Chapter II

The Role of the Hero

The transition from the world of the Prologue to that of the verse tales shifts us abruptly from realism to fantasy. While the events of the Prologue have historical antecedents, the provenances of the tales are folktale, legend, and saga. (A possible exception is "The Lovers of Gudrun," the source for which, *The Laxdoela Saga*, had a spurious reputation for historicity, a point to be discussed later.) The cities and nations mentioned in the Prologue are real, Edward III is a historical figure, and the voyage itself is based on actual expeditions; the outcome of the voyage is inevitable in this realistic context. (That this contrast is deliberate and the result of much consideration on Morris’s part is shown by his discarding of the first prologue, "The Wanderers," which impinges on fantasy.) The wanderers have mistaken art for reality and must fail. Nevertheless, there is an essential relationship between art and life, and it is this relationship that is explored in the verse tales.

With "The Man Born to Be King," the second tale for March, Morris introduces the major concern of the tales (as it is of many of his writings)—that of the hero-king who is fated to be the great leader and savior of his people. Michael, the protagonist of this tale, is not a culture hero in the same sense as Perseus, Theseus, Sigurd, and Arthur, but the tale itself shows a relationship with the typical pattern of the life of the culture hero. (I use the term to mean “a mythical or mythicized historical figure who embodies the aspirations or ideals of a society.”)² The humble birth, the prophesied greatness, the attempted murder of the newborn child by a jealous king are all standard incidents in the widespread folktale type of which this particular story is representative, but they are probably best known in the West as they appear in the New Testament account of the birth of Jesus.² These elements also appear in somewhat attenuated form in the account in Genesis of the childhood of Moses, and any or all of them may be detected in the histories of the great culture heroes

already mentioned. Additionally, this pattern of motifs is related to the legendary biographies attributed to kings by their chroniclers throughout history. The point for readers of Morris is that this simple and unpretentious tale touches upon a massive complex of related myths, legends, and folktales that associate the heroic and usually semidivine leader with the bringing in of the millennium, or the return of the golden age. The mystical relationship of the hero or leader to society is stressed throughout *The Earthly Paradise* and is brought out clearly in the low-keyed märchen atmosphere of “The Man Born to Be King.”

The importance of appropriate leadership is emphasized in the opening lines:

A king there was in days of old
Who ruled wide lands, nor lacked for gold,
Nor honour, nor much longed-for praise,
And his days were called happy days,
So peaceable his kingdoms were,
While others wrapt in war and fear
Fell ever unto worse and worse.

This king, though a good ruler by Machiavellian standards, is guilty of hubris and, like Arnold's Mycerinus, must learn to subordinate his will to the ineluctable workings of destiny. His attempts to avert what is written in the stars must, like those of Oedipus, fail, and he comes at length to repent his Promethean pride as he relinquishes his throne to Michael, the "man born to be king":

"How many an hour might I have been
Right merry in the gardens green;
How many a glorious day had I
Made happy with some victory;
What noble deeds I might have done,
What bright renown my deeds have won;
What blessings would have made me glad;
What little burdens had I had,
What calmness in the hope of praise,

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4 On the subject of Virgil's "prophecies" and the reign of Augustus as a golden age, see Campbell's *Masks of God: Occidental Mythology*, pp. 322–34. He discusses also the Jewish concepts of apocalypse and the messiah, pp. 269–71.
The Role of the Hero

What joy of well-accomplished days,
If I had let these things alone;
Nor sought to sit upon my throne
Like God between the cherubim.”

[III, 166–67]

The second tale for April, “The Proud King,” concerns exclusively the chastening of a leader who “thought that he was something more than man, if not equal to God” (III, 242, “The Argument”). One of the forms of this king’s inordinate egocentricity is a conviction that he is immortal: “Still I may not die / Though underneath the earth my fathers lie” (III, 243). Through his suffering he gains a conviction of his own infinitesimal part in God’s plan. Although this tale is basically Christian not only in setting but in its moral point, its emphasis on the need for acquiescence in the cosmic scheme is consonant with the pagan heroic stories of The Earthly Paradise. In each of the tales the fated pattern of human events is as inexorable as the progression of seasons to which, in fact, human change is constantly likened. For instance, the accession of Michael is described as follows:

And straight the autumn air did burn
With many a point of steel and gold;
And through the trees the carol rolled
Once more, until the autumn thrush
Far off ’gan twittering on his bush,
Made mindful of the long-lived spring.

[III, 167]

The new reign is a new beginning of time, a spring following the autumnal decline and abdication of the old king, a renewal of the age of gold when greed is unknown and peace covers the earth:

Nor will the poor folk see again
A king like him on any throne,
Or such good deeds to all men done:
For then, as saith the chronicle,
It was the time, as all men tell,
When scarce a man would stop to gaze
At gold crowns hung above the ways.

[III, 167]

The theme of the chastening of Promethean efforts to avert fate is immediately repeated by Morris in the first tale for April, “The Doom of King Acrisius.” Morris underscores this theme with his choice of title, for the story is, of course, that of Perseus. His jealous grandfather, King Acrisius, is a relatively minor character. The paradoxical
bringing about of events through efforts to avoid them echoes the ironic results of the wanderers' expedition:

Now of the King Acrisius shall ye hear,
Who, thinking he could free his life from fear,
Did that which brought but death on him at last.

[III, 171]

Acrisius' futile efforts to thwart the destined greatness of his daughter's son fall into the pattern of the traditional difficulties of birth of the culture hero, as already touched upon in "The Man Born to Be King." Perseus is the first of the great legendary heroes to appear in The Earthly Paradise, and his exploits illustrate well the relationship of the culture hero to the society he represents. Fated, like Oedipus, to bring destruction to his own family in the person of Acrisius, he bears what in Greek legend is analogous to the mark of Cain, a symbolic guilt resulting from Original Sin, a concept always associated with the myth of the Fall. We shall see that the Cain motif is amplified by Morris in a number of subsequent tales. (The Cain motif is implied, rather than explicit, in "The Man Born to Be King"; Michael's supplanting of the king presupposes some sort of symbolic death of the old king.) The significance of the hero's fated guilt is this: the culture hero typically embodies, represents, or brings about not only the salvation of his society but its collective and inevitable inheritance of guilt as well, and it is this guilt, at once his own and that of his people, that must be purged and atoned for in the heroic endeavors he is fated to play out. Perseus' most striking adventure, the battle with the sea monster to which Andromeda is a sacrifice, is a classic act of heroism and one that emblematizes his role as savior. The reward of the hero may be only suffering (as in the case of Jesus and of Oedipus), fame and honor (as with Perseus and Bellerophon), or both (as with Sigurd); but he will, no matter what, be the instrument of his society's rebirth.

In Christian terms the hero's life may be understood as elliptically representing the pattern of mankind's fall from grace and redemption through the atonement of the savior Jesus; in the terms of the classical writers, the hero's life is a paradigm of the loss of the golden age and its restoration. (The ontology implied is cyclical; such a view of history is consonant with certain types of primitivist thought: a gradual deterioration may be effected through a series of cyclical movements of decline and rebirth.) So Perseus, purified of his guilt,
becomes the founder of a city, Mycenae, and institutes there a reign of peace and prosperity—a symbolic re-creation of the golden age—recalling the reign of Michael in "The Man Born to Be King":

Peaceful grew the land
The while the ivory rod was in his hand,
For robbers fled, and good men still waxed strong,
And in no house was any sound of wrong,
Until the Golden Age seemed there to be,
So steeped the land was in felicity.

[III, 238]

The role enacted by the hero is foreordained, a fact demonstrated in the prophecies of his deeds of greatness, and cannot be circumvented by external events. His heroism lies in the willingness of the hero to undergo his appointed ordeal. He must submit himself to his fate, whatever it may be, even if, as in the case of Jesus, of Sigurd, of Browning's Childe Roland, and, for that matter, Oliver in Morris's own early short poem "The Tune of Seven Towers," he has foreknowledge of a tragic end. Hence the insistence on the inevitability of fate in the tales of The Earthly Paradise.

If, on the other hand, the hero should refuse the call to action, he becomes a victim, doomed to ignominious disintegration. This is illustrated in the second tale for June, "The Lady of the Land." Having failed through fear to kiss and thereby disenchant the lady-dragon, the Italian mariner suffers horribly before dying. The effect of this tale upon the listeners in the nameless Greek city is twofold: the young men feel contempt, the old compassion. The latter remember

well how fear in days gone by
Had dealt with them and poisoned wretchedly
Good days, good deeds and longings for all good.....

[IV, 142]

Thus the hero carries upon his shoulders the responsibility for accomplishing his destiny—herein lies his courage, which must not be confused with mere egoism. Although Morris's heroes are proud, their pride, the product of a mystical apprehension of their preordained roles, is subordinate to the symbolic importance of the role, as opposed to their individual worth.

"The Story of Rhodope" and "The Fostering of Aslaug" illustrate the inscrutable workings of fate in the lives of girls destined to

7Joseph Campbell interprets the hero's refusal as "essentially a refusal to give up what one takes to be one's own interest" (The Hero with a Thousand Faces, 2d ed. [Princeton, N.J., 1968], pp. 59–60).
The Unity of The Earthly Paradise

become queens. Significantly different in detail and source, they are yet both recognizable analogues to the tale best known as "Cinderella." Rhodope's unusual destiny is hinted in the dream of her father preceding her birth, in which a tiny blossom grows into a tree hung with omens of her future:

on each bough did hang
Crown, sword, or ship, or temple fair to see;
And therewithal a great wind through it sang,
And trumpet blast there was; and armour rang
Amid that leafy world....

[V, 211]

The preternatural and unfathomable actions of the eagle tend to make the events of the tale seem inevitable; by contrast, in the famous Perrault version of the story, the supernatural helper, appearing as a somewhat capricious fairy godmother, lends no sense of ineluctable destiny to the tale but is, rather, the agency by which virtue is rewarded. Typically, for Morris, the sense of fate is emphasized, as, for instance, when Rhodope's father speaks: "Fate shall yet prevail, / Though oft we deem we lead her thereunto" (V, 235). In "The Fostering of Aslaug" the heroine's heritage of royalty as the child of Sigurd and Brynhild is the factor that cannot be nullified by the base machinations of her villainous foster parents. (The bringing up of the royal child by humble foster parents is one of the standard features of the traditional king's biography already alluded to.)8 This austere northern tale is devoid of supernatural devices and omens, and its atmosphere of inevitability depends upon the girl's inborn conviction of her destiny, despite the mean servitude she is forced to undergo:

"I was not made for misery.

. . . . .

... who knows
But I am kept for greater woes,
Godlike despair that makes not base...."

[VI, 40]

Her sense of her own superiority to her circumstances, expressed paradoxically in her perfect obedience and voluntary dumbness, is recognized by her vicious mistress, whose fear of Aslaug's "awful beauty" (VI, 37) prevents her from killing the girl. The destined union of Aslaug with Ragnar is marked by their separate dream visions of Sigurd and Brynhild, expressing their felicity at the marriage which will rejuvenate the earth. In Ragnar's vision, in which Sigurd and

*See Campbell, Masks of God: Occidental Mythology, pp. 73 ff.
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Brynhild are seen through a wall of flame (an interesting treatment of the otherworld, which will concern us later), he is given a lily by Sigurd which, set in the earth, fructifies the wasteland:

"Great light upon the world did fall,  
And fair the sun rose o'er the earth,  
And blithe I grew and full of mirth:  
And no more on a waste I was,  
But in a green world, where the grass  
White lily-blooms well-nigh did hide;  
O'er hill and valley far and wide  
They waved in the warm wind; the sun  
Seemed shining upon every one,  
As though it loved it...."

[VI, 63]

The reign of Ragnar ("so great Ragnar's glory seemed / To Northern folk" [VI, 64]) is a renewal of the ancient glory of Sigurd and the Volsung line. Thus the renewing of the earth results from the irresistible impulsion of destiny.

As we have seen, "The Man Born to Be King" and "The Doom of King Acrisius" illustrate the emphasis on fate, though their primary import is not so much the impulsion of destiny on the hero as on those who would thwart it. "The Son of Croesus" is very like these tales in its treatment of prophecy and attempted avoidance, but here the prophesied act is the accidental death of an innocuous young prince, and there is little didactic meaning to be found in it, whereas in the other two tales the chastening of mortal hubris is emphasized. What "The Son of Croesus" accomplishes at this particular point (July) in The Earthly Paradise is the reiteration of the association of the Cain motif, intensified in this story, with the fate theme, although the futility of merely mortal striving is again an important point. Adrastus comes to Lydia as a result of having accidentally killed his brother in Phrygia, and, in extending hospitality to the stranger, Croesus unwittingly harbors the eventual slayer of his own son, Atys. Adrastus, driven to suicide by the guilt of his crime, is the type of the hapless victim of fate destroyed by the role he is destined to play: "The Gods are wearied for that still I live, / And with their will, why should I longer strive?" (IV, 158).

The crime of Adrastus is analogous to the early history of Bellerophon in "Bellerophon at Argos." He, like Adrastus, has unwittingly killed his brother and seeks asylum in Argos. But Bellerophon is to expiate his crime with great deeds and, in Lycia, will become the savior of the people by slaying the Chimera. More than any other hero in The Earthly Paradise, Bellerophon is envisaged as a godlike figure.
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Paradise; such an attempt to place man on a level with the gods (that is, to attain immortality) is like the doomed voyage of the wanderers. The earthly paradise can be achieved only on a symbolic level, vicariously through the deeds of a hero or, as we shall see, through the sexual principle of physical generation. Morris, having endowed his Bellerophon with the most admirable heroic attributes, does not leave him as does the Iliad wandering alone, “eating his heart out, skulking aside from the trodden track of humanity.” Instead, he ends the tale with the accession of Bellerophon to the throne of Lycia, clad “in gold and royal gear, / Such as a King might bear in Saturn’s reign” (VI, 274), looking forward to his marriage with Philonoe:

And even as a man new made a God,
When first he sets his foot upon the sod
Of Paradise, and like a living flame
Joy wraps him round, he felt, as now she came,
Clear won at last, the thing of all the earth
That made his fleeting life a little worth.

[VI, 277]

Those protagonists of The Earthly Paradise who achieve the state of blessedness represented by some form of the earthly paradise, for example, Psyche, Ogier the Dane, or the hero of “The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon,” come to bliss through suffering and acquiescence, not through hubris.

A parallel omission occurs in Morris’s treatment of the Alcestis story. What is to Browning the most significant feature of the legend—Alcestis’ rescue from death by Hercules, which is the central episode of his “Balaustion’s Adventure”—is entirely eliminated in Morris’s “The Love of Alcestis,” in which Alcestis remains irrecoverably dead, her life perpetuated only in the fame of her great sacrifice. A poignant expression of the need for resignation is sung by Apollo as he tends the herds of Admetus:

O dwellers on the lovely earth,
Why will ye break your rest and mirth
To weary us with fruitless prayer;
Why will ye toil and take such care
For children’s children yet unborn,
And garner store of strife and scorn
To gain a scarce-remembered name,
Cumbered with lies and soiled with shame?

[IV, 95]

10 Richmond Lattimore, trans., The Iliad of Homer (Chicago, 1951), Book VI, ll. 201–2, p. 158.
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10 Richmond Lattimore, trans., The Iliad of Homer (Chicago, 1951), Book VI, ll. 201–2, p. 158.
While Euripides uses the Alcestis story as the basis for a problem play and Meredith sees Apollo's stay on earth as Admetus' herdsman as the subject of a paean to the sun-god's bringing of light to a rejoicing earth in "Phoebus with Admetus," the primary emphasis of Morris's story is the poignancy of the friendship between god and mortal. But it is implicitly a tale of fate and illustrates well the superiority of the Fates over the Olympians in the Greek view of life: Apollo, despite his love for Admetus, cannot effect a reversal of the Fates' decree of death. Although Apollo refers to the decrees of the gods (IV, 120), the passage in its entirety makes clear that the decrees are actually those of the Fates.

Throughout _The Early Paradise_ Morris makes the point that earthly happiness is to be found only in acceptance of the cosmic plan, the existence of which, to his way of thinking, is indicated by his repeated inclusion of, and emphasis on, the fatalistic aspects of his sources. But such a view of life, if fatalistic, is not necessarily pessimistic; as we have indicated, such acceptance also makes possible the significant deeds of the great heroes. Bellerophon exhibits the acquiescence requisite to true heroism and at the same time accepts responsibility for whatever befalls. As he leaves Argos, his thoughts express his perception of the relationship between character and fate:

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Now go I forth alone
To do what in my life must needs be done,
And in my own hands lies my fate,
And I shall mix the cup that I must drink:
So be it. . . .
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[VI, 122]

Thus the great hero Hercules is seen in "The Golden Apples" bending his will to the dictum of the Fates. Warned by one of the maidens of the curse laid on the golden fruit, Hercules stoically pursues his appointed task:

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So be it," he said, "the Fates that drive me on
Shall slay me or shall save; blessing or curse
That followeth after when the thing is won
Shall make my work no better now nor worse;
And if it be that the world's heart must nurse
Hatred against me, how then shall I choose
To leave or take?—let your dread servant loose!
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[VI, 12]

And so he faces the worm in the most suggestively emblematic scene of _The Earthly Paradise_. This adventure, plucked, as it were, from the continuum of Hercules' many labors, has a quality of stasis concen-
trated in this scene in the timeless garden that will remain when the world is “foredone” (VI, 12):

Closer the coils drew, quicker all about
The forked tongue darted, and yet stiff he stood...

Bright in the sun he stood above the dead,
Panting with fury; ...

Silent and moveless ever stood the three;
No change came o’er their faces, as his hand
Was stretched aloft unto the sacred tree;
Nor shrank they aught aback, though he did stand
So close that tresses of their bright hair, fanned
By the sweet garden breeze, lay light on him,
And his gold fell brushed by them breast and limb.

[Hercules facing the serpent]

Hercules facing the serpent becomes the focal point of the tale itself, drawing attention to analogues occurring elsewhere in *The Earthly Paradise*. The Hesperides are one of the traditional locations of the Blessed Isles, or vestigial golden age, and the beautiful garden containing forbidden fruit laden with a curse and guarded by a serpent is suggestive of the garden of Genesis, scene of man’s Fall from the paradisaical state. The combat between the hero and the serpent is, moreover, suggestive of the apocalyptic overcoming of the dragon foretold in the book of Revelation, the event which will bring in the millennium, that is, restore the golden age. This encounter elliptically symbolizes both the Fall and the redemption of mankind. This association is suggested in Tennyson’s poem “The Hesperides”:

If the golden apple be taken
The world will be overwise.

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch, watch, night and day,
Lest the old wound of the world be healed,
The glory unsealed,
The golden apple stolen away,
And the ancient secret revealed.11

We have already noted how the hero’s life is a paradigm of man’s fall from grace, symbolized by the Cain motif, and man’s salvation, accomplished through self-immolation in the predestined act of

heroism that renews society. The hero-monster confrontation, then, is the quintessential act in the life of the culture hero, and Morris returns repeatedly to this motif.

As is well known, the dragon-slayer tale is one of the most prolific folktale types and is found figuring prominently in the heroic literature in which Morris delighted. Morris's dragon- or monster-slayers include not only Hercules, Perseus, and Bellerophon of *The Earthly Paradise* but Jason of *The Life and Death of Jason*, Sigurd of *Sigurd the Volsung*, and Beowulf of Morris's translation of the Old English epic. These dragons or monsters are not evil in the way that Spenser's, for example, are, for Morris is not concerned with the problems of the individual soul overcoming evil—his morality is not Christian. Morris's dragons are often as not harmlessly guarding their treasures when challenged by the heroes. Aside from the monsters slain by Beowulf, the only public threat occurring in *The Earthly Paradise* or the other poems is the Chimera killed by Bellerophon. Questions of good and evil are beside the point in these fated encounters, which are enactments of culminating processes set in motion by cosmic forces before the creation of the world, a fact glimpsed by Rolf when he dreamed of heroic death fighting either for or against Edward. There is much the same feeling of inevitability in these Morrisian heroic combats as in Hardy's "The Convergence of the Twain," the poem about the building of the *Titanic* while the "Immanent Will" fashions "a sinister mate" in the form of the iceberg.

The unalterable unfolding of destiny need not always be expressed in literal monster-slaying, of course. Morris's "The Lovers of Gudrun," based on the pseudohistorical *Laxdoela Saga*, is realistic in mode; yet the life of the Icelandic hero, Kiartan, follows the pattern of the legendary culture hero in a number of significant respects. Here the fated encounter is with the hero's own foster brother, Bodli, whose eventual slaying of Kiartan is foretold by the seer Guest. The close relationship of Kiartan and Bodli and their destined enmity recalls the Cain motif of other stories in *The Earthly Paradise* (Bodli, in fact, compares himself to Cain [V, 384]); in "The Lovers of Gudrun" the two men, like ship and iceberg, are symbolically united as "twin halves of one august event." Their dialectical relationship is symbolically apprehended in terms of physical description. When Kiartan is first seen by Guest, he is "a tall youth whose golden head did gleam / In the low sun" (V, 267). Bodli, whose coloring is not described in the saga source, is "black-haired and tall" (V, 267) in Morris's tale. Through-

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13 The opposition between fair and dark is stressed also in *Sigurd the Volsung*. A.
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out, Morris associates Kiartan with the sun, not least significantly
when, about to meet death in the ambush of Bodli and Gudrun’s
brothers, he offers a last challenge to Bodli: “Come, for the midday
sun is over-bright, / And I am wearying for the restful night!” (V, 377).
Kiartan’s identification with the sun blends with his role as symbol of
Iceland when the king of Norway, looking on the Icelanders, is
blinded by the sun:

    his right [hand] did shade
    His eyes from the bright sun that ‘gainst him blazed,
    As on the band of Icelanders he gazed.

[V, 290]

The dead Kiartan is borne on his bier in a procession “As mournful as
though dead with them they bore / The heart of Iceland” (V, 382).
Kiartan is the dying sun of Iceland, a symbol of the crepuscular
Viking civilization that succumbed, overripe, to the advancing Christian
church, thenceforth to become even further removed from a
heroic heritage. 14 Morris was moved by his visit to Laxdale to write:
“Just think, though, what a mournful place this is—Iceland, I
mean—setting aside the pleasure of one’s animal life there, the fresh
air, the riding and rough life, and feeling of adventure;—how every
place and name marks the death of its short-lived eagerness and
glory: . . . But Lord! what littleness and helplessness has taken the
place of the old passion and violence that had place here once—and
all is unforgotten; so that one has no power to pass it by unnoticed.” 15

“The Lovers of Gudrun” is itself like a paradigm of decay. When
Guest visits the hall of Olaf Hauskulson, he sees the “noble stories”
of Norse mythology painted on the “high panelling and roof-boards,”
among them the “deeds of Thor”:

    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. . . .

[V, 263–64]

This description, not found in The Laxdoela Saga, is a redaction of the
Norse story of the Fall, the coming of strife into the world in the form

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14 This view of Icelandic history is not universally accepted, but it is advanced by
Thorstein Veblen in his Laxdalea Saga (New York, 1925), pp. vi–xi.
15 Quoted in Mackail, I, 259–60.
of the serpent, the Midgard Worm. The low-keyed realism of Morris's style in "The Lovers of Gudrun," perhaps the quality that has won it so much admiration among critics who are otherwise unimpressed with *The Earthly Paradise*, may be imitative of the tenor of these "latter days" when the mythic adventures of a more primitive society are no longer possible.\(^{16}\) These paler deeds, the nature of which is, of course, dictated by the source, are appropriate to the facts of existence in an inferior and pallid age. The life of Kiartan exhibits the same paradigm in miniature. The strife that comes between the two houses of Herdholt and Bathstead because of Gudrun severs the "latter days" mourned by Olaf (V, 366) from the idyllic "past days, when fair and orderly / The world before our footsteps seemed to lie" (V, 354).

The spurious historicity of these events constituted one of the main attractions of the story for Morris.\(^{17}\) His enthusiasm for the actuality of the scenes of the saga is shown in his letters written from Iceland:

> Olaf Peacock went about summer and winter after his live-stock, and saw to his hay-making and fishing, just as this little peak-nosed parson does; setting aside the coffee and brandy, his victuals under his hall "marked with famous stories" were just the same the little parson in his ten foot square parlour eats: I don't doubt the house stands on the old ground.

I have seen many marvels and some terrible pieces of country; slept in the home-field of Njal's house, and Gunnar's, and at Herdholt: I have seen Bjarg, and Bathstead, and the place where Bolli was killed, and am now a half-hour's ride from where Gudrun died.\(^{18}\)

The events of "The Lovers of Gudrun" considered as history substantiate in life the patterns to which Morris had already been attracted in folktale and heroic literature. But there are other significant aspects of these patterns, which we will consider next.

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\(^{17}\) Arent, pp. xxiv–xxviii, discusses the curiously convincing style of the saga writers and the difficulties in separating truth from fiction in the Family Sagas.

\(^{18}\) Quoted in Mackail, I, 260–61.