had already issued; if the **Three Northern Love Stories**, in which "The Story of Viglund the Fair" had appeared, was to become a part of this series, it seems to me almost certain that he planned to revise and republish both his rendering of the *Volsunga saga*, which he refers to specifically in his comments on the second group, and his English version of the *Grettis saga*, which he had produced when he was a very inexperienced translator. In connection with this discussion of the question of Morris's original plans for *The Saga Library*, I should like to call attention to certain remarks on the subject that were made by an American critic in a review of the first volume in *The New York Nation* for September 17, 1891:

**Mr. Bernard Quaritch** has reverted to an old-time interest of his in undertaking the publication of a "Saga Library," to consist of fifteen or more volumes, containing the leading Icelandic mythological and historical sagas... Of the works selected for publication in the new form, all but the three narratives making up the first volume of the series have been put into English before, several of them by Mr. Morris himself. That there is room for a new edition cannot be doubted, and the editors, whose previous work in popularizing Icelandic literature has secured them a well-earned reputation for brilliant translation, should find a ready welcome for their new venture.

The writer does not indicate where he received this information, but in order to feel justified in making such definite statements, he must have drawn upon some other source than Morris's remarks in his Preface. However, one must hesitate to give full and unqualified credence to this account of Morris's intentions, for one of the statements made above is obviously incorrect: the reviewer says that of "the works selected for publication in the new form, all but the three narratives making up the first volume of the series have been put into English before..." but Morris and Magnússon's translations of the *Eyrbyggja saga* and of the *Heiðarvíga*

1. *LIII*(1891), 220.
saga in Volume II were the first English renderings to be printed of these tales, and one of the stories in Volume I - the Bandamanna saga - had already been translated into English. Moreover, it seems very unlikely that, except for the first volume, Morris would ever have planned to include in this collection only sagas which had already been translated. The rest of the account may perhaps be accepted; Morris probably originally expected to issue about fifteen volumes in this series, and it is not at all unlikely that he intended to make his own version of such sagas which had already been translated and published as the Viga-Glum's saga, the Dórðar saga hreðu, the Hrafnkels saga Freysgoða, and the Eiríks saga rauða.

The rest of the Preface to Volume I of The Saga Library, this part being the work of Magnússon, consists of introductory remarks relating to the three saga translations appearing in this book. The main part of the volume is made up of "The Story of Howard the Halt," "The Story of the Banded Men," and "The Story of Hen Thorir," each saga being preceded by a one-page map of the section of Iceland in which the story is laid. There is an Appendix, in which is presented "An Adventure of Odd Ufeigson with King Harold Harđradi."

Then follow fifteen pages of Notes and three Indexes, the first of Persons, the second of Places, and the third of Subject Matter. Of the three sagas translated in this volume, only the second had ever before been printed in an English form.


4. As I pointed out above, the Bandamanna saga had been translated by John Coles in his Summer Travelling in Iceland, pp. 205-229.
In regard to the texts used, I should like to point out that for their "Story of Howard the Halt" Morris and Magnússon chose the version of the Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings which is presented in Volume XXVIII of Nordiske Oldskrifter; for "The Story of the Banded Men" they followed the text of the Bandamanna saga given in Volume X of the same series, and for "The Story of Hen Thorir" they used the only

1. Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings, ed. and tr. [Jónnlaugr] Thordarson, med et Tillæg om Sagaen og Forklaring af Viserne, ved Gísli Brynjúlfsson, in Nordiske Oldskrifter, XXVIII (Copenhagen, 1860), 1 - 53. Magnússon says on page xxii of the Preface to Volume I of The Saga Library that in the main he and Morris followed the restoration of the "visur" that was undertaken by Gísli Brynjúlfsson in 1860. A comparison of the translation with this text and the only other edition of the saga which, according to Islandica, I (1908), 48, existed in the early 1870's when the rendering was produced - namely, the one in Nockrer Marg-Frooder Søgu-Paetter Islendinga, pp. 38-58 - shows, as is to be expected, that they followed the same text for their prose. Compare, for example, the following passages in Nordiske Oldskrifter with the corresponding passages in the other edition and in The Saga Library: XXVIII, 1, 1.2; 1, 1.3; 2, 1.7; 2, 1.8; 2, 11.19-21; and 3, 1.17.

2. Bandamanna saga, ed. Halldór Fridriksson, in Nordiske Oldskrifter, X (Copenhagen, 1850), 3 - 43. After comparing the Arnamagnæan and the Regius texts of this saga, Magnússon says on page xxv of the Preface to Volume I of The Saga Library that he and Morris based their translation on the former; on the preceding page he had pointed out that the Arnamagnæan text "was edited by H. Fridriksson at Copenhagen in 1850." Another edition of the Arnamagnæan text was in existence in the 1870's - namely, the one in Nockrer Marg-Frooder Søgu-Paetter Islendinga, pp. 1-15 (see Islandica, I (1908), 3) -; but a comparison of the translation with these two editions shows that Morris and Magnússon used the one in Nordiske Oldskrifter. Compare, for example, the following passages in Nordiske Oldskrifter with the corresponding passages in the other text and in The Saga Library: X, 3, 1.1; 4, 1.10; 4, 1.19; 4, 11.21-22; 5, 1.24; 6, 1.5; 6, 1.7; and 6, 1.14.
edition of the *Haensa-bóris saga* then in existence, the one prepared by Jon Sigurdsson for Volume II of *Íslendinga Sögur*. The story translated in the Appendix deals with Odd Ufeigson, one of the main characters in the *Bandamanna saga*. Magnússon says in the Preface that the tale is an extract from the *Morkinskinna*, but a comparison of the translation with the version of the *Ódds þáttar Ófeigssonar* which is given in this work shows that Morris and Magnússon did not use this text exclusively; in fact, they do not seem to have limited themselves to any one of the four editions then available, but to have followed now one, now another, keeping closest perhaps to the *Morkinskinna* account.

This volume of translations seems to have attracted comparatively little attention among contemporary reviewers. The longest discussion of the book was the article in the *Nation* to which I have already

1. Pages 119-186.


3. The four texts of *Ódds þáttar Ófeigssonar* that were available in 1891 are (1) *Solennia Academica ad Celebrandum Diem XXVIII Januarii MDCCXXXI Regi Nostro Augustissimo Frederico Sexto Natalem Habenda Indici Universitatis Regiae Havniensis Rector M. Nicolaus Schow cum Senatu Academico*, pp. 1-7; (2) *Fornmanna Sögur*, VI, 377-384; (3) *Morkinskinna*, pp. 105-109; and (4) *Flateyjarbók*, III, 381-386. As I state above, the two translators seem to follow now one, now another, of these texts. For example, the words "they had foul wind" (*Saga Library*, I, 167, 1.6) are found in texts 1 and 2, but not in 3 and 4; the sentence "And Harald Sigurdson was then king over Norway" (*Saga Library*, I, 167, 11.8-9) is omitted in text 1; the clause "and thereon was Einar Fly" (*Saga Library*, I, 167, 11.21-22) is given thus in texts 3 and 4 but not in 1 and 2, which have "þar var Einar fluga með fjööda manns"; the passage in *The Saga Library*, I, 167, 1.24 - 168, 1.3 is found in essentially this form in texts 1, 2, and 3 but in an entirely different form in text 4; and the concluding paragraph (*Saga Library*, I, 175, 11.10-17) is given thus in text 4 but not in 1, 2, and 3.
referred; this critic praises both Morris and Magnússon's choice of tales and their style of translation, saying,

These stories have the robust quality of the air of the country that gave birth to their heroes. Their great dramatic power, combined with simplicity and directness of narration, has kept them fresh and virile through centuries. Boldly drawn, and characterized by keen insight into human nature, these pictures, though of a rude age, are yet free from coarseness, and the translators have happily preserved enough of the original quaint phraseology to lend a peculiar charm to this English version....

The rest of the review consists mainly of brief synopses of the tales. Another discussion of the book appeared in the Academy two months later, after the second volume of The Saga Library had been published. The author, Charles Elton, finds little either to praise or to blame in the work; he devotes most of his article to a brief description of the three tales, calling attention to those features in each one which Magnússon in his Preface had pointed out as being most noteworthy. He does find fault, however, with Morris's praise, in the Preface, of the modern Icelanders' lively interest in the historical past of their country; Elton points out that this interest does not go directly back to the time of the events described in the historical or family sagas, for during several centuries the Icelanders neglected their native literature in favor of the far inferior metrical romances that were imported from Europe proper. Another contemporary discussion of this book that should be mentioned is that of Valtýr Guðmundsson, which appeared in Tímarit Hins Íslenzka Bókmenntafjelags for 1892. Guðmundsson gives a brief account of the contents of the volume, praising particularly the index of subject matter which Magnússon had prepared.

1. See above, pages 351-352.
2. LIII(1891), 220.
3. XL(1891), 448.
4. XIII(1892), 74-76.
Most of the article is given up to a short attack on Morris and Magnússon's use of archaic English words and constructions in their saga translations; this criticism I shall consider later, in my discussion of Morris's style of translation.

The second volume of The Saga Library was published in the fall of 1891. In this book we find first a scholarly Preface of thirty-eight pages, in which Magnússon discusses the two sagas translated in this book; then follow several chronological lists of events described in the stories, this material being drawn, as the editors state, partly from Vigfússon's edition of the Eyrbyggja saga and partly from his "Um tímatal í Íslendinga sögum." In the main part of the volume is presented The Story of the Ere-Dwellers; the tale is preceded by a one-page map of the district of Iceland involved. In Appendix A there is a description of "The Children of Snorri the Priest," a translation of an Icelandic account printed in the edition by Vigfússon already referred to; Snorri, of course, figures prominently in the Eyrbyggja saga. Appendix B is devoted to The Story of the Heath-Slayings, this tale being closely connected in subject matter with The Story of the Ere-dwellers; as usual there is a one-page map of the scene of the action. At the end of the volume we find forty-two pages of notes, a number of genealogical tables, and three Indexes, the first of Persons, the second of Places, and the third of Subject

1. See below, page 563.

The book is dated 1892; but in a letter headed September 23, 1891 which is quoted by Mackail in another connection we find Morris saying, "...Mr. Quaritch has sent me in a specimen copy of volume 2 of the Saga Library..." (Mackail, William Morris, II, 265), and the book was discussed in the Saturday Review for October 24, 1891 (LXXII(1891), 481).

3. Magnússon states on p. vii of Volume VI of The Saga Library that he wrote this Preface and then submitted it to Morris for revision. See also May Morris, William Morris, I, 459.
Matter, part of the last one being given up to a list of kennings occurring in the verses included in the two sagas.

Neither one of these sagas had ever been published in an English form before. As their texts the translators used Vigfússon's edition of the Eyrbyggja saga, which was published as a separate volume in 1864, and Jón Sigurdsson's edition of the Heiðarvíga saga in Volume II of Íslendinga Sögur.

The second volume of The Saga Library, like the first, received very little attention from contemporary reviewers. The best discussion of the work appeared in the Saturday Review; this critic bestowed praise on the editing of the book, on the choice of sagas, and, in general, on the style of translation. He writes,

In respect to workmanship, the second volume of the Saga Library is worthy of the first. The stories, indeed - the Eyrbyggja Saga and the Heiðarvíga Saga - are not among the best for personal interest and epic unity of narrative. But the "Story of the Heath-Slayings," a fragment, is extremely ancient, and few sagas are richer than the


2. II, 277-394. Magnusson states explicitly in the Preface to Volume II of The Saga Library (p. xxxvi) that it was Sigurdsson's edition of the Heiðarvíga saga which he and Morris followed in their translation of this tale. In regard to the Eyrbyggja saga he says in the Preface that Vigfússon's edition of this work was the best (p.xx) and that he and Morris based their rendering of the "vísur" in this story "on Vigfússon's prose arrangement of the same" (p.xlvii); moreover, as I have already pointed out, they drew one of their chronological tables and their account of the offspring of Snorri from this same edition. Magnusson does not, however, definitely state in the Preface that they used this text for their whole translation, but a comparison of their rendering with this edition and the only other text of the saga which, according to Islandica, I(1908), 18-19, had been printed by 1868 - namely, the Eyrbyggja-Saga sive Ervanorum Historia quam mandante et impensas faciente P. F. Suhm. versione, lectionum varietate ac indice rerum auxit G. J. Thorkelin(Copenhagen, 1787 - shows clearly, as the facts enumerated above indicate, that it was Vigfússon's edition that they followed for their entire translation. Compare, for example, the following passages in Vigfússon's text with the corresponding passages in the other edition and in The Saga Library: p. 3, 11.7-8; 3, 1.9; 3, 1.10; 4, 1.14; 4, 11.23-24; 5, 11.2-3; 6, 1.1; 6, 1.5; 6, 1.14; 6, 1.16; 6, 1.23; and 7, 11.3-4. An examination of these passages, however, in the 1868 holograph manuscript of Morris and Magnusson's rendering of the Eyrbyggja saga shows that for their first translation the two collaborators followed Thorkelin's edition; see below, pages 516 and
Eyrbyggja in curious details of law, custom, and belief. As for the style of translation, it is that which Messrs. Morris and Magnússon think the best representative of old Icelandic; and, though to others it may seem affected, it is perfectly intelligible.

He concludes his review by describing the volume as "a book which is a delightful gift to English literature and the study, not only of the North, but of the heroic age all over the world." This volume was also reviewed by Charles Elton in the Academy; in his very brief discussion he merely calls attention to the prominent part played by superstition in this tale and to the value of the account given there of the temple of Thor.

Before proceeding to the remaining volumes of The Saga Library, I should like to point out that in the fall of 1891 Morris also published a book of verse called Poems by the Way. Most of the pieces appearing in this volume had been written several years earlier — some of them even in the 1860's and the 1870's. Several Scandinavian poems, all but one of them previously unpublished, were included in the book; all of them have already been discussed in detail in this study. These Scandinavian pieces, in the order in which they appear in this collection, are "Of the Wooing of Hallbjorn the Strong," "To the Muse of the North," "Iceland First Seen," "The Raven and the King's

1. LXXII(1891), 482.
2. Loc. cit.
3. XL(1891), 448.
4. See Mackail, William Morris, II, 265.
5. Collected Works, IX, 95-102. See also above, pages 210-213.
6. Collected Works, IX, 116. See also above, page 58.
7. Collected Works, IX, 125-126. See also above, pages 202-203.

The Norse poems in the volume are discussed in only two of the contemporary reviews that I have seen of this book. The critic in the Saturday Review praises these pieces in rather general terms, saying,

...There are more of those Northern romances, paraphrased or invented, which Mr. Morris loves so unceasingly and does so well - "The Wooing of Hallbiorn the Strong," "The Raven and the King's Daughter," "Hildebrand and Hellelil," "Hafbur and Signy," and a fine Geste in miniature of "The King of Denmark's Sons."

These same poems are criticized adversely by Mr. C. Elton in his review of the book in the Academy; he is quick to recognize the good effects that Morris's Scandinavian studies had upon his style in general, but Morris's imitations of Norse ballads in this volume he considers less successful than some of the original pieces, for, although they are

2. Collected Works, IX, 140-145. See also above, pages 213-217.
3. Collected Works, IX, 179. See also above, pages 203-205.
5. Collected Works, IX, 203-205. See also above, pages 147-150.
6. Collected Works, IX, 206-207. See also above, pages 147-148 and 150-152.
7. Collected Works, IX, 208-209. See also above, pages 147-150.
8. Collected Works, IX, 210-212. See also above, pages 147-150.
9. Collected Works, IX, 213-224. See also above, pages 147-150.
10. LXXIII(1892), 155.
graceful and charming, all attempts to revive past literary forms are bound to fail. He says, in part,

...the Norse influence, just like that of Socialism, is certainly one that has given additional vigour and glory to the poet's verse; yet...it is no contradiction to say that the actual ballads he has written expressly on Norse subjects are by no means his best and most characteristic work. There is, after all, something hopeless about the attempt to revive a literary form nearly as it flowered in a set of circumstances now extinct. The experience that gave the form breath and power cannot really be lived over again by the most searching and tender imagination, or by any process of "steeping the mind" in books; and the result is something like that which attends the efforts, all meritorious and all failures, to write Greek plays. The failure is due, not to lack, but to misapplication, of poetic gift. Therefore, with whatever zeal and grace these revivals are conducted, we cannot help coming back from them and asking what the poet has to tell us concerning his more personal and direct message.1

Mr. Elton is of course correct in placing these poems on a lower level than more serious works such as "The Message of the March Wind" and "Mother and Son" and more inspired pieces such as "Hope Dieth: Love Liveth" and "Love Fulfilled"; yet it cannot be denied, it seems to me - and Mr. Elton makes no attempt to do so - that these ballad imitations, even though they are somewhat artificial, are skilfully done, show here and there true poetic taste, and succeed in imparting to the reader some of Morris's keen relish for the stories of the North.

The last three volumes of The Saga Library that appeared in Morris's lifetime were devoted to the translation of the Heimskringla; these volumes are numbered three, four, and five, and are dated 1893, 1894, and 1895 respectively, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, they actually appeared in these years. The work of turning this

1. XLI(1891), 197. For other reviews of Poems by the Way see the Athenaeum, No. 3359(March 12, 1892), 336-338; the Critic, XXI(1892), 2; and the Nation, LV(1892), 11.

2. For these poems see Collected Works, IX, 121-123, 150-153, 106-107, and 139.
long history into English, which had been begun in the early
1870's, was not actually completed until April, 1895; the task
of editing this Icelandic masterpiece was not finished by Magnússon
until 1905, nine years after Morris's death.

The first volume contains Morris and Magnússon's translation
of Snorri Sturluson's Preface and of the first six sagas of the
Heimskringla; at the end of the book we find thirty pages devoted
to the explanation of the more obscure kennings found in the "visur"
in these tales, and neatly folded in a pocket on the inside of the
back cover there is a large map of Norway, measuring 27½ by 17½ inches. The second volume - that is, Volume IV of The Saga Library -
is given up entirely to the rendering of The Story of Olaf the Holy,
the Son of Harald; the explanations of the kennings occupy the last
fourteen pages. The third volume gives us Morris and Magnússon's
English version of the remaining nine sagas, together with their
interpretations of the metaphors. Except for these sections on the
kennings, there is no explanatory matter in these books; all this
material was reserved for the last volume, which, as I have stated
above, was prepared entirely by Magnússon and therefore does not
really concern this study. I should like to say, however, that
this final volume is an excellent piece of work; it includes a
Preface, in which Magnússon gives much valuable information regarding his meeting with Morris and their method of translating the
sagas, a 73-page discussion of Snorri Sturluson, first as a chief
and secondly as an author, a 238-page index of persons and peoples,
a 54-page index of places, a 223-page index of subjects, and 15
genealogical tables.

1. See Mackail, William Morris, II, 313.
The last four volumes of *The Saga Library* met with a distinctly favorable reception in the contemporary reviews. Morris's choice of diction was of course adversely criticized, but most of the reviewers seem by this time to have become convinced of the utter hopelessness of attempting to induce Morris to give up the use of an archaic style for his translations and to have grown tired of finding fault with his peculiar language, for most of them passed over this matter with little more than a word of censure. As a rule they praised the translators for the accuracy of their rendering and for their choice of material; the critics considered the making of a new literal translation of the *Heimskringla* definitely worth while, not only because of the pleasure English readers would derive from a work of such literary excellence but also because of the valuable information Englishmen would find in this history concerning the early days of their own nation and the origins of their own race.

The reviewer of the first volume of the *Heimskringla* in the *Nation* says of it,

The present translation is noteworthy, wholly apart from other considerations, in that it is the first English version directly from the original Icelandic, Laing's having been made at second hand from Danish. With all its idiosyncrasies of diction (and they are, after all, but that), this is a distinct gain in fidelity to the original text, and after the dialect has been mastered the value of the *Heimskringla* as history, and the charm of its telling, appeal to one with renewed force. From either point of view, there is nothing at all comparable to it in matter and manner in the early literature of any of the kindred nations. Chronicles there are in plenty, but this, subsequent to the mythical *Ynglinga Saga* at the beginning of the work, is real history written with precision and a rare degree of feeling and finish.¹

¹. LVIII(1894), 472.
A few lines later this critic says, "...Snorri makes his Sagas read like an historical novel, only without the exaggerated phraseology and melodramatic action characteristic of that class of works." Although he praises the book in this enthusiastic manner, the writer of this article is not blind to the faults of Morris and Magnússon's work. Besides criticizing the type of diction used, he points out that "there are some few instances of infelicitous translation"; these matters I shall discuss later in this study.

Other discussions of the volumes under consideration appeared in the *Saturday Review* for March 11, 1893, September 1, 1894, and May 19, 1906. The first two articles, which deal with Volumes I and II, are given up almost entirely to an enumeration of the most interesting and colorful incidents described in these parts of the *Heimskringla*. Apart from the archaic style of the translation, which is discussed very briefly, the only defect pointed out in these two reviews is the lack of any guide to the historical background of the sagas. In the first article the writer says, "It would be well if Messrs. Morris and Magnússon would head their pages with dates, when dates are known"; in the second we read, "We have no maps and no dates. A brief preface might readily have supplied the reader with dates and recognizable historical landmarks; but he is left to wander darkling among the family traditions which are the

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1. LVIII(1894), 472.
2. See below, page 562.
3. LXXV(1893), 272-273.
4. LXXVIII(1894), 238-239.
5. CI(1906), 621-622.
6. LXXV(1893), 272.
7. The reviewer has evidently forgotten the excellent map included in the first volume.
writer's materials." It cannot be denied that the average reader would be better able to follow the Heimskringla account if a few dates, or at least approximate dates, were given here and there, so that he could connect the events here described with other historical incidents known to him. The last review mentioned above was written in 1906, shortly after Magnusson had published his volume of explanatory matter; the writer, however, devotes very little attention to this particular volume, discussing instead the importance and the value of the Heimskringla to modern readers. Calling attention to the striking similarity in temperament between the early Norsemen and the Englishmen of to-day, he says,

In these stark Northmen we see the source of one of the noblest if most unprofitable traits in our national character, the refusal to the point of perversity to admit the existence of treachery in a friend, and utter recklessness in the conduct of a point of honour.... Again when the man sins he knows his iniquity and does not repent, but drains the cup and takes the punishment when it comes without complaint. Something of the special character of the English gentleman, for good and for evil, has come to our race from the Northmen.

He points out that frequent references to early England are found in the Heimskringla, and says that to read "The Story of Harald the Hardredy," "who fought for the Miklegarth Emperors in Sicily and Africa, who fell in conflict with the other Harald, Godwinson, at the fatal battle of Stamforth Bridge, but for which there might have been no Norman Conquest, is to gain a new sense of the unity of history." He forcefully sums up the main points of his article in the last paragraph:

The Heimskringla and its kindred Sagas should be part of the liberal education of every boy, not only for their racial connexion and historic value, but because they provide the finest story-telling

1. LXXVIII(1894), 238.
2. CI(1906), 622.
3. Loc cit.
in the world - noble literature instinct with art and enjoyment, besides which the Morte d'Arthur, the stories of Charlemagne, or the Tale of Troy itself, seems thin and artificial.¹

From 1890, when the Story of the Glittering Plain appeared, until 1894, when he issued The Wood Beyond the World, Morris published no prose romances. During these years he devoted by far the greater part of his time and energy to the work of the Kelmscott Press, which he had begun early in 1890 after he had become seriously interested in the making of beautiful books and had become convinced that he would never get books produced according to the high standards he demanded unless he printed them himself. Nevertheless, although this new undertaking, especially during the first year or two, left him very little time for his literary work, he did succeed not only in finishing his Heimskringla translation for The Saga Library but also in carrying on his romance writing; in addition to The Wood Beyond the World, which, as I just stated, he published in 1894, he wrote during these years The Well at the World's End, the longest by far of all his tales, and began several others. The Well was composed in 1892 and 1893, and a cheap edition of the work was printed at the Chiswick Press at the end of 1893; this issue was not distributed at this time, however, for it was to be preceded by a Kelmscott Press edition, and this work was not finished until 1896. I shall postpone my discussion of the few Scandinavian elements found in this story until later, when I deal with Morris's activities in 1896; I should like to state here, however, that this tale is a pure

1. CI(1906), 622.
2. For an account of the founding of the Kelmscott Press see Mackail, William Morris, II, 247-256.
romance and marks a definite advance in the movement, already noted in these prose narratives, from the style of the epic to that of the romance.

Before passing on to "The Wood Beyond the World," I should like to point out that in 1893 Morris and Ernest Belfort Bax collected and republished with extensive revisions and numerous additions the articles they had printed in the *Commonweal* under the title "Socialism from the Root Up," and that in this book, which they called *Socialism: Its Growth & Outcome*, we find in the material added to the original essays two brief Scandinavian allusions, both of which are almost certainly to be credited to Morris. In one of the first chapters the collaborators illustrate their statement "that the earlier stages of a new social development always show the characteristic evils of the incoming system" by pointing out that "in all early civilised communities...usury and litigation are rampant, as, amongst other instances, the elaborate account of the life of the time given in ...the Icelandic sagas shows us"; towards the end of the book, in a discussion of money, they explain in a footnote that there are transitional stages between barter pure and simple and exchange operated by a universal equivalent, which only partly fulfilled this office: e.g., cattle, in the primitive ancient period, from which the name for money(*pecunia*) is derived; or ordinary woolen cloth, as in the curious and rather elaborate currency of the Scandinavians before coin was struck in Norway: whichcurrency, by the way, has again, in the form of blankets, been used even in our own times in the Hudson Bay Territory.2

References to lawsuits are of course extremely common in the sagas, and Morris must have met with accounts of prosecutions at the Thing in almost every saga he had read; allusions to the lending of money

1. Page 41.
2. Page 249.
at interest are less frequent, but there is at least one reference to this practice in sagas with which we know Morris was familiar. With the early Scandinavian use of cloth as a unit of measure he had already in *The Roots of the Mountains* shown himself acquainted, as we have seen above.

*The Wood Beyond the World*, which was published in 1894 and is the fourth in order of publication but actually the fifth in order of composition in the series of eight prose romances which Morris produced between 1888 and 1896, is, like *The Well at the World's End*, a pure romance. Nevertheless, we find in this story, just as we did in *The Glittering Plain* and shall do in *The Well*, a few details that Morris seems to have borrowed from his Icelandic reading. Thus, there is one allusion to the custom of "hanselling"; one of the tribes described holds a "Mote" or, as it is once called, a "Man-mote"; and at the Mote-stead there is a "doom-ring." These matters I have already discussed in detail in my treatment of the earlier romances. Furthermore, just as in the previous tales, there are several very vivid descriptions of mountain-scenery which, though to a less striking degree than in *The Roots of the Mountains* and *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, recall the mountainous country through which Morris travelled on his tours of Iceland. In this story we

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2. See above, pages 326-327.

3. See *Collected Works*, XVII, 61, 1.3.

4. See *ibid.*, XVII, 105, 11.6, 7, 22, and 27; 106, 1.23; and 107, 1.6.

5. See *ibid.*, XVII, 108, 1.6.

6. See *ibid.*, XVII, 98, 1.23; 100, 11.22 and 26; 103, 1.14; 104, 11.14 and 31; and 105, 1.1.
also find a reference to an interesting early Scandinavian custom which had not been mentioned in the first three romances. When Walter, the hero of the tale, has slain the hideous, evil dwarf who guarded the queen of the enchanted land into which he had wandered, the heroine, who is well versed in the black art, tells Walter to cut off the dwarf's head and place it by his buttocks before burying him, in order to prevent his ghost from walking. This device was one of the common methods in early Scandinavia of "laying a ghost"; Morris had long been acquainted with this custom, for in the Grettis saga, one of the first Icelandic stories he translated, Grettir follows this procedure in putting a definite end both to Karr the Old and to the fiend Glamr. Beyond these matters there is nothing in this tale which can be traced to Morris's Scandinavian studies.

In the summer of 1895, at the same time as the last volume of the Heimskringla translation appeared in The Saga Library, Morris published another prose romance, this one being called Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair. As has been pointed out, the central theme of this tale is the same as that of the Middle English metrical romance The Lay of Havelok the Dane; however, Morris has treated this theme in an entirely new manner, so that his finished story is...

2. See ibid., VII, 40, 11.12-14 and 90, 11.32-34.
3. For an account of the first edition see ibid., XVII, xlv.
4. See, for example, ibid. XVII, xxxix and Aymer Vallance, William Morris: His Art His Writings and His Public Life (London, 1897), p.371.
completely different from the original romance. He has even altered the nationality of his hero, making Christopher the son of the King of Oakenrealm instead of the son of the King of Denmark as Havelok was, and as a consequence of this change he has been forced to discard entirely the Danish setting found in parts of the Middle English romance.

In telling this story, Morris has adopted the style of the romance, as he did in *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, *The Well at the World's End*, and *The Wood Beyond the World*, instead of the method of the epic, towards which he tended in *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains*. However, in the tale under consideration he has given a perfectly realistic background to his narrative, completely excluding the supernatural element which plays a very important part in the third, fourth, and fifth of his romances; it is consequently not surprising to find that in his descriptions of the life of the people about whom he is here writing, he has introduced many of the same details which he borrowed from the Icelandic sagas and inserted into his first two romances.

Thus, just as in *The House of the Wolfings* and *The Roots of the Mountains*, the people of this new tale meet in public gatherings called "Motes" or "Folk-motes"; at the Mote-stead there is a hill or mound for the speaker; and before the business of the assembly is

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1. See *The Lay of Havelok*, pp. 11-23 and 44-71.
2. See *Collected Works*, XVII, 162, 1.28; 221, 1.2; 222, 1.32; 223, 1.28; 225, 1.17; and 260, 1.9. See also above, page 321.
3. See *Collected Works*, XVII, 135, 1.7; 162, 1.25; and 163, 1.10. See also above, pages 307 and 321.
4. See *Collected Works*, XVII, 163, 1.10 and 222, 1.27. See also above, page 307.
begun, the Mote is "hallowed in." When the leaders of the people want to raise an army, they summon the able-bodied warriors by "shearing up the war-arrow" and circulating it among the tribes. On one occasion, when two hostile armies are about to engage in battle, the leader of one host challenges the captain of the other to single combat on a "hazelled field" on an island. Two of the houses described recall the halls of the early Norsemen; definitely Scandinavian are the "shut-beds" referred to in the account of one of them. At one point in the tale we find an alliterative formula, similar in nature to some of the formulae given in The Roots of the Mountains and The Story of the Glittering Plain, used as a vow. Finally, as Biber points out in his Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances, some of the place-names Morris uses show Scandinavian influence. There are no new Norse features introduced into this romance.

In the same year as Child Christopher appeared, Morris wrote his seventh romance, The Water of the Wondrous Isles, but this tale was not published until 1897, a few months after his death. It should also be noted that in 1895, when the Kelmscott Chaucer, the masterpiece of the new press, was rapidly nearing completion, Morris

1. See Collected Works, XVII, 162, 1.28-29; 221, 1.2; and 222, 1.32-33. See also above, pages 308 and 322-325.

2. See Collected Works, XVII, 223, 1.26-28 and 34-36 and 227, 1.31-32. See also above, page 309.

3. See Collected Works, XVII, 231, 1.35 - 232, 1.1 and 233, 1.37 - 234, 1.1. See also above, page 308.

4. See Collected Works, XVII, 159, 1.23 - 160, 1.7 and 167, 1.19-25. See also above, pages 308 and 327.

5. See Collected Works, XVII, 167, 1.24. See also above, page 328.
began thinking of printing at the Kelmscott Press an elaborate folio edition of his *Sigurd the Volsung*, with a number of pictures by Burne-Jones; this work, however, was barely begun when the end came to Morris early in October, 1896.

Before passing on to my discussion of *The Well at the World's End*, which appeared early in 1896, I should like to call attention to an interesting remark Morris made in a letter dating from August, 1895; he writes,

> I was thinking just now how I have wasted the many times when I have been 'hurt' and (especially of late years) have made no sign, but swallowed down my sorrow and anger, and nothing done! Whereas if I had but gone to bed and stayed there for a month or two and declined taking any part in life, as indeed on such occasions I have felt very much disinclined to do, I can't help thinking that it might have been very effective. Perhaps you remember that this game was tried by some of my Icelandic heroes, and seemingly with great success. But I admit that it wants to be done well.

The "Icelandic heroes" to whom Morris is here referring are evidently Egil Skallagrimsson and Howard the Halt. When Egil's son Böðvar was drowned, it will be remembered, Egil buried him in Skallagrim's howe and then took to his bed, refusing to get up or to eat for three days, until his daughter Þórgerðr tricked him into drinking milk and then induced him to compose a poem on Böðvar and to arrange a funeral feast for him. Howard the Halt, however, far outdid Egil in this respect, if we are to believe the Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings, for that tale relates that Howard went to bed after the slaying of his son Olaf and stayed there for three years, except for the two days on

which he made unsuccessful attempts to secure atonement from Thorbiorn Thiodreksson, his son's slayer. A few lines later in the same letter we find Morris quoting an Icelandic proverb; after lamenting the ruthless destruction of beauty that was going on all around him, he exclaims, "The world had better say, 'Let us be through with it and see what will come after it.' In the meantime I can do nothing but a little Anti-Scrape - sweet to eye while seen." He here clearly had in mind the Icelandic proverb "unir auga meðan á sér," which occurs in the Völsunga saga and which he had rendered, in his translation of this tale, in exactly this form; the proverb is not found outside Scandinavia, so far as I have been able to ascertain.

The Well at the World's End, which, as I have already pointed out, was written during 1892 and 1893, was published in the spring of 1896. As I have previously stated, this story is a pure romance, a tale of wonderful lands and marvellous adventures, of fair ladies, sturdy knights, wandering minstrels, walled towns, perilous forests, and a magic spring. A few of the details which we have found that Morris borrowed from his Scandinavian reading and introduced into his other romances appear in this story also, but as in the other "pure romances" these features do not really form an integral part of the

3. See Fornaldar Sögur Nordrlanda, I, 125, 1.6.
4. See Collected works, VII, 298, 1.16.
5. See ibid., XVIII, xxxvii.
plot and of course do not give any Norse tone to the tale. The details in this story for which Morris was probably indebted to his Scandinavian reading are the designation of public assemblies as "Motes" or "Folk-motes,", the brief mention of the "hallowing" of the Mote, the reference to the "doom-ring" at the Mote-stead, the account of the "war-arrow," the introduction of the custom of "hanselling," the allusion to the "trolls," and the very frequent use of the terms "a lucky man" or "a lucky woman." We also find that he introduced in this tale two proverbs that he had met in his Icelandic reading — namely, "better bale by breeding bale" and "praise the day when the sun has set." Moreover, it is in this romance, more than in any of the others, that Morris makes use of

1. See Collected Works, XIX, 179, 1.2; 180, 1.29; 198, 11.1, 34, and 35; 203, 1.11; 204, 1.18; and 206, 11.6 and 10. See also above, page 321.

2. See Collected Works, XIX, 204, 1.8. See also above, pages 307 and 321.

3. See Collected Works, XIX, 179, 1.12; 198, 11.33-34; and 204, 11.17-20. See also above, pages 308 and 322-325.

4. See Collected Works, XVIII, 232, 1.20. In another passage (in ibid., XVIII, 142, 11.7-8) Morris uses the term in a figure of speech, saying that in a certain clearing in the woods there were great stones lying around, "as if it had been the broken doom-ring of a forgotten folk." See also above, page 307.

5. See Collected Works, XVIII, 294, 1.3. See also above, page 309.

6. See Collected Works, XVIII, 177, 1.17 and 251, 1.27. See also above, page 326.

7. See Collected Works, XIX, 56, 1.6. See also above, pages 330-331.

8. See Collected Works, XVIII, 29, 11.15-16; 88, 11.2-3; 304, 1.28; 306, 11.15-16; 335, 11.4-5; and ibid., XIX, 14, 11.3-4; 72, 11.5-7; 125, 11.12-13 and 19; 157, 1.27; 154, 11.8-9; 158, 11.13-15 and 18; 155, 1.28; 160, 1.14; 172, 11.4 and 8; 184, 1.24; 199, 11.18-19; and 203, 11.16-17. See also above, pages 333-334.


10. See ibid., XIX, 106, 11.27-28. In introducing this proverb Morris very likely had in mind the famous opening line of stanza 81 of the "Hyvamal"; see, for example, Óðla Sæmundar, tr. Thorpe, I, 45.
his vivid recollections of the mountain wastes through which he travelled on his tours of Iceland; as Miss Morris remarks, in his description of Ralph and Ursula's long journey through the mountains called the Wall of the World just before they reached the well at the end of the world, "one can recognize an epitome of many a moment of keen emotion that the terrible Icelandic deserts aroused in him." Finally, it should be noted that there are three poems in the tale in the metre, slightly imitative of early Germanic poetry, which I have commented upon in my discussion of the first three romances.

In 1896 Morris wrote his eighth and last prose romance - The Sundering Flood: he began it at the very end of December, 1895, and dictated the closing lines to Sir Sydney Cockerell on September 8, 1896, less than a month before he died. It was first printed at the Kelmscott Press in November, 1897.

During the year 1896 Morris declined rapidly in health. In the summer his physician recommended a sea-trip, and Morris decided to sail to Norway on a ship that was making a cruise to Spitzbergen. Mackail says that it "was hoped that the keen northern sea air might prove beneficial, and that the historic associations of Norway might serve to alleviate the monotony of the voyage." Morris left England

1. See, for example, Collected Works, XIX, 35, 1.21 - 44, 1.24; 62, 11.12-24; and 69, 1.27 - 70, 1.3
2. Ibid., XVIII, xxii.
3. Ibid., XVIII, 73, 1.26 - 74, 1.17; 298, 1.8 - 300, 1.3; and Ibid., XIX, 196, 11.4-11. See also above, pages 317-319.
4. See Mackail, William Morris, II, 322 and 331.
5. See Collected Works, XXI, xxxvii.
on July 22nd and returned on August 18th. During the trip he
visited none of the historic spots in Norway, for the only place
at which he landed was Vadsø, in the extreme northern part of
Norway, where he stayed for a week while the steamer sailed to
Spitzbergen and back. The voyage was not a success; Mackail says
of it,

His beloved books and manuscripts had to be left behind; he
suffered from almost constant weariness and restlessness; he was
not able to make any excursions inland, and the melancholy of the
firths struck a chill on his spirits in spite of fine weather and
warm suns. Off Bergen a last gleam of the Viking spirit came over
him as he gazed on "the old hills which the eyes of the old men
looked on when they did their best against the Weirds." But his
own fighting days were over.

When he reached London, he was too weak to go on to Kelmscott Manor
as he wished. A month and a half later, on October 3, 1896, he died
at his home on the Upper Mall, Hammersmith, and on October 6th, a
wild, rainy day, his body was taken by train to Lechlade and buried
in the churchyard there.

Morris's next to the last prose romance, *The Water of the Wond-
drous Isles*, was only partly printed when the end came; it was fin-
ished at the Kelmscott Press on April 1, 1897. In this tale of love
and adventure, in which the supernatural element plays a far greater
part than in any of Morris's other stories, we find very few details
which can be traced to Scandinavian sources; we do, however, meet with

occasional references to "Motes," to the "hallowing" of a Mote, to the "doom-ring" at a Mote-stead, to the "hazelled field," to "landwights," and to "skin-changing." All these subjects, as I have indicated in the notes, I have already discussed. There are also a few descriptions of mountain scenery for which Morris undoubtedly drew upon his recollections of Iceland. On the whole, however, he made less use of his Scandinavian studies in this tale than in any of the others.

In Morris's last prose romance, The Sundering Flood, which was printed at the Kelmscott Press after his death and was not issued until November, 1897, the situation in regard to the Norse influence is entirely different, for in this work he introduced far more Scandinavian features than in any of the other romances written after The House of the Wolfings and The Roots of the Mountains. The style which he adopted for this tale is again that of the romance, but the tone and spirit of this work is somewhat different from that of The Story of the Glittering Plain, The Wood Beyond the World, The Well at the World's End, and The Water of the Wondrous Isles, for in this tale we find a less unrestrained revelling in gorgeous descriptions.

1. See Collected Works, XX, 69, 11.2, 3, 16, 23, and 31; 70, 11.2 and 36; and 246, 1.13. See also above, page 321.
2. See Collected Works, XX, 69, 1.3 and above, pages 308 and 322-325.
3. See Collected Works, XX, 164, 1.21; 173, 1.29; and 190, 1.23. See also above, page 307.
5. See Collected Works, XX, 150, 1.24 and 162, 1.23. See also above, page 339.
6. See Collected Works, XX, 7, 1.11; 8, 11.7-11; 19, 11.20-23; 29, 1.35 - 30, 1.23; 32, 11.6-23; 33, 11.30-31; 35, 1.5; 38, 1.33 - 39, 1.3; 40, 11.31-33; 44, 1.20; 68, 11.4-5; 270, 11.31-32; 339, 11.15-20 and 29-30; 341, 11.1-5; 350, 11.8-10; 354, 11.9-12; and 357, 11.3-6. See also above, pages 314-315.
7. See Collected Works, XX, 158, 11.14-24 and 169, 1.31 - 34.
full of sensuous details, a far closer adherence to reality, and a much greater interest in plot, the result of these differences being a more direct and a more rapid style of narration.

In her Preface to Volume XXI of the Collected Works, Miss May Morris states that the "idea of the Sundering Flood - two lovers divided by a great river - was taken from a modern Icelandic novel"; she does not mention the name of this novel, but it must have been Jón Þórðarson Thórodsen's Píltur og Stúlka. It is not known whether Morris read this tale in the original, as he undoubtedly could have done, or in the English translation by Arthur M. Reeves, which had appeared in 1890. A comparison of this story with Morris's romance shows that apart from the "idea of the Sundering Flood" Morris borrowed nothing from the Icelandic tale; the two treatments of this simple theme are entirely different. In Thoroddsen's story the hero and heroine first become acquainted with each other one summer when,

1. Page xi.
2. (Copenhagen, 1850).
as mere children, they are tending sheep on opposite sides of a deep and swift river, which is not passable at this point; about a year later they meet each other at a sheep-gathering which is held farther north where the river can be crossed, and during the following winter the boy walks over the river on the ice and visits the girl. From that time until they grow up they meet frequently, and only the opposition of the girl’s mother prevents the young couple from marrying. After the girl has refused to wed the man her mother prefers, she goes to Reykjavík to seek work; the young man follows her, and after various adventures they are reunited and marry. In Morris’s romance the hero and heroine likewise first see each other and become friends when they are separated by a turbulent stream, the Sundering Flood, but this river is absolutely uncrossable, either in summer or winter, for several hundred miles. The two children grow up, and although they are passionately in love with each other, they can never meet to kiss and embrace. One day the girl is carried off by a merchant who has been attracted by her beauty; the young man, in despair, leaves his home and wanders to the south, hoping to find his beloved or at least to discover her fate. After five years have elapsed, during which the man has become a warrior of renown and the girl has been carried several hundred miles to the south and has been taken across the river, the two lovers are united, and return north to the young man’s home to be married.

Most of the Scandinavian details introduced into this tale Morris had already used in the earlier romances. For example, we find such
terms and expressions as "Mote," "Mote-stead," "shut-bed," "warr
arrow," "hazelled field," "land-wights," "skin-changers," "a
lucky man," "hansel," "peace-strings," "runes," and "changed
his life." We also meet with several new details borrowed from
his Scandinavian studies. Thus, for the first time since the Roots
of the Mountains we find Morris referring in this story to Old
Norse deities; in a poem which Osberne Wulfgrimson, the hero of
the tale, composes for his little friend across the river, he alludes,
in describing her, to "Sif's hair of gold" and "Hild's bright feet."

1. See Collected Works, XXI, 7, 1.5; 20, 11.2, 16, 19, and 22;
21, 11.19 and 33; 22, 1.18; 23, 1.26; 30, 1.4; 58, 1.14; 69, 1.33;
70, 11.17, 24, and 32; 71, 1.4; 79, 11.18 and 22; 81, 1.32; 82, 11.6, 9,
17, and 29; 83, 1.24; 84, 1.3; 85, 1.22; 113, 1.36; 135, 1.29; 177,
1.32; and 182, 1.4. See also above, page 321.


3. See Collected Works, XXI, 16, 1.18; 116, 11.8 and 18; and 120,
1.28. See also above, page 328.


5. See Collected Works, XXI, 61, 1.20; 62, 11.9, 22, and 35; 63,
11.1, 21, and 33; 64, 11.12-13; 65, 11.4, 10, and 12; 66, 1.17; and
67, 1.19. See also above, page 308.

6. See Collected Works, XXI, 6, 1.19; 7, 1.29; 12, 1.20; 33, 11.5
and 13; and 78, 1.26. See also above, page 339.

7. See Collected Works, XXI, 12, 1.19 and above, pages 314-315.

8. See Collected Works, XXI, 16, 11.34-35; 28, 11.32-33; 42, 11.23-
27; 51, 11.28-29; 83, 11.25-26; 123, 11.23-24; 215, 11.26-27; 216, 1.2;
and 224, 11.2 and 11-12. See also above, pages 333-334.


10. See Collected Works, XXI, 51, 11.1, 6, and 7; 63, 1.12; 65,
1.17; 66, 11.14 and 28; and 157, 1.11. See also above, page 141.


12. See Collected Works, XXI, 113, 1.34 and 130, 11.12-13. See
also above, pages 285-286.

With the Eddic story of Sif, the wife of Thor, and her golden hair, which the dwarfs made for Loki after he had cut off all her natural hair, Morris had long been familiar, for it is told in Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, which he had read as a student at Oxford. In the second expression he is evidently referring to Hildr, one of the Valkyries, who is also mentioned in Thorpe and whose name occurs very frequently in Old Norse kennings. Very interesting is Morris's allusion to "Hamdir's Sons"; in reply to the remark made by one character that "when times were bad and there was lack, then hand helped foot and foot hand," another character retorts, "Well...that failed Hamdir's Sons once, and may do others again." Here Morris is making a slight mistake, for the story to which he is obviously referring concerns Hamdir and his brothers, not Hamdir's sons. At the very end of the *Völsunga Saga*, it will be remembered, and also, but in less detail, in the "Hamðismál" in the *Poetic Edda* — we are told of the attempt made by two of Gudrun's sons to slay King Jormunrek in atonement for his murder of their sister Swanhild. Just as Hamdir and his brother Sorli set out on this undertaking, they meet their brother Erp, and when they ask him in what way he will help them, he answers, "Even as hand helps hand, or foot helps foot." Interpreting his reply as a refusal of aid, they slay him. A little later in their journey, however, Hamdir stumbles, but thrusts down his hand to keep from falling, and a short time thereafter Sorli trips,

1. I, 22, 34, and 38.

2. I, 14.


5. There are also brief allusions to the story in the
but steadies himself with his other foot; then they realize how valuable the assistance of Erp would have been. When they finally assail Jormunrek, Hamdir cuts off the King's hands and Sorli his feet, but before they can put him to death, the King's warriors fall upon them; then they lament the slaying of Erp, for if he had been there he would have cut off Jormunrek's head, and they would have accomplished their mission. Moreover, in his account of the magic sword which Osberne, the hero of the tale, receives from a warrior from fairyland, Morris seems also to be drawing upon his Scandinavian studies, for he says that the sword is of such a nature that if it is once drawn from its sheath it must kill a man; in this respect it resembles the swords Tyrfing and Dainsloom. Morris's acquaintance with the story of Tyrfing I have already discussed; the passage in the "Skáldskaparmál" in which Dainsloom is mentioned he had translated in the notes to "The Tale of Hogni and Hedinn" in his *Three Northern Love Stories*. So far as I have been able to ascertain, this particular quality is not ascribed to magic swords in the folklore of other nations. Furthermore, he introduces in the story two proverbial sayings which occur in the Óðrættis saga and which seem to be limited to Scandinavia: he represents Osberne as checking the boisterousness of a bullying, self-confident ruffian who demands lodging at his house one night with the ominous remark, "Things boded

1. See *Collected works*, VII, 394-396.
3. See above, pages 137-140.
will happen, and also things unboded; and he makes an old warrior, who is surprised at hearing that Osberne, although only a young man, has proved a hero in battle, point out that "many a man lies hid within himself." Moreover, several of the personal names Morris uses in this tale - names such as Osberne Wulfgrímsson, Ólafhild, and Steelhead - are Scandinavian in nature, as Sibor notes in his study of the prose romances. Finally, I should like to point out that many of the verses which Osberne, who is called a "scald," like the Icelandic poets, is represented as composing and reciting are distinctly Norse in tone; in these poems Morris uses the same metre which we have encountered in some of the earlier romances and which I have already shown to be a vague imitation of the most common of the early Germanic verse forms, but in the poetical selections in this story he introduces much more alliteration and many more kennings than he had done before, even in the House of the Wolfings, so that the resemblance to the early Icelandic verse is greater here than in any of the earlier cases. Note, as an example, the following stanza:

The war-god's gale
Drave down the Dale
And thrust us out
To the battle-shout.
We wended far
To the wall of war.

2. Ibid., XXI, 144, 11.2-3. See also Ibid., VII, 170.
3. Page 79.
4. See Collected Works, XXI, 15, 1.9; 36, 1.5; and 93, 1.26. On p. 118, 1.33 the term "scaldship" occurs.
5. For the poetical passages see Ibid., XXI, 13, 11.6-31; 14, 11.1-4 and 10-13; 19, 11.3-14; 22, 11.21-33; 27, 11.8-15; 38, 1.13 - 39, 1.18; 66, 11.16-35; 109, 1.1 - 110, 1.16; 136, 1.11 - 138, 1.12; and 141, 11.1-30.
6. The verse form is essentially the same; in a few cases, however,
And trod the way
Where the edges lay;
The rain of the string rattled rough on the field
Where the haysel was hoarded with sword-edge & shield.

In addition to the eight prose romances which were published between 1888 and 1897 and which have been discussed in the preceding pages, Morris began but left unfinished a number of other tales of this nature. Four of these fragments Miss Morris printed for the first time in 1914 in Volume XXI of the Collected Works; these stories, she states in the Preface, were all written within the last decade of her father's life, but the exact dates of their composition are not known. Only one of them, The Folk of the Mountain Door, shows any Norse influence, but the fourteen pages of this work that Morris completed contain a surprisingly large number of Scandinavian details and indicate that the story, if finished, would have been even more Scandinavian in tone than The House of the Wolfings.

This fragment as we have it consists almost entirely of an account of the feast that the King of the Folk of the Mountain Door held on the name-day of his baby son. On this important occasion there appear in the hall a very old man and woman, who, we learn a few pages later, are the founders of the present royal house of the kingdom and who have come back at this time from the land of the dead to advise the King on the rearing of his son. When the King notes

1. Collected Works, XXI, 109. Before closing my discussion of this romance, I should like to point out that in some "notes about end of story" which Morris apparently wrote out when the tale was in its early stages, he calls the men who try to carry off Elfhild just after Osberne has found her in the woods "Vikings" (see ibid., XXI, xii, 11.15-16 and 13 and xiii, 1.3).

2. These romances are Kilian of the Closes (Collected Works, XXI, 253-295), The Folk of the Mountain Door (ibid., XXI, 296-309), The Story of Desiderius (ibid., XXI, 310-322), and The Story of the Flower (ibid., XXI, 323-340).

3. Pages xiv-xv.
the pair, he greets them, and the old earle sings a song, recalling the days of old when he was young, revelling with his companions; at the end of the stanza occur the lines

Though the wild wind might splinter
The oak-tree of Thor,
The hand of mid-winter
But beat on the door.

In calling the oak the tree of Thor, Morris is making a slight error, for it was not the oak but the rowan, or mountain-ash, which was sacred to Thor. Of course, the oak was considered by the early Scandinavians to be a holy tree, and it was probably this fact that led Morris to make the mistake of referring to it as the tree of Thor in particular. I should also like to point out here that the dimeter couplets used in this quotation are employed in all the poetical passages in this romance; however, Morris does not introduce so much alliteration nor so many kennings in these verses as in some of the poems in The House of the Wolfings and The Sundering Flood, so that the resemblance to the Old Norse poetry is here not so great. After a short pause the old man sings again, this time boasting of his and his companions' prowess in battle; of his men he says that

...for Tyr's high-seat,
Were the best full meet.  

To Tyr, the Old Norse god of war, Morris refers in The House of the Wolfings also, as I have already pointed out.

The King then invites the old man and woman to sit beside him,

1. Collected Works, XXI, 298.
2. See, for example, Cleasby and Vigfússon, An Icelandic-English Dictionary, p. 119, col. 2, s. v. "sik."
3. Collected Works, XXI, 298.
4. See above, pages 310-313.
and they do so. At this point the little baby boy is borne into the hall and given to the King; he places the child on the table before him, takes his spear, and draws the point of it across the child's face so that it just grazes the flesh and the blood appears, saying as he does so, "Here mark I thee to Odin even as were all thy kin marked from of old from the time that the Gods were first upon the earth." The custom of "marking a man to Odin" is occasionally mentioned in the sagas, but according to these references a man was "marked to Odin" just before he died, not when he was born; in describing the ceremony as he does in The Folk of the Mountain Door, Morris must either have forgotten the saga accounts or have deliberately changed the details so that he could introduce the rite at this dramatic moment. When the child has been thus dedicated to the chief of the gods, the King places him in his high seat, and exclaims, "This is Host-lord the son of Host-lord King and Duke of the folk of the Door, who sitteth in his father's chair and shall do when I am gone to Odin, unless any of the Folk gainsay it." On the Old Norse expression "going to Odin" for "dying," which Morris uses in two other works also, I have already commented. Just as the King finishes speaking, an armed warrior bursts into the hall and rushes up to the high-seat, offering to fight anyone who "gainsays" the Folk of the Mountain Door; then "a man one-eyed and huge" rises from his seat.

2. See, for example, The Saga Library, III, 22, 11.18-19.
4. See above, page 310.
5. Collected Works, XXI, 302, 1.37.
far down the hall, and calms the young man, bidding him eat and
drink and forget warfare this night. Of this one-eyed carle Morris
goes on to say that "it is told that no man knew that big-voiced
speaker, nor whence he came and that presently when men looked for
him he was gone from the hall, and they knew not how." This figure
is of course Odin, who is always represented in the sagas as appearing
to mortals as a huge, ancient, one-eyed man; in one of his ear-
liest poems, as I have already pointed out, Morris pictures Odin
as appearing to one of his characters in this form.

As the night passes, the feasters leave or lie down to sleep
in the hall; just before dawn the old man and woman announce to the
King that they must depart, and they ask him to accompany them out
of the city. They walk quietly over the moon-lit, snowy streets,
and pass through the gates unchallenged, the walls being unguarded
since "there was none to break the Yule-tide peace." When they reach
the Mote-stead of the Folk of the Mountain Door, the three ascend the
mound in the center of the field, and there they stop; the old carle
explains to the King who he and the woman are, and he speaks to the
King of the baby's future. He warns him that between the ages of
fifteen and twenty-two the boy will be beset by evils of all kinds,
and he bids him guard the lad especially well during these years,
"lest when his time come and he depart from this land he wander

2. See above, pages 21 ff.
3. Collected Works, XXI, 305.
5. See ibid., XXI, 306, 1.15.
about the further side of the bridge that goeth to the Hall of the Gods, for very fear of shaming amongst the bold warriors and begetters of kindred and fathers of the sons that I love, that shall one day sit and play at the golden tables in the Plains of Ida." 1

The bridge referred to in this quotation is obviously "Bifröst," which, according to Old Norse mythology, spanned the space between Midgarth, the earth, and Asgard, the home of the gods. The "Plains of Ida" are of course "Iðavöllr," which lies in the middle of Asgard. The playing "at the golden tables" is evidently an allusion to the gods' playing at draughts, which is mentioned twice in the Völsunga.

With all these early Scandinavian mythological beliefs and conceptions Morris had long been familiar, for they are described in Thorpe's Northern Mythology. 2 The conversation between the king and the aged couple lasts but a little while, for presently the two visitors vanish from sight, and the king goes back to the hall alone in the quiet winter night. At this point the tale ends. As I have already stated, the fragment that we have gives promise of a story with a definite Scandinavian background; it is not at all unlikely that, if completed, it would have been even more Norse both in subject matter and spirit than The House of the Wolfings.

As I indicated at the beginning of this discussion, there is nothing Scandinavian about the other three unfinished romances that Miss Morris published for the first time in 1914; however, for the sake of completeness I wish to state that in one of them, Kilian of the Closes, there is a reference to "land-wights" and also an allusion.

2. I, 8, '9, 11, '83, and 84.
The years 1878 to 1896, which we have been considering in the present chapter, constitute what may be called the third period or stage in the influence of Old Norse literature upon Morris's creative imagination. During the years 1834 to 1870, as we have seen, Morris's knowledge of medieval Scandinavia and its effect upon his work was relatively slight. It was during this period that he made his initial acquaintance with the history, literature, and general culture of the early Norsemen, first through second-hand accounts in English, and later, when he had acquired the rudiments of the language, through a few of the sagas themselves; as a result of the slight familiarity with the North that he obtained in this way he introduced a few Scandinavian allusions in his poetry and wrote two long poems which were based on Norse themes but which owed little or nothing in spirit and style to the sagas. In the second period - 1871 to 1876 - he steeped himself in the literature of early Scandinavia, gaining an extensive and thorough first-hand knowledge of the sagas and Eddic poetry; during these years he translated almost a score of sagas and composed a number of poems directly inspired both in subject-matter and spirit by Norse works, one of these compositions, Sigurd the Volsung, being considered by most critics to be his masterpiece. Shortly after 1876, however, he dropped his Scandinavian studies, and although the sagas and other early Northern literature continued to color his thinking and writing, the influence that this material now exerted upon him was not only decidedly less complete but also almost entirely indirect.

1. See Collected Works, XXI, 256, 1.32.
or secondary. During the years 1877 to 1896 - especially during the last eight or nine years of this period - he undoubtedly extended his acquaintance with early Scandinavia, but the Icelandic work he did carry on during this time was on the whole very limited, being almost entirely a pastime of his leisure moments; and instead of producing works which were based directly on Norse stories and which reproduced, in a general way at least, the style of the sagas, he now used his knowledge of medieval Scandinavia merely to provide a background for his tales or to furnish illustrative material for his lectures on entirely alien subjects. In short, instead of being his chief, or even his sole, interest, as it had been between 1870 and 1877, Old Norse became now only one of a number of secondary interests.

It is difficult to foretell just what the course of the influence of the Icelandic sagas upon Morris's literary work would have been if he had lived longer and had continued to write. As I have already pointed out, there is in the eight tales he wrote between 1888 and the year of his death a general movement from the style of the epic back to the style of the romance, this change being accompanied by a rather steady decrease in the extent of the Scandinavian element in all but the last of these stories. If he had lived and had extended the scope of The Saga Library, as we have seen that he intended to do, the renewed contact with the sagas that this work would have involved might have led to an increase in the Norse material in his tales; but he was so absorbed in his chief interest of the time - the Kelmscott Press - and in his creative writing he had for several years showed
such a decided predilection for the style of the romance - the form with which he began and which seems to have been most natural to him - that it is extremely unlikely that he would ever have produced any more works directly inspired in matter and style by the sagas. In all probability he would simply have gone on composing prose romances for several years, the extent of the influence of his Scandinavian studies varying in each one according to the fluctuations in his interest in the sagas but never becoming great enough to give a definitely Norse tone to the tale as a whole.
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SCANDINAVIAN ELEMENTS
IN THE
WORKS OF WILLIAM MORRIS

by
Karl O. E. Anderson

A thesis submitted to the Division of Modern Languages, Harvard University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

In Three Volumes
Volume II
Cambridge, Massachusetts
1940
Chapter IV

Morris's Style of Translation

Part I: Methods Used by Morris and Magnússon in Preparing their Translations

In the chronological survey which I have just completed of Morris's Scandinavian studies, I have not, except for a few brief, passing remarks, described the method of work which Morris and his collaborator, Eiríkr Magnússon, followed in turning the Icelandic sagas into English, nor have I described and discussed the style of translation which Morris adopted for his English versions of these tales. Both these matters are questions of great importance. Morris's style of translation has been a subject of discussion among critics ever since his renderings began to be published, and it has exerted a wide influence upon later translators of Old Norse and Old English works; it is consequently essential for us to determine as definitely as possible just what part each of the two collaborators played in producing these English versions, Morris's aims as a translator, the steps in the evolution of his style of translation, and, finally, the merits and defects of his method of translation.

As I have already stated in Chapter I, Morris first met Eiríkr Magnússon, his collaborator, late in the summer of 1863, and he immediately decided to take lessons in Icelandic from his new friend so that he would be able to read the sagas in the original, some of which he had already come to know through translations. In the Preface to Volume VI of The Saga Library Magnús-

1. See above pages 42-43.
son presents a very vivid account of the beginnings of Morris's Scandinavian studies:

His [Morris's] first taste of Icelandic literature was the story of "Gunnlaug" the Snaketongue. I suggested we had better start with some grammar. "No, I can't be bothered with grammar; have no time for it. You be my grammar as we translate. I want the literature, I must have the story. I mean to amuse myself." I read out to him some opening passages of the saga, in order to give him an idea of the modern pronunciation of the language. He repeated the passages as well as could be expected of a first beginner at five-and-thirty, naturally endowed with not a very flexible organ. But immediately he flew back to the beginning, saying: 'But, look here, I see through it all, let me try and translate.' Off he started, translated, blundered, laughed; but still, he saw through it all with an intuition that fairly took me aback. Henceforth no time must be wasted on reading out the original. He must have the story as quickly as possible....In this way the best of the sagas were run through, at daily sittings, generally covering three hours, already before I left London for Cambridge in 1871. And even after that much work was still done, when I found time to come and stay with him.²

Some of the sagas which Morris and Magnússon thus read together they decided to publish in an English form; the procedure which they followed in producing such translations was described by Magnússon in a letter he wrote to Miss May Morris in the early years of the twentieth century when she was preparing her edition of the Collected Works of her father:

We went together over the day's task as carefully as the eager-minedness of the pupil to acquire the story would allow. I afterwards wrote out at home a literal translation of it and handed it to him at our next lesson. With this before him Morris wrote down at his leisure his own version in his own style, which ultimately did service as printer's copy when the Saga was published.³

To this account should be added the statement by Magnússon, in the Preface to Volume VI of The Saga Library, regarding their method of work in preparing the translations included in that

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1. The name "Gunnlung" must be a misprint for "Gunnlaug."

2. Saga Library, VI, xiii-xiv.

The work on it was divided between Morris and myself in the following manner: Having read together the sagas contained in the first three volumes, Morris wrote out the translation and I collated his MS. with the original. For the last two volumes of the Heimskringla the process was reversed, I doing the translation, he the collation; the style, too, he emended throughout in accordance with his own ideal.  

These statements by Magnússon present a fairly definite account of the way in which the two collaborators produced their English versions of the sagas. Still further details are furnished by the holograph manuscripts that have survived of these renderings. Many of these manuscripts will be discussed in great detail later in this chapter, and in some cases specimen pages will be presented in the Appendixes; here I shall simply comment on those features of these works which throw light on Morris's and Magnússon's procedure. One of the most interesting of these manuscripts is that of the translation of the Grettis saga, which was one of the first Icelandic tales Morris and Magnússon read together. Here Morris has written out the English rendering, Magnússon has corrected it, and Morris has in turn passed judgment on Magnússon's revisions. The resulting version, in part at least, served as printer's copy. Moreover, occasional differences between the final manuscript form and the published text show that still more changes, evidently to be attributed to both Morris and Magnússon, were made in the proofreading. In the manuscript of the Eyrbyggja saga translation, the rendering is again in the hand of Morris, but here there are no corrections by Magnússon.

2. For a detailed account of this manuscript, see below pages 529-539.
3. For a detailed account of this manuscript, see below.
Evidently, when the two collaborators read this saga in the late 1860's, they at first planned to publish a translation of it, and then decided not to do so. Magnússon therefore not taking the trouble to revise Morris's draft. When they did print a translation of the *Eyrbyggja saga* in 1892 in Volume II of The Saga Library, Morris apparently wrote out an entirely new rendering, for the manuscript under consideration almost certainly was not the immediate source of the printed text; not only are the differences between the published form and the manuscript version so extensive that they cannot be the result of changes made in the course of the printing, but there are no notes and directions to the printers in this manuscript, such as we find in some of the others. Also in the hand of Morris are the manuscripts of the translation of *Three Northern Love Stories*, *Dogri and Hedin*, *Roi the Fool*, and *Thorstein Staff-smitten*, of *The Story of Howard the Halt*, of *The Story of King Harald Greyfell* and of *Earl Hakon the Son of Sigurd*, and of *The Story of King Olaf Tryggvason*; these manuscripts I have not had an opportunity to examine, but brief descriptions of them in a bookseller's catalogue reveal their nature.

Of an entirely different type are the manuscripts of the later part of the *Heimskringla* translation. In the manuscripts of *The Story of Olaf the Holy*, the *Son of Harald* and *The Story*...
of Sigurd the Jerusalem-farer, Eystein, and Olaf, both of which I have seen, Magnússon has written out the original translation, using only the right-hand page; in the case of the "visur," he has copied out the Icelandic in the prose order and has given the English rendering underneath, word by word; Morris has revised the prose directly on the right-hand page, making extensive changes, and has placed his verse translation of the "visur" on the left-hand page, opposite Magnússon's prose rendering. In this form the manuscript was sent to the printer. Finally, still further alterations were made, evidently by both Morris and Magnússon, in the proofreading, for we find a number of differences between the final manuscript version and the published text, just as in the case of the Guðrún saga translation. Occasionally on the left-hand page we find notes in Morris's hand, querying renderings by Magnússon or suggesting different interpretations; a letter written by Morris to Magnússon, which is quoted by Miss May Morris in one of her works, indicates that after Morris had revised Magnússon's English version, the two collaborators were in the habit of meeting and discussing their work, and it was evidently with these discussions in mind that Morris made the notes just mentioned.

Finally I should like to point out that the manuscripts of The Story of Magnus the Good and The Story of Harald the Hard-Redy, the sagas immediately following the Ólafs saga hins helga in the Heimskringla, are also in the handwriting of Magnússon, with

1. For a detailed account of this manuscript, see below pages 398 ff.

2. See William Morris: Artist Writer Socialist, I, 460. After complaining of the difficult task of turning the Icelandic "visur" into English verse without departing too far from the sense of the original, Morris remarks, "However, we can wrangle over this when
alterations by Morris; I have not seen either one of these manuscripts, but the first is thus described in a bookseller's catalogue and the nature of the second is revealed in a remark made by Miss May Morris in one of her discussions of her father's Scandinavian work.

On the basis, then, of Magnússon's accounts and of these manuscripts, we can make a fairly definite statement as to how Morris and Magnússon proceeded in preparing their translations. In the early years of this work they first read together the saga selected; then Magnússon wrote out a translation, and on the basis of this draft Morris produced a new rendering; this version was revised by Magnússon, and Morris in turn passed judgment on Magnússon's alterations; the manuscript then went to the printer; finally a few more changes were made while the work was being printed. When they prepared their later translations, Morris took Magnússon's literal draft and made the changes he wanted directly on these sheets, instead of writing out an entirely new version; during this stage of the work the two collaborators met for discussion of troublesome passages; Magnússon's original draft with Morris's alterations was then sent to the printer, but before the text was put into final form, a few more changes were made. Inasmuch as all the manuscripts of Icelandic translations that are in Morris's hand are of sagas that were turned into English in the late 1860's and the 1870's, and all the manuscripts in which the original rendering has been written out by Magnússon and the changes

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1. See Item No. 1072 in Maggs Brothers' Catalogue, No. 578(1932).
have been made by Morris are of sagas that were translated in
the 1890's, it seems fairly safe to assume that the first method
described above was used in preparing all the translations that
were produced from 1868 to the time when Morris gave up his lit-
erary activities for public life late in the 1870's, and that the
second procedure was followed in all the saga-translating done
in the 1890's, after Morris's return to literature.

Part II: Morris as a Mature Translator of Old Norse

Far more important and much more complex than the question
of Morris's and Magnússon's method of translation, is the question
of Morris's principles of translation. So far as I know, Morris
never wrote out any direct statement of his aims as a translator;
however, from those manuscripts in which Magnússon produced the
original rendering and Morris made his alterations directly on
the same sheets, we can ascertain fairly definitely, by analyzing
these changes, just what he was striving for. With this purpose
in mind I have examined very carefully all the alterations that
Morris made in the first half of Magnússon's translation of the
Sigurðar saga Jórsslafara, Eysteins ok Ólafs, one of the last of

1. This assumption does not, of course, conflict with Magnús-
son's statement, quoted above, in regard to the way in which The
Saga Library was prepared. Magnússon says, it will be remembered,
that in the case of the sagas included in the first three volumes
Morris "wrote out the translation and I collated his MS. with the
original," and that for "the last two volumes of the Heimskringla
the process was reversed. I doing the translation, he the colla-
tion" (Saga Library, VI, vii); however, although all these
saga-renderings were published for the first time between 1891 and
1895, we know definitely that all the tales included in the first
three volumes, with the exception of The Story of the Heath-Slayings,
were actually translated in the 1860's and 1870's, and very likely
the Heiðarvíga saga also was turned into English at that time, al-
though we do not happen to have any definite information about the
the Heimskringla sagas. The manuscript containing this rendering consists of forty-six folio leaves, with Magnússon's original draft on the right-hand page and with Morris's revisions of the prose on the same side and his verse renderings of the "visur" on the left-hand page, just as I have described above. My reason for choosing this manuscript as the basis of my investigation of Morris's principles of translation is that it is extremely well suited for such a study, in view of the fact that the rendering contained in this manuscript was prepared in the 1890's, when Morris was a mature translator of Old Norse, thoroughly acquainted with the language and with fully developed ideas as to the form which he considered proper for an English version of the Icelandic sagas. In fact, the manuscript of the translation of that part of the Heimskringla in which this saga is included was once cited by Magnússon as "a particularly safe, indeed an indispensable basis" for a study of Morris as a translator of Old Norse; Magnússon wrote,

Among the literary remains of William Morris the MS on which the second and third vols. of Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla (being the fourth and fifth vols of the Saga Library) are based, forms a particularly safe, indeed an indispensable basis whereon the future criticism of the great man's relation to old northern literature is to be based...

The interest of this record of Morris' literary activity lies in the method adopted by him for the purpose of putting his own stamp on the style of the translation of Snorri Sturluson's work.3

The complete results of this study of the first part of the

1. This manuscript is now in the possession of Professor Paul R. Lieder of Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

2. For information regarding the date of Morris's translation of this saga, see above pages 344-348.

3. Einarsson, "Eiríkr Magnusson and his Saga-translations,"
Manuscript translation of the Sigurðar saga Jórsalafara, Eyjósteins ok Ólafs are presented in Appendix I. I have there first reproduced the text of the translation, placing on the left-hand page Magnússon's original draft and on the right-hand page Morris's revised version. I have then listed, first, all the changes that Morris made in the prose of Magnússon's rendering of the first half of the saga, secondly, the alterations he made in the "vísur," thirdly, the revisions Morris and Magnússon both made in their own work, and lastly, the words and expressions which appear in the printed text in a different form from that in the final manuscript version and which must have been altered in the proof-reading; in each case I have classified the changes according to the reasons for which they seem to have been made.

In the vast majority of cases, the motives which lay behind Morris's alterations in Magnússon's draft translation can be determined with a fair degree of certainty. Thus, if we analyze the changes Morris made in the prose of Magnússon's rendering, as I have done in Part B of Appendix I, we find that it is clear that in a large group of alterations Morris was striving to bring the translation closer to the original, in another group he was aiming to give the rendering a suitable tone, and in a third group he was simply endeavoring to improve the quality of the language, correcting minor mistakes and awkward constructions which were the result either of Magnússon's too close adherence to the text or of his lack of complete familiarity with English usage. We also find that in a number of changes Morris altered the form of proper nouns, the reason for these changes evidently being, as I shall show later, that he sometimes disagreed with Magnússon as to how
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