and directness of the Icelandic account. The most striking change that he makes in the story concerns the part played by Snæbiorn in the tragedy. In the Landnámabók we are not told directly that Snæbiorn is a lover of Hallgerd, but we are led to suspect that he has some particular interest in the girl, for when the news of her slaying are brought to Odd, her father, the latter refuses to pursue Hallbiorn but immediately sends word to Snæbiorn, and it is this man who carries out the revenge on Hallbiorn and his followers. Morris, however, makes it clear from the outset that Snæbiorn is a rival lover, and he uses this character to render the situation more tense throughout the poem.

Very interesting is Morris's insertion into the story of a number of place-names which are not given in his original; apparently he introduced these names in order to make the setting more vivid. Thus, he mentions Deildar-Tongue, Whitewater, Brothers'- Tongue, Whitewater-side, Olfus mouth, Helliskarth, Oxridges, Shieldbroad-side, and the Wells. In the Landnámabók the references to the scenes of the action are extremely vague; in order to give the tale such a definite setting Morris almost certainly must have drawn upon some other account of these incidents. However, so far as I know, there is no other written version of the story. In fact, with the exception of Whitewater and Whitewater-side, both of which are frequently referred to in the sagas, the

1. See, for example, Collected works, VII, 33, 11.3 and 4; 112, 11. 4 and 32; and 143, 11. 24-25; and ibid., IX, 12, 1. 33 and 117, 1. 34.
place-names that Morris inserted are very rarely indeed mentioned in any of the sagas; only two of them occur in the Icelandic works which we know Morris had read at this time. Most likely Morris had acquired the knowledge he reveals here of the setting of the story in the course of his trip to Iceland in 1871. According to the Journal he kept during his first visit, he and his friends travelled through the region in which the tale is laid, and he mentions all but one of these places in his account of this part of his trip. Although he does not make any reference to this tale in the Journal, it is not at all unlikely thatMagnússon, or some of the other Icelanders in the party, told or referred to the story as they were riding through this district, pointing out the places concerned, and that it was on this oral account, as well as on his own familiarity with the region and his acquaintance with the story in the Landnámabók, that Morris drew when he wrote his poem. In this connection it is interesting to note that a slight mistake that Morris makes in the poem in regard

1. "Ólvusa" is mentioned in the Landnámabók (Copenhagen, 1774), pp. 17 and 18, and the name "Skjaldbreið" is found in the Úrteitis saga (in Collected Works, VII, 153). Both places are referred to in the Introduction to Dase's translation of the Njáls saga also (see I, liii, liv, lxix, and lxxiii).

2. See, for example, Collected Works, VIII, 33, 34, 35, 65, 74, 75, 76, 154, 157, and 158. He does not mention Oxriddles, although the party must have passed very close to this mountain (see ibid., VIII, 165-166).
to the setting is also found in his account of this district in the *Journal* of his tour. In both descriptions he states that Odd lived at Deildar-Tongue, but as Magnússon points out in the Notes to the *Journal*, Odd did not live here but at Breiðabólstaðr.

In this poem Morris uses the refrain

So many times over comes summer again,  
What healing in summer if winter be vain?²

So far as I know this is not a translation of any Scandinavian refrain, nor does it seem to have been directly inspired by any Scandinavian ballad. There are, however, a great many references to summer in the Scandinavian folk songs; as examples of refrains expressing a somewhat similar idea I should like to cite the following:

Nu är sommaren kommen;³  
I är så blir det en sommar;⁴  
I är så få vi en sommar;⁵  
Ty nu går sommaren in;⁶  
-Sumariö mun lfrá.⁷

The ballad entitled "The King of Denmark's Sons" deals with Knut and Harald, the sons of King Gorm and Queen Thyrre. According

1. See *Collected Works*, IX, 95, 11.5-7; and *ibid.*, VIII, 154, 1.19 and 240, 11.30-35.  
2. *ibid.*, IX, 95.  
4. *ibid.*, III, 118.  
5. *ibid.*, III, 119.  
8. See *Collected Works*, IX, 140-145.
to Morris's story, Harald, who was hot-headed, reckless, and given
to fighting, grew up in jealousy and hatred of his brother Knut,
who was kind-hearted, just, and fair, and who consequently won the
love of his father and of all the people. In fact, Knut was so
dear to his father that the King made a vow that whoever brought
him news of his son's death should himself lose his life at once.
One Christmas as the young men were returning home for the Yule-
feast, Harald came upon Knut in Lima-firth, the former having ten
ships, the latter only three. The two parties fought, and Knut
was killed. On his return home the following morning, Harald went
at once to the Queen's bower, and remained there the whole day. In
the evening, evidently following the counsel of his mother, he strode
into the hall where his father was drinking, and in answer to the
King's request for news, said that he had seen a white and a gray
falcon battling together, and that after a long fight the gray one
killed the white one. Gorm failed to realize the significance of
the story. During the following night, however, while the King
slept, Thyrre and her maidens draped the hall in black, and in the
morning, as Gorm marched to his high-seat, he noticed the change.
He asked the Queen whether Knut was dead, and she replied,

"The doom on thee, O King!
For thine own lips have said the thing."

Before noon old Gorm himself lay dead.

It is interesting to note that in his poem Morris did not follow the more usual form of the story, according to which Knut was slain not by his brother but by the enemy, when the two brothers were fighting side by side in Great Britain; this is the version given in Saxo Grammaticus, in C.C. Rahn's Nordiske Kæmpe-Historier, and in most of the modern histories which deal with the incident. Moris's story is of course far superior to the other from a literary point of view: it has greater unity, it is much more dramatic, and the sense of tragedy is far deeper. For this form of the tale Morris very likely drew upon the account found in the opening chapters of Jómsvíkinga saga. This version is given by Torfaegus.

3. (Copenhagen, 1821-1826), I, Part C, 149-151.
5. Jómsvíkingasaga ok Knýtlinga með Tilheyrandi Þátum (Copenhagen, 1828), pp. 8 and 14-17.
also in his Trifolium Historicum, and by J.B. Des Roches in his Histoire de Dannemarc, the passages in Des Roches which deal with these incidents being virtually a translation of Torfaeus's account. However, although we know that Morris could read both Latin and French, and although there is nothing in his poem which he could not just as easily have drawn from Torfaeus or Des Roches as from the Jomsvíkinga saga, it seems most likely that it was the Icelandic version which served as the basis of the poem, for this account is the longest and most fully developed and is by far the most readily accessible. In retelling the story, Morris made only a few relatively unimportant changes.

The refrain that Morris uses in this ballad imitation,

So fair upriseth the rim of the sun.
So grey is the sea when the day is done,

is not, so far as I know, either directly translated from, or even closely paralleled by, the burden in any Scandinavian folk song. I have not found anything resembling the second half of Morris's refrain in the Scandinavian ballads; the first part may possibly


3. Collected Works, IX, 140.
have been suggested by such lines as,

1. För-dagen dagas upp under Östan;
2. Det dagas intet än;
3. Men det dagas likväl under tiden;
4. Ind er dagenn opniust!

In addition to the fragmentary poem on Iceland which I discussed above, Miss Morris printed in 1936 in her William Morris: Artist Writer Socialist two other unfinished poems on Scandinavian subjects which seem to have been composed during the period we are now considering.

The first one, which consists of only twenty-one and a half lines, tells, in rather humdrum verse, how the sailors aboard a trading-vessel which had passed from Ghent to Norway and was now skirting the coast in sight of the "Thrandheimers mountains," suddenly became aware of a longship bearing down upon them, its drake-head flashing in the sun; at this dramatic moment the story comes to an end. This fragment, like the uncompleted poem about King Harald and the unfinished drama "Anthony," both of which I shall discuss in a moment, was evidently an attempt on the part of Morris to tell an original story laid in the Viking Age. It

2. Ibid., I, 288.
4. I, 462.
is rather surprising that during these years when he spent so much
time reading and translating sagas he did not compose a tale of
his own depicting life in the saga-times; not until fifteen years
later, when he began writing his prose romances, do we find him
using the institutions, beliefs, and customs he found in the sagas
to build up a background for an original narrative. The fragment-
tary story under consideration is told in rolling anapestic hexam-
eter lines, which are grouped in seven-line stanzas rhyming abcbabc.

The second fragment is somewhat longer, consisting of twenty
heroic couplets. These lines also, as I have already indicated
above, seem to be the beginning of an original narrative poem deal-
ing with events supposed to have taken place in early Scandinavia.
The fragment opens with a description of the skald Hornklofi sing-
ing in a Norse hall at night, when suddenly

from hollow of the horn
A formless dreadful note of war is born
Such as we heard it when the day was new
And the light wind across our raven blew
Drifting the sailless ships in Hafursfirth
While yet our glory was but come to birth.

After a short account of this memorable victory at Hafursfirth the
scene shifts back to the Norse hall, and the poem tells how Earl
Ragnvald stands by the high-seat where sits King Harald, whose gold-
en hair, now cut,

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1. See below, pages 304 ff.
2. The second stanza, evidently as a result of mere oversight, has only six lines.
4. Ibid., I, 465.
Lies either side his face in tresses fair.

For the familiarity Morris reveals here with the skald Hornklofí, with Harald’s important victory at Hafursfirth, and with the clipping of Harald’s hair by Earl Ragnvald after the King had made himself sole ruler of Norway, he was obviously indebted to the Haralds saga hárfagra. However, there is no incident recorded in this saga between the time of Harald’s battle at Hafursfirth and the death of Ragnvald to which the poem as a whole can refer; apparently Morris was planning to treat the material in this part of the Heimskringla in an entirely original way.

The longest of these minor poems which Morris seems to have written during the period now under discussion and which bear the mark of his Scandinavian studies is the dramatic fragment “Anthony,” which he left unpublished but which his daughter printed in 1915. There is no external evidence, so far as I know, which dates this work. When Miss Morris published it in the last volume of the Collected Works, she included it in the group of compositions headed “Poems of the Earthly Paradise time (About 1865-1870);” however, it seems to me almost certain that it was written well after 1870, for not only does Morris seem to allude to episodes in sagas which we know he did not read until after this year, but his very extensive references to the customs, beliefs, and history of the early Norsemen indicate that he was exceedingly well informed about these matters and that he was literally steeped in the stories of the sagas, and such was not the case before 1870. To be sure, Miss Morris


2. See Saga Library, III, 111-113 and 117.

seems to have had no definite reason for ascribing the poem to this early period, and very likely she had no intention of placing it definitely before 1870; she evidently assigned it to this group because she could not include it in either of the other two sections, the first one being "Early Poems," written while Morris was at Oxford or directly thereafter, and the last one being "Late Poems," most of which are compositions resulting from his Socialist activities. For the reasons stated above, I have decided to consider the fragment a product of the central period of Morris's interest in Scandinavia; and I have accordingly felt justified in suggesting as possible sources of Morris's Scandinavian allusions sagas which he seems first to have read during the years 1871 to 1876.

The leading figure in this drama is Anthony, a wealthy man of "noble Southland kin." When the play opens, Anthony is sailing with Wulfstan, an English Shipmaster, to the home of Rolf on the coast of Norway, for the purpose of seeking revenge upon this Northman for having many years before attacked his ancestral castle in the south, slain his father, and carried off his sister Margaret. Just after Anthony has arrived in Norway and has been reunited with his sister, the poem ends. Morris does not state the time of the action, but various allusions in the fragment indicate that the story is laid in the tenth century. We are told, for example, that Iceland has been settled and that Icelandic

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1. Collected Works, XXIV, 336
skalds are visiting in Norway; these remarks fix the time of the
action well after 872. On the other hand, inasmuch as Norway is
described as still being heathen, we can safely assume that we are
dealing with the period before the reign of Olaf Tryggvason, who
died in 1000, or at any rate before the death of Olaf the Holy in
1030.

Unlike most of Morris's other Scandinavian works, this poem
does not seem to have any definite historical or literary basis.
I do not know of any similar situation in the sagas. However, two
of the characters may have had historical prototypes. There is a
possibility that in the case of Rolf, the Viking who plundered and
burned Anthony's castle, Morris had in mind Rolf Ganger, who, according
to the Heimskringla, frequently harried in the South-Baltic
lands, once made a raid in the Vik contrary to the command of
Harald Fairhair and was consequently outlawed, went plundering in
the Hebrides and later in northwestern France, and finally became
earl of what is now called Normandy. Rolf Ganger came to Normandy
in 911 and died in 951. Morris was undoubtedly familiar with the
history of this Rolf not only from the account in the Heimskringla
but also from the story in Mallet's Northern Antiquities. However,
Morris never applies the picturesque name of Rolf Ganger to his
character, as it seems very likely that he would have done if he
had intended that his poem should refer to the historical Rolf.

2. Ibid., XXIV, 331, ll. 3-4.
Moreover, in his poem Morris says that Rolf fought at York, Scarborough, and Dunwich, but none of the sagas, so far as I know, mention battles by Rolf Ganger at these places. On the whole, in spite of a certain similarity between the two, it is perhaps unsafe to assume that Morris intended to identify his character with Rolf Ganger. On the other hand, it is very probable that in the case of Earl Sigurd, who is depicted in the poem as the ruler of these Northmen, Morris is referring to Earl Sigurd of Ladir, who held practically supreme power over the Thrandheim district from the time of the death of his father Earl Hakon until he himself was murdered by the sons of Gunnhild, an event which, according to Laing, occurred in 962. The career of this Earl Sigurd is described at great length in the Heimskringla. However, in Morris's poem Earl Sigurd is said to have visited the English king, but none of the sagas, so far as I know, mention any journey of Earl Sigurd of Ladir to England. Again, Morris says that Rolf was the foster-father of Earl Sigurd, but the sagas do not indicate where Earl Sigurd of Ladir was fostered. Nevertheless, in spite of these departures from the saga account; it is not at all unlikely that Morris meant to refer directly to the historical Earl Sigurd. The other Norse characters in the poem, Thora, Thorgerd, and Eric, are obviously entirely Morris's own creations.

4. Collected Works, XXIV, 335, 11.6-7 and 338, 1.12.
5. Ibid., XXIV, 335, 11.8-11.
Although the story as a whole appears not to be based on any situation described in the sagas, it is clear that Morris drew directly on the sagas for many of his details; we find in the poem a number of references to early Scandinavian customs and beliefs, and there are several passages which distinctly recall episodes in the sagas.

Thus, at the opening of the drama, when Wulfstan and Anthony are on their way to Norway, the English shipmaster describes for Anthony the character of the Northmen, and imparts to him some sound advice as to how he must act in this new land. He says,

A second warning: try your mocks on them,
They will not laugh belike or say a word
Though the hall roars around them; you shall think
Them dull and go on piling jeer on jeer;
But two hours thence, two hours or days or months,
As time serves, you shall find they understood.

Similar situations are found frequently in the sagas. In the Heiðarvíga saga, for example, Bardi is ridiculed and jeered at for being slow in seeking revenge for his brother Hall; but although he seems to pay little attention to these remarks, he carefully plans his actions with the help of Thorarin, and when the opportune moment arrives, he takes a revenge about which there is nothing mean. In the Hævarðar saga Ísfirðings old Howard is grievously insulted on two occasions when he seeks atonement from Thorbiorn for the slaying of his son Olaf, but although Howard must submit to these outrages at the time, he does

1. The text has “jeer and jeer,” but this is obviously a mistake for “jeer on jeer.”

2. Collected Works, XXIV, 329.

3. I have suggested the Heiðarvíga saga as a possible source of the statement Morris makes in the passage just quoted, but it is not certain that Morris had read this saga at this time; see
not rest until he succeeds in killing Thorbiorn. Again, towards
the close of the Volsunga saga Atli slays the brothers of Gudrun,
his wife, and then mocks her; Gudrun pretends to be appeased, but
some time thereafter she kills Atli's two sons, murders him, and
sets fire to the whole hall.

A few lines later Wulfstan says,

—Take this by the way that they may well deal thus,
Sell you a sword and thrust you through therewith,
Sell you a house and burn it o'er your head,
Sell you a horse and steal it the next morn,
Sell you a wife and bid her loose her tongue
Until you make a red mark on her face
And then the district-court and her tall kin
And point and edge, or clink of the King's sweat face
Outside your purse — Well all that by the way.

Nothing exactly like this is related in any of the sagas, so
far as I know. Very likely Morris is deliberately exaggerating
the actual facts, because Wulfstan, into whose mouth he puts this
statement, is obviously in a facetious mood as he characterizes
the Norsemen for his friend Anthony. However, there is of course
a certain element of truth in the description. For example, we
frequently read in the sagas of the burning of people in their
houses. The most famous account and the most likely source for
Morris's remark is, needless to say, the description given in the
Njáls saga. The Haensa-Dóris saga describes much more briefly a
similar act, and the Eyrbýggja saga tells of an attempt at burn-
ing which was frustrated. Moreover, the last part of the passage

2. Ibid., XXIV, 330.
4. Saga Library, I, 142-143.
5. Ibid., II, 79.
quoted — the account of the rights of married women — recalls the divorce of Thordis from Bork in the Eyrbyggja saga because of the blow he had given her when she tried to murder Eyolf. The account in the Laxdaela saga of Gudrun's separation from her first husband Thorvald is perhaps even more similar; in that saga we are told that when Thorvald struck Gudrun because he had become impatient at her incessant demand for jewels, she replied that he had now given her what all women highly esteem, "en pat er litarapt gött," and when she was later divorced from him, she received half his property.

In his account of the Northmen Wulfstan goes on to say to Anthony that

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all women here -
Yea how you start - are marked and known and named
Daughter of this goodman, sister of that.
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Evidently Morris inserted this remark here because the Scandinavian system of nomenclature, which he of course met with in all the sagas he read, interested and amused him.

As the ship rounds a ness and they come in view of Rolf's hall, Wulfstan describes the scene in the following words:

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io there the hall
Big enough for a king, the water deep
Up to the garth-gate; there on the round hill
Thor's temple — may Christ curse it! the ship-stocks,
One, two, three cutters, one great merchant-ship
Just newly pitched — the long-ships neither there.
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A little later in the conversation, Wulfstan, having discovered the purpose of Anthony's visit to Norway, exclaims,

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2. Laxdaela-Saga, pp. 132 and 134.
4. Ibid., XXIV, 331.
Why, [had] I said to Rolf thou wistest him dead
He would laugh somewhat - drink nightlong with thee
And call thee to the ring of hazel wands
Wherein they fight next morn...:

I do not know of any exactly similar situation in the sagas; but
so-called "holmgangs" are frequently mentioned, and the description
of one of these may have been the basis of Morris's remark. In
the Egils saga we learn that Egil Skallagrimsson at one time
visited a friend called Friðgeirr at his home in Norway. After
being detained there for three days by inclement weather, he pre-
pared one morning to depart, and was then told that Ljótr the
Pale, a famous berserk, had challenged Friðgeirr to single combat
because he had been denied Friðgeirr's sister in marriage. Egil
at once gladly assented to fight in his place and returned into
the hall. The sagaman seems especially eager to show how uncon-
cerned Egil was over such a fight, for he states that they drank
all that day and arranged a great feast in the evening for a host
of guests; the next day Egil killed Ljótr.


2. See, for example, Kormáks Saga, pp.84-88, 118-120, and 134-
140; Sagan af Agli Skallagrimssyni, pp.157-162; and Collected
Works, IX, 37-38 and 41-44.

3. As I have already pointed out, it is not absolutely certain
that Morris had read the Egils saga by this time; see above, pp. 189-
191. A much closer parallel to Morris's account than this episode
from the Egils saga is found in the story called "The Sword,
Tyrning," which was translated by William Taylor of Norwich from
the German of Gräter and was included in his Tales of Yore (London,
1810), I,151-231, and in his Historic Survey of German Poetry
(London, 1828), I, 33ff. Here we are told that Swafurlami enter-
tained Arngrim the Berserk at an elaborate feast the night before
they were to engage in single combat, and the author points out
that this procedure was the common early Scandinavian custom. Un-
fortunately there is no evidence that Morris had read this tale,
but it is not at all unlikely that he was familiar with it through
Taylor's translation.
Wulfstan tries further to frighten Anthony from seeking revenge by extolling Rolf's prowess in battle; he describes vividly his skill in handling a sword, concluding with the remark,

So say his own men, and our English folk
Have e'en such tales to tell of him at York
And Scarborough and Dunwich.

I have already referred to this passage in my discussion of the possibility that Morris intended to identify his character Rolf with Rolf Ganger, and I have pointed out that the sagas do not state that Rolf Ganger ever fought at these places. However, Morris shows that he is familiar with the history of the Norse invasions of England in ascribing battles here to his character, for the Northmen were very active in this part of England. York and Scarborough are frequently mentioned in the sagas.

The second scene of the drama is laid in Rolf's home, where Thora, his wife, is talking with Margaret, Anthony's sister. It is interesting to note how Morris utilizes his knowledge of the early history of Scandinavia by inserting allusions thereto in order to make his story more vivid and more realistic. Thus Thora remarks,

For a year past, I thought of sending thee
Unto my mother's brother in the North,
Or out to Iceland to my father's kin.


2. For references to York, see, for example, the Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I, 316 and III, 83 and 85; Sagan af Agli Skallagrimssyni, pp. 102, 142, 153, and 202; and Formmanna Sögur, I, II, and X, 158. For mention of Scarborough, see the Heimskringla, tr. Laing, III, 83 and Formmanna Sögur, I, 117.

Thora babbles on, and recalls her wedding-feast five years earlier, at which Earl Sigurd, then a fair young man, was present; she exclaims that he was so handsome that

Baldur come back to life again he seemed.

With Balder and the story of Ragnarök we have already on several occasions seen that Morris was acquainted.

After Wulfstan and Anthony have arrived, we learn that Icelandic skalds are being entertained at Rolf's house, for Thora checks Wulfstan's rather florid praises of her with the words,

Nay Wulfstan, we shall get to verses soon;
Content thee, man, two Icelanders we have To set the big words going...

We read repeatedly in the sagas of Icelandic poets who lived as honored guests on the large estates in Norway and received noble gifts as reward for their compositions; in fact the majority of the Norwegian court poets were Icelanders. Some of the most famous of the Icelandic skalds who visited Norway were Gunnlaug and Rafa in the Gunnlaugs saga ormstungu, Kormák in the Kormáka saga, and Halfred Ottarson Vandraedaskald, Sigvat Thordarson, and Thiodolf Arnarson in the Heimskringla.

After Thora has welcomed her guests and has asked for the news, she leads the men into the hall to the feast, saying,
Come, whatso things tomorrow's sun may bring,
Tonight at least shall see us somewhat glad
Drinking the grave-ales of our joys bygone,
Our hopes too bright to bear three noonday suns.\(^1\)

There are numerous accounts in the sagas of the drinking of "grave-ales." Perhaps the best known ones are the description in the Laxdæla saga of the feast that Olaf Fá gave in memory of Hóskuld, \(^2\) at which about a thousand friends were present, and the account in the Heimskringla of the funeral-banquet held by King Swend of Denmark for his father Harald, when Swend vowed either to kill King Athelstane of England or drive him away, and the chieftains of the Jomsburg Vikings pledged themselves to treat Earl Hakon of Norway in the same way. With both of these accounts Morris was undoubtedly familiar.

The last scene of this fragment shows us Anthony and Margaret conversing secretly in the forest near the hall; they recall the events of the day when their father's castle was sacked, and Margaret relates how, while they were all standing huddled together in the courtyard, the captain cried out,

"Eric the skald, good skill thou deemst thou hast
In ways of women, choose thou ten of these
That like thee best besides this noble may."\(^4\)

By this reference to Eric the skald, Morris shows that he was familiar with the fact that skalds were often present in the battles of the Norsemen and sometimes even took an active part in the fighting. We

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2. Laxdæla-Saga, pp. 102, 104, 106, and 108.
3. Tr. Laing, I, 404-405. See also Mallet's Northern Antiquities, pp. 142-144 and 345-346.
often meet with references to this custom in the sagas. The Heimskringla, for example, tells us that Olaf the Holy took three skalds with him into the battle at Sticklestead so that they might be eyewitnesses of the events they would later be called upon to describe.

Finally, I should like to point out that Margaret relates that when Eric facetiously selected an old hag for Wulf, the captain cried out,

"Nay, for this Valkyria here
    Shall be my darling some four summers hence."  

It is of course unnecessary to seek for a definite source for Morris's information about the Valkyries; he probably first became acquainted with these mythological figures through Thorpe's Northern Mythology.

It is unfortunate that Morris failed to finish this poem, for it is by far the most promising of all the attempts that he had made up to this time to write an original poem with a Scandinavian background. As my discussion has shown, he seems to have been extremely well acquainted with life in early Scandinavia by this time, and he could undoubtedly have made the whole story historically accurate and very realistic. Moreover, the fragment that we have is entirely free from the romantic, sentimentalized attitude toward the past that we find in his portrayal of medieval life in the prose romances that he wrote in the last eight years of his life.

1. Tr. Laing, II, 311-313. See also Mallet's Northern antiquities, p. 235.

2. Collected Works, XXIV, 342.

3. See, for example, I, 14 and 20.
Before passing on to a discussion of the greatest of all the original poems that Morris wrote on a Scandinavian theme - *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung* - I should like to point out that the work called *Love is Enough; or, The Freeing of Pharamond*, which was published in November, 1872, shows traces of Morris's Norse interests although the poem as a whole is definitely non-Scandinavian. This piece tells of a king named Pharamond, who went in search of a beautiful maiden he had seen in a vision; after many hardships he found her, and he was so happy and contented in her love that when he returned to his kingdom and found that his people had chosen a new king in his absence, he gladly renounced all claim to the throne. *This story is told in the form of a play, which is represented as being performed before an emperor and empress, recently married, and a host of their subjects. Morris presented the main action of the drama in alliterative unrhymed verse. Some critics have pointed out that Morris's use of this form may have been the result not only of his acquaintance with Old and Middle English alliterative poetry but also of his study of the Poetic Edda.* However, Morris's alliterative verse does not at all conform to the rather strict rules of alliteration which govern Old Norse poetry; it seems likely that in introducing this verse form here Morris was not directly inspired by the *Eddic* lays, but rather, as Professor Mackail suggests, by the alliterative verse of the early English drama.

2. See, for example, the *Spectator*, XXVI (1873), 49-50 and the *Athenaeum*, No. 2352 (November 23, 1872), 657-658.
In commenting upon this poem, MacKail also points out that "touches of landscape here and there show that the author's mind was still 'full of Iceland'; he cites no examples, but in making this statement he evidently had in mind such passages as the following:

Girted about is the vale by a grey wall of mountains, rents apart in three places and tumbled together

In old times of the world when the earth-fires flowed forth;

and

It was gone when I wakened - the name of that country -
Nay, how should I know it? - but ever seemeth
'Twas not in the southlands, for sharp in the sunset
And sunrise the air is, and whiles I have seen it
Amid white drift of snow....

Finally, I should like to call attention to one passage in the poem in which Morris alludes briefly to the three main figures in the story of the Volsungs. In the introductory speech of Love, who appears at regular intervals throughout the play to interpret the action, the god speaks of the various symbols of his power that he has collected through the ages, and mentions, among others,

My Sigurd's sword, my Brynhild's fiery bed,
The tale of years of Gudrun's drearhead.

With the material to which he refers here Morris had of course become acquainted through the Volsunga saga and the heroic lays in the Poetic Edda.

1. I, 286.
2. Collected Works, IX, 24-25.
4. Ibid., IX, 13.
The period 1871 to 1876, when Morris reached the peak of his interest in early Scandinavia, closes fittingly with the publication in 1876 of The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Hall of the Niblunga, which not only ranks first among Morris's Scandinavian works but is also, in the opinion of most critics, the greatest of all his poetical undertakings. In fact, Morris himself considered this poem his best, and it was on this production that he wished the final estimate of his literary ability to be based. Miss May Morris says of it,

It is the central work of my father's life, his last long and important poem, and in it sustained poetic inspiration culminates - and closes. It is the work that, first and last - putting aside the eagerness of the moment which sometimes gives all precedence to the work in hand - he held most highly and wished to be remembered by. All his Icelandic study and travel, all his feeling for the North, led up to this, and his satisfaction with it did not waver or change to the last.

The history of this poem carries us back to the years 1869 and 1870, when Morris was translating the Völsunga saga and the heroic lays of the Edda. As I have already pointed out, Morris was repelled by the story of Sigurd when he first came into contact with it, but became more and more impressed with the dignity and grandeur of the tale as he proceeded to turn it into English; and in his preface to the published translation of the Völsunga saga he speaks of it as "the Great Story of the North, which should be to all our race what

1. Collected Works, XII.
2. Ibid., XII, xxiii.
3. See above, pages 62-64.
the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks." Morris revealed his deep admiration for the saga in an unrestrained manner in a letter he wrote to Professor Charles Eliot Norton of Harvard on December 21, 1869; commenting upon his work, he stated,

I have also another Icelandic translation in hand, the Volsunga Saga viz. which is the Ice: version of the Nibelungen, older I suppose, and, to my mind, without measure nobler and grander: I daresay you have read abstracts of the story, but however fine it seemed to you thus, it would give you little idea of the depth and intensity of the complete work; here and there indeed it is somewhat disjointed, I suppose from its having been put together from varying versions of the same song; it seems as though the author-collector felt the subject too much to trouble himself about the niceties of art...the scene of the last interview between Sigurd and the despairing and terrible Brynhild touches me more than anything I have ever met with in literature; there is nothing wanting in it, nothing forgotten, nothing repeated, nothing overstrained; all tenderness is shown without the use of a tender word, all misery and despair without a word of raving, complete beauty without an ornament, and all this in two pages of moderate print. In short it is to the full meaning of the word inspired; touching too though hardly wonderful to think of the probable author; some 12 century Icelander, living the hardest and rudest of lives, seeing few people and pretty much the same day after day, with his old religion taken from him and his new one hardly gained - It doesn't look promising for the future of art I fear. Perhaps you think my praise of the work somewhat stilted, but it has moved us one and all in the same way, and for my part I should be sorry to attempt reading aloud the scene I have told you of before strangers. I am not getting on well with my work, for in fact I believe the Volsunga has rather swallowed me up for some time past, I mean thinking about it, for it hasn't taken me long to do. I had it in my head to write an epic of it, but though I still hanker after it, I see clearly it would be foolish, for no verse could render the best parts of it, and it would only be a flatter and tamer version of a thing already existing....

In the Preface to Volume VI of The Saga Library, in a passage which I have already quoted in another connection, Magnússon tells us that it was he who suggested to Morris that he should retell the story of the Volsunga saga in a narrative poem of his own; he states

that at first Morris definitely rejected the idea, even going "so far as to say that these matters were too sacred, too venerable, to be touched by a modern hand...," but a month or two later he found Morris one day "in a state of fervid enthusiasm," determined to make an epic poem out of the story of Sigurd. However, although the tale of Sigurd was very much in Morris's thoughts all through the early seventies, he did not actually begin writing the poem until October 15, 1875. By March of the following year, according to a letter quoted by Miss May Morris, he had reached the end of Part III, having finished his account of the death of Sigurd and Brynhild; in November, 1876, he had completed the whole work, and presented it to the public.

The relation between Morris's poem and his sources is very fully and competently discussed by Heinrich Bartels in his William Morris, The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs. Eine Studie über das Verhältnis des Epos zu den Quellen, published in Münster in 1906. Bartels points out that in the main Morris followed the Völsunga saga, but that he used his original very freely, making numerous changes, additions, and omissions. Thus, for example, in order to give the work greater unity, Morris omitted several episodes

1. See Saga Library, VI, xv.
3. The opening of the first manuscript of the poem bears this date; see Collected Works, XII, xxiii.
4. See ibid., XII, vii.
5. Forman, Books of Morris, p. 87.
in the *Völsunga saga*, such as the opening account of Odin, Sigi, and Rerir, Sigurd's avenging of his father, and the story of Swanibild in the last three chapters; he tried to make the tale more acceptable to nineteenth century readers by omitting or altering the details of particularly savage episodes, such as the killing of Sigurd's nine brothers in the woods by the she-wolf and Sigurd's murder of the first two children of Siggeir and Signy; in several cases, for reasons difficult to ascertain, he failed to include references given in the saga to early Germanic customs, such as the burning of Brynhild on a pyre together with four men, two hawks, and ten slaves; in order to give his story a vague and mystical background, he substituted colorful but indefinite names for the more or less specific place-names mentioned in the original, as, for example, "Midworld's Mark" for "Hálaland"; on several occasions he seems to have endeavored to render the tale less bewildering to modern readers by refraining from mentioning minor characters by name; greatest in number, as is to be expected, are the alterations that he made in the characters themselves, degrading some and elevating others for the purpose of improving the motivation and plot structure of the story from the modern point of view. Bartels also points out that in several cases Morris departed from the version of the tale given in the *Völsunga saga* and introduced instead material from the Sigurd lays in the *Poetic Edda*. Thus, he shows clearly

that for many details and even incidents Morris drew upon "Reginsmál," "Fáfnismál," "Sigdrifomál," "Guðrúnarkviða I," "Sigurðarkviða in skamma," "Atlakviða in grønlenzka," "Atlamál in grønlenzko," and "Frá dauða Sinfjötla." He also finds that for some of his material Morris was indebted to the non-Sigurd poems in the Edda, such as "Voluspá," "Hávamál," "Grímnismál," "Alvísmál," and "Helgakviða Hjörvarzsonar"; these examples are especially interesting, because they are the only clear proof we have that Morris read not only the heroic lays which he printed at the end of his translation of the Völsunga saga in 1870 but also the non-Sigurd poems at the beginning of the Edda. In a few cases, Bartels also notes, Morris seems to have followed the brief account of the Volsungs given in the "Skáldskaparmál" in the Prose Edda. Finally, he proves clearly that contrary to the statements generally made by critics and reviewers, the poem was considerably influenced by the Nibelungenlied, especially in the account of Gudrun after the murder of Sigurd by her brothers and in the whole description of the fight in Atli's hall.

In the foregoing synopsis I have pointed out that Bartels calls attention in his study to a few cases in which, in developing

1. Pages 28-50.
2. Pages 50-54.
the background of his tale, Morris departed from the stories of Sigurd that he was following and inserted details drawn from other Norse works that he had read. In addition to the material of this nature to which I have already referred, Bartels notes at the beginning of his study that the account in the poem of the swearing of oaths over the "Boar of Sôn" at the wedding feast of Sigurd and the description of the ritual connected with the swearing of the oath of brotherhood were inserted by Morris, but he does not indicate the source of Morris's information regarding these matters. Both these episodes demand further consideration than Bartels has given them.

In the Volsunga saga there is no detailed account of the wedding-feast of Sigurd and Gudrun; the Old Norse tale merely states that "a noble feast was holden, and endured many days, and Sigurd drank at the wedding of him and Gudrun..." Morris, however, tells us that in the midst of the feast the "Cup of daring Promise" and the "hallowed Boar of Sôn" were borne into the hall by servants, that Sigurd drew his sword, placed it on the "hallowed Wood-beast," swore that he would live bravely and nobly, and then drank the "Cup of Promise," and that afterwards Gudrun's brothers, Gunnar and Hogni,


2. Collected Works, VII, 351.

3. In the Old Norse accounts we are told that a live boar was led into the hall for this purpose, and that afterwards the boar was sacrificed to Frey; see references given below on page 239 in notes 2 and 3.
id likewise. This custom - which, by the way, was usually restricted to the Yule-feast among the early Scandinavians - is mentioned in a number of works that Morris is known to have read - namely, in one of the prose passages in "Helgakviða Hiqrvar Thjóðardóttir," in Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, and in De la Motte Fouqué's *Undine and Sintram and his Companions*. It is only in the first of these accounts, however, that the term "Sonargölta," which Morris renders in his poem as the "Boar of Sön," is used. The description in the poem of the procedure followed in the swearing of brotherhood is likewise almost entirely an addition by Morris. In the *Völsunga saga*, when Sigurd marries Gudrun, we are simply told that he and Gudrun's brothers swore oaths of brotherhood; later in the story there is a brief allusion to the blending of blood on this occasion, but there is no reference in the original tale to the so-called "turf-yoke." Morris, however, presents a detailed account of the procedure, very likely drawing upon the description in the *Gísla saga* for his information. He states that Sigurd, Gunnar, and Hogni went to the "Doom-ring," loosened a strip of turf, raised it on two spears, crawled under it, cut open a vein in their

3. I, 208-209.
7. *Ibid.*, XII, 181-182. For other references to this ritual, see *Ibid.*, XII, 187, 1.26; 188, 1.4; 202, 1.22; 226, 1.30; and 227, 1.1.
arms, let their blood drip and mix on the soil beneath the cut turf, and then swore oaths of eternal loyalty and friendship.

The additions that Bartels shows were made by Morris are by no means the only steps Morris took to develop in greater detail the early Scandinavian background of his story. Especially numerous are the allusions he seems to have added for this purpose to the mythology of the early Norsemen. Throughout the poem we find references, not in his immediate originals, to Balder, Thor or Vingi-Thor, Mimir, the Allfather, the Father of the Slain, Fenris-

1. See Collected Works, XII, 23, 1.1; 97, 1.11; 100, 1.20; 141, 1.26; 244, 1.19; and 278, 1.26; Thorpe's Northern Mythology, I, 22-23, 72-74, 76, 83, and 84; and Mallet's Northern Antiquities, pp. 95, 373, 407, and 446.

2. See Collected Works, XII, 87, 1.11; 89, 1.1; and 131, 1.21; Northern Mythology, I, 21-22, 39, 52, 54-68, 71, 77, 79, and 81; and Northern Antiquities, pp. 374-375, 377, 417, and 444.

3. See Collected works, XII, 134, 1.28; Northern Mythology, I, 12 and 15; and Northern Antiquities, p. 411.

4. For occurrences of the names "Allfather" and "Father of the Slain" for "Odin," see Collected Works, XII, 15, 1.28; 77, 1.1; 79, 1.2; 84, 1.19; 85, 1.20; 116, 1.28; 125, 11.10, 17, and 29; 128, 1.30; 230, 1.30; 243, 1.13; and 499, 1.13; Northern Mythology, I, 15-16; and Northern Antiquities, p. 416.