covered what was wrong, and it was a spear, not an arrow-shaft, which fastened the breeches of the chief to his leg; moreover, the thrall addressed his master as "you sons of Thorbrand," not, as Morris says, as "you sons of Snorri."

Very frequently in the sagas, Morris goes on to say, heroes are represented as stupid, lazy fellows who lie in the ashes all day instead of working, but who, when the time for brave deeds comes, rise up and show their manliness in an unmistakable manner. Good examples of such heroes, and probably the ones that Morris had in mind, are Grettir the Strong and Víga-Glúm.

Morris next points out that the sagas show that the Norsemen were usually "hard and grasping" in money matters; however, "there are plenty of examples of generosity and magnanimity too." He first cites the "manly and farsighted friendliness" that existed between Gunnar and Njál "in the midst of the most trying surroundings," and then refers to the dramatic scene at the very end of the Njál's saga, where Kari, who has been seeking his enemy Flosi for several years and is now shipwrecked close to Flosi's home, walks unexpected into the room where Flosi is sitting, Flosi rises, greets him, and kisses him, and the two are reconciled. Next Morris retells, in detail, the

5. Loc. cit. For the description in the Njál's saga of the dealings between Gunnar and Njál, see Burnt Njal, tr. Dasent, I, 54-246, passim.
very touching story of Ingimundr and Hrolleifr from the *Vatnsdæla saga*, a tale which seems to have moved him a great deal. Old Ingimundr, while acting as peace-maker, is wounded by Hrolleifr, an ungrateful wretch, but he goes home without telling his sons of his injury so that Hrolleifr may have time to escape; and he dies alone in his high-seat before the young men return to the hall. Morris says that he cannot refrain from relating the sequel of this story:

Ingimund had two freedmen to whom he had given land; and when the news of his death came to one of them he drew his "sax" or short sword and saying, "If Ingimund is dead, the world is not good for me," he stabbed himself mortally, and before he died pulled out the weapon and, giving it to the messenger, said, "Take this to so and so (the other freedman), and tell him what you have seen": and so died; and when the messenger gave the sax to the other he followed his example at once. 2

Morris's account of Eyvindr and Gautr's reception of the news of Ingimund's death, it should perhaps be pointed out, is somewhat more dramatic than it is in the original, for the saga merely states that Eyvindr slew himself by falling on his sword, and it does not say that Eyvindr sent his sword to Gautr. 3

Morris continues his discussion of life in medieval Iceland by pointing out that the "Northmen were not above using the weapons of

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1. May Morris, *op. cit.*, I, 451-452. For the account of this episode in the original see the *Vatnsdæla saga*, pp. 50-52. Morris's abstract of this scene in the saga is not strictly accurate: he states that Ingimundr told no one of the wound, but the saga says that when Ingimundr came home he revealed his condition to one of the young servants and asked the lad to go to Hrolleifr and tell him to flee at once, before Þorsteinn and Jökull, Ingimund's sons, should have time to kill him in revenge for their father's death.


3. For the account in the original see the *Vatnsdæla saga*, pp. 52-53.
deceit in their struggles for life and fortune..."; he refers briefly to "old Slaying Glum, who, skilful in oaths like Autolycus, swore himself off in court." Morris is here referring to the very ingenious oath which Glum swore in regard to the slaying of Thorvald; the oath was so phrased, that by a slight shift in accent, the meaning could be entirely changed. As Glum repeated it, the oath meant that he had not killed Thorvald; but he did not perjure himself, for what he really did say was that he had slain him, as he had actually done.

At the end of the quotations that Miss Morris prints from this lecture by her father, Morris calls attention to the Norseman's worship of fame, and translates one of the two famous stanzas on fame in the "Hávamál":

 Waneth wealth and fadeth friend,
 And we ourselves shall die;
 But fair fame dieth nevermore,
 If well ye come thereby. 

However, he hastens to add,

...this was not the worship of success; on the contrary, success that came without valour was somewhat despised: says the Sagaman, e.g., "The Knytlinga were very lucky men, but not very valorous."...The practised reader of a saga always knows when he is drawing near the death of the hero, for the style heightens, the tale-teller remembers more poetry, and a kind of halo seems to

1. May Morris, op. cit., I, 452.

2. Ibid., I, 452-453.

3. See The Story of Viga-Glum, pp. 102-104.

4. May Morris, op. cit., I, 453. For the original of the stanza that Morris has translated from the "Hávamál" see Sæmundar Edda hans Fróða, ed. Grundtvig, p. 53, stanza 76.
gild the presence of a man who is now about to make his fame safe forever.1

Finally, I should like to point out that at some time during the period we have been considering, Morris seems also to have written the short poem called "State-Aided Emigration in 889" which Miss Morris printed for the first time in 1936. In this work, which Miss Morris thinks was the result of her father's discussion of schemes of emigration in the Commonweal, Morris depicts the departure, evidently for Iceland or other islands in the west, of a whole family of Norwegians - grandparents, parents, young men and women, children, and thralls -, in order that they may escape the distasteful rule of King Harald. Morris is not, so far as I know, describing any specific embarkation referred to in the sagas. He tries, however, to make his imaginary scene realistic by giving all the characters mentioned typical Scandinavian names, such as Rut, Rolf, Thora, Asny, Asta, Biorn, Brand, and Gudrun. We also find him introducing into the poem a great many kennings - some of them borrowed from Old Norse poetry, some coined for the occasion; thus, he refers to the ship, ready to be launched, as "the Wood's Daughter" and "the Maid of the Tree," to battle as "the spear-drift," to the ocean as "the pathless wet meadow-land," and to the boats in the sea as "pasturing bisons ear-driven." The poem is written in heroic couplets, four couplets making a stanza; there are five stanzas in all.

1. May Morris, op. cit.; I, 453.
2. Ibid., I, 466-467.
In the course of the late 1880's, as I pointed out above, Morris gradually gave up his active participation in the work of the Socialist movement, and began once again to take an interest in art and literature for their own sake. The first original work he produced during this decade which was not directly inspired by his devotion to Socialism was *A Tale of the House of the Wolfings* and *All the Kindreds of the Mark*, a long story in prose and verse which appeared in December, 1888. The new form of literary expression that Morris tried in this work must have appealed to him considerably, for this book was followed by a series of seven stories of a similar nature, these eight prose romances, *The House of the Wolfings, The Roots of the Mountains, The Story of the Glittering Plain, Of Child Christopher and Fair Goldelind, The Wood Beyond the World, The Well at the World's End, The Water of the Wondrous Isles*, and *The Sundering Flood*, constituting practically all of his creative writing during the eight remaining years of his life. It is well known that all these tales in varying degrees, both in regard to form and substance, were influenced by the early Icelandic literature which Morris had studied with such zeal a decade earlier and which, judging from the facts presented in the preceding pages, we can be sure he had continued to study, with less exclusive devotion undoubtedly but nevertheless with affection and admiration, during the leisure moments of the years of his public activity; Scandinavian features in the

1. See above, pages 277-278.
plots and in the general form of these romances have been pointed out and discussed in all the more important treatments of Morris's literary works, the most extensive discussion of this matter being found in Arthur Biber's *Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances*. The influence of the sagas on these tales was, however, far greater than has been indicated in these works; in my discussion of these eight prose romances in the following pages, I shall try to point out all the significant Scandinavian elements in these stories, in order to make clear how very extensive the influence of Morris's Northern studies upon these tales really was.

The first of these works, *The House of the Wolfings*, which describes one of the conflicts between the Goths and the Romans in the early centuries of the Christian Era, is the romance which bears the most marks of Morris's close familiarity with the sagas. In the first place it should be noted that the very form of this work recalls to a certain extent the Icelandic tales; as Mackail remarks, "The use, as the vehicle of the story, of a mixed mode of prose and verse, was... suggested by the Icelandic Sagas, but used in a fresh and quite delightful way." Even more striking is the influence of

1. (Greifswald, 1907). Biber's study is really concerned with an examination of the vocabulary and style of the tales; but in commenting on Scandinavian terms and expressions found in these romances, he indirectly calls attention to institutions, customs, beliefs, and ideas of the early Norsemen that Morris introduced into his stories.

2. Mackail, *William Morris*, II, 213-214. To be sure, the Icelandic sagas were not unique in mingling prose and verse. As several critics have pointed out (see, for example, the *Academy*, XXXV(1889), 85 and the *Athenæum*, No. 3229 (September 14, 1889), 348), this method of telling a story was used in other early forms of literature, such as the "cantefable," of which the best example is of course *Aucassin et Nicolette*; however, in this matter of form, Morris's tales are really closer to the sagas than to the "cantefables," for as the reviewer in the *Athenæum* (page 349) says, while "in the 'cantefable'
the sagas upon the general tone of the romance; Miss May Morris, comparing this work with the one that followed — The Roots of the Mountains —, describes this saga atmosphere well:

The House of the Wolfings is entirely conceived in the spirit of the Sagas, certain phrases in it, such as "and Thiodolf bore Throngplough to mound with him," carrying one to the Northern heroic times; it belongs to the Sagas in its remoteness, its breadth of handling and absence of elaborated detail. There is more of the epic quality about it: the thread of fate weaves in and out of the human action, the men and women speak little, and that with stern high courage, about personal griefs and loves, and the Hail-Sun is a more truly heroic figure than any of the gracious women in The Roots of the Mountains.

When we examine the romance in detail, we find that Morris not only imitated the sagas in the form and general style of his tale, but that he also introduced into his story many features of Norse life, drawing primarily on the saga accounts for his information regarding these details. For example, many of the terms relating to the government of the Goths remind us of the sagas. As Biber points out, the Goths in the tale, like the early Scandinavians,

(Continuation of note 2 on page 305) the prose portions are... a kind of rough-and-ready setting for the verses, the prose of the Icelandic sagas is as polished as verse, and, indeed, has a movement finer than a metrical one," and in this respect Morris's tale resembles the Icelandic sagas very closely. For an account of the way in which the use of a combination of prose and verse as a medium of expression in the Old Norse sagas seems to have developed, see Henry Adams Bellows, The Relations between Prose and Metrical Composition in Old Norse Literature (unpublished Harvard doctoral dissertation, 1910), especially pages 125-126, 334-338, and n - t. For a similar discussion in regard to the Irish sagas, see Marie L. Edel, The Relations between Prose and Metrical Composition in Early Irish Narrative Literature (unpublished Radcliffe doctoral dissertation, 1935), especially pages 1-4, 70-76, 190-196, and 235-237.

call their assemblies "Things" or "folk-motes," the meeting-place of a Thing is termed a "Thing-stand," and at the Thing we find a "Domring." References to "Things," "folk-motes," and "Thing-steads" are so common in Old Norse literature that it is not necessary to trace Morris's acquaintance with these names to any definite source. The term "domhringr," the name given to the circle of stones within which the judges sat at all Scandinavian Thing-steads, occurs less frequently, but, as I have previously stated, is found in several of the sagas Morris had translated. It should also be pointed out that at one of the Thing-steads of the Goths, as it is described in The House of the Wolfings, there is a Hill-of-Speech; in introducing this feature Morris very likely had in mind the Old Norse "ëingrekkja," the mound at Scandinavian Thing-steads from which speeches and announcements were made. It is not surprising that Morris was familiar with the "ëingrekkja," for it is frequently mentioned in the sagas and he had also seen the mound for the Speaker at Law on the Hill of Laws at Thingvallir in 1871. There

2. Loc. cit. Biber states that the term "folk-mote" occurs in these prose romances, but does not give any references; for occurrences of the name in The House of the Wolfings see the Collected Works, XIV, 7, 1.19; 50, 11.1-2; 58, 1.8; 144, 1.27; 159, 1.22; 165, 1.7; and 194, 1.22. Of course the terms "Thing" and "Mote" are used not only in Old Norse but in other early Germanic languages as well, but these names occur extremely frequently in the Icelandic sagas and it was almost certainly his study of the sagas which led Morris to introduce these designations here.
3. Biber, op. cit., p. 85. For other references see Collected Works, XIV, 7, 1.22; 54, 1.23; 158, 11.11 and 37; and 159, 11.4, 7, and 13.
4. Biber, op. cit., p. 84. For occurrences of the term in The House of the Wolfings see the Collected Works, XIV, 7, 1.26 and 159, 1.22.
5. See above, page 242.
6. Collected Works, XIV, 69, 1.6 and 159, 11.22 and 32.
7. See, for example, The Saga Library, II, 154, 1.30 and 155, 1.14, and Sagan af Agili Skallagrimsyni, p. 219, 1.12.
is also one brief allusion in the tale to the "hallowing" of the
1
Thing; I shall postpone my discussion of this early Scandinavian
custom until I treat the next romance, The Roots of the Mountains,
2
where this practice is described in detail.

Very apparent, moreover, is the influence of the sagas on
Morris's account of the large hall in which the chief men of the
3
Wolfings lived. As Charles Elton in his review of the tale in the
Academy points out, this building with its two rows of pillars
going lengthwise down the hall dividing it into a nave and two
aisles, the sleeping-places in the aisles, and the three hearths
down the center of the room with a luffer or smoke-bearer above
each one, resembles very closely the typical Icelandic "skali," as
it is described by Morris and Magnússon in their notes to the trans-
lation of the Grettis saga. Another striking Scandinavian feature
not mentioned by Elton is the designation of the two doors of the
hall as the Man's door and the Woman's door.

We also find that Morris introduced into his story several
terms relating to Norse methods of warfare. In his study Biber lists
several passages containing allusions to "fighting in the hazel-6
dfield"; with this Norse practice we have already on several occa-
sions seen that Morris was familiar. Another Norse fighting custom

2. See below, pages 322-325.
3. For the description of this hall see Collected Works, XIV, 5, 1.33 - 7, 1.17.
4. Academy, XXXV(1889), 85. For Morris and Magnússon's account
   in the Grettis saga see Collected Works, VII, 228-230.
5. Collected Works, XIV, 5, 1.38 and 6, 11.11-13.
7. See above, pages 226 and 242.
which is found in *The House of the Wolfings* but which is not pointed out by Biber or by other scholars is the circulation of the "war-arrow" among the tribes of the Goths as a means of calling out the army; most likely the *Heimskringla*, in which the "ørboð" is mentioned repeatedly, was the source of Morris's information regarding this practice.

Very numerous are the allusions made in the tale to the gods and the lesser supernatural beings of the early Scandinavians.

Throughout the story we find references to Odin or the Father of the Slain, Frey, Tyr, the Norns, the Disir, the Ansés, Valhalla, Godhome,

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1. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 8, 1.24; 12, 11.1-8 and 16-22; 13, 11.10-11; 51, 1.8; and 196, 11.1-2.

2. See, for example, *The Saga Library*, III, 176, 243, 273-274, 292, 293, and 309. In one passage (*Collected Works*, XIV, 12) Morris gives a very full description of this "war-arrow," the source of which I have not been able to ascertain:

"I bear the shaft of battle that is four-wise cloven through,
And its each end dipped in the blood-stream, both the iron and the horn,
And its midmost scathed with the fire...."


4. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 57, 1.3; 68, 1.8; and 204, 1.1.

5. See *ibid.*, XIV, 49, 1.28.

6. See below, pages 310, note 7; 311, notes 5 and 6; 312, note 1; and 313, note 1.

7. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 111, 1.24.

8. See *ibid.*, XIV, 171, 1.28.

9. See *ibid.*, XIV, 107, 1.30.

10. See below, page 310, note 3.

11. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 73, 1.8; 104, 1.14; 107, 1.27; 108, 1.19; 111, 1.21; 172, 11.13 and 15; and 204, 1.4.
and Ragnarök; the names "Odin" and "Valhalla" occur usually in such Old Norse expressions for "dying" as "wending to Odin's home" and "going on the road to Valhall." The Valkyries are alluded to in the epithet "Chooser of the Slain," which is applied to one character in the story. We also find the Old Norse term "Vala" used in one case for a seeress. With all this material Morris had undoubtedly become acquainted through Thorpe's *Northern Mythology* and Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. It should also be noted that in his description of the sacrifices to the gods - the killing of the horses, the collecting of the blood, the sprinkling of the blood upon the people, and the eating of the flesh not given to the gods -, Morris seems to have had the sacrifices of the early Scandinavians in mind, for he follows closely the accounts given in the sagas with which we know he was familiar.

Especially numerous and interesting are the allusions found in the tale to the god Tyr. Again and again Morris refers to the Goths as "the sons of Tyr" or "the children of Tyr." In using these kennings

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1. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 206, 1.36 - 207, 1.1. Ragnarök is not mentioned by name, but there can be no doubt that Morris is referring to the Old Norse Ragnarök in the account he gives in these lines of the end of the world.

2. See *ibid.*, XIV, 57, 11.1-2; 100, 11.10-11; and 168, 1.6.

3. See *ibid.*, XIV, 195, 11.30-31. For examples of the use of such expressions for "dying" in Old Norse works see *The Saga Library*, III, 70, 11.10-11; 155, 11.13-14; and 191, 11.9-12 and 15-18.


5. See *ibid.*, XIV, 53, 1.26.

6. Morris's description is to be found in *Collected Works*, XIV, 70, 11.26-37. One of the best saga accounts is that in the Håkonar saga hins gøta (see *The Saga Library*, III, 165); see also Mallet, *op. cit.*., pp. 111-113.

7. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 68, 1.19; 69, 1.23; 80, 1.9; 97, 1.3; 115, 11.28-29; 117, 1.32; 125, 1.15; 145, 1.4; and 160, 11.12 and 26.
he may have had in mind the epithet "Týs áttungr," which is applied to a chieftain as a mark of distinction in the Ynglingatal in a passage with which Morris was almost certainly acquainted through his translation of the early part of the Heimskringla, and also in the Hálseygíatal, which it is less likely that he knew; this phrase "Týs-áttungr," according to Cleasby and Vigfússon's Icelandic-English Dictionary, means "the offspring of the gods," "Tyr" being used here as "the generic name of the highest divinity." It is also possible that Morris was referring to Tyr specifically as the god of war, and that he introduced the expression "sons of Tyr" as a synonym for "warriors"; as Magnússon states: in one of the Indexes in Volume VI of The Saga Library, the name "Tyr" was often "used in kennings to signify a man, a warrior." In one case Morris seems to be alluding definitely to Tyr as the ruler over battle, for in a song of victory that he represents the Goths as singing, we learn that the enemy came to the slaughter,

"Yeasaying the dooming of Tyr of the fight."

Some of the references to Tyr are not entirely clear. Thus, we read in one passage that Thiodolf, the leader of the Goths, did not want any of the Romans to escape, "but would give them all to Tyr...."

1. See Heimskringla, ed. Unger, p. 25, 1.16.
2. See Corpus Poeticum Boreale, I, 253, 1.42.
4. Page 223. The first interpretation seems more likely to be the correct one. In one case (Collected Works, XIV, 68, 1.8) the Goths are addressed, not as the "children of Tyr," but as the "Children of Slains-father"; since the "Slains-father" is Odin, this expression would mean "children of Odin" or, more loosely, "children of the gods." If the two expressions are synonymous — and they seem so to be used — "children of Tyr" must be used in the sense of "offspring of gods," not as "warriors."
5. Collected Works, XIV, 184, 1.4.
6. Ibid., XIV, 98, 1.25.
The context makes it almost certain that Morris is employing the expression "to give them to Tyr" to signify "to slay them"; but this metaphor, so far as I have been able to ascertain, is never used in Old Norse. Extremely puzzling is the expression "the Stone of Tyr," which occurs in a poem dealing with a victory of the Markmen, the Goths, over the Romans:

"They drew the sword in the cities, they came and struck the stroke
And smote the shield of the Markmen, and point and edge they broke.
They drew the sword in the war-garth, they swore to bring aback
God's gifts from the Markmen houses where the tables never lack.
O Markmen, take the God-gifts that came on their own feet
C'er the hills through the Mirkwood thicket the Stone of Tyr to meet!"¹

This phrase, "the Stone of Tyr," which is not to be found in early Scandinavian poetry, may possibly refer to "Throng-plough," the mighty sword of Thiodolf, the leader of the Goths, or to the weapons of the Goths as a whole. Interesting also is the allusion made to Tyr by Arinbiorn, the captain of the Bearing host, who, deeply incensed by the Romans' burning of the Bearing hall, foolishly urges a small band of Goths to fall upon the superior forces of the enemy at once, instead of waiting for the main body of the army to arrive on the scene; he asks ironically, "Yea if the Bearing women be all slain, yet shall not Tyr make us new ones out of the stones of the waste to wed with the Galtings and the fish-eating Houses? - this is easy to be done forsooth.

¹. Collected Works, XIV, 79.
². It is not listed in Egilsson's Lexicon Poeticum (Copenhagen, 1931) under "tyr" (page 576, col. 1).
³. Perhaps the phrase "the Stone of Tyr" is simply a misprint for "the Sons of Tyr."