of this story and that told in the opening chapter of Sórla þáttr, which Morris had translated and published in Three Northern Love Stories in 1875. There Freyia, passing a cave, is filled with a burning desire to possess a collar on which four dwarfs are working; they agree to give her this treasure if she will lie one night with each; at this point the similarity ends, for in this tale the goddess yields fully and as a result wins the desired object without the attachment of any malediction. There is no exact Norse parallel to the second part of Morris's story, but the uttering of curses by dwarfs upon people who have in some way mistreated them is a rather common occurrence in the semi-mythological tales of the North; in concluding this episode as he did, Morris may not have only been guided by a desire to keep the character of the Wood-Sun unspotted, but may also have had in mind the curse which the dwarf Andvari laid upon his gold when Loki forced him to give it up, or the curse which the dwarfs Dulin and Dvalin fastened upon the sword Tyrfing, which Svafirlami had compelled them against their will to forge. It should also be pointed out that in representing the Wood-Sun as rendering the dwarf helpless by her setting a "sleep-thorn" in him, Morris is likewise borrowing from Scandinavian legends; the use of a "sleep-thorn" plays a prominent part, for example, in the story of the Volsungs.

To his study of the sagas we can also fairly safely attribute the fact that he represents one of the characters, the Wood-Sun, as possessing "the power and craft of shape-changing." In the Old

2. See ibid., VII, 320-321.
3. For an account of Morris's acquaintance with the story of Tyrfing, see above, pages 137-139.
4. See, for example, Collected Works, VII, 336, 1.18.
5. Ibid., XIV, 104, 11.26-27. See also ibid., XIV, 40, 11.25-34.
Norse literature we find that one of the powers ascribed to Odin was the ability to alter his shape and to travel whithersoever he wished in this assumed form, and that he shared this gift with some of the lesser deities, who were thus also said to be "hamr." Of course, as Morris and Magnússon state in a note regarding this subject in Volume II of The Saga Library, the belief in shape-changing "is not peculiar to the North, though few people's literature is so full of it as the Icelandic." That it was the Scandinavian accounts of this belief that led Morris to introduce it here and also in later tales seems rather likely in view of the fact that in The Roots of the Mountains he refers to a woman thought to be gifted with this power by the unusual term "skin-changer," which is the name he had used for such people in his translations of saga allusions to this belief.

Less important are the other details apparently borrowed from the sagas. Thus, on two occasions in the tale we meet with brief references to the drinking of "the Horn of Remembrance" or "the Cup of Renown"; in introducing these allusions Morris very likely had in mind the very common early Scandinavian custom of drinking a cup to the memory of some dead ancestor or chieftain, the draining of this cup of memory, or "minni," being often accompanied by the

1. For saga references to this belief see, for example, Morris's translation of the Völsunga saga (in Collected Works, VII, 302, 1.21-303, 1.29), The Saga Library, II, 167, 11.9-12 and the note on p. 292, and ibid., III, 18, 11.5-10 and 268, 1.20-269, 1.21.


4. See, for example, Collected Works, VII, 302, 1.24. In their original publication of their Völsunga saga translation, Morris and Magnússon inserted an interesting note at this point on "skin-changers," but this note was omitted when the rendering was reprinted in the Collected Works; for the note see The Volsunga Saga, tr. Magnusson and Morris, with introduction by N. Halliday Sparling (London, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Berlin, and New York, 1906), p. 46.
swearing of oaths. It was likewise undoubtedly his study of the
sagas that led him to represent certain weapons of the Goths as be-
ing covered with runes, and that caused him to apply the term
"howes" to the burial mounds of the Goths. It is also not at all
unlikely that the song which one of the old warriors sings over the
body of the hero Thiodolf was suggested to Morris by the "kvæði" which Eyvind Skald-spiller composed on the death of King Hakon the
Good and which closes the Hákonar saga goða in the Heimskringla, for in both compositions we have a rather similar account of the
death of the hero in battle, his approach to Valhalla, and his
reception by the gods. Moreover, we also find Morris introducing
allusions here, as he had already done in several earlier works,
to the custom of swearing oaths over the Yule Boar and to the
use of "peace-strings" on swords. Finally, one other very prom-
inent Scandinavian feature of the tale, one which is commented
upon by Biber in his study - must be pointed out, and that is
the nomenclature. As Biber says, in The House of the Wolfings "sind
die Namen fast durchweg aus dem Altnordischen übernommen.... Wenn
sie kein altnordisches Äquivalent haben, so sind sie doch jedenfalls

1. For saga references to this custom, see The Saga Library, III, 58, 1.12-28; 165, 1.31 - 166, 1.3; 171, 11.5-7; and 272, 1.5 - 273, 1.6.


3. See Collected Works, XIV, 38, 1.18; 105, 11.3 and 4; and 145, 1.4; and The Saga Library, III, 4, 1.24; 23, 11.15-22; 43,1.18; and 97, 11.19-29.


7. See Collected Works, XIV, 112; 11.21-22; 113, 1.13; and 206, 11.32-33; and above, page 141.
in altnordischem Sinne gebildet." This matter is fully discussed by Biber, and needs no further comment here, except for one name. Morris refers to a mountain as "Broadshield-fell." It seems to me very likely that in giving it this name he had in mind "Skialdubreið" in Iceland, a prominent peak which he had passed both on the outward and the homeward journeys during his tour of Iceland in 1871. In Morris's next romance also we find a mountain named "Shield-broad." There, in his first mention of it, he says that the men, as they travelled over the mountains, caught sight of "a low peak spreading down on all sides to the plain, till it was like to a bossed shield, and the name of it was Shield-broad." In the Journal he kept of his first Iceland tour he describes "Skialdubreið" in very similar terms, for he says, "... we see ahead... the wide spreading cone of Skialdubreið (Broad-shield) which is in fact just like a round shield with a boss..."

Before leaving this tale, I should like to point out that in one of the verse forms Morris used for the poetical passages which he introduced here and there throughout the story, he was almost certainly imitating the metre of early Germanic poetry. In the great majority of his verse interludes, Morris employed hexameter couplets, the verse form of his Sigurd the Volsung, but in four cases he used stanzas made up of four, six, or eight two-stress

1. Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances, p. 76.
2. Collected Works, XIV, 64, 1.36.
3. See, for example, ibid., VIII, 76-79 and 165-167, passim.
4. See ibid., XV, 307, 11.4 and 16; 308, 11.28-29; and 309, 11.6 and 10.
5. Ibid., XV, 307.
6. Ibid., VIII, 76.
lines followed by six four-stress lines. The nature of the feet varies considerably, but they are usually anapests or iambic. The rhythmical effect of this metre is similar to that of the early Germanic four-accent lines with a definite break in the middle. This resemblance to the early poetry of the North is heightened by the free use of alliteration and by the occasional introduction of a kenning. In one respect, however, Morris departs entirely from early usage, for he rhymes every two lines, thus giving the stanzas a certain smoothness which is entirely foreign to the early poetry. Finally, it should be pointed out that if in these particular verse passages Morris was imitating in a general way the form of early Germanic poetry — and there seems to be little doubt that he was so doing —, we cannot of course definitely attribute his use of this metre to his study of Old Norse poetry, for he undoubtedly was acquainted with Anglo-Saxon verse also, which employs the same metrical pattern; however, at this time he had not made any close study of Old English poetry, but, as we have seen, he had turned into English a great deal of early Icelandic poetry, so that it is much more likely that it was the Eddic and scaldic verse that he knew which led him to use this particular verse form. The following stanzas may serve as an example of this metre:

"Have ye not heard
Of the ways of Weird?
How the folk fared forth
Far away from the North?
And as light as one wendeth
Whereas the wood endeth
When of nought is our need,
And none telleth our deed,
So Rodgeir unwearied and Reidfari wan
The town where none tarried the shield-shaking man.
All lonely the street there, and void was the way.
And nought hindered our feet but the dead men that lay
Under shield in the lanes of the houses heavens-high,
All the ring-bearing swains that abode there to die."

Near the end of the tale we find a short poem of six two-stress lines which resembles the early poetry even more closely, for here there is no rhyme:

"Now, now, ye War-sons!
Now the Wolf waketh!
Lo how the Wood-beast
Wendeth in onset.
E'en as his feet fare,
Fall on and follow!" 2

I have tried to show in the foregoing discussion that the influence of the Icelandic sagas upon The House of the Wolfings, both in form and substance, was considerable. Very marked is the influence that this body of literature exerted upon Morris's next prose romance also, The Roots of the Mountains, which was begun in January, 1889, about a month after The House of the Wolfings appeared, was completed in October, and was in the hands of the public in November of the same year. In this story, which is laid in an indefinite location at an equally vague time and which describes an attack made by several tribes of noble, stalwart men, the most notable being the Tribe of the Face and the Tribe of the Wolf, upon an encroaching race of a decidedly inferior nature called the Dusky Men, the number of Scandinavian details is equally as great as — if not greater than — in the first; but this tale as a whole has less of the saga atmosphere, for, as compared with the first, it is less heroic and elevated in tone, the expression lacks much of the terseness and restraint that was prominent in The House

1. Collected Works, XIV, 44.
2. Ibid., XIV, 180.
3. See ibid., XV, xi-xii.
of the Wolfings, and throughout the tale we find more warmth, color, and sentiment. Mackail says of this work,

For combination and balance of his qualities it may perhaps be ranked first among his prose romances. It has not the strength of its predecessor, "The House of the Wolfings," nor the fairy charm of its successor, "The Wood beyond the World." But in its union of the gravity of the Saga with the delicate and profuse ornament of the romance, it may perhaps take the first place among the three as a work of art. ¹

When we compare Morris's later romances with the first two, we find that this change in style from the method of the sagas to that of the romances becomes more and more pronounced, so that in the last tales that came from his pen we have pure romance. Oliver Elton in his A Survey of English Literature: 1780-1880 describes this development thus:

The tales change in character. The process from Jason to Sigurd begins to be reversed. The romances begin in a saga-like and a more heroic manner, and end in a softer and more shimmering one. The comparative precision of time, place, and trappings in The House of the Wolfings contrasts with the dateless enchanted land of the last unfinished story, The Sundering Flood. This recession from reality may be described as a movement from epic to romance. ²

I shall comment further upon this change in connection with the later romances.

As I have already said, we find a host of Scandinavian details introduced into The Roots of the Mountains. As in the first romance, a number of the terms used in connection with the legislative and

¹. William Morris, II, 227.

². IV, 49.
judiciary activities of the people described are reminiscent of the sagas. Almost countless are the references to the "Thing," the "Folk-thing," the "Gate-thing," the "Thing-steal," the "Mote," the "Folk-mote," the "man-mote," the "Mote-steal," the "Mote-field," the "Mote-hall," the "Mote-house," the

1. See Collected Works, XV, 166, 11.3, 25, and 37; 167, 1.5; 178, 1.16; 180, 1.2; 181, 1.26; 182, 11.13, 25, 26, and 32; and 185, 1.3.

2. See ibid., XV, 409, 1.19.

3. See ibid., XV, 156, 1.34; 159, 11.14-15; 165, 11.22 and 24; 167, 1.9; 178, 11.10 and 13-14; 218, 1.23; 231, 1.25; 242, 1.9; and 287, 1.15.

4. See ibid., XV, 166, 1.15; 182, 1.16; 223, 1.20; 370, 1.29; and 371, 1.1.

5. See ibid., XV, 273, 1.34; 279, 11.16 and 18; and 282, 1.35.

6. See ibid., XV, 9, 11.21 and 23; 120, 1.33; 122, 1.19; 124, 1.6; 130, 11.34-35; 167, 11.6 and 34; 168, 11.2-3; 176, 11.11 and 26; 177, 1.32; 178, 1.9; 185, 1.2; 219, 11.3, 11, and 37; 222, 1.37; 223, 1.33; 227, 11.23-24 and 26; 238, 1.16; 248, 1.12; 253, 1.16; 254, 11.5, 27, and 35; 255, 11.5, 6-7, and 12; 273, 11.24 and 28; 274, 1.9; 279, 11.1-2, 5, 8, and 13; 281, 11.4-5; 284, 11.1-2 and 5; 300, 1.37; 292, 11.7 and 31-32; 316, 1.11; 317, 1.9; 320, 1.35; 379, 11.11-12; 380, 11.8 and 30; and 382, 1.14.

7. See ibid., XV, 368, 11.27-28.

8. See ibid., XV, 4, 1.19; 11, 1.29; 19, 1.4; 273, 11.29-30 and 35; 274, 1.8 and 24-25; 275, 1.1; 278, 1.10; 283, 1.16; 301, 11.10 and 16; 320, 1.32; 374, 1.21; and 406, 11.2-3.

9. See ibid., XV, 290, 1.21.

10. See ibid., XV, 9, 1.10.

11. See ibid., XV, 320, 11.4-5; 321, 11.1-2; 342, 1.21; 343, 1.15; 352, 11.1, 9, and 17; 353, 1.12; 356, 11.30-31; 357, 1.32; 370, 11.23 and 32; 371, 1.17; 382, 1.35; 406, 1.13; and 409, 1.16.
"Doom-ring," and the "Speech-mound." Furthermore, in many of the accounts that Morris gives in this tale of the procedure followed at the various "Things" and "Motes," he draws upon Scandinavian sources. Thus, on two occasions he describes in detail the ceremony of "hallowing the Thing"; the second account, which is the longer one, runs thus:

So the Alderman fell to hallowing in the Folk-mote: he went up to the Altar of the Gods, and took the gold-ring off it, and did it on his arm; then he drew his sword and waved it toward the four airts, and spake; and the noise and shouting fell, and there was silence but for him:

"Herewith I hallow in this folk-mote of the Men of the Dale and the Sheepcotes and the Woodland, in the name of the Warrior and the Earth-god and the Fathers of the kindreds. Now let not the peace of the Mote be broken. Let not man rise against man, or bear blade or hand, or stick or stone against any. If any man break the peace of the Holy Mote, let him be a man accursed, a wild-beast in the Holy Places; an outcast from home and hearth, from bed and board, from mead and acre; not to be holpen with bread, nor flesh, nor wine; nor flax, nor wool, nor any cloth; nor with sword, nor shield, nor axe, nor plough-share; nor with horse, nor ox, nor ass; with no saddle-beast nor draught-beast; nor with wain, nor boat, nor way-leading; nor with fire nor water; nor with any world's wealth. Thus let him who hath cast out man be cast out by man. Now is hallowed-in the Folk-mote of the Men of the Dale and the Sheepcotes and the woodlands."

Therewith he waved his sword again toward the four airts, and went and sat down in his place.

1. See Collected Works, XV, 4, 1.20; 9, 1.22; 101, 1.26; 102, 11.11 and 13; 110, 1.17; 113, 1.26; 115, 1.26; 123, 11.25 and 36-37; 124, 11.1 and 28; 129, 1.2; 172, 11.5-6; 264, 1.14; 274, 1.16; 291, 1.33; 294, 1.3; 301, 1.12; 370, 1.29; and 408, 11.23 and 27.

2. See ibid., XV, 4, 11.20-21 and 11, 1.10. All these terms, it should be pointed out, do not occur in the sagas: Clesby and Vigfusson's Icelandic-English Dictionary does not list any Old Norse words for "Gate-thing," "Folk-mote," "Mote-stead," "Mote-hall," and "Mote-house." These names were evidently coined by Morris in the saga manner. As I stated above in my discussion of The House of the Wolfings, the terms "thing" and "mote" occur so frequently in the sagas that it is not necessary to seek for any definite source for Morris's information regarding these institutions; for suggestions as to the basis of his knowledge of "doom-rings" and "Speech-mounds," see above, page 242 and page 307.

3. Collected Works, XV, 279. For another account of the hallowing of a Thing, see ibid., XV, 167, 11.12-19.
In the early literature of Scandinavia there are numerous references to this custom of "hallowing the Thing," but there is not, so far as I know, any complete description of the ceremony, so that for his accounts Morris must have drawn to a great extent upon his own imagination. One detail, the chieftain's wearing of the gold-ring on his arm, is frequently mentioned in the sagas; one of the best descriptions of this ring is to be found in the Ærbyggja saga, which was either the first or the second work that Morris translated from the Icelandic. His account of the Alderman's waving his sword "toward the four airts" at the beginning and at the end of the ceremony seems, however, to be his own invention, for this detail is not mentioned in the Scandinavian accounts. Moreover, the speech of the Alderman is apparently in great part Morris's own. The formula or formulae that were used in opening the ancient Scandinavian Things are not given in the sagas or the early Scandinavian law-books. However, there is an Old Norse formula fairly similar to Morris's, which is called the "trygðamál," or the "speech of truce"; this is presented in full in two of the sagas which we know Morris translated into English. It is not at all unlikely that he had this Old Norse oath in mind when he composed the speech of the Alderman, for in the "trygðamál" we find a rather

1. See, for example, the Saga Library, I, 80 and 82.

2. Ibid., II, 8. See also ibid., II, xxxii-xxxiii and 29-30; Mallet's Northern Antiquities, pp. 109, 291, and 292; and the Corpus Poeticum Norseale, I, 403 and 422.

3. The "trygðamál" is presented in the Ærbyggja saga and the Úrettís saga. For Morris's translation of this oath see the Saga Library, II, 245-246 and collected Works, VII, 178-179.
similar punishment promised to anyone who should break the peace, and the nature of the punishment is here graphically described, as in the passage from Morris, through the piling up of concrete, vivid images, most of which are grouped together in alliterative phrases. Thus, in Morris's translation of the "trygðamál" we read,

"This is the beginning of our speech of truce, that God may be at peace with us all; so also shall we be men at peace between ourselves and of good accord, at ale and at eating, at meets and at man-motes, at church-goings and in king's house....Knife we shall share and shorn meat, yea, and all other things between us, even as friends and not foes....But he of us who tramples on truce settled, or fights after full troth given, he shall be so far wolf-driven and chased, as men furthest follow up wolves, Christian men churches seek, heathen men their temples tend, fires flare up, earth grows green, son names a mother's name, ships sail, shields glitter, sun shines, snow wanes, rim skates....

"He shall shun churches and Christian men, God's houses and men's, and every home but hell....

"Now are we at one, and at peace wheresoever we meet on land or on water, on ship or on snowshoe, on high seas or horseback:

Oars to share
Or bailing-butt,
Thoft or thole plank
If that be needful.

...Let him have the grace of God who holdeth the truce, but him have God's grace who riveth rightful truce...."

at one of the things described in the Roots of the Mountains, a chieftain who is momentarily carried away by his ire forgets the sanctity of the assembly and draws his sword, but before he can strike a blow he is quieted by calmer spirits; for this "troubling of the Peace of the Holy Thing" he pays a fine. Breaking the peace of the thing seems to have been a fairly common

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1. The Saga Library, II, 245-246. The "trygðamál" very likely influenced two other passages in the Roots of the Mountains, the speech of the Alderman in the hallowing of another assembly (in Collected Works, XV, 167, 11.12-19) and Gold-mane's wish for the happiness of Folk-might and the Bride (in ibid., XV, 265, 1.36 - 266, 1.2). In introducing these alliterative formulae Morris may also have had in mind stanzas 85-87 of the "Hávamál" and stanzas 15-17 of the "Sigdrifumál," where alliterative phrases are piled up in a similar manner.

2. Collected works, XV, 182, 11.9-37 and 279, 1.36 - 280, 1.15."
A number of references to this offence in the sagas.

In the description that he gives in *The Roots of the Mountains* of the treatment of the crime of "manslaying" in this early state, Morris also introduces several customs often mentioned in the sagas. Thus, when folk-might, the chief of an alien tribe, is driven by the force of necessity to plunder the home of a miserly member of the House of the race, and in so doing slays a man, he leaves his spear in the wound "so that he might be known hereafter, and that he might be said not to have murdered Rusty but to have slain him." Such was the usual procedure in early Scandinavia also, according to the sagas. As a result of this robbery and killing, folk-might, who is then unknown to all but one of the members of the tribe of the race, is outlawed; later, when folk-might and some of his followers come to one of the folk-motes of the House of the Face to seek the aid of this tribe against the Wisky Men, Folk-might confesses his guilt and offers to make atonement, either by paying a fine, "handselling self-doom" to his accuser, or by accepting a challenge to "Holmgang." The punishing of robbery or

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1. See, for example, *The Saga Library*, II, 14-17; *Burnt Njal*, tr. Dasent, II, 270-284; and *Sagan af Agli Skallagrímssyni*, pp. 123-127.
2. *Collected Works*, XV, 63, 11.33-34. See also *ibid.*, 64, 11.31-34.
3. See, for example, *Gisli the Outlaw*, tr. Dasent, p. 43.
5. See *ibid.*, XV, 281, 1.19 - 282, 1.6.
manslaughter by a sentence of outlawry or by the imposition of a fine is repeatedly mentioned in the sagas, these being the usual penalties inflicted not only in medieval Scandinavia but among all the early Germanic tribes; definitely Scandinavian, however, are the "handselling of self-doom" and the "challenging to Holmgang." "Hansel," as Biber, who comments on these two expressions, points out in the section of his study called "Spuren des Altnordischen," is explained in one of the indexes to Volume I of Morris and Magnússon's Saga Library as "the customary sign manual to a binding contract in an illiterate age," and the term "self-doom" is defined at the end of Volume II of the same series as "a sort of legal surrender at discretion by the offender." Both words, "handsala" and "sjalfdæmi," occur frequently in the sagas Morris knew. With the institution of "Holmgang" we have already seen that Morris was familiar.

As I pointed out above, Folkmight offers to pay a fine for his slaying of Rusty; this offer being accepted, he is condemned to "pay a full blood-wite... that is to say, the worth of three hundreds in weed-stuff in whatsoever goods thou wilt." In stating the amount of the fine in these terms Morris is making use of one of the common early Scandinavian units of measure; as Vigfússon explains in his Dictionary, the word "hundrað" was often used to signify "a hundred and twenty ells of the stuff wadmal, and then simply value to that amount..." However,

1. See, for example, The Saga Library, I, 63-64 and II, 65, 101, and 131.
2. Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances, p. 86.
3. See, for example, The Saga Library, I, 102, 1.18; 109, 11.20 and 22; 110, 11.7 and 9; and 139, 11.6 and 25; and II, 23, 1.31; 24, 1.30; 25, 1.7; and 75, 1.3.
4. See above, page 226.
6. Page 293, col. 1, s. v. "Hundrað." B. For examples of allusions
Vigfússon goes on to say, "In olden times a double standard was used,—the wool or wadmal standard...and a silver standard....It is probable that originally both standards were identical;...the wool standard is the usual one, but in cases of weregild the silver standard seems always to be understood...." Thus, although Morris was obviously trying to imitate the early Scandinavian custom, he departed slightly from the usual practice in expressing the amount of the fine in terms of "hundreds in weald-stuff." 1

In my treatment of Morris's first romance I pointed out that the hall in which Morris represents the wolfing men as living is very similar to the typical early Scandinavian hall. In The Roots of the Mountains he does not present any complete description of the home of the tribe of the race, but from the scattered references to "the hearth amidst the hall," the dais around the hearth, the "thwart-table," the two doors "at the lower end of the hall...going into the butteries, and kitchen, and other out-bowers," and the loft used as a sleeping chamber above these doors, it seems that he had the Norse type of structure in mind, although he introduced a few essentially non-Scandinavian details, such as stone-vaulting and stone pillars. 3

1. Page 293, col. 1, s. y. "Hundrað," B.

2. For saga references to the paying of "weregild" see, for example, Burnt Njál, tr. Dasent, I, 121, 125, and 133.

3. See above, page 308.

4. For references in the tale to the hall see Collected Works, XV, 13, 11.20-27; 14, 1.28 - 15, 1.24; 17, 1.29; 17, 1.35 - 18, 1.4; 158, 11.1-4; 217, 11.18-20; 218, 1.32; 244, 11.7 and 13; and 247, 1.33.
One typically early Scandinavian domestic object which he mentions for the first time in *The Roots of the Mountains* is the "shut-bed." Biber points out that according to one of the indexes in Volume I of *The Saga Library*, "shut-bed," which occurs in *The Story of Howard the Halt*, is Morris's translation of the Old Norse "lokrekja," which Vigfusson glosses as "a 'lock-bed,' a locked bed-closet, in ancient dwellings." Morris represents the "shut-beds" as projecting from the sides of the hall, just as in early Scandinavian buildings.

Only one of the war-customs mentioned in *The Roots of the Mountains* is definitely Norse. This is the circulation of the "war-arrow" as a summons to arms, - a practice which I have already discussed in my comments on the Scandinavian elements in *The House of the Wolfings*. Often mentioned in the sagas, though it was by no means limited to the Scandinavian countries, is another war-custom described in this romance, - the "Weapon-show," - which Vigfusson explains as "...a meeting where all the franklins had to appear and produce for inspection the arms which every man was lawfully bound to have...."

In *The House of the Wolfings* we found frequent allusions to several of the deities and lesser supernatural beings of the early Scandinavians. In *The Roots of the Mountains* only one Norse god is men-

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1. Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances, p. 86. Biber gives only one example of the use of this word in *The Roots of the Mountains*, but it occurs several times; see *Collected Works*, XV, 15, 1.4; 40, 11.2-3; 48, 11.16-17; 50, 1.10; 72, 1.8; and 76, 1.27.

2. See *Collected Works*, XV, 219, 11.32-35 and 221, 1.8. One tribe uses a "war-arrow" tied to a spear as a banner; see ibid., XV, 225, 11.34-37; 276, 11.5-6; 277, 11.32-33; and 293, 11.34-35.

3. See above, pages 308-309.

4. For references to the "Weapon-show" in *The Roots of the Mountains*, see *Collected Works*, XV, 219, 1.35; 223, 1.29; 224, 1.1 - 232, 1.18; 250, 1.15; 255, 1.1; 274, 1.6; and 276, 11.2-3. For saga references to the "vápnaphing," see Njái (Copenhagen, 1875), p. 155, 1.11 and the *Flateyjarbók*, II, 429, 11.12-13.
tioned — namely, Thor; and he is always referred to by the epithet "the God of the Earth," — never by his own name. So far as I know, this particular expression is never employed for Thor in the Old Norse prose and poetry. However, the epithet is perfectly intelligible and its use is entirely justified, for according to the Prose Edda Thor was the son of Odin and the Earth, he was considered to be, as Vigfússon says, "...the friend of mankind, the defender of the earth, the heavens, and the gods, for without Thor and his hammer the earth would become the helpless prey of the giants...," and he was alluded to by early Scandinavian poets by such phrases as "Iarðar burr," "Iarðar sonr," "Hlóðynjar mýgr," "Fjörgynjar burr," "gründar sveinn," and "Miðgarðz veorr." We also find that one of the Old Norse customs relating to the worship of Thor is imitated in this tale; Morris refers on several occasions to people making "the sign of the Hammer," or, as he says in one case, "the sign of the Earth-god's Hammer," over their food before beginning to eat. In heathen Scandinavia, as Músson states in Volume VI of The Saga Library, "men who confessed believing in nothing but their 'might and main' were in the habit, before quaffing festive cups, to make over them the sign of Thor's hammer." A particu-

1. See Collected works, XV, 17, 11.12-13; 71, 11.17-18 and 29; 104, 11.18-19; 124, 11.7, 16, 19, and 25; 128, 1.35; 161, 1.32; 167, 11.18-19; 258, 1.29; 279, 1.15; 291, 1.34; and 368, 11.31-32 and 37.

2. It should be pointed out that the expression "Land-áss" does occur in a poem ascribed to Egil Skallagrímsson (see Corpus Poeticum Boreale, II, 72, 1.16); but this phrase cannot really be considered a parallel to, nor the source of, Morris's "the God of the Earth." In the Corpus Poeticum Vigfusson and Powell translate the line in which this expression occurs as "May the god of the land [Thur] loathe the tyrant who defiles the sanctuaries!"; and in An Icelandic-English Dictionary (page 371, col. 2, s.v. "land-áss") Vigfusson defines the term as "the guardian god of the land."


5. See Corpus Poeticum Boreale, II, 464. These epithets occur in poems included in the Prose Edda and the Poetic Edda, works which Morris knew.
larly interesting allusion to this practice occurs in the Saga Hákónar göða in the description of a blood-offering held at Ladir: when King Hákon, who has accepted Christianity ahead of his people, makes the sign of the cross over his cup, his heathen subjects grumble in disapproval, but Earl Sigurd, the faithful counsellor of Hákon, calms them by stating that it was the sign of the hammer that the king made over his drink.

Aside from these references to Thor there are comparatively few allusions to Norse mythology in The Roots of the Mountains. Occasionally we come across the term "Chooser of the Slain," as in the first romance. Moreover, in the description of the Hall of the Wolf we learn that a certain shield was "painted with the green world circled with the worm of the sea"; by this "worm of the sea" Morris must mean the "Miðgarðsormr." In Gold-mane's remark to his beloved that she is as beautiful as if she had "come down from the golden chairs of the Burg of the Gods," Morris is apparently referring to Asgard. Somewhat more frequent are the allusions to the "trolls"; Morris's trolls, it should be pointed out, are not the giants which the Prose Edda tells us that Thor was in the habit of combating, but the powerful, ugly, evil spirits which the early Christianized Norsemen believed inhabited the woods and mountains. Very interesting is the statement

2. See Collected Works, XV, 139, 1.23; 141, 1.14; and 296, 1.34; and above, page 510, note 4.
3. Collected Works, XV, 356, 11.4-5.
4. For accounts of the "Miðgarðsormr" that Morris very likely knew, see above, page 241, note 2.
5. Collected Works, XV, 140, 1.37.
6. For references to accounts of Asgard, see above, page 29, note 3.
7. See Collected Works, XV, 59, 1.27; 169, 11.26 and 29; 195, 1.35; 198, 1.4; 201, 1.34; 353, 1.3; and 355, 1.31.
that the Dusky Men, when they were defending themselves in the Mote-house of the Wolf, even climbed up on the roof, where they were riding the ridge and mocking like the trolls of old days; in making this comparison Morris almost certainly had in mind the account in the Grettis saga of how Glam rode the house-roofs at Thorhall-stead.

Although very few of the deities of the heathen Norsemen are mentioned, the religious background of the tale is decidedly early Scandinavian. In my comments on the ceremony of "hallowing the Thing," I mentioned the golden ring which the Alderman wore on his arm. There are a number of other allusions to this ring in the story; as in the sagas, it usually lies on the altar, but the priest or Alderman must always have it on his arm at sacrifices or on other holy occasions, and anyone making a particularly sacred vow or oath must take it in his right hand. Moreover, we are told that the men of the Tribe of the Face frequently held "...great feasts and made offerings to the Gods for the Fruitfulness of the Year, the Ingathering of the Increase, and in Memory of their Forefathers. Nevertheless at Yule-tide also they feasted from house to house to be glad with the rest of Midwinter, and many a cup they drank at those feasts to the memory of the fathers...."

In ascribing these customs to the people of his story, Morris very likely had in mind some of the saga accounts of the early Norse sacred festivals. In the chapter called "Of Odin's Law-Making" in The Story of the Ynglings, for example, Snorri Sturluson states, "Folk were to

2. See ibid., VII, 83, 11.12-13; 84, 11.3-4; 87, 1.27; and 88, 11.29-31.
3. See ibid., XV, 17, 1.16; 124, 11.4-6, 9, 10, 12-14, and 26; 128, 11.34-35; and 368, 11.24-36. For references to saga accounts of this ring see above, page 323, note 2.
hold sacrifice against the coming of winter for a good year; in midwinter for the growth of the earth; and a third in the summer that was an offering for gain and victory. " The Norse practice of drinking to the memory of one's ancestors I have already discussed in my treatment of The House of the Wolfings. Another early Scandinavian custom of a sacred nature which is alluded to in the first romance is mentioned on several occasions in the Roots of the Mountains and is in one case described in detail: this is the custom of swearing oaths on the Holy Boar of Yule. Once Morris refers to the holy Beast as the boar of Atonement, evidently in imitation of the Old Norse "Sonargölfr," this term being thus interpreted by scholars at the time.

There remain a few Scandinavian features of a miscellaneous nature to be commented upon. The first four I shall treat are mentioned by Biber in his study. At the end of my discussion of The House of the Wolfings I quoted some of Biber's comments on the Norse character of the personal and place-names used in that tale; in regard to the Roots of the Mountains Biber points out that many of the names Morris introduced into this romance are likewise of Scandinavian origin, but he finds that the Norse influence on the nomenclature is not so extensive in this story as in the first. Moreover, Biber

1. The Saga Library, III, 20. For further accounts of these customs see Mallet, Northern Antiquities, pp. 110-111, 113, and 196, and the Corpus Poeticum Boreale, I, 404.
2. See above, pages 315-316.
3. See above, page 316.
4. See Collected Works, XV, 67, 11.16-17; 70, 1.1-71, 1.32; 108, 11.10-20; 184, 11.8-12; 281, 11.12-13 and 17-19; and 405, 11.23-24.
5. See ibid., XV, 72, 1.5.
6. In 1892, in an article in Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur, XVI, 540-544, Eduard Sievers pointed out that this interpretation of "Sonargölfr" is wrong.
7. See above, pages 316-317.
notes, as most of the other critics of Morris who have dealt with
this work have also done, that the descriptions of mountain scen-
ery in this tale - and even to a greater extent in some of the
later ones - undoubtedly owe much of their vividness to the first-
hand acquaintance with the landscape of Iceland which Morris had
**1** gained on his two visits to that country. In presenting specimens
of such descriptions, Biber gives only one reference to *The Roots
of the Mountains*, but there are several passages in this story con-
taining pictures of typical Iceland scenery. Of less importance
are the other miscellaneous matters I should like to mention here.
In his discussion of "Spuren des Altnordischen" Biber lists the
word "skids," which occurs in the sense of "ski" several times in
*The Roots of the Mountains*, both alone and in the combination "skid-
strap"; Morris evidently used this word in imitation of the Old
Norse term "skiţ," which he had occasionally met in his saga trans-
lations. The term "skin-changer," the use of which Biber attri-
butes to Morris's Scandinavian studies, I have already discussed.
It also seems to me rather likely that Morris's description of a
certain character as "a lucky man" because his enterprises turned
out well is the result of his familiarity with the early Scandinavian


2. See *Collected Works*, XV, 1, 1.3 - 2, 1.28; 99, 1.20 - 101,
1.24; 305, 1.11 - 307, 1.27; 308, 11.3-9; 309, 1.3 - 310, 1.20;
310, 1.35 - 312, 1.21.

3. *Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances*, p. 87. For
other references to "skids," in addition to those mentioned by
Biber, see *Collected Works*, XV, 77, 11.3 and 6; 81, 1.18; and 82,
1.33.

4. See, for example, *Saga af Agli Skallagrímssyni*, p. 33,
1.11 and 177, 1.22.

belief, often alluded to in the sagas, that every man was accompanied through life by a "hamingja," or guardian spirit, and that in some cases the power of these "hamingjur" was greater than in others, so that some men were known as especially lucky and might even share their gift of luck with others on particular occasions. Also to be attributed to Morris's study of the sagas is his use of the term "hundred" to signify one hundred and twenty units, as was the custom throughout early Scandinavia. Moreover, it is barely possible that the title of the romance, The Roots of the Mountains, which has no special significance for the tale beyond the fact that the story is laid in a mountainous country, was suggested to Morris by a phrase in The Prose Edda; in the Gylfaginning we are told that the chain with which the gods finally bound the Fenris-Wolf was fashioned by the dwarfs out of "the noise made by the footfall of a cat; the beards of women; the roots of stones; the sinews of bears; the breath of fish; and the spittle of birds." Perhaps the phrase "the roots of stones" made a special appeal to Morris's imagination, and was in his mind when he named his second romance The Roots of the Mountains. Finally, I should like to point out that in two of the verse interludes which Morris introduces into this tale, he uses the verse form which I discussed in my comments on The House of the Wolfings; in these poetical

1. See, for example, the Heimskringla, tr. Laing, II, 67, 1.9 and 68, 11.8 and 12-16.

2. For references to "long hundreds" see Collected Works, XV, 176, 1.3; 205, 11.12-13; 231, 11.19-21; 249, 1.37; 250, 1.16; 302, 11.22-23; 317, 1.33; 364, 1.14.


5. See above, pages 317-319.
passages, however, he uses less alliteration and fewer kennings, so that the resemblance to early Germanic poetry is much less marked here than in the preceding romance.

Two months after the publication of *The Roots of the Mountains* - that is, in January, 1890, just before he gave up his active interest in Socialism, Morris began printing in the *Commonweal* a tale called *News from Nowhere; Or, An Epoch of Unrest, Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance*; the last installment of this work, which was his greatest literary contribution to the Socialist cause, appeared in the October 4th issue of the Socialist League journal. This story presents an imaginary picture of the state of society in England at the opening of the twenty-first century, a few years after the Socialist Revolution is supposed to have taken place; the whole tale is put into the form of a dream or vision, which comes to a Londoner of the late nineteenth century, almost certainly Morris himself, after he has spent an evening of lively discussion at the Socialist League as to the conditions of life that would develop in the reformed state for which he and his comrades are working. One would scarcely expect to find Morris using any Norse material in a work of this nature, but he does introduce three Scandinavian allusions. One of these, the reference to Horrebow's *Natural History of Iceland*, I have already discussed. The second is a brief mention of a Norwegian folktale. In the course of a discussion between the dreamer and old Hammond, a historian of the new state, concerning the changes in everyday life that have been brought about

2. See above, pages 272-275.
by the Revolution, they raise the question of the position of women in this reformed society, and the dreamer expresses surprise at finding the women waiting on the men in the homes; at this point Hammond bursts out,

"...perhaps you think housekeeping an unimportant occupation, not deserving of respect. I believe that was the opinion of the 'advanced' women of the nineteenth century, and their male backers. If it is yours, I recommend to your notice an old Norwegian folklore tale called How the Man minded the House, or some such title; the result of which minding was that, after various tribulations, the man and the family cow balanced each other at the end of a rope, the man hanging half-way up the chimney, the cow dangling from the roof, which, after the fashion of the country, was of turf and sloping down low to the ground. Hard on the cow, I think. Of course no such mishap could happen to such a superior person as yourself," he added, chuckling.

The tale in which Morris here indirectly shows such keen delight is obviously the one which Dasent calls "The Husband Who Was To Mind the House" in his Popular Tales from the Norse; it was very likely in this collection that Morris had read the story. The third allusion is of a different nature. In the course of the conversation just referred to between Hammond and the dreamer, the former refers to W.E. Gladstone, the great statesman of the Victorian age, as "one Gladstone; or Gledstein (probably, judging by this name, of Scandinavian descent) ..." According to his biographers Gladstone was of pure Scottish descent as far back as his ancestry can be traced; of course the family may originally have come from Scandinavia, many of the early Norse invaders having settled in Scotland. The fact that Morris suggests "Gledstein" as a variant of "Gladstone" indicates that he knew that.

1. Collected Works, XVI, 60.
3. Collected Works, XVI, 110.
in the earliest extant reference to the family, dating from the late thirteenth century, the name appears as "Gledstanes." However, I can see no reason for his stating that the name suggests that the family was Scandinavian in origin, for both the first element, "glad-" or "gled-," which is supposed to be the same as "glede," meaning "kite," and the second element, "stone," or "stein," are common Germanic.

While his *News from Nowhere* was appearing in the Commonweal, Morris published in another periodical, the *English Illustrated Magazine*, his third prose romance, called *The Story of the Glittering Plain or the Land of Living Men*. I have already pointed out that critics have noticed in the prose romances of Morris a gradual but definite movement from the style of the romance to that of the epic. *The Story of the Glittering Plain* reveals a distinct advance in this direction; as Mackail says of the work,

...it is...notable as marking the full and unreserved return of the author to romance. In *The House of the Wolfings,* and even to some degree in *The Roots of the Mountains* also, there had been a semi-historical setting, and an adherence to the conditions of a world from which the supernatural element was not indeed excluded, but in which it bore such a subordinate place as involved no violent strain on probability. Here the imagined world is of no place or time, and is one in which nothing is impossible. The dreamer of dreams has returned to that strange Land East of the Sun, mingled of Northern saga and Arabian tale, through which the Star-Gazer had passed two and twenty years before in the days of "The Earthly Paradise"...


3. In addition to the three Scandinavian allusions commented upon in the text above, I should like to point out here that in the tale Morris occasionally uses such terms as "Mote" (see *Collected Works*, XVI, 88, 11.10, 17, 22, and 25), "ward-mote" (see *ibid.*, XVI, 42, 1.20), "Mote-House" (see *ibid.*, XVI, 24, 1.34 and 73, 1.11), and "mote-halls" (see *ibid.*, XVI, 33, 1.6).

As is to be expected, as Morris reverted more and more to the style of pure romance, he introduced into his tales fewer and fewer features borrowed from the Icelandic sagas. However, in *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, the work in which he first returned fully to romance, there are a considerable number of Scandinavian elements. Most of these details we have already met with in the first two tales or in still earlier works. For example, we find in *The Story of the Glittering Plain* such terms and expressions as "mote-stead," "handsel," "shut-bed," "the Norns," "the Gloom of the Gods," "skin-changer," "a double share of luck," and "earth-yoke." As in *The Roots of the Mountains* there are also a number of extremely vivid mountain descriptions in which Morris is undoubtedly drawing on his recollections of his tours in Iceland; one passage in which one of the characters in the story reveals his affection for his rugged land very likely expresses the devotion Morris himself felt towards Iceland and the love which he knew the Icelanders bore towards their stern home:

"Nay, I love the land. Belike thou dearest it but dreary with its black rocks and black sand, and treeless wind-swept dalas; but I know it in summer and winter, and sun and shade, in storm and calm.

2. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 289, 1.27 and above, pages 325-326.
3. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 250, 11.13, 34, and 35; 235, 1.32; 241, 11.18 and 29; 277, 1.4; 287, 1.37; 288, 1.7; 292, 1.9; and 317, 1.36. See also above, page 328.
4. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 308, 1.30 and above, page 309.
6. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 224, 1.21; 318, 11.34-36; and 321, 11.21-22. See also above, pages 314-315.
7. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 224, 11.21-25 and 253, 1.9. See also above, pages 333-334.
8. See *Collected Works*, XIV, 309, 11.1-3; 318, 1.10; and 319, 11.16-31. See also above, pages 239-240. It should perhaps also be pointed out that the alliterative formula found in a speech of the hero of the tale (in *Collected Works*, XIV, 256, 11.31-37) was probably imitated from the Old Norse "trygðamál," as similar for-
And I know where the fathers dwelt and the sons of their sons' sons have long lain in the earth. I have sailed its windiest firths, and climbed its steepest crags; and ye may well wot that it hath a friendly face to me; and the land-wights of the mountains will be sorry for my departure."

We also find in The Story of the Glittering Plain several new allusions to Scandinavian customs, beliefs, and traditions. Thus, one of the characters in the tale remarks that if he and his companions should injure Hallblithe, who, although he is their deadly enemy, has dared to come to their hall in his search for his beloved, "his head on our hall-gable should be to us a nithing-stake...." The raising of a "nithing-stake" was a common way for a man in medieval Scandinavia to bring evil upon an enemy. The account given in the Egils saga of how Egil set up a "nithing-stake" against King Eric and Queen Gunnhilda is one of the best saga-descriptions of the custom; the saga-man says that Egil erected a pole on a mountain peak, and set the head of a horse on the stake, uttering these words as he did so:

"Here raise I a nith-stake, and turn this 'nith' against King Eric and Queen Gunnhilda....And I turn this 'nith' against the 'land-vaettir' that abide in this land, so that they may wander about, without finding house or habitation, until they shall have driven King Eric and Queen Gunnhilda from the country."

In Morris's story the term is of course used figuratively.

1. Collected Works, XIV, 319, 11.8-15. When Morris referred at the end of the quotation given above to "the land-wights of the mountains," he very likely had in mind the "land-vaettir" so often mentioned in the Old Norse literature, although of course the early Scandinavians are not the only people who have believed in the existence of guardian spirits of the land. For Scandinavian allusions to "land-vaettir" see Thorpe, Northern Mythology, I, 116-117 and the Corpus Poeticum Boreale, I, 419-420. See also the quotation from the Egils saga presented at the bottom of this page.

2. See Collected Works, XIV, 312.

3. Sagan af Agli Skallagrímssyni, p. 137. The translation is that given by Thorpe in his account of this custom in his Northern Mythology, I, 219-220.
Morris is almost certainly referring to the opening episode of the *Ragnars saga loðbrókar ok sóna hans* when he represents a young princess in his story, who is pining away because of unrequited love, as exclaiming,

"Yea, why is the earth fair and fruitful, and the heavens kind above it, if thou comest not to-night, nor to-morrow, nor the day after? And I the daughter of the Undying, on whom the days shall grow and grow as the grains of sand which the wind heaps up above the sea-beach. And life shall grow huger and more hideous round about the lonely one, like the ling-worm laid upon the gold, that waxeth thereby, till it lies all round about the house of the queen entrapped, the moveless unending ring of years that change not."  

The "ling-worm" referred to must be the "lyngormr" which the princess Thora, according to the *Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, received from her father; the little dragon, which Thora laid on some gold in a box, grew so large, we are told, that it had to be placed out-of-doors, and then it continued to grow until it encircled the house in which Thora was shut up, so that she was actually imprisoned until Ragnar killed the dragon and rescued her. With this tale Morris had undoubtedly long been familiar, for it is told in Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, which he read as a student at Oxford.

I should also like to point out that it is extremely likely that Morris gave to the land of everlasting youth which plays an important part in the tale the names "the Land of the Glittering Plain," the Land of Living Men," and "the Acre of the Undying" in imitation of the

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1. Collected Works, XIV, 266.
3. See, for example, the title of the tale and Collected Works, XIV, 211, 1.36 - 212, 1.1; 212, 11. 15-16; 228, 11.27-28; 233, 11.23-24 and 34; 234, 11.1-2; 243, 1.13; 244, 11.16-17 and 24; 245, 11.24-25; 246, 1.9; 248, 1.29; 248, 1.38 - 249, 1.1; 249, 11.15, 20, and 32; 251, 1.2; 253, 1.12; etc.
4. See, for example, the title and *ibid.*, XIV, 212, 1.5; 226, 11.35-36; 253, 1.27; etc.
5. See *ibid.*, XIV, 249, 1.1; 253, 11.22-23; 282, 11.5-6; and
terms "Glaesisvellir," "jörð lifanda manna," and "Ödáinsakr," which are used for Paradise in some of the Scandinavian mythical-heroic sagas. Only one of these names, so far as I am aware, is found in a saga that we definitely know Morris had read, and none of the other tales in which they occur - the Hervarar saga ok Heljâreks konungs, the Eiríks saga viðfórla, the Hálfdanar saga Eysteinnsonar, the Helga þáttr Dórissonar, the Þorsteins þáttr Þegjarmagns, and the Bósa saga - had been translated into English before 1890. However, Morris must by this time have attained a high degree of proficiency in reading Icelandic, and it is not at all unlikely that he had at some time read some of these sagas in the original, either by himself or with the aid of Magnússon. They were all in his library at the time of his death. It is also possible that he had become familiar with these terms through treatises on Scandinavian and Germanic mythology, such as R.B. Anderson's translation of Viktor Rydberg's Teutonic Mythology and the English rendering of Jacob Grimm's Deutsche Mythologie by Stallybrass.

1. The name "Glaesisvellir" is found in the Norna-Gests þáttr, which, as I have already pointed out, Morris is known to have translated, - in part, at least; see above, pages 189-191. For occurrences of the name in the Norna-Gests þáttr, see the Flateyjarbók, I, 347, 11.3-4.

2. See Fornaldar Sögur Nordrlanda, I, 411, 11.11 and 15; 442, 1.22; 444, 1.9; and 452, 1.10-11.

3. See the Flateyjarbók, I, 29, 1.11; 31, 11.34 and 35; 32, 1.3; and 34, 11.6 and 27.

4. See Fornaldar Sögur Nordrlanda, III, 519, 1.11.

5. See Formanna Sögur, III, 136, 1.22; 138, 1.5; 139, 1.14; and 140, 1.5.


7. See Fornaldar Sögur Nordrlanda, III, 208, 1.7; 210, 1.16; 214, 1.5; 215, 1.6; 216, 1.20; 217, 1.17; 218, 11.1-2; 219, 1.2; 228, 11.8-9; and 233, 1.8.

8. See Islandica, V(1912), 22-26, 12, 20, 21, 60, and 10-11.

9. See notes 1-7 on this page and below, page 1000.
In regard to the personal names used in this tale, Biber points out that only one, the name of the hero, Hallblithe, is Scandinavian in character. Finally, I should like to call attention to the fact that in two of the poems in the story, Morris uses the metre which, in my discussion of the first two romances, I have commented upon as being slightly imitative of early Germanic poetry.

It seems that it was in this same year -1890- that Morris resumed his work as a translator of Old Norse sagas. Before passing on to a discussion of this activity, which was to occupy a considerable amount of his attention during the next four years, I should like to mention briefly a letter which Morris wrote to the Times early in September, voicing his approval, as Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, of the pleas made by another correspondent in the columns of the Times for the preservation of the Hanseatic Museum in Bergen, Norway. Morris had not visited the Scandinavian peninsula, so that he knew nothing at first hand about this building; nevertheless, the concern he felt over the fate of this relic from the days of the Hanseatic League in Norway was the result not only of his love for ancient buildings in general but also of his interest in this particular structure as a monument of the Middle Ages in Scandinavia. He wrote, in part,

It ought not to be forgotten, too, that, great as the possessions of the Scandinavian peoples are in ancient literature, they have little to spare of examples of ancient art. The removal of the Hanseatic House from Bergen would be a most serious loss to the good town, and would so be felt by all visitors. As a student of

1. Studien zu William Morris' Prose-Romances, p. 78.
2. See Collected Works, XIV, 239, 1.20 - 241, 1.10 and 313, 1.9 - 314, 1.20. See also above, pages 317-319 and 334-335.
Scandinavian literature and history, as well as a lover of ancient architecture, I hope I may be excused for appealing through your columns to the citizens of Bergen and begging them to resist this perverted love of one's neighbour's archaeological wealth.¹

During the period of his intense public activity and even in the first years of his return to literature Morris seems to have done no saga-translating. In his Life of William Morris the first reference Mackail makes to any such work after the time of Morris's ardent Socialism occurs in a quotation from a letter which Morris wrote on July 8, 1890: "I have undertaken to get out some of the Sagas I have lying about. Quaritch is exceedingly anxious to get hold of me, and received with enthusiasm a proposal to publish a Saga Library...." As I shall show later, Morris seems originally to have planned to make The Saga Library much greater in scope than it actually is, but the saga-translations which he did include in this collection and which we can accordingly be sure that he was referring to in the statement just quoted are "The Story of Howard the Halt," "The Story of the Banded Men," and "The Story of Hen Thorir," which appeared in the first volume, "The Story of the Ere-Dwellers" and "The Story of the Heath-Slayings," which he printed in the second volume, and The Stories of the Kings of Norway, which filled Volumes III, IV, and V. Almost all of these saga-renderings, as we have already seen, had been prepared many years before. Thus, the first three of these works were translated by Morris and Magnússon in the early seventies. The Eyrbyggja saga was one of the first, if not the very first, of the Icelandic tales that the two collaborators turned into English.

¹. No. 33, 113(September 10, 1890), p. 12.
². II, 247.
³. See above, page 184.
⁴. See above, pages 47-52.
The exact date of the translation of the *Heiðarvíga saga* is not known, but, as I have explained above, it was very likely prepared during the period 1871 to 1876. Morris's English rendering of the *Heimskringla* was begun as early as 1871, but was not completed in 1890, when he resumed his saga-translating. Evidently his work on the Icelandic sagas during the years 1890 to 1895 consisted in revising and preparing for publication the tales already translated and in finishing his English version of the *Heimskringla*. As I have previously stated, his translation of the *Eyrbyggja saga* seems to have been subjected to a very extensive revision before it was published in 1892, for the printed text differs considerably from the holograph manuscript of 1868; in fact, the whole rendering must have been rewritten, for the original manuscript could not have been the immediate source of the published work. I have not seen the holograph manuscripts of the other tales in the first two volumes of *The Saga Library*, so that I cannot determine how thoroughly they were revised for publication; probably Morris found less to alter in these translations, for at least three of them, and very likely the rendering of the *Heiðarvíga saga* also, were produced after he had become an experienced translator.

Morris's rendering of the *Heimskringla* demands a few words of special comment. As I pointed out above, he had not completed this translation when he gave up his literary activities in the late 1870's and turned to public life, but none of the studies of Morris state

1. See above, pages 189-191.
2. See above, page 182.
3. See below, pages 344-348.
4. See above, page 49 and below, pages 516-517.
how much of this work he had finished when he dropped it at that
time. So far as I know, the only available information bearing upon
this question is found in two manuscript catalogues of Morris's
library, both of which are now in the private collection of Sir Syd-
ney Cockerell of Cambridge, England. One of them is a holograph
manuscript in two hands; according to a note on the inside of the
front cover, evidently written by the present owner, this "Catalogue
of the library of William Morris at Kelmscott House, Upper Mall,
Hammersmith was begun in 1890 by his elder daughter Jenny and was
continued in the same year and in 1891 (H.72-91) by Morris himself..."

1. This manuscript measures 12 1/4 by 8 inches. On the inside of
the front cover we find the following note in Cockerell's hand:
"This Catalogue of the library of William Morris at Kelmscott
House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith was begun in 1890 by his elder daugh-
ter Jenny and was continued in the same year and in 1891 (H.72-91)
by Morris himself. In 1892 (Nov.) I was employed to make a more
elaborate Catalogue of the manuscripts and incunabula, and this list
does not contain the numerous books acquired by Morris in the last
five years of his life."

On the recto of the first of the three flyleaves is written "Sydney
G. Cockerell - given me by Mrs Morris after her husband's death."
The catalogue begins on the fourth page, which is a sales-sheet
from Bernard Quaritch of London, and runs through page 91; page 92
is blank, but the catalogue is continued on page 93. The first page,
the sales-sheet, is not numbered. At the end of the book the three
flyleaves are blank; but on the inside of the back cover is pasted
a slip of paper bearing the autograph of William Morris, and at the
bottom of this cover, in the lower left-hand column, is written
"Bound by Katherine Adams at Broadway Worcestershire 1911."

The first part of the catalogue, from the beginning to page 72,
has been prepared rather carelessly; many of the titles must have
been written down from dictation, for there are numerous misspellings.
On pages 72, 73, and 74 we find two handwritings, the new one being
clearly Morris's, and on pages 75 through 91 all the entries seem to
have been made by Morris. The last page, page 93, appears to be in
the hand that wrote the titles on the sales-sheet and the first 71
pages. All the entries except those on page 93 are numbered; there
are 973 numbered entries in all.

Those pages that are watermarked are dated 1882, 1885, and 1888.
In this work item 837 on page 62 is described as "Heimskringla translation by W. Morris down to the end of Olaf Tryggvason 2 vols autograph MS." This page belongs to that part of the catalogue which, according to Cockrell's note, was prepared by Miss Jenny Morris; the handwriting is clearly not Morris's. If this page was the work of Morris's daughter, it must, according to the note just quoted, have been written out in 1890. The other manuscript is an illuminated book, containing only the beginning of a catalogue of Morris's library and a fragment of a saga-translation. According to a note, apparently in the hand of Sir Sydney Cockrell, on the inside of the front cover, this catalogue was "probably made about 1890." In this list of Morris's books the Heimskringla rendering is likewise described as "two vols; reaching down to the end of the saga of Olaf Tryggvason." On the basis of these two references it seems to me fairly safe to assume that in 1890, when Morris resumed his saga-translating, he had turned into English only the "Preface" and the first six sagas of the Heimskringla; in other words, in the late 1870's when his interest in public life finally led him to give up his literary activities, he had completed only about one-third of his English version of Snorri's great history of the early kings of Norway.

It is of course possible that Morris had begun his translation of the next saga in the series - the Ólafs saga helga Haraldssonar-, but had not finished it; if he had completed only a small portion of this section of the Heimskringla rendering in the 1870's, it would

1. For an account of this manuscript see above, page 187.
most likely not have been kept in his library and would therefore not have been entered in a catalogue of his books in 1890. In the holograph manuscript of the Magnússon-Morris translation of the Ólafs saga helga we find a very interesting situation which is perhaps to be explained by assuming that the two collaborators had begun their work on this tale in the 1870's but had put it aside during the years of Morris's public life, and that when they decided to finish their rendering of the Heimskringla in 1890, they at first forgot their earlier work on the Ólafs saga and began anew on this story. In this manuscript Magnússon has written out the original translation, using only one side of each sheet; Morris has made his alterations in the prose between the lines of Magnússon's version, but has put his verse translations of the "visur" on the verso of the preceding page or on an inserted sheet. The translation runs along in the usual way up to page twenty-four. Here we find the closing lines of Chapter XX and the opening of Chapter XXI; after the first "visa" in this chapter Magnússon has left five lines blank and has then written, "All this I have done before and sent you, or I am dreaming." Nothing more is found on this page. Next comes an inserted sheet with Morris's verse rendering of the "visa." On the following page we meet again with Magnússon's translation; here, however, he does not continue from the point he had reached at the bottom of page twenty-four, but goes back to the middle of the fourth sentence of Chapter XXI, presents a slightly different rendering of the second half of the prose passage and the "visa" found on page twenty-four, and then proceeds in the

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1. For an account of this manuscript, which is now in the Bibliothec ton Library, Leeds, England, see A Selection of Books, Manuscripts, Engravings, and Autograph Letters (London: Maggs Brothers, 1928), pp. 208-209.
normal way. On this page and on the following ten and a half pages, he has written his translation of the Icelandic prose on every other line; then he reverts to his usual manner of using each line. Evidently Magnússon had produced a version of this part of the Ólafs saga at some previous time, but had now forgotten this work and therefore began a new rendering; when he reached the bottom of page twenty-four, he realized his mistake, found his earlier translation, and introduced it at this point, beginning with that page which continued the passage he had just translated although it repeated a short section. In other words, if my interpretation is correct, page twenty-six and some of the sheets following it are part of an earlier translation which Magnússon inserted here when he remembered that the translation he was now producing of the Ólafs saga was his second. Of course, we do not know how much earlier the first translation was produced. The manuscript under consideration, as I stated above, was very likely as a whole written out during the period 1890 to 1894. The first translation may have been begun more than ten years earlier - in the 1870's, or the second rendering may have been made late in the period 1890 to 1894 and the first beginning only a year or two earlier. It seems rather unlikely, however, that Magnússon would have forgotten his earlier work, if a fairly long time had not elapsed between the two versions; in all probability he had begun a translation of the Ólafs saga in the late 1870's, and it was this rendering he forgot when Morris resumed his translation-work more than ten years later and decided to finish his English version of the Heimskringla.
The first volume of *The Saga Library*, the collection of saga translations which Morris had agreed to prepare for Bernard Quaritch, appeared early in 1891. The translations proper are preceded by a Preface of forty-three pages, the first seven and a half pages of which, according to Magnusson's statement in Volume VI of *The Saga Library*, were prepared by Morris. In this section Morris has presented a few facts relating to the history and literature of Iceland in order to aid the general reader in understanding the sagas to be presented in this collection; he has described briefly the events leading to the settlement of Iceland by Norwegians, the wide-spread maritime expeditions of the Icelanders and other Scandinavians, the conditions of life in Iceland which contributed to the production of an extraordinarily rich medieval literature in that country, and the outstanding qualities of the saga-style of narration. At the end of the discussion he has divided the Icelandic medieval literature into five groups on the basis of the subjects treated. These five divisions are, the first, works dealing with mythology, such as *Prose Edda* and the *Poetic Edda*; secondly, romances "founded on the mythology," such as the *Völsunga saga*; thirdly, "histories of events foreign to Iceland," such as the *Heimskringla*; fourthly, "histories of Icelandic worthies, their families, feuds, etc."; and fifthly, fiction sagas.

Certain remarks that Morris makes in the course of this classification are extremely interesting because of the information

3. It is not necessary to investigate the sources of Morris's information on this point.
they give concerning his original plans for The Saga Library.
Thus, in commenting on the fourth group, the "histories of Icelandic worthies," he states that "our Library will include all the most important of them"; in discussing the last division he refers to "the story of Viglund the Fair, included in the Saga Library." At the end of his classification he remarks, "There are other important works that do not come within the scope of the Saga Library; of these are the Sturlunga Saga, the Bishops' Sagas, the Annals, religious poems like the Lilja, codes of law like Grágás, and translations of medieval romances...." It is obvious from these statements that if Morris had lived longer, The Saga Library would have extended far beyond the five volumes that we have; it is likewise clear that to find time to translate and publish all the works which in his consideration fell "within the scope of the Saga Library" Morris would have needed another lifetime. There can be little doubt, for example, that he planned to print in this collection those sagas which we know he had translated during the years 1868 to 1876 but had never published,—namely, the Egils saga, the Kormáks saga, the Vápnfirlinga saga, the Halldórs báttir Snorrasoner, the Norna-Gests báttir, and, perhaps, the Laxdæla saga. Moreover, the mention of the Víglundar saga as being included in The Saga Library seems to indicate that he intended to republish some, if not all, of the translations from the Icelandic he

1. These quotations come from The Saga Library, I, xi-xii.
2. See above, pages 189-191.
4. See above, pages 188-189.
5. See above, pages 187-188.
7. See above, pages 54-55.