



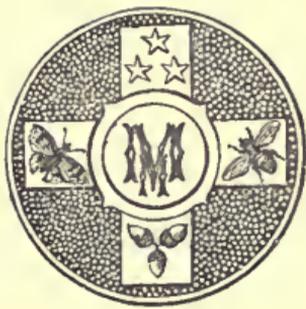
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POPULAR EPICS
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POPULAR EPICS

OF THE

MIDDLE AGES

OF THE

*NORSE-GERMAN AND CARLOVINGIAN
CYCLES.*

BY

JOHN MALCOLM LUDLOW.

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PREFACE.

SOME years ago, on the first appearance of the "Idylls of the King," I undertook to read the volume with a class at the Working Men's College, and to preface the reading by some account of those epics of chivalry of which the 'Idylls' are the latest and most precious outgrowth. I was acquainted with the Nibelungenlied, and knew its relation to the Edda; was tolerably familiar with both the German and the French of the twelfth or thirteenth centuries; knew something of the 'Chanson de Roland,' and one or two of the Carlovingian poems earliest edited in the misnamed "Rômans des douze Pairs," as well as of the "Tristans;" had read the Mabinogion and Sir Thomas Mallory. In promising a general sketch, I quite expected, I must confess, to find the whole thing ready done to my hand, so that I should have only to condense, and to refer my hearers for

further details to one or more standard works treating *ex professo* of the subject. To my surprise however, on referring to such authorities as Warton, Ellis, Ritson, Weber, De la Rue and others, I found nothing that suited my purpose: masses of antiquarian and bibliographical disquisition,—nothing complete, nothing clear, nothing which I could feel to be sufficient. So I had to set to work at first hand, and make up my mind for myself.

The time was short before me when I ventured upon this rash undertaking, and I soon found myself surrounded with such a mass of material as I could not hope to master before my readings began. When they were over however, I could not help feeling the wish to complete what I had attempted, to put into shape what I had rough-hewn. The 'Song of Roland,' which I now studied for the first time in the original, fully repaid the pains I bestowed upon it. I conceived the idea of a general work on those popular epics of the middle ages, which have done so much at bottom to fashion the modern mind. Friends urged me to carry the plan out; a publisher was taken with it.

The first, but very likely the last instalment of the work is now offered to the reader. I dare not say that it has not often palled upon me in the doing, and that amidst the terrible realities of the last few years, the mock prowess of imaginary or mythicized personages has not been often a weariness to flesh and spirit alike. But a work of this description acquires as it were a momentum of its own as it proceeds; the more one does, the less one likes to throw away what one has done; so that in short, so far as it has gone, here it is.

It would indeed require, for its completion, a volume on the Arthurian cycle; and a supplementary one which should embrace (according to my view) the lesser cycles of the Cid and the Crusades,—of the Theological epics,—the Beast-epics,—and finally, by way of appendix, the Classico-chivalrous epics, such as those on the Siege of Troy, Alexander the Great, &c. But the last-named poems I believe to have never been really popular epics in the true sense of the term, and the same observation applies to the Arthurian cycle generally,—a fact which makes me the less loth to leave this part of my original purpose, for the present

at least, unfulfilled. Without in the least contesting either the antiquity or the originally popular character of much of the material which has been woven into the last-named cycle, I think it must be confessed that in its development it is the latest of the three great cycles, and courtly rather than popular, and that in no instance does any whole poem belonging to it rise to the height of a genuine epic. Nor can this be wondered at, since it does not appeal, if I may so speak, to the epical passions of mankind,—patriotism, religious zeal, love, hatred, revenge,—in their singleness and in their breadth, but only to the sentiments and to the fancy. We can only make Arthur epical by making him more and more unreal; the only patriotism he appeals to is a microscopic Welsh or Breton patriotism; no religious fervour can be kindled in his favour by making him a Christian hero against certain Paynim Saxons, long converted into good Catholics by the time the first minstrel sang of him, in any but a Kymric dialect. The real centres of interest in the Arthurian cycle are two essentially unpopular ones,—the wire-drawn double adulteries of Lancelot with

Guinevere and of Tristan with Isolt—(to say nothing of the ugly tales of Arthur's own birth and of Mordred's); very fit themes for courtly pruriency and sentimentalism, very poor and dull ones for the healthy popular mind. Indeed it may be said that the only truly epical element in the Arthurian cycle is the Quest of the Holy Grail; but that both comes too late, and is essentially too false, ever to develop itself into a true popular epic.* Caring myself less for the Arthurian cycle than for either of the others, I rejoice at the same time to think that it has been more thoroughly studied than any, so that whatever pains I might have bestowed upon it will be the less missed.

Many will indeed find fault with me for devoting so much space to works so well known as the Nibelungenlied, or even as the Gudrun, recently given to the public in an English form by Miss Letherbrow. A little reflection will however shew, I think, that the Nibelungenlied is the real standard of comparison for the whole Norse-Ger-

* I do not indeed mean to say that some of the German poems of the cycle have not a really epical character, but it is then purely individual. They may be epical romances, they are not epics.

man cycle, and that a full abstract of it was absolutely needed on that account. I will add indeed that, well known as the work may be to many amongst us, I have found by experience that a man may have passed through school and college with the utmost distinction, and be a writer in the most dreaded of weekly journals, without having ever read a line of it. As respects Miss Letherbrow's work again, I can only say that these volumes were wholly finished and in the publisher's hands before hers appeared; and whilst her interesting "Introduction" may be usefully referred to as a sketch of early Norse-German literature, I have borrowed nothing from it but a note or two; whilst the liberties she has taken with the conduct of the poem are such that I have not been able, as I hoped, to shorten my own abstract of it by reference to her work.

On the other hand, it is perhaps necessary to remind the reader that my purpose has been to give a notion of the *cycles* of popular epic in the middle ages, not of popular middle age epics generally. Hence any epic or fragment of epic that stands quite detached, does not enter into my

plan. Had it been otherwise, I should have had to assign a substantive place and value to the Jutish epic "Beowulf" for instance, to the fragment on the battle of Finnesburh, &c., instead of dealing with Beowulf and other Anglo-Saxon fragments simply in relation to the Norse-German cycle. It seems undoubtedly true that these remains of Anglo-Saxon literature are among the earliest, if not the very earliest samples of popular middle age epic which have been preserved to us. But nothing clusters round them, nothing grows from them; they are rootless alike and fruitless. Nor have they, I venture to think, any such distinctive character and worth as to claim consideration on their own account in a work like this, which lays no claim to be an exhaustive one; whilst as monuments of the language of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers they have already enjoyed, and must continue to enjoy, a full meed of attention in this country.

Again, the reader must bear always in mind that it is the cycles of *epic* which I have endeavoured to exhibit, not the cycles of *legend*. When the epic degenerates into the mere fanciful

romance, still more when the language of the latter sinks into prose, I have no further concern with it. Those who wish to trace the noble old songs into their lowest stages of prosaic degradation, I must refer to Dunlop's "History of Fiction" or such like works. For myself I must confess that with the prose romances of chivalry I have but little patience, and could heartily wish they had all remained in the ashes of Don Quijote's fireplace, from whence even Sir Thomas Mallory would never have deserved to escape without a singeing.

I must indeed conclude by saying that I have no pretensions to bibliographic or other learning; that I write, if not for the many—to whom such a subject is scarcely capable of commending itself now-a-days, yet for all who may be ignorant of that subject, and not for the few who know all about it. To these last I have nothing to tell; though I may say that I have consulted more books in reference to my purpose than I have thought it useful to the reader to refer to, either in notes, or in one of those bibliographical lists *à l'Allemande* or *à la Buckle*, which, unless they embody the results of the exhaustive patience and

almost unerring acumen of a Von Savigny, seem to me generally worth little more than the paper they blacken. On the other hand, as I believe I have never borrowed a fact or an opinion without acknowledgment, whatever critical conclusions I have put forth without such acknowledgment must be considered as arrived at by independent research or reasoning, and where coincident with those of others may perhaps add something to their weight.

And if any should ask what purpose the book is likely to serve, I answer—That our fellow-creatures distant from us in time appear to me as deserving of our sympathy as those distant from us in space,—and that, in an age which is ready to read any book of travels among Feejee Islanders and South African Damaras, a journey back into the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth century of mediæval Europe should not be an altogether unwelcome one. Nay more,—as we should probably wish our descendants some five or six hundred years hence to take some interest in what we now think and feel,—as we should be inclined to deem it beforehand no unprofitable task for them to make themselves acquainted with the various leading works of our

day, those on which the mind of nineteenth century Europe will have especially fed,—so, I venture to think, should we in turn feel some interest in what the men of five or six hundred years ago thought and felt, in the legends and the poems which fed their minds. Perhaps we shall find something to learn from them. Perhaps their rough and artless, and often cumbrous verse may have something to teach ours, so cunning and delicate. Perhaps, if we look closely into it, we may discover that the substance of poetry is there, of which we have too often kept only the garment. Perhaps a single scene from the ‘Nibelungenlied’ or the ‘Song of Roland’ may prove to be worth more than a third or fourth edition of most nineteenth century volumes of poems.

One word more. Though I am solely responsible for the work and for its faults, I should be ungrateful not to acknowledge the valuable information and suggestions which I have received from my friend Professor V. A. Huber of Wernigerode, to whom I would have dedicated these volumes, had I deemed them less unworthy of his learned name.

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PART I.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHAPTER I.

SOME WORDS ON THE GROWTH OF LEGEND.

MANY ponderous tomes of commentary have been compiled on the subject of the legends of the middle ages, and of the popular epics and so-called romances of chivalry into which they eventually shaped themselves. Whence came they? From the far East? from the far West? from the far North? Each hypothesis has had its passionate votaries. They have been by turns Bardic or Runic, Arabic, Teutonic, Aryan. Not less various have been the points of view from which the character of the legends themselves, apart from their origin, has been considered. They have been priceless relics of shattered civilizations; they have been ignorant forgeries of a later age. They have recounted the deeds of strictly historical personages; they have been purely mythical embodiments of religious dogmas, or of nature's mysteries. They have been the creations of the freest, boldest

poetical fancy ; they have been the traditional expression of a strict and secret lore. Perhaps the learned volumes in which each theory is set forth have never carried entire conviction but to those minds which, by the accidents of birth, education, personal investigation, were predisposed to be convinced by them. Probably no impartial man ever rose from the perusal of any, howsoever wearisome in its fanaticism, without feeling that some truth lay at the bottom of the theory it set forth.

The precise filiation of each particular legend is no doubt matter of purely antiquarian research. The modifications which it underwent fall often within the actual domain of history. But the life, growth, power of the legend lie altogether outside of either antiquarian or historical learning. They belong to another sphere, which is that of the simple man and of the wayfarer, as much as of the student. The observation of the ordinary facts of human nature will, in reality, tell us more about those legends than all the volumes of all the libraries.

The babe is scarcely born, so to speak, when the power of measured sound asserts itself over it. Not more instinctively does its yet sightless eye turn towards the light, than does the mother or the nurse use song to hush and soothe it. Peculiar

melodies are those of the nursery ; confined in range, monotonous, repetitive. Too high a note, too various a measure, too bold a modulation, will rouse the child, sometimes with cries, when already half lulled to slumber. Months go by, and the mystery of language begins to unfold itself before him. Strange then is the literature which is first presented to him. Mixed or not with music, the nursery rhymes of all countries offer precisely the same characteristics. They are language so far, that they consist in great measure of words strung together in some grammatical construction. There may be subject, and verb, and predicate. But the result is often either simple no-meaning, or palpable absurdity ; if not in each single sentence, yet at least in the chain of sentences of which the rhyme is composed.

But the child's intellect is growing, and the outward sequency of lines in the nursery rhyme, its "short swallow-flights," to use Mr. Tennyson's expression, of meaning, are begetting the craving for a truer sequency, for a more intelligible use of language. "Tell me a 'tory," becomes now the favourite request of the future man or woman. Most of us know how keen is the appetite thus engendered, how it "grows by what it feeds on." The aliment which it seeks varies according to age

and temperament. At first it is generally satisfied with mere marvels,—including under that name all that transcends the slender experience or knowledge of the little questioner. But the growth of human emotion soon craves for a different food; stories must now turn upon persons rather than upon things. For a long time novelty seems scarcely an ingredient in the listener's pleasure. The same tales will be asked for over and over again, seemingly until his mind becomes absolutely saturated with them. Any curtailment is resented; variation somewhat impatiently borne; but every additional detail is received with the greatest thankfulness. Meanwhile the moral sense comes in, and makes higher demands. The boy asks for tales of battle, of the wit that braves danger, of the courage that bears it down, of strength exerted in the defence of weakness, for the overcoming of injustice. The girl takes rather a painful delight in tales of suffering innocence finally vindicated or avenged.

With the quickening of the intellect a remarkable stage is often, but not always, entered upon. As the child's large beliefs shrink gradually by longer converse with realities,—as giants and fairies, ogres and gnomes, drop out of the circle of his possible future acquaintances,—a relish for mystery and the unravelling of mystery often takes the place

of the past craving for marvels. The lowest form of this feeling is seen in the delight in riddles, charades, puzzles of all kinds; then it shows itself in the practice or invention of secret freemasonries of childish friendship, school languages, finger languages, cyphers, symbols of all kinds, to set the supposed curiosity of the profane world at defiance; sometimes in strange attraction towards all mysteries or pretended mysteries of history or society, from Eleusis to the nearest lodge of Druids or Foresters; sometimes in a passion for allegory, making the Fairy Queen or even Rasselas the most favourite sources of intellectual pleasure—alas! and perhaps models for imitation. About this time perhaps, also, what may be called the genealogical instinct appears, though it often crops out much earlier. Intense is the interest taken by the child in the family; he will listen for hours as you trace up the stock, or as he learns how and where his father and mother's life has been spent, and that of their fathers before them; the visit of the most distant cousin is expected as an event of the gravest importance.

By this period probably the boy or girl is near to that debateable age, between childhood and youth, when vague presentiments of future manhood or womanhood mix already strangely with

all the childishness of the actual child. The genealogical instinct itself is already an earnest of the change. For strange it is, but true, that the social brings forth the individual, that the discovery of his position as a member of a family, and of the depths of meaning of that relation, is precisely that which reveals to the child his true personality, as a creature having to do and feel and suffer that which none other can do and feel and suffer for him,—having, as it were, folded within himself a new family life which seeks to be developed. It is part of this new-felt individuality that the child is probably now his or her own best story-teller. All the past hungers of the fancy may often remain; the craving for adventure, for wonders, even of the most fantastic description; the craving for pathos, conjuring up scenes of torture and even death, often the most dreadful; the craving for moral excellence, often toppling over into the falsest sentimentalism. But a new thread runs through all these various feelings. The hero or heroine is a strange being; the young story-weaver's self at once and yet a creature far higher, nobler than that self,—it may be a quite distinct, even historical personage, into which that self is projected. And by the side of that hero or heroine stands a creature of the other sex, sometimes a trans-

figured person or merely name, sometimes a pure ideal ; the pair, sometimes united, sometimes parted, but emulous of each other's excellence, labours, sufferings, death. These dreams often far precede the very earliest motions of any sexual instinct properly so called ; though generally coincident with physical development, they are often quite unconnected with it ; the day-dreams of youth or maiden in their teens are as prose to them, wild poetry as are these to the realities of after-life.

At an altogether varying period comes in the religious sentiment ; yet perhaps most often about simultaneously with those first love-dreams above mentioned ; sometimes indeed replacing them altogether ; at other times blending with them. But whenever it appears its influence is always most powerful. Religious fervour spurs the youthful imagination in its quests of adventure ; religious persecution adds pathos to its tales of suffering ; religious martyrdom perhaps, in its most secret and cherished fancies, crowns the hero or heroine's glory.

As is the child, so is the child-race ; the history of the fancy's development in the one applies equally to the other. There is no race probably so utterly brutal that some traces of music, in the shape generally of a monotonous chant, cannot

be found among it. Listen to the words mixed with such ; they are generally of the most meaningless or incoherent character, exactly answering to our nursery rhymes. Soon appears, however, the actual tale, saga or legend, as we variously term it in reference to the race ; still utterly uncouth, full of marvels for the most part alike purposeless and incredible. But the human interest mixes with it before long, if not from the first. Human prowess is seen as being itself a marvel ; the great deeds of the warrior, bandit, wanderer, become inexhaustible themes for song and story ; heroes work portents or overcome them ; certain ideals grow up, of commanding power perhaps for the manlier races, of suffering innocence for the more feminine ; the Northern Skald calls the ravens to witness of the strong arm of his Berserk champion ; the Persian story-teller makes his hearers weep over the martyrdom of the Imâms.

And now perhaps,—especially if the tribe or race be divided into groups of different degrees of intellectual development,—dawns the true mythical instinct. Reckon not as such the child-man's first impersonations of material forces, which are but the shapings of his wonder at the marvels of the creation round him. Has your child never asked you whether the tree or the flower was alive ?

have you never found it hard to persuade him that the watch was not? It is the overpowering sense of an ocean of life ever welling and brimming around them, which they cannot trace to its source, that makes the child-races place that source in whatever seems to shew forth a life of its own, and ascribe a person to the thunder and to the storm-wave, to the stream and to the fountain. The marvel is the same for all, there is a common recognition of it; there is no mystery yet between man and man. But soon, by contemplation perhaps of the marvel, some men see, or think they see, deeper into it than others, think perhaps that it is no marvel at all, or merely the cloak of a greater one. And so the marvel turns into the mystery. The same words mean different things to different men; a secret lore becomes the privilege of a few, of a caste, is jealously guarded by them, traditionally handed down. These become subtle to discover hidden meanings, subtle to hide them again in words. It is their boast to tell tales to the vulgar, to the purport of which the vulgar shall have no clue; to clothe their learning or their doctrine in shapes of individual personages, sometimes traditionary heroes of the tribe, sometimes creations of the fancy. In doing so, they are caught in their own inventions; they give out

myths for facts, they come to empty facts of their reality ; the flesh-and-blood creatures whom they have selected as vehicles of their mystic lore fade away into absolute abstractions.

But whilst the wise men,—call them priests, bards, what you will,—are spinning away their brains into cobwebs, the race itself has been growing to adolescence ; it has come to look beyond the wild raid by sea or land, the mighty thrust or buffet in the fight. The sense of its own individuality, continuity, has come upon it. Pride of lineage has sprung up ; genealogy has become a study ; in Arab tent or Afghan hut, the mere beadroll of family names is music to the listener's ear. And in proportion as the feeling of hereditary existence is accompanied by a somewhat more settled state of life, by nobler aims, manners more refined, the love-tale gradually emerges into prominence. Throw in about this period a religious faith more or less ennobling in itself, and which shall not favour one sex at the expense of the other, and you will have ere long the whole rich luxuriance of chivalrous romance. A branch of composition, let us remember, however deeply tinged in our Europe with strictly Christian influences, yet perfectly recognizable in the East, wherever the female sex has not been unduly de-

pressed ; as, for instance, among the Rajpoots of Hindostan, or even amongst races newly converted to Mahomedanism from a faith in which that sex has enjoyed its true dignity, as may be seen in Firdausi. But where the religious faith is strong, as was Christianity in our own middle ages, its reaction upon the romance is most marked. In her severer forms, faith would fain destroy it altogether ; in her subtler, she endeavours to supply its place by fantastic tales of devotion, by all the religious phantasmagoria of the Golden Legend or the Lives of the Saints ; failing this again, she strives to hug it with deadly-loving arms, to penetrate into its vitals, live with its life, grow with its growth, till she has overcome and absorbed it. Such is the history of all romantic-religious fiction, from the twelfth century to the so-called religious novels of our days, and among these, from Dunallan to the latest Anglo-catholic novelet. But apart from this conscious deliberate action of the faith on the romance, which is seldom satisfactory either in its handywork or in its results, there is an unconscious involuntary one which is pregnant with noble effect ; which instead of lowering the faith to the romance is always drawing the romance upward toward the faith, and working out in its heroes

whatever of righteousness, gentleness, purity, self-sacrifice is contained in that faith itself.

Such then is the story, I take it, of middle age epic and romance, with its outgrowths to the present day. At the first, a core of real history, as connected with the deeds of some traditionary hero, mixed up with whatever portents and marvels come within the range of credibility for the race and age; the tale swelling as it is told, with as easy credence and unconcealed delight on the listener's part as any child's tale does amongst ourselves at this day; connecting itself with genealogies and family traditions; seized upon perhaps by bards and mystics as a vehicle or storehouse of secret lore, charged by them with new meanings, carried into new and wilful developments to serve their purpose; flowering out into romances of love with the adolescence of the race; twisted aside by monkish ingenuity into ecclesiastical or semi-ecclesiastical channels, but by penetration of a nobler faith reaching to ideals of chivalrous purity and magnanimity. True it is, that by the side of its noblest aspirations you will find threads, or rather gutters of unutterable filth. True it is, that its pathos runs into sentimentalism, its purity into affectation,—exactly in the same manner, dear reader, as those stories with which you used to lull yourself to sleep

when a child. Yet we must not judge aims by deeds, but deeds by aims; and there must have been a strange power in those old legends to have fastened the hold they have upon the mind of Europe,—so that three centuries after the burning of Don Quijote's library, the worn-out tale of Arthur and Merlin, of Lancelot and Guinevere, shall still supply the theme, in matter-of-fact, calico-printing, steam-ploughing, Enfield-rifle-shooting England, for new masterpieces to a great poet.

It is observable of these poems, at least of almost all the earlier ones, that they have come down to us without the names of their authors, in copies perpetually varying amongst themselves. For they were essentially *sung* poetry,—sung long before written,—varied no doubt perpetually, now and then by the first composer himself, and still more by those who only repeated his songs at second-hand, according to the tenacity of their memory, the circumstances under which they had to sing, the inspiration of the moment. Travelling from castle to castle, the minstrel always sought as far as possible to interweave local traditions and reminiscences into his song; but the glory of his host of to-night would be the shame of him of to-morrow; the conquering race would ill brook an eulogy on the virtues of the conquered; the con-

quered would take small pleasure in the tale of their defeats. Hence (amongst other causes) that strange variety of text, which I have mentioned as characterizing almost all of these poems. Another similar feature, which however more particularly marks the French ones, consists in frequent repetitions of the same incident or speech, with slight modifications. Between texts thus varying not only amongst themselves, but in themselves, it is often far from easy to discern the true thread of the narrative ; and I crave pardon beforehand if in the following pages I should prove to have failed sometimes in seizing it.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT CYCLES OF MIDDLE AGE ROMANCE.

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL, at the outset of the eighth Lecture of his course on "Ancient and Modern Literature," enumerates three great cycles of fables and histories as having served for subjects to the poems of chivalry in the middle ages. The first cycle, "formed of the Sagas of the Gothic, Frankish, and Burgundian heroes, from the time of the migration of the (barbarian) races," supplies the contents of the German 'Nibelungenlied' and 'Heldenbuch,' but comprises also a large portion of the heroic legend of the earlier 'Edda,' with one or two later Sagas besides. This cycle, as he truly observes, has at best a groundwork of history, and links itself closely with the old heathenish past and its legends of the gods. The second cycle is the French one; its chief subject is Charlemagne, and more particularly his war against the Arabs, the fight at Roncevaux, and the glory of the great

heroes united round him. The third cycle is the British one, that of King Arthur and his Round Table.

This classification, true in the main, is perhaps not quite exhaustive. The Spanish 'Chronicle of the Cid,' which indeed Schlegel presently mentions, although possessing much in common with the Carlovingian cycle, forms yet, with its later developments in the 'Romancero', a distinct though subordinate Spanish cycle. It has congeners, moreover, in other crusade poems properly so-called, although these may not have developed into a complete cycle. Whilst quite beyond these three quasi-historical cycles lie two others of pure fancy; one, the theological, turning chiefly on visions of hell or heaven, or both, such as the legends of the purgatory of St. Brandan or St. Patrick, and which culminates in Dante's masterpiece: the other, the satirical, mainly growing out of the Flemish Beast-epic, as it may be called, which Goethe in our own days has modernized in his 'Reineke Fuchs.'

Of these various cycles, the only one with which we may be said to be tolerably familiar is the British one, and, through Dante alone, the religious. Still, though the Norse-German cycle is far from being thoroughly known or sufficiently appreciated in this country, yet what knowledge of it exists

is true knowledge, and presents the legend in all its genuine features of pathos and of horror. The second or French cycle labours under the misfortune of being very well misknown, through its later and caricatured developments, such as they are presented to us by the Italian poets, and more especially in Ariosto's 'Orlando Furioso.' Schlegel himself was entirely misled on this subject by the paucity of information then existing upon it, and builds up a theory in respect to it which is wholly unsupported by facts. The Carlovingian tales, he says, "soon stray very far away from truth; the real hero was changed into an idle ruler, similar to those of the south. This may have partly arisen from the fact that the Normans, who especially cultivated this kind of poetry, represented Charles to themselves, amid all the glory which surrounded his name, in similar relations to those in which they found the inactive monarchs of old France on his throne in their time." Now with one signal exception indeed, the 'Song of Roland,' it is remarkable that none of the leading French epics appear to be of Norman composition;* and the

* "It may be remarked in conclusion that these Carlovingian romances appear never to have enjoyed a great popularity in mediæval England, or even among the Normans. . . . We believe that, with the exception of the *Chanson de Roland*, there is no known MS. of any of the *Chansons de Geste* written in the

excepted one, to the confusion of Schlegel's theory, is full of the most perfect reverence for the name of the great emperor. Moreover, a recent writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' expresses what I believe to be now the more generally received opinion, in saying that when we examine carefully the early French epic poetry, we can hardly doubt "that it is that very poetry of the old Frankish race which Charlemagne sought to preserve in its original form, but of which he became not the preserver but the hero, after it had gone through a great metamorphosis in style and form."* Thus the subjects of the early epics would belong not to the Carolingian, but to the Merovingian era: and if we could suppose the form of the poems to have come to us unchanged, the *rois fainéants* whom they may exhibit would not be, as Schlegel imagines, the later Carolingians, but those late Merovingians whom the energetic house of Pepin of Héristal supplanted.† But no one has ventured to assign

Norman or Anglo-Norman dialect."—*Edinb. Review*, No. 234, for April 1862. The latter assertion is however incorrect, as witness M. Michel's edition of 'Charlemagne,' hereafter to be noticed, besides various other MSS., generally however of a late date.

* *Edinburgh Review*, U.S.

† There is one poem indeed of the cycle which somewhat answers to Schlegel's hypothesis, 'Raoul de Cambrai,' in which figures the late Carolingian Louis d'Outremer.

to the oldest of these poems which we now possess a date earlier, as respects its actual form, than the Capetian era, whilst that one, as before observed, is remarkable for its tone of loyalty. Thus, if indeed there soon sets in through these popular epics a current of evident dislike towards the royal name, and a tendency to depreciate the royal personages,—viewed in connexion with the facts of the time, the probabilities are that this represents feelings not of contempt for lazy Carlovingians of the past, but on the contrary, of distrust towards stirring Capetians of the present, in whom the feudal chiefs of France had hoped to find merely a change of puppets, and were more and more obliged to recognize a new race of masters. A large portion of the cycle,—which must yet bear the title of Carlovingian, since the name of Charlemagne lies at its centre,—consists thus of poems representing the protest of feudalism against royalty, and is occupied with the deeds of heroes real or mythical (Gerard of Roussillon for instance) who wage war against the Carlovingian monarchs. As royalty grows stronger, such glorifications of rebellious heroes are in turn proscribed; but it is then too late to recal the old reverence for Charlemagne itself; and so the cycle assumes the purely fantastic, more or less grotesque character which has been pointed out.

But this modification in its political spirit is not the only one which the popular epic undergoes. Both in the Norse-German and in the Carlovingian cycles, a vast difference is visible between the earlier and the later groups, in respect to the relation between the sexes. In the earlier groups love holds but small room; deeds of warfare are the poet's main subject; women may figure prominently in his work, but rather as fierce heroines or faithful wives than as beloved mistresses. In the latter group sentiment begins to prevail above action, and with sentiment, fancy. The subjects are drawn from the land of romance rather than from the field of tradition; from foreign rather than from domestic sources; a certain ideal has sprung up, which can no longer well consort even with current local traditions. Siegfried and Dietrich, Charlemagne the great emperor and his peerless nephew Roland, glide into purely legendary shapes; then a yet more absolute monarch of fancy, King Arthur of the Round Table, takes his place. To this, the third cycle enumerated by Schlegel, belong poems of wonderful beauty and pathos or even thoughtful depth, such as two of the French 'Tristans', or the German 'Parcival;' but in life-like vigour and freshness they are far from equaling those of the former cycles.

We have not indeed anywhere a continuous series of samples illustrating the growth of the epic. But the short poems of the older Edda, as compared with the Nibelungenlied and its cognate epics, shew clearly how songs devoted to some particular event or adventure,—ballads as we now improperly call them,—form the foundation of the epical structure; how these are first merely collected together, like mere cairns of heaped-up stones,—then bound together in one continuous narration, like those same stones cemented into an actual wall or other work of masonry. The French cycle shews more especially how the actual epic again expands and develops itself; either by outward accretion, so to speak, in the shape of continuation or preliminary narration; or by inward increase, as each successive age intercalates new scenes and descriptions, or touches up the old ones with new details. Again, a period is visible everywhere, when, the interest of the tale having outgrown the language in which it was first told, the poem has to be modernized. The French Carolingian epics of the thirteenth century, for instance, are to a great extent attempts at renovating the older ones.

Meanwhile Prose, Poetry's limpfoot but steady-paced sister, has gradually been coming up with the latter. Even while engaged in changing her

costume, Prose pounces upon Poetry as she stands halted, and proceeds to put her own livery upon her. From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century in France,—from a somewhat later period in Germany and England,—the older poems are sedulously ‘done into prose’; some only survive in that form. The novel, in the shape of the so-called “romance of chivalry,” has killed the poem; and killed it so utterly and entirely, that when in the sixteenth century the immortal chronicler of the *hidalgo* of La Mancha proceeds to burn the huge pile which by this time has grown up of prose romantic fiction, he shows no symptom of having ever suspected the presence of the lovely corpse that lay smothered beneath. What charms indeed even the prose romance may yet retain, many of us well know. Grown men will tell you how the purchase, when in their teens, of some stray volume of Sir Thomas Mallory at a London bookstall was to them as the opening of a new world,—that same Sir Thomas Mallory whose crude farrago of incongruous materials is, to those who only approach it after some acquaintance with the originals, one of the most unbearable of travesties.

But Prose never wholly kills Poetry. Every really popular epic-cycle leaves traces behind it in popular verse. As the epic grew up out of

songs, so it resolves itself into songs again. Look behind the dreary brick or rather mud wall of prose fiction, and you will find the separate stones of the shattered epic temple still discoverable, often carved into new and shapely forms. The Norse-German epic inspires more than one beautiful Danish ballad ; the Spanish 'Romancero' is full of Carlovingian and Arthurian subjects ; the popular songs of Brittany retain many a trace of the Arthurian legend.

PART II.

THE NORSE-GERMAN CYCLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE NORSE-GERMAN CYCLE AND ITS SOURCES.

THE Norse-German Cycle, although, as I have said, the earliest of the three leading ones, yet extends in point of time over a greater space than any of the others ; since, although its earliest works appear assignable to the eighth century, we find poems belonging to it, with considerable traces of the epical character in them, composed as late as the fourteenth century, or even (if we reckon the 'Horned Siegfried') the fifteenth ; whilst at the end of the fifteenth century a large portion of the cycle is collected together, and, without destroying the individual character of the poems composing it, shortened (a solitary instance, so far as I am aware, in the annals of middle-age epics), in the 'Heldenbuch' or 'Book of Heroes' of Kaspar von der Roen (1472) ; and again, the legends which compose it in their later form, appear to have flowered up locally into a new poetical life in the Danish

ballads of the thirteenth and following centuries. Hence it has happened that, without putting on, like the Carolingian cycle, the garb of Italian travesty, the Norse-German one has actually lived on to the present day in popular use through some of its more legendary developments; since in the ballad form it extends still from Iceland, the Feroe Islands, Sweden and Denmark, throughout Germany.

On the other hand, if we measure the influence of the cycle by space instead of time, we shall find that that influence has been almost strictly confined, within the limits of its title, to the Teutonic race, in its two great branches, the German or Teuton-proper, and the Gothic. At the period when the cycle grew up indeed, that race spread nearly over the whole of Gaul, as well as Northern Italy, to say nothing of Spain, and until the establishment of the second Hunnic or Hungarian kingdom in the tenth century, must have remained scattered in much greater numbers than it is now to the East of the present German frontier. But from thence to the present time, the sphere of the Norse-German cycle seems to have gone on narrowing rather than increasing, as have done the other cycles; and it is only within the present century that it has begun to react upon other races, or even upon so note-

worthy an offshoot of the Teutonic race itself as our own.

Weber's 'Illustrations of Northern Antiquities' (Edinburgh, 1814) was, I believe, the first work which introduced the Norse-German cycle of epics to the English reader; although one of the poems of the Edda which belong to it had already been translated by the Hon. Mr. Herbert, afterwards Dean of Manchester. Weber's work is however so utterly uncritical, that I fear it has only tended to mislead later writers, such as Mr. Carlyle. It never exhibits any choice of texts; makes no distinctions of comparative antiquity, but leads up from the more modern to the more ancient in a manner most bewildering to the reader; and shews almost as little sense of poetical merit as of historic character. I have ventured on this account to abstract in the following pages some of the poems already abstracted by Weber, believing that the difference of texts, and of position in the series, will give a value to such matter even for those who may happen to possess already Weber's indeed not very commonly found work.

With the religious element in the cycle I shall not deal, but refer the reader to Grimm's 'Deutsche Mythologie.' No part of the epic value of the story, so far as I know, turns upon the connexion of the

hero Sigurd with any of the gods of the Norse Pantheon; he is exhibited to us as a Christian in the later forms of the legend. The main core of historic fact and interest in these, which constitute the German, and more properly speaking epical portion of the cycle, lies, I take it, in the tradition of the great struggle between the Hunnic and Teuto-Gothic races in the fourth and fifth centuries, including the overthrow of Attila by Aetius, at the head of the Goths and Franks, near Chalons, toward 450. But the Hun conquest is made contemporary with the next latest great name of Gothic tradition, Theodoric, king of Italy, later than Attila by half a century (born 442, defeats Odoacer ~~480~~, dies 526), himself probably confounded with the West-Goth Theodoric, Attila's contemporary, who perished at the battle of Chalons; and the story is mixed up with tales out of the Norse legend of Sigurd, who may either have been a man or a myth.

Viewed indeed either historically or artistically, the cycle seems to represent the fusion of four, which in reference to their ultimate amalgamation may be termed sub-cycles. Two of these may be looked upon as Gothic, but representing two far-distant realms of Gothic settlement: one seems distinctly West-German; the last is of doubtful origin. First comes the North-Gothic or proper

Norse one of Sigurd (the Sifrit-Siegfried of the Germans), whose name is indeed connected in the later legend with the Netherlands, but who seems to me a true Norse hero. This sub-cycle, however, blends almost at once with the German one of Gunnar (Gunther) and Hagn (Hagen), known, it would seem, originally (though the term comes to be very variously applied) as the Niflungs (Nibelungen). The origin of this seems distinctly to be on the Rhine. According to an early poem of the sub-cycle, preserved to us in monkish Latin ('Walthar of Aquitain'), these Niflungs or Niblungs were Franks of the Rhine. Even in the Norse Edda, the connexion of the two intermingled cycles with this tract of country is shewn by the magic sleep of one of its heroines, Brynhild, among the Franks; and there have not wanted writers who have sought to identify her and her lover Sigurd with the 'Brunehaut' and 'Sigebert' of Merovingian history. Without insisting on the weight of local tradition, it may be added that the legendary seat of Gunther's realm (the city of Worms and its neighbourhood) is still full of recollections of Siegfried and his bride Chriemhild or Kriemhilt.

In its simplest shape, the legend of these two combined sub-cycles resolves itself into the story of a Norse sea-rover marrying the sister of a chief

whose wife he had himself courted in former days, and perishing through the resentment of the latter. So viewed, there is nothing which need be unhistorical about its origin. If we suppose the sea-rover to have sailed or rowed up the Rhine, he would in the fifth century have met on its banks the Riparian Franks. Coming thither from the Netherlands, we may understand how the Sifrit of later days came to be treated as a prince of that country. If latterly the Frankish chiefs his murderers were treated as Burgundians, it would be because the name of Gunnar-Gunther was chiefly recollected as the royal name of that tribe.

The sub-cycles of Sigurd-Sifrit and Gunnar-Gunther, then, interweave themselves with that of Atla-Etzel (*i. e.* Attila)—whether Gothic or German, it would be difficult to say. In one form of the legend, the point of contact, which is very probably historical, lies in the well-known practice of the Hun conqueror, of retaining near him the sons of tributary chiefs as hostages, and in the escape from his court of Hagen, a relative or dependent of the Frankish king, Gunther. Although this connexion never entirely disappears from the legend, a more prominent one is supplied in other versions by the marriage of Sigurd-Sifrit's widow with the king of the Huns himself, followed by the destruction of

her family at his court. But this event, and the character of the conqueror, are quite differently treated in the Norse and German forms of the legend. In the former, Atla is still the ferocious Attila of history; the Niblungs perish through his treachery; and their sister—here called Gudrun—remains devotedly attached to her brothers, even to the extent of destroying her own children by Atla. In the German version, on the contrary, it is through the treachery of Kriemhilt their sister (the name itself being in the North applied to Gudrun's mother) and in revenge for Sifrit her first husband's death, that the Niblungs, or Burgundians, come to their death; whilst Etzel-Attila becomes the most kindly and good-tempered of sovereigns. How this marked discrepancy should have arisen, I cannot venture to pronounce; but there are historical indications that the tale of Kriemhilt's treachery to her brothers was current at an early period, and Hungarian tradition alleges that Attila had a German wife of that name.

Lastly comes the sub-cycle, which must have been originally South-Gothic, of Dietrich-Theodoric of Bern-Verona; a personage kept indeed in political subordination to Etzel-Attila, but represented as the main-stay of his power, and who in the later German legend is exhibited as finally triumphing

over the Niblungs-Burgundians, whilst in its latest forms he is even exalted above the semi-mythic Sifrit himself. Strange to say, this sub-cycle, apparently the latest in its origin, is among the earliest of which a genuine fragment is preserved, in the 'Lay of Hildebrand', ascribed by Gervinus to the eighth century (though I shall hereafter give reasons for doubting its extreme antiquity), and which, whilst preserving the memory of the enmity between Theodoric and Odoacer, shews the former already as subordinate to the king of the Huns. It is no less remarkable, as shewing the wide extension of the sub-cycle even at an early period, that the fragment should have been found so far north as Fulda, in the heart of what was once Austrasian France. Latterly indeed Dietrich appears to have grown up into the typical German, or more properly Suabian hero of the age of chivalry, and finds his way as such both into the Danish ballads and the later prose sagas of the north; retaining always something of that sluggish character which is characteristic of the Suabian,—perhaps himself the most fitting type of the whole German people.

The mingling of these various sub-cycles, seemingly incongruous, when running together in the great German epic of the 'Nibelungenlied' or 'Lay of the Niblungs,' towards the end of the twelfth or

beginning of the thirteenth century, forms a legend of great dramatic power, in which the passion of love, though recognized, assumes yet a singularly fearful and in part repulsive shape. Besides two or three poems of somewhat doubtful position in the series, the 'Book of Heroes,' stretching over another century or more, exhibits various personages or portions of the legend in the garb of the (poetic) romance of chivalry properly so-called.

CHAPTER II.

TRACES OF THE NORSE-GERMAN CYCLE IN THE ANGLO-SAXON.

THE most complete collection of testimonies relating to the Norse-German cycle is to be found in Grimm's 'Deutsche Heldensage' (Göttingen, 1829), which I have largely made use of in the following pages; though even this may be usefully supplemented by M. Amédée Thierry's admirable 'Histoire d'Attila et de ses successeurs, jusqu'à l'établissement des Hongrois en Europe' (Paris, 1856). Suffice it to say that the fact of the existence of a class of minstrels who sang the great deeds of warriors is testified to by Priscus at the court of the historic Attila in the middle of the fifth century, by Jornandes among the Goths in the middle of the sixth, whilst in the ninth Eginhard records the writing down of such "barbarous and *most ancient* songs" by order of Charlemagne.* Again, the

* Barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus veterum regum actus et bella canebantur.—*Eginh. Vita Karoli M.*, c. 29.

‘Chronicle of Quedlinburg,’ written at the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries, speaks of king Theodoric, popularly called “Thideric de Berne,” of whom the country folk sang in former days (*de quo cantabant rustici olim*). Thus we have historic evidence, 1st, That in the fifth and sixth centuries there was among the Huns and Goths a mass of popular heroic poetry; 2nd, That in the ninth there were extant some “most ancient songs” in the “barbarous” tongues; 3rd, That some time before the end of the tenth “Thideric de Berne” was a popular hero.*

Perhaps the earliest poetical trace of the legend afterwards connected with Sigurd, is found in our Anglo-Saxon ‘Beowulf’, a poem deemed at latest of the ninth century, but which is itself in all probability, as Mr. Thorpe has conjectured,† a mere Anglo-Saxon and Christianized paraphrase of an old heathen saga, composed in the South-west of Sweden, and brought over to England during the sway of her Danish kings—or according to Mr. Kemble, with her early Saxon invaders.‡ But

* Grimm indeed is so sceptical as to the historical character of the personages in the legend, that he believes the mythical Dietrich to be older than the real Theodoric, and will not even admit the identity of Atla and Etzel.

† See Preface to his edition. J. H. Parker, 1855.

‡ I have not thought it necessary to abstract Beowulf, although the oldest popular middle age epic extant, both as being probably

what the later legend relates of Sigurd, Beowulf attributes to his father Sigmund. A thane at king Hrothgar's court, whose memory is stored with songs and old sagas, tells of "Sigemund" the Wœlsing, his battles and wide journeyings, his wars and fights, which, it is said, the children of men did not well know of, except Fitela his nephew, who was with him. "To Sigemund sprang—after death's day—glory no little—since battle-hardy—he the worm slew—the hoard's guardian.—He under a hoar stone—an etheling's bairn—alone ventured—the bold deed ;—Fitela was not with him,—yet it chanced him—that his sword went through—the wondrous worm,—that in the wall stood—the noble iron ;—the drake murdered perished. The unlucky had—by daring gained—that he the ring-hoard—might enjoy—at his own pleasure." Of Sigmund it is then said that he was "of wanderers—by far the greatest—throughout the human race ;" but that after thriving at first he was at last betrayed to the Jutes, who are treated as his enemies. This conflict with a "worm" or dragon is apparently that fight with the dragon Fafnir, which holds so conspicuous a place in the Edda among the exploits of Sigurd ; the title of "Wœlsing" or "son of the best known among us, and as having really but slight poetic value in itself ; besides that (except in the passages alluded to) it stands almost entirely detached from all the great poetic cycles.

Wølse" given to Sigmund, being evidently his and Sigurd's family name of "Volsung," recorded in the Norse; whilst the "Fitela" of Beowulf is to be recognized in the "Sinfjötli" of the Volsunga saga. Whether therefore we attribute Beowulf to the ninth, or with Mr. Kemble to the fifth century, or with Grimm to the eighth, or perhaps the seventh, we have in it proof that at the period when it was composed, the legend of Sigurd properly so-called had not gained currency. It is clear, however, that Mr. Kemble rated too high the antiquity of the poem when he attributed it to the fifth century. For there seems no reason to doubt that the king Hygelac spoken of in it is the Chochilaic or Chôhilag of Gregory of Tours, and of the '*Gesta Regum Francorum*,'—a Danish king who invaded Gaul in the days of Theuderic son of Clovis, consequently in the sixth century. But the poem relates the death of Hygelac, his being succeeded by his son Heardred, then of tender age, and Beowulf's ascending to the throne himself, and dying at a great age after a conflict with a dragon. The story of the poem therefore may be taken to comprise a period of about half a century, which would carry us to the very close of the sixth. But the fabulous details of the poem, such as the dragon-fight with which it concludes, entirely preclude us from as-

signing it to a contemporary, or even to the son of a contemporary, of the hero. The least interval we can allow for its composition will probably be a century. This would bring it down to the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century,—the latter being apparently the date adopted by the German commentators. And I am inclined to think, from evidence which will be presently considered, that such is its real date.

A story of Sigmund and his conflict with a treasure-watching dragon was then current in Southern Sweden about the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth century. But it is expressly stated that Sigmund's deeds were "much unknown;" that the children of men "well knew not" of his "wide journeyings," "his warfare and his crimes." The presumption is therefore that at this time the legend of Sigmund was a comparatively new one. The modifications which that legend subsequently underwent must therefore be referred to a period posterior say to 680 or 700. But in addition to the above passage as to Sigmund, Beowulf speaks also of another personage, prominent in the later development of the cycle, Hama, the Heim or Heime of the Germans, and connects him with Eormenic-Hermanaric, in a manner which serves to throw light upon a poem

of the Edda, and to bring this in turn in connexion with a passage in the historian Jornandes, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter. In mentioning moreover the "Wylfingas" or Wolfings, it records the stock of another personage of the legend, Dietrich's chief follower, "Master Hildebrand."

And now we may observe that some of the names connected with the legend in its subsequent form occur in the so-called 'Scop or Gleeman's Tale.' This is usually printed, and is viewed by Grimm as contemporary with Beowulf, but belongs evidently I should say (though Mr. Guest in the 'Penny Cyclopædia' takes a directly opposite view) to a much later date. There is a parade of learning in it, including references to Alexander, Cæsar, and the Greeks, the Israelites, the "Ex Syrings" (Assyrians), Hebrews, Egyptians, Medes and Persians, quite foreign to the rough simplicity of Beowulf, and belonging apparently to a period subsequent to the diffusion of learning in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon, which may be said to have begun under Alfred. The very earliest period to which it can, I think, be ascribed, is quite the close of the sixth century, since it speaks of Ælfwine (Alboin) king of the Lombards, who died in 573. But, if I am right in my inference from its style of composition, it is rather to be referred to

the tenth century. Here then we meet with the name of Ætla (Attila), who ruled the Huns; Hagen (Hagen), Eormanric (Hermanric), who ruled the Goths, Gifica the Burgundians. The name of "Hama" occurs again, and this time in connexion with that of "Wudga," a personage who under the name of "Wittich" becomes prominent in the later legend, and is constantly associated with "Heime;" it also names "Sifeka,"—apparently the traitor 'Sibeche' of the legend of Dietrich. Again, the poet says he was "with the Burgundians,—there I a ring received—there me Guthhere gave—a welcome present—in reward of song—that was no sluggish king;" and he equally celebrates the generosity of Eormanric.* But no legend is connected with these personages in the poem.

From these various indications in the Anglo-Saxon poems it is to be inferred that, at a period which may be reckoned from the seventh to the tenth centuries, various of the personages in the Norse-German cycle were familiarly known to Western minstrels.

* Of course, if this passage were to be taken literally, it would prove the gleeman to have been a contemporary of the princes referred to. But as he speaks also of "Ælfwine" from alleged personal acquaintance, it is impossible to treat any of his statements as genuine. The "Guthhere" he speaks of is however probably the true Burgundian Gunther, not the Frank chief of the same name spoken of in the 'Waltharius.'

CHAPTER III.

WALTHAR OF AQUITAIN.

I SHOULD reckon as probably nearly contemporary with the 'Scop's tale' the curious Latin poem of 'Waltharius,' or 'Walter of Aquitain,' which Fauriel ascribes to the eighth or ninth century, Grimm and Schmeller (whose edition of the poem in their 'Lateinische Gedichte des x. und xi. J. H.', Gottingen, 1838, is the one I shall refer to) to the tenth; the earliest MS. belonging, according to the German writers, to the beginning of the twelfth century, although they do not consider that any subsisting text is good or old enough to be taken as a standard. The peculiarity of this work is that although epical, it is clearly not itself a *popular* epic; it is composed in a learned language, and apparently simply as a literary exercise;* written by a monk,

* In one MS. a passage occurs giving "Gerald" as the name of the author, and "bishop Erckambald" as that of the person for whom it was composed. It has been concluded by French writers

dedicated to a monk. But it is impossible not to see in it the attempt to Latinize an already existing legend of the vernacular traditions. Though Sigurd-Sifrit is not referred to, three of the leading personages of the Norse-German cycle—Attila the king of the Huns, Gunther, Hagen—figure prominently in it; and the legend is distinctly connected with the later ‘Nibelungenlied’ by repeated allusions to it in the latter. I shall give a short abstract of its contents.

The empire of the Huns had already lasted for more than a thousand years, when Attila (who in one MS. is already called “Etcilo”) invaded the Franks ruled over by Gibicho,* to whom had recently been born a son named Gunthar. By the advice of his council, Gibicho determines to pay tribute and give hostages; but his son Gunthar being too young, he sends in his place a noble youth named Hagan, with an immense treasure. The Huns next attack the Burgundians, whose king Heric has an only daughter, the beautiful

that this “Gerald” was a monk of Fleury on the Loire, and that “Erckambald” was “Archimbald,” administrator of the see of Strasburg about 970. Grimm cannot make up his mind about the authorship, but shews sufficiently that Gerald, whoever he was, was not a monk of Fleury.

* The ‘Scop’s tale,’ as we have seen, mentions Gifica as ruling over the Burgundians.

Hiltgunt (Hildegund). Surprised by the enemy, Herric shuts himself up in Chalons, but calling together all the elders, proposes that since the Franks, who are so much stronger, have yielded, they should do the like, and offer to give his only daughter for hostage. This being done, Attila receives his envoys "mildly, as was his wont," and taking away with him "the fairest gem of her parents," with treasures unnumbered, turns toward the West, where Alphere reigns over the Aquitanians, having an only son, Walthar, already affianced to Hildegund; he has in turn to pay tribute and give up his son as a hostage.

Attila, returning to his capital, shews the utmost kindness to his hostages, has them brought up as his own children, and handing the girl over to the queen, has the boys always in his sight, and causes them to be instructed in all warlike and intellectual arts, till already they surpass all the Huns; the maiden likewise is entrusted with the care of all the treasures, "and there wants but little that she should reign herself." Meanwhile however the news comes of Gibicho's death, and of Gunthar's succeeding to him; on learning which, Hagan makes his escape by night. Warned by his flight, the queen suggests to Attila that he should marry Walthar (who is greatly distinguishing himself at

the head of the Huns) to a Hunnish maiden. Walthar declares himself unworthy of such an honour, and urges that if married he might neglect his military duties, declaring that nothing is so sweet to him as for ever to be busy in the faithful service of his lord. The king is lulled by his words, which seem ere long confirmed by a signal victory of the army under Walthar's leadership over a revolted people. On his return however,—after answering in few words the enquiries of the courtiers,—Walthar, going straight to the king's chamber, finds there Hildegund alone, and speaks to her on the subject of their betrothal, hitherto untouched between them. She deems him at first to be merely mocking her. He protests; declares that he is weary of their exile, anxious to escape, and would have fled ere this, but that it grieved him to leave Hildegund alone. 'Let my lord command,' she replies; 'I am ready for his love to bear evil hap or good.' He then bids her, as she has the care of the treasure, take out for him a helmet, a coat of mail, a breastplate; fill two chests with Hunnish (money) rings till she can scarce lift either to her bosom, place four pair of sandals (or gaiters) on the top, with fish-hooks; and let all be ready in a week. He on his part on the seventh day will give a grand feast to the king, his nobles, his chiefs,

and all his household, and will endeavour with all his mind to "bury them in drink," till none shall know what happens. Let Hildegund meanwhile spare her wine, scarce quench her thirst, and when all the party are helpless, then they will hasten to westward.

The feast is given. Walthar presses the wine and food on the guests. When the dishes are cleared and the tables taken away, he hands to the king a splendid carved goblet full of wine, which the king empties at a draught, and orders all to follow his example. Full cups are brought on all sides, and are returned empty. "Hot drunkenness soon rules in all the hall;" the heroes stagger, and are all fairly floored at last, so that if any one had set fire to the house there would have remained none who could have known the cause. Walthar now calls Hildegund, and takes out of the stable his noble war-horse, which he called 'Lion' for his courage. The two chests are hung on either side, with a small provision of food for the journey; the damsel takes the flowing reins. He puts on himself his armour; on his left thigh a two-edged sword, a single-edged Hunnish one on his right, the spear in his right hand, the shield in his left; while with the reins, the maiden holds also a fishing-rod. They flee all night; but during the day

they hide in the dark woods; every breath, every bird makes the maid tremble; they avoid the villages, the fair cornfields, following by-ways, rounding their course by "unshorn" mountains. Meanwhile the Huns have woken up from their drunken sleep; the king has asked for Walthar, but he cannot be found; the queen misses Hildegund, and soon sees that her fears lest Walthar should follow Hagan's example have been realized. The pillar of the empire, she cries, is fallen; Walthar is gone and Hildegund with him. The king is at first bewildered; anger will not suffer him to speak; for the whole day he can neither eat nor drink, nor can he sleep at night. On the morrow he offers enormous gifts to any one who will bring him back Walthar bound; but none dares to venture on such an errand.

Walthar still pursues his flight, feeding on the birds of the wood, the fishes of the streams, full of respect always for the maiden. On the fourteenth day at even he reaches the Rhine, not far from Worms. To the ferryman he gives in payment fishes which he had previously caught, and still hastens on. On the morning the ferryman goes into the city, and sells the fish to the king's cook, who dresses and sets them before the king. The latter declares that there are no such fishes in

France; who can have brought them? The ferryman is summoned, and relates his ferrying over of the armed warrior, and the fair maiden, and the strong war-horse with the two chests. Hagan, who sate at table, joyfully exclaims, 'Congratulate me on the news, it is Walthar my comrade returning from the Huns.' 'Congratulate me,' retorts the king, 'on having lived till now; the Almighty sends me back Gibicho's treasure.' Leaping up, he orders his horse to be brought, and taking with him twelve of his bravest chiefs, besides Hagan, who seeks in vain to dissuade him, he goes in search of the stranger.

Walthar, journeying from the Rhine, has reached the forest of the Vosges, "wont to resound with hounds and horns." Here, between two hills standing close together, is a pleasant cave, not hollowed out in the earth, but made by the beetling of the rocks; a fit haunt for bloodthirsty robbers, carpeted with green grass. Walthar espying it carries in it to rest; for since his escape from the Huns he had known no sleep but leaning on his shield, scarcely closing his eyes. Now, putting off his heavy armour, he places his head on the maiden's lap, bidding her look around, and wake him with a gentle touch if she see a black cloud, but not to rouse him suddenly, even should she see

a vast troop, since her pure eyes may view from hence afar. So saying, he closed his bright eyes, and enjoyed the longed-for rest.

But Gunthar had seen his track in the dust, and spurring on his horse, urges his companions on. Hagan warns him that if he had seen Walthar in his fury as often as himself, he would not deem him so easy to despoil. They approach; Hildegund perceives a dust-cloud, and gently rouses Walthar, who puts on his armour. When they are near, she deems them to be Huns, and falling at his feet, implores him, as she was not worthy to share his bed, that he will cut her head off with his sword, lest she should belong to any other. "Should I be stained with innocent blood?" he asks; "how could my sword destroy my foes, if it spared not now so faithful a friend?... He who brought me oft out of sundry dangers, He can now, believe it, confound here our enemies." Then lifting up his eyes, he exclaims that these are not the Huns, but "Franci nebulones"—which the German editors translate "the *Niblung* Franks"—and recognizing Hagan's helmet, points it out with a laugh to his companion. Going now to the entrance of the encampment he speaks a "proud word," that no Frank shall ever thence returning presume to tell his wife that he has taken ought of

the treasure unpunished,—then falls to the ground and asks forgiveness for having thus spoken. Examining the newcomers, he declares that he fears no one but Hagan, who knows his mode of warfare, and is subtle ; should he escape his wiles, then “I am rescued from the fight for thee, Hildegund, my betrothed.”

Hagan now advises a parley, in case Walthar should be ready to give up the treasure without bloodshed. Camelo, prefect of Metz, is sent to him, and asks who he is, and whence and whither going? On his reply, Camelo summons him to give up his horse, the two chests and the maiden, on which conditions the king will grant him his life. Walthar charges him with folly; is the king a god, to grant him life? has he touched him with his hands, drawn him from a prison, twisted his chained hands behind his back? Yet if he will let him go, he will send him a hundred armlets of red metal. Hagan advises the king to accept the offer; he had an evil dream last night, of a bear which tore off one of the king's legs in conflict, and put out one of Hagan's own eyes when he came to the king's aid. The king reproaches him with being as great a coward as his father, who never liked battle. Hagan, justly wroth, declares that he will share neither the fight nor the spoils; they have

their opponent before them; he will look on. So saying, he climbs a neighbouring hill, and descending from his horse sits down to look on.

Walthar's encampment was such that one enemy alone could attack him abreast. It is needless to go into the details of his several conflicts, which are varied with very considerable skill and fancy, but which all end in Walthar's success. The sixth champion he has to meet is Patavrid, sister's son to Hagan, who vainly endeavours to hold him back, whilst Walthar himself as vainly advises him to keep away. After the fall of the seventh, the Franks themselves urge Gunthar to give over the fight; but he, furious at past ill-success, only urges them to it the more vehemently. The four last make a combined attack, the foremost bearing a huge trident, which the others support from the rear, but are equally unfortunate. At last the king is left alone, and flees to Hagan, beseeching him to come to his aid, asking whether he is not ashamed of leaving unavenged the death of so many kinsmen and friends? Hagan long resists his solicitations, but is moved at last. It is idle however to attack Walthar in his present stronghold; were France to send against him all her horsemen and footmen, he would do to them as to the others. The only method is to tempt him

from hence by seeming to depart, and when he is in the open to pursue and attack him. Then the king may fight if he have a mind, for never will Walthar flee from them two; they must themselves either flee or sharply fight. The king praises his companion's advice, and kisses him. They leave, and select a spot for an ambush, letting their horses go loose.

Night falls, and Walthar is perplexed as to his proceedings. Shall he remain? shall he commit himself to the wilderness? He distrusts Hagan alone, and that kiss of the king's. At last he decides upon remaining at least till the morning; the king shall not say that he fled, like a thief, through the darkness. So after fortifying his encampment against a surprise with bushes, he turns himself to the dead bodies with bitter groans, touches each with his head, and then, prostrating himself towards the east, with his sword bare, he prays thus: "Maker of [all] things, ruling all events, without whose permission and command nought happens, I give Thee thanks, who defendest me from the unjust darts of the hostile crowd and from their insults. And with contrite mind I entreat the gracious Lord, that He whose will is not to destroy the sinner but the sin, may grant me to behold these in the dwellings of heaven." Rising now, he

binds together the six horses which remained,—two having been killed, and king Gunthar having taken three away; then loosens his armour, and lightens of its weight his smoking body. Next, after comforting his sorrowful betrothed with his talk, and refreshing himself with food, he lies down upon his shield, bidding the maiden watch during his first sleep; reserving to himself the morning watch, which he deems the more dangerous. At his head she watches accordingly, keeping her eyes open with singing; after his first sleep, rising at once, he bids her sleep in turn, and stands leaning upon his spear; sometimes going round the horses, sometimes approaching his defences to look out. In the morning he spoils the dead of their weapons and accoutrements, leaving them their clothes, but taking their armlets, girdles, helmets, swords, breast-plates. With these he loads four of the horses, calls his betrothed to place her on the fifth, and mounts the sixth himself. Then leaving the in-trenchment alone first, and carefully listening for any sound, he sends forward first the four laden horses, then the maiden, then closes the rear with the horse bearing the two chests. They journey for about a mile, when looking back, Hildegund sees two men riding down a hill towards them, and calls to Walthar to flee. He recognizes the pur-

suers. "Vainly," he replies, "shall my right hand have overthrown many a foe; if honour fails, shame attends my last hour." He deems it better to await the attack than to fly, but does not despair of success. He bids her take the reins of his horse Lion (which bears the gold) and seek refuge in a neighbouring wood, while he ascends the hill to await the foe.

Meanwhile the king and Hagan are hastening towards him. The former begins from a distance to address him with insults. Walthar vouchsafes no answer, but turns to Hagan, appealing to their old friendship, to the recollection of their childish games: he would have expected that on learning his return Hagan himself would have hastened to greet him, compelled him to accept his hospitality, escorted him peacefully to his father's kingdom. It was Hagan's countenance that made him forget his father, think little of his country. Will he now break the pledged faith? let him abide by it, and he shall depart rich with Walthar's praise, his shield filled with red gold. Wrathfully Hagan replies: "First thou usest violence, Walthar, then seekest to delude (*sopharis*). Thyself brakest thy faith, when thou sawest me near, and overthrewest so many of my comrades and even kinsmen.... Yet I might have borne all else, if one sorrow had been

wanting ; for with thy sword hast thou plucked one dear, bright, soft, precious, tender flower. . . . Therefore I will take no treasure to make peace ; I will learn if thou alone hast courage in war, I seek at thy hands my nephew's slaughter."

All three leap from their horses to fight on foot. Hagan begins the conflict by flinging his spear, which Walthar avoids with his shield ; glancing off, it "wounds" the hill, sinking up to the head in the ground. Weakly Gunthar flings an ashwood shaft in turn ; it sticks at the bottom of Walthar's shield, and soon falls to the ground with a shake. Drawing their swords, and covering themselves with their shields, the Franks now seek to close in with the Aquitanian, who keeps them at bay with his spear. As their shorter swords cannot reach him, king Gunthar now conceives a "silly" plan, that of recovering his spear, which lay before the hero's feet, and winks to Hagan to go in front. Already had he his hand on the spear, when Walthar perceiving the device, whilst he places his foot on the prize, flings Gunthar on his knees, and would have killed him, had not Hagan rushed to his aid and covered with his shield the king, who gets up quivering and quaking (*tremens trepidusque*). The fight begins again ; Walthar is like a bear held at bay by the dogs ; the hot sun adds to the labour

of the struggle. Walthar begins to fear lest by their wiles they may weary and overcome him; so taking the offensive he springs at Hagan, and with a spear-stroke carries away a portion of his armour, then with a marvellous blow of his bare sword smites off the king's leg as far as the thigh; Gunthar falls at his feet on his shield, and with a second blow Walthar is about to despatch him, when Hagan throws himself before him, and the sword falls on his own head. But so well tempered is Hagan's helmet that the "astonished" blade flies in pieces, and its fragments glitter in the air and on the grass. Impatient, he flings away the hilt, though of rich metal and handywork; Hagan seizes the opportunity to cut off his right hand, fearful to peoples and princes.

Undismayed, with countenance unfallen, Walthar inserts his wounded stump into the shield, and draws with his left the "half-sword" (*semispata*) girt to his right side. With this he soon has his revenge, striking out Hagan's right eye with a blow which cuts atwain his temple and lips, and strikes out six of his double teeth. But it is the last stroke. Wounds and want of breath make both the great-souled heroes lay down their arms; Gunthar's foot, Walthar's hand, Hagan's quivering eye lie on the ground. The two sit, and stanch with

flowers the flowing stream of their blood. Alphere's son calls the maiden, who binds up all the wounds. He then bids her bring the wine, and offer it first to Hagan; a good fighter is he, if he will but abide by his troth; then let her give to himself, as having borne more than the rest; last of all let Gunthar drink, a poor warrior among the brave. Hagan declines the first draught; let the maiden give first to Alphere's son, her husband and lord; "for I own he is stronger than I." Weary in all their body after their tremendous blows, "thorny" Hagan (evidently a play on the words Hagan, hagdorn, hawthorn) and the Aquitanian joke over their cups. 'Friend,' says Hagan, 'when thou huntest the stag, of whose leather mayest thou have gloves without end, I warn thee to fill thy right-hand glove with soft wool, that thou mayest deceive the game with the semblance of a hand. But what sayest thou to the breaking the custom of thy people in girding thy sword on thy right side, and embracing thy wife with thy left arm?'—Walthar retorts, somewhat unintelligibly, by telling Hagan he will have to avoid boar's flesh; that he will distrust the effect of his orders to his servants, and greet the troops of heroes with a side-glance; in remembrance of their old friendship, he advises him, if he gets home, to make a larded broth of milk and flour, which will both feed and cure him.

So speaking they renew their "bloody bond," place on horseback the king, who is in sore pain; the Franks return to Worms, Walthar to Aquitain, where he celebrates magnificently his marriage with Hildegund, and, beloved by all, after his father's death rules the people happily for thirty years. "What wars after this, what triumphs he often had, behold my blunted pen refuses to mark. Thou, whosoever readest this, forgive a chirping cricket, weigh not the yet rough voice, but the age, since as yet she hath not yet left the nest for the air. This is the poem of Walthar. Save us, Jesus Christ."

Nothing is more curious in this poem than the mingled currents of religious and popular feeling. It is difficult to suppose that the personages of the legend were not purely heathen; yet the vein of Christianity which the writer's profession causes to run through it is of the most genuine and interesting character, and, like the probably contemporary plays of Hrotsvitha, indicates a far truer and wholesomer apprehension of Christian truth than is at all discernible in the works of the following period. Few scenes of epic poetry perhaps are more touching than Walthar praying by the dead bodies of the foes whom he had slain, that he may see them all again in heaven. In-

deed, the poem exhibits throughout a far more delicate feeling than any others of the cycle, and shows clearly, like Hrotsvitha's, the vast superiority of monastic culture at this period. Barbarous as is often the diction, yet it testifies to a study of classical models; centos from Virgil are perpetually brought in. Again, in nothing does the poem appear more remarkable than in the absence of all legendary stage-scenery of dragons, monsters, giants, and the like. There is nothing obviously fabulous about it beyond the bravery and endurance of the heroes, and their capacity for receiving tremendous wounds.*

* Those who may feel curious about the legend of Walther of Aquitain, may find the farther remains of it indicated in Grimm and Schmeller's work before quoted, p. 101 and foll. The allusions to it in the 'Nibelungenlied' I shall hereafter point out. In a middle-age German poem of 'Biterolf and Dietlieb,' hereafter noticed, Walther is represented describing the magnificence of Attila's court, and how Hagen and Walther received their swords from him; besides an allusion to their fight on the Rhine. Walther and Hagen appear together in other old German songs. In the Norse 'Vilkina-saga,' the legend of Walther of Vaskastein represents Walther as nephew to Hermanric. Following at first the Latin poem, it diverges from it in representing Walther's fight as having taken place with twelve chiefs sent by Attila after him on his escape. One curious detail of it is that he puts Högni or Hagen's eye out with the breastbone of a roast boar, which seems to indicate the source of the otherwise unintelligible passage of the Latin poem, where Walther advises Hagen to eschew boar's meat. Again, in the tenth century, the 'Chronicle of Novalesa'—a Piedmontese con-

Negatively, therefore, the evidence both of the 'Scop's tale' and of 'Walthar of Aquitain' tends to show that although Attila, Hagen, and Gunther were personages celebrated in the poetry of the day from the seventh to the ninth centuries, yet the legend which connects them afterwards with Sigurd was not in existence.

vent near Susa, founded 726 or 750—together with large (but often very incorrect) extracts from the poem above abstracted, gives an account of Walther's retreat to a convent in his old age (Novalesa itself) and of his adventures while there, which will be found in an abridged form in the Appendix to the 2nd volume of the present work, as having apparently served as prototype to a poem of the Carolingian cycle. In a Polish tale of the thirteenth century occur also the names of Walgerzs and Helgunda, but their flight is *from* France over the Rhine eastward. In the Norse 'Vilkina Saga', Hagen is found with Attila, to whom Hermanric sends Walthar. There is a later Latin poem of 'Walthar' in distichs, also quoted in the 'Novalesian Chronicle', which makes him the terror of the East and the West, and sends him as a conqueror to India. A fragment of the legend in German, belonging to the beginning of the thirteenth century, has also been discovered.

CHAPTER IV.

EDDA LEGENDS OF SIGURD, GUDRUN, AND ATLA.

THE earliest form of the full-developed legend afterwards embodied in the 'Nibelungenlied' is to be found in the 'Older Edda,' collected by Seemund in the eleventh or twelfth centuries (1056—1121), but the poems of which are considered (with some later exceptions) to belong to the eighth or to the beginning of the ninth century. I cannot help thinking that this work has been generally viewed, especially by our German brethren, too much in the light of later times; that as respects the legends now occupying us, for instance, they have rather read into it their own 'Nibelungenlied' than taken it at its actual value. Especially do they seem to me to have erred in attributing too much weight to the late prose 'Vilkina-saga', ascribed by Müller to the end of the fourteenth century, deemed by Grimm at least a hundred years older—but anyhow representing, I take it, in

the main, a reflex action of the German legend on the Norse,—as against the almost purely Norse Edda. As the Edda is avowedly a collection of earlier metrical pieces, all prose arguments, developments, intercalations, must be considered as belonging to the collector, or at all events to his age, and cannot therefore be put on the same line as the verse. So, I take it, will it be with the titles, names of personages, &c., where not forming part of the text; so evidently of the order in which the pieces occur. What alterations the text may have undergone we cannot for the most part even guess. Gervinus and Grimm may or may not be right in ascribing the Edda, like the ‘Lay of Hildebrand,’ to the eighth century; without doubting that many portions of it may substantially belong even to an earlier period, I believe that, taking the text in its present shape, it would be most unwise to assign to it any such antiquity.

The names of our legend occur already in the mythological poems which occupy the first volume of the collection. In the ‘Song of Hundla’ (the Huntress), it is said that “the father of peoples” gave “the sword” to Sigmund. In a later stanza, Jormunrec (Hermanric) is spoken of as Sigurd’s son-in-law; Sigurd himself as “the grim one who killed Fafnir,” “born” (not of Sigmund but) “of

Vaulsing and of Hiordisa." Mention is made of "Gunnar and Haugn, Giuka's seed, and eke Gudrun their sister" (names in which we easily recognize the 'Gunthar', 'Hagan', and 'Gibicho', of Walthar of Aquitain), as well as of Guttorm, who is stated not to have been of Giuka's blood, but yet to have been brother to both the former. The group of poems relating specially to the legend occurs however among the heroic pieces of the second volume. Some of the first of these,—the two songs of 'Helg Hundings-slayer' (Helga Quida Hundingsbana I. and II.) relate to a hero named Helg, son of Sigmund, and to a personage named Haugn; but the latter does not appear to be the Haugn of the true Sigurd-legends, nor is there anything to identify Sigmund. The Sigurd-cycle proper opens with the tales called of 'Sigurd Fafnir-slayer' (Sigurdar Quida Fafnisbana). The first prefigures all the others.

Sigurd, son of Sigmund and Hiordisa, goes in search of Griper, the wisest of men, who foreshows his whole life to him. He will be the most excellent of men under the sun, supreme among kings, "prodigal of gold but sparing of flight, excellent of aspect, wise in words." He will first avenge his father, and strike down the sons of the Hundings. He will slay Fafnir and Reginn, and take from the

former all his wealth. Riding towards king Giuka he will meet sleeping on the hill "the royal daughter, bright, in her breastplate"; he will cut the breastplate with his sword; she will teach him runes, whatsoever men may wish to know, and render him eloquent. He shall be the glad guest of a famous king in Heimer's habitation. Suddenly the sage stops; what he saw before him has passed away from him; it would be unlawful to question him any farther. Sigurd however is not satisfied, and the sage reluctantly continues: A woman is with Heimer, brilliant of aspect; men name her Brynhild, daughter of Budla, but she has been brought up in cruelty. She will deprive him of pleasure, he will neither sleep, nor speak of business, nor take note of men, unless he beholds the maiden. Sigurd asks if he shall marry her.—Yes, all oaths shall ye make, fully and firmly, but few shall ye keep. When thou shalt have been Giuka's host for one night, thou shalt no longer remember Heimer's excellent foster-daughter. Sigurd asks if Griper sees lightness in him, that he should break bonds once contracted? Griper replies that he will be deceived by the wiles of a woman. The white-haired queen will offer him her daughter Gudrun. Sigurd asks if he shall marry her, observing philosophically that he will

then be "full-wived."—Grimhild will wholly circumvent him ; she will advise him to ask Brynhild for Gunnar, lord of men. He will promise the journey to the king's mother ; he will put upon him Gunnar's outward semblance and gestures. Sigurd declares that he would not deceive the lady. He is told that he will sleep "chaste with the maid as if she were his mother ;" therefore shall the glory of his name remain while the world lasts. The nuptials will be celebrated ; but Brynhild will deem herself "a woman ill-given" (in marriage), will tell Gunnar that Sigurd does not well keep his oaths. Sigurd will be killed,—Gudrun's heart will burn, she will take no delight in anything. But a nobler man shall not come upon the earth under the sun than Sigurd. The hero finally replies, philosophically enough, that the fates cannot be conquered, and that Griper would have foretold a fairer life for him had he been able.

Herr Simrock views this piece as one of a late date. I agree with him ; no popular legend first appears in the shape of a poetical prophecy. No doubt all the detached elements of the story were already current in popular tradition before they were thrown into a whole, and put into the mouth of the otherwise unknown wisest of men, Griper. This lateness of date renders all the more remark-

able the discrepancies between this version of the legend and the later German one, followed eventually in the Norse also. Gudrun, as I have pointed out, not Grimhild, is Sigurd's wife, Grimhild only his mother-in-law. There is nothing whatever to connect Brynhild, Budla's daughter, with the enchanted lady whom Sigurd is to deliver, and who is to teach him all manner of runes. But I think it is impossible, considering the piece as a summary of prior legends, and comparing it with the others that have been preserved, to doubt that it indicates the existence of several that are now lost, and consequently that it must be ascribed to a decidedly earlier period than the date of Sæmund's own life, to whom it has nevertheless been attributed. If we allow half a century for the measure of oblivion, it will belong say to the 10th century, or to the very first years of the 11th. The Sigurd sub-cycle then, in its connexion with that of Gunnar-Gunthar, or the Niblungs, was complete by that time.

The second tale of the series, 'Fafnisbana II.,' (Sigurdar Quida, Part I.), is partly made up with prose argument and interpolation. It relates to the story of Fafnir and the treasure; tells how Reginn (Fafnir's brother) makes a sword for Sigurd; gives his description of good and evil

omens. A prose tail-piece describes the actual conflict, and how Sigurd stabs Fafnir to the heart. Part II., though interpolated in like manner as Part I., is a characteristic specimen of Edda poetry. Fafnir speaks: "Youth, and youth, of what youth art thou born? of what men art thou the man? when thou didst tinge red in Fafnir that bright blade of thine, in my heart stood the sword." Who impelled Sigurd to the deed?—"My spirit impelled me, my hands helped me, and my sharp sword." Fafnir predicts that the sounding gold and rings will be Sigurd's bane. Sigurd replies naively that "every man *will* take money perpetually, till that one day when every living creature must depart hence to Hela." Fafnir predicts that he will die drowned. Sigurd, with apparently somewhat ill-timed desire for knowledge, asks questions about the fatal Norns, and is told that some are children of the Ases, some of elves, some of dwarfs. Fafnir again advises him to go home, and warns him that the rings and money will be his bane, that Reginn, who betrayed Fafnir, will also betray Sigurd. The latter rejects the advice, and sings a song of triumph. Reginn, who has been lying in the heath meanwhile, now comes forward, cuts Fafnir's heart out and drinks his blood. Sigurd sneers at him for remaining

away from the fight. Reginn replies that it was *his* sword that did it all. Sigurd now takes the dragon's heart and roasts it on a spit. Touching it with his finger to see if it is roasted, and putting his finger to his mouth, he suddenly understands the language of birds, and hears the eagles chattering in the bushes, and saying it would be wise for him to eat the heart at once, and to kill Reginn, who means to cheat him and obtain all the money. So Sigurd cuts Reginn's head off, eats Fafnir's heart, and drinks the blood both of Fafnir and Reginn. He now hears the birds talking of the loveliest of women who is awaiting him, sleeping on the high Hindarfjall, girt outwardly on all sides with fire.

The next piece is entitled 'The tale of Brynhilda, Budla's daughter,' (Quida Brynhildar Budla dottor). The prose argument tells how Sigurd rides up Hindarfjall towards Frankland, sees a great light, finds a wall made of shields, a flag in the middle, and a man lying all in armour, whom he discovers to be a woman on taking off his helmet. Her breastplate seems stuck to her body, he cuts it up with his sword. She wakes up, exclaiming, "Who has cut my breastplate?" says that she has slept long, offers him a horn of mead, and then, in several stanzas of considerable beauty, greets the day, the

day's sons, the night and her daughter, the Æsir and their kinswomen the Æsymior, the earth. Sigurd asks her to teach him wisdom, as she knows all that happens in the earth. She complies: "A drink I offer thee, thou warlike man, medicated with strength and great glory; filled is it with lays and medicine, good prayers and pleasant talk." She then proceeds to impart to him the meaning of the different characters of runes, seemingly graven on the magic cup; giving him, in fact, a whole course of ethical instruction from the Norse point of view. He is to be blameless towards his friends, not to avenge himself though injured, to swear nothing but the truth, not to go to law with fools, not to give hospitality to witches, not to take delight in women, not to quarrel with warriors over his cups, to fight rather than *burn* bold men with whom he quarrels; to avoid evil and the betrayal of women, to take care of the bodies of the dead, never to believe the promises of an enemy who is his kinsman, and to observe which way evil is likely to fall out.

The name of Brynhild certainly occurs at the head of this piece, and is also prefixed to the stanzas put in the mouth of the female interlocutor. But the name is never once used by either Sigurd or the lady, and there is absolutely nothing

to identify the enchanted Walküre whom he delivers with the Brynhild of the received legend. It is my firm belief that such identification is altogether the result of a misapprehension of later times. The 'Brynhildar Quida' I take to be an ethical essay of some old Norse *vates*, which he threw into this form of a dialogue between Sigurd and a Walküre whom he delivered. The ethics in nowise profit Sigurd during the remainder of his adventures, nor is there anything to connect this adventure with the others. This absence of connexion being felt, it was sought to be supplied by making Brynhild *the* delivered Walküre; but the connexion is one of name only.

The 'Third tale of Sigurd' (Sigurdar Quida Fafnisbana III.) is one of the most striking of the series. Sigurd has married Giuka's daughter, Gudrun. He has conquered Brynhild for Gunnar, has slept by her side, a naked sword between the pair. But Brynhild loves him. At evening she says to herself: "Let me have Sigurd, or die." By a strange revulsion of feeling, she threatens to leave Gunnar unless he kills Sigurd. Gunnar does not know how to compass this, but calls Haugn to counsel, telling him naïvely that he would rather lose his life than his wife's treasures. Haugn answers with the jesuitry of a true pirate, that it is

not befitting for them to break "the sworn oaths, the faith given;" but that they may entrust with the murder Guttorm, a younger brother, who is "outside of the sworn oaths, the promises given." Guttorm stabs Sigurd to the heart in his bed, but Sigurd, flinging his sword at him, cuts him in two as he withdraws. "Asleep was Gudrun in the bed, sorrowless by Sigurd; but she woke robbed of delight." He lifts himself up: "Weep not, Gudrun, so sorely, my young wife, thy brothers are alive." The author of all the mischief is Brynhild, who loved him before any other man. As he expired, Gudrun swung her arms so vehemently that "the horses' jaws clattered, and geese clanged in the yard." "Then laughed Brynhild; Budla's daughter, for once with all her heart, when from her bed she heard the sharp weeping of Giuka's daughter." Gunnar now reproaches Brynhild, tells her she deserves that her brother Atla should be slaughtered before her eyes. She tells him that Atla little fears his rage; descants upon her mistake in marrying him, declares that Sigurd is the only one whom she loved, and finally announces that she is about to kill herself. Gunnar throws his arms round her neck; all seek to dissuade her from her purpose; Haugn alone advises that none delay her from her long journey; and may she

never live again reborn! Under cruel auspices she came into her mother's sight; she was born for everlasting damage and trouble of soul to many men.—She distributes rich gifts among her servants, puts on a golden breastplate, and rips herself up with a sword. Thus wounded, she begins to prophecy; Gunnar and Gudrun will be reconciled; Gudrun will have a daughter, Swanhild, “whiter than a beautiful day;” Gudrun will marry Atla; Gunnar himself will try to marry Oddrun, but Atla will not allow him, though they will love each other, and he will be thrown into the serpents' den; but Atla will soon die, for Gudrun is bitter in his bed. High waves will bear her to the land of Jonakur, Swanhild will be sent out of the country, and all the family of Sigurd will perish. One thing she asks of Gunnar: that he will build her a wide pyre, and on a bed burn with her body “that Hunnish man” on one side of her, and on the other side her slaves; but let there be between them a sword, “as when we two mounted on one bed, and were called by the name of husband and wife.” Their journey will not thus be dishonourable, for they will be accompanied by five maidens, eight servitors of good birth, and her foster-brother, given her by Budla her father. “Much have I said, more would I say, if the sword gave me more

space to speak. My voice fails, my wounds swell ; truth only have I spoken ; so will I cease." Thus artlessly closes the poem.

The observations before made with reference to Griper's prophecy apply equally to that of Brynhild. I am strongly inclined to think that it is insititious, and the work of a later age, foisted in to accredit the legends which it refers to ; it will be observed that it is the first piece which connects the Sigurd-Gunnar sub-cycle with that of Atla. But the crude simplicity and rugged grandeur of the great bulk of the poem seem to me to bear witness of its antiquity. The wholesale sacrifice of human life with which it concludes stamps it at once as belonging to a heathen age.

A fragment of the 'Second tale of Brynhild' (Brynhildar Quida II.) deals with the same subject. Gunnar asks Brynhild what crime Sigurd has committed, that she should wish to deprive him of life ; she replies that he gave her oaths which were but lies, that he deceived her when he should have faithfully kept all his promises. According to the version contained in this piece, the murder was committed when the kings were riding (somewhat in accordance with the traditions followed by the Nibelungenlied). "Out stood Gudrun, Giuka's daughter, and first of all she spoke :

—Where is now Sigurd, lord of men, that my kinsman should ride the first?" To this Haugn alone gave answer: "We have cut Sigurd in half with our swords; the grey horse stands nodding over the dead king. Then laughed Brynhild this time with all her heart; all the castle thundered. 'Prosperously may you enjoy your lands and subjects, since you have laid the strong king low.'" But a raven from the tree has cried aloud: "With your blood will Atla tinge red the edges of the swords; slaughter shall break the oaths which shall be given." Brynhild ends by bewailing again her fate, and the deceitful journey of Sigurd and Gunnar.

'Brynhild's Hell-ride' (Helreid Brynhildar, which appears to me again a piece of late date) relates the questioning of Brynhild's ghost by a giantess, who reproaches her with Sigurd's murder; and is apparently the first piece which connects her at all with the sleeping maiden of Hindarfjall. It dwells however chiefly on the circumstances of her marriage, and tells how for eight nights she had slept in the same bed with Sigurd as if he had been her brother, neither laying an arm on the other,—which Gudrun afterwards cast at her, telling her she had slept in Sigurd's arms;* then she learnt what she

* Sigurd's deceptive conquest of marital rights for Gunnar, a prominent feature of the later legend, is evidently here referred

fain would not have done, that they had deceived her when she took a husband. The piece concludes as usual by a platitude. "Surely with too many sorrows always at once women and men will be born. We two our life shall spend together, Sigurd with me. Be thou swallowed in earth, child of the giants!"

The 'First tale of Gudrun' (Gudrunar Quida I.) is very striking. "There was a time when Gudrun was ready to die,—when sorrowful she sat by Sigurd. She gave forth no groans, nor tossed her hands, nor wept like other women.—Noble earls came to visit her, but she could not weep; she was so shaken with grief that she almost burst.—Excellent earls' wives adorned with gold sate before Gudrun; each of them told the sharpest sorrow which she had borne. Then spoke Gjaf-lang, Giuka's sister: 'I know myself to be the most void of pleasure that is in the earth. I have lost five husbands; of two daughters, of three sisters and eight brothers, I am left alone.'—But Gudrun in nowise could weep, so sad was she after her husband's death, and burning with rage of heart because of the king's murder.—Then spoke to her Herborg, queen of Hunland: 'A sharper to. But it is observable that in those Norse pieces which seem the earliest, Sigurd has simply *jilted* Brynhild.

woe have I to tell. My seven sons fell in fight in the Southland, and my husband the eighth.'” Her father and mother and her four brothers died drowned, overwhelmed by the sea. Herself had to perform the funeral rites and prepare their graves; and all these sufferings she endured in one year, so that no one could give her comfort. Then she became a prisoner of war, and had to tire and tie the shoes of her warlike captor’s wife, threatened every morning by her and struck with hard blows. “None the more could Gudrun weep, so sad was she after her husband’s death.” But Gullrand Giuka’s daughter now tells her mother that she does not know how to deal with a young woman. She uncovers the dead body, and bids Gudrun kiss him as if he were alive. “One look cast Gudrun, saw the king’s hair running with blood, the bright eyes of the prince all dull, the king’s heart torn with the sword. Then Gudrun bent herself back on the bolster, loosened was her hairpin, her cheek reddened, but a raindrop trickled over her knees. Then wept Gudrun, Giuka’s daughter,”—the trait occurring which we met with before, that “the geese clanged in the yard.” She now praises Sigurd (one of her comparisons sounding to us rather unsavoury). Her Sigurd was like “a headed leek grown high above the grass,”

or a bright gem strung on a string. She herself was exalted, but now she is low as a leaf in the woods. As she sits, as she lies, she longs for him who shared her talk. She then proceeds to curse her brothers and Brynhild, "that execrable fury." The latter curses Gullrand for having moved Gudrun to tears. Gullrand retorts, nothing loth. Brynhild strangely enough now casts the blame on her brother Atla. The piece closes with a striking picture of Brynhild, as she stood near the pillar of elmwood, strongly grasping it, flashing fire from her eyes, and snorting poison, when she saw the wounds in Sigurd's body.

We may safely pass over the "Drap Niflung," a mere prose argument of the slaughter of the Niflungs, to come to the 'Second tale of Gudrun' (Quida Gudrunar Giukadottr II.) Gudrun laments herself, and says that she was a maid among maidens, brought up by her mother, bright in her bower, loving much her brothers, till Giuka adorned her with gold and gave her to Sigurd. "Sigurd was above the sons of Giuka as a green leek, growing above the grass, or a high-footed hart above wild beasts, or plum-bright gold above grey silver." But her brothers could not rest till they had killed him. Gran (his horse) ran in, and Sigurd came not; all the saddle-beasts were bathed in sweat.

Weeping she went to speak with Gran ; he dropped his head on the grass. She asked his fate of her brother. "Gunnar nodded his head, and said to me : 'Haugn wrought Sigurd's death. Surely he lies beyond the river,—killed and given to wolves, Guttorm his slayer. Look for Sigurd to Southward, there shalt thou hear the ravens croak, the eagles scream longing for food, the wolves howl around thy husband.'" Gudrun wished that the ravens might tear Gunnar's own heart. She went alone to collect what the wolves had left. "Neither did I utter a groan, nor toss my hands, nor weep like other women, when fasting I sat by Sigurd. . . . The wolves would have seemed to me far kinder had they taken my life ; or fain had I been burnt as the birchwood." It is now related that she went to Half, Sigurd's foster-father, and remained seven and a half years with Thor, daughter of Haco, in Denmark, occupying herself in tapestry work, and tracing the great deeds of the Hun warriors, Sigmund and others. Grimhild sends Haugn to appease her ; offers her a drink "cold and bitter," which shall make her forget her injuries ; and makes her the most liberal promises if she will consent to marry Atla. After shewing much repugnance to the idea of marrying a brother of Brynhild, she at last consents. Evil dreams

beset Atla the night of his marriage ; he relates to his wife how he has seen her stab him, seen his favourite shrubs torn out of his garden, eagles fly out of his arms "foodless to luckless roofs," whelps escape from his hand, their bodies turned to corpses which he had unwillingly to eat. This piece appears to me a patchwork of fragments, and Atla's "garden" and Gudrun's tapestry seem evidently to indicate a more settled age than that of the early Norse rovers.

The 'Third tale of Gudrun' (*Quida Gudrunar Giukadottr III.*) refers to a legend of which there is no trace elsewhere. Gudrun addresses Atla, asking what ails him? He tells her that what is amiss with him is that she dishonours him with Theodrec (Theodoric). She denies the imputation, declaring that they only talked together in their sorrow, and offers to undergo the ordeal of boiling water. She comes through it unscathed, whilst her accuser, Herkia, gets scalded, and receives a ducking in a foul pool. This piece seems to belong to the Atla-Etzel sub-cycle, mixed already with that of Theodrec-Dietrich. Herkia is evidently Attila's historic wife Herca or Kerka (Helche of the Germans). The piece is ascribed by Grimm to the eleventh or twelfth century, and by P. E. Müller is attributed to Sæmund himself.

The 'Lament of Oddrun' (Oddrunar Gratr) is another somewhat similar offshoot from the main stem of tradition, which should perhaps have been inserted in the collection somewhat further on. Oddrun is represented as acting the part of Lucina towards a certain Borgnya, and thereupon tells her story. She loved Gunnar as Brynhild ought to have done. Gunnar offered much money to Atla, who seems to have had control of her, for permission to marry her. He refuses to receive it from Giuka's sons; but they could not refrain from stolen pleasures, and were at last surprized in a thick wood by Atla's servants. In vain they offer rings to their discoverers to keep their secret; they are betrayed, and of the two Niflungs, Haugn's heart is cut out, and Gunnar is thrown into the den of snakes. Oddrun tries to save him by means of a boat, but fails, and Atla's mother—"may she rot alive!"—stabs him to the heart.

Now comes the grim 'Tale of Atla' (Atla Quida), which the last one anticipates on some points. Atla sends a messenger to Gunnar, inviting him to his court, and promising presents to him. Gunnar is doubtful as to accepting the invitation; he asks Haugn's advice, who dissuades him from going. They have more wealth than the Huns can give them. What meant the girl who sent

them a ring wrapped in wolf's skin? surely caution. But other friends advise them to the contrary, and finally Gunnar leaves with Haugn, though with evil forebodings. "The wolf," he says, "will possess the heritage of the Niflungs. O aged men adorned with beards! if Gunnar perish, black-felled bears will bite the harvests with their teeth; the troop of dogs will rejoice if Gunnar comes not back." Journeying still under evil auspices, they reach at last Atla's castle. Their sister (Gudrun) hears her brothers enter. "Thou art betrayed now, Gunnar!" she cries, and advises him to leave the house, as the snake-den will be his doom. He answers that it is too late. They take him and throw him into chains. Haugn however sells his life dear. "Seven did Haugn kill with his sharp sword; but the eighth he thrust into the hot fire: so should a fierce man defend himself from his foes." Gunnar is now represented as making some inexplicable requests for the heart of Haugn.* Instead of cutting out his heart in the first instance, they cut out that of Hiälla, place it upon a bloody dish, and offer it to Gunnar. He sees through the

* In the closing scene of the Nibelungenlied, Hagen refuses to tell where the Niflungs' hoard is buried while Gunther is alive, and Kriemhilt hereupon has her brother's head cut off. Something to this effect is probably here implied, the parts played by the two personages being however interverted.

deception: "Here have I the heart of Hiälla the fearful, different from the heart of Haugn the fearless. If it quivers much, lying in the dish, it quivered much more when it lay in his breast." They now treat Haugn in like manner: "Then laughed Haugn, when they cut him to the heart . . . he thought nowise of weeping. They placed it bloody in a dish, and bore it to Gunnar. Calmly spoke Gunnar, the warlike Niflung: 'Here have I the heart of Haugn the fearless, different from the heart of Hiälla the fearful. If it quivers little, lying in the dish, so not much it quivered when it lay in his breast.'" He says he is now sole heir to the Niflungs' treasure, since Haugn is dead; while they both lived, it was always doubtful. Now it is nought to him, let the Rhine have it. Atla comes to him; Gunnar reproaches him. "Anger billowing in his soul struck the harp through his foot" (*i. e.* his hands being manacled); "clear sounded the strings. So should the fierce-minded ring-bestower keep his gold against men." He is killed, seemingly by Atla. Gudrun now brings to drink to the latter in a gilt cup; she insults him for the death of her brothers, and of her sons Erp and Eitel, whose death is thus far merely inferred. Atla had wearied himself with drinking; he had no spear in his hand, for he did

not beware of Gudrun. She kills him, and sets fire to the palace. "No such woman ever since put on the breastplate to avenge her brothers. Three illustrious kings she put to death" (*i. e.* Atla and his two sons) "before glorious she perished."

A complete divergence will be observed between the tone of this piece and those of the true Sigurd group. There we heard of Gunnar and Hagn's treachery towards Sigurd, and Gudrun's bitter grief and intimated thirst of revenge against her brothers. Here Gunnar and Hagn especially rise from traitors into heroes; Gudrun, though Atla's wife, has nothing but affection towards her brothers, and avenges them not only on Atla but upon her own children by him. I think it is impossible to mistake here the existence of two separate threads of tradition,—of two legends, of one of which Sigurd, of the other of which the Niflungs are the heroes, but which some clumsy hand has sought to weave into one by the insertion in the 'Gudrunar Quida II.' of Grimhild's expedient of the cup of oblivion.

Another version of the last legend is the 'Song of Atla in Greenlandish'* (Atla mal in Grænlandsko).

* *i. e.* Not the American Greenland, but a district of that name in Sweden. Grimm supposes this piece to be somewhat later than the others, which he ascribes to the eighth century.

From this it appears, as may be inferred from the last, that the treachery towards the Niflungs was Atla's own ; that his wife heard secretly what was being plotted, and wrote them letters of warning by the messenger. All was joy, it relates, at Gunnar's, when the message was received. Kostbera, Haugn's wife, was there, as well as Glaumvär, Gunnar's own wife. But at night Kostbera, a wise woman, decyphers Gudrun's letter by the firelight. She communicates to Haugn his sister's warning, presses him not to go. To his protests that he is not afraid, she retorts by relating all manner of ill-omened dreams which she has had,—that his bed was burned, that a high fire shot up through the house, that a bear came in, breaking through the doors, and seized many people between his jaws, that an eagle flew in and sprinkled them all with blood. Glaumvär meanwhile relates dreams of equally evil omen to Gunnar, that he was going to be hanged, that worms devoured his body, that a bloody sword was taken out of him, that a spear transfixd him, that dogs ran about barking ; that a stream flowed in, swelled over the seats, overwhelmed everything ; that dead women came in full dress, claiming him as their husband and inviting him to their couch. Gunnar answers that it is too late, that go they must. As

a last resource Glaumvör hints her fears to the messenger, warning him of the dishonour of treachery. He curses Atla if any evil should be intended. After leave-taking the Niflungs depart, pursued as in the other piece by evil omens. Arrived at their destination, the messenger, somewhat ironically, one would say, bids them depart, revealing the intended treachery. Haugn kills him; they insult Atla who was assembling with his hosts. Gudrun rushes out, scattering her necklaces and rings, kisses the Niflungs, reminds them of her warnings, and vainly endeavours to make peace. She then throws off her mantle, seizes a sword, defends the life of her kinsmen, strikes two men to the ground, wounds Atla's brother so that he has to be carried away, kills another still. They fight three hours, the field flows with blood, till of thirty men that were with Atla eighteen had fallen. Atla now curses Gudrun; he has had no peace since she came to him; she has sent his sister to hell. She replies that he took her mother, killed her for her treasures, starved her cousin to death; thanks be to the Gods that things fall out ill with him! whereupon the poet breaks out into an appeal to worthy men to lament Gudrun. The remainder of the piece appears to be in great measure an amplification of the last. More intelligibly, however, it seems

to ascribe to Atla the order to cut out Haugn's heart, while Gunnar is fixed on a gibbet. Beit advises to cut out Hiälla's heart instead. The wretched slave "howled before he felt the blade," offered to manure the gardens, to do the hardest labours if suffered to live. Haugn—"few do so"—intercedes for the slave. His laughter when his own heart is cut out is again commemorated, as well as Gunnar's playing on the harp,—so sweetly, that women wept, men lamented. A dialogue between Atla and Gudrun now follows. He boasts of his success; she warns him to expect no good whilst she is alive; he endeavours to pacify her by promises of presents. Her lamentations are for Haugn: "We two were brought up in the same house, and played many a game." She defers however eventually to her husband's superior strength; let him do as he pleases. Atla is deceived. A great feast is appointed,—by Gudrun in honour of her brother's funeral,—by Atla for the entertainment of his men. She cuts off her two children's heads. Atla asks where they have gone to play, since he sees them nowhere. She tells him that she has killed them, has given him their skulls for cups, reddened his drink with their blood. "I took," she says, "their hearts, and roasted them on a spit; then I offered them

to thee, and said they were calves' hearts. . . . Thou leftest nothing of the dish ; greedily didst thou eat." He tells her she shall be burnt next day, after being stoned. By a totally new conclusion, which seems in fact a different fragment, Haugn's daughter and Gudrun kill Atla, after mutual reproaches between husband and wife ; and finally Gudrun kills herself.

She is however alive again in the next piece, the 'Song of Hamdir' or 'Hamdismal'. The subject of this is Gudrun's revenge for the death of Swanhild (her daughter by Sigurd) who had been given in marriage to Jormunrek, and "whom Jormunrek had trampled under foot by horses white and black in the highway." It is this outrage which she presses her two sons (by Sigurd) to avenge ; they are the only remains of her family ; she is solitary as a poplar in the holt. Her son Hamdir tells her she did not praise Haugn when they woke Sigurd from sleep ; Saurli, the other son, warns her that she will have to bewail them also, as they will die far away. On their road they meet and fell to the ground their brother Erpr, but press on to Jormunrek's palace. Jormunrek was sitting in his hall ; he "laughed, he stroked his beard with his hand ; . . . he shook his dark head," and ordered his golden cup to be

filled. "Could he but see Hamdir and Saurli, and bind them with bowstrings, and hang them on a gibbet! . . . A tumult arose in the hall; the cups flew; men lay bathed in blood that had issued from men's breasts." Hamdir cries that Jormunrek had wished for them, and there they were. The king "growled like a bear." The young men however are overpowered, and perish, lamenting the death of their brother Erpr.

"Gudrun's promptings" (*Gudrunar Hvavt*) is a piece turning on the same story, and running almost in the same words, with only a few additional developments. "I knew three fires,—I knew three hearths; to the house of three husbands was I brought. Better than all was Sigurd alone, whose death was brought by my brothers." She tells how she cast herself into the water, how the waves refused to drown her, how she married a third time, and had children of Jonakur; praises Swanhild; laments over her ills, and seems to end by announcing the intention to burn herself. The piece is evidently the composition of a mere professional minstrel, as is shewn by the conclusion: "May it be better of heart with all worthy men, may sorrow be less to all women, to whom this tale of woe shall be recited."

The Older Edda is no doubt a very interesting

and precious historical monument. It is, if I am not mistaken, the earliest collection of national myths and traditional songs which the middle ages have handed down to us; that directed by Charlemagne to be made two centuries before having to all appearance perished. Venerable as the Edda is however even in its present shape, I cannot doubt that it owes much of that shape to the doctoring of the worthy Sæmund. I cannot believe that many of the pieces in the cycle which has occupied us are not composed of fragments tagged together according to the notions of the compiler. I cannot but believe that the order in which he has placed them, however convenient for the reader who seeks merely a continuous legend, is in fact wholly foreign to the original character and family relations of many at least among them. I cannot but believe that many passages are in fact mere interpolations, inserted for the very purpose of propping up the factitious sequency thus created.

For any one who looks at the group of poems with unprejudiced eyes, I repeat my conviction that they must be felt to be wholly discrepant amongst themselves. The Gudrun who sits tearless by Sigurd's corpse is a totally different personage from the Gudrun who fights by Gunnar

and Haugn's side. Later ages may have sought to patch them up into one by the clumsy expedient of the cup of oblivion (which makes her forget nothing). The Sigurd group appears to me the oldest one, the group of Atla and the destruction of the Niflungs to come next, and that of the revenge of Swanhild's death to be the last. Sigurd's great exploit, the killing of Fafnir, it may be observed, is alluded to in that remarkable book which Mr. Dasent has introduced to English readers, the 'Story of Burnt Njal,' since in it Hallgerda directs her daughter by Glum to be called Thorgerda, "for she came down from Sigurd Fafnisbane on the father's side, according to the family pedigree" (vol. i. p. 30).*

The correspondence between the Atla group of poems, it may be observed, with the facts of history, is somewhat closer than that of the Nibelungenlied. The historic Attila is related to have been found dead in his bed on the morrow of his marriage with a young German, Ildico. The version of a death from natural causes seems to have been politicly adopted by his successors. But the rumour spread evidently at an early period

* This, it will be observed, is in contradiction with Brynhild's prophecy in the third tale of Sigurd, that all Sigurd's family will perish.

that he was murdered by Ildico, in revenge for the death of her kinsman,—a part nearly identical to that played by Gudrun in the Atla songs of the Edda. M. Amédée Thierry even ingeniously conjectures that in the Walthar ‘Hiltgund’ is ‘Ildico,’ and that Attila’s fury at Hiltgund’s escape is to be ascribed to a passion for her.

If from the Edda we pass to the Skaldic works of the thirteenth century, we find the different legends woven into a still more elaborate story. Yet it is remarkable that though the sleeping Walküre is called Brynhilde, she does not appear to be further identified with Brynhild the daughter of Giuka. The quarrel between Gudrun and Brynhild is attributed to their both going to the river to wash their heads, when Brynhild went further in the stream, saying that she would not wash her head with water coming from Gudrun’s hair, since *she* had a braver husband; to which Gudrun retorted by disclosing the facts of Sigurd’s victory. Describing the death of Gunnar, the Saga relates that when Gunnar in the serpents’ den harped with his feet because his hands were bound, he sent to sleep all the snakes there, except one adder, which bit him in the breast, fastened its head in the wound, and hung feeding on his liver. Such details are evidently the mere embroidery of a more active

fancy, thrown over the rugged groundwork of the old legends.*

I have said that the existing group of poems relating to Swanhild's death appears to me the latest of the three forming the Norse epics. Its subject however is both ancient and historical. For Jornandes in the middle of the sixth century, speaking of Hermanric, the great ruler of the united Goths before the time when the Huns first drove them on the Roman empire, mentions the execution by him of his wife Sanielh, whom we may identify with Swanhild, and his subsequent murder by her brothers "Sarus" and "Ammius." In these it is easy to recognize the "Saurli" and "Hamdir" of the Edda, on the one hand, and on the other the "Hama" whom Beowulf speaks of as having experienced Eormenric's craft, and carried away a great treasure. Next, the Quedlinburg chronicle (end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century) speaks equally of Hermanric's murder by the brothers "Hernidus" (for which read "Hemidus"), "Serila", and "Adaocar",—the two former names being still identifiable with "Hamdir" and "Saurli", while the third, if discrepant from the Norse "Erpr", still indicates in agreement with

* Being ignorant of the Norse, I quote only from the German abridgment of the 'Saga-bibliothek' annexed to Simrock's Edda.

it the existence of a third brother. Eckehard in the Ursperg chronicle, writing in the first half of the twelfth century, and referring to Jornandes, speaks of the "Sarus" and "Ammius" of that author as commonly called "Sarelus" and "Hamidiecus"—names still closer to the Norse. Lastly, if we turn to the eighth book of Saxo Grammaticus, an author of the second half of the twelfth century, we shall find equally the story of the marriage of "Jarmericus"—described here as king of Denmark—with "Swavilda" (evidently the Norse "Swanhild"), of her adultery and treading under foot by horses, which at first shrank from injuring her lovely form, and of 'Jarmericus' death at the hands of her four step-brothers, whom Saxo calls Hellespontici (apparently meaning Danes of Huen). Remarkably enough, the name "Guthruna" (Gudrun) even occurs, but as that of a Norse sorceress whom the brothers consult, and by whose magic arts the king's men fall out amongst themselves. The mythical portion of the Norse poems seems thus to lie simply in the connexion between the story of Hermanric and those of Sigurd and Attila,—Hermanric, for instance, having died a quarter of a century before Attila's birth.

The Norse poems which I have analyzed are, like the misnamed ballads of later times, epoids

rather than epics. Such short epically treated pieces form indeed (as we know by the instance of the Iliad itself) the stuff out of which epics are woven; and if the worthy Sæmund had possessed a little more of poetic fervour, instead of merely arranging those of the Sigurd and Atla cycle in a sequency, and (I suspect) doctoring them more or less, he would very likely have anticipated the 'Nibelungenlied' by making one poem of the whole. I think nevertheless one feels very thankful to him that he did not. The rough vigour and dread pathos of several of the pieces might probably have been lost without any countervailing advantages.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAY OF HILDEBRAND (HILDEBRANT'S LIED).

THE name which forms the core of the third sub-cycle, that of Dietrich, it will be observed, has only occurred once in the Edda—in the 'Third tale of Gudrun', itself without direct connexion with the main current of the legend. I have left on one side hitherto the ancient German poem already mentioned as belonging to this sub-cycle, and considered by German writers, as I have said, to be of the eighth century. As a transition to the 'Nibelungenlied', in which all previous sub-cycles are fused into one, it has now become necessary to consider it, and its intrinsic merit fully entitles it to our attention. I shall refer to it from Grein's edition (Göttingen, 1858).* A text of it, with Latin

* Or see Simrock's 'Altdeutsches Lesebuch,' Bonn, 1851. A French translation is given in Ampère's 'Histoire Littéraire de la France avant le douzième siècle.'

and English translation, is indeed to be found in Weber's "Illustrations of Northern Antiquities." But the state of criticism was so low at the date of his work, that he treats it as a fragment of a "prose romance,"—the old alliterative rhythm of the piece having till then entirely escaped the learned, whilst the rendering of several passages differs greatly from that of more recent interpreters.

The subject of this poem, of which unfortunately only a fragment has been preserved to us, is a fight between father and son; thereby recalling, as has been observed, the well-known oriental legend of the fight between Sohrab and Rustem, to which Firdausi has given so beautiful a shape. I shall give a condensation of it, premising that many words and meanings of the text are still doubtful and contested. The language in which it is written differs very considerably from that of any of the other German poems of the cycle which have come down to us, and whether belonging to the eighth century or not, testifies of great antiquity.

'I have heard tell how by challenge Hildebrand and Hadubrand met between two hosts, the son with the father.* They made ready their armour, put to rights their battle garments, girded on their

* Literally, "son-fatherly."

swords, the heroes, on their coats of mail; they rode to the fight.

‘Hildebrand spoke, Heribrand’s son. He was the lordlier man, the more experienced in life. He began to ask with few words who of the men in the people might be his (opponent’s) father? “Of what race art thou? If thou name me one (kinsman) I know the others; all the great nation I know.”

‘Hadubrand spoke, Hildebrand’s son: “This was told me by our people, the old and experienced, who were before me, that my father was called Hildebrand. I am called Hadubrand. Of old he went eastward, he fled hence from Ottaker’s hatred, with Deotric (Dietrich) and his many knights, he forsook in the land both his young bride in her bower and his unwaxen bairn without inheritance; eastward he rode from hence. Since then Deotric lost my father, so friendless a man; unmeasured was Ottaker’s wrath against that best of knights till Deotric lost him. At the head of the folk was he ever, fighting was ever lieve to him; men of price knew him well. I ween not he is yet alive.”

“I pledge the great God above in heaven,” quoth Hildebrand, “that thou never heldest converse with a man so near of kin as now.” He

took from his arms twisted rings made by the imperials, which the king gave him, the lord of the Huns: "This I now give to thee of free grace."

'Hadubrand spoke, Hildebrand's son: "With the spear should one receive gifts, spear-point against spear-point. Crafty art thou beyond measure, thou old Hun. Thou trickest me with thy words, thou wilt throw me with thy spear. So aged art thou that thou must be always plotting. This was told me by seamen, westward over the middle sea, that he was carried off by the battle. Dead is Hildebrand, Heribrand's son."

'Hildebrand spoke, Heribrand's son. "Woe now, O ruler-God! sorrow befalls me. Sixty summers and winters I have wandered out of my country; wherever I might be placed among the fighters, in no stronghold yet hath any wrought bane on me; now shall my sweet child hew me with his sword, crush me with his bill, or I must be his bane. Alas! I see by thy weapons that thou hast a good lord, and wilt not be a recreant in defence of his land; if thy strength avail thee, thou mayest win arms of a lordly man, and strip him of his armour-ornaments. Most cowardly would he be of the East-folk who should refuse thee the fight, since thou so boastest thee. To-day must it be decided which of us two shall boast

of armour won, or be master of both breast-plates.”

‘Then rained they forth first their ash-spears sharply, so that they stuck in either shield. Then rushed they together in their battle-garments, they lifted harmfully their white shields’

In the whole of the Norse-German cycle there is nothing so truly Homeric as this noble fragment, the lost conclusion of which, I suppose, consisted in the death of Hadubrand, though a modernized version by Kaspar von der Roen (end of fifteenth century) concludes by a reconciliation. An echo of the poem is also to be found in one of the late works of the cycle, ‘Alphart’s death’, in which Alphart, Hildebrand’s nephew, has an encounter with Hildebrand under strange armour, and in like manner refuses to believe the latter when he declares himself, treating his words as a mere trick to deceive him.

The chief value of the poem in its mutilated shape, however, consists in its introducing us to two prominent personages of the Nibelungenlied, Dietrich and his follower Hildebrand, always called Master Hildebrand in later tradition. As before observed,* the historical struggle between Odoacer-Ottaker and Theodoric-Deodric is visibly referred

* See *ante*, p. 36.

to; but on the other hand, the legendary connexion between Dietrich and Attila is referred to almost as evidently, since Hildebrand is spoken of as an "old Hun," and as wearing rings given by "the lord of the Huns." And the character of Hildebrand himself—a sort of Teutonic cross between Nestor and Ulysses—old, experienced, crafty, yet full of valour—is precisely the same as that assigned to him in the later legends.

The 'Lay of Hildebrand' is said to have been found at Fulda on a MS. actually of the eighth century. No doubt its alliterative rhythm places it far in the rear of any other works of the cycle in the German group. But if we assume the Edda poems to represent in the main the customs and feelings of the Norsemen in the eighth century, it is really surprising to find how widely different are those indicated in the 'Lay of Hildebrand,' which seems to belong to the actual dawn of an age of chivalry. The rude bandits of the Edda, greedy only of gold, are here succeeded by champions in 'battle-garments,' *i. e.* armour, engaging in single combat on horseback, breaking their spears on each other's shields, actuated by a keen sense of honour. I know of nothing, I must say, in the eighth century which answers to this picture. The very term 'battle-garment', with several other expressions,

belongs essentially to the language of the later poems. Were it not for what seems to be the positive evidence of palæography, I confess I should feel great difficulty on this ground in attributing to the 'Lay of Hildebrand' a greater antiquity than to the 'Walthar', *i. e.* in placing it at an earlier period than the ninth century.

We have now before us all the elements of the great epic which crowns without closing the Norse-German cycle. This we have next to consider.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAY AND LAMENT OF THE NIBLUNGS (‘NIBELUNGENLIED’ AND ‘KLAGE’).

BEFORE treating of the ‘Nibelungenlied’ I should, if I followed German authority, have spoken of the poem of ‘Biterolf and Dietlieb,’ published by Von der Hagen in the second volume of his ‘Deutsche Gedichte des Mittelalters,’ Berlin, 1820, and which is treated by Gervinus as anterior to the ‘Nibelungenlied,’ and belonging to the twelfth century; and I should also have postponed the ‘Lied’ or ‘Lay’ itself of the Nibelungs to the ‘Klage’ or ‘Lament,’ which is equally treated by Gervinus as anterior in date to the former, and which is moreover considered by both Lachmann and W. Grimm to be the work of the same author as ‘Biterolf.’ I shall however give further on the reason for my not doing so.

Considered as the centre and masterpiece of its cycle, the ‘Lay of the Nibelungs’ stands alone

amongst the great epic cycles in the lateness of its date. It belongs, in its earliest actual shape, to the beginning of the thirteenth century (1210)—*i.e.* to a period, as we shall see hereafter, when the Carlovingian epic was in full decadence: it is almost incredible to think that, heathen in fact as is the substance of it under a thin drapery of Christianity, in its finished shape it preceded but by little more than half a century the birth of the great Christian poet of the middle ages (Dante, born 1265), and is only about a century older than that marvellous work of his, which is as it were the summing up of middle-age Christianity itself (Divina Commedia, supposed by Tiraboschi to have been finished by 1313); since it is certainly not too much to say that the spirit of the ‘Nibelungenlied’ is as far removed from that of Dante, as is the latter from that of our own times. The detached portions of the German epic are however supposed to have been put into shape between 1190 and 1210; whilst a Latin original is also supposed to have been composed between 960 and 980, founded itself on popular songs of an earlier date. The great difficulty connected with the ‘Nibelungenlied’ lies however in the differences which exist between the legend embodied in it and that of the Edda. For, discrepant as are the Norse poems of the Sigurd-

Atla group, their discrepancy with the German ones of the parallel group, as I have already in part pointed out, is still more surprising. Sigurd indeed, under the name of Sifrit (Sivrit, Sigfrid, Siegfried) reappears as the original hero, to be murdered by Gunther and Hagen, the ‘Gunnar’ and ‘Haugn’ of the Norse, they in turn to lose their life at Etzel’s court. But, in one half of the cycle, instead of the latter princes being the ‘Niblungs’, it is Sifrit himself and his father Sigmund who are connected with that name. In the whole, instead of Gudrun, it is Kriemhilt—her mother in the Norse—who marries Sifrit, and afterwards Etzel. And instead of her showing any affection towards her brothers at the last, it is her bitter relentless hatred towards them which is made the moving-spring of the final tragedy. In this moreover great prominence is given to Dietrich, whose name, it will be remembered, scarcely figures in the Edda. Strange as this may appear, considering the frequent communications which existed between Germany and Scandinavia throughout the middle ages, it is certain that something like the German version of the latter portion of the legend was popular in the twelfth century; since in that century Saxo Grammaticus, relating an event of about the year 1130, speaks of a Saxon minstrel

sent to duke Canute of Seeland by king Magnus on a treacherous errand, as having sought to warn his victim by singing the tale of the "notorious treachery of Grimild towards her brothers" (Book xiii). But it is not only the variations in the story which separate the Norse poems from the German ones. The Norse heroes are mere wandering chiefs, the German ones knights and princes. Love, which especially in the earlier Sigurd group of the Norse is rather rudely made use of than delineated, becomes in the 'Lay of the Nibelungs' a prominent feature of the tale. The interval between the two, judging by the tone and spirit alone, is that not of years but of centuries. The Edda presents us with the rough songs of Norse sea-rovers; the 'Nibelungenlied' belongs to the early part of the age of chivalry. This is indeed discernible even in the old 'Lay of Hildebrand', as I have above tried to point out.

The 'Nibelungenlied', of which an abstract is already to be found in Weber, and which has been frequently reviewed in this country, and even translated into English verse (by Mr. W. N. Lettsom, 1850), is probably still chiefly known among us through a paper by Mr. Carlyle (Miscellanies, vol. ii.). I have indeed doubly hesitated, after the new and spirited abstract of it contained in Mr. Carlyle's

Essay, with its snatches of translation in verse, to present one of my own in sober prose. But,—misled apparently, as I have before ventured to suggest, by Weber,—Mr. Carlyle, whilst admitting the ‘Nibelungenlied’ to be of earlier date than the ‘Heldenbuch’, proceeds to consider it through the medium of the latter, including even its latest element, the ‘Horned Siegfried;’ which process,—though the literary values of the works would be inverted,—seems to me somewhat as if one should try to evolve the Arthurian legend out of Sir Thomas Mallory through the ‘Idylls of the King.’ I have therefore, for the better comprehension of the whole cycle, assigned to the ‘Lay of the Niblungs’ its due place and space in the development of the legend. For the history of the poem itself,—how it was first printed in 1757 by Bodmer, then by C. H. Muller, and finally was “investigated, translated, collated, commented upon with more or less result, to almost boundless lengths,”—I would refer the reader to Mr. Carlyle’s pages. It will be sufficient to say that, whilst the characteristic feature of the work lies in its consisting, in its present shape, not of a mere *collection* of detached pieces put into sequency by a compiler, but of an actual *fusion*, whether by one hand or by several, of whatever elements may have previously existed

separately into a real poem, discrepant indeed still to a great extent in its various parts, but still full of interest as a whole,—a furious controversy has raged amongst our German cousins as to whether it was to be considered as one poem or as many, and the attempt has been made by Lachmann to sort out as many as twenty separate poems from it; and he in turn, after apparently winning his way with the mass of the literary world, has found himself latterly sharply contradicted by Professor Holtzendorf of Heidelberg, a stout assertor of the original unity of the poem. I am assured however by a valued German friend, and am delighted to hear it, that “public opinion in general takes no interest at all in the debate, no more than it did to any amount when Lachmann started his theory.” Almost all analogy of course would lead to the conclusion that Lachmann is substantially right,—that like all real popular epics, the work is one literally *composed*, *i. e.* put together, not written off as a whole, like the cultivated epics of a more modern era; but few probably would be disposed to carry out the view into such minute dissection of parts as he attempted. In the meanwhile, the texts which Lachmann treats as the most ancient,*

* And which I have followed; Lachmann’s edition of Berlin, 1826, Lassberg’s of 1846, St. Gall and Constance. There is a

Holtzendorf declares to be modern. The reader must try to be as little disturbed as possible by this war of the commentators in considering the poem itself.

The great Greek epic opens with the word which is to serve as its key-note throughout,—“Wrath.” It leaps as it were at a bound to the summit of its argument, as a song of gods and men, by bringing before us at once the powers of the world above, this one as the inspirer of the singer himself, those as the authors of the dire strife which he has to sing of. Not so the great German epic. Though still more emphatically a ‘song of wrath’ than the Iliad, it professes to be a mere wonder-tale. It looks around, not above; invokes no inspiring goddess, but simply, and in form quite inartistically, addresses itself to a circle of nameless hearers: “In ancient tales many wonders are told us of praiseful heroes. Of travail great, of joy and high-tides, of tears and wailing, of bold knights’ battle-strifes, ye may now hear wonders told.*—There

handy school edition of the latter text by Schönhuth, Heilbronn and Leipzig, 1847. It is evident that the division into cantos or ‘adventures’ (*aventure*,—the word itself adopted from the French), and even the stanza form occasionally, which mark one or both of these versions, are signs of lateness.

* The punctuation of these opening sentences must remain quite uncertain, unless we suppose them to form really two separate, alternative openings for the minstrel’s use.

grew up in Burgundland a very noble maid; in all lands that are nought fairer could be; Kriemhilt by name. A fair wife she was; for whom must many knights lose their life." Three kings were her brothers, Gunther, Gernot, and young Giselher. They dwelt at Worms by the Rhine, and had heroes in their service; Hagen of Tronege and his brother Dankwart the swift, marshal of the court; Ortwin of Metz, Margraves Gere and Eckwart; Volker of Alzey (afterwards exhibited to us as the 'fiddler' or minstrel); Rumolt the 'cook-master', &c. While Kriemhilt is dreaming ominous dreams of a falcon 'strong, fair, and wild', which she brings up for many days, but which two eagles destroy,—which her mother Ute (or Vote) tells her means some noble husband, whom she must soon lose,—Sifrit, a noble king's son in the Netherlands, whose father was Sigemund (Sigmund) and his mother Sigelint, goes wandering through the world in quest of adventures, famed for valour and comeliness. Even before growing to manhood, he has done such wonders that men may sing and tell of them for ever. And now great festivities are celebrated in his honour by his parents; a tourney is held, at which lances fly to splinters, and much red gold is lavished away by the queen. The elder sovereigns hand over all their authority to their

son, though during the lives of his father and mother he refuses to bear the crown. The young hero hears say how there is a fair maid in Burgundy, “shapely to a wish.” He speaks to his father and mother of his desire to marry Kriemhilt; they assent, but warn him to beware of Gunther’s men, Hagen especially. He departs with twelve companions only; all their clothing was of red gold; their horses went even, their shields were new, strong, and broad, and glittering their helms; sharp were their spears, Sifrit’s was full two spans broad. When they reach Worms, Hagen is called in by the kings to say who the strangers are. Looking from a window, he guesses the chief to be Sifrit, the slayer of the Niblungs* and the conqueror of their father’s sword Balmung (or Palmung) and of all their treasure; the conqueror also of king Albrich, and the winner of the ‘cape of darkness.’ Once he bathed himself in a dragon’s blood which he had slain, so that no weapon can wound him.†

* The ‘Niblungs’, it will be observed, are here treated as quite distinct from the Burgundian kings of Worms. But the whole of this earlier portion of the poem must be considered (as is almost universally the case in such compositions) as being later in point of date than much at least of the remainder.

† This reference to the legend of the slaying of Fafnir will be noticed. The incidents differ greatly. Sigurd *drinks* the blood and learns mysteries; Sifrit *bathes* in it and becomes invulnerable.

The kings go down to greet the stranger, whom it is deemed wise to treat courteously. Sifrit behaves himself haughtily at first, requiring the princes to submit to him; after considerable altercation they agree to share with him; great festivities are celebrated, and Kriemhilt looks out from her window at the handsome stranger, who equally longs to see her, and yet has to remain for a whole year in Gunther's country before doing so.

Suddenly invasion is threatened by Ludegar of Saxony and Ludegast of Denmark, to Gunther's great disquietude. Sifrit offers to fight the invaders; his offer is of course accepted. He overcomes each in turn. The messengers give account of the battle to Kriemhilt; none has approached Sifrit in bravery. Great festivities are held on the return of the victorious army. Ortwin, a Burgundian officer, suggests that for the greater pleasure of the guests the king's sister be brought forth. She appears—going forth “as the red morning out of thick clouds”—and Sifrit is both glad and sorry. How can it ever come to pass, he thinks, that he should enjoy her love? if he should displease her, death would be a softer fate. The hand of Kriemhilt is eventually made a condition of his accompanying Gunther to Iceland to obtain the hand of “Prünhild” or “Brünhilt” (Brynhild), for

which purpose all equip themselves with the utmost splendour,—the poet showing the extent of his learning by speaking of the products of Morocco (Marroch), Libya, and Arabia.

The trials of strength with the young heroine need not probably be dwelt upon at length. Between the two last occurs a marvellous expedition of Sifrit to the land of the Niblungs, to bring back troops for Gunther in order to keep Brünhilt’s men in check. Wrapped in his “tarnkappe” (mantle of darkness),* he pushes a ship through the sea by his strength, the shipman thinking it was the wind. At the door of a castle he engages with and overcomes a giant-porter, and then king Albrich the dwarf, whom he has fought before, winning from him the Niblungs’ hoard, and has compelled to swear fealty to him. Albrich, the second time overcome, declares that but for his oath he would swear faith to his new victor, and is overjoyed to hear that it is Sifrit himself. On Sifrit’s return, his appearance at the head of a thousand men as

* It will be observed that, after Brünhilt is finally conquered, the ‘tarnkappe’ is heard of no more. I believe it to be a mere device of later times for avoiding the unfavourable shadow left on Sigurd-Sifrit’s character as a hero through his unfaithfulness towards Brünhilt. His ‘wishing-rod’ and the tales of his childhood, and of his fight with the sons of king Niblung, are evidently also late interpolations, by men who had lost even the meaning of the original legend.

Gunther's vassal tends to give Brünhilt a false idea of his position. At the final trial of strength, by which Sifrit, through the use of the 'tarnkappe', conquers for Gunther the exercise of his marital rights, and the scene of which is shifted to Worms after the king's return, Sifrit takes unluckily from Brünhilt a gold ring and her girdle, and gives them to his wife. Having accomplished this service, and agreed for a division of the country, Sifrit leads his bride back to his own land, where they have a magnificent reception, and the heroes have given to them "richer clothing than they had ever yet worn in all their days." They remain thus twelve years; Kriemhilt has a son called Gunther after his uncle, Brünhilt one named Sifrit after his. Sigelint, Sifrit's mother, dies. Gunther's wife meanwhile, looking upon Sifrit as a mere vassal, begins to think that Kriemhilt holds herself too high, and that Sifrit ought to do suit and service. She persuades Gunther to invite them to Worms, which is accordingly done, the messengers finding Sifrit at the Niblungs' castle, in the march of Norway. After conferring with his friends, Sifrit accepts the invitation, taking with him one thousand men; Sigmund his father offers to accompany him with one hundred more. Sifrit and Kriemhilt give so much to the messengers that they cannot carry it.

They show their presents on their return. “He may well give rings,” says Hagen; “he could not spend his gold though he should live for ever. His hand has grasped the hoard of the Niblungs. Hey! that it could yet come into the land of the Burgundians!”

Sifrit and Kriemhilt depart then with their father, leaving at home their child; “father and mother saw the child never more.” They are received with all friendliness and hospitality; many a rich dress is made wet with wine. Brünhilt meanwhile thinks that ere long she must ask Kriemhilt why they have so long withheld tribute. But Kriemhilt’s pride in her husband precipitates the rupture. She boasts that Sifrit could put all the land at his disposal. Brünhilt declares that this cannot be while Gunther is alive. “Seest thou,” says Kriemhilt pointing to her husband, “how he stands? how right masterfully he goes before the knights, as the bright moon before the stars?” Brünhilt still insists that Gunther must be above Sifrit; declares that she herself heard Sifrit say that he was Gunther’s man, and at last begins to speak about the tribute. Kriemhilt, stung to the quick, determines to shew her superiority by taking precedence of Brünhilt in going to church. She dresses herself and her maids up

in splendid vestments; thirty kings' wives could not dress themselves as she did; and when Brünhilt at the church-door orders her as a vassal to stand back, taunts the queen with having had Sifrit for her first lover, goes into church before her, and ends by showing her the ring and the girdle which he had taken from her.

Brünhilt in tears makes complaint to Gunther, who reproaches Sifrit for his wife's boasts over a service which should have remained secret. Sifrit protests his innocence, and appeases the king. But Hagen finds Brünhilt weeping, hears her tale, and vows revenge. Ortwin and Gernot plot with him to kill Sifrit, young Giselher alone endeavouring to dissuade them from doing so;—the king at last gives in to the plan. False messengers make their appearance, announcing an attack from Ludegar and Ludegast. Sifrit asks them to undertake the adventure with his Netherlanders, leaving his father Sigmund behind. Hagen, who is to accompany him, comes to take leave of Kriemhilt, who recommends Sifrit to his care. She is now much vexed at what she has done to Brünhilt; her husband has so thrashed her for it that she could scarcely appease him; well has he avenged it, "the hero bold and good." Hagen hypocritically asks how he may look after Sifrit's welfare. She then tells

him that when he slew the dragon on the mountain and bathed himself in the blood, so as to become invulnerable, a broad linden-leaf stuck between his shoulders,—there he can be struck with effect. Hagen treacherously suggests to her that she should sew on her husband’s dress a small sign, that he may know from what quarter he needs protection, and she promises to put on Sifrit’s dress a silken cross to mark the spot.

Hagen seems now to see his way clearly to the plotted revenge. News comes of a sham peace after the sham invasion, and Hagen suggests a hunting party, which Sifrit accepts. He parts with forebodings from his wife, “his darling,” kissing her on the mouth; “God grant me, lady, to see thee again safe and sound.” Kriemhilt thinks of what she has imprudently told Hagen,—she weeps beyond measure, and entreats Sifrit not to go, lest there should be treachery. He replies that he knows of no enemies there who can bear him ill-will. She continues her entreaties, telling him of the evil dreams she has had. But he will not be persuaded. “He clasped her in his arms, the wife rich in virtue; with loving kisses he comforted her fair body; with her leave he then departed in a short time; alas, she never saw him more safe and sound.” The poet dwells at length on the details

of the hunt, and on Sifrit's exploits, which end by his binding a live bear upon his horse, and finally killing him. They sit down to eat; Sifrit, "in all his virtues free from all falseness," reproaches Hagen with not having provided wine for them. Hagen says he knows of a cool spring, and offers to shew the way. They proceed thither, and Hagen and Sifrit race to it in their shirts. Sifrit reaches first, but out of courtesy will not drink before the king; ill thanks he got, for as he drank Hagen shot him from behind through the silken cross of Kriemhilt. Sifrit's heart's blood spurts out on Hagen. He finds nothing at hand to avenge himself with but his shield. With this he strikes Hagen down,—with such a stroke that the gems fly out, and the shield splits; he would have killed him, had he but a sword. But his strength failed him; Kriemhilt's husband "fell among the flowers," the blood running fast from his wounds. Gunther bewails his death; "grim Hagen" cannot understand why the king should weep, since all their sorrow and pain is at an end. Sifrit reproaches them with their treachery; little would Hagen have to boast of, had Sifrit known his murderous habit; struggling bitterly with death, he tells him that they will rue this day hereafter; yet recommends his wife to him; "nought rue I so sore," he says,

“as lady Kriemhilt my wife.” The flowers on all sides are wet with blood through his death-wrestle. They put the body on a golden shield, and determine to conceal Hagen’s treachery. In one version, the poet ends the canto by fixing the scene of the murder at Otenhaim in the Otenwald.

Sifrit’s dead body has been placed at Kriemhilt’s door. A chamberlain finds it without recognizing it. But Kriemhilt, before ever she discovers that it was her husband, begins weeping out of measure, thinking of Hagen’s questioning. In vain her companions try to quiet her, telling her the murdered man is only some guest. “The blood burst from her mouth through her heart-anguish. She said, ‘It is Sifrit, my well-beloved husband,—this is Brünhilt’s counsel, this is Hagen’s deed.’” When she was shown the knight, “she lifted his comely head with her white hand;” red though it were with blood, she recognized it. She sees that his shield is not hacked with sword-cuts. “Thou liest murdered,” she exclaims, “and could I but know who did it, I would ever plan his death.” She desires that Sifrit’s men and Sigmund be awakened. Sigmund has not slept; “his heart told him what had happened to him, that he should see Sifrit no more.” They bid him rise and go to lady Kriemhilt. He springs from his bed with one

hundred of his men, who seize their sharp long weapons. Kriemhilt clasps her father-in-law in her arms; the whole town of Worms resounds with their weeping; the Niblungs rush to arms to avenge the murder. Kriemhilt however, in the midst of her need and anguish, sees the danger of a conflict, and warns them not to rush on their death. Noble burghers come to wait with the guests, with them good burghers' wives. Smiths are bid make a coffin of "noble marble stone, full mickle and strong." Sifrit is carried to the minster, the bells ring, the priests sing. Gunther comes with his men, "with him grim Hagen," and declares that no harm has befallen Sifrit from his men; but the wounds begin to bleed when Hagen passes before the body. Gernot and Giseller however bewail the dead in all sincerity; their eyes become "wet-blind." After the mass Kriemhilt lets the body dwell yet three days and three nights; many men remain without eating or drinking; great alms are given to the poor, to the value of many thousand marks. As they finally bear the corpse to the grave, Kriemhilt's "faithful body" is wrung with such anguish that they have to sprinkle her "very thick" with water; a great wonder it was that she ever recovered. She begs to see once more Sifrit's "comely head," and begs

so long that they break up again the costly coffin. They brought the lady to where she found him lying. “She heaved his comely head with her very white hands, and kissed him thus dead, the good noble knight; her very bright eyes wept blood for grief;” full of anguish was the parting which then took place. They bore the lady thence, she could not go; senseless they found her, the lordly woman; for grief her winsome body was like to die. The whole day and night, till the next day, she understood not what was said; for three days long she neither ate nor drank. In the same need lay the lord Sigmund.

But his men said to Sigmund, We must go to our land, we may not remain here longer. He comes to tell Kriemhilt that they must leave; she will have all the power that Sifrit had; all Sifrit’s men will gladly obey her. On the other hand, her friends at Worms, her mother, the lady Ute, her brother Giselher, entreat her to remain. At first she resists their entreaties, saying she must die for grief if she should see Hagen. Eventually however, at the moment of the Niblungs’ departure, she determines to remain. Giselher escorts king Sigmund carefully back to the Netherlands. Only Count Eckwart remains behind with his men; “he served his lady with all his will till his death.”

She makes her a wooden chamber at Worms by the minster, where she spends much of her time. So sat she in her grief for four and a-half years, speaking never a word to her brother Gunther, nor seeing her foe Hagen.

Hagen now suggests that by means of Kriemhilt they may get possession of the Niblung treasure. Yielding at last to Gernot's urging, she has the hoard, her "morgengabe" (gift of the wedding morrow) brought from the land of the Niblungs. But she only uses it to distribute such gifts to rich and poor that many are won to her service, and her brothers feel anxious as to her purpose. Hagen undertakes to get possession of the treasure, and does so, much to the indignation of Gernot. They swear mutually neither to show nor give away the treasure but by common consent,—but Hagen gets sole possession, and sinks it all in the Rhine. Kriemhilt continues in her sorrow till the twelfth year, but eventually, at her mother's instance, leaves her retreat to live with the latter.

It befell in those days that the lady Helche, Etzel's wife, died, and that king Etzel sought to marry again. His friends urged him to ask Kriemhilt in marriage, "a noble wife, the highest and the best that ever king won." 'How can it be,' he asks, 'since I am a heathen unbaptized, and the

lady a Christian?’ Good Margrave Rudeger of Bechlar says he has known from childhood the queen and Gunther, Gernot and Giselher. Etzel offers him rich presents if he will obtain the lady’s hand for him. Rudeger declines his presents, but is willing to be his messenger at his own expense, and starts with five hundred men, visiting on the way at Bechlar his wife Gotelint, and his daughter, sometimes called Dietelind. They ride through Bavaria, “seldom” attacked by robbers, and enter Worms in great splendour. Hagen is sent to ascertain who they are, and recognizes Rudeger. They are most courteously received; on Rudeger’s setting forth the object of his embassy, Gunther asks seven days’ delay before giving an answer. He summons a council; all are of opinion, Hagen alone excepted, that Kriemhilt should marry Etzel. Hagen declares that if she ever bear Helche’s crown, she will do harm to the Burgundians. Giselher is wroth with him; if the marriage be for her good they should rejoice at it. Gernot and Giselher go and entreat Kriemhilt to consent to the marriage, but fail to persuade her, the “rich in sorrow;” for the “many virtues” of Rudeger she however agrees to receive the messengers, who wait upon her the next morning, attired in their best. She receives them in her every-day dress, “all wet

at the breast with hot tears." Rudeger delivers his message. She will be lady of twelve rich crowns, rule the lands of thirty princes. She promises a reply the next day. Giselher and her mother both advise her to go. She prays "the rich God to fashion her counsel." She, a Christian woman, shall she give her body to a heathen? She finds somewhat to rely upon in the assurance given to her by Rudeger and confirmed by his oath, that he and his men shall be faithful to her, and shall avenge her of all injuries. She begins to think, if the power of Etzel be so great, she may do her will. His heathenism is however the sticking point. Rudeger assures her that "he is not quite a heathen;" he has many Christian knights; she will easily be able to turn him to God. At last, at her brother's renewed urging, she yields.

She had still some of the Niblungs' gold, which she prepares to distribute or take with her; "she wanted to make rich all Rudeger's men." Hagen hears of it, and resolves to prevent the treasure from going. He knows well what Kriemhilt does with this treasure; if she were to bear it hence, she would only divide it in hatred to him. Kriemhilt learns this with "grim sorrow." Rudeger bids her never grieve for the gold; Etzel will give her so much wealth that she will never be able to dis-

tribute it. They fill in haste twelve chests with gold to carry away; she spends one thousand marks in masses for her husband's soul before leaving. Eckwart with five hundred men remains in her service; she takes with her one hundred "rich maids." Giseler with Gernot and one thousand knights accompany her some way, and on taking leave the former reminds his sister that if ever she wants him he will come to her aid.

The journey to Etzel's capital is lengthily described. They cross Bavaria, resting at Passau, with Bishop Pilgrim, Kriemhilt's uncle. Gotelint, Rudeger's wife, comes to meet them. "Enough out of Bavaria would have taken plunder on the roads, according to their custom; so might they perhaps have done harm to the guests. That was well understood by the lord Margrave; he led one thousand knights, and yet more." When they met, "the service of the knight was not displeasing to the queen." Feasts are held; Kriemhilt makes presents to Rudeger's wife and daughters, regretting that she is not able to do more. The young princess is much attracted toward her, and offers to come to her in the Huns' land. The bishop takes leave of his niece, expressing the hope that she may be as virtuous as Helche her predecessor.

Meanwhile all the Christian and heathen knights of Etzel's court troop to meet her. "Of Russians and of Greeks rode there many a man;" Polanders and Wallacks went together on a line, riding their good chargers with their wonted horsecraft; "the wild Pescenäre" (?) shot birds flying with their bows. Before Etzel the rich rode four-and-twenty princes; Duke Ramunk of Wallackland with seven hundred men (as flying birds they passed); Prince Gibeke with his lordly troop; Hornboge the swift; bold Hawart of Denmark; Irinc the swift; Irnfrit of Thuringen; the lord Blödel, Etzel's brother; lastly Etzel himself with Dietrich. The queen's mood was "well lifted" by the sight. She greets her new husband with a kiss, and is led by him to kiss twelve others. All proclaim that the lady Helche could not be fairer. Jousting takes place; Kriemhilt sits beside Etzel; "what they said to each other," observes the poet, "I do not know, save that her white hand was between his two, and lovingly they sate." She proceeds to Vienna, and on Whitsunday king Etzel obtains fulfilment of all his desires. Sifrit had not so many nobles as the queen sees around her, nor did he give away so many rich mantles, nor such good clothes. The knights followed the example of their lord, and many a knight remained "quite without

clothes through his generosity.”* From the city they proceed to Etzel’s castle, where Helche’s women, seven kings’ daughters, with Herrat, Helche’s sister’s daughter and Dietrich’s wife, await their new mistress.

In such high honour dwelt they till the seventh year. The queen has a son, who is baptized and named Ortlieb. So it goes on till the thirteenth year. Kriemhilt has been measuring her power. She has well ascertained that none opposes her, and that twelve kings are at all times at her command. She thinks of many a woe which she had endured in her first home; of the great honours which she had had from the Niblungs’ land, and of which, through Sifrit’s death, Hagen’s hand has deprived her. She wishes that she might bring him into the country. She dreams of her brother Giselher, and kisses him in her sleep; “I ween the evil Wayland suggested this to Kriemhilt.” It lies on her heart, early and late, how without fault on her part she has been brought to this, that she should love a heathen man. This was the doing of Hagen and Gunther. Every day she desires to be revenged on them for this. She is now so mighty, she thinks, that, let who may be offended, she is

* Von milte bloz ane cleit. The use of the word ‘milte,’ mildness, in the sense of liberality, is characteristic of the age.

able to do harm to her foes. She is always thinking of asking the king to bring her friends into the Huns' land. One night, as she lies clasped in his arms, she prefers her request, which the king willingly grants.

Etzel sends Werbel and Swemmel, his two minstrels—literally, fiddlers—as messengers, with twenty-four men as an escort. Gunther and his friends are to be invited to a festival. The queen specially charges the messengers privately to mention to no one that they have ever seen her troubled in mind. They are to say she is afraid that the Huns will deem her destitute of friends; were she a knight, she would go herself. Let them bring all their best friends. If Hagen of Tronege wishes to remain behind, ask who will shew them through the land; he knows from a child the way to the Huns.*

The messengers accomplish their journey in twelve days without accident. "Their silver and their clothes no man took from them; men feared their lord's hatred; for the noble well-born king was very mighty." The fiddler-envoys are nobly received, and deliver their message. Gunther bids them go to the hostelry, and calls his friends to-

* This is one of the passages which imply the legend contained in 'Walther of Aquitain', where Hagen is represented as a fellow hostage with Walther at Etzel's court.

gether to counsel. The best advise him to go, all but Hagen alone: to him it was “grim loath.” “Ye know,” he tells them, “what we have done. We must always beware of Kriemhilt. Since I slew her husband to death with my hand, how durst we ride into Etzel’s country?” They may lose there both honour and life.—It were ill done, says Gernot, to forbear seeing their sister, because Hagen being guilty is afraid of death.—Since Hagen feels guilty, says Giselher, he may remain behind and take care of himself.—Hagen, enraged by the taunt, declares that none shall scare him from undertaking the journey. In vain Rumolt the master-cook in turn advises them to remain; where can they ever be better than where they are? have they not food enough, the best that ever was? As they will not follow his counsel in remaining, Hagen advises them at least to go in force. To this Gunther agrees; one thousand heroes, selected by Hagen out of three thousand, are to follow him; Hagen and his brother Dankwart will take eighty, others in proportion. Amongst others comes a personage of whom much will be seen hereafter, Volker, “a noble player,” with thirty knights; “he was called the player because he could fiddle.” Meanwhile the Huns’ messengers are sore annoyed at not receiving their

congé,—another device of Hagen's, who bids the lords beware lest they let the envoys depart before they are ready themselves to leave, so that Kriemhilt should not have time to contrive any mischief before their arrival.

By the time that many brave knights are ready to start, the messengers receive their dismissal. Great presents are bestowed on them, but they declare that their lord has forbidden them to receive any; at which Gunther is sore troubled. They have an interview with the queen-mother Ute, but none with Brünhild, and make haste back, giving news of the speedy arrival of the Burgundians to bishop Pilgrim and to Rudeger. They meet Etzel at Gran, who flushes red with joy at the news of the coming of his wife's friends. The queen is profuse in her liberalities to the messengers. She asks what said Hagen. "He came one morning early," said the messengers; "few good words did he speak. When they praised the journey hither to Hunland, grim Hagen called it a journey to death." The queen declares she will stand pledge for Hagen, that good hero; her heart is lifted up at the thought of seeing him. Quarters are prepared for the beloved guests.

Never did highminded heroes go forth so lord-like into any king's land as the Burgundians. Yet

ill omens beset them. The old bishop of Spire talks with fair lady Ute: ‘Our friends,’ he says, ‘mean to go to the festival; may God preserve them there!’ The noble Ute speaks to her children. ‘Ye should remain here, good heroes,’ she says; ‘I have dreamed of need and anguish, and that all the birds in this land were dead.’ Hagen affects to make light of her dreams. They depart; Rumlolt in sorrow asks to whom they leave the people and the land? “To thee” (Gunther replies) “be the land commended, and also my little child, and serve thou well the ladies, that is my will; whomsoever thou seest weep, him comfort; never will king Etzel’s wife do us harm.” Passing through East Franconia, on the twelfth morning they reach the Danube.* The waters were swollen, so that they could not see their expected ships. Hagen forebodes evil through the rising of the waters and the strength of the current; many good heroes, he weens, will they lose this day. The king entreats him, through his own virtues, to discourage them no more. Hagen declares that his life is not so loathly to him as that he should wish

* The term “Niblung” is here used three times in five stanzas (1463, 1466, and 1467 of Lachmann’s text, 1553, 1556, and 1557 of Lassberg’s), apparently to designate the Burgundians. This occurs from henceforth several times again,—evidently showing that the poem in its present state is put together out of two different legends.

to drown himself; before that, many a man shall die by his hands in Etzel's country. He undertakes to go in search of a ferryman to carry them over to Gelpfrat's land.

Searching up and down on the banks, well armed with shield and two-edged sword, he sees "wise* women" bathing in a fair fountain, and seizes their clothes ("the hero did them no further harm"). "Then spoke the one merwife, Hadeburc by name: 'Noble knight Hagen, if you will give us back our clothes, we will make known to you how ye shall accomplish your journey to the court of the Huns.'" As she spoke, "they floated like the birds before him on the flood." She tells him they may well go to Etzel's land, for never heroes reached such honour as they will. He now gives them back "their wondrous apparel," and they tell him the way to Etzel's court. Then spoke the other merwife, who was called Sigelint—she warns him that her companion "for love of her clothes hath lied to him." If he go hence to the Huns, he is sore deceived. Those who do so "have death in their hand." Hagen tells them they are deceiving him; they cannot all remain dead in Hunland. One of the merwives says then that the king's

* Mr. Carlyle translates "white." It would be but the difference of a letter. But the reading of both the old texts is "wise."

chaplain alone will return in safety. “In grim mood spoke then the bold Hagen: ‘That were a weary tale to tell to my lord, that we are all to lose our lives to the Huns. Yet show us over the water, thou all-wise woman.’” Since he will not take counsel respecting the journey, says she, there is a house over by the water where there is a ferryman, and nowhere else; but he should beware of the latter, as well as of the knight Gelpfrat, a Bavarian lord. If the ferryman will not come, let them call over the stream the name of Amelrich, that of a “good hero” who left the country on account of his enemies, and the ferryman will then come.

Hagen follows the stream till he sees the house indicated on the other side. He cries out to the ferryman that if he will ferry him over he will give him a pouch of red gold. But the ferryman was so rich, and his servants were so proud, that they would not come. Then cried Hagen, “Now take me, I am Amelrich.” The proud ferryman himself takes the rudder and hastens over, but is very wroth when he sees that his fare is not Amelrich. Hagen thanks him, and offers him his pay. The ferryman declares he has orders from his lord to bring over no stranger. Hagen says his heart is sorrowful; “take from me for love this good

gold, and ferry us over, one thousand horse and also many men." It can never be, said the "grim ferryman." He had a strong rudder (or oar) "mickle and broad;" with it he smote Hagen who was unprepared, and brought him to his knees. Hagen is very wroth, and cuts off his head.

He now goes back to his party, who are astonished to see the blood reeking in the boat. Gunther fears lest he should have killed the ferryman. Hagen lies to him, declaring he has seen no ferryman, hurt no one; he is himself the best ferryman by the Rhine's side, and will bring them over. He takes over first one thousand knights, then nine thousand servitors. As he was bringing some over, including the king's chaplain, he thought of the strange tale of the wild merwife, and suddenly flings the chaplain out of the ship, much to Giselher's anger. Gernot declares that were it any one else who had done the deed he should suffer for it. The priest swims for his life, none daring to help him, Hagen even pushing him down; but though he knew not how to swim, God's hand helped him, and he reached the land. "There stood the poor priest, and shook his clothes." Then Hagen saw that the wild merwife had told him true. After they had unladed the boat, he breaks it up, and flings the pieces into the stream. Dank-

wart, his brother, asks him how they are now to get back? Hagen replies that he does it that none may think to escape.

(The wild beauty of this passage over the Rhine must, I think, strike every one. The merwives and their prophecy,—the meeting with the ferryman,—Hagen’s unwonted forbearance with him,—his sudden impulse to test the truth of the merwives by the attempted murder of the poor chaplain,—the escape of the latter,—the breaking up of the boat,—form a series of vivid scenes, such as Shakspeare himself might have painted them, yet all overhung by the weight of an approaching doom.)

They are all out of the boat. Who shall guide them? asks the king. Hagen now tells them that they will never return, that two merwives told him so that morning; that he sought in vain to detect the wild merwife in a lie by drowning the chaplain. He also tells of the ferryman’s death, and bids them beware of Gelpfrat’s and his brother Else’s revenge for it, and advises them to descend from horseback so as to go more softly. Volker “the swift fiddler” is chosen for their guide, as knowing already the country. For all their precautions, Gelpfrat and Else come up with seven hundred men and more, and meet Hagen and his brother

Dankwart with sixty men who were before. Hagen relates the circumstances of the ferryman's death, and offers any atonement for it. It is refused, and a conflict takes place. Hagen, engaged in single combat with Gelpfrat, is sore pressed, and calls for aid to his brother, who was engaged with Else; Dankwart springs to his assistance, and deals Gelpfrat a deadly blow, when Else, already wounded, orders a retreat. The dead are reckoned up; Hagen has lost four men, the Bavarians a hundred or more.

So on to Passau, where Bishop Pilgrin receives them hospitably, and where they remain all day. They then make their way into Rudeger's land, where Hagen finds Eckwart asleep, and takes from him his arms, but restores them with a present on his mentioning Rudeger's name. Eckwart warns them to be on their guard, on account of Sifrit's death. Hagen asks for lodgings, but only for the king and his men, as the horses have all perished through the hardness of the roads, and their provisions have run short. Eckwart promises them all hospitality from Rudeger, "the best host that ever came to house;" as the sweet May fills the grass with blossoms, so glad of heart is he when he can serve heroes. Eckwart therefore undertakes to be their messenger towards Rudeger.

Rudeger hears the message “with laughing mouth,” and promises his hospitality. When told that he will have to entertain sixty brave chiefs, a thousand good knights, and nine thousand squires, he is all the more overjoyed, and gives immediate directions for their reception, which he announces to the lady Gotelint, who as yet knew nothing. “Well-beloved darling,” said then Rudeger, “you should full well receive the noble kings here. . . . You should also fairly greet Hagen, Gunther’s man; with him comes also one that is called Dankwart; the other is called Volker. . . . These six shall ye kiss, you and my daughter.” The ladies accordingly bestir themselves, take rich garments out of chests, and make every preparation.

Rudeger goes out to receive his guests, whom he greets in the most friendly manner, undertaking to provide for the men, and to protect all their goods,—not so much as half a spur shall be lost. The margravine appears before the door with her fair daughter, and many a fair maid in splendid garments covered with precious stones; six-and-thirty maids there were, and other women, fair to a wish. The young margravine kisses the three kings, her mother following her. Hagen too stood by; her father bade her kiss him. She looked then upon him, and he seemed to her so grewsome

that she had fain passed him by. Yet she must needs do her bidding; but as she did it "mixed was her colour, pale and red" at once. She kissed also Dankwart, afterwards the player. The young margravine now takes Giselher in by the hand; her mother does the same by Gunther; Rudeger leads in Gernot. Good wine is served; never could heroes be better treated. Rudeger's daughter attracts the gaze of all by her good looks.

The next passage is curious, as showing the early Teutonic existence of a social (or unsocial) habit that separates us yet from all Latin nations. "After the custom they parted from one another, the knights and ladies; they went elsewhere." But the guests were troubled to see the ladies no longer, and when all had eaten their full cheer, the fair ones were shown back into the hall. Volker praised the margrave's good fortune. "Were I a prince," said the player, "did I wear a crown, I would have your fair daughter to wife." "How should a king ever desire my dear daughter?" replied Rudeger; "we are both poor, I and my wife, and have nought to give her; what boots then her fair body?" "Ye should leave this talk," said the lord Gernot; "could I have to wife a darling to my will, I should be always joyous with such a wife." Hagen now suggests a match between

Giselher and the princess. The proposal is agreed to ; the kings endow her with castles and lands ; the margrave, having no land to give, promises silver and gold. According to custom they make the fair ones stand in a ring ; they begin to ask the fair maid if she will have the chief. Partly was she loth, and yet thought to take him ; “ she was ashamed of the question, as many a maid has been.” Her father Rudeger bids her say yes, and agrees to give her over on their return from Etzel’s court ; after which the guests are dismissed to sleep.

They are entertained again in the morning ; but when about to start, the noble host warns them not to go to the Huns’ land, but to stay with him ; seldom has he had such agreeable guests. Dankwart declares it is impossible ; asks, somewhat bluntly, where he will find bread and wine for so many men ? Rudeger is distressed beyond measure by the question ; he declares that he can fully supply all their wants for fourteen nights. Eventually they have to tarry till the fourth morning. Rudeger bestows on them at parting weapons and clothes ; whatever any one wished to take, that he refused to no one. To Giselher he has given his daughter ; to Gunther he gives a suit of armour ; to Gernot a ‘ weapon good enough ’ (ein waffen guot

genuoc); by which afterwards Rudeger himself lost his life. The margravine offers her gifts to Hagen. He wishes for nought "but yon shield, hanging there on the wall;" that would he gladly bear with him to the Huns' land. The shield is to the margravine a memento of a past bereavement; it was that of Nuodung "whom Witege slew" (an allusion which the *Vilkina Saga* explains by connecting Nuodung with Dietrich's warfare against Hermanic). Yet she takes it down with her own white hands and gives it to Hagen; better shield never lit up the day with precious stones; it was worth full 1000 marks. Dankwart in like manner receives rich garments from the princess. It came not in their minds, says the poet, that hereafter they should be such enemies to their host, that they should slay him dead. Volker comes last with his fiddle, and stands before Gotelint; he fiddles sweet tunes, and sings to her his lay of leave-taking, the queen giving him "a load of friendly gifts."

Rudeger now announces his intention of accompanying himself his guests to Etzel's land, and starts with five hundred men on horseback. They part with kisses. Giseller did as his virtue counselled him. With clasped arms the knights comforted their fair wives. Many a window was

unclosed and thrown full open to see them depart. Yet rode they forth with joy, over the sands down by the Danube, as far as the Huns’ land. Messengers go forth through Austria, announcing that “the Niblungs”* are come to the Huns. When the king announces the news to his wife, her heaviness begins in part to yield. She thinks of having revenge on Hagen.

When the Burgundians (in later texts “the Niblungs”) come into the land, Dietrich and Wolfhart are sent to meet them. Hagen rides ahead of the guests. When the lord Dietrich saw them, he was both lieve and loth. He knew the tale; their coming was loth to him. ‘Be welcome,’ he said, ‘lord Gunther, Gernot and Giselher, Hagen and Dankwart, with you also Volker. . . . My lady Kriemhilt yet weeps sore for the hero of Niblungland.—She may well weep long,’ answers Hagen; ‘it is many years since he was slain. The king of the Huns whom she hath taken to husband, he it is whom she should now love. Sifrit comes no more; he has been now long buried.’—‘Whilst my lady Kriemhilt lives,’ said he of Bern, ‘evil may yet befall. Trust of the Niblungs, be thou ware.’ The chiefs draw him apart, and ask of him

* Observe this term again—stanza 1653 (Lachmann). It occurs equally in stanzas 1664, 1675.

further particulars. How does he know the lady Kriemhilt's mind? Then spoke the prince* of Bern: 'What shall I say now? every morning early I hear her, Etzel's wife, weep and wail full sadly to the God of heaven, for strong Sifrit's body.'

They ride to the court. Many brave Huns crowd round Hagen, to see how he is made. They tell of him that he slew Sifrit of the Netherlands, strongest of all chiefs, Kriemhilt's husband. Well grown was the hero (Hagen), big in the chest, his hair mixed with grey, his legs long, his gait lordly.—The queen has the guests from Rhineland separated in their quarters (so that afterwards they slew the squires at their lodgings). In receiving the Niblungs (*sic*) she kisses Giselher and takes him by the hand (*i. e.* him alone). Hagen sees it, and binds his helmet all the faster. The queen asks him what they have brought her from Worms, over the Rhine? Hagen retorts that she is so rich, that he should never have brought gifts to her. She insists: 'The hoard of the Niblungs, what have ye done with it? It was my own, as ye well know. Ye should have brought it to me hither in Etzel's land.' Hagen answers that "my lords"

* *Vogt, i. e.* bailiff. The Italian march or frontier was entrusted to Dietrich's keeping.

ordered it to be sunk in the Rhine: there it must be till the day of judgment. How could he bring it? He has much to carry,—his hauberk, his shield, his helmet bright, this sword in his hands.—The lady now announces that none is to bring arms into the hall; they must give up to her their weapons; she will have them kept. Hagen declares it cannot be: “I desire not the honour, bounteous daughter of princes, that you should bear to the hostelry my shield and my other accoutrements. You are a queen. My father did not teach me so. I will myself be chamberman.”—‘Woe is me,’ exclaims Kriemhilt, ‘my brother and Hagen are warned! could I know who did this, I would ever plot his death.’—In anger replied the lord Dietrich: ‘I am he that warned the noble princes, and Hagen the bold.’ Sorely ashamed was Etzel’s wife, for bitterly she feared Dietrich; she went from thence and spoke no more, but cast swift glances at her foes.

Dietrich and Hagen speak together, Dietrich lamenting the coming of the Burgundians. Etzel sees them, and asks who is the chief whom the lord Dietrich is greeting with such friendship. One of Kriemhilt’s men answers, ‘He is born of Tronege, his father was called Aldrian, he is a grim man.’ Etzel then (it would seem, although

the text seems defective in not indicating the change of speaker) says he knew well Aldrian, who was his "man", and won with him great praise and honour. "I made him knight," he says, "and gave him my gold." 'Helche the true had him in great affection. He was my prisoner, he and "Walther of Spain." Here they grew up into men. Hagen I sent home again; Walther with Hildegund ran away.' The king is rejoiced to see one who did him such service in his youth. (This is the remarkable passage which directly connects the Nibelungen cycle with the Latin poem of 'Walthar of Aquitain', having for subject, it will be recollected, the flight of Walther with Hildegund from Etzel's court, and exhibiting Hagen as intimate with the former.)

Hagen and Dietrich separate. Hagen looks over his shoulder for a companion. He sees Volker the brave fiddler, and asks him to go with him. They leave the court, and sit outside the palace, opposite a hall where sate Kriemhilt on a bench below, her queenly garments all glittering upon her. She sees them through a window; she is sore troubled and begins to weep. Etzel's men wonder; who can have thus troubled her? 'It is Hagen,' she replies. 'Lady mistress, how has this happened? we saw you lately full of

gladness. Whoever has done this, it shall cost him his life.’ “I lay myself at your feet,” said the king’s wife; “avenge me of Hagen, so that he lose his life.” Full sixty brave men are ready to slay Hagen and the fiddler. But the queen, seeing so small a troop, in grim mood dissuades them from the attempt. So few could never withstand Hagen; and however strong and brave be he of Tronege, yet far stronger is he that sits by, Volker the fiddler. More than four hundred men gather round her. She yet bids them be still awhile; she will go with them herself against her foes.

She descends to meet them; the fiddler sees her come down, and warns Hagen. Never did he see with a queen so many men with sword in hand, going in such warlike fashion; they should be on their guard. Hagen answers wrathfully, ‘I know well that all this is done for me.’ But will Volker stand by him? if he will, Hagen will be always faithfully at his service. Volker assures him of his help; though there come out against them the king with all his chiefs, he would not yield a foot for fear of them. But they should at least stand up from their seats,—Kriemhilt is a queen, they should do honour to her as she passes. ‘Nay by my love,’ replies Hagen, ‘they would fancy that I did

it for fear. For her will I never rise from my seat.' Over his leg lay a bright sword ; on its hilt a bright jasper, greener than the grass. Kriemhilt recognized it as Sifrit's. It reminded her of her woe ; she began to weep. Volker drew nearer to him "a fiddle-bow strong, mickle and long, like a sword sharp and broad ; there sate unaffrighted the two knights together." The "noble queen" went by their feet, and offered them foelike greeting : ' Now tell me, Hagen, who hath sent after you, that you should ride hither into this land, when you well know what you have done to me ? '—' None sent for me,' he replies. ' To this land were escorted three knights that are called my masters ; I am their man.'—' Now tell me further,' she said, ' why did you that whereby you have earned my hate ? You slew Sifrit my beloved husband, for which I have cause enough to weep evermore till mine end.'—' Why more talk ? ' said he. ' It is enough. I am that Hagen who slew Sifrit,—how sorely he paid for the lady Kriemhilt's scolding of the fair Brünhild ! All the blame is mine ; avenge it who will, woman or man, I will not lie, I have wrought you much sorrow.'—' Now hear him, ye knights,' she says, ' how he tells the truth.' But the Hunnish knights refuse to be her instruments. One says flatly he will not fulfil his

promise, he will not lose his life for any one's gifts. Another is of the same mind. Were they to give him towers of red gold he would not stand up to that fiddler. Hagen too he knows from his youth. He has seen him in two-and-twenty battle-storms wherein many ladies found their heart's woe.* He was then but a child; a grim man is he now; he bears moreover Balmung, which evilly he won. In short, none will fight the pair.

At Volker's suggestion they go forth to rejoin their masters. They find the princes just going to court. Volker and Hagen never were parted from this time, save in a battle-storm at their last hour. As the Rhenish prince comes in, introduced by him of Bern, Etzel springs from his seat. So right fair a greeting from a king never more took place. ‘Be welcome, lord Gunther, and also lord Gernot, and your brother Giselher; be ye greatly welcome, ye two knights, Volker the full bold and also Hagen, to me and to my lady here in this land. She hath in great truth very often reminded me of you.’ Hagen replies that had he not come on his lord's account he would have come in honour of the king. Wine is handed round in wide golden cups; they then proceed to table. Never

* “Him and the Spaniard,” the text bears,—another evident allusion to Walther of Aquitain.

host sat more graciously by his guests. They gave them their fill of meat and drink ; all they wished was at their command ; for many wonders had been told of the heroes.

The day had now an end. The night was near ; the "way-weary knights" wished for their beds. Gunther asks leave to depart, promising to come early in the morning. As they depart, the Huns throng the guests, which Volker complains of. They are taken into a spacious hall, wherein afterwards they received their death-fall, containing many rich beds, long and wide, covered with Arabian silks, with ermine, with the swart sable. Giselher's heart misgives him ; however kindly his sister may have received him, he fears that they may meet their deaths by her means. Hagen offers to perform "the shield-watch" till day ; Volker offers to perform it with him. Each takes shield in hand and goes out to stand before the door ; but Volker, leaning his shield against the wall, goes back and takes his fiddle. "Then rendered he his friends such service as beseemed the knight. Under the door of the house sate he upon the stone ; a bolder fiddler was never yet." He struck the strings, and all the house resounded ; sweeter and softer he began to play, and lulled upon the beds many a sorrowful man. When he found that they were all asleep,

he took his shield again, and went out to stand before the door, and so guarded his friends from Kriemhilt’s men. A night surprise is indeed attempted by the latter, but the sight of the fiddler and Hagen at their shield-watch is enough to make the Huns fall back.

At the approach of day, the watchers have to wake up the many who yet lie sleeping. Hagen asks them if they will go to the minster and hear the mass after Christian fashion,—they agree, but he is grieved to see them put on splendid garments for the occasion. ‘Take,’ he says, ‘for roses your swords in your hands, and for hats well decked with gems the bright good helmets; for silken shirts hauberks, and for rich mantles good shields.’ They will have to fight to-day—let them bewail to God their sorrow and their need, and know for certain that death draws near.

So they go to the minster, the princes and their men. Hagen bids them lay their shields at their feet. Their host comes with his fair wife, arrayed in rich garments. When king Etzel sees the knights of the Rhine thus armed, he exclaims that it is painful to him to see his friends go in their helmets; if any one had done aught to them he would gladly punish him as they might think good. ‘None hath done aught to us,’ answers

Hagen of Tronege. 'But it is my lord's custom to go armed to all festivities for three full days.'

After church come the jousts. Volker is unlucky enough to kill a richly dressed Hun. There is a cry to arms; the Huns seek to kill the fiddler. King Etzel endeavours to stop the tumult; declaring he saw how the mischief happened, that Volker wounded the Hun without meaning it, that they must leave his guests in peace. They go in to feast in the palace; but the Rhine men have many foes; Etzel himself is somewhat nettled to see them eat while yet armed, but threatens still any who should molest them. Kriemhilt asks Dietrich's counsel; but Hildebrand answers for his lord, 'Who slays the Niblungs must do it without me.' The queen promises her 'gold to any one who will single out and kill Hagen; but she would be much grieved were any one else hurt. Dietrich tells her her prayer does her little honour. She turns for help to Blödel. He bears no hatred, he says, to the Niblungs; he will be ill seen of the king if he attacks them. She promises him silver and gold, land, a fair wife. Blödel is tempted, and undertakes to risk his life with all his men in the attempt.

The princes go to the feast. Four of Etzel's men bring in Ortlieb the young king. "Now see,

my friends,” says the king, “this is my only man” —*i. e.* son. If he lives, he will give him thirty countries. He begs of them that when they leave they will take their sister’s son with them, deal graciously by the child, and bring him up to honour, till he come to be a man. Hagen roughly answers that seldom will he be seen going to court after Ortlieb. The king is vexed by the speech. But Hagen’s mood was not good for pastime. All the princes were grieved.

Meanwhile Blödel with a thousand men has gone to the hostelry where Dankwart the marshal sate at table with the squires. Dankwart receives him courteously; what means his visit? ‘Greet me not,’ replied Blödel. Dankwart must lose his life because of Hagen his brother, who slew Sifrit. Dankwart replies that he was but a small squire when Sifrit lost his life. Blödel will listen to nothing. ‘Then entreaty had better be spared’, replies Dankwart; and springing from table, he takes a sharp sword, large and long, and strikes a swift blow, so that Blödel’s head and helmet lie at his feet. ‘That be thy morning-gift,’ said Dankwart the hero, ‘to her whom thou hast chosen to thyself; she may to-morrow marry another man’ (for a true Hun had told him of the queen’s counsel). Blödel’s men however rush upon the squires. They had no

swords; they tear up the benches, and drive out the armed men, but there remain dead five hundred or more.

News is carried to Etzel that Blödel and his men are killed. Two thousand men go against the squires, they slaughter them all,—a thousand, with twelve knights of Dankwart's. Swords enough fell on his body, as he remained alone. 'O that he had a messenger, to tell his brother Hagen!'—'Thou must be the messenger; we will bear thee dead before thy brother.' He tries himself to go to the court and give the news. His shield is so full of spears that he lets it fall for the weight. As a wild boar in the wood before the hounds, so he rushes through the midst of them.—Carvers and cup-bearers hear the clank of swords; the drink and the meat fall from many a hand. Dankwart reaches the door all running with blood, carrying a mighty sword bare in his hand. It was just the moment when Ortlieb was being carried backwards and forwards from table to table.

'You sit too long, brother Hagen,—to you and to God from heaven I cry our need. Knights and squires in the hostelry lie dead.'—'Who has done this?' cries Hagen.—'Lord Blödel and his men; but he has not enjoyed it, for I struck off his head with these hands.'—'Why is Dankwart bloody?'—

‘It is the blood of others.’ Hagen (whom the poet seizes this strange opportunity of calling ‘the good hero’) suddenly kills Ortlieb; the child’s head leaps into Kriemhilt’s lap. Amongst other mischief, he also strikes off a hand of Werbel the fiddler, who had brought the invitation into the Burgundians’ land. Volker springs from table, his fiddle-bow in his hand, and ‘fiddles’ sternly. The three kings also spring from table, anxious to leave ere the mischief be greater. Gunther first enters into the fray; then Gernot, slaying many with the sharp sword given him by Rudeger; then Ute’s young son did great wonders, standing foremost among the foes. “Then men saw the guests go hewing with their bright swords through the king’s hall.” The crowd presses in from without; Dankwart is in great danger; Hagen calls on Volker to go to his help, who begins to go “full fiddling” through the palace, a sharp sword in his hand. Suddenly he calls out that the house is shut, that Etzel’s door also is closed. The host sits very anxious; what avails him to be king? The queen calls on Dietrich for help. Dietrich answers at first that he has enough to do to look after himself, so enraged are Gunther’s men. Pre-vailed upon however by her entreaties, he calls out; his voice sounded like a horn. Gunther

recognizes it, and bids his men cease from striking, that he may know what his friends have done to Dietrich; he is willing to make him any atonement. Dietrich replies that nothing has been done to him, but begs to be allowed to leave the house in peace with his companions. Gunther grants the request; whereupon he takes out under his arm the noble queen, and Etzel on the other side; many others go with him. Rudeger in turn is likewise allowed to depart. As Dietrich goes out, a Hun knight who seeks to take advantage of the escort is struck such a blow by Volker that his head rolls at Etzel's feet; which makes Etzel, once out, thank his salvation that he has "escaped the devil." The prowess of the fiddler,—the "tunes" which he "fiddles with the Huns"—excite equally within the admiration of Gunther and Hagen. When the slaughter is over, they put out the dead bodies; seven thousand are flung down the hall-steps; some, only wounded, are killed by the fall. A cry of lamentation arises from the Huns; Volker wonders to hear them wail like women, and "shoots" dead a margrave who was endeavouring to carry away the dead body of a comrade. Etzel, rendered desperate by the slaughter of his knights, comes out to fight the Burgundians; Kriemhilt advises him rather to bribe them; but Hagen begins in-

sulting the king and queen. She offers gold, castles, lands, to any one who will bring her Hagen's head. Volker expresses his wonder that so rich a reward should tempt no one. At last Irinc of Denmark undertakes the task. Hagen at first refuses, saying that he must have two or three at a time. Irnfrit of Thuringia and Hawart the strong with a thousand men go with Irinc, but he insists upon fighting alone. He engages in succession not only Hagen, but also Volker, Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher, slaying by the way four Burgundian knights. Giselher strikes down and stuns him without wounding him; but Irinc recovers himself and springs away, wounding Hagen in the face as he leaves the building unhurt. Great of course is the rejoicing on Kriemhilt's side. After refreshing himself and providing himself with better weapons, Irinc is unwise enough to repeat the venture, but is this time slain by Hagen. Irnfrit and Hawart with their thousand men go in to avenge his death, but Danes and Thuringians are all in turn slain by the Burgundians; then all is still, while the blood flows on all sides through every crevice.

Hagen now bids them unloose their helmets; he and his mate will keep watch. The knights sit down to rest on the bodies of those they have

killed. But before the evening, the king and queen have gathered together before the house full twenty thousand men. The hard strife lasts till into the night; all the "summer-long day" the guests defend themselves like good heroes against Etzel's men. At last they ask a truce, and wish to see the king and queen. The king declares he cannot make peace, after the death of his child and so many of his men. Gunther declares they were compelled by the slaughter of the followers at the hostelry. The parley goes on; Etzel's chiefs are inclined to let the guests go; Kriemhilt opposes it. Young Giselher addresses her as his "full fair sister;" why has she invited him over the Rhine to die? how has he deserved death at her hands? He was ever faithful to her, never did he harm to her; "full dear sister mine," he again addresses her, wilt thou not have mercy?—"I can have no mercy for you; I have unmercy; Hagen of Tronege has done me so great harm. Full unatoned for is it; whilst I have life, ye must all pay for it." Only if they will deliver Hagen over to her as a hostage will she give them their lives.—'Would God from heaven,' then spoke Gernot, 'were we a thousand, that we all lay dead, ere we gave thee that one man as a hostage.'—'We must then die,' spoke Giselher; since never has he betrayed the faith

of a friend. The queen now threatens to fire the hall, and on their still holding out, carries out her purpose.

The Burgundians are ready to perish for heat and thirst. “Then spoke Hagen of Tronege, the good knight: ‘Whomsoever thirst-need twinges, let him here drink the blood; it is in such a heat still better than wine.’ Loosing the helmet of a fainting man, he bows him to the wounds of a dead man; he began to drink the flowing blood. ‘Now praise I God, Sir Hagen,’ spoke the weary man, ‘that I by your teaching have drunk so well; full seldom has better wine been poured to me.’” The others do the same, and gain much strength thereby. They keep off the fire with their shields as best they may, or by Hagen’s advice tread out the falling brands in the blood.

The weary night passes thus, till Giselher feels a cool wind rising, which makes him think day is coming. They put on their armour again; there remain yet six hundred men, than whom never king had better. The Huns are astonished to see them come forth yet alive; Kriemhilt will not at first believe that they have escaped. The fight recommences; Volker bids the Huns come nearer, since there remains none among them but must die. One thousand two hundred men attack

them ; but the guests 'with wounds cool well their courage.'

Rudeger, coming to the court in the morning, sees the carnage on both sides, and weeps. He sends to Dietrich, to know if yet the king can be appeased ; Dietrich replies that there is no chance. A Hun sees Rudeger weeping, and goes to complain to the queen ; for so many castles as he has received from the king, Rudeger has never yet struck a good stroke in this assault. Rudeger indignant strikes the Hun dead, deploring that he should ever have brought the guests into Hunland. "Then spoke to the margrave Etzel the lord king : 'How have you helped us, full noble Rudeger ? when we have so many cowards here in the land, we have no more need of you ; you have done full evilly.'" The queen also comes, her eyes wet with tears. "How have we deserved it, that you should increase our sorrow, to me and to the king ?" She reminds him of his promise, made to her when he first escorted her to Etzel, that he would serve her till death. Rudeger admits that he swore to risk for her honour and life ; but that he should lose his soul, that swore he never. She bids him remember his oath, that he would ever avenge her ills. Etzel too begins to implore him ; both throw themselves at his feet. Rudeger feels himself in a

strait; whatever course he takes, he must do evil. He beseeches the king to take back land and castles; he will go forth on foot.—What help were that? says Etzel; land and people, he will rather give Rudeger all, that he should avenge them; he shall be king beside Etzel.—How can Rudeger act so? He invited the Burgundians to his house; he offered them meat and drink, he gave them his gifts; to Giselher he gave his daughter; never saw he a young king so virtuous-minded. The queen continues to entreat his mercy. At last Rudeger yields. He knows that his fate is death, and commends to the mercy of his sovereigns his wife and child, and the many poor souls at Bechlar. The king trusts he will yet come off safe; but Etzel’s wife wept to see him venture soul and body.

Sadly Rudeger went forth from the king. He found his chiefs close at hand, and bade them arm, as he must engage the bold Burgundians. Quick they sprang to their weapons, and with five hundred men, and twelve chiefs besides, he proceeded to the beleaguered house; sharp swords bore the margrave’s men, and before their hands the bright broad shields. Volker saw them, and was loth; young Giselher beholding his father-in-law as he came with closed helmet, how should he understand that he meant aught but good? ‘Now well

is me,' he said, 'that I should have made such friends on the way ; glad am I, by my troth, of my marriage.'—'I know not what your trust is, spake the player ; when saw ye ever through the sunlight so many heroes go with closed helmets, bearing sword in hand ? Rudeger means to earn upon us his castles and his land.'—Before the fiddler had finished his speech, they saw the noble Rudeger before the house. His good shield he set before his feet,—now must he to his friends renounce service and greeting. The noble margrave calls out into the hall ; heretofore they were friends, now must he be quit of his troth. Affrighted were the need-sore men at this news, who after having endured such labour from their foes, must now strive with their friend. Gunther beseeches him to have mercy. Rudeger declares he must fight them ; he has promised, and Etzel's wife would not discharge him. Again Gunther promises to serve him ever if he will let them live. Gunther reminds him of the rich presents he gave them, Gernot of the loving reception they met with at his hands. 'Would God,' said Rudeger, 'most noble Gernot, that ye were at the Rhine, and I were dead !' Gernot shows the arms he gave him, which have never failed him in all this need ; bright are they and stedfast, lordly and good ; if Rudeger slays

his friends, must Gernot kill him with his own sword? Giselher tells him he wishes too soon to make a widow of his fair daughter; how unfriendly is it for Rudeger and his men to strive with one who is true to him above all other men, since he has taken his daughter to wife!—‘Think of your truth, noble lord king; should God send you from hence’ (so spoke Rudeger) ‘let not the young girl pay for me; by your own virtues vouchsafe to be gracious.’—Giselher replies that should his men perish in the fight, all friendship must be parted between him and Rudeger and his daughter.—“Now may God have mercy,” spoke the bold man; and the shields were lifted for the fight, when Hagen called out: ‘Wait awhile, most noble Rudeger, let us speak further; what does our death help Etzel? ‘I am in much trouble for the shield, which lady Gotelint gave me to bear; the Huns have hewn it down from my hand. I bore it as a friend into Etzel’s land; would that God from heaven would grant me to bear yet a shield as good as that thou hast before thy hands, most noble Rudeger, then would I need no more hauberk for the storm.’—‘Full willingly would I be good to thee with my shield, durst I offer it thee before Kriemhilt. Yet take thou it, Hagen, and bear it on thy hand; ah, couldst thou but carry it into the Burgundians’

land!—As he so willingly offered him the shield for gift, there were eyes enough red with hot tears; that was the last gift that from thenceforth ever more offered to any knight Rudeger of Bechlar.—So grim were Hagen, so wrathful-minded, yet the gift pitied him, which the good hero, so near to his last moments, had made; many a noble knight with him began to lament. ‘Now God from heaven reward you, most noble Rudeger; never more shall be your like, who to wretched knights make such lordly gifts. God grant that your virtue may live for ever!’ Hagen pledges himself never to lift his hand upon Rudeger, though he were to slay all the Burgundians.—Volker declares that since his mate Hagen has made peace, he will do the like, and bids him look at the red fiddle-bow which the margravine gave him.—‘Would God,’ said Rudeger, ‘that the margravine could give you yet more; the news will I gladly give to my darling, should I see her again.’ So speaking he lifts his shield and begins the fray, while Hagen and Volker look on; but when his men engage the conflict they spring into it, sparing him alone. Rudeger slays so many of the Burgundians that at last Gernot engages him; they perish by each other’s hand, Rudeger under his own weapons. The furious Burgundians slay all Rudeger’s men,

and then sit down, strife-weary, weening, Giselher says, that God means them not to live much longer. The silence lasts so long that Etzel’s wife fears treachery; she imagines that Rudeger means to take the guests away to their country. Volker overhears her; could he accuse so noble a body of lying, devilishly has she lied upon Rudeger. He and his followers lie dead; “look round, Kriemhilt, whom ye would now command; Rudeger the hero has served you to the end.” To convince them, they bring the hero’s mangled body for the king to see. When they saw them drag the margrave dead, a writer could not write nor say the grief of woman and man. King Etzel roared like a lion with heart-sorrow.

One of Dietrich’s men hears the great lamentation. He addresses the prince, declaring he never heard the like; the king himself must have gone up; either he or the queen must be dead. Bold Wolfhart offers to go and learn the news. Dietrich, fearful of his temper, bids Helpfrich go instead. He returns in tears with the tidings of Rudeger’s death. It is the devil’s mock, says Dietrich. Wolfhart declares that the guests should all pay for it. Thoughtful sate the prince at a window. He bade Hilprant (or Hildebrand) go and learn what had happened. The “stormbold

knight," Master Hildebrand, went forth without shield or weapon; grim Wolfhart, who sees it, declares that if he go bare, he will return shameful. Before he was aware of it, all Dietrich's knights were in arms, sword in hand, to accompany him.

Volker sees them coming, and forebodes evil. Hildebrand places his shield before his feet, and asks what they have done to Rudeger? is it true that they have slain him?—"The news is true, answers Hagen; would God the messenger had lied to you! that Rudeger were yet alive! Man and woman must ever weep for him." Dietrich's men begin to weep; "one saw the tears go over their beards and over their chins." Hildebrand for sobbing can put no more questions, but asks for the body of Rudeger that they may pay him the last honours. Volker however will not let them in; Wolfhart provokes him; Hildebrand his uncle endeavours to restrain him. "Let go the lion, master," cries Volker. Wolfhart springs at him; old Hildebrand however is before, and attacks Hagen; a "fire-red wind" goes forth from their two swords. The fray begins; many bold knights fall on all sides. A grim man was Dankwart, Hagen's brother; what he had done before in the strife with Etzel's knights was but a wind. Old Hildebrand fares like one mad. Volker slays Sig-

stap, sister's son to Dietrich ; Hildebrand avenges him on Volker himself. Hagen of Tronege sees Volker dead ; of all the feast that was his greatest sorrow. Helpfrich the strong slays Dankwart ; Wolfhart goes hewing down Gunther's men on all sides. Giselher calls him ; they engage, and perish by each other's hands. Hildebrand runs to Wolfhart, and endeavours to carry him off from the hall ; but he was a little too heavy ; he must let him lie. The wounded man looks at him out of his blood ; he begs his uncle not to care for him, but to beware of Hagen, and to tell his men there is no need to weep ; “by a king's hand I lie here in lordly death ; I have too so avenged here my life, that good knights' wives must bewail it ; if any ask you, ye shall say at once, by my one hand a full hundred lie slain.”

Hagen seeks to avenge Volker on Hildebrand, and strikes a blow by which one might well know Balmung, Sifrit's sword, which Hagen had taken from the hero when he slew him. Hildebrand strikes at him in return, but cannot wound him. Wounded himself, and fearing worse, he throws his shield over his back, and outruns Hagen. None remain alive but himself, Gunther, and Hagen. Dietrich receives him with reproaches ; why did Hildebrand fight with the guests, in spite of his

master's forbiddance? Hildebrand explains that they wanted to carry away Rudeger, but were not allowed. 'Is Rudeger then dead?' Then weeping, 'O the true help that I have lost! Who is the knight that hath slain him?'—Strong Gernot, Hildebrand answers, did it; but the hero too lies himself dead by Rudeger's hand. Dietrich now bids Hildebrand tell his men to arm quickly, as he will himself go and question the Burgundian heroes. "Then spake Master Hildebrand: 'Whither shall I go? What you have of living (men), that see you stand by you.'" Dietrich shudders at the news. "God hath forgotten me, poor Dietrich that I am! I *was* a mighty king, lordly and rich. . . . But how could it befall,' spake lord Dietrich, 'that they should all be dead, the praiseworthy heroes, through the strife-weary ones that yet were sore pressed? . . . Has none of the guests yet survived?'—"God knows, none more, but Hagen alone, and Gunther the lord king."

"Then took the lord Dietrich himself his war apparel; old Hildebrand helped him to arm. Sorely too wailed the strong man, so that the house began to resound with his voice. Then again gained he the mind of a true hero; in grimness then was armed the good knight; a shield full tough then took he in his hand; soon they went forth, he and Master Hildebrand."

Hagen sees them, and that the lord Dietrich is coming to avenge his strong woe; never seemed he so strong of body and so terrible. Dietrich and Hildebrand hear them speak; they find the two chiefs both standing outside the house, leaning on the doorpost. Dietrich puts down his good shield, and reproaches Gunther with the ill they have wrought upon him; whatever he had of joy, lies slain by them. “We are not so guilty,” said Hagen; “methinks the tale has not been rightly told you.”—“What shall I rather believe? Hildebrand told me, when my knights of the Amelungs’ land desired that you should give them Rudeger out of the hall, ye offered nought but insult to my knights here below.”—“They said they wished to carry Rudeger from hence,” said Gunther; “I bade this be denied them, but for spite of Etzel, and not of thy men; and then Wolfhart began to storm about it.”—“So must it be,” said the hero of Bern; “Gunther, noble king, through thy virtues make amends to me for the sorrows that have befallen me from thee. . . . Give thyself to me as a prisoner, thou and thy man; so will I protect thee the best I can, that none of the Huns here do aught to thee; thou shalt find in me nought but truth and all good.”—“God from heaven forbid,” said then Hagen, “that two knights should give

themselves up to thee, who stand yet before thee armed so warlike yet.”—“I give you my troth,” said Dietrich, “that I ride with you home again to your land; I conduct you honourably, or I lie dead; for you I will forget my dreadful woe.”—“The tale fits not well to be told of us,” replies Hagen, “that two so brave men should give themselves up to you, now that one sees by you none but a single Hildebrand.”—He goes on to reproach Hildebrand for his flight. Hildebrand retorts, with a new allusion to the subject of the ‘Waltharius’: “now who was it that sat on his shield before the Wasgenstein, when Walther of Spain slew him so many of his troop?”—“It befits not heroes,” says Dietrich, “that they should scold like old wives. I forbid you, Master Hildebrand, to say more.”—But it is in vain; Hagen is incensed at the idea of their being asked to give themselves up. Seeing his “grim mood,” Dietrich seizes his shield, and Hagen springs on him with the good sword of the Niblungs. But Dietrich’s sword is “a weapon strong enough,” and with it he is adroit enough to give him a wound “deep and long.” He thinks now it will be little honour to kill him, he should rather take him. “His shield he let fall; his strength it was great; Hagen of Tronege he grasped in his arms; then was overcome by

him the brave man. Gunther the noble began to sorrow therefore. Dietrich then bound Hagen, bore him where he found the noble queen, and gave to her hand the boldest knight that ever bore sword; after her full strong sorrow then was she joyful enough.” He recommends her—very uselessly as one feels beforehand—to spare his life. Meanwhile Gunther is calling for him to come, and rushes on him at his appearance. It was a wonder that lord Dietrich survived, so sore wroth and enraged was Gunther, so lordly was his courage. Yet the blood began to flow through the rings of his mail through a sword-stroke of lord Dietrich’s; at last he was bound “as no kings should be,” and carried out in turn to Kriemhilt. “Welcome,” said she, “Gunther, a hero of the Burgundians’ land!”—“I should salute you,” he replies, “my very dear sister, if your greeting might be more gracious.”—“Wife of a noble king,” says Rudeger, “never were such good knights made prisoners as I, lady, have given you; now should you let the poor ones be safe with me.” She said she would do it gladly. With tearful eyes Dietrich departed. “Grimly afterwards did Etzel’s wife avenge herself.”

She made them lie apart, so that neither afterwards ever saw the other, till she bore her brother’s head to Hagen. First she went to Hagen: “If

you will give me back that you have taken from me, you may yet well go home alive to the Burgundians.”—“The prayer is lost,” said grim Hagen; “full noble queen, I have sworn it, that whilst any of my lords live I will show the hoard to no one.”—An end to this, said she. “Then bade she take her brother’s life. Men smote off his head; by the hair she bore it before the hero of Tronege; sorrow enough was it for him.” He tells her he thought it would be so. Now is the king of Burgundy dead, and Giselher, and Gernot; none knows where the treasure is, but God and himself; it shall ever be concealed from her.—She declares she will at least have Sifrit’s sword; “It was borne by my sweet love, when I saw him last; when a heart-sorrow befell me above all sorrow.” She took it from the sheath,—he could not prevent it,—she lifted it with her hands, she smote off his head. King Etzel saw it and was displeased enough. Old Hildebrand declared that though she durst slay him, she shall not enjoy his death; he will himself avenge the bold one of Tronege. Old Hildebrand sprang to Kriemhilt, and struck the queen with a sword; what did it help her, that she full dreadfully screamed? To pieces was then hewed the noble woman. Dietrich and Etzel began to weep,—and so, amidst universal tears and

lamentations, “Here has the tale an end; this is the Niblungs’ need.”*

So ends this wonderful poem,—to my mind by far the grandest of epics since the Iliad, and even superior to that in its conclusion for sustained tragic awfulness; whilst on the other hand, of course, it must always remain inferior beyond comparison to that masterpiece in all the essential characteristics of the Greek genius,—unity, and proportion of parts, and adequacy of means to ends and motives to acts,—in short all the qualities dependent on the *μέτρον*, the inner music of thought and form. Here, as in the series of Norse legends, and still more offensively since they have been reduced to outward unity, we are called upon to shift our sympathies bodily from Sifrit to his murderers, and to look upon the cowards of the first part as the dauntless heroes of the second. Kriemhilt’s preferring to reside in the neighbourhood of her husband’s murderers remains perfectly unaccountable; not less so that she should so long delay her revenge, nor that her second lord, Etzel, (who indeed plays no very creditable part) should espouse so readily the cause of his predecessor in her affections. I should be inclined myself to con-

* Or, according to the later text, ‘the Niblungs’ lay.’

sider that the poem is really the work of at least three distinct rhapsodes, the earliest of whom must have followed the Norse legend, according to which, as we have seen, Gunther and his kindred were the Niflungs or Niblungs. Traces of this, it will be recollected, are frequent towards the middle of the poem, whilst the older title ('Niblungs' Need') shows that this must have been the original form of the legend. I should then incline to consider the last books, representing the catastrophe at Etzel's court, as the next most ancient portion; and the beginning, occupied chiefly with Sifrit (though dealing with the oldest legend), as the most modern, and in fact introduced chiefly to account for Kriemhilt's hate to Hagen.* The wonderful *keeping* of the last part, its perfect truth of character in all the heroes, forbid me from supposing that the same great poet would ever have produced anything so out of keeping with the close, so devoid of truth of character, as the commencement.

* In legendary poems of a semi-historic nature, it will generally be found that the most ancient portion lies towards the middle, and that the most modern is at the beginning of the series. The popularity of a poem would tempt in the first instance to continuation; but each step then becomes more difficult to take, as carrying the poet towards his own times, and thereby hampering his invention; whereas each step backward from the commencement, by carrying him towards the unknown, adds to his freedom.

This view is, I think, to some extent supported by a poem often found in MS. in connexion with the former, called “the Lament,”—“*Diu Klage*,” and which I should agree with Gervinus in considering as probably more ancient than the former part of the “Lied,” as far as the actual text at least is concerned. But in substance, I cannot help viewing it as decidedly more modern than the “Lied,” taken as a whole.* Not only does it profess to rest altogether on the authority of a written book, thereby showing itself not to be the work of a true rhapsode, but to belong to that second epoch of the popular epic, when a state of semi-cultivation exists, and the minstrel seeks to bolster up his compositions with sham authorities either of texts or of names,—but the very conception of it is artificial, however inartistic the form. The natural flow of poetry is to lament over the recently dead, to tell the story of those long departed. When the practice comes in of composing laments over personages dead centuries before, you may be sure that the actual story of those personages has long been told, and that it is a mere attempt to dress up old matter in a new form. Here the ‘Klage’ visibly implies the ‘Noth’ throughout; although, starting from and chiefly dealing with Kriemhilt’s

* M. Amédée Thierry indeed ascribes it to the fourteenth century.

second wedding and its consequences, and reproducing the leading events of the narrative in the wailings of the three surviving personages, Etzel, Dietrich, and Hildebrand, it seems to me to show that the catastrophe was considered the kernel of the whole cycle of legend. It is indeed observed by Grimm and Gervinus that the robbery of the Nibelungs' treasure is made by it the prominent ground of Kriemhilt's revenge; and so far, the inference seems to be a probable one, that the giving the first place as a determining cause of that revenge to Kriemhilt's affection for her long dead first husband must have been a refinement of a later age. But although it may be literally true, as Grimm maintains, that the writer has not had before him "*our* Nibelunge Noth," a "Nibelunge Noth," I repeat it, underlies it throughout.

At any rate, the 'Klage' is immeasurably inferior to the 'Noth', and amounts only to a vulgar continuation of it. Nothing can be more tiresome than Etzel's perpetual lamentations over wife, child, brother, chiefs, &c., which indeed Dietrich is shown reproving as womanlike; nor is additional dignity imparted to such by his declaring that "Machmet" (Mahomet) has not profited him, or that he is punished for having been five years a Christian and then having abandoned his faith; whilst some of

his doleful sayings sound like Joe Millers, such as “Alas! that no one may die till his last day comes” (v. 1033). In despite of perpetual weeping, wailing, screaming, the pathos is of the poorest, feeblest description. After having supped full of horrors in the storm, what can one care for hearing that on Hildebrand being told to carry Rudeger out, as he bent down, the wound that Hagen had given him began to bleed, and the body was “partly too heavy for him,” so that he could only bear it to the door, then lost his strength and changed colour, so that water was sent for? Or how is the hearer touched by being told that “however right unpleasant the dead may be to people, one saw then many dead men kissed and fondled?”

The special subject of the “Klage” is, as a sequel to the “Noth,” to describe the search among the dead bodies in the house of slaughter, the burying of them, the journey of Etzel’s “fiddler,” Swemmelin, to the Rhine by way of Bechlar and Passau, to give the tidings of the massacre to queen Brünhilt, his return, and the final parting from Etzel of Dietrich and his wife Herrat, who take also Bechlar on their way. Level and poor as the narrative is, it reaches to pathos in the description of the arrival of the messengers at Bechlar. To spare his niece (Gotelint), Dietrich has directed

them not to mention the terrible events which have happened, but to say that he and Rudeger will soon come and see her, or at all events himself. They are received with great rejoicing; Gotelint and her daughter think "both to receive love without sorrow, as often before, from beloved glances." The young margravine has a foreboding of evil at seeing the messengers so few, only seven. Then her mother tells her of an evil dream which she has had; and she in turn has to tell of another which had come to herself. Meanwhile the messengers are at hand, and are observed to be sad. They give to Rudeger's wife the false tidings of peace which they had been instructed to give; the younger lady wonders that her father should have been so "cross" as to send no message to herself specially. The ladies go on questioning the messengers about Kriemhilt, and how she received her brother? what she said to Hagen? what to Gunther? How is it, asks the younger one, that Giselher has sent her never a message? Each lying answer costs the speaker more and more; at last his tears begin to flow. The young margravine exclaims that there must be ill news; evil has befallen them; the guests and her father must be dead. As she speaks, one of the messengers can contain himself no longer; a cry breaks with blood

from his mouth. All his companions burst into tears at the same time. The margravine conjures them by their troth to tell how they parted from her husband; the lie must have an end. “Then spake the fiddler, Swemmelin the messenger: ‘Lady, we wished to deny to you that which we yet must say, since no man could conceal it; after this hour, ye see margrave Rudeger no more alive.’” The margravine, we are afterwards told, died of grief through the news; so did old queen Ute at her abbey of Lors. Brünhilt survives, and is prevailed upon by her vassals to have her son crowned. Etzel, after parting with Dietrich, loses his mind; according to another version, his fate remains altogether uncertain. Dietelint the young margravine is taken under Dietrich’s protection, who undertakes to find her a husband. Bishop Pilgrin has the story written out in Latin letters, “that men should deem it true.” A writer, Master Konrad, then began to set it down in writing; since then it has been often set to verse in Teuton tongues; old and young know well the tale. “Of their joy and of their sorrow I now say to you no more; this lay is called ‘Ein Klage.’”

It need hardly to be pointed out that the last portion of both the “Lied” and “Klage” must be

held to be in great measure borrowed from the Dietrich sub-cycle.

A strange passage occurs in an appendix to Mr. Kemble's "Beowulf." Speaking of Attila, he says (pp. 258, 259): "That this prince drew gradually into his traditional history the exploits of others, and more particularly those of Chlodowic and his sons in the matter of the Burgundian kingdom, is quite clear to any one who will take the pains to look over the accounts of the Burgundian war in Gregory of Tours, *where scarcely a name of note in the Nibelungen cyclus is wanting.*" The first doubt that occurs in this passage is, what Burgundian war Mr. Kemble refers to, seeing that that of Clovis-Chlodowic and that of his sons are wholly distinct. But "any one who will take the pains to look over the accounts" of the former war in Bk. ii. chs. 32—4, and of the latter in Bk. iii. ch. 11, of the author referred to, will find that the only names mentioned in the former are Gundobadus, Godegiselus, and Aridius,—in the latter, Chlothacarius, Childebertus, Theudericus, and Godomarus. Now the only ones of the above names which appear to be identifiable with those of the Nibelungenlied are Godegiselus-Giselher, and Theudericus-Dietrich. It is true that elsewhere Gregory speaks of a Burgundian Sigimundus, answering to

Sigmund, whilst Brunihildis is a prominent personage in his later history among the Franks, as well as the Burgundian Gunther. Nevertheless, Grimm has pointed out in the Burgundian Law a text which does supply to a great extent the connexion which Mr. Kemble has rashly deduced from Gregory of Tours: “If any shall be ascertained to have been free in the days of our predecessors of royal memory, that is, Gibica, Godomar, Gislahar, and Gundahar” (*si quos apud regiæ memoriæ auctores nostros, id est Gibicam, Godomarem, Gislaharium, Gundaharium*), let them remain in the same state of freedom.” Here it is impossible to mistake the “Giselher” and “Gunter” of the Nibelungenlied, the “Gibeke” of other poems of the cycle. And a Burgundian king “Gundicar” or “Cundichar” is mentioned by three separate writers (Prosper of Aquitain, Cassiodorus, and Paulus Diaconus) as a contemporary of Attila, and by the latter expressly as having been overthrown by the Hunnish king.

Bishop Pilgrin, it should be observed, is equally a historical personage, of considerable prominence in his time, who filled the see of Passau from 971 to 991, and took a great share in the conversion of the Hungarians to Christianity. M. Amédée Thierry ingeniously suggests that the older legend as per-

petuated in the Norse, in which Attila is still the ferocious monarch of history, may have been touched up and moralized by Bishop Pilgrin for the Hungarians, whose great national hero Attila was, so as to soften all the harsher features of his character. The difficulty in this supposition is, that no Hungarian Nibelungenlied has been preserved, and that the Hungarian chronicles (alluded to as historical by Mr. Carlyle), though full of fables which have some points of contact with the German legend, yet sensibly depart from it. In these chronicles, Attila is represented, in conformity with history, as having many wives, foremost among whom are named Honoria the daughter of the emperor of Greece (historically only affianced to him), and Crimhild or Kremheilch, daughter of the duke of Bavaria, each of them having a son,—Honoria's son is named Chaba, and Crimhild's Aladar. On the death of Attila from hæmorrhage, the night of his marriage with Mikolt, daughter of the king of the Bactrians (apparently the historical 'Ildico'), Theodoric excites the sons against each other; the Germans take part for Crimhild's son, the Huns for Honoria's. A gigantic fifteen days' battle ensues, for many days after which nor man nor beast could drink of the bloody waters of the Danube; Chaba is beaten and withdraws into Asia,

but Aladar dies of his wounds. In this narrative we may recognize the real battle of the Catalaunic plains, and perhaps also the slaughter of the Nibelungs, which Grimm is disposed to connect with the former.

CHAPTER VII.

BITEROLF: THE DIETRICH LEGENDS.

THE vast preeminence of the 'Nibelungenlied' over other poems of the cycle can never be felt more keenly than when it is compared with one deemed by Gervinus to belong to the end of the twelfth century, and consequently to be older than the completed form of the 'Nibelungenlied' as we have it now; a work of quite epical proportions, since it extends over no less than 13,000 and odd lines, and not without a certain epical character in its treatment of the subject, but the oppressive tediousness of which must be felt to be imagined, 'Biterolf and Dietlieb.' It requires to be noticed, as it has a value in the development of the cycle; but the reader may rest assured that I will not make him tarry over it longer than may be necessary. Like the "Klage," it professes to rest upon an older written original.

A gallant knight, Biterolf, whose capital is

Toledo (Tolet) hears such marvels spoken of king Etzel's court, that he secretly leaves his wife Dietlint and his son Dietlieb to go in quest of it. In his absence his son grows up, and eventually starts forth secretly in like manner in quest of his father. In crossing Burgundy, he is attacked by king Gunther, but throws all his adversaries, reaches Etzel's court, and after the inevitable incident of a fight between father and son, unknown as yet to each other, a mutual recognition takes place, and father and son proceed homewards, but with an army from Etzel sent to avenge the outrage committed by the Burgundians on young Dietlieb. Gunther is found supported by a numerous body of valiant guests, whom he has invited together under pretext of a tourney; the knights of the two armies at first tourney together, then a great battle takes place, which remains indecisive, and is followed by a general reconciliation, after which Biterolf and Dietlieb continue their way homeward.

Such is the very slender subject of this enormous poem—written indeed in real doggrel. It is quite obvious that the unpleasing character of Biterolf, who leaves wife and child simply to attach himself to the service of a strange sovereign, is almost sufficient to deprive it of all interest in itself. Gervinus points out, and probably with

truth, that the subject of the wanderings of a son in search of a father is characteristic of the Arthurian cycle, and that 'Biterolf' thus testifies to the influence of that cycle over Germany at the period when it was composed.

I have before intimated that the author of 'Biterolf' is considered by some German authorities to be the same as the one of the 'Klage.' In point of tediousness and garrulity, the two poems certainly nearly match each other; though I must say that I miss in 'Biterolf' the absolute childishness of parts of the 'Klage.' In other respects indeed, the same observations apply in great measure to both works. Whether older or not than the present text of the 'Nibelungenlied,' it is certain that 'Biterolf' implies throughout, with some discrepancy on minor points, the whole legend of the latter. In character, it is unmistakeably more modern; as for instance, in the way in which it is larded with reflexions; as when, after dwelling on Etzel's liberality, the author declares that "whoso acts not as a Christian, but only hoards and spares, may fare yet better to hell than Etzel the warrior, though he were a heathen." The chief value of the work indeed consists in its presenting to us *all* the leading personages of the 'Nibelungenlied'—Sifrit, Gunther, Gernot, Hagen, Brünhilt, Kriemhilt, Etzel,

Rudeger, Hildebrand, Dietrich, Wolfhart, Blödel, &c., &c., with others of the cycle such as Walther, often in connexion with details which seem to belong to lost portions of the original cycle; and the author's great difficulty (as that of later poets will be seen to have been also),—taking up the story of his personages at a period antecedent to the great catastrophe of the *Nibelungenlied*,—was evidently to exhibit fully their valour without allowing them to deal a single deadly stroke at one another. Thus, in the whole of the great battle between the Huns and their allies on the one hand and the Burgundians and their allies on the other, the only chief of note who is killed is Stutfuchs of Apulia.

Among the personages who figure prominently in *Biterolf* is Walther of Spain. He meets *Biterolf* at Paris (v. 566 and foll.) on his journey to *Etzel's* court, and fights him, after which the two recognize each other as uncle and nephew, Walther being a son of *Biterolf's* sister (v. 671). The adventures which form the subject of "*Walther of Aquitain*" are clearly referred to; Walther tells his uncle of *Etzel's* court, how he and *Hildegund* left it (v. 767 and foll.), and how he and *Hagen* both "received swords from *Etzel*"—*i. e.* were knighted by him. *Biterolf* on leaving Walther makes him "peace-master" of his land (v. 788),

recommending his wife and friends to his care. Biterolf and Walther are however arrayed on opposite sides at the last, when by Hagen's advice the latter is invited as a guest by Gunther, and brings Hildegund with him. Walther's flight is again alluded to, when on Rudeger's coming as messenger Walther receives him laughingly (v. 6275), thinking how he had left the realm of the Huns, whilst Rudeger asks news of fair Hildegund, whom Walther afterwards allows him to kiss; "her sweet rose-red mouth she lovingly offered him" (vv. 6856—7). When Hildebrand arrays the host for the battle, he opposes Rudeger to Walther, especially putting forward as a grievance against Walther that he carried away Hildegund from queen Helche (v. 7648 and foll.). In the battle itself, a messenger is sent by Biterolf and Dietlieb to Walther, complaining of his acting against kinship by fighting on the opposite side. He asks in reply how he can leave his host, who pours him out his wine? it were very unknighly not to come to his help. But they mutually agree to avoid one another. Walther and Rudeger meet and wound each other; they are parted, but meet again. Walther and Hildegund are eventually shown as taking a prominent part in the general reconciliation.—And whilst "Biterolf" serves thus further

to consolidate the connexion between the legend of 'Walther' and that of the Nibelungs, it serves also, as I shall presently have occasion to show, to connect those legends with a remarkable poem which has to be next considered, the "Gudrun."

'Biterolf' in short—which seems to have been greatly overrated by some German writers,—may be admitted to contain genuine and valuable traces of the earlier legend, but worked up with untiring garrulity in the most prolix days of the age of chivalry. Its great fault is, that we never feel it to be real. It is a mere prologue to the great drama of the 'Nibelungenlied.' Here and there we may come upon a striking or touching scene or passage; as where Biterolf, arriving in Austria on his way to Hunland, and asked by Wolfrat who has led him through the land, replies: "Our hand, and our knightly heart, leads us full well;" or where it is said of Dietlieb, brought up in Biterolf's absence: "Full sorrowful it was to the child, when he saw other children by him, and one of them said Father! he was for ever asking what a father was." Of whole scenes, perhaps the best are those of "mild Rudeger's" embassy, and of his gracious reception by the ladies; of Dietrich's shrinking from the encounter with Sifrit, Wolfhart's denunciation of him to Hildebrand, and the old

knight's remonstrances with his master. "Your father," he tells him, "gave your hand by faith into mine, that I might have you and all his in my care. There stood by many a man, German and also Italian, when he commended to me all that he left after his death. Thereto I turned heart and mind, how I might bring you up with honour. Now am I quite deceived, as if I had never taught you for a day. Now must you practise strife with me. . . . I will see how the spear is levelled by your hand; mine . . . must be levelled at you, and, take it on my faith . . . through the breast or at the eyes I stick you with my hand." Dietrich objects that he bears his armour, whilst Hildebrand only has a shield; with a silken shirt. The old man replies that he knows not Dietrich to be so wise or his arm so big as to hurt him. They fight till Dietrich has the better of him, when Hildebrand tells Dietrich that he has only done it to prove him, and Dietrich in turn says that his blood is so warmed that he is ready to withstand Sifrit,—of whom we may observe that whilst his possession of the Niblungs' hoard is mentioned, and his conquest over Albrich, his invulnerableness is not.—Another striking scene is that of Sifrit's encounter with Hayme or Heime, the striking of the famous sword Nagelring out of the latter's hand, so that it flies

high in air over three troops of fighters, and the struggle between the two hosts for the possession of the sword, which is at last seized by Dietrich. Indeed, but for the sameness, there is no doubt considerable vigour in the whole narrative of the great battle.

The poem, it should be observed, appears to belong mainly to the Dietrich sub-cycle. Dietrich, it will be observed, is already represented as a match for Sifrit, when fairly stirred up. It is not uninteresting, in viewing the relation of perfect friendship and faithfulness shewn by the German poems between Etzel and Dietrich, to compare the very different version of the Hungarian chronicles, as analyzed by M. Amédée Thierry. Here, on the arrival of the Huns under Attila, Theodoric and an imaginary Lombard hero defeat the former on the plains of the Danube, in a tremendous imaginary battle of Tarnok Welg, in which the Huns lose 125,000 men, but the victors the still greater number of 200,000, and after which the vanquished pursue the victors, and in turn defeat them a little below Vienna. Wounded by an arrow in the forehead, Theodoric refuses to have it pulled out, but rides with it in hot haste to Rome, to shew the imminence of the danger; for which, says the Hungarian chronicler of the fifteenth

century, Thwroczi, he is called Theodoric the immortal, 'Halathalon Ditrek,' till this day. The kings of Germany now bring their homage, and Theodoric, unsupported, becomes himself Attila's vassal, but treacherously suggests various dangerous expeditions, to lure him on to his ruin; a part which, as before mentioned, Theodoric continues to play after Attila's death, by exciting his sons against each other.

Nor can we, in dealing with the Dietrich sub-cycle, overlook those popular traditions of the middle ages which, through inability to canonize the Arian hero, represent him as descending alive on horseback in full armour into Etna; or those which exhibit him as a sort of national male banshee for Germany. Thus Godfrey, monk of Cologne, writing in the middle of the thirteenth century, in his 'Annals' for the year 1197, speaks of the appearance on the banks of the Moselle of 'a phantom of wondrous size, sitting on horseback in human form,'—that of Theodoric, coming forth to foretell various calamities for the empire.

CHAPTER VIII.

GUDRUN.

NEXT in value to the 'Nibelungenlied' in the Norse-German cycle, though without other connexion with it than the mere names of a few of its personages, but linked already with 'Biterolf' and mingling with the stream of later legend, is the poem of 'Gudrun' (Chautrun), in metre belonging to the thirteenth century apparently, but which through Biterolf can be traced in some shape at least to the twelfth.*

It must be clearly kept in view that the 'Gudrun' who gives her name to the poem has no more connexion with her of the 'Edda' than has

* Since the pages which follow were written, has appeared Miss Letherbrow's "Gudrun, a Story of the North Sea" (1863), nominally a "free prose version" of the poem, but in fact a complete recasting of it,—not always, I venture to think, a judicious one. To Miss Letherbrow's Preface I may however refer the reader for an account of the MS. of Gudrun, and of modern German translations and theories on the poem, and to her "Introduction" for some speculations as to the localities referred to in it.

the 'Hagen', one of its chief heroes, with the 'Nibelungenlied'. Hagen is the son of a king of Iceland named Sigebant, and is afterwards king himself; his especial appellation is that of the 'wild' Hagen, probably derived from the story of his childhood. At a great festival celebrated by his father, he is carried away, a boy of seven, by a griffin* to his nest. One of the young griffins lays his claw on him, but in flying from tree to tree he lets him fall. The child hides himself, and so escaping, discovers three young maids, all kings' daughters, who had been brought in like manner. They all maintain themselves together for awhile, hiding from the griffins, living on wild herbs, till a crusading host is shipwrecked on the coast. The griffins fly down to carry away the dead bodies; the boy creeps down too, and finding a dead man in armour, puts it on himself. The old griffin swoops down upon him, he defends himself, and with the drowned man's sword hews off the bird's leg and kills him, and then exterminates the whole brood one after the other in like manner. He now bids his companions come forth without fear; becomes a most expert archer, hunter, fisher; grows

* I adopt this term from Miss Letherbrow. There is nothing however in the text, I think, to show that any fabulous monster is meant, but simply a vulture or other huge bird of prey.

till he has the strength of twelve men. But they are all tired of their exile, and seek to depart. Travelling along the sea-shore they see a ship, and Hagen calls to it. The sailors fear "wild mer-children" when they see the maidens on the beach. But the Count of Carady, who is on board on a pilgrimage, puts forth in a boat and takes them in. He asks the maidens who they are. The eldest is daughter of the king of India; the middle one, of the lord of Portugal, the youngest, of the lord of Iceland. Wild Hagen in turn declares his parentage; on hearing which, the Count says he must retain him as a hostage for all the harm which his friends have done to him in Carady. Hagen is wroth, and bids the sailors steer towards Ireland. On their refusal, he throws thirty of them into the water, and can scarcely be stopped by his three companions from killing the Count. The ship's course is now directed towards Ireland; on his arrival, the Count sends twelve of the pilgrims to announce to king Sigeband that they are bringing back his son. The king at first receives them roughly and discredits their story; but on hearing a message from Hagen himself as to a golden cross which he bears on his breast, the mother feels it must be her son, and the king and queen ride off to meet him. "With weeping eyes she kissed him

on the mouth; 'Before I was sick, now am I whole. Be welcome, Hagen, my only child! Now may all well take comfort that are here with Sigeband.'" Rich garments are put on the young damsels; the king and the Count of Carady are reconciled.

Young Hagen grows up to full manhood, and acquires great renown. He marries one of his companions in misfortune, fair Hilda of India. The nuptials are celebrated with great splendour, and after them Sigeband abdicates in favour of his son, who rules with great rigour towards wrongdoers, of whom he has 'eighty or more' beheaded in a year, and with great success against his enemies, so that he comes to be called the "Wayland of all kings." A fair daughter is borne to him, who is named Hilda after her mother. By the time she is twelve, so comely is she that all wealthy princes begin to sue for wild Hagen's daughter. But her father is so proud that he will give her to no suitor; a prince of Denmark who makes the venture loses life and honour for his pains.

Now there was a mighty king at Hegelingen in Friesland, young Hettel, who had lost both father and mother, and who was advised by his best counsellors to take a wife. Young Morung of Nifland suggests the fair daughter of Hagen of

Ireland. The king objects that many a noble man has lost his life on her account. But send, says Morung, to Horant, who well knows Hagen and his ways; without his help it shall never prosper. From Daneland, over which he was lord, Horant comes to his sovereign's bidding with sixty of his men, bold Frute among them. On being questioned by the king, he declares that he never saw a fairer than Hilda of Ireland. But he declines to go as messenger to sue for her hand, since all such are hanged or slain by Hagen. Frute suggests that Wate of Sturmen, Horant's uncle, who had brought up king Hettel, should be sent as messenger. Wate comes with twelve of his men, and is heartily greeted by the king. But on learning what is sought of him, he is wroth: "He who has told thee this, if I were to die this day, it would not grieve him." He declares at once that it must be Frute and Horant who have given this advice, and summons them to go with him. Horant is nothing loth; Frute only advises that they take seven hundred men with them on "a ship of cypress-wood, fast and good," with plenty of good armour, good victuals and rich presents. Wate is of the same opinion. The king bids that no expense be spared; the ship's rudder glows all red with gold, the anchor is of silver. At the appointed

time Wate rides in from Sturmen, his horses heavy with silver and apparel, four hundred men with him. Swift Morung comes from Friesland with two hundred knights; brave Horant from Denmark, Yrolt from Ortland, "though the king never gave him his garments;" a thousand or more willing messengers were ready at king Hettel's bidding. A hundred are chosen to lie concealed in the ship; the whole number of the expedition, knights and serving men, was "thirty hundred." 'When you see us nearing,' says Horant, 'you shall behold the fair maiden;' sad however the king remained at their departure.

They leave; a north wind fills their sails. On the wild sea some are sad for discomfort; but discomfort is the lot of him who "tills the waves." Over a thousand miles of water they sail to Hagen's castle at Balian. They give themselves out as merchants, come from a far country, having rich lords on board their ship; when taken before Hagen, they give him a thousand marks' worth of jewels, and full twenty thousand on the reception of Horant and Yrolt at court. After sharing all with his knights, Hagen asks Horant whence they come. Horant replies that they are banished folk, driven out by a mighty king, Hettel of Hegelingen. Hagen offers, if they will stay with him, to share

his land with them. He has lodgings prepared for them in the city, where they astonish and delight all by their liberality; only the knights who remain hidden in the ship would fainer be in hard battle-storms than on such an errand.

The young queen wishes to see the generous strangers. Her father invites them to a feast; they come in the richest of apparel. The queen rises at their coming; the king "bade them be seated, as one does to guests." The best of wine is brought; the queen leaves, begging Hagen to send the guests to her room. Wate goes in first, a broad-bearded man. The queen and her daughter begin to joke him, asking whether he would rather be sitting by fair ladies than be fighting in hard strife? Wate replies that though he never sate so softly by fair ladies, yet it would be easier for him to fight in full hard battle-strife. The lovely maiden laughs to see which he prefers. The queen advises him to remain, and bids them be always welcome at court, and sit without shame by the ladies. Great rejoicings take place; Horant is much beloved by the ladies; old Wate wins the king's friendship. Pretending himself ignorant of fencing, he takes a lesson from a fence-master, from whose hand Hagen takes the foil, declaring that he will teach his guest his four strokes. But Wate was in fact

a consummate fencer; Hagen soon recognizes Wate's mastership, and is half angry;—the conflict goes on till the buttons fly off, when they stop. Yrolt now tells him that fencing is the daily pastime of knight and serving-man in their lord's country. “‘Had I known it,” says Hagen, “the foil had never come in my hand; never saw I youth learn so quickly.’ Many a noble mother's son laughs at the speech.”

It came to pass one evening, that Horant sang with voice so masterly that it pleased every one. The old queen heard it from the window, and begged him for a gift to sing every evening. “As the night had ended and it began to dawn, Horant began to sing, so that in the hedges all the birds held their peace at his sweet song; the people that slept there remained not long lying.” Ever higher and better he lifts his song; Hagen hears it, and rises to listen; his daughter and her maidens mark how the birds lose their notes through the song. Women and men all thank him; Hagen's heroes declare there is no one so sick but he might get well by hearing such a voice. When he has done singing, the young queen goes and begs her father to bid him sing again. He declares he is ready to give the singer 1000 pounds if he will sing again at eve.

The evening comes ; the sick and the whole cannot leave the place where Horant sings. "The beasts in the wood let their food stand ; the worms that should go in the grass, the fish that should swim in the wave, leave their purpose." When he has done, the choirs of the priests, the sound of the bells, no longer seem what they were ; all that have heard Horant long after him. The young queen gives twelve purses of gold to her chamberlain to go and bid him come and sing to her in her chamber. He comes, and sings a song of Amile, "which never Christian man learnt since nor before, save he heard it on the wild flute." The fair maid thanks him and gives him her hand,—"not gold was so good." Pressed to accept rewards, he will take nothing but a girdle to give to his master. She asks who his master is ? "I never saw so rich a king," he replies, and tells how for the love of her they have all been sent to the country. She declares that she would willingly be the king's wife, could Horant sing to her at eve and at morn. He tells her that his lord has daily at his court twelve who can sing far better than himself ; yet howsoever sweet their song, his lord sings best of all. She says that but for her father she would willingly follow them from hence. Morung now tells her that they have 700 knights, ready to share

with them both the lieve and the loth; they will ask leave to depart, and then let her beg of Hagen permission for herself and her mother to visit the ship. The high-chamberlain comes and interrupts them, asking who has allowed the two strangers to be there? She tries to appease him. "Is it," he asks, "the knight who can sing so well?" He knew one just such, whose mother and his own father were children of one father; his name was Horant of Daneland. The eyes of the knights moisten, a recognition takes place, and the chamberlain declares that he will be their protector, whereupon they confide to him their design. All being now ready, on the fourth day they beg of Hagen leave to depart, since Hettel has sent to say that he is willing for reconcilment, but request that "your fair daughter and my lady your wife" may come and see what they have. The king says he will go himself.

On the morrow morning, after the time of early mass, maids and wives array themselves to go under Hagen's leading to the sands, with them 1000 good knights of Ireland. The anchors were all heaved; the chests stood open on the sand for the queens to see. The old queen is separated from her daughter; up spring the armed men, sails are hoisted, and in spite of Hagen's fury, the

guests escape with their prize. They hasten over seas to Daneland, where Hettel receives his bride and her maidens (among whom is Hilburga, or Hildeburg, of Portugal, one of the damsels carried away by the griffin) with great joy. But as they sate among the flowers, Hagen was near.

As the night began to fall, Horant the brave knight of Daneland saw a sail with a cross,—well he knew it; “for such pilgrims had old Wate little love.” The Danes arm themselves in haste; Hagen’s ship presses on to the sand, he leaps in great wrath into the water; a shower of arrows white as snow pours on him; Hettel advances to meet his father-in-law; a wonder it was that he could withstand Hagen at all, so strong was he. But he receives a wound, and his men coming up part him from Hagen. The latter breaks through the press, dealing deadly blows, throwing behind him “many a noble knight, of whom never more shall the tale be told in his country, how he fared in the strife.” Old Wate engages him, and a fierce conflict ensues. Hagen breaks his war-pike on Wate’s shield, but wounds him on the head. The dead and wounded lie on all sides. Hettel, whose wounds are bound, calls to Hagen: “By your own honour, let your hate have an end, that our friends die no more.” Grim was

Hagen's mood ; wherefore should the strife be parted ? he loudly asks. " I am Hettel of the land of Hegeling, who sent his dear men so far after the lady Hilda." Hagen allows himself to be appeased, and peace is concluded. Yet many suffer " from the deep wounds they have brought from the strife ; many were there found who never more thought of need and strife." King Hettel sends for Wate, who was known to have been " medicined by a wild woman." He comes with " a good root" in his hand, and a box containing a plaister. " Sweet Hilda, the fair queen," entreats him to heal her father and his knights, as well as the knights of Hegelingen, who " have wetted the sand with blood, like a rain." He refuses to do so till the reconciliation be complete, which is effected by Hagen's reception of his daughter. The sick are now healed, and Hagen and his men nobly entertained for twelve days, and loaded with gifts at their departure. Hagen recommends his daughter to Hildeburg, and on his return tells the old queen that he could never have better bestowed his daughter, and that had he more daughters, he would send them to Hegelingen.

Hettel lived in great honour and happiness with his wife, who bore him two children ; a son, Ortwein, who was sent to be brought up by Wate ;

and a daughter, Gudrun, who grew up to still greater beauty than her mother, and was sought in marriage by many noble princes. King Seyfrid of Moorland (who seems afterwards treated as king of Carady) came to Hettel's court to sue for her, but was dismissed. King Hartmut of Ormany, son of king Ludwig, sends an embassy to ask for her hand, but meets with the like refusal, even when he pleads again in person. Young Herwig of Seeland, her neighbour, courts her also, till Hettel bids him cease from his suit. Herwig raises a host of 3000 men, and "one cool morning" comes before Hettel's city. "While yet they slept in Hettel's hall, there called a watcher from over the fortress—'Up, up! strange guests have we! arm yourselves, ye heroes, and see the gleam of many a helm!' They sprang from their beds and lay there no longer; whoever was within, poor man or lord, must needs take heed for his honour and eke for his life; so sought Herwig his wife in battle-storm." Sharp is the fight; wrathful is king Hettel, but valiant is Herwig; Gudrun looks on, and is both lieve and loth. At last she calls down to the knights: "Hettel, lord father, now flows down the blood through the hauberks, our walls are breached on all sides; an evil neighbour is Herwig; for my sake ye shall make peace."

The strife is parted. With a hundred of his knights Herwig goes before the queens. He fears, he says, that he may have displeased Gudrun through his lightness. 'Who were the lady,' she replies, 'who would be displeased by such service? believe me, it displeases me not; no maid that you ever saw could be more friendly to you than I would be; if but my next friends would consent, I would be by you always according to your own will.'—"With loving glances he looked her under the eyes." By her father and mother's leave he courts her now; "before the damsel stood the good hero, as if wrought by a master's hand on a white board."* If she will love him, he tells her, all his cities and all his men shall serve her. She replies (changing "you" to "thou") that she will part all hate between him and her kin; he shall ever have joy with her.—She is given to him to wife, but her mother would not part with her for a year, during which time he is advised to spend his time "with fair women elsewhere."

Meanwhile, however, Seyfrid of Moorland had prepared an expedition against Herwig; 80,000 heroes, with twenty strong ships. They reach Herwig's land, and put all to fire and sword.

* "Wand." Miss Letherbrow translates "parchment." The word may be understood in several senses, but none seems to me less likely than this.

After a valiant resistance, he sends to solicit aid from Gudrun. Hettel willingly agrees to go to his son-in-law's assistance, and summons Wate and Horant, Morung and his son Ortwein. A twelve days' battle is fought; on the thirteenth day the invaders retire. But Hartmut's spies have seen all, and before Hettel can return to Hegelingen, by his mother Gerlint's counsel, Hartmut and his father invade the country, and through the foolhardiness of Hettel's knights, who instead of closing the gates go out to meet them, carry away Gudrun from the city of Matalan, with two-and-sixty ladies, and many a lovely maid.

Queen Hilda sends news to her husband and son-in-law that her daughter is taken, her heroes are slain, her gold and gems carried away by the men of Ormany. Great is the sorrow of the kings and all their men at the news. By Wate's advice, peace is made with king Seyfrid of Moorland, and his aid secured against Hartmut and Ludwig. They are at a loss for ships; but Wate takes possession of some ships which had brought pilgrims, on which five hundred or more of Hettel's best men embark.

Ludwig and Hartmut were far away, on the broad Wulpenstrand; seven nights they dwelt there with the fair ladies; so far were they from

Matalan that they thought of no hurt to come from Wate and his men. A ship appears ; crosses are on the sails ; they deem it is but pilgrims. More ships follow ; they come so near that helmets are seen on board. The men of Ormany seize their shields ; dread is the conflict ; never saw one snow fall so thick as the shafts. Wate and Ludwig fight, the latter scarcely escapes ; “ an evil guest ” is Wate to his foes. All the day long the hard strife lasted ; grimly wept Gudrun and the other ladies. Ludwig and Hettel fight ; the latter is killed ; grim Wate hears of it, and rages like a boar ; evening-red shines many a helmet under his swift strokes. In the falling night Horant kills one of his own kinsmen. “ Murder has been done, ” cries Herwig, and bids his men cease from strife till the morrow. But in the night, by Ludwig’s craft, the enemy make off unperceived. By the time the men of Denmark are aware of their departure, it is deemed too late to pursue them. The dead are buried with great solemnity ; a cloister of Hospitallers is founded on the spot. But sorrowful is the return journey ; only old Wate ventures to present himself before the lady Hilda, to tell her the evil news. Compensation is made to the pilgrims who had been despoiled of their ships, and a new expedition is prepared for Gudrun’s rescue.

Meanwhile Hartmut and his party were nearing Ormany, Ludwig's stronghold. He bids Gudrun cheer up and love his son. She would rather be dead, she replies. He takes her by the hair and flings her into the sea. Hartmut rescues her, and declares that were it any one else than his father, he would have taken from him both life and honour.

They reach the coast of Ormany, where Hartmut's mother, queen Gerlint, and her daughter Ortrun, give them a magnificent reception. But Gudrun declines to kiss Gerlint, through whose counsel she has suffered so much woe. She refuses to be comforted; her eyes and cheeks are seldom dry; in spite of Ortrun's affection, of Hartmut's constant service, of Gerlint's offer to hand over the crown to her, she declares that she can never love the young king. Gerlint now asks him to hand over the lady to her, that she may bring her to reason. Hartmut begs her at least, since the maid is unhappy, to teach her kindly; so much woe hath he wrought her, she may well turn away from his service. But the "evil deviless" declares to Gudrun that since she will not have joy, she must have pain. She parts her from all the fair maids her companions; noble duchesses have to wind yarn; Heregart, the best of all, has to carry

water to Ortrun's chamber; the daughter of a prince who had strongholds and lands, she must heat the oven with her white hands (though afterwards, we are told, she marries the queen's butler, and becomes a powerful duchess). For four years and a-half the maidens are thus treated, till Hartmut has returned from three campaigns. He asks his dear one to be shown to him; he sees that she has had but little comfort and good food, and asks his mother why she has so acted. "We slew dead her men, so many a knight, we made the lady Gudrun an orphan, my father slew her father." Gerlint replies that were they to follow Gudrun for thirty years she would not be reconciled to him. Hartmut says he desires her more and more; not knowing that she disliked him always more. He still leaves Gudrun with Gerlint, who now tells her she must dust stools and benches with her hair, do her room three times a day, and kindle the fire in it. Seven years she works, as king's child never worked. By the ninth year, Hartmut is advised by his friends to get himself crowned, and to bring anyhow the fair maid to his will. Still she repels him, declaring she is a foe to him and all his kin, and will never trust him. "You know well," he replies, "Gudrun, that mine own are the lands and the farms and the folk also;

what should hinder me from winning you to me for a bride?"—"It would be ill done," she answers; 'other princes would say that Hagen's child is a harlot in Hartmut's land.'—"What need I care what they did?" he asked: "if it should seem good to you, lady, I would be king and you queen."—"Be without care," she said, "never will I love you willingly." She enumerates her wrongs, declares that were she a knight, his father Ludwig should seldom dare come to her unarmed. It is the custom till now that no woman ever take a man but by their joint will. Since God has forgotten her, she suffers willingly all her many sorrows. He now puts her in charge of his sister Ortrun, begging her to win her favour for him. Gudrun is offered cities and land, fed with good meat and drink till her colour becomes once more rose-red. Still she is obdurate, till at last Hartmut leaves the land, since he is so hated. The evil Gerlint now makes Gudrun serve her again, and bids her wash clothes on the sands, where she has to stand from morning till night. Hildeburg sees her and obtains permission to wash with her. They have to wash thus for six years and a-half.

Meanwhile Hilda was always preparing an expedition to rescue her daughter; seven strong ships with two-and-twenty pinnaces, which were

the delight of her eyes. When they are ready, she sends round messengers to Herwig, Horant, Morung, Wate; to Ortwein her son, who was flying his hawk under a "bird-rich" tree. All come gladly. Horant is made standard-bearer; she earnestly recommends her son, not yet twenty, to the knights. The ladies weep much at their departure, but Hilda stops the weeping; she will have the knights go forth with joy, and clang of music, and singing; only when they have left the ladies stand at the windows, and follow them with their eyes as far as they can from Matalan town. The masts crack, a good wind comes, many a sail is stretched. On the Wulpenstrand they join forces with ten thousand men of the king of Carady, *i. e.* Seyfrid. Twenty-four pinnaces he has, and victuals more than enough for twenty years. Proceeding on their course, they are stopped for some while at Gyfers before the load-stone mountain, but a western wind releases them. They reach the shores of the neighbouring coast to Ormany, and land on a wild part of the coast, drawing their ships on to the sands. Yrolt mounts a very high tree, and descries the seven palaces and the hall of Ormany itself. That night they rest; on the morrow they consider whom they shall send for messengers before them to Gudrun. "I will be

messenger," says Ortwein; "Gudrun is my sister by her father and her mother."—"I will be the other," says king Herwig; "I will die by thee or succeed; if the maid were thy sister, she was given to me for wife." Wate advises them to do nothing of the kind, since if Hartmut is aware of them, he will have them hanged on a gallows. They insist however on undertaking the venture. Ortwein begs the knights to avenge them if they should perish, and at whatever cost of labour to themselves, not to leave behind them the sorrowful ladies before having engaged a fight.

Now as Gudrun and Hildeburg were washing on the sands about midday, a bird came flying down. Gudrun spoke to it: "Ah, me! fair bird, I pity thee so much, to have flown so far over the sea-flood." With a man's voice God's angel began to answer her, and offered to give her news of her friends. Gudrun asks about her mother, about Ortwein and Herwig, Yrolt and Morung, Horant, Wate, and Frute. She learns of the host which Hilda has sent for her rescue, and that all the friends she has named form part of it, and also of the coming of the messengers. The angel disappears; the ladies go on washing, and talking of the heroes. At night they return home, and are found fault with by evil Gerlint. She com-

plains of their idleness, declares that they must wash her linen early and late, be out as soon as it is day. Palm-Sunday is nigh, and guests are coming, whose clothes must be washed white. They go from her, and put off their wet clothes; sorry was their food, nor soft their bed; they slept but on hard benches. As they go to the window in the morning, the snow lies on the ground. They go to the queen, and beg at least for shoes, lest by washing barefoot they should be frozen to death. She refuses; what were their death to her? They go forth to the sands to wash as usual, looking over the sea for the announced messengers.

Long had they waited, when they saw coming over the sea two men alone in a boat. Hildeburg thinks it may be the messengers. Gudrun is taken with a sudden shame at being found washing, and cannot bear to wait for them. As they are going off, the messengers call after them, asking whose the clothes are; by the honour of all maids they beg them to return. Thus adjured, they come back in their shifts all wet, shivering in the cold March winds amid the snow and the ice, blocks of which were swaying on the sea. Their hair was loose; through their shifts shone white as snow their lovely bodies. Noble Herwig bade them good morning; dear to them now were such words

as "good morning" and "good evening." 'Whose are these rich clothes on the sand?' asks Ortwein; 'for whom are ye washing? so fair are ye both, who wrongs you? so right fair are ye, ye might wear crowns. Hath your master yet more of such fair washers?'—'He hath many fairer than we may be,' she replies. 'But ask what ye will, for we must depart; evil hap is ours if we be seen to speak with you.'—'Whose then is this heritage, and this rich land, and the good cities, and how is he named?'—On hearing the names of Hartmut and Ludwig, Ortwein asks further how they can find the princes. Gudrun replies that they left them in the city at early morn with eighty hundred men.—Whom do they fear, asked Herwig, to be always sitting with heroes around them?—Gudrun replies that they are always in fear of foes from a far land called Hegelingen.

As they spoke, the fair maids shivered with the cold. If it might not seem a shame to you, noble maidens, asks Herwig, would ye not bear our mantles on the sand? But Hilda's daughter declares that no eye shall ever see men's garments upon her. "Oft Herwig looked on the damsel; so fair she seemed to him and so shapely too, that in his heart it made him oft to sigh, so like she was to one, of whom full oft he thought lovingly."

Have they ever heard of the coming of a great army into the land, among which was one called Gudrun? Ortwein now asks.—There came such a host, it is now long since, she replies; full sorrowfully came the ladies to land; she whom you seek, I saw her lately in great labours.—Sir Ortwein, says Herwig, if your sister Gudrun be yet living anywhere, this is she,—I never saw any one so like to her. At the mention of Ortwein's name, Gudrun in turn tells the speaker that he is like one whom she knew, Herwig of Seeland; were he alive, the hero would loose them from their captivity. But she is herself the only one who was brought over sea by Hartmut; the maid of Hegelingen is dead in great labours. Tears start from the heroes' eyes; She was my wife, exclaims Herwig.—Ye would deceive me, says the poor maid; I have been told of Herwig's death; were he alive, he would have borne me hence.—Look at my hand, says the noble knight, whether you know the gold [ring] whereby I was affianced to Gudrun; if you are my wife, I will bear you hence. She looked at his hand, she saw the shining ring with a precious gem set in it; she herself at one time had worn it on her hand. 'The ring that was mine I recognize well,' she says; 'see too this one that my sweetheart sent, when I, poor maid, was with joy in my

father's land.' He looked in turn at her ring; "now have I, after many a sorrow, seen my joy and my bliss." He clasped the maiden in his arms, he kissed her I know not how oft, her and Hildeburg the lovely maid. 'But could ye do no other service in this land,' asks Ortwein, 'than to wash clothes? and where are your maidens that they should let you wash alone?'—'Where can I find them?' she asks weeping.—'Well have we prospered in our journey,' says lord Herwig; 'now must we see to bring them away.'—'Had I a hundred sisters,' replies Ortwein, 'I would rather let them die than to steal away from my grim foes those who were taken from me in battle-storm.'—'My anguish is,' says the hero of Seeland, 'lest if they become aware of us, they bear away the maidens so far that we cannot discover them.'—'And how are we to leave here,' asks Ortwein, 'my sister's noble following? Gudrun shall enjoy the service of all her maids.'—'My darling I must bear away with me,' says Herwig; 'let us then seek as we please for our ladies.'—'I had rather be cut in pieces with my sister than do so,' Ortwein replies.—'What have I done to thee, dear brother Ortwein?' pleads Gudrun; 'I know not wherefore thou shouldst thus punish me.'—'I do it not for hate of thee, dear sister, but I cannot take thee

away save with honour; thou shalt yet have Herwig thy betrothed lord.'

They went to the skiffs; the fair maid wept; endless, she cries, is her sorrow. She calls after Herwig: "Before I was the best, now men hold me for the worst; to whom dost thou leave me, or wherewith shall I, poor orphan, comfort myself?"—"Thou art not the worst, thou must be the best; most noble queen, conceal my journey; ere the sun shine to-morrow, I am here, I pledge it on my troth, with 80,000 heroes."—A hard parting was that from friends. They followed the messengers with their eyes as far as they could, they forgot the washing. 'Why do you let these clothes lie so?' asks Hildeburg at last; 'Gerlint will beat us, never yet so sorely.'—'Never more will I wash for Gerlint,' replies Gudrun; 'two kings have kissed me. Though one should beat me till to-morrow, I trust I should not die, and those who use us so ill, some of them must perish for it.' She bears the clothes to the sea, she flings them with her hands far upon the waves.

As night came, heavily went Hildeburg to the city, yet bearing a bundle of her washing; but Gudrun went empty-handed. They are received with scoldings and threats by Gerlint. Gudrun tells her that the clothes were too heavy for her;

“if you never see them, on my truth it is very indifferent to me.” The “deviless” bids her be bound to a bed-post, meaning to flog her skin off with thorns. Gudrun now “craftily” offers to buy herself off from punishment by bestowing her love on Hartmut. Gerlint at once is pacified, and a messenger runs in haste to Hartmut to tell the news, asking for “messenger’s bread” in reward. Hartmut will not at first believe him, but the news being confirmed, he springs from his seat and hastens joyous to the maid in her room. In her wet shift she stood, and greeted him with tearful eyes. He would have clasped her in his arms; ‘Nay, Hartmut, do it not yet. I am but a poor washerwoman, you a rich king; I will let you do it when I stand under a crown before your knights and am called a queen.’—‘Shapely maiden,’ he replies, ‘order what you please of me and my friends.’ She asks first for a “fair bath,”—then that her maidens be brought to her. Three-and-sixty are brought, who with loose hair and in coarse clothes went about the court. She requires them to be bathed and clothed. They are clad in the best of garments that are to be found; the poorest of them might well suit a king. Gerlint sends Ortrun to Gudrun; they embrace lovingly; glad was Ortrun to see the noble washeress so

winsomely clad. Craftily Gudrun now bids Hartmut send messengers throughout Ormany, summoning all his best friends to court. A hundred messengers or more are sent out, so diminishing the number of the Hegelingers' foes.

When Gudrun and her maids withdraw to her chamber at night, a plenteous feast is prepared for them. Some of the maids of Hegelingen begin to weep, thinking that for them there is no joy, since they must dwell there all their lives. Gudrun laughs,—she that for fourteen years has known no mirth. The “evil deviless” has heard it. She goes to Hartmut, declares to him that Gudrun must have received a secret message from her friends; let him beware.—‘Let be,’ he replies, ‘her friends are so far off, I shall always be able well to defend myself against them.’ Gudrun now goes to bed, the youths of Ormany bearing the light before her; more than thirty beds are there, with rich bedclothes of silk and gold. When the door is bolted, she tells her maids that she has kissed this day Herwig her husband and Ortwein her brother; the joyful time is at hand; if she can but live to the hour when men shall call her queen, she will largely make them recompense. Joyful was their mood when they lay down to sleep.

Meanwhile Herwig and Ortwein had given ac-

count to their men of their journey. The knights weep to hear of Gudrun and Hildeburg being found washing on the sands. This excites old Wate's scorn: 'Ye behave like old wives,' he tells them; 'would ye help Gudrun out of her need, ye should make the clothes red that her white hands have washed.' He bids them all embark in silence, and be ready against the morning; he who would conquer early on the morrow, he should not lie long. When they hear his horn for the first time, let them make ready for the strife; at the second blast let them go to their horses, at the third let them sit on horseback in their armour; but all must wait till they see him ride armed behind fair Hilda's banner.

High was the morning-star, when a fair maid of Gudrun's going to a window and spying for the day, saw the gleam of helmets and of bright shields. The city was invested; and all the field shone with armour. She goes to her mistress: 'Wake, noble maiden,' "our friends from home have not forgotten us poor ones.'" The lady Gudrun sprang from her bed to the window, and saw many a rich sail swaying over the sea. "Then spake the noble maid: 'Now for the first time I feel sad; alas, me wretched one, that ever I had life! to-day shall one see die here many a worthy

man.” Loudly now cried Ludwig’s watcher ; “Wake, lord Ludwig, thy city and thy land are walled round with dire guests ; dear to-day shall thy knights buy Gudrun’s laugh.” Ludwig looks out himself. ‘Perhaps they are pilgrims,’ he says ; ‘it must be told my son Hartmut.’ Hartmut, who says he knows all the banners in twenty lands, goes with Ludwig to the window and sees the host. “They lie a bit too near my city,” says Hartmut ; “no pilgrims are they, dear father mine.” He recognizes and describes one by one the banners of the Moorish king, of Horant, Frute, Morung, Ortwein, Hilda, Herwig, Yrolt. “A battle-storm draws nigh,” he concludes ; “now up, all my men !” They spring from their beds, they call for their bright armour, forty hundred knights gird themselves. “What would you do, sir Hartmut ?” asks Gerlint ; “why would you lose your life yourself, and all these heroes ? The foes will slay you, if ye go out to them from the stronghold.” “Get you hence, mother,” said the noble knight, “you have nought to teach me and my men ; advise your ladies, that may easily bear it, how they may prick gems and gold on silk. Bid Gudrun now go washing with her maids, as you have done hitherto ; you think she hath no friends nor following.” . . . Gerlint still urges him to close

the gates and await a siege ; he has bread and wine, good victual for a year. Let him guard his honour and not lose his life ; let him cause bows and cross-bows to be shot from the windows ; ere they have to use swords with the foe, she and her maids will cast stones at them. Angrily Hartmut bids her begone ; “before I be found shut up in this city, I would rather die outside there among Hilda’s followers.” Since he is resolved, “now arm yourselves,” says she to their men, “beside my son, strike out from the helmets the glow of the hot fire ! . . . receive well the foes with deep wounds.”

The gates are opened ; thirty hundred men ride out after Hartmut. Once, twice, thrice, did the hero of Sturmenland (Wate) blow his horn. Whilst Herwig’s darling looks out from a battlement, the hosts ride against one another ; as Hartmut rides before his troop, all his armour shines against the sun. Ortwein and Hartmut furnish the first course ; Ortwein is wounded, as Horant after him. Herwig engages Ludwig ; either he must have his wife back, or one of them must die. Herwig receives a fall in the first instance, and is only saved by his men. Ashamed of his ill-success before his darling’s eyes, he hastens after Ludwig again, wounds him, and cuts off his head. Hartmut on

the other hand, ignorant as yet of his father's death, is so pressed that he withdraws into the city, Wate reaching the gate almost at the same time, under a shower of arrows; but Wate cares little who lives or dies, so he conquers. Hartmut looks out, and sees a foe at every one of the four gates, the Moorish king at one, Ortwein at another, Herwig at a third, old Wate at the fourth. He cannot fly, he has no feathers; he cannot go under the earth, nor to the sea, because of the enemy; all that remains is to engage the foe. Dismounting from their horses, they strive sword in hand at the gates; Hartmut seeks out grim Wate, and though it was said he had the strength of six-and-twenty men, yet young Hartmut "gave him knighthood," and did well in the strife; a marvel was it that he died not by Wate's hand.

Suddenly he hears Gerlint cry out, offering great reward to whoso should slay Gudrun and her following. A faithless churl, greedy of wealth, runs to do the deed; and had not Hartmut seen it, Gudrun's head would have been cut off. "She forgot somewhat her virtue; how loud she screamed, as if about to die!" Hartmut knew her voice, and seeing the murderer with his raised sword, calls out to him that if he slay but one of the ladies, his life is lost, and all his kin shall be hanged. The

king had well-nigh lost his own life by saving hers; but Ortrun, wringing her hands, rushes to Gudrun, and falling at her feet, "Take pity," she cries, "child of a noble prince, of so many of my folk who are here dead! think how it was with thee when thy father was slain! * noble queen, now have I this day lost mine!" She urges Hartmut's danger, recalls how she alone stood a friend to Gudrun. Gudrun knows not how to part the strife; were she a knight to bear arms, gladly would she part it, so that none should slay Ortrun's brother. Ortrun wept with such anguish, she besought so dearly, that at last the lady Gudrun went to the window, and beckoned with the hand, and asked if there were any there from her fatherland? Herwig answers, at first without recognizing her. She begs him to save Hartmut from old Wate. Herwig calls for his banner, and hastens towards Wate, calling to him from afar, in the names of the fair maidens, to cease from strife. In scorn Wate answered: "Herwig, now get you hence! Should I now follow ladies, what should I do with my sense? Should I spare the foes?" For the love of Gudrun Herwig sprang to them; wroth was Wate, and struck a stroke at Herwig. His knights now leapt forward and helped Herwig thence, but

* *Μνήσαι πατρὸς σοῦο...*

Hartmut was made prisoner, with him eighty good knights ; all the rest were slain. Nor was this the end. Wate stormed the city, and all within was destroyed or plundered ; of furs and silks, of silver and gold, so much was carried forth as two ships could not bear. Men and women were slain ; many a child in the cradle lost there its life. “ Strong Yrolt called to Wate : ‘ What the d—l have the young children done to you ? No fault have they of the slaughter of our men ; through God’s honour let the poor orphans have safety.’—Said Wate the old : ‘ A child’s mind hast thou. They that weep in the cradle, would it seem good to thee that I let them live ? Were they to grow up, I would trust them no more than a wild Saxon.’”

Sorrowful came Ortrun to Gudrun, beseeching mercy, and obtains it for herself, and three-and-thirty maidens, and two-and-sixty knights. Evil Gerlint came also, beseeching mercy too. “ Unmerciful were you to me,” replies Gudrun. Old Wate heard it ; up he stood, with eager eyes, and ell-broad beard, wet-clad, running over with blood ; all dreaded him. Gudrun bade him be welcome. “ Are you Hilda’s daughter ?” he asks ; “ who are these ladies that are so near to you ?” “ It is the lady Ortrun,” she replies, “ whom you must spare ; truly the ladies dread you much. The others are

the poor ones whom Ludwig's host brought with me over the sea from Hegelingen. You sweat all with blood, come not so near to us; the service you have done us, make it not repulsive to us." Wate went further, and found Herwig and Ortwein, Yrolt and Morung and Frute, busy in slaying many a good knight. But Heregart the young duchess came, and begged mercy of Gudrun, declaring herself still in her following. Angrily did Gudrun reproach her with the little heed she had taken of her sufferings, yet bade her stand below amongst her maids. But Wate was still seeking for evil Gerlint, who stood in Gudrun's following. Grimly he came through the hall: "My lady Gudrun, give me here below Gerlint and her friends, who made you to wash."—"There is none such here." Nearer he came in his wrath: "Will ye quickly show me the right ones?" A fair maiden winked to him with her eyes, whereby he knew the evil deviless: "Tell me," said he, "lady Gerlint, will you have any more washing?" He took her by the hand, and dragged her thence: "Lady queen, never more shall my damsel wash your clothes." As he brought her before the palace door, he took her by the hair and smote her head off. Loud screamed the ladies. Wate came back, and asked for Gerlint's kin. Weeping

spoke Hettel's child, and implored him to leave her those who had come to her for peace, noble Ortrun and her following from Ormany. He spared these, but asked for the lady Heregart, the young duchess, who had given her love to the king's butler. In vain they all begged she might be spared; her head he smote off too, so that the ladies began to flee behind Gudrun.

And now came Herwig with his companions, and was lovingly received by Gudrun. The princes took counsel together, what to do with the good city Cassiane. Wate advises it to be burned. Frute on the contrary recommends that the dead be carried out, the blood washed off the walls, the city preserved. His advice is followed; four thousand or more dead bodies are thrown into the sea; Gudrun is placed under the keeping of Horant, together with all their prisoners, a thousand men remaining with them, whilst Wate and Frute with thirty thousand men go out through the land, wasting it with fire and sword. Six-and-twenty cities are destroyed, and a thousand or more prisoners brought back. They now return to Hegelingen, leaving Horant and Morung to keep the country, and taking Hartmut with the prisoners, though Wate cannot understand why they are not rather slain at once.

Swiftly they returned, the winds favouring them. Their voyage had lasted a year when they reached Matalan. Joyously did Hilda receive them. Herwig brings Ortrun by the hand. 'Kiss the lady maiden,' says Gudrun to her mother; 'in my distress she did me much service and honour.'— "I will kiss no one here, ere I know who be the ladies, or how they are named, whom thou bidst me kiss so friendlily."—"It is Ortrun, the young maid of the realm of Ormany."—"I will not kiss her; why givest thou such counsel to me? Were I to bid her be killed, it would suit me far better; her folk have done me much sorrow; that which I have wept over here was her kinsmen's best spectacle." With tears at last Gudrun prevails upon her mother to kiss Ortrun. Hildeburg comes too, led by Frute. "Dear mother mine," said Gudrun, "greet now Hildeburg; can ought be better than friendly faithfulness? Whoso had a kingdom of gold and precious stones, he should give it to Hildeburg."—"Well has it been told me how with thee she has borne the lieve and the loath; never can I sit joyful under the crown, till with right faithfulness I have rewarded her for the service she did to thee." The knights are greeted in their turn, and the "noble widow" treats all for five days with abundant hospitality.

And now Gudrun and Ortrun come and beseech Hilda to have mercy on Hartmut, who lies yet bound. At first she declares that she can have none, but yields at last, Ortrun pledging his services. He is delivered from his chains, bathed, richly clad and brought to court. No comelier man was there; "in all his sorrows he stood as if he had been drawn well with a pencil." Kindly the ladies look on him; their old hatred lies appeased; they quite forget that their knights had slain one another in great battle-storms. Herwig is anxious to take leave; but Hilda begs him to remain for a great festival which she is about to hold. Gudrun takes occasion of it to make up marriages between Ortwein and Ortrun, and between Hartmut and Hildeburg, so as fully to appease the old hates, whilst she asks Herwig to give his sister to the king of Carady. He objects that he has no clothes to give her, since the Moorish king has wasted all his land and burnt his cities; but Seyfrid declares he would take her, were she only in a shift. So the maid is sent for to Hegelingen, and after a splendid reception, she is taken to a tent of rich silk, wondering what is to be done. The king of Carady comes forward: 'Will you have this man? nine kingdoms will be put under you.' "Christianlike shone the hero's

colour; his hair lay on his head like spun gold; she were very unwise not to give him her love. Yet she praised him scantily, as oft a maiden does." However, they are affianced; the four kings' weddings take place; five hundred or more are made "sword-knights" in their honour; a great festival is held; though there be but little wind, the dust is as the night. Great largess is bestowed by all, after which the kings depart, Hartmut and Seyfrid first. Then Gudrun, amid smiles and tears, leaves Matalan, and Ortwein and Herwig part, after swearing to each other that whoever should seek to hurt either, both should take and slay him.

Without deserving to rank as its editor Von der Hagen wishes it to do, as a 'twin sun' (nebensonne) to the 'Nibelungenlied,' 'Gudrun' has obviously great beauties. The quaintly poetical incident of Horant's singing is perhaps the gem of the earlier portion. There is equally a good deal of tenderness and beauty, though wire-drawn in true thirteenth century fashion, in the story of Gudrun's captivity, and of her interview with the messengers. And there is real dramatic power in her sudden revulsion of feeling when she has been 'kissed by two kings', which rises into epic grandeur in the storming of Cassian city. The picture of grim Wate in particular raging for slaughter is truly worthy of

the 'Nibelungenlied' itself.—But (except perhaps when fresh from reading 'Biterolf') it is difficult, I suppose, to get through the 6824 lines of 'Gudrun' without feeling that one has had enough of it.

The earliest reference to any portion of the "Gudrun" legend appears to occur in the Exeter Anglo-Saxon MS., where Heovrend the "lay-crafty man" is spoken of,—apparently the Horant of the German poem. The sweet singing of Horant, it may be said at once, is referred to in a poem of the latter half of the thirteenth century, and in several later ones. An allusion to Wate's valour again seems to occur in Priest Konrad's version of the 'Song of Roland' (1173 to 1177).*

I have now to point out the passages of 'Biterolf' which evidently imply the existence of the 'Gudrun' legend, though not, apparently, of the poem in its actual form, and which thus serve to bind it to the cycle in general, though rather as an outlying adjunct than as a component link.

Among the chiefs whom, before the battle in 'Biterolf' between the Huns and the Burgundians, Gunther enumerates to his followers as likely to

* Miss Letherbrow in her introduction (p. 41) quotes also a passage from Priest Lamprecht's "Alexander" (about 1180), referring to the death of "Hilda's father . . . between Hagen and Wate," on the "Wulpinwerd."

come against them as foemen from Hunland, he names "Hawart the strong, the hero of Denmark," (vv. 4959—60) a hero who indeed already occurs in the *Nibelungenlied*.

Strange to say, less than 1200 lines further on (v. 6227 and foll.) "Herwart the strong, the hero of Denmark" (obviously the same personage) is among those whom Gunther summons to his own assistance. The same Hawart-Herwart afterwards turns into "Herbort," and figures as such on the Burgundian side during the remainder of the poem. This "Herbort from Daneland" is represented as saying of Dietrich that he knows well "how I rode from Ormany, and how my arm there conquered king Ludwig's child. Yea, I carried off his maiden from the realm of Ormany full mightfully. When Hartmut and his men and Ludwig his father withstood me, I and the maiden had none else; whom the lord Ludwig could never overcome; mischance befell him from my hand alone." He goes on to say that, riding through the land, though with his body wounded, he heard men and women tell of a giant who oppressed the land, and slew him, though Ludwig and all his men never durst withstand him. On leaving the country he slew Goldwart and Seewart; came to Bern, was attacked by Dietrich and Hildebrand whilst bearing his wife

alone through the land; gladly had they taken from him "Hildeburg" the rich. Yet "I brought her," said the good hero, 'untaken through the land; Master Hildebrand well knows it; thereby is my wife yet here with me on the Rhine.'"

We see obviously from this that the Hawart-Herwart-Herbort of 'Biterolf' is the Herwig of 'Gudrun'. We recognize his expedition to "Ormany," his struggles with Ludwig and with Hartmut his son, and his success. Beyond this, the tale is evidently divergent. Instead of going with an army as in Gudrun, Herbort-Herwig has gone alone, and by land instead of by sea; and what marks a still stronger divergence, the maiden described as the object of his endeavours is Hildeburg, Gudrun's companion in the other poem. With this however agrees a passage in the 'Klage,' which speaks of "Hildeburg of Normandy" as one of Helche's women. I cannot help thinking that these passages mark the story of Gudrun's captivity as insidious, and indicate to us an older and more genuine version of the legend. The hero's carrying off his bride alone on horseback, on the other hand, and the attack made upon him, strongly resemble the Walther-legend.

'Gudrun' indeed, like most of the greater middle-age epics, must not be taken as primarily

forming a whole, nor as the work of a single author. A single instance will prove this: The ravages of king Seyfrid of Moorland in Herwig's land are represented as simultaneous with, or rather slightly anterior to, Hartmut's carrying away of Gudrun. The captivity of the latter is represented at v. 4087 as approaching the ninth year. Her washing is afterwards mentioned as lasting six-and-a-half years (v. 4280). Yet at the close of the poem, Herwig is represented as unable to endow his sister on account of Seyfrid's ravages. Evidently, Gudrun's prolonged captivity of more than fifteen years is a mere graft upon the original legend, according to which her rescue must have followed close upon her abduction. This is abundantly confirmed by other considerations (apart from those which are supplied by 'Biterolf'). The antecedent improbability of Herwig's waiting fifteen years before recovering his wife, devotedly as he is represented to be attached to her, must strike every one; nor is it less extraordinary that Hilda's preparations for the rescue should have taken so long a time. Again, Ortwein is represented (v. 3539) as wishing to avenge his father when slain by Ludwig; yet after the fifteen years of Gudrun's captivity, when the trial expedition for her rescue is about to start, Hilda recommends him to the

princes as being scarcely twenty years old (v. 4459). Still more extraordinary is it to find Hildeburg, the second in age of the three princesses who were companions to Hagen, represented latterly as a "lovely maid," sharing the trials of Hagen's daughter Gudrun, and married to Gudrun's own lover Hartmut, when she must have been some twenty years older than Gudrun, and Gudrun herself between thirty and forty.

Assuming therefore that the detail of Gudrun's captivity does not belong to the original legend, the next question is, whether the remainder of it is to be treated as forming a continuous composition. I must say it seems to me that the poem, as we have it, embraces at least two separate ones of earlier date, a "lay of Hagen," and the "lay of Gudrun" itself. The earlier portion is not only visibly independent of the latter, but the latter is connected with it only by the names of personages, and a few slight allusions as respects Hildeburg. It is sufficiently surprising to find Horant, Morung, Yrolt, Wate, Frute, alive and as vigorous as ever throughout the whole action of the second part. But after the characteristic incident of Horant's sweet singing, which is so instrumental in winning Hilda, it is difficult to account for the total omission of reference to such a gift afterwards, if really the

poem is to be treated as continuous. Wate on the other hand develops latterly into a totally different personage from what he is at first. In what I must call the Hagen-lay, as the former preceptor of Hettel, he is represented rather as a sort of Northern Ulysses. However skilful at fencing, craft rather than strength seems his prerogative, and so far from courting strife, he is extremely wroth at being selected for the embassy to Hagen. In the true Gudrun-lay on the other hand, he becomes the leading warrior, he has the strength of six-and-twenty men, and his character is marked by a ferocity which closely assimilates him to the Hagen of the 'Nibelungenlied.'—The frequent variations in proper names are another indication of variety of source, or at least of text. Thus Hartmut's country figures as 'Ormanie', 'Ormandin', or 'Normandie'.

As respects the relative antiquity of the different portions of the poem, I should be inclined to think that the Gudrun-lay proper is the oldest.* A

* Although I must confess never to have entered beyond the ankle into the sea of German controversy as to the Nibelungenlied, I must say that the mere touch of those learned waters was sufficient to deter me from making acquaintance with the minor Dead Sea of the Gudrun-controversy. Miss Letherbrow seems to have been bolder, and I once more refer the reader to her Preface as to the present state of the matter.

kernel of ancient legend lies also in the Hagen-lay, but it is greatly overlaid by modern additions. The scenery and names seem to indicate that the origin of the poem is Norse rather than German; but the story of the griffins is evidently derived from Oriental traditions; while the fencing is a detail of very modern character. Equally modern, as I have said already, appears to be the story of Gudrun's trials in captivity, as inserted into the Gudrun-lay. To the thirteenth century, I believe, belongs the idea of female sufferings as a subject for epic treatment; the story of Gudrun may thus be connected with the French "Berte aux grans piès," and links itself on to the popular fourteenth century tale of the "Patient Grizzel," as treated by Boccacio and Chaucer.

It should indeed be observed that in the "Younger Edda" of Snorro, a version of the legend varying in names and other particulars occurs. Here Hildir the Dane, daughter of Hagen (Högni), is Hettel's (here called Hedin's) beloved, and escapes with him, pursued by Hagen. Father and son-in-law are reconciled, but Hildir, who is represented as a sorceress, ceasing to love Hettel, throws a charm upon both, so that every night her father and husband rise and fight till the day. M. Amédée Thierry sees in this form of the legend especially

a reminiscence of the history of Attila; Hettel for him is Attila, Hilldr the latter's historic bride Ildico, whom, as before mentioned, he would also identify with Walther's bride Hildegund. The carrying away of Högni's daughter is spoken of indeed by older Norse writers than Snorro, and also by Saxo Grammaticus.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOOK OF HEROES (HELDENBUCH): THE HEROIC POEMS.

I.—ALPHART'S DEATH.

WE now enter upon the consideration of the great collection of the 'Heldenbuch' or 'Book of Heroes', edited by Kaspar von der Roen in the fifteenth century, but supposed by Grässe to have been first put together from earlier sources, and touched up by Wolfram von Eschenbach and Heinrich von Ofterdingen at the end of the twelfth century.* Mr. Carlyle, who seems to have known it only at second hand, whilst, as before observed, strangely using it as a sort of clue to the 'Nibelungenlied',

* Vilmar in his 'Geschichte der deutschen National-literatur,' indicates indeed several earlier "Hero-books", and would even deny the title to Kaspar von der Roen's collection, which he greatly disparages. It seems however to have been the most complete and popular of any. It is the one therefore which I shall chiefly refer to, though I have consulted other printed texts of some of the poems contained in it.

treats it as mere 'doggerel', and is willing to throw it all out of window. The term 'doggerel' is applied with Mr. Carlyle's usual unreliable hastiness of expression, a great portion of the 'Heldenbuch' being written in verse far more regular and artistically-wrought than that of the 'Nibelungenlied', and however unequal in merit are the poems of which it is composed, several of them appear to me full of beauty.

Kaspar von der Roen's collection consists of the following poems: 1. 'Otnit.' 2. 'Wolfdietrich.' 3. 'Etzel's Court-keeping' (Etzel's Hofhaltung). 4. 'Giant Sigenot' (Riese Sigenot). 5. 'Ecke's Journey' (Ecken Ausfahrt). 6. 'Dietrich and his companions' (Dietrich und seine Gesellen). 7. 'King Laurin' (König Laurin). 8. 'The Rose Garden at Worms' (Der Rosengarten zu Worms). 9. 'The Lay of Hildebrand' (Das Hildebrand's Lied). 10. 'The Sea-monster' (Das Meer-wunder). 11. 'Duke Ernst' (Herzog Ernst)—the last a poem quite unconnected with the cycle. Later printed 'Hero-books' include other poems which, like the 'Horned Siegfried', have become popular through the greater diffusion of the more modern editions; and it is from such a modernized 'Heldenbuch' that Weber has printed his abstracts and extracts. MSS. of most of these poems have however been dis-

covered by modern industry. The 'Rose Garden at Worms', otherwise called 'the great Rose-garden' (to distinguish it from 'King Laurin', called also 'the little Rose-garden'), was already thus published from the MS. by Von der Hagen and Prüsser in 1820. Since then, a couple of valuable volumes by Von der Hagen, 'Altdeutsche Heldenlieder aus dem Sagenkreise Dietrichs von Bern und der Nibelungen' (Leipzig, 1855), have given us one or more texts from the MSS. of several other of the poems comprised both in Kaspar von der Roen's and later 'Hero-books', namely 'Ortnit' (Ortnit) and Wolddietrich, with a 'Hugdietrich' between, the 'Death of Alphart' (Alphart's Tod), 'The battle of Ravenna' (Die Ravennaschlacht), Giant Sigenot, Ecke's journey, Dietrich and his companions, with fragments of 'Dietrich's marriage journey' (Dietrich's Brautfahrt), Etzel's Court-keeping, and 'Ermenrich's Death' (Ermenrich's Tod). A modernized version of the 'Horned Siegfried', 'Etzel's Court-keeping', the 'Great Rose-garden', 'Alphart's Death', 'Ecke's Journey', and 'Giant Sigenot' will moreover be found in a publication of earlier date by the same author (Berlin, 1811). Among the poems above referred to (which do not exhaust the cycle), I shall select a few, of merit in themselves, which serve to develop the sub-cycle of Dietrich.

The finest of these,—and indeed the most noble of all the later poems of the Norse-German cycle,—is ‘Alphart’s death’. It seems to be, in its present shape, considered to belong, like the ‘Battle of Ravenna’ to be presently noticed, to the fourteenth century,* but like the latter, it had probably an original of the thirteenth. It connects itself with that which forms the main subject of the Dietrich sub-cycle,—the persecution, through Sibich’s treachery, of Dietrich by his uncle Ementrich or Ermentrich, emperor of Greece,—a legendary personage who has evidently taken the place of the historical Odoacer (still remembered, as before pointed out, in the old ‘Lay of Hildebrand’), whilst by his name he seems to represent the still older Hermanic or Gothic history. It is moreover remarkable as bringing forward two personages, hitherto (as in ‘Biterolf’) of secondary importance in the legend, Weytege-Wittich and Heime-Heim his comrade, the former of whom especially, in the Norse *Vilkina-saga*, becomes quite another Northern Achilles; but here on the contrary the part they play, though an important one, is latterly anything but creditable, to Wittich especially. It

* Grimm looks upon Otnit, Wolfdietrich, the Rose-garden, and Alphart as nearly contemporaneous, and probably belonging to the second half of the thirteenth century.

will be recollected that "Hama" and "Wudga" are names already found conjoined in the "Gleeman's tale,"—that in the Anglo-Saxon Hama and the Norse Hamdir we have already recognized the "Amnius" of Jornandes,—that a connexion between Amnius-Hamdir-Hama-Heime and Hermanric-Eormenric-Jormunrek—Jarmericus—Ermentrich is indicated alike by Jornandes, by Beowulf, by the Edda, and by Saxo Grammaticus. But the nature of that connexion is lost in the later legend. Here Heime is no longer the nephew or stepson of Ermentrich, but simply, with Wittich, one of his principal chieftains, and who moreover remains faithful to him against Dietrich. In short, the part occupied in history by him and his brothers is now in the main transferred to Dietrich. And there seems to be evidence that a form of the later version was current at least in the ninth century. Thus Flodoard, writing at that period the history of the Church of Reims, relates that Foulques archbishop of Rheims, in dissuading king Arnulf from undertaking a war against Charles the Simple, quoted the instance of Hermanric, who by the impious advice of one of his counsellors doomed all his kin to death.

Kaiser Ermentrich, through the advice of the false traitor Sibich, has determined to expel his

nephew Dietrich from the land. The knights Heim and Wittich, called upon by Dietrich to stand by him, deem themselves bound to the emperor; whom however, on their rejoining him, Heim strongly advises not to drive out his nephew, telling him it is unfriendly conduct, and that Dietrich will empty many a saddle ere he be worsted. Otherwise, all Dietrich's knights declare that they will support him against his uncle's unjust enmity.

The Kaiser's host is nigh to Bern (Verona); who from Dietrich's side shall be sent on the watch? Young Alphart, Hildebrand's nephew, offers himself.—'Dear brother mine,' says brave Wolfhart, 'let now another knight take the watch; thou art but a child of thy years.'—'No honour will it be to me,' replies Alphart, 'to tarry here like a poor wife; on the watch will I ride forth, none can turn me from it; to-day will I die, or be reckoned for a knight. What should I do, were I not to risk body and life? Since the foes are come upon the green heath, I dare well withstand them.' In vain do Dietrich and his uncle Hylbrand, *i. e.* Hildebrand, dissuade him; in vain does many a good knight begin to grieve; in vain do they take him by the hand before the lady Ute, his uncle's wife, who endeavours herself to turn him from his purpose; in vain at last comes the fair lady Amelgart,

who bids him remember that she has been given him to wife, and falling on her knees beseeches him at least to take some one with him who shall give notice if he be attacked. Alphart tells his bride that it is for her he makes the venture, nor will he have help of any.

Armed by the Lady Ute, mounted by her on a good horse, and receiving his spear from her hand, Alphart rides over the bridge that crosses the Adige; yonder on the heath are eighty of the Kaiser's knights awaiting him, and he knows it not. His uncle Hildebrand determines to ride after him in strange armour, hoping to overcome him and bring him back a prisoner. Alphart takes him for an imperialist and rides at him. Hildebrand is ashamed of yielding to a youth, and awaits the encounter. They fight, and at last Alphart gives Hildebrand such a stroke as stretches him on the green heather. Quickly cried the old man, 'Let me live, I am thy uncle Hildebrand.' Alphart treats this at first as a trick, and will only be convinced on taking off his adversary's helmet. 'Not wise seem you to me; so old as you are, you should have foregone this journey.'—'I did it for the good; come now back with me to Bern.'—'Nay, I will yet serve the watch this day.'—'Christ be gracious to thee, for surely thou hast made

known to me thy manhood; the praiseworthy prince will not be loth to hear that thou hast conquered me.'—As from afar the prince sees Hildebrand coming, 'You have been long away, Master Hildebrand,' he cries; 'where is your prisoner that you are bringing?'—'Lord, we have sent forth the bravest knight that in our times hath ever won the name of knight. The young chief met me on the broad plain; I could not stand before him.'—'Not loth am I to hear that the young chief hath conquered; on my troth, it was well enough done for a youth.'

Meanwhile Alphart stands on the heath, tightening anew the girths of his horse. Eighty knights under a green banner worked with gold ride up to him. He asks who is their chief. Duke Wolfing replies that they are sent by Kaiser Ermentrich for Dietrich's hurt. To Wolfing's question who Alphart is, the latter only answers that he is his foe, and to all who mean evil by his lord. The Duke observes that he holds of the Kaiser castles, wealth and land, he has received his pay, "the bright gold so red;" when the Kaiser orders, he must ride to the fray. They fight, and Alphart drives his spear right through the breast of Wolfing. The knights press upon him to avenge their chief. He meets on foot two of them successively

and kills them. The remainder now attack him all at once, but he slays them all except eight, who leap on their horses and take to flight, pursued by Alphart, who however stops after awhile, for he is hot, and the sweat falls on the heather through the rings of his mail.

He dismounts, and taking his spear in his hand seeks the shade of a linden-tree. From hence he can see the smoke of Ermentrich's host fly over the broad plain. 'Had I now one thousand men,' he thinks, 'the Kaiser should not be excused from fighting. Had I Wolfhart my dear brother, and the prince of Bern, and the old Master my uncle Hildebrand, and were the three of the same mind with me, the foe should have to leave this land.' He unbinds his helmet, he turns him to the breeze.—By this time the eight knights had come running, they stood all wounded before the Kaiser, their shields and helmets all wet with blood. 'Welcome be ye, knights; where are the other heroes who were with you on the watch? where is Duke Wolfing, and his eighty men?'—'He is dead, and the others remain by him. We saw it with our eyes; ask of them never more. We were eighty, eight have come back; the others lie all slain to death upon the heather.'—'Now tell me, worthy man, how many were the knights who conquered you?'

—‘It was a single knight’....—‘Who was the knight? what bore he on his shield that I may know him? Was it my nephew Dietrich or one of his servants?’ They reply that the knight was one of such valour that he will certainly ride hither himself. At this news, the imperialists begin at once to fall back.—Alphart perceives the movement from afar, he laughs, and thinks whether he will pursue them. But he deems that it would be reckoned foolhardiness were he slain on such a venture, and he would not be lamented; so he bides under the linden-tree.—Meanwhile the Kaiser is asking again who the foeman knight was. The fugitives can only say that he bore a white shield with a lion of red gold, and above a golden crown. This is not Dietrich’s cognizance; it must be, they think, some stranger knight come to help him from afar.

The Kaiser is sore troubled. He has silver and gold brought forth, he offers it to whosoever will go upon the watch; but all are silent. Alphart meanwhile dwells still under the linden, for it was the law in those days that whosoever went upon the watch, were he knight or servant, he kept it till the end of the day. The Kaiser now addresses Wittich, appealing to his faith, and offering to share with him castles and wealth and lands.

Wittich replies that for the many gifts that the Kaiser has bestowed upon him, he is entitled to have a return, and arming himself, goes in search of Alphart. But as he goes a fear comes upon him, the weight of his armour oppresses him, he feels so hot that the sweat drops through his mail on the green heather. 'God from heaven,' he exclaims, 'what is this? what will happen to-day on the watch? I will not ride forth.' He turns round his horse and faces the host. Then he bethinks him again as a hero: 'Rather must thou endure grief, since the praiseworthy Kaiser hath chosen thee out of 80,000 men.' His friend Heim too rides after him, meaning to revenge him if he fall.

Alphart comes forth to meet Wittich, whom he recognizes, and reproaches bitterly for his breach of faith to Dietrich, but refuses again to give his name in answer to Wittich's inquiries. Wittich declares he has never been so reproached in all his life; he would not be a man if he were to bear it. 'To whomsoever God may grant heal,' says Alphart, 'let him live while he may; but I ween nought shall part us twain, save either's last day.' They fight; Wittich shivers his lance on Alphart's breast, Alphart strikes Wittich to the earth, far behind his horse Schimming, who ran off and ate the green grass, caring little for his lord's fall. A

sword-fight follows, of which Alphart has again the best, stunning Wittich with his blows till he thinks only how to escape, and at last stretching him on the heather as if dead, the blood gushing from his nose and ears ; but he forbears to kill him whilst thus at his mercy.

Now Heim comes forward, and suggests that each champion should return to his own party. Alphart insists that Wittich should be left with him as a hostage. Wittich now appeals to Heim to come to his aid, reminding him of past vows and services rendered. Heim deems it would be evil done if both at once were to strike the youth. However, he ends by yielding to Wittich's entreaties. Alphart for a time has the better still, and pursues both his foes ; but they weary him, and he appeals to them to remember knightly honour, and to encounter him singly, pledging himself not to yield to either. Heim cannot resist the appeal, and engages him alone, but receives such a blow that the blood spirts forth an ell. Then Heim attacks Alphart in front, Wittich from behind, and the latter strikes Alphart a treacherous blow through the leg, so that he can hardly stand ; after which they take to flight. Alphart calls after them ; are they such cowards as to flee from him on his one leg ? He springs after them ; in a lion's

rage he leaps on Heim and wounds him twice in the breast. Then they close for a final grapple, in which at last Heim splits open Alphart's head, whilst Wittich runs him through the body. He dies crying still "Fie, ye evil cowards, ye men without honour!"

This, which should be the end of the poem, represents unfortunately but a break in the MS., which afterwards continues at some length to relate the succour brought to Dietrich by Walther of Kärlingen and other chiefs, who have been summoned by Hildebrand to come and help Dietrich in his need and avenge young Alphart's death, and by monk Ylsan (who it seems had offended Dietrich by slaying his uncle Garten, and is anxious to be reconciled to him), with 1100 monks wearing black coats over their bright armour; the encounter of the party with Studenfuss of the Rhine (apparently the 'Stutfuchs' of 'Biterolf'), the relief by them of Verona invested by the Kaiser, and the battle between the two hosts, in which the monks distinguish themselves greatly, so that the emperor deems them to 'sing evil chaunts.' The poem ends by the discomfiture of the imperialists, and the flight of Sibich, of the emperor, and of Wittich and Heim, which is followed by a distribution of the booty.

II.—THE BATTLE OF RAVENNA (RAVENNA-SCHLACHT).

The 'Battle of Ravenna' (first half of the fourteenth century) is in fact but a different version of the action which forms the subject of the latter part of 'Alphart's Death', only placed at a later epoch, and one more consistent with the general course of the legend. It might deserve more attention here, were it not that the Carlovingian cycle will afford us much finer specimens of the battle-epic, in the description of the fields of Roncevaux and Aleschans. The most interesting portion of it, and that on which alone I shall dwell at any length, is that relating to the death of Etzel's sons.

Dietrich is sad for the many knights whom he has lost in Romishland through the persecution of Kaiser Ermenrich. Queen Helche comforts him; king Etzel promises to give him 1,100,000 men, that he may go and avenge his wrongs; all the chiefs promise their aid. After great festivities, the host is about to start. Queen Helche meanwhile has had an evil dream, of a dragon that came flying through her room, carried away her sons to a broad heath, and there tore them in pieces. They come to greet her in the morning: 'Welcome be

ye from God,' she says, 'my full dear sons, my eyes' blooming delight, my Easter-day, my May; what joy have I to see you!' But they have come to beg permission to go with Dietrich. Both Helche and Etzel are very loth to give it, fearing the craft of Ermenrich. Dietrich declares he will not let them go out of his keeping; but they must not ride further than he may allow. Pressed at last by their importunities, Helche in tears asks her husband to give his consent, and they are allowed to go, their mother specially commending them to Dietrich.

After the surrender of Padua to the Huns, the two armies meet under Ravenna. Dietrich, before proceeding to the field, specially commends the two young princes and his brother Diether to old Elsan, (Ylsan?) "as God commended His mother to St. John." Whatever displeasure the princes may show, Elsan is not to let them approach the gate, under pain of his life. Dietrich also recommends the princes to his brother Diether, as being a little older than his companions, reminding him that if they (the princes of Bern) were to lose "the Hunnish march" they would be dead for ever. He warns them all that they are not to believe any report of his death; but that if he should perish, 'Bern' is to be handed over to Etzel. The princes

are much grieved at parting one by one from all the chiefs. More than a hundred times did Dietrich kiss his brother Diether on the mouth, and also the young princes.

Left alone, the princes ask leave of Elsan to see 'Bern', seeing it lies in Hunland. With great reluctance he consents. They go round the town, but on coming out take the wrong road, which leads straight to Ravenna. Elsan has missed them, and searches for them in vain. The three young men ride all the day, lose themselves in the evening mist, and spend the night on a heath. Early the next morning they descry Wittich, armed as if for battle. The sight of one who has done such harm to his party much grieves Diether; would that Wittich might die under his hand! Scharf, one of the young princes, says they must conquer the traitor. Wittich, who has perceived them, now calls to them, asking if they are companions of 'him of Bern'? Diether now replies that Wittich must expiate his breach of faith. 'Fare back to Hunland,' he retorts, 'and reproach me not, else will ye see Hunland no more.' The three young men set upon him, Scharf foremost, who inflicts on Wittich two wounds, and strikes a blow which, though aimed by too weak a hand to reach the flesh, is sufficient to unhorse him, but is killed. Grimly

his brother Orte rushes on Wittich, but, alas! the young men's armour was but their summer garments. Again Wittich advises his assailant to go his way, but is only met by reproaches. He is thrice wounded in this new conflict with Orte, in which Diether joins after a time. The fight lasts till the evening, and Wittich is sore pressed; but in his fury at last he strikes a blow which cleaves Orte's skull. Diether is so grieved at the sight that the blood starts from his eyes; but after inflicting four new wounds on Wittich, he is in turn cloven in twain through the shoulder. Wittich however is overwhelmed with grief at his victory; he weeps over Diether, and kisses all his wounds.

Meanwhile the battle is raging under Ravenna. Under Ermenrich fight various personages both of 'Gudrun' and of the 'Nibelungenlied', Frute of Daneland, Herman (Hartmut?) of Normandy, Morunk of England, Gunther, Sifrit. Dietrich's host is marshalled by Hildebrand, Helfrich taking the standard. The struggle is a bloody one; "Wolfhart becomes young that day in the strife." Dietrich and Sifrit close together; Dietrich is nearly killed, and is only saved by a silken shirt under his hauberk, with four relics sewn in it; but in turn he strikes Sifrit down, and compels him to beg for his life. At last Ermenrich takes to flight with the

traitor Sibich, who however is taken prisoner by Eckart.

Great is the woe of Dietrich when the dead bodies of the dead princes and of Diether are discovered by Helfrich. 'Who will ever trust me now?' exclaims the chief. He beats his breast, he bites his arm and his hand; O! that he were dead! He gazes upon the wounds of the dead; so deep are they, he declares that they can only have been made by Mimung,—the sword of Wittich. At this moment Rudeger tells him that Wittich is riding by. Dietrich instantly rides after him, but at sight of him Wittich takes to flight. In vain Dietrich adjures him to tarry; Wittich flees all the faster. But his uncle Reinolt who accompanies him cannot bear Dietrich's appeals and taunts; he stops and awaits the latter, while Wittich rides off. Dietrich soon kills Reinolt, and resumes his pursuit of Wittich. But when on the point of reaching him, a mermaid carries off the latter and his horse, telling him that thirty such as he could not withstand Dietrich in his wrath.

Ravenna is stormed after the battle, but Ermenrich escapes. Dietrich revenges himself by setting fire to the palace and the tower; the proud burghers come out and give up their relics.—Dietrich now sends Rudeger and Helfrich to Etzel's court to

bear the news. The queen asks at once about her children. Rudeger can only reply by tears. She presses him anew. "Your two sons lie dead on the heath before Ravenna." Bitter is Helche's woe. 'Alas!' she cries, 'for their dear blooming youth, for their high-praised virtue! Yea, rightly knew no man what virtue lay in them! Alas! for their dear greetings, that seemed to me so sweet and so pure! Joy of my best time, how have I lost thee!' She loads Dietrich with curses for his breach of faith. Rudeger defends him, and speaks of young Diether who also lies dead. 'Tell me, Rudeger, by thy truth,' says the queen, 'weeps he yet sadly, the king of the Roman land? is Diether really dead?'—'I saw with my eyes Dietrich kiss the young kings on their wounds, I saw him bite his flesh from his hands; never can I forget his weeping.' By degrees Helche begins to pity Dietrich, and is sorry for having cursed him; and she ends by sending him assurance of her favour. The news has now to be told to Etzel, with the like effects, save that he seems to be chiefly comforted by hearing that Elsan's head has been cut off.—Dietrich soon follows his messengers, and on reaching the presence of his sovereign bows his head down upon Etzel's foot, begging him to avenge his two sons upon him; but Etzel lifts him up kindly, and forgives him.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOOK OF HEROES: THE ROMANTIC POEMS.

I.—OTNIT.

THE two foregoing poems may be considered as the latest worthy specimens of the true epic. It will not have escaped the reader how remarkably abstinent almost all the works hitherto noticed of the German portion of the cycle have been from the vulgar marvellous. With the exception of the former portion of the 'Nibelungenlied' (in date probably the latest), the opening of 'Gudrun' and a few subsequent passages, and the incident, probably interpolated at a late period, of the carrying away of Wittich and his horse by a mermaid in the 'Battle of Ravenna,' we have been left unmolested by giants, dwarfs, dragons, monsters, magicians, &c. The only marvels have been those of the strength and endurance of the heroes; or if supernatural creatures have been introduced, it has been those whose fabled existence forms,

as it were, a part of the national character itself—as the ‘merwomen’ of the Rhine in the ‘Nibelungenlied’. The introduction of the fabulous as a mere part of the poetic machinery, and a whet to the *blasé* fancy, marks the lower stage of the purely romantic, as distinct from the heroic epic. When the poet of the ‘Nibelungenlied’ sang of the endurance of the Burgundians in the House of Slaughter, and of their quenching their thirst in the blood of the dead, he told that which, being a simple exaggeration of the known powers of man, was no doubt believed in with profound faith by a vast number of his simpler hearers. When a later minstrel told of Wittich being carried away by a mermaid, he said that which, as he himself assuredly knew, not one grown man among his audience could credit for an instant. The one appealed to his hearers’ faith,—the other simply to their fancy.

To this form then of the purely romantic or fanciful epic belong two poems which open the ‘Heldenbuch,’ and which have thereby attracted, I believe, an undue amount of attention, ‘Otnit’ (more properly ‘Ortnit’ or ‘Ortnic’), and ‘Wolfdietrich’,—the former personage a Lombard king, the latter his avenger, and his successor both in the throne and in the affections of his widow. I shall not

attempt to abstract them. Attributed by some to Wolfram von Eschenbach,—ascribed by Gerwinus to the end of the thirteenth century,—written in regular stanzas of eight short lines with alternate rhymes,—these works have nothing directly in common with the poems of the cycle hitherto considered but the personage of king Elberich the dwarf, evidently the ‘Albrich’ of the Nibelungenlied. Of the identity of Otnit with Odoacer, of Wolfdietrich with *the* Dietrich of the cycle, which Mr. Carlyle speaks of, I have failed to find so much as a trace in the originals. Kaspar von der Roen indeed expressly treats Wolfdietrich as the grandfather of Dietrich of Bern, and as such he figures in the poems of the Dietrich legend proper; the poem evidently offering us an instance, of which many occur in the other great cycles, of the growth of legend by the accretion of tales of the ancestors of a chief hero. Considering moreover that Theodoric, instead of being the avenger, was the deadly foe of Odoacer, and that the memory of his victory over the latter, as above shewn, has been preserved in the ‘Battle of Ravenna,’ though Odoacer has grown in it to be an emperor of Greece under a Gothic name, it was hardly to be expected that the two personages should be found in any such connexion as that

spoken of by Mr. Carlyle. It is true that in other poems of the cycle, as the 'Great Rose-Garden,' the same personage apparently who figures here as Wolfdietrich the grandfather of Dietrich of Bern, appears as his contemporary, under the title of the "Comely Dietrich of Greece."*

Both 'Otnit' and 'Wolfdietrich',—which latter occurs also as divided into the two lays of 'Hugdietrich' and 'Wolfdietrich',—are poems versified with considerable skill, not uninteresting, and studded now and then with striking and beautiful passages. The one which Mr. Carlyle quotes as "Sole specimen of that old German doggrel," and as "perhaps the finest" detached passage in the Heldenbuch, does not occur in the version of Kaspar von der Roen. Its title to be called 'doggrel' must be left to the reader. Anyone may see it is almost faultless in metre, and I should call it in fact a favourable specimen of Minnesinger poetry. The finest passage, to my mind, in the older text, is perhaps one describing the parting between king Otnit and his wife when he goes forth to fight and be killed by a dragon (stanzas 258—260, 263—266), which is full of pathos; but I certainly should not take upon myself to say it

* There were indeed two contemporary historical Theodorics, as Mr. Kingsley, in his lectures on "the Roman and the Teuton," will have reminded many.

was the finest in the 'Heldenbuch',—still less would I say so of Mr. Carlyle's excerpt. But the reader is not likely to take much interest in the conquests over Turks and encounters with dwarfs, mermen, or dragons, of purely fanciful heroes with whom he is not otherwise acquainted. I will merely observe that the poem concludes with a penance by Wolddietrich, which, with varying circumstances, appears to have been somewhat celebrated in the later legends, (see for instance post, p. 268) and in which, according to Kaspar's version, being laid on a bier, many hundred devils come and carry him alive to hell, and practise torments and temptations upon him.

II.—SIGENOT AND ECKE.

Two other poems, in stanza metre, 'Giant Sigenot' and 'Ecke's journey', which I shall call simply 'Sigenot' and 'Ecke', stand in direct connexion with the main body of the Dietrich-legend. The former, much the inferior one of the two, deserves to be slightly referred to as forming avowedly an introduction to the latter.

Dietrich finds a tall man (Sigenot) sleeping in a wood, and wakes him. The latter recognizes on

the hero a helmet once belonging to his nephew Grein, whom Dietrich has killed, and declares that he must avenge him. They fight,—the giant strikes Dietrich down, carries him off, and casts him into a ‘hollow stone’—which afterwards appears to be a tower—where there is no light. Hildebrand comes riding by, and sees his master’s horse bound, whereby he knows he must be near. The giant attacks him with a steel stake, strikes his sword out of his hand, and seizing him by the beard, drags him toward the ‘hollow stone’. But when arrived there, Hildebrand’s beard breaks in the giant’s hand, who has been moreover unwise enough to leave his stake behind. Seeing his master’s sword hanging up, Hildebrand seizes it, and with it cuts off an arm and a leg of the giant, whom he proceeds to despatch.

Meanwhile Dietrich in the hollow stone—here called a tower—is in great straits ‘from many a strong worm,’ *i. e.* serpent. Hildebrand somewhat cruelly takes the opportunity of rating him for going forth alone. Dietrich acknowledges that things have gone “a little amiss” with him, and begs his follower to help him out. There is however no ladder to be found; at Dietrich’s suggestion, Hildebrand cuts up his garments and forms a rope which he throws in; but as he is

drawing up Dietrich it breaks, and the latter is so much injured by the fall that he bids Hildebrand go away and look after his wife and brother, as he can nevermore be healed. However, by the assistance of a dwarf named Eggerich, whom Hildebrand finds sleeping in the mountain and seizes by the beard, Hildebrand finds a ladder which is hanged on the tower ; Dietrich is rescued, and his wounds are salved. But the one night that he lay there, it seemed to him thirty years.

“ Here begins the Lay of Egge” (*i. e.* Ecke), says the MS. ; and this is so far superior to the former, that I can hardly believe it to be the work of the same author.

There was a land named Gripiar (*i. e.* Colonia Agrippina) in heathen times ; its chief town was named Köln, and it was praised afar ; the town lies nigh the Rhine, and is full well built. There sate (there) heroes in a hall ; they spoke wonders without number of knights of price. The one was lord Fasolt, to whom fair ladies were friendly ; the other was lord Ecke, the third wild Ebenrot. They said all alike that no man was braver in time of need than lord Dietrich of Bern, a hero throughout all lands ; and keen also with crafts was lord Hildebrand. But the lord Ecke was loth` to hear him of Bern praised by all. ‘ What is happened to the

folk'? he said; 'have they not often seen full many a man fall down, slain by my hand through his armour? Well might ye dismiss this talk. But after him of Bern will I search throughout all lands; I must find him and give him battle; he shall deprive me of my life, or else lose all his praise.'—Then spoke wild Ebenrot: "Full shamefully did Dietrich slay to death the lady Hilte and also Grein,* for a breastplate that he took. Had Grein awaked, he had never come thence.'—Then spoke lord Fasolt: 'Neither foe nor friend am I to Dietrich, I never saw him with my eyes. But those who have seen the hero, I hear them ever assign to him the preeminence; truly is he said to be the bravest in time of need that ever received baptism. Tell me, lord Ebenrot, wherein it ever misfell him? Shew me a man who ever yet conquered him. Not shamefully did he overcome Grein and his wife, they pressed him so sore; he slew them on the green open to save his life.'—'True is it,' said lord Ecke, lord Dietrich is full perfect in princely honour. For me, men know not yet who I am; they must know me also; if I deprive him of life it will be said in the land, lord Ecke has slain him of Bern. I am full twenty

* This event, it will be remembered, is referred to at the commencement of 'Sigenot'. I cannot state the details of it.

years old, I have killed full a hundred men, felling them under my hand with deep wounds to the ground, as the wind casts down the trees on the mountains. As many a good hero as I have ever met in storm or strife, I have conquered him till now; my greatest woe is when I have none to fight. Who should thank me for withstanding a dozen cowards and overthrowing them? but by withstanding a good man who shall hew my shield and pierce my armour, if I conquer him, it will be more honour to me than to slay such a dozen of the feeble.'

Three fair queens sate by and heard this talk. The highest of them spoke: "Alas! that I never saw him of Bern! Who is he? If my eye should never behold him, then God has forgotten me, and all my joy is gone. Blessed is the woman that bore so worthy a body, of whom such things are told! Enough lords there be that speak falsely of him, and are heavy that men should speak well of him; but they cannot contend with him in manhood nor in honour.' Now the lady that spoke was named Seburk; she bore crown at Jochgrim. Addressing Ecke, she bade him be welcome if he should win on the quest he speaks of. Ecke declares that he will not fail to go in search of Dietrich. The lady promises him the best breastplate

ever seen, once belonging to king Otnit of Lombardy, who therein perished; for a worm found him sleeping before a stone wall, and carried him into the hollow mountain, where the young worms 'sucked him through the work'—*i. e.* through his mail armour. Wolfdietrich of Greece conquered the breastplate, but at Tischen the knight "brothered himself," *i. e.* made himself a monk, and gave the breastplate to his convent. There the high-minded one expiated his sins in one night, by a penance strong above all others, wrestling with all the dead whom he had slain from a child; there, continues the lady, 'I bought the breastplate for 50,000 marks. Of pure steel is it, with rings of gold big as a finger, hardened in dragon's blood; no sword-cut hath ever struck so much as a hair from it; wrought was it in Araby, a land's price is in it. I will give it to thee on this condition, that if thou find him of Bern, thou let him live.'—'Lady, he shall live if he will give up to me his sword; but that can hardly be, so much do I hear of his manhood. God send me this help!'—'Could I but see the hero', says the lady, 'in all my years nought liefer could befall me. His high name kills me. I know not what he hath done to me, that my heart so longs after him.'—Ecke pledges himself to bring Dietrich or lose his life.

An old wayfaring man hears him, and speaks : 'Lord, this is not well done. If you should in your pride withstand him of Bern, your end, believe me, will not be good. He is the father of the afflicted ; what he wins, he shares ; honour much he loves ; God forbid that you should harm him.'—'Dear companion', said the noble lady, 'knowest thou Dietrich ? Tell us tidings of him.'—'Yes do I,' said the wayfaring man ; 'a praiseworthy knight is the noble one of Bern ; broad in the chest, shaped as a lion.'

Ecke is richly armed (full details being given of the rest of his armour and weapons besides the breastplate). He is promised for reward the love of any one of the three queens whom he may choose. But when the best horse in the land is brought for him to mount, he declines it, for it would not be strong enough to bear him. For himself, he can go a fortnight afoot without feeling hunger or fatigue. In vain the lady Seburk presses him, declaring she will be spoken ill of for giving him a breastplate and no charger. They see him go forth afoot, like a leopard through the wood, bounding wide on his way, whilst his armour resounds afar like a bell. The wild creatures are affrighted at the noise, the birds are wakened up and give out manifold notes ; all flee before him.

Down the wood ran Ecke, till he came upon a road and a cultivated country. He found a hermit, and asked him how far it were to 'Bern'. He is told there are yet twelve miles, too far for him to go, and is offered hospitality in the hermitage. At table he asks his host concerning the prince of Bern, saying he has never set eyes on him, and fain would see him. The hermit tells him he was at 'Bern' late the previous night, and saw there the prince. Ecke is rejoiced, and thanking the hermit for his food and his treatment, asks the way to 'Bern'. In vain the hermit presses him to bide till the day; Ecke replies that his heart compels him, he cannot sleep.

Before daylight he left, and came upon a beaten path that led him to 'Bern'; in the morning he went into the town. As he passed through the streets, the folk fled before him, for his breastplate shone as if on fire, like live coals glowed his shield and his headgear. 'Who is that man,' it is asked, 'who stands there in the fire? if he tarry at all, the whole good town shall be burned.'—Loud cried Ecke: 'Where is lord Dietrich of Bern? Long have I sought him; I am sent forth by ladies, rich, fair, and noble, who fain would see him; never yet was I lady's messenger; more have I done for them than for God.'—Master Hildebrand sees him:

‘Never saw I,’ he says, ‘so rich apparel of gold cut so long. I say it not for hate, but a narrower cut coat would suit you far better than to come in arms to seek my lord. But in so rich apparel you must have come on horseback?’—‘No horse could have brought me hither. Three famous queens have sent me to bring him of Bern to their house; he shall depart again with good honour when he shall list to go, thereof I give him my troth; but they fain would see him, they long after him.’—‘How durst you come hither to Bern? You will have lost your journey; you know not my lord’s custom. He fights with those who come on horseback; but you are the first who have come bounding on your feet. I advise you as a friend, follow another road, and take yourself off from Bern. If my lord fought with vagabonds, he would withstand you.’—Looking straight into his eyes (literally ‘*under* the eyes’), wrathfully replied Ecke: ‘You chide me too sharply; had I hold of you by the beard before the gate on the broad heath, it should be loth to you, of a surety.’—Master Hildebrand saw the speech was grievous to him, he did as a wise man doeth, and said: ‘I did it in jest. My lord is not here at home; he is riding to Tyrol in the forest; there will you find the hero. Yet be not anxious to strive with him; full many a knight

has he felled dead with his hand. But if you should conquer him, come then hither to Bern, I will myself withstand you.'

Taking his sword in his hand, asking leave of none, Ecke departs, and crosses the Adige to go up the mountain; wherever he goes men ascend to the battlements to look at him. That day he fared from 'Bern' till he saw Trent. On being questioned as to his errand, he says he seeks him of Bern, and is shown up a mountain, where he spends a night. In the morning there comes to him a monster (afterwards called a 'mer-monster', but really a centaur), half-man and half-horse, clad in horn, who shoots a bolt at him, crying with a terrible voice; but the bolt can do nothing on the knight's cuirass. Then with a sword the centaur gives him such a blow as strikes him down senseless on the green grass. But his wrath woke him up, and helped him out of his need; for he struck the creature with such a sword-stroke through his horn-garment, that he fell dead.—Hot with the fight, Ecke comes to a linden-tree, where he finds a wounded man. He asks who has wounded him? 'It was the good prince of Bern; none can strive with him; a lion's valour is his.' The lord Ecke sate down by the man, he began to measure his wounds with both his hands: 'Never', he cried,

saw I wounds in any land that were struck so deep! Hero, nought remains whole to thee under helmet or shield. No sword can have done this; it must be the wild thunder-stroke from heaven.'— 'Hither I rode, I fourth, from the Rhine, for a fair lady's will, to win glory; a brave man rode against us, who bore on his shield a lion of red gold. He withstood us all four, the three he slew to death, I will not lament them, for cowards they were all together; not long they defended themselves. But now my life is gone; give me some earth in my mouth for God's honour, that my soul may go to God sound' (*i. e.* absolved). 'Ask no more of me, my wounds so pain me. For God's sake let me rest, I cannot live longer.' In spite of this appeal Ecke questions him still further, and obtains his name (Helfrich of Lun) and that of his companions. He declares he will avenge him, and binds up his wounds.

Having been shewn by the knight the path which Dietrich took, Ecke proceeds on his final quest. Dark was the valley where the knights met, but their armour shone so bright it was like a burning sunshine. The lord Dietrich deemed it was Hiltegrin his helmet that gave the shine, and addressed it: 'How fair thou art! free of all grief must be the smith whose hand wrought the

crown on thee. The older thou growest, the brighter art thou ever.' But so speaking he hears the man coming, about the distance of a horse-run (*i. e.* of a charge by a knight in armour). 'I would receive you with greeting, lord,' said Dietrich, 'if it be your will. Who hath sent you hither? how run you thus after me?'—'I have been sent hither, I have traversed strange lands, in quest of lord Dietrich of Bern; fair ladies should he go and see; I would tell him of three queens, noble and rich.'—'Many Dietrichs there may be at Bern; if you mean the Dietrich to whom Dietmar left Bern and other his properties, him you find here in me.'—'Now turn thee, knight; I stand here on my feet, I cannot escape thee, having come hither without a horse. On me thou mayest win the richest armour that ever rich Kaiser's child had on his body.' Dietrich asks how he came by such armour, which Ecke proceeds to describe, praising at great length breastplate, sword, &c., successively. 'If thy sword be so sharp,' says Dietrich, 'that it will hurt giants, I will not withstand thee; a fool were I to fight with thee.'—'Well I see thou art loth to fight. . . . Dietrich thou mayest be called, but thou doest not as the prince of Bern. Rather would I die than part from thee.' And Ecke proceeds to curse the lady who sent him, and the

path which he has followed. 'Hast thou name of knight?' asks Dietrich; 'thou shouldest well be ashamed of not being able to hold thy peace. What need hast thou to strive with me? I will not strive with thee, thou hast done me no harm. Give my service to thy lady from him of Bern, tell her I will always be her knight.'—'Not a word' (literally, not a hair) 'will I say to her of thee. Bare thou art of all honour; cowardice teaches thee to flee. Dost thou see my good breastplate, and this noble smith's work? Through this worms sucked the blood of Kaiser Otnit. Now strive yet, fearless hero; my armour is wrought of Saxon gold.'—'I fight for no one's gold. Will you not be friends with me? I have done you no harm. But if we must fight, wait till the day shines; on my troth it is too early yet.'—'Now turn, lord knight, if thou have ever a man's courage; turn hither, worthy good knight, for the honour of all ladies. Henceforth will I withstand any who should praise thee. Art thou he of whom men tell tales to knights and to ladies? Three noble queens have sent me after thee, who fain would see thee.'—'Three queens, sayest thou? whilst we fight here for them, their mouth must laugh. I wonder what pleasure it will be to them, if one should dwell here (dead), and the other alone comes away!'

Goaded at last by Ecke's taunts, Dietrich dismounts and they begin to fight, both wishing for the day. The more they hew at each other, the brighter shines their armour. At daybreak the birds begin to sing; but Ecke's breastplate and Hiltegrin *overclang* their singing. The blood runs from the noses and ears of the knights. The spear-shafts take fire from the sparks from the helmets; the smoke rises through the trees like a cloud. So terrible is the strife, that no coward could look upon it. Ecke strikes through the red lion on Dietrich's shield, who gives way, but the trees which are felled by Ecke's furious blows serve him for a shield; Ecke's own breastplate is hard as a mountain. Dietrich gives Ecke a knock-down blow, but the latter wounds him again and again, and boasting already of his victory, tells Dietrich he must follow him alive or dead. Dietrich however recovers new strength each time, and fells his foe till five times, then calls on him to give in. At last they wrestle on the grass; Dietrich has the upper hand, and bids Ecke give up his sword; on his refusal he runs him through. But he is grieved at what he has done; 'My victory and thy youthful death,' he exclaims, 'make me red with shame; never saw I knight so rush upon his death, as, hero, thou hast done. Blessed on

earth is he who in all things knows how to hold and to leave.' After a long lament, he takes off Ecke's armour, and by request of the latter cuts off his head, and binds it to his saddle.

The rest of the poem is greatly inferior, and seems to have been composed by some one who was not even acquainted with the commencement. Dietrich departing finds by a pleasant spring a fair lady sleeping. Binding his hawk to a linden-tree, he falls on one knee before her. On awaking, she heals him with a wondrous salve, and tells him she has a fair land in the sea, and knows the evil and the good; she bids him moreover go to Jochgrim and give the news to the queens, foretelling him much trouble, but promising that he will eventually escape. On his way he meets a maid who is pursued by Fasolt with his leash-hounds, and overcomes in turn both him and the third brother, here called Eggenot. He ends by killing their mother and sister, two fearful giantesses.

The 'Lay of Ecke' belongs evidently to that later school of poetry, in which the exploits of particular heroes are related, rather than great national traditions; and to that later division of the school, in which the individual is not even brought into connexion with the general. It may

be in this respect contrasted with 'Alphart's death,' which it otherwise resembles somewhat in subject. There, the wilfulness of Alphart was yet blended with devotion to his chief; here, the wilfulness of Ecke stands unredeemed by any sense of duty. At the same time, there is a sort of epic greatness still hanging over the career of the headstrong youth, and the dash and brilliancy of the poem are unmistakeable. That it must have been very popular,—that in its present shape we have only a late *rifaccimento*, or rather the result of several *rifaccimenti* of it, appears to me evident. Originally, Ecke seems to have been nothing but a gallant, stalwart young knight; latterly, he was transmogrified by vulgar hands into a paynim giant, member of a brood of monsters. This change of view is not only apparent, as already indicated, in the conclusion, but may be traced in various superadded details (which I have omitted in great measure) throughout the poem, towards the latter half of which indeed Ecke begins to be designated in the text as a giant. Another obvious inconsistency, for which the original author is surely not to be held responsible, lies in the long wanderings after Dietrich which are in one place spoken of, whilst in the text as preserved Ecke seems to have had only a forest to pass through be-

fore coming within a few miles of Verona. There are indeed historical indications of the popularity of the legend throughout the thirteenth century. An "Austrian Chronicle" of the middle of that century speaks of 'how Dietrich slew sir Ecke.' Marner, in the latter half of that century, refers to "Ecke's death" as one of the subjects which a minstrel would be called on to sing of. Hugo of Trimberg, at the end of the century, mentions equally 'sir Ecke,' and 'how sir Dietrich fought' with him, as popular themes of song. Ottokar of Horneck (about 1295) is still more distinct in speaking of the three queens "who sent the great knight Ecke, Vasolt's brother, after him of Bern," and of the armour they gave him. Similar references occur in various other German poems of the period, and even in the "Livonian Chronicle."

III.—THE GREAT ROSE-GARDEN (GROSSE ROSEN- GARTEN).

All sense of greatness disappears when we consider a poem, the last that I shall endeavour to

epitomize, but which is perhaps the pleasantest specimen of the purely fanciful epic of chivalry within the Norse-German cycle,—the “Great Rose-Garden.”

The poet, who evidently considers himself to have fallen on degenerate days, begins by referring to the rich kings and heroes of old, how they strove with one another for honour's sake without hatred, how they could cleave shields and helmets and suffer pain for fair ladies' sake, and went on long journeys to increase their praise. Such a journey to “Worms on the Rhine” he next proceeds to describe.

At Worms dwelt fair Kriemhilt, with her father Gippich,* who had a garden full of red gold and treasures; whosoever might break into it, the king would become his servant. In the garden was joy and gladness, and red roses enough, and twelve of the boldest men whom king Gippich could collect, to defend the rose-garden, and many a clever maiden white. And king Gippich sent messengers to king Etzel, inviting him to come, if he wished to look at the rose-garden, with twelve heroes like unto his own, and he would serve him

* The “Gibicho” of ‘Walthar of Aquitain,’ the “Giuka” of the Edda, the “Gifica” of the ‘Scop's Tale,’ the “Gibica” of the Burgundian law, &c.

if he won. (From some passages in the poem, it would seem that these joustings were to be in honour of Kriemhilt's wedding with Sifrit.)

So king Etzel rode into the land of Dietrich of Bern, who came to meet him with five hundred knights: 'Welcome, Etzel rich king of the Huns; what seek you in my land?'—'King Gippich has sent messengers to ask if any will dare ride against the Burgundians; he has a rose-garden at Worms on the Rhine; whoso breaches it, his servant will he be.' He of Bern and Master Hildebrand promised to help the king; as they went back to the hostelry, they found many a knight sitting on a table, and so merry that they would all have leapt over it. "For God's sake now sit still," said lord Dietrich. So, going to a bench, and calling his chaplain and his secretary, he gives the latter the letter to read, forbidding any to leave till they have heard its contents. As the secretary opened the letter, how loud he laughed! "'There stand so many wonders in the letter, whoso is become a knight, or will a knight become, let him hear this news, and stand here by me.'—'What stands then in the letter?' said the chaplain.—'King Gippich is her father, and well we know it; down there by the Rhine the lands obey him. . . Gunther is her brother, and Gernot the other.'—'Now read

for good, master, what stands in the letter?'—
 'Fair Kriemhilt has sent her greeting to us,—an
 the lord Dietrich dare carry his sword and his
 shield to Worms on the Rhine? and defiance to
 lord Dietrich,* says the maid.'” Dietrich declares
 that, if he should not be able to ride, they must
 carry him thither, to do justice to the maiden's
 greeting. The secretary reads further from the
 letter the description of Kriemhilt's garden, which
 she has dressed since she was a child, half a mile
 broad, with many roses and other flowers; a lin-
 den-tree within it, so wide that it gives shade to
 five hundred fair dames, with birds in its branches;
 beneath it bellows black as a coal, which when you
 pull, there goes a wind through the branches above
 in the lime-tree, where the birds are, and they
 begin to sing so sweetly one against the other, the
 small and the great, that no heart was ever so
 mournful as not to be solaced by them; under the
 linden-tree is also a carved ivory seat, with samite
 and furs upon it. Twelve chosen knights, each
 a hero in storms and battles, keep the garden; to
 each is given a damsel, and a broad land; they
 must bring twelve that are their equals.—And
 what then? says lord Dietrich.—Each victor, a
 damsel shall kiss him, and put a garland upon

* *Und trutz und tratz her Dietrich.*—Untranslatable.

him.—“Now let her kiss the devil!” says Wolfhart. He is not for the journey, though he were to vanquish; he can do without such adventures; he has “a red mouth here too at home.” Becomingly spoke Master Hildebrand: should he perhaps win a garland, he will give it to the lady Ute, his dear lady. Dietrich bids the secretary name king Gippich’s twelve knights; the first is the king himself, then Gunther, Gernot, Hagen Aldrian’s son, Walther, Volker of Alsace, sister’s son to Kriemhilt, the fiddler; Stüfing king of Hungary, Asprian the giant,* who bears two swords, Schrudan the giant, who rules by fear over the Prussians as far as the sea, Rienolt, Herbort, and the twelfth Sifrit king of the Netherlands, who bears twelve swords, one named Balmung. Wolfhart still declares that he will not ride to Worms for a rose-garland, but remain at home with a whole skull. ‘He wants to be entreated to go,’ said his brother Alphart. But when Wittich says he is willing to remain with Wolfhart, if his lord allow, ‘nay, we will all go,’ says Wolfhart. One or two others make objections. Heime would gladly go, but not for roses. ‘If I rode for roses,’ replies Dietrich, ‘it were apelike;’ but he must

* This is a personage who figures in another early epic hereafter noticed, king Rother, and also in the *Vilkina Saga*.

meet the maiden's challenge. And he bids the secretary read on still, how, if they care not for the roses, there are dragons to fight in the forest. Finally, the twelve knights are chosen; old Master Hildebrand the first, then he of Bern, then Wolfhart, then "a proud youth of Denmark," then young Sigstap; Rudiger, the mild margrave; Heime, Wittich, Hartung the rich king of Russia, comely Dietrich of Greece, high-minded Dietlieb of Styria the eleventh. But who is to be the twelfth?

Hildebrand suggests his brother, Ilsan the monk. 'How can this be?' asks Dietrich, since he has been two-and-thirty years in the cloister; it were sin to take him from his good life.—"Know you not, dear lord, what the monk swore to you, when you gave him leave to enter the cloister? He promised you a ride," (*i. e.* a knightly expedition) "and swore you an oath, that when ye would he should be ready."

They ride towards Isenburg, Master Hildebrand foremost. On the fifth morning they were at the convent gates, as the monk was about to sing an early mass. The lords with their shields almost knocked in the door. "Let me in quick," said Master Hildebrand, "I too would fain be a brother in the cloister."—"Who knocks at the door?" cried monk Ilsan. 'Bring me my armour,

and my good sword, and my bright helmet;—‘if they wish to force the monks, were they two-and-thirty, I attack them all. Quick tell, who is before the door?’—Lord, it is an old man, and bears three wolves.’—‘Hurrah, ever hurrah, it is my brother Hildebrand.’—‘By his side is a younger man, and seems a strong hero; on his shield an angry lion.’—‘It is my lord Dietrich.’ Then went to the door monk Ilsan; over his mail he bore a grey coat, on his legs he bore coarse thick hosen. ‘Benedicite, brother,’ said Master Hildebrand. ‘The devil lead thee,’ said the monk, ‘that thou shouldst be riding to battle the livelong year; thou mightest have thy ease by lady Ute’s side.’—‘I would do it if I could,’ said Master Hildebrand; ‘but I must ride for roses; we are sent for by fair Kriemhilt.’—‘Well it appears, dear brother, that you are mad. Are you on your way to Bern, lord Dietrich?’—‘My lord begs you,’ said Master Hildebrand, ‘to fulfil your troth to him, pledged with your hand and sworn to, that when he chose to ride, you should be ready.’—Ilsan knows well that he promised it, and if they go to Bern, he is ready to fare with them, but will have nought to say to the ride to Worms. However, on Dietrich’s telling him that it will be shame to him not to help his brother, he yields, and throwing off

his cape, stands forth in his "old storm-armour." He "will go to Worms, and see the river of Rhine, for a garland of roses, for a damsel's kiss;" they must pledge him that all shall be fulfilled to him, though Kriemhilt should say that she had never thought of such a thing. He now invites them to breakfast, and promises good wine; the monks must pay for it. After they have eaten, a horse is brought to the monk, "Scheming's brother, mickle and strong," and he girds on a sword. The abbot willingly grants him leave to depart, which he does after taking his spear and his sword, with which "in his day he has played so often." The monks all curse him as he goes: "For that thou hast parted from thy brotherhood, mayest thou be killed and never victorious! So strong a man is he, we are deceived in him; so often has he pulled us round by the ears, when we would not do what he bade us; he brought us in the cloister into anxiousness and need." But an old monk praises God for the riddance.

On the fifth morning at daybreak the lords had reached the host, save Wolfhart alone, who lay apart, but on hearing the news came before them, pointing out as an outrage that "he of Bern" has brought a monk with him. "Mockest thou?" said Heime.—'If thou wilt not believe me, see

him yonder thyself.' Up sprang all the lords; those who could not find shoes went barefoot, running all together towards Dietrich, save Wolfhart alone, who ran somewhat behind. "Welcome from God, lord Dietrich of Bern," said all the lords together; "and be you welcome also, old Hildebrand; but what the evil devil would the monk in this land?"—"Sir monk," said Wolfhart, "take yourself off hence quick to the cells; I will not ride with you to the foreign land."—"Who is the young knight?" said monk Ilsan; "if he will not have a care of himself he will suffer for it." 'He is thy sister's son,' said Master Hildebrand.—'Is it then Wolfhart? He lay in the cradle when I last saw him; I knew not that I was to suffer from him so great an outrage.' Matters are made up between uncle and nephew. All rejoin king Etzel, who rides back with them to the country, and takes in Dietrich, Hildebrand, and Rudeger to queen Herke (Helche of the 'Nibelungenlied').

Graciously she welcomes them. They tell her of the garden up the Rhine, of the birds that sit on the linden-tree, of the bright maidens each with a rose-garland on her head, of the twelve knights already afield, who on their coats of mail bear twelve golden birds, whose plùmage must be praised over all the world. 'Bring us of the

roses' from Worms on the Rhine, says the noble queen. Here too has she many a clever maid; if they conquer, each shall have a damsel and a broad land; and if they of the Rhine have their coats all adorned with golden birds, she will have all theirs adorned with twelve "sea-wonders." To work these, she has her chests opened, and bids the goldsmiths take out gold and precious stones; each sea-wonder has a gem in its mouth; their banner too is worked with red gold and gems, and with gems too the helmets of the twelve knights. She bids them choose for themselves swift chargers; long of side are they and strong of chest, and wide-leaping. She has a rich tent made, all bright with gold and precious stones, so that "it blazed like a taper"; the twelve champions were at their ease beneath it. One found there many a lordly game; the tables were of ivory, smooth as glass; above in the tent lay the bright carbuncle. After many encouragements they take their leave one by one; Master Hildebrand has charge of the 'storm-banner,' and leads them joyfully through the land.

But on reaching the river Rhine, he plants his banner, and speaks to the lords, bidding a halt, for never saw they such big ferrymen as are here. One of such he knows well, and good luck must

he have who should cross with his life against that ferryman's will ; and he has twelve sons, all fearful ; whomsoever he ferries over, he will have of him for fee the right foot and the left hand.—‘ An evil pledge to leave,’ said he of Bern ; ‘ I will attack him myself.’—‘ I will be messenger,’ said monk Ilsan ; ‘ the big man will ween I am a pilgrim when he sees my beard.’—‘ Strange news this,’ said Wolfhart ; ‘ how shall we conquer twelve men in the garden, if we suffer so great an outrage from one ? We should beg of him as men beg of an ass, with a good scourge, and say, “ Now ferry us over Rhine, and the devil pay thee, thy dear lord ! ” ’

Meanwhile knights and ladies from Worms have seen many a red banner waving over the heather, and the glitter of gems on the helmets. These guests, they say, are come to fight in the rose-garden ; evil befall Kriemhilt for sending letters to the Huns ! At this moment monk Ilsan came to the Rhine, and began to call to the ferryman : ‘ Wilt thou ferry twelve men over ? they shall pay thee.’—‘ Yes, dear brother,’ replied the ferryman, ‘ I will ferry thee over for God's sake.’ But when he had brought his boat over, and saw the monk in battle array, he began to reproach him for deceiving him, and seizing a rudder (or oar) struck

at the monk, who however sprang under it, and began fighting the ferryman with his fists, till the blood ran, and the ferryman at last was struck to the ground. 'Such a strong devil I never knew,' said the ferryman; 'never was I yet felled in storm or in strife; now hath he conquered me as if I were a little child of seven years old.' Since Kriemhilt the queen has invited such guests, let her will be done. So he has boats enough made ready, and ferries over the knights with their crowned helmets. In the town of Worms many a knight's lady is saying that so many proud heroes were never ferried over Rhine; if they come into the garden, Kriemhilt's heroes will be slain. King Etzel promises the ferryman, if he conquers, to share his wealth with him. 'Come when ye please,' said the ferryman, 'you will find me ready.'

They pitch their tents in the field by Worms. Mild Rüdiger is sent as a messenger, to know if the knights will fight by the Rhine or in the garden; he is clad in a garment worth 12,000 marks. He fares alone with Herman his squire, and alights at the garden. The queen sits under a dais for the sun. 'Say, rich prince, what is thy name?' said one of the ladies.—'I serve king Etzel and lord Dietrich;—the fairest among you all, what is her name?'—'The fairest among us all is Kriem-

hilt the fair maid.' Kneeling the margrave presents the letter, which the queen's secretary reads, loud laughing at the acceptance of the challenge by king Etzel and lord Dietrich and their knights, who mean to destroy all the flowers and the grass of the garden, so that it be all wet with blood.

A damsel asks that the margrave may hear the birds sing. So they began to pull the bellows; a wind went through the branches above in the linden-tree where the birds were; they sang one against the other, the small and the great; was never heart so sorrowful that could weary of that pastime; they sang one against the other, the throstle and nightingale. 'You have upon earth here a whole heavenly realm,' said the margrave; "could I live in it, so long as live I may, a year with the ladies were but a short day." A damsel played sweetly with a lute;* whoso heard her must be rich with joy. The margrave took off his garment and gave it to her. 'What prince can this be?' said the queen, 'to give such rich gifts.' Again they ask him who he is. "Right virtuously" he replies: 'I serve king Etzel and lord Dietrich; I am subject to lady Herke the mild; I am called Rüdiger of Bechlan' (Bechlar). The queen says

* The "rotta" or "chrotta", a well-known instrument of the middle ages, which appears as early as in Venantius Fortunatus.

she has heard much of his virtues. Does he see the twelve damsels sitting before her? she will give him one, with a golden crown, and a kingdom. He replies that he will rest satisfied with the lady Gotelint, "since God from heaven led me to her from the first;" he will remain steadfast to her, and grow old beside her. But when are they to come with the armed hand?—At this very hour, replied the queen.

He took leave of her at midday. On his return, Dietrich asks at once where he has lost his garment. Rüdiger replies that he gave it to a maiden who played so sweetly on the harp and the lute. "Thou art a mild man," say they all. He then tells them that "he has been in paradise;" that there are damsels in the garden who would take away sorrow from all eyes; a kiss from them will be a rich reward. It is agreed to send Hildebrand on the morrow to arrange the fight. Sigstap undertakes the 'shield-watch', and is attacked by Rienolt of Megilant (Milan), whom he wounds.

Hildebrand is courteously received by king Gippich, and asks him to select his twelve champions. The king will be the first for his daughter's sake. Hildebrand, who is a hundred years old, will fight him himself. Gunther is matched against Früte of Denmark, Gernot against Rüdiger, Hagen

against Wolfhart, Walther against Hartung of Russia, Stüfing of Hungary against Dietlieb of Syria, Asprian the giant against Wittich, Schrudan of Prussia against Heime the four-elbowed, Herbort against fair Dietrich of Greece, Volker of Alsace the fiddler, sister's son to Brünhilt,* against monk Ilsan, Sifrit of the Netherlands against lord Dietrich. But Rienolt has got wounded overnight, and cannot fight. Hildebrand goes back, and bids his men get ready; one after another must go to the fight. He has all the huts where they have slept set fire to; and men see on the field the strong heroes with their crowned helmets, their swift steeds by them.

At the blowing of king Etzel's horn comes Hagen, a silver-white shield in his hand, two golden horns on his helmet. He springs into the garden; angrily he cries, 'With whom am I to fight?' 'With Wolfhart,' replies Hildebrand, and Wolfhart springs forward on his white horse, a wolf of red gold on his shield, a silver-white stake upon his helmet, in his hand a spear big as the arm. They meet and unhorse each other, they seize their swords, they strike upon one another as if they were blind. Weary at last, they sit down and rest awhile, unloosing their helmets,

* To Kriemhilt, according to an earlier passage.

and washing from their eyes the dust and the sweat; then, refreshed, they spring up and strive together again, till their shields are red with blood. But Hagen is struck to the earth, and had the queen not parted them in haste, Wolfhart would have killed him. Wolfhart cries, with voice sounding like a horn, that he must have more fighting; where is Hagen? The queen tells him Hagen will not strive any more; let Wolfhart take the prize.

King Gippich now calls for Asprian. "Up sprang the giant, long and big therewith," and grimly armed himself. Hildebrand calls Wittich to oppose him. "Have I killed thy father or thy brother, that thou hast betrayed me to this devil's man, and paired me against him? take him yourself in hand. So big is he and so long, the devil, that for fighting with him I have no desire." Dietrich entreats Wittich to undertake the fight, promising him his good horse Scheming. Wittich asks for Hildebrand's warranty of the gift, which is granted. Yet will he not 'risk his worthy life against the long giant' unless margrave Rüdiger will arm him and grant him reconciliation for what, in the text I am following, remains an unexplained cause of offence, but which, from other texts, appears to be the slaying of Nuodung, Rüdiger's son,

referred to in the Nibelungenlied, when Hagen receives Nuodung's shield from the margravine. This too is done, and Wittich at last springs into the garden. The giant strikes upon him with his two swords; of all the heroes was none so over-matched as Wittich; but he fights craftily, fleeing before the giant till he finds an opportunity of cutting off one of his hands. The giant is furious, and with the other hand discharges a blow which strikes Wittich down upon one knee; in all his days it had never so happened to him. But springing up between the giant's legs, he cuts off one of his feet,* and then his hauberk, which three men could not have carried. "Wittich," cries the queen, "thou must let him live." But he did as though he heard it not, and took away his life; then turning round, said: "Proud maiden, if you will have the long giant, he shall not be denied you." She complains that he would not hear when she first called. If he has slain him, he may have him himself. So Wittich quits the garden, receives the good horse Scheming from him of Bern, and mounting him declares that now he fears no longer king nor kaiser.

Schrudan, Asprian's comrade, is slain in turn

* Wittich, it will be observed, is represented here as using fairly the crafts which he uses unfairly in 'Alphart'.

by Heime; then Stüfing by Dietlieb. Günther, matched against young king Früte of Denmark whom he has deprived of his inheritance,* receives a blow which cuts through his helmet, so that the blood runs down before his eyes and blinds him. The queen springs up and begs that they be parted. Früte declares that unless his heritage be restored he will kill Gunther. "I thought your fighting here was for roses," she says.—"Lady, my land is dearer to me than your roses." He seizes his sword right grimly. "Your land is won," cry all the ladies. "I will never believe it," he answers, "unless Günther says it." Günther grants the land back. Hildebrand rejoices over Früte's success. "God abide by the right, who knows all things," says he of Bern. Gippich laments his son's ill-fate. 'We have deserved it, by my faith,' says Günther.

Gernot is now matched against Rüdiger, who "springs to his foe amid the red roses." As they fight, and either breastplate is red with blood, a damsel with her red mouth prays God to watch over the knight who gave her such rich gifts. Kriemhilt strikes her on the mouth, that the blood flows; "Wishest thou luck to a stranger man?" But when Rüdiger sees the damsel bleeding, so

* This indicates evidently a different legend from that of 'Gudrun' respecting one of the personages of that poem.

fiercely he strives that the queen springs up, parting them, and awarding him the prize.—Walther is in turn rescued from Hartung, whilst Herbort is killed by Dietrich of Greece; Rienolt is conquered by Sigstap.

Monk Ilsan is now called out by Hildebrand. He comes forward, a grey coat over his mail. 'Give me,' he asks, 'a champion among the roses, or I tread them all down, and leave never a one.' He proceeds to tramp up and down the garden, treading down the roses. None comes forward to meet him. 'Hast thou none bold enough to withstand him, dear father?' says the queen; 'may his grey coat be shamed for ever!' Monk Ilsan laughs. 'Most noble queen, cursing is forbidden, as well I know, who am a cloister-man.'—'Ill service is it to God to mock me thus,' says the queen.—'My orders are true,' he replies; 'see here my staff, given to me by the abbot himself, who sent me to hear confessions.'—'Heavy is this man's mock; he bears a sharp sword for a staff. Say, was the abbot not uncanny, who gave it thee? It is the devil whom thou servest with thy staff.'—'Though I were to lose here my soul for roses, the news came to the cloister that brought me hither, that every one shall have a damsel's kiss, who dares fight here for a rose-garland; for this will

I break shield and helmet.'—"The devil kiss thee on thy rough beard," says the lady. King Gippich calls out Volker to fight with him, on whose shield was a fiddle. With strong swift strokes they fight; but the monk looks often upon the ladies, for which Hildebrand sharply reproves him. He has however the upper hand, and the queen has the combatants parted. 'To the devil I commend thee and thy brethren,' says Volker; 'thou hast given me great strokes with thy staff; a bold serving man is he who dares wait on thee.'—"Has the queen any more fiddlers?" asks the monk; 'how sweet soever their strings may sound, their fiddlebow is sick.'

Gippich now turns to Sifrit, bidding him arm; if he will avenge him, fair Kriemhilt shall be his own. Up stands the queen, and kisses the king of the Netherlands, bidding him fight cheerfully. Let her be without anxiety, he tells her; whoso shall fight with him, though he had the courage of three men, he will overcome him with his good sword. Hildebrand calls out Dietrich to oppose him. And here occurs a scene exactly parallel to the one in 'Biterolf,' Dietrich declining to encounter the "devil's man" till his blood is warmed by Hildebrand's taunts, and afterwards by an encounter with him, with the addition however of a few de-

tails,—as that Wolfhart is ready to fight if Dietrich is not,—that Dietrich leaves Hildebrand after striking him to the ground, and (by a trick of the old man) is afterwards told of his death by Wolfhart. Grieved at this news, he goes and knocks at the garden gate: “Let me quickly in to Sifrit the wild, though he be horned;* slain through him lies Master Hildebrand; I will avenge me on him, though he were a stone wall.” The fight is a furious one, so that many a noble lady weeps: “And should two generous princes lose their life for the queen’s will?” they say, “it is too much.” —“Let them fight!” said Kriemhilt; “it is child’s play to me; who ever saw for roses so grim a strife as fights lord Dietrich of Bern with Sifrit of the Netherlands?” The blood flows in streams; Sifrit wins new strength by thinking of the kiss his lady gave him, and presses Dietrich so sorely that he takes to flight. Already Kriemhilt declares that he will have to be her servant all his life.—‘Why hold you not your peace, lady Kriemhilt?’ says Brünhilt; ‘When he of Bern is right enraged, he strikes deep wounds.’ Hildebrand

* This term already occurs in one passage of the Nibelungen, and gives its name to the latest poem of the Sigurd legend, that of the “Horned Siegfried.” As Mr. Carlyle explains, it is meant to express Sifrit’s invulnerableness, not his being crested with actual horns.

runs up and begins again to scold his master, who returns to the fight; but once more Sifrit begins to drive him round. 'Go to thy master, Hildebrand,' cries Wittich, 'and again reprove him, or we shall lose here prize and honour.' Loudly calls Hildebrand to him,—'How now, well-known prince of Bern? look on the fair ladies, born on the Rhine, how they sit under the linden-trees, and all make mock of thee, young and old together.' Dietrich is enraged, and begins to "reek," like a house on fire. Seizing his sword Rose with both hands, to the joy of the Huns, he strikes Sifrit with wounds deep and long through horn and through mail, so that Sifrit in turn flees before him. Brünhilt now begins to taunt Kriemhilt, who at last, seeing Sifrit's double hauberk hewn off from his body by Dietrich's sword, and the blood flowing over his gold-coloured shield, weeping springs from her seat, and bidding all her ladies come with her, runs through flowers and roses to the fighters, calling out to Dietrich to cease fighting, for he has won the prize. Dietrich pretends not to hear, till with great strokes he has hewn off Sifrit's helmet. At last, all the ladies entreating him, as looking through his visor he sees "so many red mouthlings" speaking to him, he grants life to the Netherlander, who is taken

under the arms and carried off, and his wounds searched, which were more than a span wide. He declares that had he known Dietrich six months before, he would have avoided him; the devil in hell should fight him. 'Well we knew,' say the ladies, 'that when he of Bern is right enraged, he strikes deep wounds.'

There remain of the champions only Hildebrand and king Gippich. Dietrich taunts the former, telling him the king will pay him off all he has himself had to suffer from him. They fight; king Gippich thirsts for revenge, and pursues Hildebrand with uplifted sword. 'Hildebrand, bold knight,' says Dietrich, 'if king Gippich slays thee, I'll give to lady Ute a young husband, of whom she is well worthy.'—'Nay, lord of Bern, were I slain, men would hear lady Ute wail and lament and hotly weep; so great is her troth toward me, it would be ever woe to her red mouth, should she have to take another husband than me; so will I well fight for the lovely lady.' So saying, he strikes through king Gippich's armour and shield, bidding him pay for Dietrich's words, and fells the king at last at his feet. 'Will you let your father perish?' cry the young damsels to Kriemhilt; 'will you not think that he is your father?'—'Let my father live,' cries she to Hildebrand.—'If you

with your heroes become subject to my lord, I will let your father live.' The terms must needs be accepted.

Hildebrand leaves the garden with king Gippich and Sifrit, who have to give up their sceptres and crowns to king Etzel. Sifrit bewails himself; to-day he was a king, but now a poor man; what is life worth to him? Etzel however bids them keep their crowns, but be subject to himself and to the lord Dietrich.—'Now prepare yourselves quickly, ye knights, that ye may receive the garland and the kiss.'

The twelve heroes go into the garden. Towards each of them comes a shapely damsel, who embraces the champion, sets a rose-garland on his head, and kisses him on the mouth. Dietrich mocks Wolfhart for receiving a rose-garland on uncombed hair.—'It is Hagen's sword that has disordered it,' replies Wolfhart.—'The heroes have all their reward, and not I,' says monk Ilsan; 'I must seek it with my good sword. I must have a chaplet, or the linden-tree must pay for my waiting; the dais against the sunshine will I hew down, the birds on the tree will all be set free.'—'An you be a good friar,' says the queen, 'do me no violence.'—'Then give me my chaplet.'—'The garland thou shalt have at once, but no damsel

will kiss thee on thy rough beard.'—'Am I then the devil, because I have a rough beard? I bear true orders; I will have my right, or knights and squires shall lie dead by my hands.'—'A red mouthling shall reconcile us,' said the queen. Then came toward him a clever maiden, a rose-garland in her hands; she set it on the monk's short hair. He took the fair maiden under the arms: "Who ever saw on earth so sweet an image?" She kissed monk Ilsan on his rough beard: 'Had I such joy within my convent, I would live for ever without torment under the friar's coat, I would kiss for worship more than a thousand times this image that stands before me. Now must I rue it ever, that I have to leave her here, her smile, and her embrace, and her lovely countenance.' The monk would have pledged himself to her on the spot, but Dietrich reproves him, saying it would be told to the abbot.—'So great is the falseness of the abbot and the brotherhood,' says Ilsan, 'whoso should bring him news that I had lost my life, all would rejoice, and give him rich largess; not a monk in the cloister is friendly to me.'—'This talk wearies me,' said wounded Hagen; 'let whoso may rejoice, no joy is mine; soft salve were better for me than all red mouths; and though I should heal, yet have we lost four knights for Kriemhilt's sake; the

devil serve her, as Wolfhart served me!' Wolfhart expresses his regret at having harmed him, and asks him for his friendship. 'Willingly,' said Hagen, 'the fault is not thine; Kriemhilt the queen hath brewed the slaughter.'—The poem concludes by the departure of the champions from Hunland, their return by way of Bechlar, their reception by the queen of the Huns, and their dispersion, with the incident of Wittich's earlier departure, on account of Wolfhart's jealousy at seeing him in possession of the horse Scheming. Monk Ilsan, as might be expected, is refused admission at his convent, and has to break in the door.

Mr. Carlyle's brief account of the "Great Rose-Garden" is apparently derived through Weber from a late text, stuffed out with a host of superfluous exaggerations, especially as regards the prowess of monk Ilsan. The latter,—who figures in serious shape in 'Alphart's death,' and is perhaps also the 'Elsan' of the 'Battle of Ravenna,'—although he has various congeners in the French cycle, and is by no means distantly related to our Friar Tuck,—becomes yet, as it seems to me, in the hands of the author, a perfectly original personage, the creation of whom would alone mark the true poet. The want of reality in the 'Rose-garden,' while de-

prising it of true epic power, does not moreover impair the poetical character of the work. You evidently see that the author does not in the least believe what he is telling; but he would fain be able still to do so; and this yearning after an avowedly ideal past, coupled with a considerable amount of genial dramatic power, is precisely what gives its peculiar charm to the poem. There is moreover great skill and delicacy in the way in which the tragic story of the 'Nibelungenlied' is led up to by the exhibition of Kriemhilt's pride and wilfulness, and of Hagen's feelings of resentment towards her. The 'Great Rose-Garden' must have been highly popular, for Von der Hagen tells us that 'Chriemhilt's Rose-Garden' is still the name of a meadow near Worms.

CHAPTER XI.

CLOSE OF THE NORSE-GERMAN CYCLE;
THE 'HORNED SIEGFRIED;' THE DANISH BALLADS.

WITH the 'Great Rose-Garden' I close this survey of the Norse-German cycle proper. It is not indeed considered to be the latest by any means of the poems in that cycle, being ascribed by Grimm to the middle, by Gervinus even to the beginning of the thirteenth century. But it marks, properly speaking, the German transition to the *renaissance* school of epic among the Italians,—artistic,—elaborate,—mostly facetious or satirical. 'Alphart,' the 'Ravennaschlacht,' even 'Ecke,' if later in date, are in fact earlier in character than the 'Great Rose-Garden.'

Beyond them all lies the 'Horned Siegfried,' with its childish stories of Siegfried and Chriemhild's childhood, of her being carried off by a dragon, of his combat with the dragon, and victory over it by the aid of a dwarf. This belongs really,

though in verse, to the group of the German 'Kinder märchen.' The legend of Siegfried's *horny* skin, which gives it its name, is no doubt, as shewn by the reference to it in the "Great Rose-Garden" in the thirteenth century, of much earlier date than the poem of the "Horned Siegfried" itself. But such a coarse material rendering of the idea of invulnerableness indicates of itself the degeneracy of poetical conception.* The cycle of Norse-German epic, properly so called, is worked out.

But as that cycle has for one of its starting-points the epoids or shorter pieces of the Older Edda, so its true conclusion lies in the Danish ballads. These, in their earliest preserved form, belong only to the sixteenth century,—the first hundred of them having been published, as may be seen from the Preface to Grimm's "Altdänische Heldenlieder," in 1591, whilst the larger collection of the "Kämpe-viser" dates only from 1695. But there is about some of them an unmistakeable character of antique vigour, which carries us far away from the close of the sixteenth century. A few which turn upon the legends of the Norse-German epic cycle are remarkable indeed, as be-

* Vilmar and other German writers indeed consider that the 'Horned Siegfried' must have had a very ancient original. I differ from them *in toto*. Legends of heroes' childhoods are always of secondary growth.

longing far more to the German than to the Norse portion of that cycle, but with peculiarities of their own. Thus, the kingdom of the Huns becomes in them the small island of "Huen" in the Sound; that Sound, and not the river Rhine, becomes the scene of the famous crossing; Hagen and Volker, under the names of "Hogen" and "Volquart" or "Folquard," are the prominent personages, and are treated as brothers to "Grimild";—the 'Grim Hagen' of the *Nibelungenlied* becoming here a young hero who wins damsels' favours at his last hour; the tragedy of the Hall of Slaughter dwindles down into the deaths of Hagen and Volker alone, and in various other details the legend departs from either type before set out. I would say at once that it appears to me not at all unlikely that this Danish form of the legend is the one really referred to by Saxo Grammaticus, and consequently that it may well belong to the thirteenth century.

To give an idea of these, I shall translate the first of three, which are indeed to a great extent identical in subject and treatment.

"It was the proud lady Grimild, who had the mead prepared; she invited the bold knights from all strange and distant lands; she invited them to come without delay to the fight and to the strife.

"It was the hero Hogen, who lost his young

life. It was the hero Hogen, who went out to the strand; he found there the Ferryman upon the white sand. 'Hearken, good Ferryman, ferry me over the Sound; I give thee my good golden ring, that weighs well fifteen pounds.'—'I ferry thee not over the Sound, for all thy gold so red; an thou come into Huenild's land, there shalt thou be slain to death.

"It was the hero Hogen, who drew out his sword; it was the hapless Ferryman, whose head he cut off. He took the golden ring from his arm, he gave it to Ferryman's wife: 'This shalt thou have for love, for Ferryman's young body.'

"It was the hero Hogen, who went up and down on the strand; he found there a mer-dame, resting on the white sand. 'Hail to thee, hail to thee, good mer-dame, an artful wife art thou; an I come into Huenild's land, can I preserve my life?'—'Strong forts hast thou, also much gold so red; an thou come on Huen island, there shalt thou be slain to death.'

"It was the hero Hogen, who quick outdrew his sword; it was the hapless mer-dame, whose head he cut off. The bloody head he seized, he threw it out into the Sound, he tossed the body after; there both met at the bottom. Lord Gimmer and Lord Germer, they pushed the skiff from the land with

courage. Angry to them was the weather, and strong the sea flood.

“Angry to them was the weather, and strong the sea flood. The iron rudder good went in twain in hero Hogen’s hand.

“The iron rudder strong went in twain in hero Hogen’s hand. With two gilded shields the lords steered themselves to land.

“As now they came to land, they drew out their swords. There stood there a damsel so proud, who looked upon their passage. Small was she in the middle, of right measure in her length, short in the body; her gait was that of a damsel.

“To Nordbing they go, where the porter was wont to stand: ‘Where is now the porter, who should here watch and go?’—‘Here is the porter, who lies for protection and defence; an I knew whence ye came, your message I were lieve to bear.’—‘Hither are we come over three fields of land; Lady Grimild is our sister; be that known to thee in truth.’

“In then went the porter, and placed himself straightway before the table; clever was he in speech, full well could he shape his words.

“Clever was he in speech, full well could he shape his words: ‘There tarry without before the door two so well-born men. . . .

“There tarry without before the door two so well-born men! The one bears a fiddle, the other a gilded helmet. The fiddle he bears not for any lord’s reward; from whencesoever they are come, they are two dukes’ sons.’

“It was the proud lady Grimild; she wrapped her head in her garment; she went to the courtyard of the fort, and invited her brothers in: ‘Will ye go into the room, and drink mead and wine? A bed of silk, when ye would sleep, and two damsels mine.’

“It was the proud lady Grimild; she wrapped her head in her garment; so went she into the stone-built room before all her champions: ‘Here sit ye, all my men, and drink both mead and wine; who will slay hero Hogen, my best beloved brother? Whoso will earn this prize, let him slay hero Hogen to death: he shall rule in my castles, and win my gold so red.’

“Thereupon answered a champion, a governor over the land: ‘The prize insooth will I earn with this free hand; the prize will I earn, and slay hero Hogen to death; so am I master over thy castles, and over thy gold so red.’

“To this spake Player Folquard, with his great iron-stake: ‘Fairly will I teach thee, ere thou go forth.’ Therewith he struck the first stroke, fifteen

champions lay dead. Ha! ha! Player Folquard, how thou movest thy fiddle-bow!

“He struck the champions so, that a bridge of them he made, and both broad and long it was; great unrest it brought to all. Above were the skins, below the peasen small;* which made hero Hogen to fall first of all.

“It was hero Hogen, who would again stand up. ‘Hold now, dear brother’ “(*i. e.* cried Grimild)”, ‘thou knowest how things go;—hold now, all-dearest brother, so fast thou holdest thy troth, that falling first to earth, thou wilt stand up never more.’†

“So faithful was hero Hogen, he would not break his word; on both his knees he stood, as he received the death-wound. Yet slew he three champions, who were not of the meanest; so went he hence to Hammer, to find his father’s treasure.

“Yet was the leech so friendly to him, that he received damsel’s favour; proud Huenild it was, with her he begat a son. Ranke was the champion bright; he avenged his father’s death; starved

* In a version of the legend in Danish prose (the chronicle of Huen) this seemingly imperfect passage is explained by a statement that Grimild strewed peas by treachery.

† There seems to be a passage omitted relating the giving of such a pledge.

Grimild by Niding's treasure, with hunger-need through want of bread.

“So went he forth of the land toward Bern in Lombardy; there was he with Danish men, and showed forth his manhood. At home remained his mother, from whom Huen took its name; among knights and among warriors the noise thereof went far abroad.”

In the second of the three poems referred to, evil dreams of Hagen's mother are referred to; Hagen kills the mer-wife, but not the ferryman; he boasts of having killed king Siegfried with his own hand, and also strong king Ottelin. Here occurs an incident recalling the Nibelungenlied, of his drinking blood out of a helmet.

The third poem is full of vigour, and but for its many points of contact with the others, might well deserve translation. In it occur, as the names of Hogen's companions besides Folquard, lords “Gynther” and “Gerlof,” evidently the German ‘Gunther’ and ‘Gernot,’—that of “king Güncelin,” as Grimild's champion, and that of “good Obbe Tern,” as lending Hogen a “good sword” in the strife.

It is remarkable, as shewing the tendency of tradition to incorporate fact, that on the small island of Huen (now Swedish territory) appear to

have been found the remains of four castles, two of which (Nörborg and Hammer) are mentioned in the ballads; and that the chronicle of the island relates with some variations the same legend.

In other Danish ballads, which are closer to the Norse than to the German version of the Sigurd-Sifrit legend, that hero is mentioned under the name of Sivard, but instead of perishing by the hand of Hagen or his kinsmen, he is killed by a certain "good lord Nielus," who then hews Brynhild in pieces, and afterwards kills himself.

Other ballads turn upon the Dietrich legend. One describes the fight of Dietrich and a lion with a serpent, and the subsequent attachment of the lion to his deliverer; this seems borrowed from the 'Heldenbuch' poem of 'Wolfdietrich.' Another singularly fanciful one, supposed to belong to the latter half of the fifteenth century, brings into play a prominent personage of the Carovingian cycle, Oger the Dane (Olger Danske), in a fight between him and Dietrich, in which the German champion is made to take to flight.

Lastly, there is a ballad of "The fighting monk," which, although the name of its hero is omitted, is evidently a reminiscence of the prowess of sturdy 'monk Ilsan' of the Rose-garden. The 'fighting,' otherwise called the 'cold-headed monk,'

conquers twelve champions, then an enchanter, and on his return to the convent stretches three monks in their blood, 'because the brose was not yet on the table,'—'hangs fifteen up in the smoke, because the fish was not yet boiled,'—strikes out one of the abbot's eyes, because he made them sit so long,—and eventually becomes abbot himself, and rules the convent for thirty years. The piece is one full of vigour and grim humour.

That the Norse-German cycle is worthy of a distinct and not un-prominent place in the history of the world's literature, few persons, I think, even after the imperfect and superficial survey which I have given of it here, will be inclined to doubt. Viewed merely as a cycle, without reference to any particular poems, it presents us with a group of personages of marked individuality, and considering the long period over which the poems spread, great consistency of character. Proud and revengeful Kriemhilt,—Rudeger the mild and courtly margrave,—Dietrich the noble knight, easy-tempered, hard to rouse, but when roused not to be conquered,—impetuous, high-tempered Wolfhart,—wise old Hildebrant, free-spoken and faithful, full of craft and sly humour, yet never deficient in valour,—the gentle lady Helche—are distinct and

worthy members of that great ideal family which begins (in the West) with Achilles and the sons of Atreus, with Ulysses and Nestor. So too, and prominently, are the Hagen and Volker of the 'Nibelungenlied'; so is the 'Wate' of the latter half of 'Gudrun'; so are monk Ilsan of the 'Rose-Garden,' and Alphart, and Ecke; when we once know them, we feel that we have added names to the circle of our poetical acquaintance, which henceforth we should be sorry to have missed from it. It will be remarkable to observe how the other great middle-age cycles in turn will contribute new personages to the epic family, whose character may in some respects recal, but will yet remain entirely distinct from, those which the first cycle has hitherto introduced to us.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LOMBARD SUB-CYCLE: KING ROTHER.

BEFORE passing on to the Carlovingian cycle proper, it seems necessary to say something of a poem decidedly epical in character, belonging only through one of its personages to the Norse-German cycle, and only loosely, and as may easily be judged, at a late period connected with the Carlovingian,—‘King Rother,’ a work of which the original authorship is ascribed by Von der Hagen to the former half of the twelfth century, but evidently re-written in great measure towards the close. Its connexion with the Carlovingian cycle is simply that the hero is represented (quite unhistorically of course) as father to king Pepin. It belongs visibly, not so much to Germany proper as to Germanized Italy, and may be said to represent a Lombard sub-cycle.

By the Western sea sat a king, lord Rother, in the town of Bar (or Bare), where he lived with great hon-

our. Two-and-seventy kings served him, he was the most lordly man that ever received the crown in Rome. His young courtiers began to say that he should take him a wife. A count who by his wiles had helped him to come from Rome, the good hero Lupolt (Leopold), tells of a rich king's daughter over the Eastern sea at Constantinople; her father is called Constantine. Fair is she, and shines as the star from heaven; she shines before other women as gold before silk; well would she suit a king; but no man has ever sought her yet but has lost his life. Margrave Herman advises to send Lupolt as a messenger to sue for her. Lupolt is willing to go, though at the risk of his life, but begs that eleven other counts be sent with him, all with such goodly garments as they may wear without shame before a king. Many a hero quickly offers himself for the adventure; the eleven are chosen; white were all their horses; never in any land were so many well-made lords; a very crafty man leads them.

They cross the sea, and ride to Constantine's court in splendid apparel, young count Erwin foremost. The queen bids king Constantine go and receive them, as she would fain know whence they come; strange is their raiment; he who has sent them must be a stately man. Both king and

queen receive them most graciously; an old lady declares that it must be a wonderful land from whence they come, so full of gems and gold are their garments. Lupolt begs for leave to deliver his message. He comes from a rich king, comeliest man that was ever born of woman; he goes attended by great crowds; swift heroes serve him. Leave being granted to him, he proceeds to say that his lord, king Rother, who sits westward by the sea, desires Constantine's daughter to wife. The king angrily replies that he must long regret having given Lupolt leave to speak. Were he to give his daughter to any man, he might send her to Lupolt's lord; but wisely has Lupolt done in speaking first about the message, else would he never more have seen the day, for no man has yet sued for his daughter but has lost his head. As it is, they must never more see their lord's realm again. He sends the messengers to prison; many a day were they there, that they never saw the sun nor "the moon so light"; hunger and need they suffered; how could they live? Whilst they weep and bewail themselves to God, the king has the contents of their ships examined; wonderful wealth is found, which is handed over to the king's chamberlain to keep.

It is now a year and a day that they have lain

in the dungeon, and Rother is very anxious. He sits upon a stone, and for three days and three nights speaks nothing to any one, always thinking how he may go to Greece. He calls to him an old man, his trusted counsellor, count Berter (or Berker) of Meran, and asks advice how to get beyond sea to the city of Constantinople, since he fears that king Constantine has beheaded the messengers. Berter says he had eleven lordly sons; the twelfth was sent forth by Rother beyond seas to fight the heathen; he was killed in God's service, never should he be lamented. But seven of his sons are gone on this journey; Lupolt and Erwin were the eldest. His advice is to lead forth the host, and slay Hungarians and Greeks; he himself will go in the van. Rother willingly assents to this advice, and preparations are made for departure, the king, by the advice of his lords, taking abundant treasure with him. Messages are sent far and wide through the land, that whoso wishes to become rich, let him come to the court at Rome. A letter is sent "to an unknown land, where was a giant named Asprian, who never came to court;" but on receiving the news he rises and comes to court with a troop of giants, armed with steel stakes; bright helmets they wear, and snow-white breast-plates, and swords besides their stakes; Berter is delighted at their coming.

The crown and government being entrusted to count Amelgar till the king's return, Rother takes with him twelve dukes, each with two hundred men, and king Asprian with twelve of his men, one of them a fearful giant, who went chained like a lion, and was "one of the boldest men that ever were called mother's bairns;" when his chains were taken off, no one could offend him without losing his life; Witolt was "the good hero" called. Lading the ships with immense treasures, Rother embarks with all his host, to go over the broad sea to Constantinople. He bethinks himself of "a wisdom," and calling his lords together, tells them that since they go into an unknown land, and it is no child's play, they must protect their body by good cunning; let all, poor and rich, call him Thiderich (generally written Dietrich in the latter part of the poem,—which form I shall adopt), that he be not known. This they swear to do.

On their arrival, the giants begin fighting on the sand. One of the burghers comes hastily to tell the king that a folk is come with such power as never was seen; were it not that one lies bound, they were all lost. The strangers reach the palace in magnificent apparel, riding on snow-white mules. One of the king's counsellors suspects it may well be the lords of the imprisoned messengers, and

that he has been himself the "wayland" of the iron stakes borne by the giants. The Greek dukes and the good queen go to meet the strangers; she bids them be welcome. Two counts offer to ease Asprian of his stake, but it is so heavy that they cannot lift nor bear it, and they have to leave it on the ground. As king Constantine sits on his throne, the false Dietrich complains to him of king Rother, who has forbidden him his land, offers his services and solicits protection. Constantine takes counsel with his worthiest lords; he is very sorry that the stranger ever came; he has one in his suite who might be a fitting mate for the devil in hell. Still, by their advice, and for fear of worse consequences, he tells Dietrich that he accepts his services, stating moreover that he holds imprisoned in his dungeon Rother's messengers,—a piece of news which excites Asprian's anger.

The strangers are lodged near the gates. Twelve waggons are employed for seven days* in bringing gold and treasure and the other contents of the ships. The giants excite great astonishment. As she looks upon Witolt: "See now, lord Constantine," says the queen, "here are they carrying thy master in chains. . . . How foolish were we to deny

* Seven nights in the original,—the mode of calculation which has left its mark in our "se'nnight" and "fortnight."

our daughter to Rother, who drove these men over the sea!" Fain would she now give the girl to these, for they are his masters, and he must rather pluck his eye out with his hand than be wroth with such a chief.—As they sit down to the feast, a fearful lion is brought before the king's table, but because the beast takes some of Asprian's bread, the latter thereupon seizes him with his hand, and flings him against the wall, crushing him to death. The king is grieved; the queen, rather pleased, takes advantage of the fact to repeat her regret that they should have refused their daughter to Rother, and urges the release of the messengers. Old Berter observes the queen's satisfaction.

On returning to his quarters, Dietrich begins a course of abundant alms and largess-giving, till six thousand men attach themselves to him, as well as a count named Arnold, who had lost great honour in his own land, and who receives 1000 marks, the best quarters in the town, and thirty knights to serve him for a twelvemonth. All Constantine's men now begin to flock to Dietrich for the sake of his gifts. At his daughter's request, Constantine gives orders for a great festival; but in preparing for it, a quarrel arises between Asprian and a lordly duke named Frederick; blood is shed, the chained giant Witolt begins "to growl like a

bear," breaks his chains, and seizing a steel pike twenty-four ells long, begins to do dreadful havoc. The news is brought to the king, who laments over the dishonour that is inflicted on him by Dietrich's men. The queen bids him hold his peace, and returns to her old regrets that they had not given their daughter to Rother, who would have sent him defenders.

The king's daughter comes forth, fairest of women that ever adorned their body with a golden crown; a hundred praiseworthy maidens follow her. Dietrich comes forth too in splendid array,—shirt of silk, and coronet of gold stuck with precious stones. Three days the festival lasts; on the third great largess is given to minstrels and wandering folk; Dietrich wins over more hearts by his liberality. The young princess longs that he should come to her rooms. Herlint, her chief attendant, offers herself for the message. Dietrich receives her with full courtesy, though declining through humility to go to her mistress; but he rewards her with rich gifts, including a shoe of gold and one of silver, both fitting the same foot. The young queen on learning the result of her message laments that the hero will not see her, and asks Herlint to give her the shoes, offering to fill them with gold. After putting on the gold one, finding

that the silver shoe does not fit, she sends Herlint back to ask the other, and that he will come and see her. Lifting her dress to the knee, Herlint runs across the palace to Dietrich, who knows well her errand beforehand. She returns after delivering her message ; he soon follows her, while Asprian with his giants succeeds in diverting everybody's attention from him, as with two companions he proceeds to the lady's rooms.

The young queen was standing at the window when Dietrich came. She receives him courteously, and begs him to put on the shoes. He sits down at her feet ; she places her foot on his leg. Cunningly he asks her, since she has been sued for by many a man, who of all has pleased her best ? She replies that no mother has ever had a worthier bairn than himself ; but could she have her choice, she would take the hero whose messengers are lying in her father's dungeon, king Rother, otherwise must she ever go a maid.—If she will love Rother, he answers, he will soon bring him to her.—Then Rother, she retorts, cannot have driven him out, but he must be a messenger from the king.—“Now leave I everything of mine to God's grace and thine own ; thy feet are on Rother's lap.” Startled, she withdraws her feet ; her pride, she says, has taken her in, that she should have

placed her feet in his lap. If he be king Rother, he could not be more worthy than he is, and if God has sent him, right glad is she ; but she cannot make sure that he is telling her the truth ; else is there no man so comely whom she would rather take, if he be king Rother. Craftily he replies, by asking to see the prisoners, who will be able to assure her of the truth. She objects that her father will never hand them over to any man who will not undertake on his life for their return to prison. This Dietrich pledges ; the lady kisses him, and he departs.

After much thinking over night, when the day comes the lady dresses herself in black, and with staff in hand and palm on shoulder, as if she were going to leave the country, she goes to her father's room, and under colour of an evil dream that she had had, of having to go down alive into the pit, she obtains permission to take out the prisoners for three days, but only on condition that some one shall pledge himself on his life for their safe return to prison. On the king's going to table in the evening, she goes round hotly weeping, asking the guests to be pledges for the prisoners, but none dare do so, till she comes to Dietrich, whom she implores most beseechingly ; he of course undertakes the warranty, as agreed between them.

They go to the prison; daylight shines into it, to which the captives were no more accustomed. Erwin was the first who came out; sore was the grief of his father; he turned him round and wrung his hands, but durst not weep; never had he such pain since his mother bare him. Black and filthy were the worthy knights, in rags like poor men. Dietrich, restraining himself from tears, bids them be taken to his hostelry. ‘Lupolt, dear lord,’ says Erwin, ‘seest thou stand there a grey man with the fair beard? he gazed on me, he turned him round, he rung his hands, he durst not weep. Surely it must be a sign from the good God that we shall get from hence.’—‘It may well be our father,’ answered Lupolt. “Then laughed they both for joy and sorrow.”

They were left “hand-fast” till the next day, when the young princess won leave from her father to go and serve them. She hastens to Dietrich; goodly garments of his are put upon the captives; Berter is cup-bearer whilst his children eat. As they sate, their sorrow partly forgotten, Dietrich took a harp, and began sounding a lay. He that drank, his hand fell and he spilt the liquor on the table; he that cut bread, his knife fell from his grasp; they were witless for comfort. They sate all and heard till Lupolt sprang over the table

with Erwin, and welcomed and kissed the rich harper. Rightly now saw the lady that this was king Rother.—After having been three days abroad, the messengers went back to their prison, into which meanwhile had been carried much bed-clothes and other good stuff, and where they were well fed during twenty days, whilst a covered passage was dug between their prison and Dietrich's hostelry, to enable them to go out, so that their bodies began to gain strength.

But now there came against king Constantine the greatest host that ever was seen ; two-and-seventy kings of Babylon under a fearful heathen named Ymelot, whom nought could withstand ; over all the unchristian land was his command obeyed ; he wished to be God himself. News is brought to king Constantine that they are coming, full 100,000 strong. Dietrich solicits the release of the prisoners ; had they horse and armour, there is many a hero among them ; he offers himself to go against the enemy. Constantine sends far and wide through the land to summon his men, of whom 50,000 come to Constantinople ; the twelve knights are brought out of prison and taken into Dietrich's corps, all on snow-white horses ; his banner brings 20,000 worthy men together. They set out to meet the foe ; a se'nnight they ride

before they reach the two-and-seventy kings of "waste" Babylon. Dietrich encamps in the forepart of the host, and is the first to attack the enemy overnight. Witolt is unchained; Asprian presses on to Ymelot's tent, who, when he sees the giant's pike, says nothing, and allows himself to be taken prisoner. The heathen flee on all sides before the giants; "grim death hunted them." Witolt is now caught and chained up again; Dietrich returns to his quarters as if nothing had happened.

The watcher, hearing apparently the noise of Dietrich's men returning, wakes up the king, "Up, lord Constantine, I hear thy foes; with great clamour methinks they come hither." Constantine and his chiefs arm in haste; many a one casts reproach on Dietrich who does nothing; surely the king is betrayed by him. Constantine himself goes to waken him up. He is answered by Ymelot: "Lord, you mock without need; this night at midnight, as I lay in my bed, there came a frightful man and took me away under his arms; my men are all slain, they cannot hurt thee." Constantine now goes into Dietrich's tent, and taking him by the hand, thanks him for his good service. At daybreak Dietrich himself brings Ymelot by the hand into the king's tent. He cunningly suggests

that a messenger will be needed to tell the ladies of the good news. Constantine bids him bear the tidings himself. Taking with him only his own men, who came with him over the seas, and sending the rest of his folk to the king's banners, he starts for Constantinople.

Weeping the queen received him. Where, she asks, are the king and his knights? "Dietrich, dear lord, shall we ever see them more?"—Nay, replies Dietrich, Ymelot has slain them and rides hither in great might; I dare not trust to maintain myself, I must flee over seas; women and children, all who remain in the fortress, will be slain by Ymelot. Both the queen and her daughter entreat Dietrich to take them away. He bids them go toward the ships; many a fair lady, weeping and wringing her hands, comes with them; all would fain go beyond seas to save their lives from Ymelot. Dietrich bids his men embark in haste, he takes on board the daughter, leaves the mother on the strand, who with tears inquires his motive for so doing, and beseeches him to take her with her daughter. The "crafty man" now tells her that Constantine is not dead, that Ymelot is taken, that the king and his men are riding homewards, and will be here in three days, and that she may tell him that his daughter has gone with

Rother, "westward over the sea." The queen is delighted; she tells him that had she had her will, the damsel had been given to him in gentler fashion; may St. Giles preserve him!—"Fare you well, mother mine," replies the princess. The ladies return laughing to the palace, wishing Rother a happy return to his home. On arriving in his kingdom indeed Rother found it in a state of strife owing to his absence, so that his "way-weary" knights could have but little rest.

Meanwhile Constantine had returned to his court. Hastily he inquired for his daughter, since he did not see her. The queen tells him that the worthy knight Dietrich was king Rother, and that he has borne their daughter beyond seas; how could she be better wed? Constantine is bitterly grieved, and swoons away. Hereupon Ymelot manages to escape in a ship, and returns to "waste Babylon," so that on coming to himself he hears the cry from old and young, "Ymelot is escaped." However being "mild of gold" (*i. e.* liberal) he proceeds to distribute rich rewards to his men. Out of the crowd there speaks a minstrel, offering to bring back the king's daughter if he be provided with a ship and store of merchant's wares, "gold and stones, white small pearls, scarlet and peltries," and sixty worthy knights to lie concealed. Con-

stantine bids him take what he will out of the royal treasures. A ship is laded, and makes sail for 'Bare' over the sea, whilst king Rother is away at the war, leaving Lupolt in charge of the city.

On the arrival of the Greeks, the cunning minstrel begins selling his wares at fabulously low prices; "there was nothing so dear, that he gave it not for a penny;" the burgesses deem him mad. He gives out moreover that a stone he has is of such virtue that, if a queen took it in her hand, it would give light over all the land, and no one should die, for if before burial he should be stroked with it, he would revive, whilst the halt and the crooked, if touched by the stone with the queen, would become sound again,—only she must come on board the ship. He is willing to be hanged if he tell not the truth. A knight, who has two little deformed children, goes and entreats the queen to make the trial, which, in Lupolt's absence, she consents to. But the instant she is on board, the minstrel bids the sailors heave off. They make sail, leaving many a cripple waiting on the strand, and the minstrel in answer to the queen tells her it is her father Constantine who has sent them. "Wo is me," she exclaims, "King Rother! how thou wilt now begin to grieve thy life for me, as I pine for thee!"

There is great rejoicing on her arrival at Constantinople, on the part of all except her mother. The king hugs and kisses his daughter, but will not listen to her complaints, and bids her hold her peace. Meanwhile all 'Bare' is in commotion for the loss of the lady; Lupolt does his best to comfort the people. On the seventh day Rother arrives, and is met by Lupolt with the evil tidings. "I alone," says the knight, "am guilty against thee; thou shalt judge concerning me what is fair and right." But before all the assembled lords Rother takes Lupolt by the hand and kisses him on the mouth: "Why grievest thou thy life, my nephew? there lives many a fair wife. . . . if thou fearest my wrath, then were all thy service ill lost, that thou hast richly done to me . . . were I ever wroth with thee, I should do as Judas, who lost himself." . . . The duke of Meran comes forward and thanks the king for his conduct. They must go in strength beyond seas: "My beard is never so grey that I stay here at home." The lords vie with each other in pledges of service and succour for the expedition; the old duke of Meran makes light of death, if he can give a stroke of his sword to king Constantine, for still he feels pricked by the old pain of his having so martyred Lupolt.

At the set time the host assembles; thirty

thousand men make sail, and twenty-two ships ; in six weeks they reach Constantinople, and disembark unperceived at a woody point a mile below the city. Rother announces that he will go alone to Constantine in the garb of a pilgrim. Young Wolfrat of Tengelingen advises him to take with him Berter of Meran and Lupolt, and offers him his good horn, which shall give them intimation that he is discovered. If we hear it, says Asprian, the fort is lost.

The three depart, Rother foremost. Outside of the wood, he meets a good knight on horseback, who greets and questions him. "I am a poor man," replies Rother, "I must wander for my food ; now tell me, my dear lord, I am a poor pilgrim, and journey through the realm full sadly ; the needy man must mostly go to court ; there are they fain to ask news of the pilgrim ; tell me some now for God's sake, well shall it be rewarded thee." The knight tells him a wondrous tale : There was at Constantinople a rich lord of great honour, liberal of his gold, whose court stood open to poor and rich, who found father and mother in him ; he who asked of him a thousand pounds, he gave him rings to boot ; no tongue could tell his virtues. Such knights he had, as never another man under heaven. He helped Constantine in his great need, and took

Ymelot, a frightful heathen ; but his service was for a fair lady who dwelt in the fortress ; she ran away with him from her father. This was king Rother ; and “ now learn, good pilgrim, how he was rewarded.” The heathen man escaped ; king Constantine sent messengers for his daughter, who stole her from king Rother and brought her back again over the sea. And hither to the Greeks’ land rode king Ymelot, leading many a good hero, and put all to fire and sword, and took Constantine, who only obtained relief by giving Rother’s wife to the frightful king of “ waste Babylon ; his son shall take her this night, as thou thyself mayest see.” At Constantinople, with many warriors, are thirty kings of “ waste Babylon” ; Rother’s wife stands and grieves her worthy life. Might but Christ send Asprian before the day !—Amen, say the pilgrims.

Going into the city, they find Constantine at table, with a king named Basilstriun (or Balistriun), son of Ymelot ; by him sate Rother’s wife, and grieved her life. Whilst Rother and his men succeed amid the crowd in creeping under the table, Constantine tells his daughter that he has dreamed of a falcon, coming flying from Rome, that carried her again beyond seas. Were Rother to come, says the heathen, he should be drowned in the sea. The queen is grieved ; but Rother, sitting on her

footstool, gives her a gold ring lettered with his name. The lady reads it and laughs, and tells her mother that the king of Bare is come. Constantine sees her laugh: "Well to thee, dear daughter mine, now does thy father rejoice."—"That I was ever wroth against thee," she replies, "much it grieves me; I will do it never more."—"Lady," says Ymelot, "you lie needlessly; I ween your laughing makes for us hearts' woe and wringing of hands. . . there are in this hall spies of the king of Bare." . . .—"I saw," says Balistriun, "a good ring, which thy daughter, Constantine, gave to the old queen; Rother is in here, the king of Bare; how he came hither thou must be well aware."—"I will bid twelve of my men," said king Constantine, "stand before the door of the hall, that they may know well whom we have in here." Rother and his knights, "in honour of the heavenly king and all his host," come forth from under the table. "I am surely here," says Rother, "look on me who will." Balistriun threatens to drown him; "Ill shall he die," says Constantine. Rother cunningly asks only to be hanged on yonder hill before the wood. Rother is bound, to the bitter grief of the young queen; all, men and women, bewail his fate. Count Arnold, whom he had formerly guerdoned, assembles his knights and

others, and urges the duty of liberating Rother. Five thousand are willing to risk their lives for the undertaking.

The thirty kings of "waste Babylon" go forth from Constantinople, led by king Balistriun, to hang Rother, full sixty thousand men with them. As the cry rises, 'Hoist him up on the gallows,' Count Arnold addresses his men: Two guerdons have they; one, "the fair realm of heaven," since whoso lies here dead, his soul shall be delivered into the blessed life; "what better could be given him?"—the other, to save the true man, who shall lead them into his land to dwell there with him. They strike with such strokes as to drive away the heathen from the gallows. As Arnold comes up with Rother, the latter begs him to cut asunder his bands, that he may blow his horn, and summon Asprian. Loud sounds the horn; "My lord is bested," cries Asprian, "up, hero Wolfrat." Out they burst from the wood, their hauberks clanging as they spring. Rother bids them spare Arnold and his men. The giants rush on all sides; Asprian kills all that he comes across; Witolt never speaks till he breaks his pike, when he draws a fearful weapon. Blood flows from the wounded; "If any should cry O, Witolt ran on him and trode him on the mouth, so that he never should be

sound." A minstrel who barely escapes from him goes and tells the king of his prowess, and of the approach of the knights from Rome.

These meanwhile are deliberating what to do after recovering the young queen. Witolt has threatened to destroy the fort of Constantinople. Asprian says that it should be spared, as containing the graves of the twelve apostles, and of St. Helena Constantine's mother, who found the cross. Witolt, who "feared the Saviour," is overwhelmed with sorrow at his proposal. Woe is him that he ever was born! the devil surely counselled him, poor fool, to destroy the fort. All the giants throw their pikes away; "for the everlasting God who gave them life they let Constantinople stand." Berter commends Rother for his clemency so far, and advises him moreover to spare Constantine and content himself with taking back his wife. "Since my father died," replies Rother, "and I was entrusted to thee, thy will was evermore to my honour; thou barest me night and day that I should not come to harm, and thou showedst me as to thy child what were christianlike things, and taughtest me how to treat good servants according to their rights; now God the good through His mercy let thee enjoy all truth; ever shall it grieve me that I overlive thee." . . .

Constantine on the other hand, terrified at his fate, bewails himself to the queen over his "great childishness" in carrying away Rother's wife. He bids her take their fair daughter and lead her to the hero, and beg mercy for himself. "Why fearest thou, Constantine?" retorts the queen; "the kings of waste Babylon are thy helpers" . . ., and proceeds to lecture him on his pride. The king finally goes himself, without any of his men, but with his daughter in her most gorgeous array, his queen, and eighty fair ladies with golden crowns. As they reached Rother's camp, Rother's wife shone before all the other women like a burning jacynth. Erwin advises his master to receive his father-in-law courteously, and that no one do him a scorn. Asprian would fain give him one blow first.—Nay, lord Asprian, says Berter; now that he has come among the ladies, had he taken the life of all thy children, we should honour this lady in the king's person. Lupolt and Erwin receive the queens; "Rother kissed his wife, she was to him as the life, he kissed also the old queen and bade her be welcome." Wolfrat took Constantine by the hand; only Witolt, when he saw it, began to laugh and bite his pike, and to cast frightful looks at the king. The queen bids the king take notice that but for Rother's honour he would never again see

his people nor his land. She presents her daughter to Rother, and compliments Berter; Constantine bids Arnold stand forward, and rewards him by making him king of Greece. All now return, and on the very day that Rother and his men reach Bare, the queen is delivered of a son, who is called Pepin; he afterwards married Bertha, who bare Karl (Charlemagne). Finally, Rother rewards his men by rich distributions of lands. To the giants in common he gives Scotland; to Asprian Rheims, Spain to Erwin, Austria, Bohemia, and Poland to Wolfrat, to Lupolt Berter's government, Apulia and Sicily, &c. After four-and-twenty years, Pepin wishes to be armed knight. Great are the festivities at Aix-la-chapelle; all Rother's former vassals make their appearance with numerous followers. Pepin has already girt his sword, when there rides to the place a "snow-white" chief, two thousand men after him. It is Berter; he bids Rother follow him and help his "poor soul" by becoming a hermit in the woods. The queen deems the advice good. "Then spoke the" . . . and so the poem breaks off, in the middle of a line, between article and substantive.

'King Rother,' it will be seen, has but little tragic interest. The captivity of Rother's messengers, the leading out of Rother himself to be hung,

offer the nearest approach to such; but everywhere the poet gives intimations, which I have not thought necessary to insert, that the sufferers will get through their trials safely. Yet the poem has a certain clumsy, almost childish originality of its own. It seems to have been written by some garrulous old priest, very averse to bloodshed, a great admirer of small cunning, and especially fond of the display of outward wealth, so that he is always ready to stop at any moment of his narrative to describe clothes and jewelry. The mildness of Rother's character is somewhat happily hit off, and the merciless wisdom of the old queen, inexorably 'improving' every trial for Constantine's benefit, is cruelly true to every-day experience.

Von der Hagen points out some analogies between 'Rother' and the poems later in date of the Nibelungen-cycle, such as 'Otnit' and 'Wolfdietrich', as well as with the Norse 'Vilkina Saga' of the thirteenth century. The giant 'Asprian', it will be remembered, figures in the 'Rose-garden', though playing there a much less distinguished part. The legend itself seems to me to have been originally Lombard, not only through the name of its hero Rother (Rotharis in the history of the Lombard kingdom), but through that of his capital, 'Bar' or 'Bare', which I should identify with

“Bari” in Southern Italy (though Von der Hagen does not appear to do so), and through the relations which are shown with the Greek empire and Constantinople. The attempted connexion of the hero with the Carlovingians, and frequent references to France, especially towards the end, seem to me to belong, not to the origin of the legend, but to a later elaboration of it. The spelling of several of the names, it should be observed, varies in the latter part (Berker’ for ‘Berter’, &c., &c).

A somewhat noteworthy feature of “King Rother” lies in the exhibition of friendly and Christian giants as the allies of the hero. The chained Witolt’s *bonhommie* towards Asprian his immediate chief and Rother his sovereign is exemplary, and his contrition at having ever thought of destroying a city which contained the tombs of the apostles, not long after he has been represented as treading on the mouth of any wounded enemy who should cry O, is peculiarly edifying.

PART III.

THE FRENCH OR CARLOVINGIAN CYCLE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FRENCH CHANSONS DE GESTE.

I SUPPOSE there are few instances in the history of the world of two poetical cycles, extending over areas immediately adjoining to each other, and almost synchronous in their development, yet interpenetrating each other so little as the Norse-German and the Carolingian cycles; thus presenting a strong contrast to the Arthurian cycle, which so frequently blends itself with the Carolingian. The "Weland" of Norse tradition—our "Wayland Smith"—figures indeed as "Galand" in several of the French poems; but he is no actual personage in either epic-cycle. Dwarf Albrich or Elbrich again, transformed into "Auberon"—our "Oberon"—comes equally before us in "Huo of Bordeaux" (a poem curious indeed in connexion with this particular legend, but which I have not deemed it necessary specially to notice, as not really bearing on the main development of the cycle); but Al-

brich-Auberon is still but a side-figure in either group of epic personages. Traces however have been discovered of the Norse-German epic cycle proper in Western romance. In the Auchinleck MS. Grimm has pointed out a reference to Wit-tich's famous sword Mimung ; whilst a fragment in French Alexandrines of the Harleian collection speaks of Hildebrand and of Herebrand.* Perhaps however the most vivid idea of the relation between the two is given in a tradition preserved by an Icelandic chronicler,—how the Emperor Charlemain once wished to see the old renowned champions of the North ; how Earl Widforull called them forth, and they appeared in four divisions, mounted on their war-steeds, clad in full armour ; how, when Dietrich came before the Emperor, they sprang from their chargers and seated themselves in his presence ; how Dietrich was known by his towering stature, and by the crowned lion on his shield. For in truth, beside the great historic Emperor of the West, the Norse-German heroes are but shadowy forms of greatness,—dwellers in the nether darkness, not creatures of the sunlight ; yet are they not unconscious of their own worth, and though they may come forth in deference to that imperial will, yet will they not

* 'Quarterly Review,' vol. xiii. p. 396.

bow to the imperial presence, but sit as equals beside the later conqueror.

In dealing with the French cycle then, what has been said of the Norse-German one will only be of avail to us by way of artistic comparison. We enter upon a new realm of poetry, in which all stands as clear and sharp-cut as much was dim and hazy in the former one ; a realm emphatically of noonday sunshine, as compared with the twilight of the Edda, or the thick gloom of the 'Nibelungenlied.'

Those amongst us who know something of the French language and its literature, and who judge of it, as Frenchmen themselves do, mainly by the productions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, would probably agree very much in the following conclusions: As an instrument of the intellect proper, French has admirable qualities. It is simple mostly in construction, clear, subtle, delicate at once and forcible ; its prose is perhaps the type-prose of modern times. But the language has (to use one of its own idioms) 'the defects of its qualities'; it is essentially unpoetical ; its verse has no rhythm to any ear but a French one ; its so-called poems, whether so-called epics like the *Henriade*, or so-called odes like those of J. B. Rousseau, have little or nothing in common with

what other nations are used to deem poetry, and are generally intolerable to them ; its classic stage at least is hampered by those dreary fetters of the "unities," which at one time had well-nigh brought our own to wrack and ruin.

Such, I believe, would be the judgment of nineteen out of every twenty readers of French, without reckoning those who know French literature only through translations or by hearsay. Those who have gone a little deeper into the matter have mostly stopped at the sixteenth century, or at most have reached the fourteenth in the pages of Froissart. Here they have been initiated into a very different French literature from that of the "great century" of Louis XIV., far freer and bolder ; yet in the sixteenth century mostly overlaid with Latin words and Latin erudition ; everywhere still, except in some of the works of the sixteenth century, which mostly exhibit its prevalent parade of classical lore in the most prominent manner, a literature of prose.

Now it will astonish such persons greatly to be told that behind not only the seventeenth and sixteenth, but the fourteenth century even, there lies in the French language a whole literature of the truest and freshest poetry, both epical and lyrical ; a body of epic poems in particular, which

although they may be individually surpassed by the grand German Nibelungenlied, yet as a group stand perfectly matchless in European literature, and claim to rank not only in the same category with, but in one or two instances not very far from, old Greek masterpieces. Ranging from the eleventh century to the thirteenth, these poems deal primarily with national subjects, belonging, as I have said, mostly to the great heroic era of France, that of the early Carolingians. They are not however, I repeat it, of that age by any means, but belong in their subjects mainly to the Merovingian age, in their actual form to the first blossoming of the feudal system, which rose upon the very ruins of the Carolingian monarchy; a period which, amid all its brutalities, I believe to have been one of the most wonderful development of local life and energy.

The variety of text in the different MSS. of these French epics,—“Songs of deeds” (*chansons de geste*) as they are characteristically called,—is at least as great as in those of the Norse-German school. But they are still more marked, as intimated ere this, by incessant repetitions, with slight modifications of detail. One of the editors of the “Chanson de Roland,” M. Génin, insists very strongly that such repetitions are “a form of pri-

mitive art," born from the needs of middle-age minstrelsy, which required that the story should be taken up at different points of its development. Something, no doubt, may be due to this. But it seems to me much more probable that these repetitions represent generally different versions, the result of modifications of the theme, either wilful, by minstrels who thought it could be improved upon, or who felt compelled by local circumstances, or took advantage of such, to vary it,—or accidental, where their defective memory compelled them to fill up a void out of their own heads. Great facility, it should be observed, was offered for such variations by the extreme simplicity of the original French epic metre, consisting simply of long pieces on a single rhyme, itself only in fact an *assonance*, or uniformity of vowel in the last syllable;—a metre indeed which in the earlier works commends itself still further to the sympathies of other nations as being the ordinary pentameter heroic of modern Europe, only with an unvarying *cæsura* after the second foot. When the poem was eventually committed to writing, it became no doubt an advantage to the minstrel to possess at once the main text, if I may so call it, and its 'various readings'; only instead of putting these in foot-notes, as is our habit, the copyist inserted them

in the body of the work. By so doing indeed, accident, if I may so speak, proved perhaps sometimes a better poet than the original one; the same incident, repeated in a different form, gained in effect. Wherever this has seemed to me to be the case, I have in the following pages, without scruple, preserved the repetition. It need scarcely be pointed out that, the more popular a poem was, and above all, the longer its popularity lasted, the more various texts of it would be found, and the more repetitions in the same text.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GROWTH OF CARLOVINGIAN LEGEND.

THE French school of popular epic differs greatly from the Norse-German in this, that it is in its essence historically christian. Nothing is more perceptible in the *Nibelungenlied*, than that we have before us a Pagan groundwork, with just a little Christianity worked in. In the earliest of the French poems, on the contrary, the Christianity of the day, such as it was, forms evidently part of the very tissue of the story. Of the three great cycles again, the French is especially remarkable, inasmuch as it has its ground in real, acknowledged history. Prize essays may be written till Doomsday to prove that Sigurd or Arthur did or did not exist. No man out of Bedlam doubts that Charlemagne did. Yet undoubtedly the *Charlemain* of romance, though he may have features in common with the *Charlemagne* of history, is a very different personage from him. We look in vain through

Eginhard's pages for the twelve peers; for the prowess of Roland and Oliver and Turpin, the treachery of Ganilo, the wisdom of Naymes of Bavaria. Could we trace to their origin all these personages in and through their various developments, we should know really by experience what I have endeavoured elsewhere* to shadow forth hypothetically,—how legend grows.

The first flash of light was indeed cast upon this subject by M. Paulin Paris, when he pointed out that in the history of Dagobert I. we find mention of a great battle fought in the Pyrenees, in which twelve Frankish chiefs were killed; and suggested that this was the traditional Roncevaux, these the twelve peers of Charlemain. The conclusion seems irresistible; and we may thus see how a favourite hero gathers up into himself the fame of many a traditional exploit whose true author's name has faded away. A French Grimm, who should put together a French "Heldensage," would no doubt be able to do much towards clearing up these "origins" of the Carolingian epic.

We cannot indeed be surprised that French legend should have fastened upon the personage of Charlemagne. It is difficult,—even for a generation which has listened to the last echoes of the

* See Part I. chap. I.

exploits of another Charlemagne, Napoleon the First,—to read without wonder the bare enumeration of the achievements of the great Emperor of the West; how, by him or by his lieutenants, the Frankish sway was carried to the Weser, the Elbe and the Oder, the Danube, the Raab and the Theiss, the Adige and the Po, the Ebro; how the ‘Hermansäule’ was thrown down in German forests, and the ‘Hring’ of the Avars broken into in distant Hungary; how the Pope crowned him, and the Emirs of Spain became his vassals, and the distant Khalifs assured him of their friendship. Accordingly, seventy years after his death, as was observed by Châteaubriand in his ‘Etudes Historiques’, and was again pointed out by M. J. J. Ampère, in his interesting ‘Histoire Littéraire de la France avant le 12^e siècle’, we already find his memory assuming a legendary character in the pages of the Monk of St. Gall. M. Ampère quotes to this effect, and with reason, that striking passage which describes Charlemagne’s appearance in Lombardy, when king Desiderius is looking out for him, and the air darkens at his approach:

“Then was seen Iron Charles himself, crested with an iron helmet, armleted with iron bracelets, an iron hauberk sheltering his iron chest and broad shoulders, his iron spear lifted upright filling his

left hand; for his right was always stretched to his unconquered sword; the outside of his thighs, which for greater ease of mounting in others are usually bare of mail, in him was surrounded with iron plates. What need I speak of his leggings? which with the whole army were wont to be used always of iron. In his shield nothing appeared but iron; his horse also in spirit and colour had the gleam of iron. And this fashion all who went before, all who surrounded him on both sides, all who followed, and the whole common discipline, imitated as far as possible. Iron filled the plains and the streets; the sun's rays were cast back by the sharpness of iron. . . . 'O iron!' 'Iron alas!' so sounded the confused clamour of the citizens. Iron made the firm walls to tremble. . . . Seeing therefore with quickest glance these things (which I, stammering and toothless, have attempted, as I ought not to have done, to explain lengthily and by a slow circuit), Otker the true watchman said to Desiderius: 'Behold him whom thou hast so desired to see.' And saying this he fell almost dead."

It is impossible here to mistake the way in which the popular fancy was already at work on that great memory. In the next century, as M. Ampère observes, Italian monks will seriously relate that Charlemagne went to Jerusalem. The

progress of the legend, it may be observed, always tends to increase the age of Charlemagne. In Turolde's work, after referred to, "the Song of Roland," although Charlemagne is still a right royal monarch, full of warlike vigour, implicitly obeyed by his barons, still he is the "white-bearded emperor," although in fact at the date of the action of the poem, the fight of Roncevaux, he was only thirty-six years old, and was not an emperor till twelve years later. In later poems he is represented as being almost in second childhood; he is freely disobeyed by his knights, made public game of. Meanwhile, according to what almost invariably takes place in such cases, the leading characters in the legend being so to speak worked out, subordinate ones are made more prominent, or new ones brought forward. Thus by the thirteenth century, we find in the "Song of the Saxons," besides Charlemagne himself, only Duke Naymes of Bavaria remaining of the old set of personages, and a new hero, Baldwin, another nephew of Charlemagne, filling the chief place.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STORY OF RONCEVAUX.

AT the heart, so to speak, of the Carlovingian legend lies the world-renowned fight at Roncevaux, an event beyond doubt more demonstrably real than Arthur's battle of Badon Hill, but scarcely less fictitious in its recognised poetical story. A fight at Roncevaux there certainly was, and not only one, but two, at forty-six years' interval, and under precisely similar circumstances. Eginhard tells us, both in his *Life of Charlemagne* and in his *Annals* (year 778), that the king having invaded Spain with all his forces, pushed as far as Saragossa, before which he received hostages from the Saracen chiefs, and then returned to his own states. But whilst engaged in the Pyrenean passes, the Basques attacked his rear-guard, which perished to a man. Most of the officers of the palace, to whom the king had given the command of his troops, were amongst the slain, and amongst others, "Roland,

(Hruodlandus) prefect of the marches of Brittany.” This reverse, says the historian, in great measure obscured the joy of the king’s Spanish successes. And he expressly states that no revenge could be taken of this disaster, as the light-footed mountaineers dispersed at once and could not be discovered. The popular poetry of the Basques, it may be observed, has perpetuated the recollection of this event in their “Song of Alta-biçar.”* For

* This has been several times printed in France, amongst others by M. Michel in his edition of the ‘Chanson de Roland’ (Paris, 1837). As it is still but little known in England, I insert it here :

“A cry has arisen from the midst of the mountains of the Esculdunac ; and the *etcheco-jauna* (master of the house), standing before his door, has opened his ears, and has said—‘Who goes there? what will they with me?’ And the dog that slept at his master’s feet has roused itself, and has filled the neighbourhood of Altabiçar with its barkings.

“In the pass of Ibaneta a noise resounds ; it nears, touching the rocks to right, to left ; it is the dull murmur of a coming army. Our men have replied to it from the mountain-tops ; they have blown in their ox-horns ; and the *etcheco-jauna* sharpens his arrows.

“They come ! they come ! what a hedge of spears ! How the rainbow-hued banners float in the midst ! What lightning flashes from the weapons ! How many are they ? Child, reckon them well ! ‘One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty.’

“Twenty, and thousands more besides ! One should lose time in reckoning them. Let us unite our sinewy arms, let us uproot these rocks, let us fling them from the mountain-tops upon their very heads ! Crush them ! Kill them !

them it had no religious meaning ; it recalled simply the days of the old barbaric invasions,—another struggle with the giants of the north.—The second battle of Roncevaux took place under Louis the Debonair, in 824, when two Frankish counts returning from Spain were again surprised and surrounded by the Pyrenean mountaineers,

“And what had they to do in our mountains, these men of the North? why are they come to disturb our peace? When God makes mountains, it is that men may not cross them. But the rocks fall rolling, they overwhelm the troops; blood streams, flesh quivers. O! how many crushed bones! what a sea of blood!

“Flee, flee, all to whom strength remains, and a horse! Flee, king Karloman, with thy black plumes and thy red mantle. Thy nephew, thy bravest, thy darling, Roland, is stretched dead yonder. His courage was of no avail. And now, Esculdunac, let us leave the rocks there; let us quickly descend, flinging our arrows at the fugitives.

“They flee, they flee! Where then is the hedge of spears? Where the rainbow-hued banners floating in the midst? lightnings flash no more from their blood-soiled weapons. How many are they? child, reckon them well—‘Twenty, nineteen, eighteen, seventeen, sixteen, fifteen, fourteen, thirteen, twelve, eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one.’

“One!—There is not even one. It is done. *Etcheco-jauna*, you may go in with your dog, kiss wife and children, clean your arrows, put them away with your ox-horn, then lie down over them and sleep. By night, the eagles shall come and eat the crushed flesh, and the bones shall whiten in eternity.”

A capital ballad, and which, if really extant in a MS. of the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century, must rank as one of the most finished poems of the age.

and lost all their troops, themselves remaining in the power of the foe.*

That these two battles should in the popular memory have run into one can surprise no one, nor that they should have become mixed up with that earlier Pyrenean battle of the Merovingian era to which I have alluded. Nor can we wonder that the true meaning of these battles should have escaped the many; that they should have been considered simply as an episode of that great war between Christian and Mussulman, of which the last embers burst out even nowadays in the flames of Delhi, Jedda, or Damascus massacres. Spain was in the power of the Saracens; it was to fight the Saracens that both the latter Frankish armies had crossed the Pyrenees; the slaughter at Roncevaux must have taken place at the hands of Saracens. It is somewhat more remarkable that the historical traitor of the second disaster, Lupus or Lope duke of Gascony, who was hung for his treachery, should have disappeared behind the name of a later personage, Ganilo archbishop of Sens, who, after receiving many favours from Charles the Bald, signally betrayed him. As Ganilo died in 865, it seems, as M. Génin observes in his edition of the 'Song of Roland', impossible

* Eginhard, Annals, *in anno* 824.

to assign an earlier period than the end of the ninth century or the beginning of the tenth for the rise of the legend, properly so called, of Roncevaux, in which Ganilo plays so prominent a part, and by no means a clerical one. This would give about half a century or more for the ripening of the legend into a complete epical form, as we now have it at Turolde's hands. But if it be true, according to Seroux d'Agincourt, as quoted by M. Génin, that on the doors of Verona Cathedral are to be found the figures of Ogier and Roland, in work of the ninth century, it would seem that, however late may be Ganilo's introduction into the legend as a dramatic personage, the purely heroic part of that legend had already developed itself within a century or so from the actual event, mixing itself indeed with that of the earlier disaster.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE "SONG OF ROLAND."

I.—THE POEM.

ON the popularity of the Carolingian legend there is no need to dwell. The exploits of Roland and Oliver, as M. Génin observes, were sung in Sweden and Denmark, in Hungary and Italy, and even in Greece. Our own phrase, the meaning of which has now escaped the many, "a Rowland for an Oliver", testifies to the diffusion of the story amongst ourselves three centuries ago. In its later form, no doubt, this story was founded on the celebrated chronicle of the false Turpin. But other versions of it must undoubtedly have been current, greatly at variance with that work in some of their leading incidents, since Pope Calixtus II., in that extraordinary document in which he placed the chronicle of Turpin on the same rank as the canonical books, actually went so far as to damn all those who should listen to the 'lying songs of

minstrels' on the same subject.* Now it is precisely such a version which is presented to us by the "Song of Roland", a poem apparently of the eleventh century, and the earliest recorded one of the Carolingian cycle.

Of this poem, purporting to be written by Turolde or Théroulde, and which I certainly agree with its latest editor and other French writers in deeming the masterpiece of French epic poetry, the earliest text is preserved at Oxford. Two editions of it have been published, one by M. Francisque Michel, (1837)†, the other by M. Génin (1851). Of the controversy which has been raised on the subject of M. Génin's edition, it would be too long to speak here, though it certainly constitutes a piquant dish of literary scandal. M. Génin appears, no doubt, entitled to the credit of having been the first to do complete justice to, and seek due popularity for, a noble poem, which M. Michel had only published in a very limited edition (of 200 copies) as a mere literary curiosity, as well as to the merit of many ingenious philological corrections; but he must, I think, be deemed chargeable with having

* A brief summary of the 'Pseudo-Turpin' will be found in the Appendix.

† In M. Michel's volume will be found an indication of and extracts from the other MSS. of the poem.

put himself forward as the autocratic censor of a text which he had in fact never seen, and with having done but scant justice to, if he did not quite ignore, the labours of his predecessors—not to speak of many blunders of his own in text and translation.

The "Song of Roland" has indeed, apart from any question of literary merit, a peculiar interest for our country; not only as forming one of the treasures of the Bodleian, but from its connexion with one of the half-dozen greatest events in our history, the battle of Hastings. For there, as we are told by Wace, in his "Roman de Rou", William of Normandy's minstrel—

"Taillefer who full well sang—On a horse that fast went—Before them went singing *Of Carlemain and of Roland—And of Oliver and of the vassals—Who died in Roncevaux.*"*

The remainder of the story,—how the minstrel begged of William "the first blow of the battle,"—how he played with his lance,—how his horse rushed open-mouthed on the Saxons,—how rider and charger met their death,—will be found only

* In spite of Wace's text, a number of learned men have maintained that the song sung at Hastings was one of 'Rollo,' not of 'Roland'. I believe my readers will be glad of my sparing them all controversy on the subject.

partly in Wace, but at greater length (and I suspect much embellished) in Geoffrey Gaimar's Anglo-Saxon chronicles.

It thus appears that to the sound of a "Song of Roland" England was conquered by the Normans. But with the exception of the Oxford MS., all the other texts of the present poem which have come down to us are amplifications of the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Of the English one on the contrary it is declared by M. Guessard, one of M. Génin's opponents, that "it cannot reasonably be made to go back beyond the twelfth century," though he expressly guards himself against being "too affirmative." M. Génin, on the other hand, deems it of the eleventh, and the archaic language seems to me alone, I must say, (apart from other internal evidence to be hereafter noticed) to fix it as at least half a century older than a work which I should deem its immediate successor, and should attribute to the first quarter of the twelfth century, Garin the Lorrainer. We have thus a strong presumption that the Oxford MS. represents to us, if not the actual text of the song as sung by Taillefer, yet one closely corresponding to it.*

* One of the puzzles of the Oxford MS. consists in the letters or word AOI following most of the divisions of the poem, and representing, it has been suggested, perhaps a war-cry. If so, it

The poem, anyhow, is one of first-rate beauty.* I know nothing more truly epical—because nothing broader and simpler—than this beginning :

“Charles the king, our great Emperor, seven years quite full has been in Spain. As far as the sea he conquered the haughty land; no castle is there that remains before him; wall nor city is left to be broken, save Saragossa, which is on a mountain. King Marsile holds it, who loves not God: Mahomet he serves and invokes Apollo.”†

Sitting in an orchard under shade, more than twenty thousand men around him, Marsile calls his dukes and counts to council, as to how he may rid himself of Charlemain. One only answers him, the wise Blancandrin, who advises him to send a friendly embassy to Charles, with splendid presents, offering to go and do fealty to him at Michaelmas, and receive Christian baptism, and giving ten or twenty hostages if necessary; he will himself send his son. The Franks will depart, Michaelmas will come and go without tidings of

might afford an additional presumption in favour of the identity of the Oxford text with Taillefer's song.

* An English version of it, but from the modern French, by Mrs. Marsh, has been published in a quarto form. The one which follows appeared in “Macmillan's Magazine.”

† The confusion here indicated between Mahomedanism and Paganism runs through all the popular thought of the Middle Ages.

the paynim, the proud king will cut off the hostages' heads ; but it is better they lose their heads "than that we lose bright Spain the fair."

The advice is taken ; envoys are sent with the lying message, on white mules, with olive-branches in their hands. They come to Charlemain, who has just taken Cordova, sitting he too in "a great orchard"; by him Roland and Oliver and other chiefs, and fifteen thousand men of "sweet France." The knights are sitting on white cloths, playing at draughts and chess ; agile bachelors are fencing ; on an arm-chair of gold, under a pine-tree, beside a hawthorn, "sits the king who holds sweet France ; white is his beard and flowered all" (*i. e.* white-haired) "his head ; comely his body, proud his countenance. If any asks for him, there is no need of pointing him out." The messengers deliver their message ; king Marsile will give largely of his treasures ; bears, and lions, and greyhounds in leash, seven hundred camels and a thousand moulted hawks, four hundred mules loaded with gold and silver, fifty carts filled with the like to pay the soldiers. Charlemain has been long enough in this country ; he should go to Aix ; there the king will follow him.

"The emperor stretches his hands toward God, bows his head, begins to think . . . In his words

never was he hasty; his custom is to speak at leisure." Lifting his head, he asks what warrant he shall have of such words? The hostages are offered, and the pledge of baptism is given. The emperor gives no answer however that night, but has the messengers nobly entertained, and summons his barons to council for the next morning under a pine-tree; "By those of France" (*i. e.* by their advice) "he means wholly to walk."

They come; Duke Ogier and Archbishop Turpin, Richard the old and his nephew Henry, brave Count Acelin of Gascony, Tedbald of Reims and his cousin Milo, Gerer and Gerin, Count Roland and Oliver the brave and comely; and Guenes (or Ganilo) "who did the treason." The emperor sets forth Marsile's offers. Roland starts to his feet. "Ill shall ye credit Marsile!" Once before the same attempt was made, fifteen thousand pagans were sent with olive-branches in their hands, using the same words; the emperor sent two of his counts, but the pagan king cut their heads off. "Make the war as you have undertaken it; lead all your host to Saragossa, besiege it all your life-long, avenge those whom the felon has killed."

The emperor's visage darkens, he answers nought. All are silent, save Ganilo, who rises and comes before Charlemain, and proudly speaks: "When

king Marsile offers you that with joined hands he will become your man, and will hold all Spain by your gift, and then will receive the law we hold, who advises you that we reject this plea, he cares not, sire, of what death we die. It is not right that pride's counsel should have the upper hand. Leave we the fools, and hold we by the wise."

Naymes (of Bavaria) comes after him,—“better vassal in the court was none :” King Marsile is vanquished, he cries mercy, it would be a sin to do more to him ; this great war should go no further.—“Well hath the Duke spoken,” say the French.

“Lord Barons, whom shall we send to Saragossa, to king Marsile ?”—Naymes offers to go ; the emperor tells him he is a wise man, and shall not go so far from him.—Roland offers ; Oliver objects that he is too proud and might do mischief, but could well go himself ; the emperor forbids them both.—Archbishop Turpin offers in turn, and is in turn silenced.—The emperor tells the knights to choose a baron for messenger.—“Ganilo my stepfather,” suggests Roland.—“You shall send none wiser,” say the French.

Full angry was count Ganilo ; from his neck he threw his great furs of sable, and remained in his tunic. “Hazel were his eyes and full proud his visage, comely his body, and broad his sides” ; all

his peers look at him with admiration. "Fool," says he to Roland, "what madness is this? Well do men know that I am thy stepfather. Hast thou judged that I go to Marsile? An God grant that I return from thence, I will moot thee such a counter-blow as shall last thee all thy life!"—'Am *I* proud and a fool?' answers Roland. 'Well do men know I care not for threats. But it should be a wise man to do the message. If the king choose, I am ready to do it for you.'" Ganilo repels the ironical offer, and declares that he will go, after a short delay, to lighten his "great wrath." Roland laughs on hearing this. Ganilo is ready to burst with rage. He addresses the emperor: since none who go to Saragossa can return, he recommends to him his fair son Baldwin, the son of the emperor's sister, to him he leaves his honours and his fiefs; "keep him well, with my eyes I shall never see him."—"Your heart is too tender," replies the emperor; "since I order it, it befits you to go." And he offers him the "staff and the glove,"—apparently the insignia of his embassy. "'Sire,' says Ganilo, 'Roland has done all this; I will not love him all my life long, nor Oliver, for that he is his companion, nor the twelve peers, for that they love him so. I defy them, sire, before your eyes.'—Then said the king: 'You are too ill-

mindèd ; now shall you go, for certain, when I command it.'—'Go I may, but without warranty.'" —*i. e.* for my life. As the glove is handed to him he lets it fall, an evil omen which strikes all the French. He takes his leave at once, and departs in stately array, amid much lamentation from his knights, whom he charges to greet for him his wife, and Pinabel his friend and peer, and his son Baldwin whom they are to hold for lord.

He rejoins the Saracen messenger, and speaks with Blancandrin. The latter begins by dwelling on Charlemain's achievements, who has conquered Apulia and all Calabria, passed the salt sea to England, and conquered the tribute of it to the Holy Father. But what does he want in the Spanish marches ? Evil work do those dukes and counts who so advise their lord !—I know none such, replies Ganilo, but Roland. The emperor was sitting under the shade in a meadow by Carcassonne ; came his nephew, in his hand a ruddy apple. "'Behold, lord,' said Roland to his uncle, 'of all the kings I present you the crowns.' His pride should well confound him, for every day he gives himself away to death. Were he killed, we should all have peace." They ride on, and end by pledging each other that they will seek Roland's death.

They reach Saragossa, and find king Marsile sitting under a pine-tree, twenty thousand Saracens around. Blancandrin gives account of his embassy; Charlemain has returned no reply, but has sent a noble French baron, from whom they shall hear whether they will have peace or not.

"But count Ganilo had well bethought himself; by great wisdom he began to speak, as he who well knows how." Charles's message, he tells the king, is that he should become a Christian, and receive half Spain in fief; if not, he shall be taken and bound, carried to Aix, and there judged and put to death.—The king is so enraged that he would have pierced him with a javelin, if not hindered. Ganilo, seeing this, puts his hand on his sword, draws it two fingers' length out of the scabbard: "Sword," says he, "full fair and bright are you; so long have I borne you at the king's court, that the emperor of France shall never say that I die alone in the strange land; ere that, the best shall have paid for you!" The Saracens interfere to stop the quarrel. Ganilo declares that for all the gold that God made, nor for all the riches in the land, would he have spared to give Charlemain's message. "He was wrapped in a mantle of sable, that was covered with a cloth of Alexandria. He throws it down, and Blancandrin

receives it; but his sword he would not quit; in his right fist by the golden hilt he held it. The pagans say 'a noble baron is here.'" He goes on to develop the message; Charlemain will give Marsile half Spain in fee; "the other half he will give to Roland his nephew; a full proud joint-tenant you shall have there." If not, he will be besieged in Saragossa, bound, taken to Aix neither on palfrey, charger, nor mule, but thrown upon a wretched baggage-hack, and at Aix lose his head. In proof whereof he hands him the emperor's letter. Marsile, "discoloured with rage", breaks the seal, flings the wax away, and reads out the contents, by which Charlemain bids him moreover send as hostage his uncle the khalif. Marsile's son asks that Ganilo be delivered to him, and he will do justice of him! Ganilo hearing this, brandishes his sword, and sets his back against the pine-trunk.

But the king enters into the orchard with the best of his men; Blancandrin bids him call the Frenchman, for he has pledged his faith for their behoof. At the king's bidding he brings Ganilo. "There they treat of the unrighteous treason." Marsile begins by apologising for his rashness, and offers Ganilo five hundred pounds' worth of gold in sables; before to-morrow night he will have

made amends. He then begins to speak of Charlemain. "He is very old; his time is spent; methinks he is more than two hundred years old? Through how many lands has he carried his body! how many blows received on his shield! how many rich kings led to beggary! When shall he ever be tired of warring?" Ganilo replies: 'Not such is Charles! None can see him and know him, but will say that the emperor is a man! I cannot so praise nor vaunt him to you, but that there shall be in him yet more honour and goodness. Who could recount his great valour? God has enlightened him with such a baronage, as would rather die than leave his baronry.'—The pagan says: 'I marvel much at Charlemain, who is grey and old. Methinks he is two hundred years old and more? Through how many lands has he worked his body!—how many blows received of lances and swords! how many rich kings led to beggary! When shall he ever be tired of warring?'—'Never,' said Ganilo, 'while his nephew lives. There is no such vassal under heaven's cope. Full equally brave is his comrade Oliver; the twelve peers, whom Charles holds so dear, form the vanguard with twenty thousand knights. Charles is secure, he fears no man.'"

Marsile boasts in turn of the four hundred thou-

sand knights whom he can bring forward. Ganilo warns him to do no such thing. "Leave folly, hold by wisdom. Give so much wealth to the emperor that every Frenchman shall marvel. For twenty hostages that you shall send to him, the king shall return to sweet France; his rearguard he will leave behind him; there will be his nephew count Roland, I think, and Oliver the brave and courteous. Dead are the counts, if any will believe me. Charles will see his great pride fall; and he will have no mind ever to make war upon you.'—'Fair Sir Ganilo, an God bless you, how shall I kill Roland?'"—Ganilo tells him that when the king will be at the pass of Sizer, his rear-guard behind him with Roland and Oliver and twenty thousand French, he is to send a hundred thousand pagans against them; there will be great slaughter; but a second battle must be fought, and in one or the other Roland would perish; and Roland dead, "Charles would lose the right arm of his body," and "the great land* would remain in peace." They mutually swear to the treason, Ganilo on the relics contained in his sword-hilt, Marsile on a book of "the law of Mahomet and Tervagant." One of the Saracens now gives his sword to Ganilo, another

* '*Terre major*' *i.e.* France—a remarkable expression of this poem.

his helmet; queen Bramimond two bracelets for his wife; the king promises him "ten mules laden with finest gold of Arabia," and this year by year. Ganilo now departs with the keys of Saragossa, the presents and the hostages.

He reaches the emperor of a morning, as he sits on the green grass before his tent, Roland with him and Oliver and Naymes, and a good number of others. He delivers the lying message; if he has not brought the khalif, it is because with his own eyes he has seen him and three hundred thousand men all shipwrecked and drowned, four leagues from the shore. Before a month Marsile will follow the emperor to France, to receive the Christian law and hold Spain of him. The king thanks him for his services. A thousand trumpets sound throughout the army, the French raise their camp, load their sumpter-horses, and depart for "sweet France." But while they march homeward, the pagans ride by the upper valleys, hauberks on, banners folded, helmets closed, swords girded, shields on neck, and lances in rest; they tarry in a wood on the summit of the hills; four hundred thousand men await the daybreak. "God! what sorrow that the French know it not!"

The emperor is troubled with evil dreams. At one time he deems that Ganilo seizes his lance,

and shaking it causes it to fly in pieces; at another, that being at Aix a boar bites his right arm, and a leopard from Ardenne assails him; but a hound comes leaping, bites the right ear of the boar, and wrathfully fights the leopard. At dawn he asks his barons whom he shall entrust with the charge of the rearguard. "Roland my stepson," answers Ganilo; "no baron have you of so great vassalry."—"A devil alive are you," replies the king; "deadly rage has entered your body. And who shall be before me in the vanguard?"—"Ogier of Denmark," says Ganilo; "you have no baron who can do it better than he." Roland declares that since the rearguard is adjudged to him, the king shall lose nor palfrey nor charger, nor ridable mule, nor hack, that shall not have been paid for by their swords. "Give me," says he to the emperor, "the bow you hold in your fist; methinks they shall not reproach me that it fall from me, as did to Ganilo the staff which he received with his right hand." The emperor's countenance darkens, "he fingers his beard and untwists his moustache," he cannot help weeping; Naymes sees Roland's wrath, and begs the king to give him the bow, which he does. The emperor presses Roland to retain with him half the host. 'I will do no such thing,' replies Roland; "I will retain twenty thousand full brave

Franks; pass the gates all in safety, never shall ye fear any man while I live."

He mounts his charger; to him come Oliver his mate, and Gerin, and brave Gerer, and Josse, and Berenger, and Jastor, and old Anseis, and proud Gerard of Roussillon, and rich duke Gaifer. "By my head I will go!" says the archbishop. "'And I with you,' says count Walter; 'I am Roland's man, I ought not to fail him.'" Twenty thousand knights are thus chosen out. Count Roland calls Walter of Luz, and tells him with a thousand men to occupy the depths and heights, that the emperor may lose none of his men.

"High are the mountains and gloomy the valleys, dark the rocks, marvellous the defiles." When the French approach the "great land," they see Gascony, and remember "their fiefs and their honours, and their damsels and their gentle wives; there is none of them but weeps for pity. Charlemain is anxious above all the others; he has left his nephew at the gates of Spain." Duke Naymes rides beside him, and asks him why he is heavy-hearted. Charles tells him he fears Ganilo will destroy France; he has adjudged Roland to the rearguard, whom if Charles loses, he will never have his match. Seeing him weep, a hundred thousand French are moved, and fear for Roland.

Meanwhile Marsile has summoned all his men, four hundred thousand in three days; after exposing Mahomet to their adoration on the highest tower in Saragossa, they ride by hill and dale till they see the pennons of the twelve peers. Marsile's nephew (afterwards called Asbroth) comes forward on a mule, and laughing asks a guerdon of the king for many a service, "the blow of Roland," whom he means to kill with his sharp sword. Marsile "gives him the glove" of it. Asbroth then asks for eleven of the barons, to fight the twelve peers. Falsaro, Marsile's brother, king Corsallis, Malprimis of Brigal, (swifter footman than a horse), an emir of Balaguer, an almacer of Maurienne (*i. e.* Savoy), Turgis count of Tourtelouse, Escremiz of Vauterne, Esturganz and his mate Estramariz, Margariz of Sibille, the friend of ladies through his beauty, Chernuble of Munigro, whose hair sweeps the ground, who bears a bigger load for sport than four mules for baggage, who comes from a land where "sun shines not, nor corn can grow, nor rain falls, nor dew wets, nor is there stone that be not all black,—some say that devils dwell there,"—offer themselves for the purpose, all boasting of what they will achieve. One hundred thousand Saracens go with him, and arm in a larch grove.

"Clear was the day and fair was the sun; no garment have they but it all glitters like fire; they sound a thousand trumpets for more comeliness. Great is the noise, the French heard it. Said Oliver—'Sir comrade, methinks we may have battle of Saracens?'—Answers Roland: 'And God grant it us! Well ought we to be here for our king. For one's lord should one suffer distress, and endure great heat and great cold; one should lose both leather and hair. Now look every one to fulfil such great blows, that evil song be not sung of us! Pagans are in the wrong and Christians in the right. Evil example shall never be of me.'

"Oliver has climbed on a high pine-tree, he looks to right amidst a grassy vale, he sees come that paynim folk, he calls Roland his comrade: 'Toward Spain I see come such a tumult, so many white hauberks, so many glittering helmets! These shall do a great mischief to our French. Ganilo knew it, the felon, the traitor, who judged us" (*i. e.* assigned this post to us) "before the emperor.'—'Hold thy peace, Oliver,' answers count Roland; 'he is my stepfather, I will not have a word said of him.'"—Oliver sees so many Saracens that he cannot even count the troops of them. All bewildered he descends from the pine-tree. "I have seen so many pagans," he tells the French,

“never man on earth saw more! . . . Ye shall have a battle, never was the like! Lord Barons, have virtue from God, stand to the field, that we be not beaten!”—“Cursed be he that flees!” say the French; “never for dying shall one man fail you.”—“Comrade Roland,” Oliver pursues, “now blow your horn; Charles will hear it, the host will return.”—“I should do as a madman! In sweet France I should lose my praise! I will strike always great blows with Durandal; the brand shall be bloody to the hilt; ill shall come the felon pagans to the gates: I pledge you they are all judged to death.”—“Comrade Roland, now sound the ivory horn. Charles will hear it, he will make the host return, the king with his baronry will succour us.”—Replies Roland: “May it not please the Lord God that my kinsmen be blamed for me, nor sweet France fall into contempt! Rather will I strike enough with Durandal, my good sword that I have girded to my side. You shall see the brand all bloody. Ill gathered themselves together the felon pagans: I pledge you they are all given over to death.”—“Comrade Roland, sound your ivory horn; Charles will hear it, who is passing at the gates: I pledge you the French will return.”—“May it not please God,” replies Roland to him, “it be said by any living man that I have blown

horn for pagans! Never for this shall my kinsmen have reproach. When I shall be in the great battle, and I shall strike a thousand blows and seven hundred, you shall see the bloody steel of Durandal! The French are good, they will strike as vassals: those of Spain shall have no safety from death.'—Said Oliver: I know no blame of this. I have seen the Saracens of Spain; covered with them are the vales and the mountains, and the brushwoods and all the plains. Great are the hosts of that stranger-folk; a full small company have we.'—Answers Roland: 'My desire is all the greater. May it not please God nor His saints nor His angels that ever for me France lose her worth! I had rather die than shame should come to me. The better we strike, the more the emperor loves us.'—Roland is brave, and Oliver is wise; both have wonderful vassalage" (*i. e.* bravery). "Now that they are on horseback and in arms, never for death will they eschew battle; good are the counts and high their words."

Oliver still remonstrates. Roland, "prouder than lion or leopard," calls the French, and speaks aloud to Oliver: "Sir comrade, friend, speak not so! The emperor who left the French in our care, placed apart twenty thousand; to his mind there was not one coward among them. For one's lord

one should suffer great ills, and suffer strong cold and great heat, one should lose blood and flesh. Strike with thy lance, and I with Durandal, my good sword which the king gave me. If I die, he who has her may say, 'This sword belonged to a noble vassal.'" Archbishop Turpin on his horse makes a sermon to the French: "Lord barons, Charles left us here; for our king well should we die; help to sustain Christendom. Ye shall have battle, ye are all sure of it, for with your eyes you see the Saracens. Cry your sins, pray God's mercy, I will absolve you to heal your souls. If ye die, ye will be holy martyrs, ye shall have seats in the highest Paradise." The French dismount, they kneel on the ground, the archbishop blesses them in God's name; "for penance he commands them to strike." The French then rise, mount their horses, and place themselves in battle array.

Roland is in the gates of Spain on his good horse Veillantif, in his hand his broadsword, the point towards heaven, a white pennon laced to the top; his golden reins float in his hands. "Full comely was his body, his visage bright and laughing. After him came following his comrade; those of France claim him to warranty. Proudly he looks towards the Saracens, towards the French humbly and mildly; courteously he says a word to

them: 'Lord barons, ride on gently; these pagans go seeking a great martyrdom; to-day shall we have booty fair and great; so worthy never had king of France.' At these words the hosts go joining each other.—Said Oliver: 'I care not to speak. You deigned not to sound your ivory horn; nor shall you have aid from Charles. He knows not a word of it, nor is he in fault, the brave one. Those who are there are not to blame. Lord barons, hold the field; by God I pray you, be resolved to strike blows, to receive and to give. The war-cry of Charles we should not forget.' At these words the French cry out; and who should hear them shout *Monjoie* might well remember vassalage."

The battle begins by a single combat between Roland and Asbroth, whom Roland attacks with such fury that he cleaves him down the spine. Then Falsaro, who "held the land of Dathan and Abiron," half-a-foot broad between his eyes, is killed by Oliver. Archbishop Turpin runs his great spear through king Corsalis, Angelier kills Malprimis of Brigal, Gerer his comrade the emir. "Fair is our battle," said Oliver. Duke Samson cuts the almacer through heart and liver and lungs. "A baron's blow," says the archbishop. Anseis kills Turgis of Tourtelouse; Angelier again Escremiz

of Vauterne, Walter Esturganz, Berenger Estramariz.* Of the twelve Saracen peers two only remain, Chernuble and Margariz, a "full valiant knight, fair and strong and swift and light," who has a pass of arms with Oliver, but without result. The battle is now general. After fifteen blows Roland's spear breaks, and he draws Durandal, with which he splits atwain both Chernuble and his horse. Oliver with the stump of his broken spear brains a pagan, strikes and kills on all sides till the wood splinters to his very hand. 'Where is your sword Haultclear?' asks Roland. Oliver draws it, and cleaves in turn a pagan and his horse. "For such blows the emperor loves us," cries Roland. The archbishop kills Siglorele the enchanter, who, led by Jupiter, has already been in hell. "Brother Oliver," cries Roland, "fair are such blows to me." The pagans die by thousands and by hundreds; who flees not has no warranty against death. But "the French will not see again their fathers nor their kindred, nor Charlemain who waits for them at the gates. In France there is a marvellous tempest, a storm of thunder and of wind, rain and hail beyond measure. Many a

* It will be seen that the names of the French champions differ in several instances from those mentioned at p. 378.

lightning falls, and often; earthquakes truly are there from St. Michael of Paris to Sens, from Besançon to the port of Wishant. There is no shelter whereof the walls crack not; against mid-day great darkness is there, no light save the sky opens. None sees it without dismay; many say 'Tis the last day, the end of this present age.' They know not nor speak the truth; 'tis the great woe for Roland's death."

"The French have struck with heart and vigour. The pagans are dead, by thousands, by crowds. Of one hundred thousand not two can escape. Says Roland: 'Our men are full brave; no man under heaven has better; it is written in the *geste* of the French that our emperor has vassals indeed.'" They go through the field, seeking their men, they weep with their eyes for their kinsmen. Now comes king Marsile with his great host, full thirty troops, seven thousand trumpets sounding the charge. Says Roland: "Oliver, comrade, brother, felon Ganilo has sworn our death; the treason cannot be hid; full great revenge shall the emperor take of it. A battle we shall have, strong and obstinate; never man yet saw the like come together. I will strike with Durandal my sword, and you, comrade, strike with Haultclear; in so many good places have we borne them, so many battles have

we achieved with them, evil song should not be sung of them."

Before Marsile's host rides the Saracen Abisme, black as pitch, loving more treason and murder than all the gold of Galicia; no man ever saw him play nor laugh; a favourite he of king Marsile, and bears his dragon, to which all the host rally. The archbishop, seated on a horse which he took from a king whom he killed in Denmark,—well-cut of the feet, flat of leg, short of thigh, broad in the hind-quarter, long in the sides, high in the back, with white tail and yellow mane, and small ears on his tawny head,—no beast dare go against him,—the archbishop goes strike Abisme on his gemmed shield, and cleaves him from the one side to the other. "Great vassalage is this," say the French; "with the archbishop full safe is the cross." Yet seeing the pagans are so many, the French look often to Oliver and Roland. "Lord barons," says the archbishop, "go not to think ill. By God I pray you that ye flee not, that no worthy man sing evilly of it. . . . We shall here have our end; beyond this day we shall be no more alive; but of one thing I warrant you well,—holy Paradise is given to you, with the innocents ye shall sit there."

Angelier of Gascony is now killed by a Saracen,—the same who gave Ganilo his sword,—Oliver

however takes swift revenge of the peer's death.—Then Valdabrun,—another of Ganilo's friends,—“lord by sea of four hundred dromons,” who had taken Jerusalem by treason, violated Solomon's temple, and killed the patriarch before the font, kills duke Samson, whom Roland in turn avenges.—An African of Africa, son of king Malchus, kills Anseis, and is killed by Turpin.—The son of the king of Cappadocia kills Gerin and Gerer, Berenger and others, but meeting Roland, flees before him, yet in vain; with one blow Roland cleaves atwain man and horse. So valiant are the French that victory seems long to remain with them. Great is the prowess of Roland, Oliver, and the archbishop. The number of their slain “is written in charters and briefs; the *geste* says, more than four thousand.” But after four successful encounters, the fifth is “heavy and grievous,” all the French knights are killed save sixty; “before they die, they will sell themselves dear.”

“Count Roland sees great loss of his men. He calls his comrade Oliver: ‘Fair dear comrade, for God's sake who protects you, see how many good vassals lie on the ground. Well may we pity sweet France, the fair; how deserted she remains now of such barons! Ah, friend king, why are you not here? Oliver, brother, how shall we do it? how

shall we send news to him ?"—Says Oliver : ' I know not how to fetch him. Better die than shame be drawn on us.'

"Said Roland then : ' I will sound the ivory horn ; Charles will hear it, who is passing the gates of Spain ; I pledge you the French will return.'—Said Oliver : ' Great shame were it, and a reproach to all your kinsmen. Such a shame would last all their lifetime. When I said it to you you would do nought ; you shall not do it by my advice If the king were here, we should have no harm ; those who are there ought to bear no blame.' Said Oliver : ' By this beard of mine, if I may see my pleasant sister Alda, never shall you lie in her arms.'

"Said Roland then : ' Why are you wroth with me ?' And he answered : ' Comrade, it is your doing ; for vassalage by sense is not folly ; better is measure than foolishness ;—Frenchmen are dead by your lightness ; never shall Charles have service of us . . . never shall be such a man till God's judgment ! You will die here, and France will be shamed ; to-day the loyal company fails us ; for before evening grievous will be the parting.'

"The archbishop heard them disputing, he pricked his horse with his spurs of pure gold. He came to them and began to reprove them :

'Sir Roland, and you Sir Oliver, for God I pray you, dispute not. To blow the horn would now no more avail us, but nevertheless it is full better the king should come, he may avenge us. Those of Spain ought not to return. Our French, descending on foot, will find us dead and cut to pieces, they will lift us in biers, on sumpter-horses, they will lament us with mourning and pity, they will bury us in minsters, so that we be not eaten by wolves, nor hogs, nor dogs.'—Roland answers: 'Sir, you speak full well.'

"Roland has placed the ivory in his mouth. . . . High are the hills, and the voice is full long. For thirty great leagues they heard it answer. Charles heard it and all his companies. Said the king: 'Our men do battle.'—And Ganilo replied: 'If another said it, it would seem a great lie.'

"Count Roland, by labour and by effort, by great pain, sounds his ivory horn; from his mouth bursts the clear blood forth; the temples of his head are bursting. Of the horn he holds very wide is the hearing. Charles hears it, who is passing at the gates; Naymes hears it, the French listen. Said the king: 'I hear Roland's horn; never would he sound it but in a fight.'—Ganilo answers: 'Battle there is none; you are old, and flowery, and white; by such words you seem a

child. You know enough Roland's great pride; great marvel is it that God has so long suffered him. . . . For a single hare he goes blowing his horn all the day; before his peers he goes now boasting. Besides, there is no one who would seek him in the field. Ride on then; why stop you? The great land is full far ahead.'

"Count Roland has his mouth all bloody; burst are the temples of his head; he sounds the ivory with pain and weariness; Charles hears it, and his French likewise. Said the king: 'That horn has a long breath.' Replies Duke Naymes: 'A baron is labouring at it! There is battle! By my wit, that man betrayed him who sought to deceive you. Make ready, sound your cry, bear succour to your fair vassalry; you hear well enough that Roland is going mad.'"

The king at once rides back in all haste with his men. He has count Ganilo seized and handed over as a felon to the cooks of his household, placing him in charge of Bego the master-cook. One hundred kitchen companions, of the best and the worst, pull out his beard and moustache, and strike him each four blows with their fists; they beat him with sticks, they put a big chain on his neck, chaining him 'like a bear,' and place him on a sumpter-horse for shame.

"High are the hills, and dark, and great; deep the valleys, swift running the streams; the trumpets sound behind and before. . . . Angrily rides the emperor; anxious and sorrowful the French." But they cannot be in time.

Roland looks to the hills and the moors; he sees so many French lie dead, he bewails them as a gentle knight: "Lord barons, God have mercy on you! grant paradise to all your souls! make them lie in holy flowers! Never saw I better vassals than you; so long have ye always served me! so great countries have ye conquered for Charles! . . . Land of France, a full sweet country are you. . . . Barons of France, for me I see you die; I cannot defend nor warrant you. God help you, who never lied! Oliver, brother, I ought not to fail you. I will die of grief if another kill me not. Sir comrade, let us go and strike again!"

"Count Roland has gone afield, he holds Durandal, he strikes like a vassal. . . . As the stag goes before the dogs, before Roland so flee the pagans. Said the archbishop: 'You do well enough. Such valour should a knight have who bears arms and sits on a good horse. In the battle he should be strong and fierce, or otherwise he is not worth fourpence, rather should he be monk in minster, so shall he pray daily for our sins.'—Roland re-

plies: 'Strike, spare them not!'" At these words the French begin again, fierce as lions, knowing that they shall have no quarter.

King Marsile strikes valiantly on the Saracens' part, he kills amongst others Ivorie, Ivo, and Gerard of Roussillon. Roland seeking to avenge them strikes off the king's right hand, and kills his son. One hundred thousand pagans are so affrighted that they take to flight; never to return. But if Marsile has fled, there remains his uncle Marganice, with his black Ethiopians, large-nosed, broad-eared, more than fifty thousand. Seeing them ride against him, "Then said Roland: 'Here shall we receive martyrdom; now know I well that we have but little to live; but felon he who sells not himself dear before. Strike, lords, with your polished weapons; so challenge your deaths and your lives that sweet France be not shamed by us. When to this field shall come Charles my lord, and shall see such a chastening of the Saracens that against one of us he shall find fifteen dead, he will not fail to bless us.'"

The fewness of the French gives pride and comfort to the Saracens. Marganice, striking Oliver from behind, pierces him through the chest with his spear, and thinks to have well avenged his people on such a knight alone. But Oliver, though

feeling his death-wound, strikes with Haultclear the golden helmet of Marganice, casting down its flowers and crystals, and cleaves his head down to the smaller teeth. "Pagan," he cries, "nor to wife nor lady whom thou hast seen shalt thou boast in the kingdom whence thou art that thou hast taken from me one penny's-worth, or done damage to me or to any." Flinging himself into the midst of the fray he strikes on all sides, dismembering the Saracens, throwing them dead one upon the other. But he calls to Roland for aid, for to-day they must part.

Roland looks on Oliver; his face is colourless, the clear blood runs down his body and drops to the ground; for grief he faints on his horse. Oliver has so bled that his eyes have lost their strength; "nor far nor near can he see so clear as to recognise any mortal man. When his comrade meets him, he strikes him on his helmet gemmed with gold, he cleaves it in two to the nose-piece, but wounds him not in the head. At such a blow Roland looks on him, and asks him soft and gently, 'Sir comrade, have you done it willingly? this is Roland, who is wont to love you so; in nowise had you defied me.'—Said Oliver: 'Now I hear you speak, I see you not; the Lord God see you! I have struck you; now forgive me.'—Roland replies:

'I am none the worse; I forgive it you here and before God.' With these words one bends to the other; midst such love, behold, they are parted.

"Oliver feels that death much anguishes him; both his eyes turn in his head; he loses all his hearing and his sight. He descends from horse-back and lies down on the earth, hardly and loud he proclaims his sins, both his hands joined towards heaven. He prays God that He may give him Paradise, and bless Charles and sweet France, and his comrade Roland above all men; his heart fails him. . . . The count is dead."

Roland sees it, and laments over him full sweetly: "Sir comrade, ill were you so bold! Together we have been for years and days; thou didst me no wrong nor did I wrong thee; when thou art dead, 'tis grief that I should live." He faints again on his horse; only his golden stirrups prevent his falling. When he comes back to himself he sees great damage. All the French are killed, save the archbishop, and Walter of Luz, who has been fighting the pagans on the mountains, and has seen all his men killed. He is now fleeing against his will through the valleys, calling on Roland: "Ha! gentle count, valiant man, where art thou? Never knew I fear where thou wert. I am that Walter who conquered Maelgut, nephew to Droo,

the old and grey-haired ; through vassalage I was wont to be thy favourite. My lance is broken, and pierced is my shield, and my hauberk unmailed and broken ; a spear has struck me through the body ; I shall die, but I have sold myself dear." Roland hears him, and returns to the fray. He kills twenty of the enemy, Walter six, the archbishop five. A thousand Saracens come down on foot, forty thousand on horseback. They dare no more approach, but from afar they throw lances and spears and darts. Walter falls the first ; then Turpin is wounded in the head, pierced with four spears through the body, his horse killed under him. But quick he leaps up again from the earth, looks for Roland and runs to him : "I am not vanquished ! a good vassal yields never alive.' He draws Almace, his sword of burnished steel ; in the great fray he strikes a thousand blows and more. Charles said afterwards that he spared none ; four hundred were found around him, some wounded, some struck through, some with their heads cut off ; so says the *geste* and he who was in the field, the baron (St.) Giles through whom God makes miracles, who made the charter in Laon minster ; who learns not so much has not well understood it.

"Count Roland is fighting bravely, but his body is all in sweat and very hot, his head pains him full

sore. His temples are burst through his blowing of the horn, but yet he would fain know if Charles will come. He draws the ivory horn, feebly he sounds it. The emperor stood and listened. 'Sirs,' said he, 'full ill it goes with us. Roland my nephew this day fails us; I hear by his blowing that he will scarcely live more; who would be there, let him ride swiftly; sound your trumpets, as many as are in the host.' Sixty thousand are blown so loud that the mountains resound and the valleys answer. The pagans hear it, they take it not for pleasantry." Four hundred of the best of them rush at once upon Roland. He sees them approach without fear; he and the archbishop have both heard the music of Charles's host.

"Count Roland never loved a coward, nor a proud man, nor a man of ill parts, nor a knight that were not a good vassal. He called archbishop Turpin: 'Sir, you are afoot, and I am on horseback; for love of you I will here take my stand; together will we have the good and the evil; I will not leave you for any fleshly man. We will yet to-day return this assault to the pagans. The blows of the best are those of Durandal.'—Said the archbishop: 'Felon who shall not strike well; Charles is coming, who will well avenge us.'" The pagans say amongst themselves that Roland will never be

vanquished by fleshly man. Once more they fling missiles at them ; Roland's shield is fractured and pierced, his hauberk broken and unmailed, his horse Veillantif wounded in twenty places and killed under him. The pagans now flee towards Spain ; Roland, unhorsed, cannot pursue them. He goes to the aid of the archbishop, unlaces his gilded helmet, takes off his light white hauberk, cuts off his tunic, and puts strips of it in his wounds. Pressing him then to his breast, softly he places him on the green grass, full gently he prays him : " ' Ha, gentle man, now give me my leave ; our companions whom we had so dear, now are they dead ; we should not leave them. I wish to go and fetch them, and place them in order before you.'—Said the archbishop : ' Go and return ; this field is yours, thank God, and mine.'—Roland returns, he goes all alone through the field, he searches the valleys, he searches the hills, he finds Berenger and Otho, he finds Anseis and Samson, he finds old Gerard of Roussillon, one by one the baron has taken them, he has come with them all to the archbishop, he has placed them in a row before his knees. The archbishop cannot forbear weeping ; lifting his hand he gives his blessing, then says : ' Ill was it with you, barons ; God the glorious have all your souls, and place them in

Paradise in holy flowers! my own death so anguishes me, I shall not see the mighty emperor." Roland goes again to search the field, and brings back Oliver pressed against his bosom. He places him on a shield by the others; the archbishop absolves and crosses them. Roland bursts out weeping, and falls fainting to the earth. Seeing him faint, the archbishop felt such a woe as never before; he takes the horn, and goes to fetch water from a runnel in Roncevals. Slowly he goes and tottering; so feeble is he through loss of blood that before he has gone an acre he falls on his face. Roland, recovering himself, rises to his feet. "He looks below and he looks above; on the green grass, beyond his comrades, he sees the noble baron lying, the archbishop. . . . Dead is Turpin, Charles's warrior. By great battles, and by full fair sermons, against the paynim he was ever a champion; God grant him His holy blessing!

"Count Roland sees the archbishop on the ground; out of his body he sees the bowels lying; over his brow his brain is bubbling out;" on his chest "he has crossed his white fair hands. Sorely Roland bewails him, according to the custom of his country: 'Ha, gentle man, debonair knight, this day I commend thee to the glorious Heavenly One; never shall be man who will more willingly

serve Him. Since the apostles was never such a prophet to keep the law and to draw men. May never your soul have suffering! May the gate of Paradise be open to him!"

Roland feels that death is near; by his ears his brain is escaping. He prays God for his peers, and then the angel Gabriel for himself. Taking the ivory horn in one hand, and Durandal in the other, he proceeds to Spain-ward, and ascends a hill, where under a goodly tree are four blocks of marble. Here again he faints away, when a Saracen who feigned himself dead, seizes on him and his arms, exclaiming, 'Vanquished is Charles's nephew! This sword will I carry to Arabia!' But Roland, feeling the sword drawn away, opens his eyes, and with the ivory horn which he had not lost hold of, strikes him such a blow as crushes helmet and head at once, drives the eyes out of their sockets, and stretches the Saracen dead at his feet. "Coward!" said he, "how wert thou so bold as to seize me by right or by wrong? None shall hear it but shall deem thee a fool." But he has split the thick of the ivory horn, and all the crystal and gold are fallen from it. He perceives that he can see no more. He raises himself however on his feet; before him was a brown rock. He strikes ten blows on it with Durandal. The steel creaks, but

does not break. "Ha, Durandal," he exclaims, "how bright thou art and white! how thou shinest and flamest against the sun! Charles was in the vale of Maurienne when God from Heaven commanded him by His angel that he should give thee to a captain; wherefore the gentle king, the great, did gird thee on me; with this I conquered him Normandy and Brittany, with this I conquered him Poitou and Maine, with this I conquered him Burgundy and Lorraine, with this I conquered him Provence and Aquitain, and Lombardy, and all Romania; with this I conquered him Bavaria and all Flanders, and Alemain and all Apulia, Constantinople, whereof he took the faith, and in Saxony too he did what he demanded; with this I conquered him Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and England which he held for his chamber; conquered have I with this so many countries and lands which Charles holds, the white-bearded, that for this sword I have sorrow and grief. Better to die than that it remain among the paynim. May God the Father not let France be shamed thereby! . . .

"Roland feels that death is passing through him, from his head it descends upon his heart. Beneath a pine-tree he goes running; upon the green grass he lies down on his face, under him he puts his sword and the ivory horn; he turns his

head toward the pagan folk. For this he does it, . . . that Charles should say, and all his people, that the gentle count died a conqueror. He confesses his sins, minutely and often . . . he stretches his right glove toward God . . . St. Gabriel took it from his hand. Upon his arm he held his head bowed ; with clasped hands he is gone to his end. God sent His angel cherubim, and St. Michael of the danger ; with them came St. Gabriel ; they bear the count's soul to Paradise."*

"Dead is Roland ; God has his soul in Heaven. The emperor reaches Roncevals. There is no way nor path, nor of void earth yard nor foot-breadth, but Frenchman or pagan lies there. Charles cries 'Where are you, fair nephew ? where is the archbishop and Count Oliver, where is Gerin and his comrade Gerer, where is Otho and Count Berenger, Ivo and Ivorie whom I held so dear ? What is become of Angelier the Gascon, Samson the duke, and Anseis the baron ? Where is Gerard of Roussillon the old, the twelve peers whom I had left ?' . . . He pulls his beard like a man in wrath ; his

* The climax of interest in the poem is henceforth past. Yet so entirely, it would seem, for the middle-age reader or hearer, did the fate of the individual hero merge in the larger story of the conflict between Christian and Mussulman, that two-thirds of the poem still remain. I shall of course abridge still more succinctly from henceforth.

knight barons weep . . . twenty thousand fall fainting to the ground . . . they weep for their sons, their brothers, their nephews, their friends, their liege lords." Naymes advises the king to ride on and take revenge on the pagans. The sun stops in the heavens while the French pursue the fleeing Saracens, and drive them into the Ebro. King Marsile however has meanwhile reached Saragossa, from whence he had sent his letters to Baligant the old amiral,* who has survived Virgil and Homer; Marsile threatens to renounce his faith if not succoured. Baligant leaves Alexandria with a huge fleet, and at last, the day after the battle, reaches Saragossa, of which Marsile sends the keys out to him. Learning what has happened, the amiral rides at once to meet the emperor.

After a night troubled with evil dreams, Charles had gone out alone in search of his nephew's body; for he had heard Roland say that were he to die in a strange realm, he would pass beyond his men and his peers, and would have his head turned toward the foemen's country, and would thus end conqueringly (*conquerrantment*). As he goes, Charles finds the flowers of all the field red with the blood of "our barons," and cannot forbear weeping. Reaching two trees, he recognises Ro-

* *i. e.* Emir-al-mumenim.

land's blows on three blocks of marble, and sees his nephew lying on the green grass, a sight which makes him faint away. On his return to consciousness he begins "so softly" to lament him: "Friend Roland, God have mercy on thee! never man saw such a knight to wage and end great battles; my honour is turned to decline!" He tears out his hair by handfuls; a hundred thousand Franks weep to see him. "Friend Roland," he begins again, "I shall go to France; when I shall be at Laon in my room, from many realms shall come the stranger men, they will ask, 'Where is the count-captain?' I shall tell them that he is dead in Spain. With great sorrow afterwards shall I hold my realm; never shall be day that I do not weep and lament for this.—Friend Roland, worthy man, fair youth, when I shall be at Aix in my chapel, my men shall come, they will ask me news; marvellous and evil news shall I tell them; 'Dead is my nephew who made me conquer so much!' Against me will rebel the Saxons, and Hungarians, and Bulgarians, and so many different nations, Romans, Apulians, and all they of Palermo, and those of Africa, and those of Califerne. . . . Ah France, how deserted thou remainest! So great woe have I that fain would I not be."

They bury the dead, with absolutions, and in-

cense, and great honour. The hearts of Roland and Oliver and Turpin are taken out, put in a cloth and then into a white marble urn; their bodies are then put into stag-leather, well washed with spice and wine, and placed upon three carts, covered with a cloth. News now comes of the approach of the Saracen vanguard, and two messengers bring the amiral's message of defiance. The battle is now set in array. The French have ten corps of troops; of the Saracens the *geste* of the French reckons thirty corps. Before the amiral is borne his dragon, and the standard of Tervagan and Mahound, and an image of Apollo the felon. Great are the hosts and fair the different corps; between them nor mountain nor valley, nor hill, nor forest, nor wood; they see each other well amidst the plain. The battle is engaged. The French, greedy of revenge, do wonders, but not without loss; even Duke Naymes is wounded. Towards evening, beginning to despair of success, the amiral draws out his beard white as flower on thorn, that wherever he goes he may be seen. The two sovereigns meet at last in single combat; Charles receives a blow on the head which cleaves the helmet and lays bare the bone; he staggers, he is near to falling, but the angel Gabriel calls to him, "Great king, what doest thou?" Recovering

himself, with "the sword of France" he cleaves the amiral in twain with a deadly blow. The pagans now flee, and the French pursue. Great is the heat, and the dust rises; the pursuit lasts as far as Saragossa. Bramidonie (elsewhere called Bramimond), Marsile's wife, has mounted to her tower with the clerks and canons of her false law. When she sees the confusion of the Arabs, 'Help us, Mahound!' she exclaims, 'our men are vanquished, the amiral is killed.' On hearing her, Marsile turns to the wall and dies of grief, giving his soul to the devils. The emperor breaks down the gates of Saragossa, and enters the city. A thousand French search the town, "the synagogues and mahoundries" (*mahumeries*); with mallets of iron and wood they break the images; the bishops bless the waters, lead the pagans to baptism; if any oppose, he is hung or burnt or killed; more than a hundred thousand are baptized, all but the queen, who is to be led a prisoner to sweet France, that she may be converted "by love."

Leaving a garrison in Saragossa, the emperor now departs. At Bordeaux, on the altar he places the ivory horn full of gold; pilgrims see it who go there. To Blaye he takes his nephew and Oliver and the archbishop, has them put in white tombs; they lie there in St. Roman's. He tarries not till

he reaches Aix, and as soon as arrived sends to summon "his judgers," Bavarians and Saxons, Lorrainers and Frisians, Germans, Burgundians, men of Poitou, Normans and Bretons, and those of France. Then begins the trial of Ganilo.

But as Charlemain enters the hall, "to him comes Alda, a fair damsel. Said she to the king: 'Where is Roland the captain, who swore to take me for his mate?'—Charles has sorrow and grief for the saying, he weeps with his eyes, he pulls his white beard: 'Sister, dear friend, thou askest me of a dead man! I will give thee a full weighty exchange for him, this is Louis, I cannot say more, he is my son and will hold my marches.'—Alda answers: 'This word is strange to me. May it not please God, nor His saints, nor His angels, that after Roland I remain alive!' She loses her colour, she falls at Charlemain's feet, she is dead for ever; God have mercy on her soul! The French barons weep and lament over her." Charles summons four countesses; they bear her to a convent of nuns, watch her all night till the day break, bury her fairly by an altar. "Full great honour the king has done her."

Ganilo the felon, in chains of iron, is before the palace, bound to a stake by serfs who tie his hands with straps of stag-leather, and beat him with

sticks. When the barons assemble, Charles has him brought before him. 'Lord barons,' says he, 'judge me Ganilo.' "'He was in the host with me as far as into Spain; he took from me twenty thousand of my French, and my nephew whom ye shall never see, and Oliver the brave and the courteous; the twelve peers has he betrayed for money.'—Said Ganilo: 'A felon be I if I hide it; Roland wronged me in gold and in goods, wherefore I sought his death and his ruin; but no treason do I grant'.... Before the king stood there Ganilo; a lusty body has he, a pleasant colour on his face; were he loyal, he had well resembled a baron"... He cried aloud: "'For God's love hearken to me, barons; I was in the host with the emperor, I served him by faith and by love. Roland his nephew took me into his hatred, and so adjudged me to death and to grief. I was messenger to king Marsile; by my knowledge I got clear; I defied Roland the fighter and Oliver and all their comrades; Charles heard it and his noble barons; I have avenged myself of them, but there is no treason.'"... There are assembled thirty of Ganilo's barons, who all obey one, Pinabel of Sorence castle, a good vassal who can both speak and fight, who has undertaken to give the lie at the sword's point to any who should condemn Ganilo. The barons consult together;

they decide upon praying the king to quit-claim Ganilo for this once, that he may serve him faithfully hereafter. Roland is dead and will be seen no more; it would be folly to fight. Only Thierry, brother of Lord Geoffrey of Anjou, holds out against this decision. It is however carried to Charlemain, whose visage darkens on receipt of it.

But Thierry comes forward, a knight spare of body and slim, black-haired, brown-eyed, not very tall, nor yet too short. Courteously he bids the emperor not trouble himself. Ganilo is a felon for having betrayed Roland; he has perjured himself against the king. Wherefore Thierry adjudges him to be hung, and his body burnt as a felon. If any of Ganilo's kin will give him the lie, he is ready to warrant his judgment.—Well said! reply the Franks.—Pinabel takes up his kinsman's quarrel; gloves are given; Ogier of Denmark proclaims the appeal of battle to be in due form. They fight in a meadow before Aix. After many a stout stroke, Pinabel offers to become Thierry's man "by love and by faith," if he will reconcile Ganilo to the king. Thierry replies by offering to reconcile Pinabel with Charlemain if he renounces the battle. Each refuses; Thierry receives at last a blow which cuts his face open, but replies to it by another which cleaves Pinabel's head in two and strikes

him dead. The emperor comes and takes Thierry in his arms, wiping his face with his great sable furs. Pinabel's pledges, thirty of Ganilo's kinsmen, are hung on a tree; Ganilo is sentenced to be torn to pieces by horses. Bramimond is next baptized under the name of Juliana.

But at night, while the king is lying in bed in his vaulted chamber, St. Gabriel comes from God to bid him summon all his hosts, that he may go into the land of Syria, to the succour of king Vivian, who is besieged by the pagans. Fain would the emperor not go.

"'God!' said the king, 'so painful is my life!' He weeps with his eyes, he pulls his white beard.—Here ends the story (*geste*) that Turolde related."

II.—ORIGIN, DATE, INFLUENCE, AND CHARACTER OF THE POEM.

EVERY work of art or literature must bear more or less the impress of the ideas of its time; how much more so one which addressed itself essentially to the popular feeling, which was sung before it was written, which was to earn the bread of the wander-

ing minstrel for him! I think we may fairly say that the "Song of Roland" bears internal evidence of its antiquity, and I suspect also, of its origin. It stands quite apart from all subsequent epics in its glorification of Charlemagne. Its hero-worship is perfectly genuine; it is not merely for show that the exploits of Roland and his peers are described; the feeling all through is that of intense reverence towards them. Again, it is brutal, but it is also singularly simple and pure. The marvels which abound in it are told with almost childlike honesty; and, very different from later works of the kind, not a coarse word occurs in it, if I mistake not, from the first page to the last. All these features are characteristic of a young, half-savage race, pure of manners, which has not yet outgrown the recollection of its great men. Now this was precisely the case with the Normans of the eleventh century. To the feudal barons of the rest of France, who had newly cast off the Carolingian yoke, the recollection of Charlemagne must have been irksome rather than otherwise. For the Norman on the contrary, the remembrance of Rollo served to hallow the name of Charlemagne: new converts to Christianity, they had all the fervour of such; and there is nothing more striking in the story of the battle of Hastings than the picture of the Normans

passing the battle-watch in prayer and the Saxons in revelry. Above all, they were essentially, as compared with the Saxons on the one hand, with the French on the other, a new race, lovers of the marvellous, and in spite of occasional outbursts of lust, certainly retaining much of Norse purity of manners.*

We may therefore, I think, fairly look upon the Song of Roland as a Norman poem of the eleventh century. M. Génin in one passage goes farther, and from grammatical resemblances to a certain translation of the book of Kings, which belongs to the end of the tenth century, treats it as contemporary with the latter work. His theory is that it was written by a certain Théroulde, tutor of William the Conqueror, and that the Oxford MS., after passing through Taillefer's own hands, was deposited in his MS. chest by a second Théroulde, abbot of Peterborough, who died in 1098. We need not follow him through his ingenious chain of hypotheses.† But it is nevertheless true that in many respects the Song of Roland seems to bear the marks of an authorship more cultivated than that of later epics of the kind. There are

* It will be seen that I draw precisely opposite conclusions to F. Schlegel's, from the fact of Norman authorship.

† See also the Preface to M. Michel's edition as to various Turolde or Thorolds.

none of those appeals to the public, as one might call them, which generally open the latter, and are largely scattered through them. There is more brevity, more artistic symmetry of plan. In the account of nature's mourning for Roland, M. Génin even sees a reminiscence of the passage in Virgil's *Georgics*, describing the omens of Cæsar's death.

On the other hand two things appear to me to be clear,—Firstly, we have not before us the original text,—secondly, we have not before us the first work of its kind.

That we have not before us the original text seems to me to be proved by the repetitions which occur in most of the leading passages, which are given two or three times over with slight variations of detail. Whatever M. Génin may say to the contrary, I have not a doubt myself that, in the case before us as in others, the variations frequently represent chronological differences, and distinct *rifaccimenti*. Thus, in the three versions of Roland's death, there seems to me to be a clear gradation of treatment. The first (which I have chiefly followed) is mainly heroic; it dwells on Roland's turning his face towards the foe; his religious performances are disposed of in two lines: 'He proclaimed his guilt, minutely and often; for his sins he offered the glove.' The

second is specially religious, and brings in angels. The third is sentimental as well; it tells us the hero's last thoughts, it introduces a little Biblical lore, it names the angels who come down to Roland.* In my own belief, the first account,

* 1st

2nd

"Roland feels that death is passing through him; from his head it descends upon his heart. Beneath a pine-tree he has gone running, on the green grass he has laid himself on his face, under him he puts his sword and the ivory horn; he turns his head toward the Pagan folk. For this he has done it, that he wishes truly that Charles may say and all his people, the gentle count, that he died a conqueror. He proclaimed his guilt, minutely and often; for his sins he offered the glove of it.

"Roland feels that his time is no more. Towards Spain he is on a sharp peak; with one hand he has beaten his breast: 'God, my many things, — so Thy vir- many lands which the baron conquered, great and the small, sweet France, the that I have done since the hour that I was born to this day that I have reached.' His right glove he has stretched toward God; but angels of heaven descend to him."

"Count Roland lies beneath a pine-tree. Towards Spain he has turned his face; he begins to remember pine-tree he has gone his many things, — so many lands which the baron conquered, sweet France, the men of his race, Charlemain his lord who nourished him; he cannot refrain from weeping and sighing; but himself he will not forget; he proclaims his guilt, he prays mercy of God: 'True Father, who never didst lie, who didst raise St. Lazarus from the dead, and didst save Daniel from the lions, save my soul from thy perils for the sins which I did in my life.' His right glove he offered

completed by a single line, placed after the two others: "Dead is Roland; God has his soul in Heaven," represents the original text, whilst the two others correspond to different historical stages of feeling and development. Perhaps half a century would not be too long a period to span the interval between the first and the last.

On the other hand, I am strongly impressed with the feeling that the text before us, with its *latest* incrustations of thought, belongs to a period certainly anterior to the first crusade, *i.e.* cannot be older than about the third quarter of the eleventh century. The feelings which originated the crusades breathe all through it; the actual idea of crusading in the east is scarcely hinted at except at the last; and that idea is one that so entirely took hold of the mind of Christendom when it was put forth,

to God; St. Gabriel
has taken it from his
hand. On his arm he
held his head bowed,
with raised hands he
has gone to his end.
God sent His angel
cherubim, and St.
Michael of the dan-
ger; with them came
St. Gabriel; they bear
the count's soul to
Paradise.

that I cannot believe it to have been current without leaving its mark strongly fixed on a popular work like this. And I am equally disposed to fix the date of the text before even the conquest of England; because (assuming the work to be Norman) that event was also one so great that it must have printed itself on all contemporary popular heroids. Frequent allusions to Southern Italy and Sicily seem to me to mark that the Norman exploits in Sicily were then recent; whilst two allusions to the conquest by Roland of England, of which Charlemagne "made his chamber," seem to me precisely to indicate that state of feeling prior to the conquest, when the Normans simply coveted England, and sought pleas for winning it. On the whole, therefore, I am not indisposed to think that the different versions which M. Génin's text represents correspond to a period stretching from about 1010 to about 1060.

But again: the work before us does not represent the absolute birth of a literature. "Songs,"—by which poems such as the present may well be intended,—appear in it already as an actual *power* in the world of chivalry. "Let no evil song be sung of us," forms part of Roland's reply to Oliver, when he first bids him sound his horn. He repeats the same thing when the French are attacked by

the main body of Marsile's army; archbishop Turpin uses soon afterwards the same argument. Nor does the poem pretend to be original. It professes on the contrary to be founded on existing histories. "It is written in the *geste* of the Franks (*en la geste francor*)", says Roland, "that our emperor has vassals (indeed)." Of those whom the three champions killed, there were, "it is written in charters and briefs, says the *geste*, more than four thousand." Round Turpin alone there were four hundred: "so says the *geste*, and he who was at the field, Giles the baron, through whom God makes miracles, and who made the charter at the minster of Laon." Of the Saracens at the battle after Roland's death "the *geste* of the Franks numbers thirty troops." Again, for the trial of Ganilo, "it is written in the old *geste* that Charles summoned men from many lands."

What was the *geste* thus referred to? Not the celebrated chronicle known as that of the false Turpin, since the poem represents the supposed author of it as having been killed himself on the field of Roncevaux. I need not dwell here on M. Génin's ingenious and indeed almost demonstrative argument, that the real author of this chronicle was in fact Guy of Burgundy, afterwards Pope Calixtus II. (1050—1124). But evidently, so mate-

rial a variation of the original theme could not have been ventured upon, whilst that was still in the full blaze of its popularity. Consequently, since 1092 is the period when we see the Turpin chronicle first put forward, the presumption is, that the old song of Roland was already getting out of date. If we allow a period of seventy-five years, or the length of a long life, for this to take place, we shall find ourselves led back, by an altogether different chain of reasoning, to the first quarter of the eleventh century as the date of the full popularity of the earlier legend, and of the probable first composition of the present text, or to just about the time before assigned,—but with a *geste* of unknown antiquity behind, of which only the far-off wellspring can be dimly discerned in that Merovingian Roncevaux pointed out by M. Paris.

Notwithstanding Pope Calixtus's damning of those who should listen to the 'lying songs of *jonglours*,' M. Génin shows that Turol's work must have been familiar to the authors of two of the leading epics of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, 'Agolant' and 'Gerard of Viana;' to 'Priest Conrad,' writer of a German 'Lay of Roland' (*Ruolandes Liet*), edited by Grimm, and which must have been composed between 1173 and 1177;* to Sostegna de Zanobi, author of the

* The writer states that the work had been translated from

Italian poem of the fourteenth century called "la Spagna." He points out also some striking resemblances between Turol's poem and the famous Spanish "Cid." The French versions of it descend to the fourteenth century, each amplifying and weakening the original. The popularity of the Carolingian legends in Italy has been something almost incredible. Thus in a curious Italian pamphlet of the year 1850, "Cenno critico intorno ad alcuni costumi ed usi dei Napoletani," by G. Robello, it is stated how the writer, going after dinner to walk near the Mole at Naples, stopped to listen to the story of the exploits of Charlemain and his paladins, as told by an itinerant *littérateur*; observing that whilst, of the various groups of storytellers and listeners scattered on the Mole, in a few only was read and explained the "Gerusalemme Liberata," the greater number were occupied with the great adventures of Roland, Roger, Rinaldo, Bradamante, spiced with innumerable marvels.

French into Latin, and thence into German, by the wish of the daughter of a Duke Henry, who is supposed to have been Henry the Lion, 1173—7. Conrad must have had, Grimm supposes with M. Génin (and an inspection of the poem seems to me necessarily to lead to the same conclusion), Turol's very work before him, but also, Grimm thinks, another poem on the same subject;—which surmise, if correct, would supply another argument in favour of the pre-existing *geste*. It is observable that the poem ends with the punishment of Ganilo.

And he grumbles at the Italians for having grown so enamoured of a foreign prince, that since the prose compilation called the "Reali di Francia," his exploits should have afforded a subject to more than forty poems, over and above songs and legends.*

The real beauty of Turol's poem needs surely no commendation. All his characters are thrown off with the most perfect vigour, and detach themselves quite distinctly on our mind's eye. In the treatment of Ganilo in particular there is very considerable subtlety; no pains seem to have been spared by the poet in trying to avoid making him a mere stage villain. He is strong and handsome; he can put on all the semblance of courage, if he has not the reality of it; he is adroit to a degree. This is brought out with peculiar success in the history of his embassy, and in that remarkable

* In the appendices to M. Francisque Michel's edition of the *Chanson de Roland* will be found the Basque song of *Alta-biçar*,—a Latin poem (one of our Cotton MSS.) and fragments on the rout of *Roncevaux*;—a collection of Spanish romances on the same subject, with an indication of other Spanish poems and dramatic pieces relating to it;—a list of similar Italian poems;—a summary and fragments of an English poem, (a fourteenth century *Lansdowne MS.*);—an analysis of the German poems by Priest *Conrad* and by *Striker*;—an extract from the Danish prose "Chronicle of *Kaiser Charlemain*";—a reference to an Icelandic Saga, and finally the indication of some French prose romances partly treating of the same subject.

scene with Marsile, where Ganilo lets the Saracen gradually worm out of him the treason which he is predetermined to commit. Apart from the delineation of character, we find the poet always rising to the height of his argument. In his description of the great slaughter of Roncevaux he is as tragic, if not as awful, as the author of the *Nibelungenlied* in describing the carnage at Etzel's court. The great fault in the poem lies in the climax of interest occurring so long before the end; otherwise, in point of condensation, in the keeping of the characters, in the natural sequency of the story, in the nobleness of the argument, it is far superior to the German masterpiece itself, though falling short of it in variety of interest, and through the absence of female characters—all but the one touching glimpse of Alda. It may be said to be, in short, more heroic, and less human, than the *Nibelungenlied*; and because less human, therefore inferior.

APPENDIX.*

THE CHRONICLE OF TURPIN (De vitâ Caroli magni et Rolandi).

This work has so greatly influenced the poetical literature of the middle ages, that it may not be out of place to give the headings of its chapters, with a few occasional details as to their contents. I borrow them from Ciampi's edition of 1822 (Florence, 8vo.).

I. Incipit historia famosissimi Caroli Magni, quando tellurem hispanicam et galletianam a potestate Saracenorum liberavit.

II. De muris Pampiloniæ per semetipsos lapsis.

III. Nomina villarum et urbium quas acquisivit Carolus in Hispaniâ.

IV. De idolo Mahumet.

V. De ecclesiis quas Carolus fecit.

VI. De reditu Caroli ad Galliam et de Aigolando (*i. e.* Agolant) rege Aphricanorum.

VII. Terribile exemplum de non retinendis eleemosynis.

VIII. De bello Sancti Facundi ubi hastæ viruerunt.

IX. Venit Carolus ad Aigolandum in specie nuntii ut videat Aigolandum et exploret urbem Agensii, quam et cepit, fugato Aigolando cum multis regibus.

X. De urbe Santonicâ ubi hastæ viruerunt.

XI. De fugâ Aigolandi et de militibus exercituum Caroli.

XII. Hæc sunt nomina pugnatorum majorum qui fuere cum eo [enumerates Roland, Oliver, 'Estulfuss,' 'Arastagnus' king of the

* See p. 363.

Britons, 'Englerius' (Engelier), Gaifier, 'Gelerus,' 'Galinus,' Salomon comrade of 'Estulfus,' Baldwin uterine brother of Roland, 'Aldebodus' king of Frisia, Arnald of Berlande (Beaulande), Naman (Naymes) duke of Bavaria, Ogier duke of Dacia, 'Oellus' count of Nantes, Lambert prince of Berry, Constantine Prefect of Rome, Rainald of Albo Spino (Montauban), Walter of Thermes, William, Garin duke of Lorraine, Rogo, Guinard, 'Esturnutus,' Tederic, Berengard, Atto, Ganalon (Ganilo), Ivo, and Samson duke of Burgundy].

XIII. De datis treugis et de disputatione Caroli et Aigolandi.

XIV. De ordinibus qui fuerunt in convivio Caroli, et de pauperibus, unde Aigolandus scandalum sumpsit et renuit baptizari [the Saracen is represented as refusing to be christened through seeing the ill-treatment of the poor in Charles's host; whereupon the emperor begins to treat them liberally].

XV. De bello Pampilonensi et de morte Aigolandi.

XVI. Quidam Christiani revertentes ad spolia cupiditatis causâ trucidantur.

XVII. De bello Furcæ.

XVIII. Pugnans Rolandus et Ferracutus qui vincitur ac perimitur a Rolando, primum disputatione facta de fide.

XIX. De bello Larvarum.

XX. De concilio Caroli et protectione ejus ad Sanctum Jacobum.

XXI. De personâ et fortitudine Caroli [he is represented as eight feet high, measured by his own feet, *qui erant longissimi*, with a palm and a half of face, a palm of beard, forehead a foot broad, eyes as a lion's or as carbuncles, eyebrows a half palm between, waist eight palms of span. He would eat a quarter of a sheep, or two fowls, or a duck, or a peacock, or a crane, or a whole hare; drank little wine at meat; could cleave a man and horse at one stroke; could raise a man in armour on his palm from the ground to the height of his head].

XXII. De proditione Ganaloni et de bello Roncievallis.

XXIII. De passione Rolandi et morte Marsini (Marsile) et de fugâ Belrigandi (Baligant).

[It is from the previous chapter that a resemblance to Turol'd's 'Song of Roland' becomes perceptible. It is here close, such as

the striking by Roland of his sword 'Durrenda' upon 'petroneum marmoreum,' *i. e.* the 'perron marbrin' of the poet. The address of Roland to his sword affords perhaps the most favourable sample of the pseudo-Turpin's style. I abridge it, as it is evidently borrowed from a poetical text already cumbered with repetition :

"O pulcherrime gladius, non... furibunde, sed semper lucidissime, longitudine decentissime, latitudine congrue, fortitudine firmissime, manu-tenente eburneo candidissime, cruce aureâ splendidissime, superficie deaurate, pomo berillo decorate, litteris clarissimis magni nominis Dei A et Ω sculpte, acumine legitime, Dei virtute circumdate, quis ampliùs tuâ virtute erit usus? quis ampliùs te possidebit? quis te habebit?..... Per te Saraceni destruuntur, gens perfida perimitur, lex christiana exaltatur, laus Dei et gloria et celeberrima fama acquiritur. O quoties Domini nostri Jesu Christi sanguinem per te vindicavi!... Quot vicibus per te aut Judæum perfidum aut Saracenum peremi!... Nullatenus vivere poterit qui a te vulneratus aliquantulum extitit; si miles ignarus aut piger te habuit, nimis ex hoc doleo; si Saracenus aut alius perfidus te tetigit, valde doleo."

The poem is exactly followed in the story of the three strokes, which only break the marble].

XXIV. De sonitu tubæ et confessione et transitu Rolandi [tells, as in the poem, of Roland's bursting his vein in blowing the horn, of his being heard by Charlemain, of Ganilo's detaining the latter. But inasmuch as Turpin is necessarily away from the battle, it is Baldwin who brings water to Roland and blesses him. By Thierry's advice, Roland confesses his sins at great length, and prays also at great length for those who are dead in the war].

XXV. De visione Turpini episcopi, et de lamentatione Caroli super morte Rolandi [At the mass of the dead, Turpin being rapt in ecstasy sees Marsile's soul carried to hell, and Roland's to heaven. Charles's lament over Roland is again one of the finer passages of the book: "O alti nominis, O brachium dextrum corporis mei, O barba optima, decus Gallorum, spata justitiæ, hasta inflexibilis, lorica incorruptibilis, galea salvationis, Judæ Machabeo probitate comparatus, &c., &c., cur te in his oris adduxi? cur mortuum te video? cur non morior tecum?" &c.].

XXVI. De hoc quod sol stetit spatio trium dierum. Exercitus Caroli adspectat martyres de Roncievalli per diversa loca sepeliendos, et Ganalonus proditor nece damnatur. [Oliver is found crucified on the field. The fight between Pinabel and Thierry, and the execution of Ganilo, are related much as in the 'Song of Roland'].

XXVII. De corporibus mortuorum sale et aromatibus conditorum.

XXVIII. De duobus cœmeteriis sacrosanctis, uno apud Arelatem, altero apud Blavium.

XXIX. De sepulturâ Rolandi et cæterorum qui apud Belinum et diversis locis sepulti sunt.

XXX. De his qui sepulti sunt apud urbem Arelatem in Aylis Campis.

XXXI. De concilio quod apud beatum Dionysium Carolus adunavit.

XXXII. De morte Caroli.

No unprejudiced person can entertain the slightest doubt about the character of Turpin's Chronicle. It is the attempt of an unscrupulous clergy to adapt popular legends to its own purposes,—one exactly similar to that which in our own days, in French and Belgian editions of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' transformed Uncle Tom into a pious Roman Catholic, and directed all his prayers to the Virgin Mary. In order to compete with the lay minstrel, the clerical falsifier stuffs the legend well with marvels ; but being utterly devoid of imagination, he can only supply these at second-hand, mostly by travesties from Holy Scripture,—as the fall of the walls of Pampe-luna, or the standing still of the sun for the return of the army, or the sprouting of the spears. The pious outpourings of his heroes are of the most wordy and tedious description, and the only moral duty which he seems anxious to inculcate is that of almsgiving.

It would perhaps be too much to say that the Pseudo-Turpin blighted the development of the Carolingian epic; that without it, the 'Song of Roland' must have been succeeded by some masterpiece of world-wide renown. If the French epical school had not, by the end of the eleventh century (when the Pseudo-Turpin appeared), contained already within it the germs of dissolution and death, it never could have been ruined by a work in itself so feeble. But it would be impossible for us probably now to over-estimate the effect of such a work, coming out under ecclesiastical patronage, pandering at once to popular tastes and to superstitious feelings, and eventually placed audaciously by a Pope, whom we may presume to have had at least a hand in its composition, on the rank of the Canonical books. That the low fraudulence of Rome must have inflicted a grievous blow on the literature of France by thus forcing her monkish trash into the place of the simple and earnest song of old Turol, we cannot doubt on comparing the two, even though we may not feel convinced that his mantle might otherwise have fallen on a successor endowed with a double portion of his spirit.

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