intense expectation passes through sweet music into the trance in which she finds him.

The charm of the *Earthly Paradise* was that it gave us the picturesqueness of earth with the atmosphere of fairyland; we drifted along a swift current of adventure under a sky heavy with sweet dreams, through which the dew of death fell without dimming the sunshine: we were amused and yet enthralled. In his new work Mr. Morris demands more of the reader; instead of abandoning himself to a passive fascination, he has to be penetrated with a profound and earnest passion: we have to live in the poem, not to dream of it. Consequently it will not be surprising if *Love is Enough* attracts fewer readers than the *Earthly Paradise*; though those who are attracted will be held longer under a deeper spell. Those outside the charmed circle will perhaps complain that the figures which move within are shadowy, because their own desire does not burn within them.

32. Sidney Colvin, review, *Fortnightly Review*

1 January 1873, xiii, 147–8

That he clothes modern thoughts in modern words, is not the definition of Mr. Morris's work. Rather it has been made an accusation against him that he occupies himself exclusively with old stories, and goes back to old sources of language for words to put them in: 'Remote subjects—archaic manner,' grates every now and then the note of a criticism respectable if only for rustiness; while the mind susceptible to literature, and awake to poetry, is enjoying itself in the sense of a delightful possession, and acknowledging that no subject is too old, and no style too primitive, when the one is made to fit the other with a result so true, so fresh, so living, so full of brightness and colour, so rich in lovely inventions and amplifications of the renovating and realizing fancy, as this is. That, I say, is the feeling towards the *Earthly*
there is the originality of an exquisitely tender, profound, and brooding sentiment—a sentiment which is almost a philosophy—of love and its predominance, and the weariness of everything else in the world along side of it. And that is put in, both in the body of the actual fable, in the comments of Love as Chorus, and the lyric interludes of the musicians, with a much greater aim at concentration and fulness of thought than has been common in any other of Mr. Morris's work. And, taken together with the picturesque character of his imagination, it produces, in some places, a result which, new as it is in form, less clear as it is than one would have fully desired, leaves yet an impression most delicate and enchanting. Some strokes of the lyric interludes, some passages like that where Azalais comes upon Pharamond in his sleep are of a perfect poetry.

THREE NORTHERN LOVE STORIES

1875

33. Unsigned review, Athenaeum

17 July 1875, no. 2490, 75

Much vexation of spirit arises from seeing work ill done, and as ample cause for it is provided by translators as by any class of literary men. Usually, indeed, translations are either depressing or exasperating. The fatuity of some, the criminality of others, weighs heavily upon the reader's mind or painfully disturbs his liver. Now and then, however, a most agreeable exception to the rule presents itself, and a version from some foreign tongue appears which is in itself a work of art, not only satisfying the just demands of the foreign original, but also gratifying the ear and the taste of the native reader. Of such a nature are the versions from the Icelandic for which we are indebted to Mr. Eiríkr Magnússon and Mr. William Morris, the most recent of which is now before us. Of it, as of its predecessors, too high praise cannot be spoken, both as regards the grace and vigour of its own language and its fidelity to that which it interprets.

These Northern love-stories are deserving of the pains which have been taken with them. Not only do they contain a series of trustworthy pictures of the old times to which they refer, but they are rich in scenes of romantic as well as historic interest, through which move with unaffected dignity the forms of brave men and fair women. He who has read them feels the better for having done so, as one who has been transferred from a relaxing to a bracing air. From the tropical raptures and languors of so many modern love-stories it is good to turn to these simple but vigorous records of ancient warings and wooings in the North.

The oldest is, perhaps, the best, telling how Gunlaug the Wom tongue, so called because he was a great skald 'somewhat bitter in his rhyming,' loved Helga, 'the fairest woman in Iceland, then or since,'