Morris's style of translation and the changes it underwent in the course of the twenty-eight years in which he engaged in turning sagas into English will be discussed in detail in Chapter V of this study. I should like to point out here, however, that the Gunnlaugs saga rendering, as is to be expected, shows definite signs of being an early work. If, for example, we compare it with the revised translation of the same saga that Morris and Magnusson published in 1875, we find that this first version is not so literal and accurate, does not reproduce so well the style of the original, and is not so careful to avoid non-Germanic words which are apt to clash with the general tone of simplicity and directness found in the saga. Evidently Morris had as yet neither acquired a mastery of the language nor become familiar with the distinctive features of the saga style.

Neither Professor Mackail nor Miss May Morris makes any statement in regard to what sagas, if any, Morris and Magnusson studied during the winter and spring of 1869; evidently the records to which Mackail and Miss Morris had access make no references to this subject. One saga, however, which the two collaborators must have read, in part at least, during this period is the Laxdæla, in spite of the statement Magnusson made many years later that it was in the fall of 1869 that he and Morris took up this work; Morris's long narrative poem "The Lovers of Gudrun" is based on the principal episode in this tale, and as Morris himself states explicitly in the manuscript of this work, he had completed the

1. See below, page 192.

story by the end of June, 1869. Morris and Magnússon never published any translation of the Laxdaela saga, but in her William Morris: Artist Writer Socialist Miss May Morris states that there are sixteen pages of such a rendering extant in Morris's hand; concerning this fragment she says, "These pages of Laxdála begin with chapter 28 which forms the opening of Morris's Lovers of Gudrun. They break off at the end of chapter 33, the passage of the interpreting of Gudrun's dreams." Miss Morris has no information to give as to the date of this translation. In view of the statement by Magnússon referred to above, it is possible that when he composed "The Lovers of Gudrun," Morris had merely read the saga with Magnússon or had seen a rendering prepared by Magnússon, and that it was not until the fall of 1869 that he wrote out a translation of his own; it is more natural to assume, however, that he had produced his own rendering before he composed the poem. That he had prepared his own translation of at least part of the saga before he began his metrical version is almost certainly proved by an interesting situation which we find in the holograph manuscript of the first draft of "The Lovers of Gudrun." On page 31

1. On one of the flyleaves of the manuscript of the first draft, which is now deposited in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England, we find a note saying, "This is the first copy of the poem with some of the alterations inserted: I wrote it in June 1869. William Morris," and at the end of the whole manuscript he has written "Wednesday June 23rd, 1869." It should be noted that no English translation of the Laxdála saga had been published at this time. There is, of course, as I have already stated (see above, p. 45), a rather detailed abstract of the main episode in the saga in Mallet's Northern Antiquities, with which we know that Morris was familiar at this time, but this summary could not possibly have been the sole source of Morris's poem. In the abstract even such important scenes are omitted as Guist's interpretation of Gudrun's dreams and Guist's comments on Kiartan and his brothers as Olaf, their father, and he watch them swimming.

of this manuscript there are at the bottom a few lines of inverted writing, and if we turn the page completely around, we see from the wide margin here before the ruled lines begin that what in this manuscript is the bottom was originally the top of the sheet. Here we find that Morris has written, "Fall down from thee?" Says am I loth to West, 'Idle is it to tell thereof, yet can I not hold my peace concerning those things which will befal in thy days, nor will it take me unawares though Bolli stand over Kiartane[slig] dead head, and win his own bane thereby." These lines are of course a translation of the end of Chapter XXXIII of the Laxdæla saga. In all probability this page is a rejected leaf of Morris's rendering of the central episode in the Laxdæla; he apparently had this translation before him while writing "The Lovers of Gudrun," came across this partly-used sheet, and decided to use the rest of it in scribbling out his first draft of the poem.

As I have already pointed out, Miss Morris states that the section of the Laxdæla rendering now extant extends to only sixteen pages. There are of course two possible ways of interpreting this fact: Morris may have produced a translation of the whole story of Gudrun, Kiartan, and Bolli, of which all but the first sixteen pages have been lost, or he may have read the complete account in the Old Norse with Magnússon but have written out only a few pages of an English version.

To resume our chronological survey of Morris's Scandinavian work, we must note that in March, 1869, Morris wrote the Earthly Paradise poems dealing with Bellerophon, for although these two tales are based on classical sources, we see in them the first signs of the influence his study of the Icelandic sagas in the

1. Mackail, William Morris, I, 201.
original was to have upon the style and character of his creative writing. As Mackail says, "The treatment of the Bellerophon legend clearly shows the epic manner rising beside and partially
overmastering the romantic"; Percy Lubbock in his article "The Poetry of William Morris" writes that the influence of Morris's new interest is revealed in "the sumptuous treatment of the Bellerophon legend...." This change in tone and spirit, which is very marked in most of the remaining Earthly Paradise stories, I shall discuss in detail later in my account of the publication of the third volume of this work at the end of 1869.

In April, 1869, Morris and Magnússon published their translation of the Grettis saga, the second saga-rendering that they submitted to the public; as we have already noted, it was almost ready for publication early in November, 1868, and in January, 1869, according to a letter quoted by Dr. Einarsson in his article "Eiríkr Magnússon and his Saga-Translations," Magnússon was busy writing the introduction to the work. The rendering, the first one of the Grettis saga in English, was almost certainly based on the text in Nordske Oldskrifter; this collection of sagas was in

1. William Morris, I, 201.
2. The Quarterly Review, CCXV(1911), 497.
4. Mackail in his William Morris, I, 201 and Miss Morris in the Collected Works, V, xi say that the Grettis saga translation was published in April; Buxton Forman in The Books of William Morris, p. 59, gives May, 1869 as the date of publication.
Morris's library at his death.

The translation is furnished with everything necessary for the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the saga. First there is an introduction of twelve pages, which briefly compares the Grettis saga with the other leading Old Norse sagas, gives a synopsis of the tale to be read, and describes the main characters. This is followed by a list of the main events with their dates and by a map of the northwestern corner of Iceland, the principal scene of the action. Then comes the saga itself. At the end we find nine pages of "Notes and Corrections," three very complete indexes of Personal Names, Local Names, and Things, a list of "Periphrastic Expressions in the Songs," and a collection of "Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings that occur in the Story." As I have already pointed out, Magnússon states explicitly in a letter early in 1869 that he was then writing the preface to the translation; we can be quite certain that it was he who did most of the work in preparing this other supplementary material also.

1. See below, page 1000. According to Islandica, I(1908), 31, there were two editions of this saga available in 1868; the text in NockrER Marg-FroodER SAGU-BAETTER ISLENDINGA (Holur, 1756) and Grettis saga, edd. G. Magnússon and G. Thorðarson (Copenhagen, 1859), in Nordiske Oldskrifter, XVI. A comparison of the following passages, for example, in Nordiske Oldskrifter with the corresponding passages in the other edition makes it clear that Morris and Magnússon based their translation on the text in Nordiske Oldskrifter: XVI, 1, 1.2; 1, 1.3; 1, 1.7; 1, 1.11; 1, 1.12; 1, 1.18; 1, 1.19; 1, 1.20; 1, 1.22; 1, 1.23; 2, 11.2-3; and 2, 1.4. It should also be noted that in a footnote (see Collected Works, VII, 74) the two collaborators refer to the 1853 edition.

2. This statement by Magnússon that he wrote the introduction is important, for it shows that we cannot take this discussion as an indication of the extent of Morris's acquaintance with Old Norse literature at this time, as some critics have done (see MacMail, William Morris, I, 201 and Scandinavian Studies and Notes, XIII (1934-1935), 100, note 38).
That Morris was deeply moved by the tale of Grettir is apparent from the two sonnets he wrote on the subject, one of which he placed at the very beginning of his published rendering of the saga. In this one he comments on the noble lives that many of the Icelanders led under hopelessly adverse conditions, and greets Grettir, who on account of his courage, steadfastness, and nobility has remained alive through the centuries and has now come as a new friend to make the poet's life richer. In the other sonnet, which Morris himself never published but which Miss Morris inserted in the Preface to Volume VII of the Collected Works, his passion is less restrained, and he exclaims, in lines throbbing with deep emotion,

At least thy life moved men so, that e'en I,
Thy mother's wail in the lone eave and drear,
Thy brother's laugh at death for thee, can hear
Hear now nor wonder at her agony
Nor wonder that he found it good to die —
Speak, Grettir, through the dark; I am anear.

Twenty-three years later, in Poems by the Way, Morris published a short piece consisting of eleven pentasyllabic couplets called "To the Muse of the North." According to Miss Morris, her father originally wrote this poem also as an introduction to the Grettis saga translation. Here, however, he does not refer to Grettir in particular, but prays to the Northern Muse that she acquaint him with the tales of old so that he may learn to understand the sorrow and grief experienced by these ancient men, — grief which bowed their heads and turned their hair gray,

But left no stain upon those souls of thine
Whose greatness through the tangled world doth shine.

1. Page xix.


3. Ibid., IX, xxxv.

4. Ibid., IX, 116.
The translation of the Grettis saga does not seem to have attracted very much attention in the periodicals of the time. The longest discussion, that in the Saturday Review, is the least favorable. The author finds little to admire in the style of the sagas; he has not yet learned to overcome his dislike of the violence, bloodshed, and brutality with which they are filled, and so has not discovered their real art and beauty. But he attacks with most vehemence the statement in the Preface to the rendering to the effect that to "us moderns the real interest in these records of a past state of life lies principally in seeing events true in the main treated vividly and dramatically by people who completely understood the manners, life, and, above all, the turn of mind of the actors in them." That the saga is a record of "events true in the main" the reviewer absolutely refuses to believe, for, he says, not only is the concluding story of Thorstein Dromund and Spes taken from the romance of Tristram but almost all the other incidents in the saga are to be found in other tales. Then following the methods of many of the students of comparative mythology and folklore of the day, he gives a long list of episodes in the Grettis saga and points out absurd parallels in Hebrew, Greek, Roman, and medieval stories. Thus, he says,

1. XXIX(1870), 157-159. I should like to point out here that in discussing the reception given Morris's translations in the contemporary reviews, I have not at this point called attention to the comments on the diction and style of the renderings, this material having been reserved for Chapter IV.

2. Collected Works, VII, xliii.
When Grettir is driven from his home without arms, and his mother draws forth from her cloak a fair sword which has gained many a day, we see before us Thetis and Hjordis bestowing on their children the magic weapon which reappears in the hands of Arthur and of Roland. In the horrible smiting of the Bearseker, who are shut up in a barn, we have the awful Hall of Slaughter in the Odyssey and the Nibelung Lay.

A few lines later we read that

in the errand on which, when his companions have no fire, Grettir is sent to bring fire from a distant cliff, although "his mind bids him hope to get nought of good thereby," we see the myth of Prometheus and his recompense. The conflict of Grettir and Snæskoll is related in words so nearly resembling those of the narrative of David and Goliath that it is hard to resist the conclusion that here we have an instance of mere copying, or that we have a travesty of the story of Samson....

When we are told in the saga that Glam's curse began to work on Grettir because he grew afraid of being alone in the dark, the reviewer says that Grettir "dreads the darkness, like a child, for Heracles, Helios, Achilleus can do nothing when the sun has gone down." He even tells us that if "Grettir has his brother Illugi in whom he has garnered up his soul, this is the story of Achilleus and Patroklos, of Peirithoös and Theseus, of Heracles and Iphitos, of the Dioskouroi and a host of others." On the basis of these parallels and a great many others, equally absurd, the reviewer proudly proclaims that the saga is merely fiction and is totally unreliable as a picture of contemporary events.

The other reviews that I have seen of this translation are in the main favorable. The author of an article on "Icelandic

1. Saturday Review, XXIX (1870), 158.
2. Loc. cit.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Ibid., XXIX, 158-159.
Sagas" in the London Quarterly, who shows that he is thoroughly familiar with Old Norse literature, praises the saga, and cordially endorses the very passage in Magnússon's introduction which the critic in the Saturday Review condemns. G. A. Simcox, writing of the rendering in the Academy, praises Morris's sonnet, comments on "the close blending of the historical and the supernatural" in the saga, and calls attention to the information it gives about the state of Scandinavian society at the time. The Fortnightly Review states that the "present story is founded on facts full of dramatic interest, and gives a vivid picture of the life and manners of a race nearly akin to ourselves."

During the spring of 1869 Morris was apparently at work on "The Lovers of Gudrun," which, as I have already pointed out, he himself states that he finished June 23rd. Late in the summer he and Mrs. Morris left London, and went to Bad-Ems on the Rhine for the sake of her health; Morris was not very eager to spend several weeks at such a place, and he seems to have occupied most of his time while there in composing new tales and revising old ones for the last volumes of The Earthly Paradise. In a letter written August 15th to Mr. Webb, which Miss Morris quotes in her Preface

1. XXXVI(1871), 56-57.
2. I(1869-1870), 33.
3. VI, New Series(1869), 120.
to Volume V of the *Collected Works*, Morris writes, "Magnússon's Saga has turned up and I have begun it; it is rather of the monstrous order but I shall go through with it, partly to see what there is good in it, partly to fill up the time - sleeping does a good deal of that..."¹ In a later volume Miss Morris explains that "this was the Völsunga Saga which Mr. Magnússon had translated in the course of the summer of 1869 and sent out to Ems."² Morris did not read very much of this rendering during the summer. About two weeks later, on August 27, he wrote again to Mr. Webb, saying, "I am at work still, I find the Palace East, &c., wanted rewriting rather than tinkering, I want to finish it before we get back, so as to have some time for correcting it before going to press."³ As I have previously pointed out, the poem "The Palace East of the Sun" was already written at this time - in fact, had probably been composed for many years. In her discussion of this work Miss Morris describes the manuscript of the first draft, written on both sides of large sheets of blue paper of foolscap size, and remarks, "This tale was written with apparent ease and little alteration in the early manuscript I have before me, in spite of what he says in one of the letters above mentioned. 'The Palace East &c. wants re-writing rather than tinkering.'⁴ I have not seen the manuscript of which Miss Morris here speaks, but as I have already stated, I have examined a fair copy manuscript of this poem, of quarto size, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England;

¹. Page xvi.
². VII, xx.
⁴. Ibid., V, xxiii.
this version of the tale differs to a very great extent, especially in the last part, from the printed form. If this was the version that Morris had with him at Ems — and it very likely was —, he certainly must have rewritten it, and not merely tinkered with it, to give it the form we find in the printed text. This manuscript version will be discussed in detail later.

The Morrises returned to London in September, and shortly thereafter the tales for the next volume of The earthly Paradise began to go to press, although the book was not published until the very end of the year. During the autumn, Morris also resumed his work with Magnússon. In a letter written to Miss Morris many years later, Magnússon describes his Icelandic studies with Morris at the end of 1869 and the beginning of 1870 in the following words:

When he returned from his trip we soon met and had a talk about the Saga. He was not so impressed with it as I had expected he would be; but added that as yet he had had time to look only at the first part of it. I explained to him how the Völsunga Saga was based on the heroic cycle of the Elder Edda, with the original text of which he was unacquainted. I resumed lessons with him on the old system — three days a week — this time taking the story of the men of Salmonriverdale (Laxdaela). Some time afterwards — I forget how long — when I came for the appointed lesson, I found him in a state of great excitement, pacing his study. He told me he had now finished reading my translation of the 'grandest tale that ever was told.' He would at once set about copying it out, and procure the original for himself, which he promptly did. On my suggesting that it would be desirable for him to go through the originals of the Edda songs on which the story was based, he set aside for a while the Laxdaela Saga and we got to work on the heroic songs of

1. See below, pages 74–87.
2. See Forman, Books of William Morris, p. 56.
3. The saga referred to is the Völsunga saga.
the Ægir. They were studied as the Gunnlaug story and Grettir had been, but in this case my translation had to be even more exactly literal. These songs were finished about midwinter 1872.

I have already pointed out that Magnusson's remark that he and Morris began reading the Laxdala saga in the fall of 1869 is very likely inaccurate. The rest of the statement, however, that they read together the Volsunga saga and some of the Ædic poems in the winter of 1869 to 1870, is apparently correct.

At the end of November or early in December, 1869, Part III of The Earthly Paradise was published. In the spring of 1868 when he issued the first volume, later split into Parts I and II, Morris had intended to include in the rest of the poem only one Scandinavian tale - namely, "The Palace East of the Sun"; but now even in the first part of the second half we find two stories that are Norse in origin. These are "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon," which is almost certainly the same tale he had before designated by the name "The Palace East of the Sun," and "The Lovers of Gudrun"; these two poems are almost twice as long as the four non-Scandinavian stories in the volume combined.

The influence of Morris's Scandinavian studies, however, is to be seen not only in the choice of subject for two of the tales in this volume but also in a decided change in the character or most of the poems included here which were written or rewritten


2. As I have also indicated, it is possible that although Morris must have read the whole of the main episode in the Laxdala saga with Magnusson in the spring of this year, he had written out only a part of his own translation at that time, and that it is to the continuation of Morris's work on his own rendering that Magnusson is referring in the passage quoted above.

after the fall of 1868. This difference in treatment, which became still more pronounced in the work produced after Morris had carried his Icelandic studies further, was noticed even at the time of the publication of this and the last volume of 'The Earthly Paradise' by some of the more acute reviewers, and since then it has been carefully analyzed and described by several critics. Mackail, for example, writes as follows regarding this change in the third volume:

In the eighteen months which passed between the appearance of this and of the earlier volume a silent revolution had been effected in the poet. It was not at once realized even by himself. Yet here and there a critic observed that the Chaucerian manner which had been so unqualified in 'Jason' and so powerful in the earlier stories of 'The Earthly Paradise' was wearing off, and a new manner replacing it. Some deepening of the poetry they felt there was: what it really meant was a development of capital importance, the transformation of romance into epic.... 'The Lovers of Gudrun,' his first essay in epic poetry, is in its way as complete and satisfying as any of his later achievements. Between this poem and the story of 'The Man Born to be King,' a perfect example of the pure romance, there is in truth no comparison possible. They cannot be weighed in the same scales.

Percy Lubbock, in his article on Morris to which I have already referred, brings out the importance of the change more clearly:

We come now to the most significant turning-point of Morris's literary life, the sudden transition from the golden world of 'The Man Born to be King' or 'Ogier the Dane' to the ominous landscape, the naked reality, the difficult passions, of 'The Lovers of Gudrun' and... It becomes intensely interesting to watch the overwhelming effect upon Morris, halfway through 'The Earthly Paradise,' of his discovery of the heroic literature of the north. He had been

1. The exact date of the composition of many of the poems in the last half of 'The Earthly Paradise' is not certain. We do know, however, that at least 'The Death of Paris,' the revised form of 'The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon,' and 'The Lovers of Gudrun' in Volume III and 'Bellerophon at Argos,' 'Bellerophon in Lycia,' 'The Hill of Venus,' and 'The Fostering of Aslaug' in Volume IV were written after the autumn of 1868. (See Mackail, William Morris, I, 201; Collected Works, V, xviii and xxii; ibid., VI, ix; and above, pages 16-17.)

2. See, for example: the Academy, II (1870-1871), 57; the North British Review, LII (1870), 296-297; Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, CVII (1870), 646; and the London Quarterly Review, XXXVI (1871), 252.

familiar from early days with the northern studies of Thorpe and
Dasey; but, until he began to learn Icelandic and to read the
sagas in the original, their influence had not been strong enough
to draw him away from the romance of the 'happy poplar-land' which
was his imaginative home...

After briefly comparing the epic and the romance as forms of art,
Lubbock says,

There can be no question here of discussing in detail the
profound differences which separate these two most significant
forms; but it is obvious by how many of them Morris would be
drawn towards the earlier. The saner relations between man and
man, still more between man and woman; the power of assimilating
the whole business of life, instead of a narrow selection from
it, as poetic material; the unflinching candour of the whole point
of view—all these signs of a stronger and more difficult art
would be at once attractive to a man of Morris's temper, apart
from any artistic consideration.

A little later he quotes the opening lines of "The Lovers of
Guðrún," and exclaims,

That is enough; the honey-tongued story-teller is gone, and
another man is attacking another task. There is nothing remote
or visionary here. His tale is of men who are dead and gone, no
doubt, but who are not so very far off, whose life was real, and
can be recaptured, whose deeds are to be honoured and sung in all
their glory, but not translated into a golden light which can
never have shone on them...

There can be no doubt that Morris's Icelandic studies with Magnús-
son had had an immediate and definite effect upon his style of
narrative. As soon as we turn from the early Earthly Paradise
poems and begin reading the tales written after 1866, we realize
that here we are no longer in a quiet dream-world of eternal sun-
shine and beauty, inhabited by a race of people utterly unlike us
mortals, whose loves, joys, disappointments, sorrows, and deaths
never seem genuine and never move us to either laughter or tears,

2. Ibid., p.495.
3. Ibid., p. 496.
perhaps because they are described in a most dispassionate manner, but that instead we are now entering a world similar to our own, where people like ourselves, complex and inconsistent like all human beings, suffer real griefs, disappointments, and failures, and in so doing rouse the deepest sympathies of both the storyteller and his readers.

Of the two Scandinavian tales in Volume III of The Earthly Paradise I shall discuss first "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon," which according to Mackail "represents the culmination of the romantic-medieval method in the strongest antithesis to the epic treatment of a given story." ¹ In regard to the sources of this poem Miss Morris says:

For "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon" my father has followed rather closely the imaginative opening of the tale in Thorpe's "Yuletide Stories;" but it will be seen that directly the time-worn elements come into the old tale - the trivial explanations, the three gifts and all of what one might call the commonplace of fairy story (so far removed from the true magic of fairyland), directly all this machinery appears, the poet leaves the tale. He goes to Marie de France's "Lai of Lanval" for an incident in his own far more complicated tale, and there is possibly a suggestion of the search for his "bird-lady in "Hassen of El-Zaarah:" all the rest of it, and more especially the curiously arresting framework of Gregory the Star-gazer, is his own.²

The tale in Thorpe's Yule-Tide Stories, which Morris probably had known as early as his Oxford days, was of course his main source. The only incident in the Lai de Lanval that is similar to anything in Morris's poem is the attempt of the Queen to gain Lanval's love, an act which leads Lanval to reveal his love for the fairy lady,

¹ William Morris, I, 207.
² Collected Works, V, xxii.
³ "The Beautiful Palace East of the Sun and North of the Earth" is found on pages 158-168 of the Yule-Tide Stories.
contrary to his promise to her, and thus to forfeit her affection; Morris may possibly have had this episode in mind in introducing the scene between Thorgerd and John on Christmas Day, when Thorgerd offers her love to him and he, in his deep disappointment at being separated from his true lady, cries out to her and bids her come to him, thus bringing her to his home for that night but losing her for many years thereafter. The main theme of the second part of "The Story of Hasan of El-Baarah" in The Thousand and One Nights is of course the same as the underlying idea in Morris's poem, but the whole setting of this tale and the development of the plot are so completely different from what we find in Morris's work that there seems to be little justification for mentioning it as a source. Morris's treatment of his originals in the three Scandinavian poems included in the last two volumes of The Earthly Paradise has been investigated and discussed by Tollef B. Thompson in a dissertation called Skandinavischer Einfluss auf William Morris in den ersten Stadien (The Earthly Paradise). The section of this study that deals with "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon" is very detailed and complete; I shall merely summarize Thompson's results, making a few comments on some of his statements and adding a few observations of my own.

3. Tr. E. W. Lane (London, 1865), III, 352-483. The part of the story that is similar to Morris's tale begins on page 372.
4. Miss Morris herself says a few pages later (in Collected Works, V, xxiv) that she does not think her father used the Arabian tale as a source.
5. (Berlin, 1910).
6. Pages 17-51.
Thompson first very carefully compares Morris's poem with all the Norwegian, Danish, and German popular tales with the same or a similar theme, and comes to the conclusion that although Morris drew in the main on Thorpe's story, he was also indebted for some of his details to these other fairy tales. It seems to me that some of the incidents Thompson believes were borrowed Morris may very well have invented himself, without the use of any sources, but in the main Thompson's conclusions are probably correct. Morris was of course intimately familiar with all the fairy tales of northern Europe, and it is only natural that when he wished to develop and enlarge upon his immediate source, he borrowed incidents from other folk tales. The four Norwegian stories to which Thompson refers, I should like to point out, are all translated into English in Dasent's Tales from the Norse, and it must have been through this book that Morris had acquainted with these legends. The Danish story Thompson mentions, "Den nedtraadte Ager" in Molbech's Udvalgte Aventyr eller Folkedigtninger, had not been turned into English at this time, so far as I know; it does not seem to have played any important part in Morris's poem, and most likely he did not know it at all.

Thompson next discusses Dasent's and Thorpe's style of trans-

1. Pages 17-23.
2. Thus, for example, Thompson points out that the following incidents in Morris's poem are not in Thorpe's version but are to be found only in German tales with a similar subject: "Er spricht nur mit einer Jungfrau, weil die anderen fortgeflohen sind.... Sie hieraten sich, ehe er die Heimat wieder besucht..... Trotz seiner königlichen Kleidung, verkleidet er sich noch mehr, als er die Heimat betritt." (page 23).
4. (Copenhagen, 1854), I, 288-296.
lation in their English versions of Scandinavian fairy tales, and refers briefly to the influence of their renderings on some of Morris's Earthly Paradise poems and on his later prose romances. The examples that Thompson gives of this influence show that it is rather slight and in no case very important.

Next comes a very detailed account of all Morris's changes and additions to the original story. Thompson mentions first a number of elements which he thinks were suggested to Morris by details in Scandinavian popular tales with an entirely different theme; it seems to me that almost all of these incidents Morris in all probability invented himself, and that there is little need for citing these similar episodes as possible sources. The following examples are especially unconvincing:

(M.) Bei seiner Rückkehr sieht die Mutter die Kleider des Sohnes furchtsam an und fragt ihn flüstern, ob er etwas von dem Ort, von dem er neue Glaube sprechen, erzählen könne. Dies ist dem norw. Märchen "Somme Kjørringer er slige" entnommen. Thorpe übersetzt es (S. 337): "Where he was from? I come from Ringerike answered the man. Oh, indeed! what, do you say you come from Himmerige (Heaven), then of course you know the second Peter, my poor late husband?" Basent übersetzt es (S. 202) auf ganz ähnliche Weise. Die Frage am Ende der Erzählung (M.) ist charakteristisch für die meisten Märchen.

A little later we read, "Auf seinem Weg trifft er Leute und ruft sie an: "What land of all lands this might be?" In Basents Übersetzung von Hv. ruft der Held unter ähnlichen Umständen: "What's the name of this land?"

1. Pages 25-35.
2. Pages 35-46.
3. I should like to point out that by "(M.)" Thompson indicates that the incident referred to is in Morris's poem.
4. Pages 36-37.
5. I should like to point out that "Hv." refers to the Norwegian tale "De tre Prinsesser fra Hvidtenland."
Next Thompson discusses other changes and additions by Morris, and lists the Scandinavian allusions Morris introduced in order to make the Norse setting of the tale more realistic. He calls attention to the references to "stockfish," to "Sigurd Fafnir's-bane," to "Skeggi's two sons," and to "Haldor the Icelanders"; he also points out that Morris gave Scandinavian names to most of his characters, such as "Thorgerd," "Asa," "Kirstin," and "Haldor." For the allusion to "Sigurd Fafnir's-bane," as Thompson notes, Morris was very likely indebted to Thorpe's Northern Mythology. In his reference to "Skeggi's two sons" as well-known evil-doers, Morris does not seem to have had any definite historical figures in mind; the name "Skeggi," however, as Thompson shows, is extremely common in Old Norse works; and Morris had already come across the name both in the Grettis saga and in the Njáls saga. With the names "Haldor," "Thorgerd," and "Asa" he had also already met, I should like to add, in the Grettis saga. "Stockfish" is likewise mentioned in the Grettis saga and also in the Eyrbyggja saga, but for Morris's

1. Pages 38–40, passim.
3. Ibid., V, 31.
4. Ibid., V, 23.
5. Ibid., V, 50.
6. Ibid., V, 63.
7. Ibid., V, 60.
9. See, for example, Collected Works, VII; 16, 20, 21, 95, and 209 and Njáls saga, tr. Dastent, I, 80 and II, 219, 327, 344, and 347.
11. See, for example, ibid., VII, 104 and Saga Library, II, 145, 146, 147, 149, and 173.
acquaintance with the use of stockfish in Scandinavia it is scarcely necessary to seek for any definite source. To Thompson's list of Norse elements that Morris inserted in the tale itself, I should like to add his use of the term "bonder," an allusion to Micklegarth, and his use of the names "Thorolf" and "Thord." With these terms and names Morris had become familiar even before he began studying Icelandic with Magnusson. Finally, in regard to the framework of the tale, Thompson calls attention to the fact that Morris presents the whole story as a dream of Gregory the Star-gazer and represents Gregory as living in Norway in the reign of King Magnus. Thompson does not point out, however, that Morris further portrays Gregory as a member of the retinue of Marshall Biorn, and designates the scene of the opening of the dream as Ladir. For his references to Magnus, Marshall Biorn, and Ladir, I should like to state, Morris was very likely indebted to Laing's translation of the Heimskringla. In that work there are five Norwegian kings named Magnus whose reigns are described in detail, - Magnus Barefoot, Magnus the Blind, Magnus Erlingsson, Magnus the Good, and Magnus, the son of Harald Hardrady; which one of these Morris had in mind here there is

2. Ibid., V, 112.
3. Ibid., V, 28-29.
4. For occurrences of the term "bonder," see, for example, Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I, 272, 274, 283, and 284; for references to Micklegarth, see above, pp. 20, 23, and 24; and for occurrences of the names "Thorolf" and "Thord," see Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I, 367, 368, 371, and 464 and II, 99, 100, 318, and 330.
5. Page 44. For references in the poem to Magnus, see Collected Works, V, 24-25 and 50.
6. Ibid., V, 24 and 25.
7. See Heimskringla, tr. Laing, III, 115-147; 205-232; 300-340; and II, 359-399 and 82-104.
nothing in the poem to indicate. There is also a Marshall Biorn mentioned in the Heimskringla, but he was one of the chief officers of King Olaf the Holy. Moreover, Ladir is frequently referred to in the early part of the Heimskringla, this being the seat of the powerful Earls of Ladir, but neither Marshall Biorn nor any of the kings by the name of Magnus had any special connection with this place. Morris probably simply remembered these names from his reading of Laing's translation of the Heimskringla, and introduced them here in order to make more vivid the Norwegian setting he had invented for the tale.

Thompson also suggests a possible modern Scandinavian influence. He calls attention to the similarity between Morris's description of the youth John and Ibsen's account of Peer Gynt, and thinks that Morris may have had Ibsen's character in mind when he wrote his tale. The possibility that Morris was influenced in any way by Ibsen is extremely slight. In the first place the similarity pointed out is not very striking. Moreover, Ibsen's Peer Gynt appeared in 1867; and as we have already seen, Morris seems to have written the first draft of his poem in 1865 or 1866, if not earlier, and already in the manuscript of this work in the Fitzwilliam Museum, which is very likely a copy of this first draft, we find practically the same descriptions of John as those in the printed text to which Thompson calls attention and on which he bases his suggestion.

1. See, for example, Heimskringla, tr. Laing, II, 52, 59, 60 and 67-70.
2. See, for example, ibid., I, 277, 307, 314, and 323.
3. Pages 41-42.
It is clear, then, that Morris found the central theme of his poem "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon" in the tale called "The Beautiful Palace East of the Sun and North of the Earth" in Thorpe's *Yule-Tide Stories*, but that he enlarged considerably on this legend, developing in some detail a medieval Scandinavian setting and introducing a number of new incidents, some of them probably suggested by other Norse folk tales and others most likely invented by the poet himself. The finished poem thus differs in a very marked degree from the story in Thorpe. An excellent opportunity to study the evolution of the tale is provided by the holograph manuscript of an earlier version in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, to which I have already on several occasions referred.

In this manuscript Morris has written out the poem very neatly in ink in a small notebook, using only one side of each page. There are extremely few corrections throughout the whole work. Frequently we find on the left-hand page, otherwise left blank, brief notes for pictures, similar to the notes which, according to Miss Morris, are found in some of the other early manuscripts. Very likely this Fitzwilliam Museum notebook is a fair copy of the manuscript of the first draft of the poem, which Miss Morris describes briefly in the Preface to Volume V of the *Collected Works*. At any rate, it most certainly represents an early form of the story, for the version found here differs considerably from the poem he finally published.

1. This manuscript, measuring 9½ by 8½ inches, is bound in three-quarters dark, purplish-blue leather. The following words, in gold letters, appear on the back: "Earthly Paradise The Land East of the Sun William Morris M.S." On the inside of the front cover is pasted a slip bearing the words "From the library of Ch. Fairfax Murray." With the exception of the two flyleaves at the beginning and end, the pages are ruled, with twenty-three lines to the page. The writing ends in the middle of page 65.


In order to reveal the extent of these differences and to show how the tale developed under Morris's hand, I shall present first a brief abstract of the legend as it is found in Thorpe's *Yule-Tide Stories*, then a fairly full summary of the plot of the poem in the Fitzwilliam Museum manuscript, going into some detail here since there is no account in print of this manuscript, and finally a synopsis of the printed poem.

In Thorpe's story, which he translated from G. O. Hyltén-Cavallius and George Stephens's *Svenska Folk-Sagor och Äventyr*, an old farmer, often finding on summer mornings that the grass in his best field had been trampled down during the night, once resolved to find out who the malefactors were by sending his oldest son to watch over the meadow. The boy, however, fell asleep and discovered nothing. The next son fared similarly the following night. Finally the youngest boy, amidst the jeers of his brothers, decided to try his luck. Just before sunrise the following morning, he saw three doves alight on the grass; they immediately shed their feathers and became three fair ladies, and then began to dance over the meadow. The young lad straightway fell in love with the prettiest one, and decided to steal their plumage and wait for the results. Just after the sun had risen, the three maidens prepared to leave, and not finding their feather-dresses, they searched the field carefully and came across the youth. He refused to return the skins unless they answered two questions. First he demanded to know who they were; one of the girls replied that she was a king's daughter, and that she and her attendants came from "The Palace Which . . ."
Lies East Of The Sun And North Of The Earth." He then made the re-
quest that the king's daughter should promise to marry him, and when
she did so and fixed a day for the wedding, he gave back the feather-
dresses and the three maidens flew away. The youth now returned home,
but said nothing about his adventure. When the day set for the mar-
riage arrived, he asked his father to prepare a feast; at midnight
the princess arrived with her two attendants. All were supremely
happy, but just before dawn, the young lady revealed to her husband
that she must leave at once, because she was held in captivity by a
troll who had slain her father and allowed her only a few hours of
liberty at midnight. The three guests departed, the princess giving
him a ring and her two attendants presenting him with two golden
apples. Needless to say, the youth now felt very unhappy, and after
a short time he left his home to search for his bride. One day he
came across two giants fighting in the woods over a pair of boots
which enabled the wearer to cover a hundred miles at every step.
He persuaded the giants that the easiest way for them to settle
their dispute would be to give him the boots, and he spoke so con-
vincingly that they agreed to this suggestion. In the same way the
youth acquired a cloak which rendered the wearer invisible and a
sword which possessed such power that its point immediately killed
anyone it touched but its hilt restored life to the dead. Delighted
with his new possessions he journeyed onward, and came one night to
the cot of an extremely old woman, who in return for his kind greet-
ing promised to aid him in his search for the palace east of the sun
and north of the earth. In the morning she summoned all the beasts,
over which she ruled, and asked whether anyone of them knew this
palace. But no one had heard of it. The old lady then sent the youth to her sister, who held sway over the fishes, but they could not give him any information either. This lady directed him to another sister, who was the ruler of the birds. Here he learned that the phoenix knew of this palace, and the old lady commanded the bird to convey the young man thither. It did so. As soon as it was midnight, the lad knocked at the gate of the palace, and gained admittance to the princess after he had identified himself by means of the golden apples and the ring that he had received as presents. In the morning, with the aid of the boots, cloak, and sword he killed all the trolls and restored to life the slain relatives of the princess. The young man then became their king.

In the Fitzwilliam Museum manuscript of Morris's poem, the whole opening scene is very similar to that in the fairy tale. The two older sons, Roger and Hugh, were both unsuccessful in their watch over their father's field; but the youngest boy, John, kept awake, and early in the morning saw three swans arrive in the meadow. When they removed their swanskins and began dancing, John realized at once that the fairest one was a queen, for on her skin lay a crown. He fell in love with this girl immediately, and stole her skin. When the maidens ceased dancing and discovered that one of the feather-dresses was gone, the queen sent her two attendants home, and remained in shame alone; she then burst into tears. At this point John came forth. She begged him to return the skin, promising as a reward to make him free if he was a thrall and to make him rich if he was poor. John, however, would not be satisfied with these fair words, and demanded that she promise to marry him. She looked
at him askance, noticing that he was fair; and remembering that it often happened that a fool's heart beat in a king and that a king's courage and nobility were frequently to be found in a man of low birth, she gave him her promise to marry him. She directed him to wait for ten days, and then to wish to be with her, and he would be transported at once to her land. Then they parted. He returned home, but did not mention his adventure. On the tenth day, following her instructions, he went into the woods, longed passionately for his love, and was immediately carried to a strange country, where he saw before him a royal palace roofed with gold. As he approached the castle, he found a river before him, guarded by huge dragons. He hesitated a moment but then plunged in, and reached the other bank untouched. At the gate of the palace he walked boldly by two lions, and in the doorway he passed unharmed through a fire that burned on the threshold. He then found his beloved seated on a dais surrounded by knights; she praised him for the courage he had shown in not being frightened at all these dangers, and commanded her chamberlains to give him clothes befitting a king.

Here now John passed many a day in perfect happiness, sitting on his throne judging wrong-doers, watching his soldiers engage in tilts, talking with his sailors about far-off lands, or kissing his fair lady in some lone garden. But amidst all his happiness he began to think of Norway, and one day he asked his queen whether it would not be possible for the two of them to visit his country. She replied that she could not accompany him thither, but that he might go alone, assuring him that when he saw the hunger and distress of his own land, he would soon realize how happy he had been with her.
As they parted, she gave him a ring, by the aid of which he could be transported to his father's house by merely expressing a desire to be there. She also warned him not to wish for her, for then she would be compelled to come to him at once but would also be forced to leave him shortly thereafter forever, and he would no longer be a king. He now followed her directions, and soon found himself before his father's house. As he approached his old home, he pulled down his hood; and meeting his father at the door, he asked for shelter, saying that his horse had been frightened away when he had alighted to adjust the stirrups. He sat down on the settle by the door, and sang an old song he had learned as a boy, and through this song his family recognized him. The next day John went to the town, bought a horse and a beautiful suit of armor, engaged in a tourney held by the king, and carried off the prize. The young Queen fell in love with him, and bidding him come to her chamber, offered him her love; when her fair words failed, she began to threaten him with death, but he firmly refused, declaring that he had already given his love away to a maiden much fairer than the Queen and finally in desperation uttering the forbidden wish that his beloved would come to him. In a flash his fairy lady stood before him. She told him that all their joy was now at an end, for she must go at once to the land which lies Eastward of the Sun and West of the Moon, and he would never see her again. Then she departed abruptly, and left John plunged in despair.

After a short time had passed, John wandered to the sea and found a dromond ready to sail, the master standing drinking the farewell toasts. The captain announced that he intended to sail to Dunwich, London, Calais, Marseilles, and Scanderby in Africa, where
one can see many marvels, such as headless black men and war
between birds and men, and from which one can travel "to westward of
the moon." At these last words John decided at once to accompany
this skipper. After visiting the places named, the travellers
finally arrived in Africa, and sailing up the Nile, came to a city
beside an untrrodden desert. In the evening John walked alone out-
side the city-gates, mourning over his loss, and came across two
brothers quarrelling over the inheritance left them by their father;
this inheritance consisted of a sword which could pierce anything
made by a smith and at the same time was able to shield its wielder
from all wounds, a pair of shoes which transported him who possessed
them whithersoever he wished in a moment, and a cap which rendered
the wearer invisible. As the brothers were fighting, John snatched
up all three articles, and disappeared. Of course, he immediately
wished to be East of the Sun and West of the Moon, and at once he
stood in a marvellous land, where the woods were leafless and there
was no grass,

But underneath red stones he saw
And emeralds without a flaw.

And when he lifted up his face
Skyward, there ever in his place
The sun was set, nor moved at all,
Nor ever seaward did he fall.
And over against him was the moon
That moved not either late or soon.
For there was neither night nor day
But changeless was the light alway.

On a river he saw strange ships of gold, manned by golden men with
long red beards. On the land uncouth beasts with tongues striped
with blue fed on the red pebbles. He soon came across a red and
green tower in a garden, and entering, he found a king and a queen
seated on their throne, the king being all naked except for a crown and a heavy belt of rubies. John, wearing the cap of invisibility, approached them, and found that the queen, who was sobbing violently, was his beloved. As the king led her off to the bedchamber, John followed unseen, struck off the king's head, snatched up a golden cup, gathered his lady in his arms, and wished to be back in his own country. Straightway he and his bride found themselves on a ness in Norway. That night they lay down together on the beech mast, their marriage-bed. The next day they brought the golden cup to the King of Norway as a gift; the King, in return for this present, granted them large estates, and John became a man of wealth and position.

In the published poem the opening scene of the tale itself is very similar to that in the early version and in Thorpe's story. The two oldest sons, Thorolf and Thorl, were unsuccessful in their watch over their father's field; but John, the youngest, after an uneventful night, found in the early morning that seven white swans came down on the field, shed their skins, and became fair maidens. The description that follows of how John fell in love with one of these damsels and stole her skin is given here in much more detail than in the early version, the account here being more than twice as long. Even more expanded in the published poem is the scene between John and his lady, after the others had flown away, when John won the love of the swan-maiden and she promised to remain faithful to him forever; this passage is almost four times as long here as in the Fitzwilliam Museum manuscript. The nature of the scene is also almost entirely different; all the passion, tenderness,
and emotion and the delicate dream-world atmosphere found in the
final form are absent in the earlier draft.

From this point on, Morris has completely rewritten his tale. As soon as John and his lady had plighted troth to each other, he was transported directly to her land, where they lived for many years in complete happiness until John returned to his old home for a visit. Morris describes in a very touching manner John's feelings on seeing all the well-known places again; this whole description is entirely lacking in the account of John's visit to his home in the early poem. He reached the house just as the family was sitting down to dinner, and although he kept his identity unknown, he was at once invited to come in and partake of the food. He found everything as it had been, except for the fact that his brother Thor was newly married; and John soon became aware that Thorgerd, the bride, had now fallen in love with him. Later in the day, when the men had returned to work, John revealed to his mother, mainly by means of singing an old song, that he was her long-lost son. He now continued to live in his father's house during the autumn and early winter; he longed desperately for his lady, and went every evening, as she had requested, to the meadow where they first had met to watch for any sign from her. In the meantime Thorgerd's love for him grew greater and greater, but she was utterly unable to turn his thoughts to her. On Christmas Day, as he returned dejected from his watch in the meadow, he met Thorgerd, and thought for a moment that she was his lady; then, being plunged into despair when he realized his mistake, he forgot that he must not call upon her to come to him, and cried out.
He repented at once, but it was too late. That night amidst the feast she arrived, and all John's kinsmen and friends marvelled at the beauty of his bride. As it grew late, she drew him away to his chamber, and during the night he slept happily in her arms. Just before dawn she arose while he still slumbered, and amidst stifled sobs and sighs, she prayed that although she must now leave him, he would seek for her in the land which lies east of the sun and west of the moon. Then she slipped away into the night.

When John awoke and discovered his loss, he was of course overcome with despair, and rather than face his family and friends again, he rushed out at once into the snow to seek for her. He soon reached the sea, and early in the spring sailed on the first ship that left the harbor. For a long time he had faintly remembered something told him in a dream, but he could not recall the message exactly; now one morning when he awoke, he saw the pale moon just over the mast, while in the east the sun rose brightly over the horizon, and at once the phrase "East of the Sun, West of the Moon" came clearly into his mind. From that moment he knew where he must search for his love. But although he journeyed far and wide throughout the world, he never met anyone who knew of this land. Finally he found himself sailing over the Indian Ocean; and one night just as the sun was sinking in the west, he saw the moon over the mast, and again the well-known phrase flashed into his mind. That night the ship was wrecked in a storm, and he was washed ashore in a strange land. There he found a beautiful palace, inhabited by people who

1. Collected Works, V, 76.
did not speak either to him or to one another. In a separate chamber he came across his love, as she sat embroidering, but she too remained deaf to his greetings and gave no response to his caresses. At last he repeated the whole story of their love and of his search for her, and as he told how he remembered the words "East of the Sun, West of the Moon," the spell broke, and she recognized him. From that time forth, as long as they lived, the two enjoyed supreme happiness there in her land.

If we compare Morris's two versions of this tale, we see at once that the final, rewritten form is far superior in every way. In the early poem all the characters are vague and unreal; the action is not well motivated, and the movement of the plot is not always smooth and natural; many of the incidents are fantastic and even grotesque, and some are colorless conventionalities; the treatment of the whole story is singularly unimaginative, and throughout the poem we find no beautiful descriptive passages, no flashes of insight into character, and no tender, sympathetic portrayal of emotions and feelings. The whole work seems unusually dull and uninspired. In the published poem, however, the situation is just the opposite. Here the main characters, although by no means drawn in detail and fully developed, are not mere types like those found in the medieval romances, but are more individualized and more human. Again, Morris does not here introduce unusual or extraordinary adventures and scenes, but tries to make the action and setting as natural and realistic as possible. In the early poem, when John returned from his lady to his old home, he bought a suit of armor and a horse, engaged in a tourney, and won the prize
and also the love of the young queen, who first requested with
fair words and then demanded with threats that he become her para-
mour, - a scene very closely resembling the temptation of Lanval
by Queen Guenevere in the *Lai de Lanval* by Marie de France; in
the later version, however, Morris does not borrow any of the con-
ventions of the medieval romances, for here on his visit home
John quite simply and naturally awakened the love of his brother's
young bride Thorgerd, and it was through an unexpected meeting with
her when his mind was especially occupied with thoughts of his
loved one that he was led to utter the fatal wish for his lady.
Similarly, in the first version John finally reached the Land East
of the Sun and West of the Moon and regained his beloved by means
of the magic sword, shoes, and cap, but in the published poem Morris
does not resort to any of the outworn supernatural devices, bringing
John to the home of his fairy love by means of a storm which wrecks
his ship and washes him ashore, unconscious, in a strange land. In
the first draft Morris describes the country in which John finally
discovers his princess as a place of extraordinary marvels: the
hills are white but not with snow, the woods are leafless, the
ground is not covered with grass but with red stones and emeralds,
golden images with red beards reaching to their knees move slowly
about, singing, on ships of gold, and golden people tend beasts
with blue-striped tongues that feed upon the red pebbles. In the
rewritten poem, however, Morris represents the place as being excep-
tionally beautiful but essentially natural, the only marvels being a
tree that bears blossoms and fruit at the same time and the spell of
silence which has been laid upon the inhabitants of the palace and
which is broken as soon as the princess recognizes John. Finally, in the rejected version John finds his love just as she is about to be married to a king, all naked except for a crown and a belt of rubies, from whom he rescues her by smiting off his head with the magic sword; in the other poem John discovers his lady as she sits embroidering, surrounded by her maidens, and he awakens her from her trance by reciting the story of their love. Furthermore, not only are the scenes and incidents in the rewritten poem more natural and more pleasing, but the whole story is told here with a wealth of imaginative detail that is especially delightful; I have already called attention to some of the most beautiful passages in my synopsis of the published tale. Moreover, there is a great difference in the attitude of the author toward his subject in the two poems: in the first one he seems to stand apart, showing but little interest in the fate of his characters, but throughout the second version of the story there runs a deep note of tenderness, sympathy, and warmheartedness. Because of all these differences, the original tale as compared with the revised form seems shadowy, vague, and utterly unreal, but the rewritten poem, even though it is purely a fairy story, takes on a human quality and an air of realism, and rouses the deepest interest and sympathy of the reader.

The reasons for this decided difference in Morris's treatment of the same tale in these two poems are probably numerous. Perhaps he simply lacked inspiration when he wrote the first one. Again, he may have been too close to his sources to give free play to his imagination in the early version. Moreover, the improvements in the second form may merely have been the result of maturing poetical
powers. However, it is not at all unlikely that many of the
changes noted above in the revised version — the tendency to avoid
the introduction of fairy elements, the attempt to make the setting,
characters, and episodes in the tale realistic and natural, and the
revelation of a greater understanding of human nature and deeper
sympathy — were all to a great extent a definite result of Morris's
study of the Icelandic sagas in the original, and that these altera-
tions were part of the general change from the method of the romance
to that of the epic which, as I have already pointed out, took place
in Morris's creative writing after the fall of 1866. We seem to
have here in these two poems, one written almost certainly before
his meeting with Magnússon and the other composed a little less than
a year after he had begun reading Icelandic, an illustration of how
even in the telling of the same story Morris's style underwent a
change as a result of his becoming acquainted with the saga litera-
ture of the North at first hand.

Apart from this change in the general nature of the tale, the
growth in Morris's knowledge of early Scandinavia is apparent in
the increase in the number of Norse allusions in the second version.
Not only was the whole framework of Gregory the Star-gazer and his
dream with the references to King Magnus, Biorn, and Ladir added
in the final form, but in the story itself most of the Scandinavian
names and several of the allusions to early Scandinavia which I
have already pointed out, in the published poem, especially in the
last part of the work, were inserted in the course of the revision.
These added Norse allusions help, of course, to make the setting
more realistic.
The other Scandinavian poem that was published in Volume III of *The Earthly Paradise* was "The Lovers of Guðrun," a very lengthy tale in heroic couplets based on the central episode in the Laxdæla saga. This story is generally considered to be the best one in the whole collection—in fact, it is considered by some critics to be one of the finest of all Morris's literary productions. Apart from its own inherent value, the poem is noteworthy because it was through this work that many Englishmen of the nineteenth century made their first acquaintance with the Icelandic sagas; the publication of this poem was undoubtedly one of the most important factors contributing to the awakening of an interest in the literature of the North among English-speaking people in the second half of the last century. However, although Morris followed very closely the main events described in the saga, he told the story in an entirely different spirit from that found in the original, and many critics familiar with the sagas have resented Morris's modernizing of the tale and have criticized him for his treatment. Sir Oliver Elton, for example, says of the poem in his *Survey of English Literature*,

It is a history that is better packed into a ballad, as the late Miss Barmby showed in her noble *Bolli and Guðrun*, than

1. Morris's poem is based on Chapters XXVIII through LVI of the Laxdæla saga; there are also a few references to material in other chapters. As I have already stated, it is not definitely known which of the two editions of the Laxdæla saga in existence in 1869 (see *Islandica*, I (1906), 74-75) Morris used in preparing his poem, but it was very likely the edition printed at Copenhagen in 1826 that served as the basis of his work, for this book was in his library at his death (see below, p. 1002) and this edition, but not the other, includes the "Húadrápa," which he used in his poem (see below, pp. 93-94).

2. Elton here inserts the following note: "In *Gísli Súrsson, A Drama*, etc., by Beatrice Helen Barmby (pref., by F. York Powell), 1900, pp. 128-9. In Sigurd metre, but only 22 lines. When will this author's dramatization of *Gísli Saga*, in the title-poem of her book, cease to be smothered under the rubble-heap of contemporary verse?"
unfolded into a long romance. A detailed comparison with the original shows how much nerve is lost, and how the characterisation is weakened, in the process. The saga deals in a vicious close cut-and-thrust of dialogue; Morris loosen this, and sentences become speeches, and the words do not draw blood, although the incidents are respected and passages versified bodily. In recompense, there is always his diffused beauty of treatment, and much lovely ornamentation.

Morris's treatment of the original saga material has been very thoroughly examined and discussed in the second chapter of Thompson's Skandinavischer Einfluss auf William Morris in den ersten Stadien (The Earthly Paradise). In order to indicate in some detail the nature of Morris's changes, I shall call attention to the most important and interesting observations Thompson makes in this study, adding a few remarks of my own.

Thompson points out that Morris made slight alterations in the character and personality of some of the leading figures; he says, for example, "Gudrun erscheint naiver und schuldfreier, Bodli mehr von Leidenschaft getrieben und mehr wissentlich schuldig, und die Brüder Gudrungs boshafter als im Original, diese Personen werden überhaupt am meisten verändert." In the original saga, moreover, the characters as a rule do not reveal their feelings outwardly even in the slightest degree, but in Morris's poem they are allowed to express their sorrow and grief openly:

5 B: B. spricht ruhig mit G. über K. s Aufenthalt in Norwegen

1. Elton here inserts the following note: "See e.g. the deletions of the Laxdala Saga, ch. xxxiii. (swimming); ch. xlv. (Khartan and Hreins); and ch. xlix. (slaying of Khartan); and the poet's omissions in ch. xxxix. (Olafr's bodings), and in ch. xlix. (the superb dialogue of Bolli and Gudrun). There is a translation of the saga by Muriel A. C. Press, 1906."

2. IV, 40.

3. Pages 52-90.


(M: Ein nimmt ihre Hand, worauf Freudentränen seine Augen fällen).
S: G. zeigt keine Erregung, hat aber ein sehr rotes Gesicht, als
sie B. verläßt. (S: Sie weint.) S: Als K. von G.s Heirat hört,
scheint er darüber nicht traurig zu sein. (M: er wird aufgerütt
und bricht in Wechseln aus)... S: G. spricht wenig mit B. Über
K.s Rückkehr, zeigt aber, daß sie unzufrieden ist (M: sie kommt
to B. in der Nacht, als er noch auf ist, überschüttet ihn mit
Schimpfworten und verläßt ihn, ehe er ihr antworten kann).

The most important change, however, that Morris made was the addi-
tion of psychological analysis of the characters; this literary
device was utterly foreign to the sagas.

Alles in allem werden der Liebespsychologie Bodis, ehe er
nach Island zurückkehrt, mehr als 60 Zeilen und bi zu seiner
Verheiratung mit Guðrun ca. 125 Zeilen gewidmet; Ó.s Liebes-
psychologie, entweder von dem Dichter berichtet oder von ihr
selbst in Selbstgesprachen mitgeteilt, umfaßt bis zu ihrer
Verheiratung mit B. ca. 90 Zeilen; desgleichen bei K. bis zu
seiner Rückkehr 30 Zeilen; bei Ingibjörg 45 Zeilen; K.s Gemüt-
stimmung (Liebe, Sorge, Kummer), nachdem er zurückgekehrt ist,
112 Zeilen; bei G. nach K.s Rückkehr bis zu seinem Tod 102
Zeilen; Alles in allem umfaßt die Psychologie der Personen 3
ungefähr 940 Zeilen, das ist fast ein Fünftel des ganzen Gedichtes.

Similarly, the style of the sagas was absolutely objective,
the teller of the story never introducing his own opinion or his
own interpretation of the events described; Morris, however, did
not hesitate to insert his own reflections on a number of occasions:

Als B. die G. heiratet, macht der Dichter selber die Bemerkung,
"so sprung the evil crop by evil sown", womit er B.s Handlung
vollständig verwirrt; er nennt dies später die Ernte aus den Leiden-
schaften und den Lügen. Wiederum tritt seine Persönlichkeit hervor
in Ausdrücken wie: "Ah well! what will you have?" (zweimal); "the
story saith"; "my story saith"; "Harken once more"; "Thus have I
striven to show the troublesome life of these dead folk e'en as if
mid their strife I dwell myself";.... Eine persönliche Lebensan-
schauung spricht er in den Worten aus: "I deem it that use and wont
may raise the base, but somewhat abuse those that are wise and noble".

Less important as far as the general tone of the poem is

1. This "S" is obviously a mistake for "M."
2. Page 52.
3. Page 70.
concerned but nevertheless very interesting are the changes
which Thompson shows that Morris made in his original for the
apparent purpose of rendering certain scenes more effective from
the modern point of view:

S: Guest trifft u. an der Quelle (M: Siehst, dass er kommt,
also sie im Hause sitzt, damit der Dichter ihr Bild in der Tür
beschreiben kann). S: Als K. nach Island zurückkehrt, reitet
sein Vater zu dem Schiff, um ihn zu empfangen (M: Olaf und seine
Söhne waren damals nicht zu Hause, so dass einige Zeit verging,
bevor K. sie sieht. Dadurch stellt der Dichter die Szene mit
Reftna mehr in den Vordergrund). S: Der Köpfezt wird gestohlen,
ehe Reftna Gelegenheit hat, ihm beim Feste zu tragen (M: Sie trägt
ihn beim Feste, damit der Dichter ihr aussehen und die Wirkung
auf die anderen schildern kann). 1

Finally, it should be noted that Thompson points out here and
there in his discussion that in developing the Scandinavian setting
of his tale Morris occasionally introduced Norse allusions not
found in his immediate source. Thus, for example, he writes,

Das Aussehen König Olafs (roter Bart, breite Schultern, helle
Augen) hat M. vielleicht auch Laings Heimskringla entnommen; die
Beschreibung passt auf einen König Olaf, aber nicht auf Tryggveson,
sondern auf seinen christlichen Nachfolger Olaf Haraldson. Dieser
Fehler ist sehr leicht zu erklären, denn die Geschichte von Harald-
son folgt direkt auf die Olaf Tryggvesons Saga in der Heimskringla.
Hieraus stammt auch vermutlich die Auseinandersetzung über den König
Langschiffe und über den Bischof. Das Christentum wurde im Island
auf dem Thinghöfe im Jahre 1000 n. Chr. angenommen. Über den Einfluss
Gissurs und Hjaltsis wird in Heimskringla berichtet; von Morris
Einfluss hat M. vielleicht in Mallet gelesen, auch von dem Gesetz
der Gastfreundschaft. 2

With the stories of the Christianization of Iceland found in the
Heimskringla and in Mallet’s Northern Antiquities Morris was very

1. Pages 64-65.
2. Page 66. For a description of King Olaf, see Collected Works,
V, 290 and Heimskringla, tr. Laing, II, 2; and for references to
the King’s Longships, see Collected Works, V, 292 and Heimskringla,
tr. Laing, I, 441 and 456-458. In stating that Morris was indebted
to the Heimskringla for his information about Bishop Thangbrand,
Thompson evidently had in mind Morris’s reference to him as the “German
bishop” (in Collected Works, V, 296), for the rest of Morris’s account
of Thangbrand is to be found in the Laxdæla saga; for a statement in
the Heimskringla that Thangbrand was German, see Heimskringla, tr.
Laing, I, 441. For references to the Christianization of Iceland, see
Collected Works, V, 300-301 and 314; Heimskringla, tr. Laing, I,
441-442, 453-454, and 465; and Mallet’s Northern Antiquities, pp. 310,
352, and 532. Thompson’s reference to “Gissur,” should be pointed
out, must be a mistake for “Gissur.”
likely familiar, as Thompson suggests, but these descriptions seem not to have been the only ones that Morris had in mind in referring to the event, for he mentions details not found in these sources. It was very likely the fuller account in Wælter's translation of the Njáls saga which was the basis of Morris's statement that the Hill of Laws had heard
Sung through the clear air many a threatening word,
And seen the weapons gather for the fight;
Till Snorri's wiles, Hall's wisdom, Gizur's might,
And fears of many men, and waverings doubt
On the worse side, had brought it so about. That now Christ's faith was law to everyone.

In another passage in his study Thompson points out that in the account of how Kiartan and his companions were summoned to appear before King Olaf Tryggvason in his council chamber Morris enlarged upon his original and made Bodli say that they must go, and

then, if the worst befall,
There can we die too, as in Atli's Hall
The Niblungs fell.

and that somewhat later in the story, when Ingibjorg, the King's sister, parts with Kiartan and gives him a cowl for Guðrun, Morris again departed from his source, representing Ingibjorg as saying that the headdress had been made by "folk of Mícklegarth." With indications that Morris was familiar with the story of the Volsungs and with the Norsæmen's visits to Mícklegarth we have already met.

1. Note, in Morris's description, the references to the bitter dissent at the Thing, the preparations for battle, and "Hall's wisdom."


4. Page 70.


6. Ibid., V, 317.

7. See above, pages 22-23, 26, 28, and 37-38.
These are the only Scandinavian allusions inserted by Morris that Thompson notes. It is very surprising that he does not point out anywhere in his study that in the long description given in the poem of the paintings on the walls and ceiling of Claf Peacock's hall Morris drew not upon the Laxdæla saga but on the "Húsdrápa" of Úlfr Úggason. The saga refers very briefly to these paintings; in Chapter XXIX, in the account of the building of the hall, it states that "voru þar markadar á ágaðar sognur á pili-vidinum ok sva á raðfrinu," and at the end of the same chapter, in telling of the wedding-feast of Geirmundr and Thurídr, the saga further relates, "Þar var at bodi Úlfr Úggason, ok hafði ort kvæði um Claf Hóskulds-son ok um sognur þær, er skrifðar voru á elðhúsinu ok færdi hann þar at bodinu. Peska kvæði er kallat Hús-dráp ok er vel ort. 2 Claf launad vel kvæðit...." Morris, however, describes the scene at great length:

For over the high-seat, in his ship there lay
The gold-haired Baldur, God of the dead day,
The spring-flowers round his high pile, waiting there
Until the Gods thereto the torch should bear;
And they were wrought on this side and on that,
Drawing on towards him. There was Frey, and sat
On the gold-bristled boar, who first they say
Floughed the brown earth, and made it green for Frey.
Then came dark-bearded Niðr; and after him
Freyja, thin-robed, about her ankles slim
The grey cats playing. In another place
Thor's hammer gleamed o'er Thor's red-bearded face;
And Heimdall, with the gold-horn slung behind,
That in the God's-dusk he shall surely wind,
Sickening all hearts with fear; and last of all
Was Odin's sorrow wrought upon the wall,
As slow-paced, weary-faced, he went along,
Anxious with all the tales of woe and wrong
His ravens, Thought and Memory, bring to him.

1. Page 114.
2. Loc. cit.
Upon the other side, the deeds of Thor
Were duly done; the fight in the far sea
With him who rings the world's iniquity,
The Midgard Worm; strife in the giants' land,
With snares and mockeries thick on either hand,
And dealings with the Evil One who brought
Death even amid the Gods - all these well wrought
Did Guest behold...

The "Húsdrápa," which describes these paintings in much the same way and was obviously the source of Morris's account, is reproduced with a Latin translation and commentary at the end of the edition of the Laxdæla saga that was published at Copenhagen in 1826. Very likely Morris used this edition of the saga, and became acquainted with the "Húsdrápa" through this work. He was of course already familiar with the incidents referred to in the poem, and it should be noted that in his description he enlarged upon the account in the "Húsdrápa," supplementing the material presented there with information that he had gained from his reading of the Edda stories in Thorpe's Northern Mythology and Mallet's Northern Antiquities.

In addition to this description Morris introduced a few other allusions to Norse mythology in developing the Scandinavian background of his poem, referring on three other occasions to Thor and twice to Odin. He also inserted two proverbs common in Icelandic, with which he had evidently become familiar in translating the Grettis saga - namely, "Old friends are last to sever" and "Battered is bale by bale that follows it." Finally, I should like

2. Pages 386-394.
5. Ibid., V, 299, 1.1 and 374, 1.27.
6. Ibid., V, 356.
7. Ibid., V, 394. For occurrences of these proverbs in the Grettis saga, see Collected Works, VII, 200 and 116.
to point out that when in another passage Kiartan threatens to
burn the hall at Bathstead and Morris represents him as exclaiming,

"Come out, I say,
Else o'er your roof the red cock crows to-day!" 1

Morris seems again to be trying to add a Scandinavian touch to the
poem. The use of this expression is of course by no means restricted
to the Scandinavians, but that it was common among the Northmen Mor-
ris must have learned from Thorpe's Northern Mythology, and it may
have been for this reason that he introduced it here.

Morris's infusion of sentiment into the tale and his addition
of psychological analyses are undoubtedly the most important changes
made in this retelling of the tragic story of Gudrun, Kiartan, and
Bolli. It is of course true that as a result of these alterations
the original tale loses much of its force and vividness, as Sir
Oliver Elton points out in the quotation presented above, but it
must be admitted that Morris was to a certain extent justified in
changing the story as he did, in order that he might be able to
present it in the Earthly Paradise as one of the old tales told by
the wanderers to their Grecian hosts at the close of the fourteenth
century and in order that he might make his poem more acceptable to
the average modern reader. Miss May Morris, commenting on the ne-
cessity for these alterations, says of "The Lovers of Gudrun,"

...as one scene follows on another in the relentless drama, through-
out the whole runs an undertone of pity and tenderness - the modern
setting of this chronicle of passion that renders it more widely
intelligible and sympathetic. It is doubtful whether the general
English reader would ever have come to know well this splendid Saga,
with its tense self-restraint, its grimly brief handling of the most
poignant moments, without some introduction or modern comment....
The relation in which the story-teller of modern England is placed

2. See II, 7.
to his reader is of necessity different from that which held between the ancient Sagaman and his listeners, and involves a like difference in handling which is apparent in the English poem. In "The Lovers of Gudrun" the wildest and grimmest of the touches are softened or discarded and the writer allows himself some explanation of motive, where the Icelandic historian is able to trust almost entirely to the habit of mind of his audience for the interpretation of external things.

So it is after a different fashion that our poet makes us feel the irony of things and the fate that broods over these passionate conflicting wills; but modern difference and all, the poem stands with the splendid things of the Saga unaltered, none the less impressive for having been brought into the "Earthly Paradise" atmosphere.

The original manuscript of the first draft of "The Lovers of Gudrun" is now deposited in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, England; I have very carefully compared this manuscript with the


2. This manuscript, measuring 13 1/2 by 8 inches, is bound in three-quarters dark, brownish-green leather. On both the front and back covers is found the title "The Lovers of Gudrun"; the back, however, bears no lettering. On the inside of the front cover is pasted a slip of paper bearing the words

Fitzwilliam Museum
Cambridge

Presented by
Sir Philip Burne-Jones, Bart.
and Mrs. Mackail
July 1920

On the verso of the first flyleaf is written the following note, apparently in the hand of Sir Sydney Cockerell, the Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1920: "This MS. of the 'Lovers of Gudrun,' given by William Morris to Georgiana Burne-Jones, was presented to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, by her son and daughter, Philip Burne-Jones and Margaret Mackail, July 29th 1920." On the recto of the second flyleaf the inscription "Georgie from W.M. April 15th 1870" is written in the upper right-hand corner, and on the other side of this page is the statement "This is the first copy of the poem with some of the alterations inserted: I wrote it in June 1869 William Morris."

Most of the pages on which the poem is written out are blue lined foolscap; some of them, pages 13-27 and 32-36, are half an inch shorter than the others, and one small white paper, inserted between pages 16 and 17, measures 7 by 4 1/2 inches. Morris seems to have written out the poem in great haste. He completely disregarded the ruled lines, putting about sixty lines on a page. He used almost no punctuation of any kind; as a rule, however, he began each line with a capital letter. Frequently he drew flowers and scrolls in the margin. The poem is concluded on page 56; at the end he has written "Wednesday June 23d, 1869."
published poem, and I have found, as Miss Morris did, "that some of the passages have been amplified, but there are not many alterations and except for two whole pages cancelled (greatly to the improvement of the poem) no serious ones; there is very little groping about or teasing into shape of the verse."

Some of the revisions Morris made are interesting, and deserve brief consideration.

The most extensive change Morris made was the cancellation, referred to above, of two whole pages at the very beginning of the episode headed "Tidinga brought to Bathstead of Kiartan's coming back." In the passage struck out, which extended to ninety-five lines, Morris drew mainly for his material on the opening of Chapter XLIII of the Laxdæla saga; he described how, after Bodli had returned alone to Iceland, everyone began more and more to doubt that Kiartan would ever tear himself loose from King Olaf and his sister Ingibiorg in Norway, how Gudrun pined away, sometimes dreaming wildly that Kiartan would come back to her unwed, at other times raging at the thought that he would nevermore be hers, how her father and brothers were led to favor her marriage with Bodli because of the increase in power, an alliance with the men of Herdholt would give them, how Olaf


2. It was placed directly after line 22 of this section.

3. In the manuscript it runs from page 46, line 34 to page 48, line 11.
tried in vain to dissuade his foster son from seeking to marry Gudrun, and how the wedding was finally held, with little real pleasure to anyone, while all present wondered how Gudrun could have forgotten Kiartan in this way in only a year. After Morris had written this passage, he seems to have felt dissatisfied with it, for he cancelled it completely; then he rewrote the account of the actual wedding-feast, but said nothing about the reasons which led Gudrun to agree to the marriage, although he had made only very vague references to this matter earlier in the story. Undoubtedly, as Miss Morris says in one of the quotations presented above, the original passage in the manuscript was cancelled "greatly to the improvement of the poem." In the saga, which aims to present a cross section of life as it actually is, without any very great manipulation of events or scenes for the sake of artistic effectiveness, a detailed account of the circumstances leading to Bodli's wedding is of course absolutely essential; in Morris's poem, however, where exactly the opposite method is followed and where the actual incidents and details of the story are rearranged, developed, dropped, or subordinated by the narrator according to what he considers the most effective presentation, there is a distinct gain in omitting a description of these details, for not only is the whole passage dull and uninteresting but the very omission of any direct account of how Gudrun was led to yield to Bodli's suit makes the marriage itself seem more pitiable and dreadful.
Much later in the poem we find two long passages which Morris left uncancelled in the manuscript of the first draft but which he either rejected or entirely rewrote when he revised the tale. One of these occurs in the very moving description of how Kiarton’s body, after he had been slain by Bodli, was carried to Bathstead, while Bodli, overcome with grief and shame, plodded wearily behind; at this point in the manuscript Morris seems to have been carried away by the pathos and tragedy of the story he was retelling, for he bursts out into a very touching lament over the unworthiness he feels in attempting to describe the actions and feelings of these truly great and noble men. These lines are exceedingly interesting, for they reveal very vividly how deeply Morris’s feelings were aroused by this ancient tale.

O ye who hearken as unto the end
I draw of this strange woful history,
A little now I pray you pardon me
My stammering tongue unfit to deal with love,
Unfit to deal with the great thoughts that move
The hearts of great men, for so must I drag down
Their souls unto the level of mine own.
My little longings cling about their lives,
My little fluttering hope that feebly strives
Amidst my life of foolish pettiness
To gain from out the dark some faint redress
Of my life’s vanity, bears to earth again
Their soaring vision that saw heaven so plain.
Great men beloved were these, though in cold verse
And petty do I tell about the curse
They struggled with and fell, beneath at last,
That they might please us... 2

1. The cancelled passage comes directly after line 13, page 382 of Collected Works, V. In the manuscript it is found on page 79, lines 27-43.

2. Practically all the punctuation in this passage is mine; the only marks of punctuation in the manuscript are a dash after “plain” in line 13 and a comma after “last” in line 16. I should also like to point out that “ye” in line 1 is “Ye” in the manuscript, and “and” in line 16 is “&” in the manuscript.
This passage is completely omitted in the printed poem; it was of course only natural that Morris should realize, when soberly revising the tale, that these personal remarks of the author not only unduly interrupt the action but also have no place whatever in the retelling of a saga-story.

The other passage I referred to occurs only a few pages later in the account of the proceedings in the hall at Herdholn in the evening of the day on which Kiartan was slain. In the published poem Morris tells us that on that night Olaf Peacock sat in his hall, with tears in his eyes, surrounded by his family and friends, that as his gaze fell on Kiartan’s empty seat, he bade them all drink to the memory of “the best man Iceland ever knew,” that threats were muttered against the slayer of Kiartan, that Refna came in, pale-faced, and sat down beside Olaf, and that finally Thorgerd threw a sword upon the table, vowing that Bodli would be slain in revenge, even if she must do the deed herself. In the manuscript Morris leads up to Thorgerd’s vow to avenge Kiartan in an entirely different way. According to the manuscript account, as Olaf sat dejected in his hall, he asked the “masspries” whether there was not any story in the Bible of a man who lost his son, whereupon the priest related the tale of David and Absalom; and when he came to the end and told how David at the news of the death of his son exclaimed, “O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee,” Thorgerd rose, threw a sword on the table,

and cried that if all the old gods had departed from the land, she, Thorgerd, had not gone, and she would avenge Kiartan. Perhaps Morris originally introduced this allusion to David and Absalom because he wished to make the acceptance of Christianity by the Icelanders, which had been described earlier in the poem, seem more real. He had already made Bodli say, when Sæwif praised him for his courage in not hiding after he had killed Kiartan,

"Nay, I am not beguiled
To hope for speedy death; is it not told
How that Cain lived till he was very old?"

This remark, which is not to be found in the original saga either, Morris retained when he revised the poem, but the reference to David and Absalom he completely omitted when he rewrote the account of the scene in the hall, probably feeling that the sharp contrast between the new Christian and the old Pagan outlook upon life in the manuscript passage, effective as it was, was somewhat too artificial and improbable. There can be no doubt that the account in the published poem is much more in harmony with the spirit of the rest of the story and at the same time is more moving, with its simple description of the grief of Olaf and Refna for Kiartan.

In addition to these changes there are a few other less important alterations in the manuscript and in the printed text which I should like to mention. It is very interesting to note, for example, that many of those passages in which Morris departs most

1. The cancelled passage extends in the manuscript from page 81, line 48 to page 82, line 23.

widely from the spirit of his original in the introduction of sentiment are not in the first draft. Thus, in the description of Gudrun's feelings when she awoke on the morning of the day set for the slaying of Kiartan, we do not find in the manuscript the following lines from the published poem:

And then she thought of Refna's longing eyes,
And to her face a dreadful smile did rise
That died amidst its birth, as back again
Her thoughts went to the tender longing pain
She once had deemed a sweet fair day would end;
And therewith such an agony did rend
Her body and soul, that all things she forgot
Amidst of it; upon the bed she sat
Rigid and stark, and deemed she shrieked, yet made
No sound indeed; but slowly now did fade
All will away from her, until the sun
Risen higher, on her moveless body shone,
And as a smitten thing beneath its stroke
She shrank and started, and awhile awoke
To hear the tramp of men about the hall.

At the end of this episode, the long, detailed, and very moving description in the printed text of Boðil's passionate farewell to Gudrun and his departure from Bathstead with her rude brothers for the purpose of waylaying Kiartan - an account which extends here to forty-nine lines - is the result of the expansion of a passage only fifteen lines long in the manuscript. The original description, it should be noted, is almost entirely a mere statement of fact. Similarly, part of the account of Gudrun's wild despair when Kiartan's body was borne away from Bathstead is not found in the first draft.

In some cases the revisions in the printed text represent

2. See ibid., V, 370, 1.25 - 372, 1.4.
3. See page 74, lines 27-41.
4. Lines 24b-35 in Collected Works, V, 389 are omitted in the manuscript.
corrections. Thus, according to the manuscript, when the idea of going abroad first occurred to Kiartan, he went to Osulf to learn the truth of the reports from Norway that Olaf Tryggvason was waging war against the sons of Gunnhild, and a little later we are told that he heard that Gunnhild's sons had been driven from the land and that Olaf had become king. Here Morris has become slightly confused about certain facts in the early history of Norway, for it was not from the sons of Gunnhild but from Earl Hakon, son of the powerful Earl Sigurd of Ladir, that Olaf Tryggvason won the country. In the published poem these mistakes have been corrected, the name "Hakon" having been substituted for "the sons of Gunnhild" in the two passages to which I just referred. Similarly, later in the tale Morris relates in the printed version that when Bodli sailed from Norway to return to Iceland, Kiartan exclaimed to his foster-brother,

"This is the best face I have seen since first our black crows smote the Burgfirth sea."

In the first draft Morris incorrectly wrote "the Broadfirth Sea" instead of "the Burgfirth sea." Very likely these errors were pointed out to Morris by Magnússon.

Rather surprising are two cases in which Morris seems to depart deliberately from the facts of the saga in his revisions. At the very opening of the story we are told in the published poem that

Bathstead its roof did raise
Seven miles from Herdhalt...

1. This passage occurs in the manuscript, page 22, lines 17-19.
2. This statement is given in the manuscript, page 23, lines 2-6.
4. Ibid., V, 302.
5. See the manuscript, page 34, line 50.
The actual distance between the two farms is approximately fifteen miles, and in the manuscript we find that Morris originally correctly wrote "fifteen" instead of "seven" in this passage.

There is no statement in the Laxdála saga as to how far Bathstead is from Herdholts; very likely Morris had learned of the distance from Magnússon when they were reading the saga. His reason for departing from the facts was perhaps that he felt that if he represented the two farms as being only seven miles apart, he would make the frequent visits of Kiartan to Bathstead and the otherwise intimate relations between the two families seem more probable.

More puzzling is the other change referred to. In the manuscript when Morris enumerates the members of Olaf's family, he says,

Two maids Bergthora, Thorbiorg there were.

This statement is correct according to the account in the saga.

In the published version, however, he writes,

Two maidens, Thurid, Thorbiorg there were.

The reason for the substitution of "Thurid" for "Bergthora" is not apparent.

The two Scandinavian tales in Volume III of The Earthly Paradise met with almost unqualified approval in the reviews of the time. Most of the critics considered the two poems the best in the volume— if not the best so far in the whole collection. Concerning "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine said that of all the tales in the volume this "is

1. Page 1, line 25.
2. Page 1, line 18.
3. Laxdála-Saga, p. 108.
the most charming in its lingering wistful sweetness. ¹ The Atlantic Monthly stated that the "poem is full of tender and beautiful passages, - sensuous often, but pure as the white nakedness of marble, - and is written in the octosyllabic rhyme-verses, which are often managed so happily by Mr. Morris, especially in his effective modulations and skilful use of pauses." ² Speaking of the "dreamy, sweet, and sad" passages in the tale, the reviewer in the Galaxy pointed out that they seem all the more dreamy and delicious because of the clear, precise, deeply-tinted realism with which every landscape, figure, and object in the poem is described, and which compels us to see the strange sights and forms in the wondrous land that lies east of the sun and west of the moon as distinctly as if our own feet had trodden there a familiar region. ³

The critic in the Spectator voiced a slight dissatisfaction with the poem: "We confess to certain misgivings about 'The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon.' It is a region almost too dreamy and misty for living men to walk in; we lose ourselves in rambling melodies, and are oppressed with the vagueness of everlasting twilight." ⁴ This criticism, however, is by no means severe.

As is to be expected, the reviewers were more lavish in their praise of "The Lovers of Gudrun." The Atlantic Monthly said of it,

"But of all the poems in this new volume, it is in "The Lovers of Gudrun" that we are made to feel that we are in presence of assured flesh and blood and the hearts of men and women with real personality and characters, and it is here, we think, Mr. Morris touches us most surely... It is written in the simpler heroic rhymed verse, and is generally straightforward and vigorous, not wearying us with languid monotones, as do many of the long poems. ⁵ in stanzas whose lines are too often oppressive with monosyllables."

¹ CVII (1870), 645.
² XXV (1870), 751.
³ IX (1870), 570.
⁴ XLIII (1870), 333.
⁵ XXV (1870), 751.
The Athenagum felt that "in regard to his mastery in tragic narrative and his power over emotion" this work was "the highest achievement in the book." The critic in the Spectator was the most lavish in his praise, and was at the same time the most specific:

The tale is broken up into several sections, and a careful judgment is shown in keeping the less important parts of the narrative at their proper level, as well as in handling and distributing the stronger effects. Mr. Morris has not hitherto shown himself capable of this reserve and discretion, which enhance the impression made by the exercise of an unwonted force. Here, too, is seen in free play that fresh and simple delight in life which contributes so much to the charm of both the Earthly Paradise and Jason. Elsewhere it is well nigh stifled at times in very luxuriance of description, for which there is here little or no place. But the tragic passages of this tale disclose powers of which the author's former work had given no sign. The events are brought on by the working of an inevitable doom, and they are told in a way to remind us of the horror subdued by divine awe that pervades the Æschylean drama.

Only two contemporary notices that I have seen offered any adverse criticism at all. One appeared in the Galaxy; the writer of this review, however, failed to explain and substantiate the first part of his criticism, and the second fault he found with the poem, the scarcity of "tender, spiritual, melodious passages," is, as the reviewer himself admitted, inherent in the tale.

But as a story it is not artistically constructed, and it has fewer than any other of those tender, spiritual, melodious passages which one delights to read over and over again. The drear Northern atmosphere is all around it; the genius loci makes his presence felt everywhere; and this, undoubtedly a striking artistic merit, yet renders the story less fascinating and delightful than the poems which are warmed by a brighter sun and fanned by more genial airs.

In a review in the Academy G. A. Simcox pointed out what he considered an inconsistency in the poem:

1. No. 2200 (Dec. 25, 1869), 868.
2. XLIII (1870), 333.
3. IX (1870), 570.
Before leaving the subject of Mr. Morris's relation to the sources which serve as food to his rare and peculiar inspiration, we may be permitted to express a doubtful regret that while he has dwelt with equal emphasis on each of the four stages of Gudrun's Dream, he has dismissed the fourth stage of her life, which serves to interpret the dream, with only a hurried and perfunctory mention. If this violation of obvious symmetry is really a fault, it may easily be forgiven to the poet who has transformed one of the least artistic of the Norse Sagas into one of the completest of English poems.

Simcox's criticism of Morris for not having described in more detail Gudrun's marriage with Thorkel seems to me entirely unjustified, for in the poem all the interest centers in the unfulfilled love of Kiartan and Gudrun, and any extended account of Gudrun's life after the death of Kiartan would be entirely out of place.

Finally, before leaving these contemporary criticisms, I should like to point out that it is rather surprising that none of the reviews examined raised the slightest objection against Morris's failure to preserve the grim reserve, the lack of sentiment, and the terseness of expression of the original tale. Most likely very few of the writers of these criticisms knew the sagas at first hand.

In only two cases do we find references to Scandinavian matters in the links between the various tales in Volume III of The Earthly Paradise. The first is a mere allusion to Micklegarth in the passage in which Rolf, the captain of the Wanderers, introduces his story "The Man who Never Laughed Again" and recalls how he first heard the tale when his father was a member of the

1. I(1869-1870), 122.

2. Of the reviewers quoted above, only the last one, G.A. Simcox, reveals any familiarity with the original saga. For other reviews of these two poems in the contemporary periodicals, see the Eclectic Magazine, LXXIV, New Series (1870), 437-440; the London Quarterly Review, XXXVI (1871), 262; and the Edinburgh Review, CXIX (1871), 258-264. The author of this last review expresses great dissatisfaction with "The Lovers of Gudrun." He seems to have failed utterly to understand the thoughts and feelings which underlie the actions of the main characters, and besides, he makes no allowances for the state of society in Iceland at the time of the tale. However, the faults he finds do not concern us here, for they are inherent in the original saga and are not the result of Morris's adaptation.
Varangian Guard. Later, when one of the other mariners is about to relate the story "The Lovers of Gjirun," we are given a beautiful and sympathetic description, thirty-four lines long, of Iceland and its people. Here as in the published prologue to his translation of the Grettis saga, Morris dwells on the contrast between the barrenness and roughness of the land and the nobility and courage of the men and women who lived there long ago. The passage opens with the lines,

Then spake a Wanderer: "Long the tale I tell,
Though in few years the deeds thereof befell,
In a strange land and barren, far removed
From southlands and their bliss; yet folk beloved,
Yearning for love—striving 'gainst change and hate,
Strong, uncomplaining, yet compassionate,
Have dwelt therein ..."

It is interesting to note that Morris considered it worth while to interrupt his description with the statement that the tale that was to follow was historically true; he probably thought it expedient to inform his readers beforehand that the story they were about to read was of a totally different nature from the other poems in the collection, all of which were based on legends or fairy tales. He says,

"...know withal that we
Have ever deemed this tale as true to be,
As though those very dwellers in Laxdale,
Risen from the dead had told us their own tale."

With these remarks I shall conclude my comments on the Scandinavian elements in the third volume of The Earthly Paradise.

As I have stated before, Part Three was published at the end

2. Ibid., V, 250, 11.1-34.
3. Loc. cit.
4. Loc. cit.
of 1869. During the late fall of this year and the early winter of the next, Morris was engaged in a number of undertakings, most of which reflected in one way or another his interest in Scandinavia. Thus, as I have already pointed out, he was at work during this time on a translation of the Völuspa saga and of the heroic lays of the Poetic Edda. There is also reason to believe, as I shall show presently, that it was now that he composed "The Fostering of Aslaug," the only Scandinavian poem he included in the last volume of The Earthly Paradise, which appeared a year later. Moreover, he seems at this time to have begun turning Norse ballads into English; the manuscript of his rendering of "Hafbur og Signe" is dated February 4, 1870. Finally, it should be noted that in February of 1870 he resumed the production of illuminated manuscripts; during the next four or five years he spent almost all of his leisure time at this work, turning out a surprisingly large number of illuminated manuscripts both of his own original compositions and translations and of the works of other authors. A great many of these manuscripts were copies of his Icelandic saga-renderings, and are of great interest for this study. These works and his ballad translations I shall discuss in detail in the next chapter, when I describe the Scandinavian work Morris carried on in the years 1871 to 1876.

On March 12, 1870 Morris wrote in a letter, "I have been hard

1. See above, page 63-64.
2. See below, pages 120-121.
5. See below, pages 147-175 and 179-189.
at work, but have not done much except the translations as they are rather pressing now, and I want to get all my Volsung work done this week... Ned came to see me Sunday; I read him my stanzas for the Volsunga and he thought them good." Morris and Magnússon's rendering of the Völsunga saga was "through the press by April 1870," and was published the next month.

In the volume the two collaborators offered to the public, the translation is provided with a great deal of introductory and supplementary material for the benefit of the general reader. First we find a short Preface, in which the two translators express their admiration for the saga and their surprise that it has not hitherto been turned into English, saying that "this is the great story of the North, which should be to all our race what the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks..." Morris and Magnússon also call attention here to the ten heroic lays from the Poetic Edda which they have rendered wholly or in part and have added at the end of their version of the Völsaunga saga, describing the relation of each one to the story as it is told in the saga; they also point out three cases in which they have inserted passages from the Poetic Edda in the translation proper. Then follows a list of "The Names of Those who are most Noteworthy in this Story." Next comes "A Pro-

1. "Ned" is Edward Burne-Jones.
6. In the Notes at the end of the whole work (see ibid., VII, 481, 11, 27-29), they call attention to a fourth passage inserted from the Edda which they seem to have forgotten to mention in the Preface.
logue in Verse" by Morris, consisting of six stanzas in rhyme royal; in these lines Morris describes how this beautiful old tale, dealing only with events which brought disaster, despair, and woe to those involved, has become to us through the passage of many centuries a means of diversion and entertainment, so we awhile

with echoed grief life's dull pain may beguile.

To this attitude towards the legends of old Morris gives expression again and again throughout his writings. Directly after this "Prologue" comes the translation of the saga itself. At the end Morris and Magnusson placed "Certain Songs from the Elder Edda, which Deal with the Story of the Volsungs," then a few notes, and finally an "Alphabetical List of Persons, Places, and Things in the Story."

The two translators do not state which edition of the Völsunga saga they used in the main part of their rendering or which text of the Poetic Edda served as the basis of their English version of the heroic lays which they added to the tale. However, a comparison of the translation with the texts available of the two works indicates that they used the edition of the Völsunga saga in Fornaldar Sögur Nordrlanda and the text of the Sæmundar Edda issued by Svend Grundtvig. The rendering of the saga follows the original


2. See, for example, the cancelled lines quoted above on page 99 from the first draft of "The Lovers of Gudrun" and the stanzas in the illuminated manuscript of the skýrbyggja saga translation (in Mackail, op. cit., I, 263-264).

very closely, except for the inserted verses to which I have

(Continuation of note 3 on page 111) of the Völsunga saga with
these texts makes it almost certain that the translators followed
the text in Fornaldar Sögur Nordrianda. Compare, for example, the
following lines in the Fornaldar Sögur with the corresponding lines
in the other editions and in the rendering: I, 115, 1.2; 115, 1.4-5;
115, 1.8; 115, 1.10; 115, 1.15; 116, 1.2; 116, 1.11; 116, 1.13;
116, 1.20; 116, 1.26; 116, 1.10; 131, 1.10; and 131, 11.14-15. I
should also like to point out that a copy of the Fornaldar Sögur
was found in Morris's library at his death (see below, page 1006).

According to Islandica, XII (1920), 1-5, the following editions
of the whole or of the greater part of the Poetic Edda had appeared
by 1870: Edda Sæmundar hins fröða (Copenhagen, 1787-1828); Lieder
der älteren oder Sámundischen Edda, ed. Friedrich K. von der Hagen
(Berlin, 1812); Lieder der alten Edda, ed. the Grimm Brothers (Ber-
lin, 1815); Edda Sæmundar hins fröða, ed. Armand C. Rask and
Arved A. Afzelius (Holmiae, 1813); Den Äldre Edda, ed. Peter A. Munch
(Christiania, 1847); Die Edda, ed. Hermann Lüning (Zürich, 1859);
Edda Sæmundar hins fröða, ed. Theodor Möbius (Leipzig, 1866); Morrocan
Fornvägandi, ed. Sophus Bugge (Christiania, 1867); and Sæmundar Edda
hins fröða, ed. Svend Grundtvig (Copenhagen, 1869). I have not col-
tilated all of Morris's Edda translations with the texts in these
editions, but in those cases in which I have compared the rendering
with the texts available, it seems almost certain that Morris was
following Grundtvig. Thus a comparison of the following words or
passages in Grundtvig's edition with the corresponding words or pas-
sages in the translation and in the other texts indicates that the
English version was based on Grundtvig: p. 128, col. 2, 11.21-32
(note the order); p. 129, col. 2, 1.20 ("svaran"); p. 142, col. 2, 1.21
("sæfing"); p. 155, col. 11, 11.18-21; and p. 154, col. 1, 11.1-6. More-
over, in a footnote (in Collected Works, VII, 437), Magnusson and
Morris state, in commenting on a difficult passage, that the "ori-
inal has 'a við lessa.' This reading is found in exactly this form
only in Grundtvig. However, the translation occasionally departs
from Grundtvig's text. In Collected Works, VII, 410, 1.33, Morris
and Magnusson write,

Adrad was Gunner;

but Grundtvig (on p. 128, col. 2, 1.1) has

Hrygg varð Gunner.

Moreover, all the other editions have "Reipr" as the regular read-
ing. Again, in Collected Works, VII, 410, 11.1-5, Morris and Mag-
nhusson omit two lines inserted in Grundtvig's text; it so happens
that these lines are omitted in some of the other editions, but
Morris and Magnusson do not seem to have been here following any
of these other editions either, for all of them adopt a different
stanzaic division at this point. Very likely these discrepancies
are merely the result of changes that Morris and Magnusson made on
their own authority in Grundtvig's text. Finally, I should like to
point out that Grundtvig's edition of the Poetic Edda was in Mor-
ris's library at his death (see below, page 1006); two other Edda texts
were also found in Morris's library in 1896, the one printed at
Copenhagen between 1787 and 1828 and the one edited by Bugge in
1867.
already referred. It ends with the account of the slaying of
Hamdrír and Sólin, who had been sent by Gudrun, their mother, to
the land of King Jormunrek to avenge the death of Swanhild; it
does not include the story of Heimir and Aslaug, the daughter of
Sigurd and Brynhild, which most editors of the Völsunga saga insert
as the last chapter. The reason for this omission, according to
a statement made by Magnússon many years later, was that he and Mor-
ris "had considered it to belong rightly to the Ragnar Lodbrok
saga"; the two sagas are found together in the same manuscript, the
Ragnars saga lodbrokar being given as a continuation of the other
one.

The heroic lays included in the rendering of the Völsunga
saga were not the only Eddic poems translated by Morris. In the
Preface to Volume VII of the Collected Works, Miss Morris prints
two others, "Baldr's Dream" and "The Lay of Thrym," which she
says were prepared at this time, and in her William Morris: Artist
Writer Socialist, she presents an unrevised rendering of the
"Völuspá," which she states she found among her father's manuscripts.

2. See Finnur Jónsson, Den Oldnorske og Oldislandske Litera-
ture Historie (2nd ed.; Copenhagen: U.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1920-1934), II,
325.
3. Pages xx-xvii.
after she had prepared the Collected Works. Morris may have turned into English still other poems from the Poetic Edda, for according to Dr. Einarsson in his article "Eiríkr Magnússon and his Saga-Translations," Morris wrote in a letter in 1874 that he definitely intended to publish a rendering of the Edda at some time. However, no other translations by Morris from this collection have ever been printed or are known to exist.

The publication of Morris and Magnússon's rendering of the Völsunga saga brought forth a variety of reviews in the periodicals of the time. In the Academy appeared a criticism by G. A. Simcox and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, which, as is to be expected, is both thorough and scholarly. At the opening of their review the critics call attention to the translators' statement that the story of the Volsungs and the Nibelungs "should be to all our race what the Tale of Troy was to the Greeks," and then they explain why this Northern

1. I, 9 and 543-563.
3. According to Dr. Einarsson's article (on pages 26-27), Magnússon wrote out a complete translation of the Poetic Edda and also of the Prose Edda in 1893 and 1894. The manuscript of this rendering survives; it has not been revised by Morris, but Dr. Einarsson states that the nature of the manuscript seems to indicate that it was intended to serve as the basis of a translation by Morris. He believes it likely that if Morris had lived longer, he and Magnússon would have included a rendering of the Poetic Edda and the Prose Edda in The Saga Library.
saga has not had, and cannot have, the same effect upon the thought
and art of succeeding generations as the Irojan story.

It is probable that the Greek race was more highly gifted for
artistic purposes than the northern; it is certain that the society
of the Homeric age was artistically richer than the society of the
Icelandic sagas, for it was more complex and more regular. These
Icelandic compositions are largely influenced by a spirit of naive
"historical veracity, a desire to get as quickly as possible through
all that is remembered of the traditional facts. This tendency is
not without its value; it excludes inartistic loitering," and so-
briety is always impressive. But a literature of this kind is not
suggestive, it does not germinate; it begins and ends in ballads,
and the compilations that come between are scarcely epical - even
in dimensions.

The reviewer next points out certain inaccuracies and inconsisten-
cies they have noted in the rendering itself; I shall refer to
these later in my discussion of Morris's style of translation. The
second half of the article is devoted, first, to a discussion of
certain "gaps and discrepancies" in the story as it is told in the
Völsunga saga, - omissions and inconsistencies which result from
the fact that the "ballads which the compiler tried, or did not
try, to work into his narrative, were written at different times
and places" and "sometimes represent incompatible traditions..."
and, secondly, to an account of some of the beauties in the saga,
"which justify the praise of Mr. Morris's lovely Prologue in Verse."
The whole review is instructive and well worth reading.

Quite different are the notices of the book in the Athenaeum
and in the Old and New; they were apparently written by men who

1. II(1869-1870), 278.
2. See below, pages 557-559.
3. I(1869-1870), 279.
4. Loc. cit.
5. No. 2224(June 11, 1870), 763-764.
6. II(1870-1871), 364-367.
were only very slightly acquainted with the material to be dis-
cussed. The article in the Athenaeum consists almost entirely
of a very full synopsis of the story; the one in the Old and New
presents rather superficial comments on some of the most important
incidents in the tale. The writer of this last-mentioned review
reveals his lack of familiarity with Icelandic literature by conf-
fusing Gudrun of the Völsunga saga with Gudrun of the Laxdæla
saga; he says of Gudrun, the daughter of Giuki, that "readers who
have fallen in love with her in Mr. Morris's poem of her lovers
will be glad to read of her in these earliest renderings."

Two other reviewers devote almost all of their attention to
pointing out that parallels to certain elements in the Völsunga
saga are to be found in Greek, Latin, and Oriental folk lore. The
article in the Saturday Review was written by the same critic whose
comments on the Morris-Magnússon translation of the Grettis saga
in the same periodical I have already discussed. He begins by
saying that just as he revealed that exact parallels of many of
the incidents in the Grettis saga could be found in classical and
oriental popular tales and that as a consequence the translators'
statement that the saga treated "events true in the main" was in-
correct, he will now show in the same way that the Völsunga saga
does not "reflect the lives of men and women of our own race in
any age or in any land," as the translators imply. To be sure,
he is somewhat more justified in analyzing incidents in the Völsunga

1. II (1870-1871), 366.
2. See above, pages 59-60.
4. Saturday Review, XXX (1870), 83.