trajan 98-117, Antoninus Pius 138-161, of Faustina the elder, wife of Antoninus Pius, of Marcus Aurelius 161-180, of Faustina his wife, of Commodus 180-192; then in decreasing quantities the coins of the subsequent emperors. By the side of these coins and other Roman objects are Norse objects, and

these Norse objects are, as I have said, similar to those found in the England of a corresponding period. The mode of burial is also identical in both countries. These facts tell plainly who were the people who settled in Britain before and after the time of Ivar the Viking and of the Roman occupation.

While the controversy was going on in England, knowing the receptive and impartial mind of Mr. Gladstone, and having been several times the recipient, in years past, of his kind hospitality, and remembering the interest he had taken in my African travels, I took the liberty of addressing to him a request for his opinion in regard to the position I had taken. Mr. Gladstone, who was then in Oxford for the purpose of delivering a lecture on Homer, replied the same day. I append his letter:

Dear Mr. Du Chaillu:

You have done me great honor by appealing to me, but I fear your appeal is to a person prepossessed and ignorant.

My prepossessions are on your side. But I have not yet been able, although very desirous, to examine the argument on your side as it deserves, nor that of your adversaries.

I am a man of *Scotch* blood only, half Highland, and half Lowland, near the Border. A branch of my family settled in Scandinavia, in the first half, I think, of the seventeenth century.

When I have been in Norway, or Denmark, or among Scandinavians, I have felt something like a cry of nature from within, asserting (credibly or otherwise) my nearness to them. In Norway I have never felt as if in a foreign country; and this, I have learned, is a very common experience with British travellers.

The love of freedom in combination with settled order, which we hope is characteristic of this country, is, I apprehend, markedly characteristic of Norway and of Denmark. I have not spoken of Sweden, simply because I have not been there.

The ethnography of northern and insular Scotland, down even to the Isle of Man, and the history, seem to show a very broad and durable connection.

Still I cannot call these more than feeble generalities. I earnestly hope, when I am a little more free, that I may be able to get some real hold of the subject.

I think a good deal of the argument suggested by our fishing population, and by the *curious* persistency with which, in some districts, Scandinavian terminations have been preserved.

Yours faithfully,
W. E. Gladstone.

CHAPTER I

HJORVARD AND GOTLAND

The mariner sailing in the Baltic, as he skirts the shores of Gotland, sees on a promontory of that island several large cairns and mounds overlooking the sea, and the country that surrounds them. This promontory was the burial place of a family of great Vikings and rulers who held sway over the whole island a few centuries before and after our era. Among the most conspicuous cairns two are pointed out to the stranger, those of Hjorvard and his son Ivar, the hero of the present narrative.

The events of which I am going to speak to you relate to them, and to what happened during their lives, towards the latter end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century, between the years A.D. 270 and 320, or about sixteen hundred years ago.

Hjorvard, "the wide spreading," so called on account of the widely extended maritime expeditions he had undertaken, was one of the most renowned Vikings of his time. In all his expeditions he had been successful and always victorious in his battles. The Roman fleets had never dared to attack him as he sailed with his numerous ships along the coasts of their wide empire to make war upon the different countries over which they held dominion.

Hjorvard's ancestors, by the side of whom he now lies buried, had been great warriors and sea-faring

men like himself. They had sailed from the Baltic to the Caspian Sea, by the present Gulf of Finland, and also westward, along the coast of Friesland, Gaul, Britain, and as far south as the Mediterranean. The ships used by them in their river expeditions or along the coast during the summer months were unlike those of the Romans, and were much admired by them. Even in the first century the Romans feared these men of the north on account of the great fleets they possessed, and placed them as living on the most northern shores of the sea, in the very ocean itself. They called them Sueones; and all they knew of their country was what these Sueones told them about it, for the Baltic was an unknown sea to the Romans.

Hjorvard was of high lineage, for he was descended from Odin, and he belonged to that branch of the family of Odin called Ynglingar, which ruled over Svithjod, a realm that embraced a great part of the present Sweden.

Sigrlin, his wife, was a very handsome woman, and possessed all the accomplishments belonging to women of her high rank. She was also of Odin's kin; was a direct descendant of Skjöld (the Norse word for shield), one of the sons of Odin, from whom the Skjöldungar are descended. The Skjöldungar ruled over that part of the land which to-day is called Denmark, but which was then called Gotland. Her father was called Halfdan, and resided at Hleidra, not far from

where Copenhagen stands to-day, and was one of the great rulers of the north.

Not far from the cairns and mounds just mentioned was Dampstadir, the head "by," or burg, the residence of Hjorvard and of the rulers of Gotland. From this place a long panorama of coast and land could be seen, and the eye lost itself in the dim horizon of the sea. There Hjorvard lived in great splendor. The buildings which made up Dampstadir were among the finest of the northern lands; they were of different sizes and varied architecture, and, like all the structures of those days in the north, were entirely of wood. They were roofed with shingles, heavily tarred, their dark color contrasting pleasantly with that of the log walls of the houses.

All the numerous buildings formed a vast quadrangle, enclosing a large plot of grass called "tun," or town. From the centre of the square the sight was extremely beautiful and picturesque, for there were not two buildings of the same appearance or size. Some were finer than others, of course, but all were quaint; from their roofs and sides, gargoyles, representing heads of horses or dragons and other wild beasts, stuck out boldly into the air from every side, or looked, with heads inclined downward, towards the ground. There were a few houses with towers, called lofts; in these towers were a number of sleeping-rooms, and from their tops, in time of war, a sharp lookout was kept for

the enemy's vessels. Many buildings were also used as store-houses.

Before the doors of many houses were porches, ornamented with carvings, while others had belfries and dark piazzas with ladder-like stairs leading to them, their weather-beaten walls of hard logs seeming to defy the ravages of time, for many of them, at that time even, dated centuries back. Some were specially for the use of the women members of the family of Hjorvard and for their household, for it was customary for women to have their "skemmas," or bowers, all to themselves. There they received their friends and spent their time in sewing and embroidering. There were several festive halls for every-day use. During the winter long fires ran along the centre of these, the smoke escaping through openings in the roof, which openings could be closed when necessary. Along the walls ran long benches, and tables were set in front of them. The light came in through windows; instead of glass, the transparent membrane enclosing the new-born calf was stretched over what were called the light-holes.

The every-day life of Hjorvard was very simple. At the principal, or day meal, Sigrlin sat on the left hand of her husband, the seats next to this, on both sides, being the most dignified for men and women, while the farthest ones, near the door, were the least so. The most high-born, oldest, and wisest man-for it was

the custom for rulers to have wise men with them who knew the ancient examples and customs of their forefathers-sat on the northern high seat, called the lower high seat, opposite that of Hjorvard, on whose right hand were women, the men being on his left. It was also the custom for chiefs to carry the ale over the fire, and drink to the man opposite the high seat, and it was thought to be a great honor to be toasted by the host.

The most imposing and striking of all the structures along that enormous square was the great banqueting hall; of all the buildings, this was the one in which the chiefs and rulers took the greatest pride, for it was there that they received their most honored guests and gave their most splendid feasts. The banqueting hall at Dampstadir was ranked the sixth for beauty and grandeur in the land of the Vikings, and was very old. Two superb doors at the two ends led into the interior. The door-ways, or jambs, of these were of solid oak, about two and a half feet wide, and several inches thick; these were adorned with beautiful carvings, representing scenes belonging to the religious history of the race, and varying greatly in depth, so as to give a fine artistic effect of light and shade. The doors themselves were of solid oak also, and were ornamented with intricate designs made with flat iron bands, of exquisite beauty, and perfect gems of art. A massive gold knocker adorned each door. By one door

the women entered, by the other the men.

The inside of this banqueting hall was a sight not to be soon forgotten. The first artists and wood-carvers of the North had been employed, and had shown wonderful skill in the elaboration and grouping of their designs-the scenes represented including many of the deeds and expeditions of Hjorvard's ancestors. The carvings were considered so beautiful that even the finest tapestry was not hung over them, and the wood itself had become richly dark during the centuries that had elapsed since the hall had been built. All along the walls hung shields of variegated designs and bright colors, ornamented with gold and silver, overlapping each other, and, of course, adding much to the gorgeousness of the spectacle.

As was customary, this hall had been built east and west, the long walls running north and south; along the latter were the benches for the guests, and just in the middle of them were the two high seats, facing each other. The most important bench ran along the northern walls, and there the great high seat, the more honored of the two, stood facing the sun. It was for the master of the house; and to be placed on the high seat opposite was the greatest honor that could be shown to any guest, consequently this seat was always assigned to the most prominent men. The nearer the places on the benches assigned to any one were to the high seat, the greater the honor; the places farther away, near the

door, being the lowest. These two high seats were beautifully carved, with arms on both sides, and two pillars which were both painted and ornamented with carving representing historical subjects.

The weapons of Hjorvard hung above his high seat-his "sax," or single-edged sword, his best double-edged sword, also his shield, his "brynja," or chain-armor, and helmet of gold. His double-edged sword, called "Hrotti," was a magnificent weapon. The hilt was all ornamented with gold, and so was the scabbard; the blade was of most exquisite damascened workmanship. This sword was in its sheath, which was wrapped with bands called "peace bands"-for there was profound peace over the land at the time we are speaking of-and no one but Hjorvard could unloose them, for these were holy, and it was only when war had been declared that it could be done.

Mementos of the expeditions of Hjorvard and of his forefathers were scattered here and there, treasured as heirlooms. Along the walls hung several Roman swords with Latin inscriptions upon them, which had been in the family for two hundred years. There were Roman statuettes, bronze vessels, and various other bronze objects, and a collection of Roman coins of every emperor from the time of Augustus, the first Roman emperor, to the time of Hjorvard. Among the gems of art were lovely Grecian cups, bowls, and drinking horns of glass, some of the glass cups and

bowls adorned with charming paintings representing rural scenes, with wild beasts, lions, bulls, birds of variegated colors, and even men boxing with boxing gloves, all looking as fresh as the day they were painted.

At the foot of Dampstadir was a beautiful land-locked bay where the ships of Hjorvard lay at anchor, while on its shores were numerous sheds, under which stood many of the ships which were thus protected from the weather; there were also building yards, where busy carpenters were always at work constructing or repairing vessels.

The finest ships to be seen there were the "drekis," or dragon-ships. These were the largest and most formidable of all warships, and derived their names from the fact that their prows and sterns were ornamented with the head or tail of one or more dragons. Some were covered with sheets of solid gold, which gave a superb appearance to the ships, especially when the sun shone upon their sides. Many of these drekis could carry a crew of from five hundred to seven hundred men.

Besides the dragon-ships there were other war-vessels called "skeids," "snekkjas," "skutas," "buzas," "karfi," "ask," and also many provision ships which followed the fleets on their expeditions. The skeid was a formidable war-vessel, almost equal in power to the dragon-ships, a very fast sailer, which

carried two hundred and forty men or more. The snekkja was a smaller ship of the same general description. The skutta was a smaller craft still, which could be manœuvred very quickly. It was generally used for boarding other ships, the upper part of its gunwale being so built that warriors could more easily leap upon other vessels. All these vessels, small or large, had only one mast.

Among these ships could be seen some of the old-fashioned type which has been described by Tacitus, with no mast, and entirely propelled by oars; they were very sharp pointed at both ends, much like the whale-boats of to-day, about eighty feet long, and in the widest part ten or eleven feet broad, with fifteen or sixteen benches about three feet apart. These boats were propelled by thirty or thirty-two oars, varying somewhat in length, and of an average of about twelve feet. Two men, and sometimes three, pulled each oar, and a man with a shield protected the oarsmen on each outer side. The thole-pins were fastened to the gunwales with "bast" ropes, and were adorned with graceful carved designs, no two being alike. On the side, at the stern, was the rudder, resembling a large, broad oar. They were so shaped that they could be rowed in either direction. At the time of which we are speaking, this model of naval architecture was fast going out of fashion, and sailing vessels exclusively were coming into general use. All the vessels were of

oak, “clinch-built;” that is, the planks overlapped each other, and were made fast together by large iron bolts.

The island of Gotland, over which Hjorvard ruled, had a very dense population, and was, on account of its size and geographical position, a great emporium of commerce, and with its war and trading ships occupied at this time about the same position as the England of our days. Its inhabitants were wealthy, and traded extensively, as their fathers had done, with provinces of Rome, with Greece, and the countries round the Caspian, the Black, and the Mediterranean Seas. From such distant lands as these they brought superb bronze vessels, exquisite glass vases, velvets and silks, beautiful objects of leather, embroidered gold and silver textile material for dress, and many other costly objects which the rich prized very highly, as well as wine.

CHAPTER II
THE VIKING LAND, AND THE VIKINGS

At the period of which I write, the land of the Vikings embraced the islands of the Baltic and those of the small and the great “Belt” leading into that sea, the country known to-day as Scandinavia, which embraces the large peninsula of Sweden and Norway, and the small peninsula of Jutland. The whole land was virtually surrounded by sea. Great fortifications had

been built on the southern peninsula of Jutland between the two fjords which enter it from opposite sides, so that no incursion could take place from the land to the south.

The large islands, especially, were seats of great maritime power and wealth. All the tribes were of a common origin and kindred; they had the same customs and religion, practised the same burial rites, intermarried, and spoke the same language which was called the Norranean tongue.

These Vikings, as we have seen, were quite isolated from Central and Western Europe, and formed a world of their own, having much intercourse with the country forming the present Russia. Between them and Rome stood the inaccessible swamps and forests of Germania, inhabited by wild and barbaric tribes. Great, indeed, was the contrast that existed between the Vikings and the tribes of Germania. All these tribes called themselves Norsemen, or Northmen; they were intensely warlike, and had been sea-faring people from immemorial time. The deeds done on the sea in by-gone ages could only be seen or remembered by graves made venerable by the centuries that had passed over them, or by the large tracings deeply engraved upon the rocks, seen to this day, representing sea-fights, raids, and invasions. Like the hieroglyphics of Egypt, they were the mementos of a great past, forever forgotten.

The Norsemen of our period used only weapons of iron; those of bronze had been given up centuries before, but they were proud of that former civilization, and boasted that at that remote time no one excelled their ancestors in the art of manufacturing arms of bronze-a boast that has not been made vain to this day.

Long even before the time of Hjorvard the country was unable to support its population, and the people had in consequence become more and more aggressive towards the inhabitants of countries to the west of them as years passed away. Through their voyages during the preceding generations and during their own times, they had become thoroughly acquainted with the countries and rivers of Friesland, Gaul, Britain, and other countries, and had been seeking new homes there. Their fleets swarmed over every sea, and no country was exempt from their attacks. Year after year, an innumerable, irresistible, and apparently inexhaustible host, they poured over Western Europe, and had become complete masters of the sea. Fleet after fleet returned home laden with Roman spoils of all kinds.

These expeditions were undertaken by chiefs living in very different regions of the country, and the people flocked with their ships from every part of the land, to enroll themselves under their standards, when they announced that they were ready to make war on the Roman world. The ever victorious Norsemen called

themselves the chosen people of the gods, the loved ones of Odin, and considering themselves the chosen, they never tried to convert other nations; like the Jews of old, they despised every other religion. Wherever they obtained a foothold, they held the land and people under an iron sway. Death had no terror for them; Valhalla, where Odin dwelt, was to be their future abode. They believed also in Frey, Njord, Thor, Freya, and in other gods and goddesses.

There were many conditions of men in the great Viking's land; different grades of society built up the social structure. The whole country was divided into "herads," forming separate realms; some had a much larger tract of territory than others, and were more powerful. Most of the estates composing them were inherited by laws of primogeniture or entail. Over each herad ruled a Hersir, which was the highest hereditary dignity in the land. The title of Drott, "Lord," or High Priest, which had come down from Odin's time, had disappeared and given place to that of Hersir; the name of king was yet unknown. Each herad had a head-temple where the yearly sacrifices for all the people were made.

The Hersir was the head of the community. He was the leader in war, and the administrator of justice. He was the high priest in regard to worship, and as such took care of the temple, and superintended the sacrifices and other religious ceremonies. He held the

farms and estates belonging to the temple in trust, received a temple tax from every man for its maintenance and that of the sacrifices. He presided over the general assembly of the herad, called Thing, which took place several times during the year. Through his position he acquired great wealth, and owned many landed estates at home and in the countries he or his forefathers had subjugated. He distributed among his warriors and scalds costly things and much gold. He stirred up war, reddened the fields of battle, overthrew his enemies, in order to rule over more lands and personal property.

The Hersir's wife was generally of Odin's kin, and their children were wrapped in silk and the finest of linen; their descendants were the highest in the land.

Their sons broke horses, bent shields, smoothed shafts, shook ashen spears, rowed and sailed ships, were believed to be able to write magic runes to save the lives of men; to blunt the edges of weapons and calm the sea by spells; to understand the language of birds; to quench fire, read minds, allay sorrows, and to have the strength and energy of eight men. Their chief occupation was to go to war and fell the enemy. Their hair was fair, their cheeks bright and healthy, and their eyes as keen as those of a young snake.

The Hersir's daughters were slender-fingered, their hands and arms were soft, their hearts lighter and their necks whiter than pure snow. They were fair and

gentle, endowed with all the accomplishments belonging to high-born women; when they married they were clad in white bridal linen, according to the custom of high-born people, and walked under a bridal veil.

Next in rank to the Hersir were the Haulds, the highest class of dwellers in the land. They lived on the estates that had descended to them for generations. As a body of men, they were the power of the land, and no Hersir could ever rule without their consent.

Their sons, as they grew up, learned how to handle the shield, bend the elm, or make bows, shaft the arrow, throw the spear, ride horses, set on the hounds, brandish the sword, practise swimming, to write runes, play chess, wrestle, and be foremost in all athletic games. They had the same education as the Hersir's children; their daughters were dressed in white, also, when they married.

After the Hauld came another class of land owners, the Bondi, whose estates were also entailed. These people throve well on the land, broke oxen, made ploughs, timbered houses, made barns and carts, and drove the plough. Their daughters carried keys hanging at their side, and helped their mothers. When they married, they too were allowed to wear white, like the daughters of Hersirs and Haulds, to set up a household, and sleep under linen bed-clothes; they divided wealth with their husbands.

There was another class of freemen who rented

lands, for they had no estate. The doors of the houses of these were always ajar; there was a fire in the middle of the floor; a lumpy loaf, heavy and thick, hand-mixed, was on the trencher; broth in a bowl, and veal, considered the choicest of dainties, were often seen on the table.

A poorer class of freemen existed. Their doors were also always ajar; husband and wife were always busy with their work; his beard was trimmed, his hair lay on his forehead, his shirt was tight. His wife twirled a distaff, stretched out her arms, and made cloth. She wore a head-dress on her head, to show that she was no longer a maiden; a kerchief on her neck, and brooches fastening the folds of the dress on the shoulders.

Then came the slave, distinct from all, dressed always in thick, white woollen stuff, with his hair cropped close, in contrast to the long hair worn by the freeman. Such was his badge of servitude. He was always of foreign birth or origin. He had been captured in war, or bought at a market-place or at a fair in distant lands, and generations of slavery had degraded him; nevertheless he also throve well in the land, but the wrinkled skin and crooked knuckles, the thick fingers, the ugly face, the bent back, the long heels, told the tale of his slavery and of that of his forefathers. His life was passed in trying to learn how much he could endure and bear; his time was employed in binding bark or bast, in making loads, and in carrying these the live-long day.

His wife came home in the evening, weary of standing up all day. Scars were on the soles of her feet, her arms were sunburnt, her appearance told of her bondage. After she had come in, she sat down on the middle of the household bench, and her son sat at her side. Husband and wife lived happily with their children; when these grew up, they laid the fences, tended swine, herded goats, cut wood, or dug peat. Such were the classes that made up the population of that great and powerful Viking land.

CHAPTER III
HJORVARD CONSULTS THE ORACLE

There was no nobler or bolder heart than that of Hjorvard. He had begun his life of warfare when fifteen years old. Many in the land said that the renown he had gained was the result of folly and hardihood; others thought that he enjoyed his life in doing deeds of honor. He had won fame, and travelled through nine different countries.

Like all the great Hersirs, he had with him twelve champions who formed his body-guard, and had come from every part of the Northern lands; some from the shores of present Norway, others from the islands of the Baltic, and two from Svithjod. The bravest men wanted to serve him, for he was lucky in war, a genial and convivial leader, and most generous with his gold.

All the champions of Hjorvard were berserks, and to be considered the foremost champion was the ambition of every warrior. To attain this proud position was no easy task among so many men in the land who were equally brave and perfectly reckless of their lives, and who were thoroughly skilled in the handling of weapons, and all kinds of athletic games. After such a reputation had been acquired, the champion had either to challenge or be challenged by those who were envious of him, or thought themselves more than his equal; and these contests, or trials of strength and skill, generally took place before a large assembly of people. The champions of Hjorvard in time of peace often went round the country and challenged men specially famous for their prowess.

Berserks despised chain-armor and all weapons of defence such as shields and helmets. They often even fought without clothing, and could lash themselves into such a state of frenzy that they lost all control over themselves. Often this fury, or berserk rage, came upon them without cause and seized them suddenly, when they would bite their weapons, gnash their teeth, wrestle with trees and rocks, and become reckless of every danger. When in sight of their foes they rushed to the attack with an indescribable fury, and when in conflict with other berserks the fight was deadly. When the berserk fury seized them at home, they would go out, through fear of fighting with their friends, and

wrestle with rocks and trees.

Hjorvard had made very stringent rules for his champions and warriors. No man could come under his standard who feared death or uttered words of fright when in danger, or groaned when he received the worst wounds in battle. Nor could these wounds themselves be dressed until the day after they had been received. No man was allowed to have a sword longer than two feet. The swords and saxes of Hjorvard's men were heavier than those of others, so that when they struck a blow it might be most telling.

It was always the custom of Hjorvard to lie with his ships before promontories so that these might be seen by every one. On none of his vessels were tents put up to protect him or his men from the weather. They never reefed a sail during a storm, and he had never more than one hundred and twenty champions on board of his own ship.

He had the honor of chivalry; he bade his warriors not to break men's spirit by putting them in fetters, nor to do any harm to any man's wife, and ordered that every maid should be bought with dowry and with the consent of her father, and that women and their children should not be captured.

Victory always followed him, so that great champions and berserks of the land flocked to his standards when he undertook a warlike expedition. Led by him, they felt sure of victory in advance. No man

less than eighteen years old or more than fifty could follow him in warfare. All his warriors had to have strength enough to lift a large stone that stood near his residence. The chiefs who resided in Gotland owed him allegiance, and all were his kinsmen, and all those under him had, by law, to furnish him a certain number of ships and warriors when needed.

During his life he had subdued several chiefs on the southern shores of the Baltic, and those paid him tribute willingly, for he was not grasping, and used his power with moderation; but all had to submit once to the humiliating ceremony of letting him put his foot on their necks in acknowledgment of being his vassals.

Though Hjorvard and Sigrlin had been married a certain number of years, no child had been born to them, so the Hersir of Gotland made up his mind to go to Svithjod, the most powerful realm of the Viking lands, and to Upsalir, the most sacred of all the places of the north, to consult the gods and see if he could learn the decrees of fate.

Hjorvard assembled a large fleet, and after bidding farewell to Sigrlin, who accompanied him to his ship, he sailed directly for the fjord at the head of which is Lake Malar. The wind was good, and the second day they came in sight of land. Here fortified towers and catapults in sight of each other guarded the narrow arm of the sea on both sides, whence a storm of missiles could be thrown on the vessels of an invading

host, and in war times chains were laid across there, preventing the sudden ascent of ships. As the moon shone brightly that night, they continued their voyage. Borne on by a strong and favorable breeze, in due course of time they came to the narrowest part pf the fjord, called to-day Waxholm. The men shouted as they sailed past the fortifications, viewing which, they said to each other, “No wonder that Upsalir is impregnable.” But the white peace shields were at the mastheads, for there had been peace between Gotland and Svithjod for many a year.

As the fleet approached Lake Malar the wind became very light, and the crews had to take to their oars. Three men were on each; these pulled the oars so hard that their bodies seemed at times to be bent in two. Farther on, they came to the head of the fjord, and sailed amidst the several islands which are in the river, and upon which to-day a great part of Stockholm is built. That place was also fortified; numerous catapults defended the channels between the islands. Then they entered the lake, a large sheet of water about seventy miles long, dotted with fourteen hundred islands, whose banks were covered with superb forests of oak of gigantic size, and after a pleasant journey reached Upsalir. Hjorvard was received with much honor by Yngvi, his kinsman, the ruler of Svithjod, who descended from Odin in direct line, and there was great feasting during his stay.

Many of the dwellings and buildings of Upsalir dated from the time of Frey, the successor of Odin. The temple itself was believed to have been built by Frey. It was of the greatest magnificence and size, and the most sacred building in the Norselands. From its fantastic and overlapping roof, gargoyles stretched forth in every direction, or looked down upon the sacred grounds of the temple, and the worshippers that came to sacrifice. A gallery ran around the temple, supported by pillars. The temple was built of enormous red fir trees, and its walls had withstood the blasts of centuries. The walls, ceilings, and pillars inside were entirely sheathed with red gold, likewise the altar upon which the holy fire was always burning. The Hersir of Svithjod alone could remain seated during the religious ceremony attending the sacrifice. All the others had to stand until they partook of the flesh of the sacrificed animals.

The door of the temple was round-arched, and a masterpiece of carving, representing Odin offering a sacrifice. On each of its pillars stood a beautiful carved cat. The door itself was ornamented with iron work, with a solid knocker of gold in the centre. Not far from the door outside was the holy spring in which the men sacrificed to Odin were thrown. For a long distance the lands surrounding the temple were sacred. No temple could vie with the temple at Upsalir, none received more yearly taxes and offerings for its sacrifices and maintenance; large estates belonged to it, and its

revenues were very great. People came from every part of the Viking lands to assist in its sacrifices, which were the largest in the North, and on important occasions chiefs met there from all their realms to sacrifice to the gods and learn the decrees of fate.

After his arrival Hjorvard made a great sacrifice. Black oxen and the finest horses had been fattened for this special occasion. The walls of the temple, inside and outside, were reddened with the blood of the sacrificed animals, and the Hersirs and all the people who were present were also sprinkled with the blood. The gods were invoked, and then the holy chips that had been dipped in the sacrificed blood were thrown into the air. The answer came that Sigrlin would bear a son in about a year; then with great joy he sailed for Dampstadir to announce to his wife what the chips had foretold.

After his return he remained at home, waiting for the event which had been predicted by the casting of the sacrificing chips. He spent his time surveying his large estates, and watched over very carefully the building of a great number of ships; he often superintended the work in the fields, for he was a good husbandman; and to amuse himself, he made several fine damascened swords. He paid special attention to the fisheries and seal catching, for these were splendid schools for future seamen; or he played chess-the squares of his chess-board were of gold or of silver-or

hunted with his hawks.

CHAPTER IV
IVAR'S BIRTH AND LIFE FORECAST

About fourteen months after the return of Hjorvard from Upsalir, towards the year 275, a great event took place at Dampstadir, which filled the hearts of Hjorvard and Sigrlin with joy. The sacrifice which Hjorvard had made to the gods in Upsalir to stop the sterility of his wife had been accepted, and Sigrlin gave birth to a son. While this happened, Hjorvard was in the great banqueting hall, entertaining some of his kinsmen who had come to see him, and was then listening to a poet who was singing the heroic deeds of the ancestors of the race. Messengers were sent to him to apprise him of his good fortune.

Present at the birth of the child were Oddrun, the married sister of Hjorvard, and several other high-born women, and others who lived at or near Dampstadir, and also the female servants; for it was the law of the land that women had to be witnesses of the birth of a child, and none of those who were present could leave the place until they had seen the babe on the breast of his mother. According to custom, the infant was laid on the floor to wait for the arrival of his father.

After Hjorvard had entered the room, the new-born child was put into his lap, and he covered

him with the folds of one of the corners of his cloak; doing this he acknowledged the legitimacy of his offspring. Then he looked at his child intently, to judge of his appearance, proportions, luck, and temper. After a thoughtful examination, and satisfying himself that the new-born offspring was well-shaped, he decided that he should live and not be exposed. This custom was similar to that of the Spartans-the father was the only judge to decide if the new-born babe was to live or not.

Then took place the most important and sacred ceremony of "name fastening," equivalent to baptism, or pouring or sprinkling water upon the child, a holy custom which had come down from the remotest time, and was lost in the mist of ages. A vessel filled with water was brought in, and Hjorvard poured water upon the child, and said in a loud voice, so that the people should hear him: "Ivar shall the boy be named after his grandfather; he will of Odin's family the foremost man be called; he will fight many battles, and be much like his mother, and be called his father's son, for he will wage war from early age, and wander far and wide." After this ceremony, the life of Ivar, like that of all other men, was sacred; his father had not the power to expose him or to take his life, and if he did it would be murder.

Hjorvard gave first, as a "name fastening," a sprig of garlic as a symbol that as the garlic stood high

among the grass, so would little Ivar stand among men. Then he placed by his side a double-edged sword and a sax, a coat of mail, a shield and a helmet of silver; these had been made specially beforehand, in case the expected new-born infant should be a boy, and hence came the common saying that high-born infants were born with weapons. He also gave him two large landed estates, one called Ringstadir and the other Hightun. Every animal born on Hjorvard's numerous farms on the day of the birth of little Ivar was to belong to him, with the increase thereof, according to ancient custom.

The champions and warriors of Hjorvard said that good years were in store for them, as little Ivar would become in time a mighty warrior who, like his father and forefathers, would lead them to victory, as he had the piercing, snake-like eyes of the Ynglingars.

During the night which followed the ceremony of name fastening, the utmost silence reigned in the house where little Ivar and his mother slept. No one spoke; the utmost darkness prevailed there, for no lights were burning. The three Nornir, Urd "the Past," Verdandi "the Present," and Skuld "the Future," were expected to come, and forecast the life of Ivar that night.

These three genii shaped, or foreordained, the life of every human being at his birth; their decrees were final, and the gods had no power to undo what they predestined. They carved on wood tablets the laws for the children of men. According to the belief of the

Norsemen, they were an inseparable triad, or trinity, who, though independent of each other, ruled as one the destinies of man. They were the representatives of all life-the past, the present, and the future.

Urd was most majestic in appearance; her long, flowing hair was as white as the purest snow. The wisdom of the past lighted up her beautiful countenance. Her dreamy eyes looked back on the countless ages of the past. She remembered all that had happened since the time of Ginnungagap, or Great Void, before the worlds had been created, and beheld the successive changes that were taking place. From that time change was constant; no ripple of the sea was as it was an instant before, for every moment witnessed new transformations. Nothing is as it was, and nothing will be as it has been. And Urd's contented mind told her that all that happened in the immensity and evolution of time was for the best.

Verdandi looked fondly upon Urd, for the present could not exist without the past. She was most beautiful; her long, golden chestnut hair, dyed by countless years in the rays of the sun, typified the ripening of life, of time, of seasons. Her face reflected the beauty and the loveliness of the world in which Ivar's father and mother lived. She saw what was constantly happening in the world-the storms, the wars, the joys, the pestilences. Once in a while an expression of sadness passed over her countenance, for the woes

and sorrows that befell men were brought upon them by themselves, and not by the Nornir.

Skuld was resplendent in beauty and freshness. Butterflies always surrounded her, for she typified immortality. She held in one of her hands the thread of life of every human being. Her garment shone like a silvery cloud; from her long, flowing hair sprang rays of light, more brilliant than those of the sun, sending their radiance all over the world. With unbounded joy she looked into the future and into immortality. Hope she gave to all the children of men, and hid from their sight the breakers ahead, which wreck so many lives. With one hand she was ready to snap asunder the thread of life, which measured the number of days or hours allotted by the Nornir to every human being that came into the world.

The three Nornir lived in a large hall under the great ash tree, "Yggdrasil," where the gods give their judgments every day. The ash is the largest and best of trees; it stands ever green; its branches spread all over the world, and reach up over the heaven; three roots of the tree hold it up, and spread very widely. Under one of the roots is the well in which wisdom and intellect are hidden.

Towards midnight, when every one was profoundly asleep, and deep silence reigned in the house, Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld, according to the belief of the Norse people, came to forecast the fate of

little Ivar. They bade him become the most valiant of chiefs, and the best of rulers. They unravelled the golden threads of fate they held, and fastened them in the midst of the heavens; in the east and in the west they hid their ends, and foretold that Ivar should hold land between them; but Skuld flung one thread on northern roads, and bade it to hold forever. This fore-shadowed that he would never conquer any country north of Gotland. And it came to pass that the great dream of his life to extend his dominions north was never realized. They bade that he should understand the language of birds; and then they departed from the house to forecast other lives that were coming into the world.

CHAPTER V
THE FOSTERING OF IVAR

Ivar throve well, to the delight of his father and mother, and there was great joy in the family when he cut his first tooth. His father, according to ancient custom, gave him on that occasion a gift called a "tooth-fee." The gift was a knife in a gold sheath attached to a leather belt, sewn and embroidered with gold thread. The buckle was a beautiful work of solid gold. He gave him, also, with this, a large farm not far from Dampstadir, which was to become his residence when he became a man. As time went on, Ivar grew to

be a beautiful child; he was fair, and had blue eyes resembling the people of his kin; like all boys of his age he loved to play, and nothing delighted him more than to put in the water a toy boat with a sail, and watch its going to sea.

When he had attained his sixth year, his parents began to think about sending him to be fostered, as it was the custom of the land for boys of prominent and leading men not to be reared at home, for fear they should become effeminate. They were sent to some distinguished friend, known for his bravery, tact, wisdom, and accomplishments, so that the fostered child could have all the education his rank in life should require.

Hjorvard and Sigrlin had had many anxious thoughts in regard to the education of little Ivar, for they wanted him to become wise, and the most accomplished of warriors. Their love for him was unbounded, and it required great strength of character for both to be willing to part from him for several years; but they felt that their greatest duty was the welfare of their son. Their thoughts had centred upon a noble man as the foster-father of Ivar, of the name of Gudbrand, a Hersir, who no longer undertook to lead expeditions into far-off countries. He ruled over the island of Engel, which is still called so to this day, and which is situated in the Cattegat, not far from the beautiful promontory of Kullen, and close to the

present southern Swedish shore. For him both husband and wife had the greatest friendship, esteem, and admiration. No better man could be found to educate a boy in all the accomplishments which were necessary for the high-born to possess in those days.

Gudbrand and Hjorvard were foster-brothers, and had gone on many warlike expeditions together; many a Roman, Gallic, and British head had fallen under their saxes and swords; they had shared and escaped many dangers, and had received dangerous wounds together, and the love one bore towards the other was very great.

Gudbrand was not as powerful a Hersir as Hjorvard, and did not possess as many estates and as much gold; but he was closely related to many of the chiefs who ruled over the large peninsula comprising the present Sweden and Norway. He was also of Odin's kin.

Hjorvard and Sigrlin, having made up their minds that Gudbrand should foster Ivar, concluded to send messengers to him to invite him to come and make them a visit, but without telling the reason why. They had told no one of their intentions in regard to the man whom they wanted to foster Ivar. The vessels were made ready to carry the messengers, when an unforeseen event prevented their departure. On the morning of the day appointed for their sailing, a fleet of fifteen sail was signalled from one of the towers as being seen very far off on the horizon. They were so far

away that they could not be observed from the shore. Finally they were sighted by those on the beach, and gradually they became more and more distinct as they approached the land, and there was not the slightest doubt that they were steering for Dampstadir; the white peace shields were clearly discerned at the mastheads, also the color of each ship was clearly seen. The sight was beautiful as the vessels came nearer and nearer the land. The shields of the warriors lay side by side, covering each other partly, outside, along the gunwales, and their variegated colors, especially yellow, red, and black, presented a picturesque sight. The striped, colored sails added no little to the beauty of the sight. Ahead of all was a dragon-ship; at its masthead a standard embroidered with gold, with an eagle in the centre, by which the people recognized at once the dragon-ship of Gudbrand.

Hjorvard and Sigrlin, who were watching from the highest tower, were greatly rejoiced at the sight. They considered the arrival, at such an opportune moment, of Gudbrand, whom they wanted to see so much, as a good omen for the future of their son. Hjorvard walked towards the shore to meet his foster-brother, and took a rowboat to go on board and welcome him as soon as his ship had cast anchor.

Gudbrand was received with hearty demonstrations of joy and with great honor by Hjorvard, who had not seen his foster-brother for more

than two years. He was led to the great hall, and seated on the high seat opposite to that of Hjorvard, and all the commanders, or "styrmen," as they were called, of Gudbrand's ships, and his champions were there also, and seated according to their rank. There was deep drinking that day; a great feast took place; the ale and the mead were passed freely, and served in silver and golden horns, and there was much merriment until the early hours of the morning, after which all retired to their separate houses. Gudbrand was given the finest house, intended for high-born guests, for his residence while in Dampstadir.

The following day, as Gudbrand was quietly talking with the champions of Hjorvard in the banqueting hall, and was intensely interested in listening to one of them who was describing a great wrestling contest that had taken place a few days before, Hjorvard entered unnoticed, with Ivar in his arms; and as Gudbrand saluted him, he put little Ivar on his knees, before he was aware of it. It was an ancient custom that the man upon whose knee a child had been thus "knee-seated," as this ceremony was called, was bound to become his fosterer until he became of age. A shout of assent arose from Hjorvard's champions as an approval of the choice of their chief, for whom every one was ready to sacrifice his life. No wonder they approved the choice, for Gudbrand was well known for his wisdom, skill in athletic games, and many other

accomplishments.

Hjorvard could have shown no greater proof of friendship, esteem, and regard to Gudbrand than by what he had just done.

Gudbrand promised his companion-in-arms and foster-brother that he would bring up little Ivar to the best of his abilities, and then added, with a thoughtful voice: “Hjorvard, thou knowest well the ancient saying: ‘An early sown field shall no man trust, nor his son too soon, for the weather rules the fields, and wits guide the son; each of these is uncertain.’ Thou knowest well, also,” he continued, “that the Nornir rule unevenly the fates of men. To a few they predestine a happy and contented life; to many, a short or a long one; to some, but little property or praise. Many they have fated to sorrows or to be unlucky; to one man they give great wealth and a miser’s heart; to a poor man a most generous disposition. It seems to me that he who has the miser’s heart ought to have been poor, and the one that has a giving heart to have been rich. But such are the decrees of the Nornir, and no one can understand or escape them. Fame and poverty are often given to the poet, but his name will endure forever; his mound will always be green in the memory of man, like the deeds of great heroes.”

There was great feasting in Dampstadir during the remainder of Gudbrand’s stay. Many a warrior drank more than he ought to have done, as was the custom in

those times; but hospitality was most unbounded, and chiefs did not want to have the reputation of being miserly.

Many evenings were spent in listening to the songs of poets who recited the great deeds of war of Hjorvard's and Gudbrand's ancestors, and also those that had been accomplished by the two Hersirs. Gudbrand had among the champions who had come with him a man of the name of Ulf, who was a great poet, or scald, and only spoke in verse, and answered also in that manner. His fame was very great, but in despite of offers of great pay by powerful chiefs, he remained with Gudbrand, for he loved him dearly, and to him the land of Engel was the most beautiful spot he had ever seen.

One evening, after Gudbrand and all the champions had retired, Hjorvard remained all alone with Ulf, who composed on the spot a magnificent song on the deeds of Hjorvard's father, and it took a great part of the night to recite it. Hjorvard thanked him, and the next day spoke to his intendant, who had charge of all his treasures, and after telling him of Ulf's wonderful gift, asked him how he should reward the scald.

"Shall I give him two trading ships?" said he.

"That is too much, I think," was the treasurer's reply.

"Other chiefs give costly things-good swords or

good gold bracelets-as rewards for a song made for them," Hjorvard answered, "but the ruler of Gotland is above and much richer than many Hersirs."

So he concluded to present Ulf with a fine trading ship, a new scarlet cloak, a gold-ornamented sword, and a heavy bracelet of gold, and invited him to come and stay a whole year with him. Ulf thanked Hjorvard, and said that he would come in two years, on his return from a visit to his kinsmen in Britain.

After a sojourn of over three weeks, Gudbrand talked of returning to Engel. Sigrlin tried with all her power of persuasion to make him stay longer, and pleaded that Ivar's outfit was not ready, though she had been busy with her maids, sewing and making garments for him; and succeeded in inducing him to remain another week. She was loth to see the day of Gudbrand's departure; the thought of parting with her darling little son broke her heart.

At last the last day came, when Ivar was to leave his mother and father, and go and learn how to become an accomplished man and warrior. Sigrlin did not sleep that last night. Ivar slept unconscious in her arms the whole of the night; she fondled him, and half fancying she was bidding him farewell then, often pressed him so tightly against her heart that two or three times during the night she awoke him. No wonder that her mother's heart grieved, for it was not a separation of a day from her child. He was not to be away from her for