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INGEBORG THE FAIR

Ingeborg the Fair

Northland Heroes

By

FLORENCE HOLBROOK

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"The Hiawatha Primer" "A Book of Nature Myths" etc.

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PREFACE

For centuries the songs of Homer, the blind poet of Greece, recounting the heroic deeds of great Hector and lion-hearted Achilles, have delighted the children, young and old, of many lands. But part of our own heritage, and nearer to us in race and time, are these stories of Beowulf and Frithiof.

The records of lives nobly lived are an inspiration to noble living. With the hope that the courage, truth, endurance, reverence, and patriotism shown by these heroes of the Northland will arouse interest and emulation, this little book is offered to our children.

"The Story of Frithiof" is based upon Holcomb's translation of Bishop Tegnér's poem, "The Saga of Frithiof," and the quotations are used by the kind permission of Mrs Holcomb and the publishers.

FLORENCE HOLBROOK.

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THE STORY OF FRITHIOF

In Hilding's Garden

So they grew up in joy and glee,
And Frithiof was the young oak tree;
 Unfolding in the vale serenely
 The rose was Ingeborg the queenly.

In the garden of Hilding, the teacher, were two young children. Ingeborg was a princess, the daughter of a King of Norway. The boy, Frithiof, was a viking's son. Their fathers, King Bele and Thorsten, were good friends, and the children were brought up together in the home of Hilding, their foster-father and teacher.

Hilding was very fond of them both. He called the boy Frithiof an oak, for he was straight and strong. The little Ingeborg he called his rose, she was so rosy and sweet.

All day roaming over field and grove the strong lad cared for the little maid. If they came to a swift-flowing brook he would carry her over. When the first spring flowers showed their pretty heads Frithiof gathered them for Ingeborg. For her he found the red berries and the golden-cheeked apples.

In the evening they sat at the feet of their kind teacher and together they learned to read. Often they danced on the sward at twilight, when they looked like golden-haired elves in a fairy dance.

When Frithiof had grown into a sturdy youth he often hunted in the forests. He was so strong that he needed neither spear nor lance. When he met the wild bear they struggled breast to breast. Both bear and youth fought bravely, but at last Frithiof won. Home he went gaily, carrying the great bear-skin, which he gave to Ingeborg. She praised his bravery and strength, for every woman loves courage.

While Frithiof roamed the forest for game, Ingeborg, at the loom, wove beautiful tapestries. Pictures of sea and grove, blue waters and waving trees, grew under her deft fingers. Then she wove warriors on horseback, with their shining shields and their bright red lances. Soon the face of the leader was seen; 'twas the face of her brave playmate, Frithiof.

In the long winter evenings around the fire, Ingeborg heard the story of the gods. The light shining upon her fair face made her lovely as one of the goddesses. Frithiof thought her hair as golden as Freya's treasure.

When darkness held the quiet earth
They gathered round the welcome hearth,
 And Hilding told them stories old
 Of gods and kings and heroes bold.

So Frithiof and the lovely Ingeborg grew to love each other. But when Hilding saw that the viking's son dared to love the daughter of a king, he said: "Frithiof, my dear foster-son, in vain are your hopes. Ingeborg is a king's daughter. Your reason should tell you that you cannot marry her. Proud is King Bele of his family descended from the great god Odin. He will have his daughter marry a prince, not a yeoman. Well do I love you; brave and handsome are you and strong as any prince, but you must forget your love for Ingeborg."

Then the brave youth smiled and said: "I am free-born, and never will I yield. I killed the forest chief, and honour is mine for the deed. All power is noble—Thor who hurls the thunderbolts is noble, although Odin is king of the gods. So free-born men shall never yield though kings are on the throne. In Thor's kingdom, where all strength is, worth is king, not lineage. The sword always speaks with power; never will I forget Ingeborg, but will fight all the world for her."

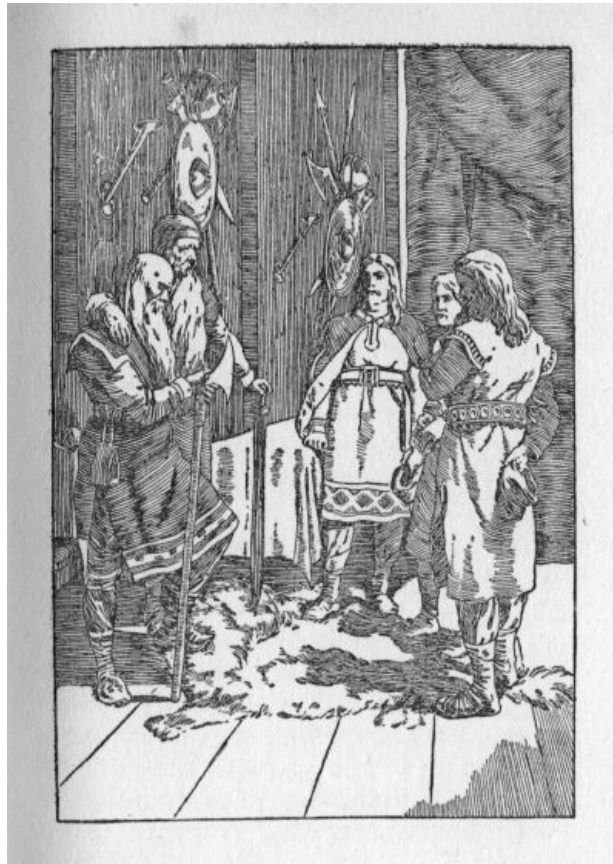
The free-born man will never yield,
He owns the world's unconquered field;
 Where worth and not descent is leader
 The sword is e'er a valiant pleader.

King Bele and Thorsten

The words by an old man spoken should not be slighted

In the great palace stood the old King Bele and his friend, Thorsten the faithful. Both had lived brave lives and longed for Valhalla, the home of heroes.

"The evening of life comes over me," said King Bele, "but as death draws nearer, the glory of heaven seems brighter. I have called our sons to the throne room, dear friend, to speak words of warning and help. To-morrow it may be that I shall sleep in death, and it will be too late."



King Bele and his sons

Into the throne room came the two princes obedient to their father's command. Helge, the elder, was dark and gloomy. Halfdan, the younger, fair and gay, came with untroubled heart, thinking only of games and hunting.

After these came Frithiof, son of Thorsten, taller and stronger than the princes. He stood between the brothers, shining in beauty like the sun.

"Sons of my heart," said the king gently, "my life on earth is ending. Rule the kingdom together. While you are united no power can destroy you. Let freedom bloom through all the land, and use your power, O Helge, as a shield for your people.

"The power the king possesses comes from the people, and foolish is the ruler who is cruel and hears not their cry. The great and good king is merciful, and kindness can do more than cruelty. Boast not of the greatness of your ancestors. Each man uses but one bowstring, and that is his own. Who cares for the worth that is buried? The good man is true to his own heart, and thus makes himself great.

"A joyous spirit is yours, O Halfdan, and it is good. But idle talk is needless and weakens kings. Hold fast to your friend and choose the best, but do not give your love and faith to all men. Fools win no praise though they be kings, but the wise are loved and honoured by all men, no matter how lowly they may be."

Then Thorsten spake: "Not alone, O Bele, shall you go to Odin. Always have we stood together, and death shall not divide us.

"Hear me, my son, my Frithiof, and slight not the words of the old.

"First, give the gods high honour, for good or ill,
Storms come as well as sunshine, by Heaven's will.
Great strength is Heaven's dower; but, Frithiof, learn
That power devoid of wisdom, can little earn.

"Obey your king. One must be king, and others are happiest when obeying wise directions. The shields of brave men are the best protection for a country against the swords of an enemy, and law is

the best defence against treason. Young men should listen to advice and should test the strength of friendship by use.

"All men will surely perish, with all they prize,
But one thing know I, Frithiof, which never dies,—
And that is reputation! therefore, ever
The noble action strive for, the good endeavour."

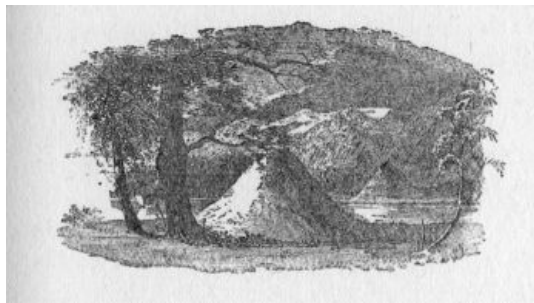
It was pleasant to hear Bele and Thorsten talk of their lives together. Much they told of the wonderful adventures of their youth, when they travelled to strange lands in their swift-moving boats. They had been friends through good fortune and ill, with hands clasped together and hearts united. In battle they had stood back to back, facing their enemies. If one was threatened by an enemy, the other was on guard and defended his friend.

The king spoke much of the bravery of Frithiof, and said that his heroic power was better than all royal birth. Thorsten in return praised the gifts of Helge and Halfdan. Thus did they give an example of friendship between a king and his man. With the memory of their long friendship King Bele urged his sons and Frithiof to be friends too.

"But hold ye fast together, ye children three,
The Northland then your conqueror shall never see;
For royalty and power, when duly ordered,
Are like a bright shield golden, by blue steel bordered."

Then again spoke Bele: "These are my last commands. On you, O Helge, my eldest son, I place a father's care. Guard and love your sister Ingeborg. Be gentle and guide her with loving words. Noble spirits fret under harshness, but loving and gentle manners win all to right and honour.

"And now, farewell, my children. Together Thorsten and I go to the All-father gladly. Lay us in mounds close to the waves of the restless gulf singing the song of the sea."



Burial mounds

Framness

So the old king and his faithful friend were united in death as they had been in life, and were buried on the shore of the loud-singing sea. Together by the wish of the people did his sons, Helge and Halfdan, rule the kingdom.

Frithiof, the son of Thorsten, went to his father's hall, the mighty Framness. For twelve miles in all directions stretched his broad acres. The hilltops were covered with birch forests. On the sloping sides grew the golden corn and the tall rye. Many blue lakes gleamed like mirrors. Streams rippled over the pebbly beds. In the wide valleys herds of oxen and sheep were quietly grazing, and in the stables were twenty-four steeds swift as the whirlwind.

In the great hall built of choicest fir more than five hundred warriors gathered at Yule-time. A great table of oak, polished and shining, ran through the middle from end to end. The floor was covered with straw, and on the hearth in the centre of the hall a warm and cheerful fire was always burning.

On the great nails in the hall hung helmets and coats-of-mail. Between them flashed swords and sparkling shields. Round the table sat the warriors, and as often as the drinking-horn needed filling fair maidens came with the joyous mead.

All this and other vast treasures did Frithiof receive from
his father,
Scarce was there found in the Northland any with richer
possessions,

Save were he heir to a kingdom, for of kings is the wealth
always greatest.
Though from no king he descended, yet was his mind
truly royal,
Courteous, noble, and kind. Daily became he more famous.

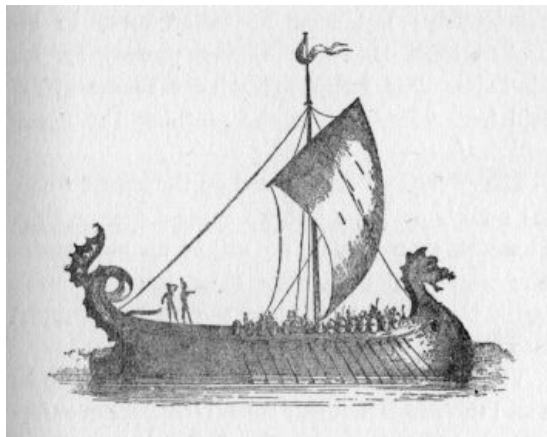
Rich was the house of Framness. Everywhere plenty and beauty, gleaming jewels, gold and silver, met the eye of the stranger. But three things in Framness were most prized by Frithiof and his brave men. First of the three was a sword which had descended from father to son. The sword was called Angurvadel, grief-wader, and brother of lightning. Made in the far east, it had finally come into the hands of Viking, the father of Thorsten.

When Viking was a youth of fifteen he heard of a monster ferocious and shaggy, misshapen and higher in stature than man, who came from the wood to the palace of a weak old king. This king had a lovely daughter, and the monster boldly demanded her hand and the kingdom, offering to meet in hand-to-hand combat any who would say him nay. No one dared to meet him, for no one had a weapon that could pierce his hard skull.

Then came Viking gladly to the combat with Ironskull, and with one blow of his good sword Angurvadel cleft the head of the monster and rescued the maiden. Viking gave the sword to his son Thorsten, and Thorsten gave it to Frithiof. The hilt was of hammered gold, covered with mystic red letters. Whenever he drew the sword light filled the hall, as when the northern lights gleam or the bright lightning flashes.

Lost was the warrior
Who met, on the field of encounter, the blade with its red
letters glowing.
Widely renowned was that sword, and of swords was the
chief in the Northland.

The second prize in Framness was the wonderful arm-ring forged by Volund, the lame blacksmith. This ring was made of gold and was very heavy, and upon it Volund had carved pictures. First he showed the house of the gods, with twelve high castles. In one was the sun rising over the ocean. In the second castle were Odin and Saga, drinking together from a golden shell. That shell is the ocean gilded by the glow of morning. Balder, the beautiful king of summer, was seen, the good, kind god. Next was shown the castle of Giltner, the home of peace. Within was Forseti, god of justice, holding the scales. Many more pictures were graven on the great ring, showing the conflict between light and darkness. High in the centre was a cluster of rubies bright as the sun in the heavens. This circlet was a family heirloom, for Frithiof's mother was a descendant of Volund, its maker.



Viking ship

The third of the family treasures was *Ellide*, the famous ship, of which this story is told. When Viking was returning from the wars he saw a sailor adrift on the billows. Noble and tall he seemed, borne on the waves as if he were at home on the sea. He wore a mantle of blue bound by a golden girdle. His hair was sea-green and his beard as white as the foam of the ocean.

Viking took him home and cared for him right courteously; but soon he sailed away in his broken boat, thanking Viking warmly for his kindness. "If I could only leave thee a gift!" said he. "Perhaps in the morning the ocean will waft thee a token."

The next day Viking stood on the shore, when, lo! swiftly over the billows came a dragon ship. There was no leader, no sailor, no steersman. The wonderful ship drew near, the sails were furled by unseen hands and the anchor dropped into the firm sand.

Viking was speechless with wonder. Then he heard the winds murmur softly: "Aeger never forgetteth a kindness. He giveth thee this dragon."

Kingly the gift and beautiful. Its throat was ablaze with gold, and bordered with red were its inky black pinions. When they were unfolded, the boat flew in a race with the whirlwind and left far behind

the swift eagle. Widely renowned was the ship, the chief of all ships of the Northland.

Of chieftains Frithiof had many around his hearth. One youth whom he greatly loved was Bjorn. Frithiof and Bjorn were of the same age and dear to each other, brothers in joy and grief. In the days of their boyhood they had mingled their blood, thus becoming brothers in good Northern fashion, in peace and in war sworn to help and avenge each other.

King Helge and Frithiof

In the spring Frithiof sailed in his dragon ship proudly over the billows to the palace of King Helge. The kings had met at the mound of their father to give justice to their people.

To them came Frithiof and proudly he spoke: "Ye kings, I choose here from all women your sister, the lovely Ingeborg, to be my bride. The good king, your father, wished us to marry, and therefore reared us together in the garden of Hilding. My father was of peasant birth, yet his memory will live in the songs of the poets, for he and his father were the bravest of heroes.

"Full easily could I win a kingdom for myself, but I choose to stay in my own country and serve ye, my kings.

"On King Bele's grave we are standing now,
He hears every word in the grave below,
With thee he pleadeth.—
A dead father's counsel a wise son heedeth."



Frithiof asking for Ingeborg

But King Helge refused Frithiof's words with scorn, saying: "Our sister was not for a peasant born! Kings should strive to win our Ingeborg. Boast not of your strength—women are won by words and not by force. As for my kingdom, I will defend that myself and do not need your help. If you wish to be my man your place is among my servants."

"Thy servant! No, never!" cried Frithiof. "My father had no master, nor shall I. Fly from your silver dwelling to avenge this insult, my good Angurvadel! You, at least, are royal. Were we not at the grave of thy father, O King, here would I teach thee not to come where my sword can reach."

With these words he struck the gold shield of Helge, and it fell in halves with a clang to the ground.

"Well done, my sword! Lie still and dream of great deeds to come! Now will we go home over the foaming billows."

So in anger did the noble Frithiof leave the presence of King Helge, and return to Framness, the house of his fathers.

In the Country of King Ring

Far in the north lived the good King Ring. His words were wise and kind. In his land no war cast its dark shadow and everywhere in his kingdom blossomed fair flowers. Justice and right clasped hands, and peace lived with plenty in the golden fields.

For thirty years King Ring had ruled in the Northland. The people loved him well and named him in their evening prayers. His good queen had died, and long had he mourned for her. But the people begged him to marry again.

At last the old king said: "King Bele often visited me and spoke of his fair daughter. Her would I choose for my bride. Take gold and jewels rare from my coffers. Have minstrels go and with their songs win for me the fair Ingeborg."

In gay company they went to Helge's court and asked him for his sister Ingeborg. Here they remained three days, singing and feasting. On the fourth morning they asked for a reply from King Helge for their king.



Ingeborg at Balder's Temple

In the grove of Balder Helge offered bird and beast and asked the priest what answer he should give. The priest, frightened by evil omens, replied that Ingeborg must not be given to King Ring. Then Helge said nay to the messengers, for men must obey when the gods have spoken.

Angry were the messengers, and angry was King Ring when he was told that Helge would not give the lovely Ingeborg to be his queen. He struck his bright shield and seized his warlike weapons.

Over the sea many a dragon ship came hurrying and the plumes of the warriors waved in the breeze.

"Let us teach the proud Helge a lesson," they cried.

When King Helge heard of the ships and the warriors hurrying over the sea, he said: "Long and bloody will be the strife, for King Ring is a mighty king. To protect my sister we must place her in the temple of Balder the holy."

Frithiof's Answer

While King Helge gathered his warriors to fight King Ring, the angry Frithiof was playing chess

with his friend Bjorn. Hilding urged him to forget his anger and go into battle to fight for his king and his country. "The times are evil, dear foster-son," said the good Hilding, "and you are all the people's hope."

Kindly but firmly said the youth: "My resolve is firm. I will not obey Helge. He and Halfdan may be angry and threaten. They are kings, but I bid defiance to their power and their threats."

Then said Hilding sadly: "Is this the reply to my pleading?"

Frithiof then arises, laying
Hilding's hand in his, and saying:
"My resolve is firm and steady,
And my answer you have heard.

"Go to Bele's sons and warn them
Peasants love not those who scorn them;
To their power I bid defiance,
Their behests will not obey."

"In thy chosen way abide thee,
For thy wrath I cannot chide thee;
Odin must be our reliance,"
Hilding said, and went his way.

In Balder's Grove

While King Bele's sons were preparing for war with King Ring, Frithiof sought Ingeborg in the grove of Balder. Most beautiful was this temple of the sun-god, and here the sunshine seemed lovelier than in other groves. The flowers glowed in the friendly rays and seemed more beautiful. At night, when evening drew the rosy curtain, the brooks and breezes whispered softly to one another and the stars gleamed like pearls upon the dark blue robe of night.

The wonderful boat, *Ellide*, sped over the waves sparkling in the moonlight. "Glide on, *Ellide*, over the deep gulf and bear me swiftly to the grove of Balder. I hail thee, moon, with thy pale light streaming over grove and dale. Upon the shore I leap with joy and salute thy brown cheek, smiling earth."

So spake Frithiof as he landed on the shore. The earth seemed friendly, the red and white flowers smiled upon him, and he was happy and free from care. With Ingeborg the brave youth knelt at the shrine of Balder, the mild, radiant god of the sun whom all gods and men love, and prayed for happiness and peace. They prayed not for princely honours, but for a home near the dark blue sea. Then, amid flowers and under the shade of the leafy trees, their lives would be happy and free from envy and care.

But they feared the king, the cold and cruel Helge. He would never consent to Frithiof's request for the hand of Ingeborg. If he learned that Frithiof had dared to visit Ingeborg in Balder's grove, his anger would be greater than ever. But Ingeborg begged Frithiof to go to her brother and to offer his hand in friendship. She could not leave the grove of Balder, where Helge had placed her for protection during the war with King Ring.

At last Frithiof yielded. He said farewell to Ingeborg with sadness in his heart.

"Like Balder are you, Ingeborg! Like him your hair is golden, and your eyes are blue as his skies, while your soul is as pure as the morning light!"

The Parting

A meeting of all the warriors had been called by King Helge. They were to gather at the mound of Bele to decide upon the war and upon the fate of Ingeborg.

The princess had urged Frithiof to go and offer his hand to the haughty king and join him in battle. It had been very hard for Frithiof to consent, for he felt that Helge would not receive him kindly. Now in Balder's grove Ingeborg waited to hear how her lover had fared. Sad was she, for she feared her haughty brother, and she knew he would be angry because Frithiof and she had met in the temple of the great god Balder without his consent. Bravely, however, she resolved to meet her fate, and when she saw Frithiof returning with angry look she cried: "Tell me, Frithiof, for I have foreseen the worst

and am prepared for all."

Then Frithiof spake: "To the council at Bele's mound I went. There, gathered ring after ring, sat the great chiefs of Helge's kingdom. Upon the judgment seat sat your brother, dark fate upon his brow. Near by was Halfdan, careless and like a child. To the king I spake: 'Thy kingdom is in peril and every strong arm is needed in the war. Give me thy sister and I will lend to thee mine arm. Let us forget ill-will. Here is my hand.'

"Loud cheered the throng. A thousand swords struck upon a thousand shields and the freemen cried: 'To him give Ingeborg! Strong his sword and well he deserves our fair lily.'

"Hilding spoke words of peace and wisdom, and Halfdan rose with pleading looks and words. But all in vain. King Helge replied:—

"A peasant's son might gain my sister, but he who profanes a holy temple seems unfit for Bele's daughter. Say, Frithiof, have you not stolen into Balder's temple, against our laws, to see my sister? Speak yes or no.'

"Say no!' shouted the brave men; 'we believe thee, son of Thorsten. Say no, and Ingeborg is thine!'

"Fear not, O Helge,' I replied; 'I would not lie to gain the joy of heaven, and I shall not now to gain thy sister. I have seen Ingeborg in Balder's temple, but the laws I have not broken.'

"More they would not let me say. They looked at me with dread as one accursed. 'Though I could order thy death by the laws of our fathers,' said Helge, 'yet will I be mild as Balder whose sacred dwelling thou hast profaned. Across the sea lives Angantyr, who tribute owes to us. Go thither and when summer comes bring back this tribute, or to every man thou wilt be as one without honour, and outlawed shalt thou be.'"

"What did you decide, my Frithiof?"

"Could I choose? Must I not get the gold and thus redeem my honour? To-day I will depart and will get for your brother the gold he craves. But we, my Ingeborg, will sail in *Ellide* to a friendly land. A little earth from our fathers' graves we'll place upon our ships, and that will be our fatherland. Often has my father told of the beautiful islands of Greece—fresh groves of green in shining waves. There golden apples glow and blushing grapes hang down from every bough. There will we build a little North, more beautiful than this. Happiness stands near to human hearts if they are brave enough to seize it. Come, let us go! All is ready, and *Ellide* stretches her shadowy wings for flight."

"I cannot go. Dear friend, be not angry. I am not free to go, like you. Helge is now my father, and on his will I go or stay. I will not steal my happiness. Last night I thought about my fate. I must remain obedient to my brother. A child of the Northland cannot live in the south. With eyes filled with tears should I look for the bright northern star which stands over our fathers' graves. And you, my Frithiof, must not desert the land you were born to guard. Let us yield to the voice of duty. Let us save our honour though our happiness be lost!"

"Necessity commands our flight. Come, Ingeborg!"

"What's right and noble, that's necessity."

"Consider well. Is that your last resolve?"

"It is my last. But remember that my thought will follow you wherever you may go. When evening comes I will send a greeting, and the fleeting cloud shall bear it unto you."

"You have conquered, my Ingeborg. A noble mind best teaches what is noble. To-day I yield and leave you. But in the earliest spring I shall return and in open council of the sons of the Northland, who alone can give the hand of a princess, will I demand you. Farewell till then. For memory wear this arming, the work of Volund, graven with heaven's wonders. But the best of wonders is a faithful heart."

So, full of hope, did Frithiof leave, but Ingeborg feared her gloomy brother, knowing well how he hated the noble Frithiof. To herself she said: "Never will he give me to thee, dear childhood's friend. Rather will he wed me to King Ring whom he fights. No hope do I see, yet I am glad thy heart can hope. May all the good gods follow thee."

Frithiof and Angantyr

Over the sea sailed Frithiof with his friends in the good ship *Ellide* to the home of the brave earl Angantyr. The old man, joyous and light-hearted, one day looked over the sea and saw the white-winged ship bringing the brave heroes.

"That is *Ellide* coming, and the hero with firm and steady step is Frithiof, son of Thorsten. No one

in the Northland has so brave a brow and so bright a smile."

Then the sturdy Atle sprang up crying: "Now will I go and prove what truth there is in the report that Frithiof breaks all swords and never sues for peace."

When he saw Frithiof he cried: "No one comes here but he either fights or flies. If you beg for peace, I shall receive you in friendship and take you to the earl."

Frithiof replied sharply: "Before I cry for peace our good swords must be tested."

Then flashed his sword-blade, the bright Angurvadel. The men fought long and cleft each other's shields, but finally Atle's sword was broken and Frithiof's sword was king.

Then said the victor: "I do not wish to slay a swordless foe. If you wish, let us strive as yeomen, man to man, without weapons."

So they wrestled breast to breast as two bears trying their strength, or as wave breaking against wave. The firm earth trembled, and the great oaks scarce could endure the shock.

But Frithiof proved the stronger, and at length brought proud Atle to the ground. Angrily he said: "If my good sword were at my hand, through thy body would I plunge it, thou black-beard!"

"Go bring it! Who'll prevent thee?" cried the brave Atle. "Here will I lie if that will content thee. All must Valhal see; I, to-day; thou, perhaps, to-morrow!"

Then Frithiof fetched the gleaming Angurvadel, but the good sword harmed not the noble foe. Frithiof struck the sand with the blade, for he admired the courage of the brave Atle.

As friends Frithiof and Atle then entered the palace of Angantyr. Everything seemed new and beautiful to Frithiof. Instead of planks well matched, leather embroidered in gold covered the walls. No rough hearthstone littered the centre of the hall, but a marble fireplace was built up against the side. In the windows were fitted panes of glass, and a key secured the door.

Here were no wooden torches as light of the feast, but waxen candles gleamed brightly in their silver sconces. The roasted stag gracing the table had gold bands on his hoofs, and flowers wreathed his horns.

Three steps the earl descended, saying to Frithiof: "Come sit by me, brave son of Thorsten."

Then was Thorsten's praise chanted by the singers, and his brave deeds were sung in the old Norse tongue.

The earl asked much about his friends of long ago. Frithiof answered wisely and kindly, and all the warriors cheered him loudly. Soon he spoke of the errand that brought him from his own land. Angantyr listened kindly but replied:

"I never paid tribute to Bele and shall not to his sons. If they wish to take it, let them meet us on the strand and see who is best. But Thorsten was my friend," continued the earl, and beckoned to his daughter, who sat near him.

The beautiful maid hastened to her room and brought back a green silk purse all deftly wrought. The tassels were made of gold and the clasps shone with rubies.

Angantyr took the treasure and filled it with gold. Giving it to Frithiof, he said: "This welcome gift is a tribute to you, my friend, but not to King Helge. And now I beg you, Frithiof, to pass the long winter hours with us, your friends and the friends of your fathers."

The Return

When lovely spring with her blue skies came again, Frithiof left his kind host Angantyr and sailed over the deep billows. Full of joy is one who has travelled far when his bark turns homeward. Memory shows the smoke from his mother's hearth-fire and the fountain where his childish feet played.

Six days Frithiof sailed, and on the seventh he saw his loved land. He saluted the cliffs and the forest dancing in the sunlight, but thought of Ingeborg. As *Ellide* rounded the headland, Frithiof stood at the prow, shading his eyes from the sun and looking for his old home, loved Framness.

But he looked in vain! Of the stately hall ashes alone remained. Sadly did the hero thread the blackened ruins. Then his faithful dog, Bran, ran up to welcome him. A powerful dog was he, and often had he been master of wolves. The milk-white steed with swan-like neck and golden mane came bounding up the valley. Both asked for food of Frithiof, their master; but he, poorer than they, had nothing to give them.

Then came Hilding, the foster-father with silvery hair. "My message," he said, "I fear will bring you little gladness. Scarce had you sailed when King Ring came. Five shields had he to our one. Not long did the battle last. King Helge yielded and fled. In his flight he passed Framness and fired the lordly dwelling.

"Ring gave the brothers, Helge and Halfdan, this choice: to give their sister to him or to lose their throne. The brothers chose, and now Ingeborg has gone with old King Ring."

Then Frithiof blamed Ingeborg for her broken vow and declared he would never believe her again. And yet his heart grieved for her, and he could never forget the friend of his childhood.

"You wrong the maid," said old Hilding. "As the sea-fowl, when its breast is wounded, dives far away from the eyes of daylight, and, with its life-blood flowing, yet gives no sign of weakness or misery, so Ingeborg in the darkness bore her suffering and I only saw her anguish. When the wedding day came, she, pale as death, rode a black steed, following the white-robed maidens and the steel-clad men.

"From off the saddle I took the sad maid and went with her to the altar, where she uttered her vows and prayed long to Balder. When Helge saw your ring on her arm he tore it off with angry words. Then I in anger drew my sword, but Ingeborg gently said: 'Let the All-father judge between him and me.'"

"The All-father will judge," calmly replied Frithiof, when Hilding had told his story; "I, too, will judge. Now is the time when the king who sold his sister sits in the temple of Balder as priest. Him will I seek."

Balder's Funeral Pile

Midnight's sun fell upon the mountain. The beams seemed to threaten fire and war, so blood-red were they. The heavens glowed; it was night contending with day.

On Balder's altar burned a fire—the emblem of the sun—and priests stood around the wall of the temple, grasping burning brands. Near the altar stood King Helge, wearing his crown. All at once he heard the war-cry, and the clash of weapons resounded through the forest.

"Bjorn, stand fast by yonder door!"

Helge heard the cry and turned pale. Well he knew the ringing voice of Frithiof. Fiercely as autumn winds fell the hero's bitter words:—

"Here's the ordered tribute; it came
Safe through the tempest's rattle;
Take it; then here by Balder's flame,
For life or death we'll battle.

"Shields behind us, our bosoms free,
Fair the fight be reckoned;
As the king the first blow belongs to thee,
Mind thou, mine's the second."

With these words he threw the purse filled with gold in Helge's face. The heavy blow stunned the king, and he fainted near the altar. Frithiof laughed and called in scorn: "Are you then overpowered by a purse of gold? No one shall blame my sword for felling so cowardly a foe, for he deserves not to fall by a brave man's sword."

Then Frithiof put up his sword and turned to the statue of Balder that stood near the altar. Calm and kind seemed the god. On his arm was the ring given by Frithiof to Ingeborg but taken from her by Helge.

"Holy Balder," spake Frithiof, "be not angry with thy servant. Well dost thou know that the arm-ring which thou wearest was stolen, and that Volund's work was never meant for thee." With these words he strove to take the ring, but arm and ring seemed to have grown together. Then he became angry and with a supreme effort he loosened the ring; but the image fell into the flames of the altar.

Up leaped the fierce fire! Bjorn at the door was pale with dread. Frithiof with equal anxiety called to him: "Open the doors, Bjorn, and let the people go. The temple is burning; bring water, yea throw on an oceanful!"

The warriors quickly formed a chain from the burning grove to the sea and the water was passed with speed from hand to hand. Frithiof sat like the god of rain and gave his orders in a calm, clear voice. Long they strove, but in vain. The flames borne on the wings of the wind mounted to the sky. The

grove was dry with summer heat and the hungry fire-king revelled midst the quick-burning branches.

Fiercely leaping from height to height,
Aiming yet still higher;
Oh, what wild and terrific light!
Strong is Balder's pyre!

Soon in smouldering ashes lay
Grove and temple's adorning;
Sadly then Frithiof turned away—
Wept in the light of morning.

On the Sea

After the burning of Balder's temple and grove Frithiof was very sad at heart. He felt that the sun-god would never forgive him, although he had not intended any wrong. His home, the lovely Framness, had been destroyed by the king. Ingeborg was kept from him, and the people of his own country shunned him because of his crime against Balder. He felt that he had no home, no country, no friends.

One refuge he had—the swift-flying ship *Ellide*. From her deck he saw the fires still burning in Balder's grove. Grief filled his heart. "Gone is the temple of the white god. In ashes are the groves once never neglected! And I am to blame; anger and haste made me forget time and place, the reverence due in that holy temple!"

Over the blue sea where wild waves sing, *Ellide* flew. Frithiof felt at home in the tempest on the rocking ship—this was his Northland, these on board were his only friends. The sea knows no king, and Helge's wrath could not reach him on its waves.

But lo! from a hiding-place in the high rocks King Helge sends out ten dragon ships. The warriors with Frithiof rejoice and laugh at the king, for Bjorn had, unknown to all, leaped into the sea and bored holes in the boat-keels. Down sank the ships and many men were drowned, but Helge escaped.

In wrath the king drew his bow, but it broke. Then Frithiof aimed his lance. "A death bird have I here, false king! but my lance refuses to drink thy coward blood. It is too good for food so craven!"

So speaking Frithiof seized his oars—huge blades of fir, and swiftly moved away.

Where foam-crest swimmeth
Ellide skimmeth
On joyous wings;
But Frithiof sings:

"Thou front of creation,
Exalted North!
I have no station
On thy green earth.
Thy lineage sharing
My pride doth swell,
Thou home of daring!
Farewell, farewell!"

And that you also may sing Frithiof's song, the last verse is given with the music.

World's grandest re - gion, thou might - y North,
 World's grandest re - gion, thou might - y North, From
 thy do - min - ions I'm driv - en forth. With -
 in thy bor - ders I loved . . . to dwell.
 Mid - sum - mer sun fare thee well, . . . fare - well !
 Thou might - y North, thou might - y North,
 Fare - well, fare - well then, thou might - y North !
 Ye rug - ged mountains where he - roes dwell and
 Thor com - mand - eth clouds and winds, Ye az - ure lakes that I
 love so well, Ye woods and brakes, fare ye well, fare - well !

Frithiof's Song

The Viking's Code

Over the foaming sea Frithiof sailed, seeking strange lands and adventures. Like a falcon in search of its prey flew the good boat, *Ellide*, over the waves.

To the champions on board Frithiof gave this law of the viking:—

Make no tent on thy ship, never sleep in a house, for a foe
 within doors you may view;
 On his shield sleeps the viking; his sword in his hand, and
 his tent is the heavenly blue.

When the storm rageth fierce, hoist the sail to the top—
 O how merry the storm-king appears;
 Let her drive! let her drive! better founder than strike,
 for who strikes is a slave to his fears.

If a merchant sail by, you must shelter his ship, but the
 weak will not tribute withhold;
 You are king of the waves, he a slave to his gains; and
 your steel is as good as his gold.

Let your goods be divided by lot or by dice, how it falls
 you may never complain;
 But the sea-king himself takes no part in the lots—he
 considers the honour his gain.

If a viking-ship come, there is grappling and strife, and
 the fight 'neath the shields will rejoice;
 If you yield but a pace you are parted from us; 'tis the
 law, you may act by your choice.

If you win, be content: he who, praying for peace, yields
 his sword, is no longer a foe!
 Prayer's a Valhalla-child, hear the suppliant voice; he's
 a coward who answereth no.

Wounds are viking's reward, and the pride of the man

on whose breast or whose forehead they stand;
Let them bleed on unbound till the close of the day, if you
wish to be one of our band.

Frithiof's Return

Such was the law of the vikings which Frithiof gave to his men. Day by day his name became more renowned through foreign lands. No viking was brave as Frithiof, and none had braver followers. When the conflict came, his spirit rose like an eagle refreshed for its flight. A smile was on his face and his voice rang clear above the noise of the battle.

After many conquests he sailed to Greece. In her beautiful seas he found many green islands. On the shores were green groves and temples gleaming with pillars. Here it seemed peace must have its home. The murmuring fountains and the sweet songs of the birds made music in the groves.

But in the midst of all this beauty Frithiof thought of his home in the north. There was the friend of his youth, the fair Ingeborg. There were the grave-mounds of his fathers. Around the groves and shrines of his country gathered the memories of his early years, and no matter how lovely any other land might be, his heart returned to his home land.

"Three years have passed since I saw the Northland, the land of heroes. How I long to see those loved shores once more! The tree that I planted on the grave-mound of my father—can it be that it lives now? Why do I linger in distant waves, taking tribute and conquering in war? My soul despises the glittering gold, and enough have I of renown.

"There's a flag on the mast and it points to the north, in
the north is the land I hold dear;
I will follow the course of the heavenly winds, and back
to the Northland I'll steer."

To his foster-brother Frithiof said: "Bjorn, I am weary of riding the sea. My heart longs for the firm earth of the Northland, and her lofty mountains are calling to me. Tired am I of this life on the sea and too long have I wandered an exile from home."

"Frithiof, why do you complain?" asked Bjorn. "Freedom and joy flourish best on the sea. When I am old I too will turn to the green-growing land with the grass for my pillow. But now I'll fight with a free hand and enjoy the freedom of the billows."

So the dragon ship sailed for far northern waters. The ice closed in around them and Frithiof declared he would not spend the winter on the desolate shore. He would go as a stranger to the palace of King Ring and see Ingeborg once more.

"Good!" exclaimed Bjorn. "Right glad will I be to fight the king and to let him feel a viking's power. We will fire the palace of the greybeard and carry his queen away with us; or, if you wish, challenge him to a fight on the ice."

"No!" replied Frithiof; "no fight have I with King Ring. His is not the fault. But peace would I bear to them both and say farewell to Ingeborg. When spring returns you see Frithiof here."

"You may be prevented from returning, Frithiof; go not alone!" said Bjorn.

But Frithiof had no fear and laughed at the warnings of Bjorn. Alone he went with his good sword to the country of the old King Ring.

King Ring and the Stranger

In the kingdom of the north reigned King Ring. Old was he now and white-haired, but noble and brave. At the merry Yuletide he held a great feast in the royal hall. High on the throne of state he sat, and beside him was his fair young queen, the gentle Ingeborg.

Into the spacious hall came a man unknown to any there. A bear-skin covered him from head to foot. He leaned heavily upon a staff, but even then he was taller than any warrior in the hall. He chose for rest a seat upon the bench beside the door. This is now the poor man's place and has always been. Some of the young men laughed at the beggar dressed in the skin of the wild bear and pointed the

finger at him.



INTO THE HALL CAME A MAN UNKNOWN TO ANY THERE

The stranger's eyes flashed and all felt his anger. Quickly he seized one of the young men by the belt and shook him so that all were suddenly silent in the hall.

"What causes such commotion?" cried the angry monarch. "Who dares disturb our peace? Old man, come here and answer. What is your name, your place, your errand?"

The old man replied: "Many questions you ask, O King, but every one will I answer. My name belongs to me alone and I'll not give it. My birth-place was misfortune and all I possess is want. I have come hither from the wolf so fierce and gaunt. In youth I bestrode a dragon on the blue waters, but now I am old and feeble and must live upon the land. As to my errand, I came to see your wisdom, renowned far and near. When your men met me rudely I seized one of them by the girdle and hurled him to the ground. For that forgive me, though the man is safe and sound."

"Your words are wisely chosen," said King Ring. "The aged should be honoured; come, sit here by me. You are no beggar, I know. Throw off your disguise and appear in your true form. Disguise is a foe to pleasure, and pleasure should rule at Yule-tide."

Then the guest dropped the bear-skin. Instead of an old man bent with care, there stood a handsome youth with long golden locks. His mantle was of azure velvet and his girdle was of silver finely worked. Around his arm clung a heavy golden circlet and at his side gleamed the great battle-sword.

When the queen looked at the guest she knew him as Frithiof, but mentioned not his name. It was the right of a guest to claim hospitality without giving his name, and Frithiof had claimed this guest-right. The horn sounded a shrill blast in the hall and all was still. The hour for vows was coming and the boar was now brought in. His four knees were bent beneath him on the great silver dish; in his mouth was an apple, and there were wreaths about his neck.

King Ring, his grey locks flowing, arose and straightway now
The boar's head gently touching, he thus declared his vow:
"I swear to conquer Frithiof, the champion in war,
So help me, Frey and Odin, and likewise mighty Thor."

Then with a smile defiant uprose the stranger tall
A look of wrath heroic spread o'er his features all—
He smote with sword the table till through the hall it rang
And up from oaken benches the steel-clad warriors sprang.

"And now, Sir King, please listen while I my vow shall tell—
Young Frithiof is my kinsman, and so I know him well;

'Gainst all the world I'll shield him, I give you here in word,
So help me now my norn, and likewise my good sword!"

The king laughed at this bold defiance. "Right daring, methinks your speech," he said, "but in the Northland palace all fair words are free." Then turning to the queen he bade her fill a horn of wine, the very best. "I hope that he'll remain our guest through the winter," he concluded.

The queen then took the great goblet and filled it with wine. With trembling hand she gave it to the guest. He accepted the horn with a bow of reverence and drank the wine at a draught in honour of the fair queen who gave it.

Then the skald, the singer of the royal court, touched the strings of his harp and sang a song of love and glory. As he sang he moved the warriors' hearts to pity or roused them to anger and revenge at his will. Such is the wonderful power of music and poetry. He sang of the home in Valhal, where brave heroes go after death, and all hearts were filled with a desire to be brave and noble that they might deserve a place in heaven when their work on earth was finished.

So with mirth and song, with stories of the great heroes of their race, King Ring and his court kept the merry Yule-tide in his castle.

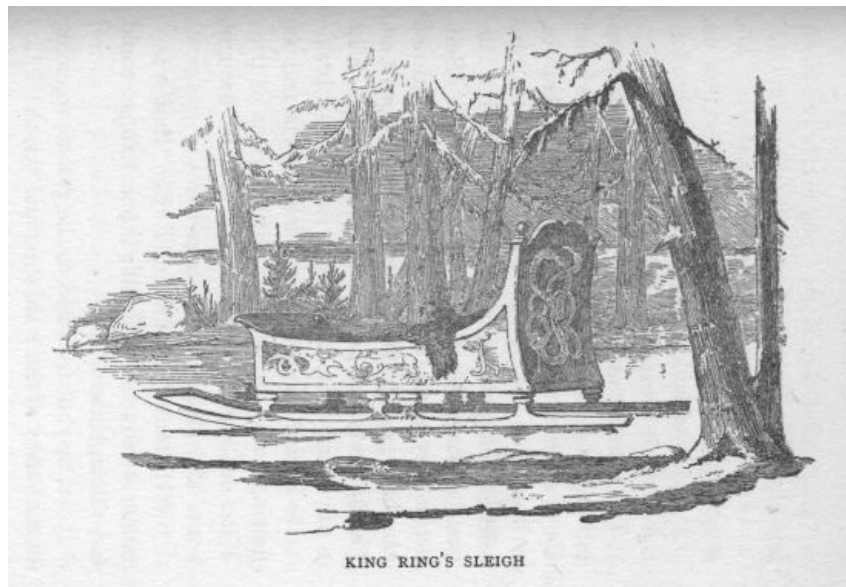
The Ride on the Ice

King Ring had set forth a banquet for his queen in a palace far over the lake. The ice on the lake was glistening in the sun, and the king ordered his sleigh and his swiftest horse.

"Do not go on the ice," urged the stranger; "it may break, and the water below is deep and cold." Then the old king laughed. "A king," said he, "is not easily drowned. If any one is afraid let him go round!"

The scornful laugh of the king angered the bold stranger, and he frowned. Soon, however, he bound his good skates to his feet. The servants meantime had brought out the sleigh-horse, strong and free, and his nostrils flamed as he breathed the bright, cold air.

"On," cried the king; "on, my brave steed and show if you are of famed Sleipner's brood!"



King Ring's Sleigh

As swift was his speed as a storm at sea. The queen grew fearful as the mighty steed flew on, but the king had no fear and paid no heed to the queen's cries.

The stranger skated, now fast, now slow, passing Ingeborg and the king whenever he wished. He made letters and figures on the sparkling ice, writing often the name of the queen. Onward swiftly they glided across the lake, but the treacherous ice-maidens were hiding below. Suddenly they made a hole in the silvery ice and caught the sleigh of the king with its precious load. The queen turned pale and called for help. Like a whirlwind came the skater, strong and brave.

He buried his skate in the ice and clasped the flowing mane of the steed with a grasp of iron. With one strong swing of his arm he brought horse and sleigh to the firm ice.

"Well done!" said King Ring; "that was a noble stroke. Not Frithiof, the strong, could have done better!"

Then they all returned to the palace, rejoicing in the safety of the good king and queen.

In the Forest

Through the long winter the stranger remained at the court of the king. The time passed merrily in skating, sleighing, and in other manly sports. In the evening all gathered in the great hall and listened to the songs of the skalds or related the deeds of heroes.

The coming of spring rejoiced all hearts. The songs of the birds, the new leaves on the trees, the warmer rays of the sun, all gave joy to those who had passed through the long cold winter. The ice-bound rivulets melted and ran merrily to the ocean; the buds began to unfold, and the earth seemed born anew, filled with love and hope and courage.

The king had planned a great hunt for the court. Men and women, courtiers and servants, awaited the signal to start. The steeds impatiently pawed the ground; the clanging of bows and the rattling of quivers were heard on every side. The hooded falcons, eager to escape, uttered wild shrieks that echoed on the hills. At last the queen appeared, like a star in the spring's clear sky, and the hunting troop was ready.

Hark! through hills and valleys sounds the horn! The falcon, loosened, flies straight up into the heaven's blue, and the wild animals of the forest fly in terror to their cavern homes. Off rush the hunters on their eager steeds. The aged king rides no more on the wild hunt, though in years gone by he was one of the best to follow wild game. Frithiof is with the king, for he, too, does not wish to join the hunters. Sad thoughts trouble him, and he wishes he had never left his beloved boat. On the sea he had no time for brooding over his sad fate, but here, with the king and Ingeborg, he is always remembering happier days.

As the two entered the forest they came upon a lonely place, dark and restful. Here the king halted and said: "See how lovely, fresh, and deep is this forest. Here will I rest me, for I desire to sleep." But Frithiof urged him not to sleep in the dark, damp forest. "Hard and chilly is the ground, O King! Let me take you back to the palace."

"Like the other gods, Sleep cometh unexpected," said the king; "and here will I sleep."

When Frithiof saw that the king was determined, he took off his mantle and spread it beneath a tree. The king in trusting friendship leaned his head against the stranger's knee. Soon he slept as the hero sleeps after the battle, or as the infant sleeps cradled in its mother's arms.

As he slumbered, hark! from the branch of a tree a coal-black bird sings: "Frithiof, now thou mayest slay thine enemy, the old king. Human eyes do not behold thee!" But a snow-white bird sings: "Though no human eye behold thee, Odin sees and hears each word. Wouldst thou be a coward and slay an old man now defenceless and sleeping! The hero-crown is not won by such a deed."

So sang the birds. Frithiof, snatching up his battle-blade, flung it far from him into the gloomy glade. The black bird flew away into the dark underworld. The snow-white bird, singing sweetly as a harp tone, mounted towards the sun.

Suddenly the old man awoke: "Sleep is sweet beneath a tree, guarded by a brave man's weapon. But where is your sword? What has parted you who have never before been parted?"

"It is not hard to find a sword," replied Frithiof. "Sharp is its tongue, O King, and it never speaks for peace. I think it is haunted by an evil spirit."

"I have not slept, O youth, but have been proving you. Man or sword a wise man testeth ere in them he can confide. You are Frithiof. I have known it since first you entered my hall," said the old king. "Why did you enter my home in disguise? Honour, Frithiof, sits not nameless, the rude guest of hospitality. We had heard of a Frithiof whom both men and gods revere. Soon, I thought, will he come against my home with his famous sword, bold and brave. But you came clad in tatters, a beggar's staff in your hand.

"But cast not down your eyelids. I have proved you and forgiven. I have pitied and forgotten. All life is a struggle, hardest in youth. You are young and I am old. Soon shall I rest in the grave. Therefore, O youth, take my kingdom and my queen. Be my son and let us forget our quarrel."

"I came not as a thief," said Frithiof sadly, "but only to see Ingeborg for the last time. Too long have I stayed as your guest. The gods will not forgive me. Balder the Good loves all mankind but me. Northland has cast me out, and no more shall I seek for peace on the earth so green and sweet. To ocean's billows will I go, out upon my good ship far as the stars can guide me and far as the stormy

billows can bear me.

"Let me hear the rolling thunder, let me hear the lightning's voice;
When it thunders all around me, Frithiof's heart will then rejoice
Clang of shields and rain of arrows! let the sea the battle fill;
Purified, I'll then fall gladly, reconciled to heaven's will."

King Ring's Death

On a lovely day in spring when the rays of the sun seemed more golden than usual, Frithiof entered the hall of King Ring to take leave of his host. The king and Ingeborg his queen sat upon their chairs of state, both pale and sad. Frithiof listened to a song of parting recited by the king's harper. Then he said: "O king! the billows now bathe my ship, the flying steed, the sea-horse that is longing to leave the shore. Gladly will they follow him who is fleeing from his well-beloved land."

To the queen Frithiof said: "Again I give you this arm-ring, O Ingeborg! Receive it in memory of our youth, and never let it leave you. I go, and never will you see me again. No more shall I behold the smoke rising upward from Northland. For the ocean is my fatherland and shall be my grave."

"Well know I that death is nigh," now said King Ring. "All men must die, and I shall not moan like a coward. No one can by complaining change what the fates have decreed. But if you will stay, my sorrow you will lighten. Take my queen, reign over the land and guard the crown. Long have I reigned in the Northland, loved and respected. Though I longed for peace, yet have I broken shields in war both by sea and land without turning pale. Vainly have I sought for peace amid slaughter. Now the mild daughter of heaven beckons me hence to Valhal."

"Bring for my drinking
The horn with wine flowing;
Skoal to thy honour, thou land of my birth!
Minds deeply thinking,
Harvest fields growing—
Peaceful exploits have I loved on the earth."

Speaking thus bravely, the king pressed the hand of his queen and of his son. Frithiof's also he clasped with love. Then, closing his eyelids gently, the royal spirit of King Ring sank with a sigh to All-father's breast.

The New King

King Ring sits in his barrow, buckler on arm and battle-sword by his side. His war-horse stands at the cairn pawing the earth and chafing as though impatient to start on the long journey.

Thus sang the harper of the departed hero: "Great King Ring has gone on his last journey. He rides over Bifrost, the rainbow bridge that leads to Valhal. The bridge bends with his weight. Wide open the doors of Valhal to welcome him, and hands reach out to lead him within the doors.

"Odin himself, king of the gods, calls for the beaker to be brought. Frey wreathes the king's head with garlands of grain ears, and Frigg places therein the bluest of her blossoms. Broge, the singer of the gods, tunes his golden harp and sings a song of welcome. Silent is Valhal as he sings:—

"Dear to us is this hero king, for he held his shield as a shelter for peace. Always did Forseti, goddess of justice and peace, have an honoured place in his kingdom. Generous, too, was the king, always strewing beauty and blessing far and near. To heroes he gave gifts without measure; sadness he comforted and suffering he relieved.

"Welcome, thou wise winner of Valhal! Long will you be loved and honoured in the Northland. You are loved by the gods, a friend from the earth."

So sang the harper in the palace of the king whom he loved.

When the news spread over the country that King Ring was dead, the peasants and warriors from hill and dale, from meadow and farm, cried: "We must choose a king to fill his place."

The peasant took from the wall his steel sword and tried its edge with his practised finger to prove

its sharpness. His boys admired their father's blade and tried to lift it, but it was too heavy for one, and two struggled to lift it from the floor.

The peasant's daughter scoured the helmet to make it clean and bright, and laughed to see her face shining from the silvery sheen of its polished surface.

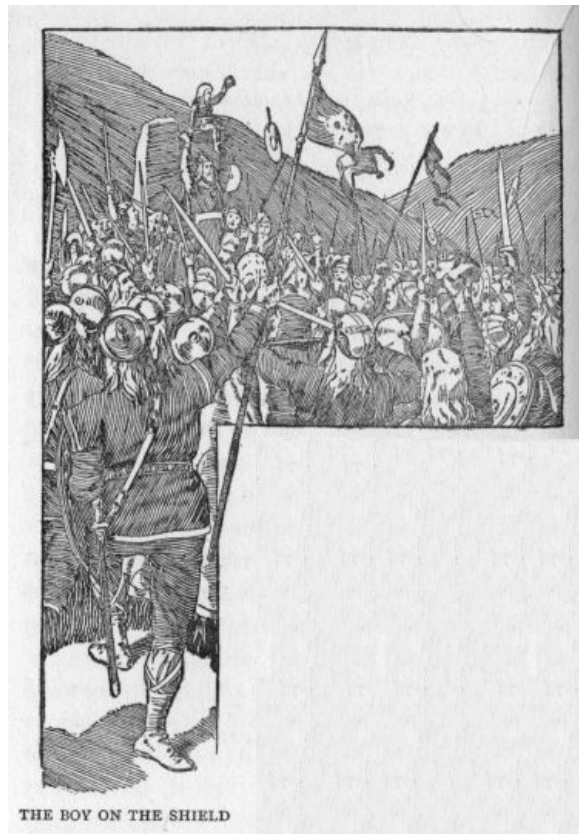
When the peasant had bound his good sword to his side and put on his shining helmet, he took his round shield and started with his friends to the gathering-place.

Hail! iron man, so strong and sound,
Thou peasant good!
Renown and powers which nations wield
From thee they draw.
In war thou art thy country's shield,
In peace its law.

With sounding of arms and shields the peasants met under heaven's blue sky in the fair, pleasant fields. Upon the great stone in the centre of the assembly stood the noble Frithiof. With him was the little prince, son of King Ring, a slender, noble lad with long golden hair. When the men saw the two, there rose the cry on every hand, "Too small is the king's son to rule our land and to lead our wars. Frithiof shall be our king!"

But Frithiof raised up the little boy on his shield and cried: "Ye Northmen, behold your hope, your king, your joy! From Odin is he descended, and he is brave at heart, as much at home 'mid shield and spear as fish are in the sea.

"I swear my lance and sword to set
Round land and throne,
And with the father's coronet
To crown the son."



The Boy on the Shield

While Frithiof was urging the Northmen to choose the son of Ring for their King, the boy sat on the high shield as if it were a throne. No fear had he, but he faced them all as the eaglet faces the sun. At last he grew impatient and leaped to the ground; fearless and proud he stood, like the royal prince he was.

Then all rejoiced at his courage: "We of the north, we choose thee, thou shield-borne youth, to be our king. Be like thy father, brave and good. For Frithiof, thy loyal friend, he shall be thy guardian and guide thy youth. You, Frithiof, shall marry the queen. We give her to you for your bride."

But Frithiof frowned and said: "To-day you are here to make choice of your king,—not of my bride. To the temple of Balder I must go to repair the wrong I have done, if perchance I can do this.

"Against me Balder's anger sore

Doth still abide;
He took, he only can restore
My cherished bride."

Then Frithiof kissed the youthful monarch on the brow in farewell, and, turning from the assembly, he silently and slowly passed from view.

Frithiof at his Father's Grave

From the home of King Ring Frithiof fared to seek his father's grave in his own loved land. As he neared the shore, he looked upon it with joy. How brightly the sun shone, smiling like a friend as its soft rays touched the branches of the forest! The dewdrops reflected the light as perfectly as the great ocean. The mountains were aglow with crimson light as the sun slowly sank in the west.

On every side Frithiof saw the well-known places he loved as a child. The same sweet beauty graced the valleys, the same birds were filling the woods with song. He visited the stream in which he strove as a swimmer bold, and he found the birch trees with their white bark, on which he had carved his name so long ago.

All seemed unchanged. But when he looked for Framness, that royal home of his father, he found it not. And Balder's shrine was gone; both destroyed by fire and sword. No more the pious pilgrim came to Balder's grove, for wild beasts roamed where once the sacred temple stood. Although Frithiof had suffered so long, his grief was even stronger than before, when he saw the ruined temple. He repaired next day to the grave of his father, the brave Thorsten, where he prayed to the gods:—

"Is there no way by which I may obtain pardon for my offence? Will the blue-eyed god, kind Balder, refuse forgiveness when man pardons man who asks for pardon? Command any sacrifice and I will perform it. No evil will had I in the burning of thy shrine. Tis the only stain upon my shield. I pray thee, remove it and make my shield spotless. Cannot an upright life repair a moment's fault?"

"Here is my father's grave. He has gone where there are no tears, and he rejoices in the company of noble heroes. O father, hear my prayer! Not for renown in war I pray, but for forgiveness. Take my plea to heaven. No rest have noble minds if unforgiven. Will you not send me some message, some token, some sign that you hear and answer my prayer? The waves are resounding on the shore; can you not speak through them? The storm flies by, bounding on swift pinions; will you not whisper to me in the storm?—No answer?"

As Frithiof prayed, the storm passed by. The sun sank in golden splendour. Over hill and dale the glowing clouds floated in many lovely circles. Then came a wondrous vision to his longing eyes. In the clouds appeared a temple of gold surrounded by groves of emerald trees. The gold and marble gleamed with divine lustre never seen by man. Slowly it sank to earth but did not disappear. It stood in beauty where before the temple of Balder had stood. Its broad walls were of silver, and each pillar seemed cut of deep blue steel. The altar was carved of a single precious stone. The ceiling seemed like the blue sky with twinkling golden stars, and there sat the gods of Valhal in all their splendour.

Frithiof gazed in wonder and in praise. "Now I know your answer, my father. I will build a new shrine to Balder the Good, more glorious than the one destroyed by fire. How glad I am to atone for my warlike act by peaceful deeds! The gods will pardon those who sue meekly for forgiveness. Now with joy can I look at the stars and welcome the Northern Lights. To-night I shall sleep upon my shield and dream how heaven forgets the faults its mercy hath forgiven."

The Reconciliation

After seeing this vision of the lovely temple, Frithiof, greatly cheered, worked long to build one as beautiful as his vision. At last it was finished, a noble work. It stood high up on the mountain cliff, and its image was mirrored in the ocean beneath. About this glorious temple stretched a grove of noble trees, their branches green against the sky. Here could be heard the songs of birds, but no sound of discord. All was harmony.

As Frithiof stood admiring the temple, he saw twelve virgins clad in silver gauze, with roses in their hair, enter the temple and approach the altar of Balder. About the altar they danced lightly as breezes about a fountain, or elves amid the waving grass while dewdrops glisten there. As Frithiof looked, all hate and vengeance faded from his heart as ice melts from the cliff before the sun of springtime. All

was quiet,—peace and joy seemed to possess his soul. He felt love for all nature and longed to be at peace with all God's creatures.

Then came into the temple the most high priest of Balder. Kind was his face, and Frithiof revered the noble man of peace. "Son Frithiof, welcome to this grove and temple. I have long expected thee. Weary with travel and longing for home, the strong man at last returns from his wanderings.

"Dost thou remember when thy heart was joyous as the birds are when summer night winds gently rock the fragrant blossoms? Then Balder was growing in thy pure soul. But always with the good Balder there grows up in every human soul his brother Hoder, the evil one, the child of night.

"No one can suffer for thy sins,—no one can atone for the living but themselves. One offering canst thou give, more dear to the gods than the smoke of victims. This is the sacrifice of thine own vengeance, the hate in thy untamed heart.

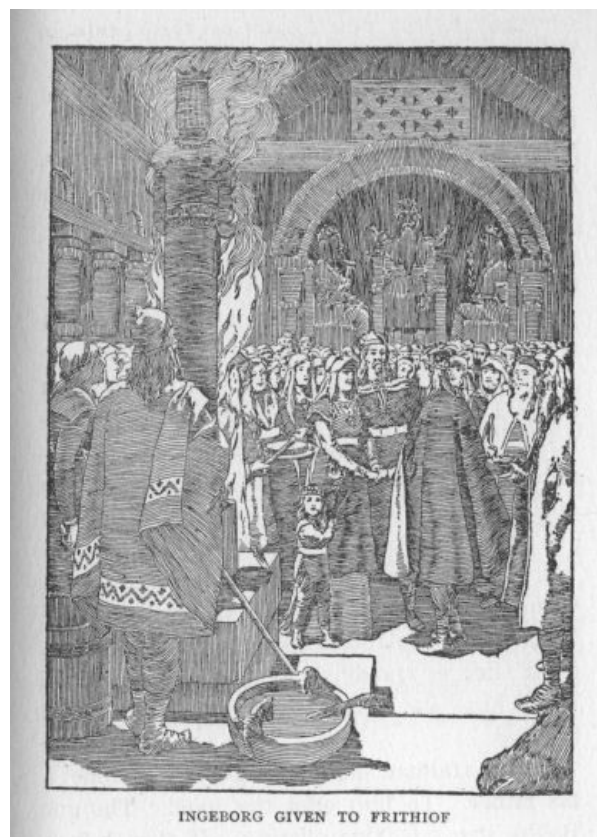
"Canst thou not forgive, O youth? Be reconciled with thyself and thy foes, and then will Balder be reconciled with thee.

"Thou hatest Bele's sons because pride of birth was theirs and they would not give thee Ingeborg, their sister. Strange it is but true, that no one is proud of his own merit, but only of his fortune. Art thou not proud of thy heroic deeds, of thy great strength? But who gave thee this strength? Is it thy merit or Odin's gift? Censure not another's pride, lest thine own be condemned. King Helge now is fallen."

"Fallen!" exclaimed Frithiof; "King Helge is fallen?"

"Yes, my Frithiof. Thou must know that while thou wert building this temple, Helge was far away, marching among the Finnish mountains. On a lonely crag of the mountains was an ancient shrine. He wished to enter, but the gate was closed and the key fast in the lock. Helge was angry, and, grasping the doorposts, he shook them with all his might. All at once with horrid crash the rotten pillars gave way, and a great image standing on the doorposts fell upon him, and crushed him to earth. Thus he died.

"Now Halfdan sits alone upon the throne of his father. To him offer thy hand. The god Balder demands this offering. If thou refuse, in vain has this temple been built, and vain are thy prayers for forgiveness."



INGEBORG GIVEN TO FRITHIOF

As the noble priest thus advised, King Halfdan entered the temple, but stood apart in silence. Frithiof at once loosed his breast-plate and placed the bright shield against the altar. To Halfdan he offered his hand, saying, "In such a strife the noblest first offers his hand for peace." King Halfdan met his friend half-way, and their hands, long separated, met in a strong clasp.

Then the priest in solemn voice proclaimed Frithiof forgiven for his crime against Balder, the loving god, and purified from his guilt.

Scarce had the words been spoken when Ingeborg entered, attired in bridal robes and mantle of ermine. She walked among her maids as the moon glides in the heavenly azure attended by the radiant stars. With tears in her lovely eyes she turned to her brother; but Halfdan clasped her hand in Frithiof's, and thus gave his sister, the fair Ingeborg, to the friend of their childhood, her best beloved, the noble Frithiof.

THE STORY OF BEOWULF

The Coming of Sheaf

Once upon a time, many, many years ago, a boat came sailing over the sea to Denmark. In it were shields and rings of gold, banners of bright colours, bracelets, drinking-cups, and helmets. With sails gaily spread the breezes bore the boat gently over the deep blue sea. No sailor was seen at the oars.

"What can it be?" cried the people as they came to the shore, wondering; "is it a ship of earth, or have the gods sent it?" They asked one another many questions, but knew not what to think.

Nearer and nearer came the beautiful boat; bright shone the coloured sails and golden armour. Many were the treasures borne therein, but loveliest and most precious was—a little baby boy! He smiled at the man who found him, and lifted up his tiny hands as if asking to be taken.

"A prince!" cried the people; "we have found our prince! The gods have sent us a king to rule over us and to conquer our enemies." For at that time the Danes had no king, and were glad to see the beautiful child who so strangely came to their shores.

The ship with all its treasures was carefully guarded, and the boy, who was called Sheaf, was brought up as a prince. In due time he became king and fought many battles and won many victories over the robbers on land and sea. Over many noble thanes did Sheaf, the king, rule; all obeyed him and paid tribute to him.

Nor did God withhold from him a son to comfort the people. The boy was strong and handsome and gave great joy to the heart of his father. Over many lands shone the glory of the young prince. So shall a young hero act that when he is old all his friends shall praise him. He shall fight for his people and by praiseworthy deeds shall he flourish.

Now when the time came for Sheaf to die, he asked his companions to bear him to the shore. There stood the brave ship with gleaming prow and widespread sails, eager to go. Sad and yet glad at heart were the heroes who bore the king to the death-boat—glad to honour a brave king, and sad that he must leave them.

On the king's bosom they placed treasures of gold and silver; rings, shining stones, cloth of gold, shields, and drinking-cups. Indeed, he took away treasures as many as he brought with him when, years before, he had come, a tiny child, to the country of the Danes. Out into the mist sailed the proud ship with its precious load never to return. No man saw it again, and whither it went none can tell.

The Young Beowulf

The sons and grandsons of the great Sheaf ruled the country of the Danes until the time of Hrothgar. Hrothgar was king of the Danes when Beowulf, the hero of our story, was a prince in the country of the Goths.

The young Beowulf grew up in the court of his uncle, Hygelac, king of the Goths. Fond of all games and manly sports was he, and he learned to throw the heavy hammer, to shoot, to row, to swim, and to ride. Running, wrestling, and hunting were daily exercises of the young men, and Beowulf could excel them all in every trial of skill. Soon the men at court called Beowulf their leader, and they loved and honoured him.

Although Beowulf had won many victories at home, and his people knew him to be brave and strong, yet he longed to do some great deed which should make his name known over other lands. The time came when he had his wish and when all his strength and courage were tested. For a harper from the land of the Danes came to the court of Hygelac and told a sad story.

The Harper's Story

"In the land of the Danes lives Hrothgar, a great and wise king; but sadness clouds his brow and tears dim his eyes. Years ago all was joy and glory. Hrothgar had conquered all his foes and made them friends. Much wealth had he added to his country's treasures, and many warriors gathered round him, glad to hail him leader and king.

"Hrothgar loved peace more than war and was glad when the earls were his friends, and he said: 'I will build a great hall, a house of joy for all my friends. This shall be larger than any hall earth has seen. Here I will bring all my war treasures. The walls shall be hung with banners of bright colours and decked with shields and swords. Tables shall be spread and guests shall always be welcomed.'

"The great king spoke, and many workmen gathered to build the hall. Large and strong it rose, a wonder for all the people. The king named the hall Heorot, and here was every one made welcome. The mead-cup was passed, the king gave presents of shining rings, and joy and laughter filled the hall.

"Gleemen sang of the goodness of the king, the beauty and grace of the queen, and the bravery of the Danes. One singer told of the beginning of all things; how the All-Father wrought the earth, the beautiful plain, which the water embraces. He sang of how God placed the sun and moon in the heavens for light to dwellers on the land; how he adorned the earth with grass and leaves and made all creatures that go quickly to and fro.

"But alas! now all this joy is changed to sorrow. No longer does the gleeman strike the harp and fill the hall with music. No merry laugh is heard, but all is dark and still. King Hrothgar sits upon his kingly seat, silent and sad.

"You marvel what can bring grief to the great king and his merry thanes? In all the broad lands there is but one who does not wish long life and joy to the king. This is Grendel. No man is he, but a monster whose heart is filled with wickedness. Laughter and happiness are strangers to him, and he hates all beauty and goodness.

"Far in a lake, dark, poisonous, and surrounded by a marsh, does Grendel live. When he heard the songs and sounds of joy in the great hall, he smiled grimly to think how he would turn their joy to gloom, their songs to groans. So, in the darkness, from his horrid home the monster crept up to the wondrous hall. There slept the warriors, little dreaming of evil. A score and ten the monster slew, then strode away, howling defiance to the king.

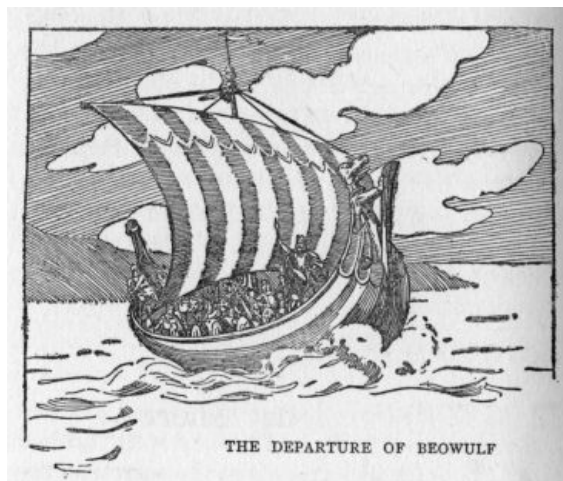
"When the sleeping thanes awoke and found their comrades slain, sad were they all at heart. Night after night the monster came and slew, and fear seized every heart. In all homes were cries of grief for the dead, and men knew not where to go for safety.

"This is the woe of the Danes, for none can battle with a monster of the deep. No one has ever seen this ugly shape, for he comes always in the darkness and when no one looks for him. Everywhere has the great king sought help, but none can be found. Hrothgar sits weeping for his brave comrades in the hall he built for their comfort and joy."

Beowulf and his Men

When the harper had ceased, the hall was still. All voices were hushed for they grieved at the sorrow of the good Hrothgar. Then the brave Beowulf cried out: "Give me leave, O king! Let me go to Hrothgar and free his land from this monster so wicked and fearsome." The other thanes applauded his words and cried: "Take us with you!"

But Hygelac, the great king, said wisely: "Brave men go to war with care and after deep thought. Not easy is the way over the sea; not easy is the contest with the evil Grendel. But to fight for a good cause and to nobly win or nobly die is the best a man can do. Proud is my heart when I see so many brave men ready to overcome the evil monster or to die fighting, but all may not venture. Go, my cousin and my thane," he said to Beowulf, "and make thy name famous in all places where honour is loved."



THE DEPARTURE OF BEOWULF

Beowulf thanked his king and chose fourteen of his bravest warriors to go with him. They prepared the strong ship and found a pilot who knew the road the swans take, and who could safely guide the boat. The warriors made their weapons bright and carried them to the ship. The men shoved the boat from the shore. The sails were raised, and, driven by the wind, the boat flew over the foamy waves.

On the second day the voyagers saw the shining ocean-shore. The sea-farer was at the end of the watery way. Quickly the men stepped out upon the plain. They tied the sea-wood, shook their shirts of mail, and thanked God that to them the wave paths had been easy.

The Warder of the Shore

A warder of Hrothgar, guarding the seashore, saw these warlike men and wondered why they came. Shaking his spear, he cried: "Who are you? Why come you over the seas in a giant ship, bearing arms into our land? Haste to make known whence is your coming!"

Then Beowulf answered: "We are of the Goths; Hygelac is our king. My father was a noble chief. All wise men through the earth remember him. We have come in kindness to your lord and to defend him. For we have heard that a foul fiend spreads terror through your land and in the darkness slays your thanes. We would overcome this foe to joy."



THE LANDING OF BEOWULF IN HROTHGAR'S REALM

Then the warder spake: "A warrior wise should know the difference between words and works. But I perceive that you are a friendly band. I will bid my fellows guard your ship against every foe, and then I will direct you." So with their guide the warlike men hastened until they saw the shining roof of the great hall. Their ringed armour rang as they walked.

At last the warriors came to the entrance of the hall. Here, on a bench, they sat until some one should bid them welcome.

Soon came the warder of the hall, a princely chief. "Whence bear you the stout spears and war-shields? Great men and proud you seem, and methinks you plan great deeds."

Then the proud lord, the leader, spoke: "Beowulf is my name. I will relate my errand to your prince if he will grant that we may greet him."

Replied the Dane: "I will seek the king and tell him of your coming." Quickly he came to Hrothgar, sitting with his wise men, and told him of the strangers, praising the hardy warriors. Kindly spoke the king: "Glad am I that Beowulf and his brave Goths have come thus to our shores. For I have heard he has the strength of thirty in his hand-grip. Him God in his great mercy has sent to us. Hasten, bid them come in! Tell them that they are welcome guests to the Danes."

Beowulf received by Hrothgar

When the king's message had been told, Beowulf and all his men entered the hall. Proud and warlike he stood before the king. "Hrothgar, hail! Kinsman to Hygelac am I and daring deeds have I done. Now I have heard that this brave hall of yours stands empty and silent when night shuts out the day, because of Grendel's warfare. So I have come with my good friends to help you. Deny me not one prayer: that I alone with my brave thanes fight with Grendel. This monster fights not with weapons, I have heard. Then I also will bear neither sword nor shield, but with my strong hands will I seize him. If Grendel conquers me in the battle, he will carry me off; so no care need you take of my body, but send to Hygelac my armour."

At the brave, strong words of the young Beowulf the heart of the old king rejoiced. "I welcome you to my home. Come, now, let us sit at the feast and listen to the songs of brave deeds," said the king. Then the mead-cup was passed, the gleeman sang, and there was joy in the hall.

One man in the hall did not rejoice; there was envy in his heart, for he did not wish any other man on earth to have more glory than himself. So he said: "Are you the Beowulf who strove with Breca in the wide sea in swimming? For seven nights you strove, but he had more strength and overcame you in the race. Surely if you dare to fight with Grendel, worse things will befall you."

Then spoke Beowulf: "Much do you speak of Breca. Now I speak the truth. More strength on the sea have I than any other man. Five days were we together. Then the cold winds and waves drove us apart. Many a water monster tried to kill me, but sank to the bottom of the sea with a blow from my powerful hands. Nine of these water nixies I killed. I have never heard of a harder fight, yet from all these dangers I escaped. I have never been told that you have gone through such terrible fights. Although your wit be good, I must say in truth that never had so many princes of Hrothgar's court fallen under Grendel's stroke, if your courage were as fierce as your tongue. Grendel fears not the Danes, but kills for pleasure. Now a Goth shall offer him toil and battle. Afterwards, all who wish may go to the mead-hall and rejoice."

All the Danes applauded Beowulf's bold words, for they did not like the jealous prince who had taunted him. The queen, lovely and gracious, bore the mead-cup to the king, and then to their guest. In kind words she greeted him: "Glad am I and grateful to God that I may trust in you for comfort against our sorrow."

Then replied Beowulf, for battle eager: "I alone shall work your people's safety or bow in death. I shall perform deeds of noble valour or my last day in this mead-hall await."

These words pleased both Goths and Danes, and applause filled the hall. When darkness came on, the company arose and greeted one another. Hrothgar to Beowulf said: "Never before, since I could raise hand to shield, have I given to any man the Dane's festive hall to guard save now to thee. Have now and hold the best of houses; keep watch against our foe. All things shall be yours if you escape with life from the battle of this night."

The Contest with Grendel

Hrothgar then departed with all his warriors. And Beowulf spoke to his men: "I do not think myself less in warlike strength than Grendel; so I will not use the sword or shield, but we two shall fight to-night without weapons, and God shall give the glory to whom glory belongs."

Around him lay the warriors, sadly thinking they would never see their homes across the sea again, for so many before that night had been slain by the cruel Grendel. At last they slept, all but one. The mighty Beowulf in angry mood awaited the battle.

Now truly it is shown that mighty God rules the race of men. Over the moor came the shadow-walker stalking. He strode under the clouds until he saw the golden hall of men. This was not the first time he had come to the hall of Hrothgar. On the door he rushed. He opened the wide mouth and trod on the floor. When he saw the men sleeping on the benches he laughed, thinking how he would take life from the body of every one there.

The shadowy form came nearer and nearer. At last he stretched out his great hand to take Beowulf, but with all his strength the brave warrior seized the arm of the monster. Then did the heart of Grendel fill with fear. Fearful was his mind, but not for that could he escape the sooner.

Then stood Beowulf upright and firmly grasped Grendel. Very angry were both. The wonder was that the great hall did not fall to the ground. But it was made fast within and without with iron bands, and naught but fire could destroy it. Then the noise grew greater. The Danes who had heard it were terrified; never had such horrid noise filled the air, for Beowulf, the strongest of men, held Grendel fast. Not for anything would he let the dreadful one escape that day.

The warriors sought to help their leader, but he would not use any weapon. With his hands, with his bare hands, he held fast the fearful foe. On the shoulder of Grendel was a horrid wound, and Beowulf tore the arm from the body. Well knew the monster then that his life's end had come.

Glad was Beowulf that his strength had aided the Danes, had freed the great hall, and had healed the deep sorrow which had been theirs for so many years.

The Feast of Joy

There was in the morning many a warrior in the gift hall. From far and near over distant ways they

came to behold the wonder, the arm of Grendel the joy-killer. Away to the dark water, his home, had he gone with his death-wound.

All the warriors rode in gladness to the great hall. There was told the bravery of Beowulf. No other was so great, so worthy of honour, as he. Hrothgar, also, they praised as a good king and famous in war.

All the Danes and the Goths were happy that the terror of the land had been destroyed. Care was removed from their hearts. They were filled with joy and turned to games and sports. Some let their beautiful horses run in contest over the fair roads. Some who knew the famous stories of heroes told them to eager listeners. Laughter, song, and merry voices were heard once more in the hall. Soon one of the singers began a song in honour of this new deed, the victory of Beowulf.

Then over the meadow came the great king with many knights famed for their brave deeds. With them also walked the fair queen and a company of maidens.

When Hrothgar entered the gold-crowned hall and saw the great hand and arm of Grendel, he said: "Now let us give to the All-Father thanks! Wonder after wonder can God work. This one brave warrior has, through God's might, performed a deed which the Danes could not. Happy is the mother of such a son! Now, Beowulf, as a dear son will I hold you in my heart. Nothing shall you want which I have power to give you. You have done a deed which will make your glory live through every age."

Then replied Beowulf; "With great good-will we fought the fight. I seized the enemy quickly with hard hands and hoped to lay him on his death-bed. But I have his hand and arm, and he will surely die, for pain has him in its deadly grip."

Hrothgar now gave the order that the hall should be adorned for the feast of joy. Men and women worked to make all clean and whole. Beautiful banners, a wonder to all who beheld them, decked the walls.

When all was ready, the king himself came to the feast in honour of Beowulf. Never had a larger or a nobler company sat in the gift hall. Merry at heart were they all, and they had a merry feast.

Then Hrothgar gave to Beowulf a golden banner in reward of victory; a sword, a cup, and a helmet he gave, four beautiful and wonderful gifts. These were most precious gifts, of which Beowulf need not be ashamed.

Then Hrothgar, the shield of warriors, eight warlike steeds brought into the hall as gifts to Beowulf. On one of the horses was the war-seat the king himself used when going to battle. So with steeds and treasures did the king of the Danes reward the brave prince.

To every man with the hero did the king give a precious gift. Then the song of praise was heard. "The wise God rules all, therefore is understanding everywhere best; wise forethought is best."

When the song was ended, the queen took the mead-cup to the king, saying: "Accept this cup, my beloved lord; be thou happy, good friend of men, and to the Goths speak with kind words as one should do. Be cheerful to thy guests and mindful of gifts. The bright hall is made safe; be happy with thy sons and friends."

Then the gracious queen said to Beowulf: "Receive as a gift this collar, dear prince. Thou hast done that which men will praise throughout all time. Be noble and happy! Be brave and gentle in deeds. Here in this hall is every man to each other true and to his lord faithful. The thanes unite to praise thee!"

Then the queen went to her seat, and all the court united in praise of Beowulf, who had driven Grendel from the great hall.

After the merry feast, all left the hall except a few warriors who slept rejoicing, thinking all their warfare was over.

Grendel's Mother

But Grendel's mother did not close her eyes in sleep. When her son came home with his death-blow, great was the sorrow and anger in her heart. She would punish the Danes and the Goths for her son's death. In the middle of the night she crept to the hall where the Danes were sleeping, free from all fear. One she seized,—a brave man and dear to the king. Then rose a great cry in the hall when Grendel's mother saw her son's well-known hand and arm. She seized it and bore it away to the dark lake, together with the body of the warrior.

Soon Hrothgar was told of the fresh calamity, and he grieved at the death of his friend, the brave warrior whom Grendel's mother had taken away.

When Beowulf came to the hall, Hrothgar cried out: "Speak not to me of rest or joy! Sorrow has come again. My best friend in war and peace is dead! The dread monster has killed him. Two shadows on the moor have my men seen; one, Grendel, is the figure of a man, and the other is like a woman. They dwell in the secret land where the wolf howls and the winds sweep; where the flood flows under the earth. About a mile away is this lake over which the dark trees bend. Every night can fire be seen over this waste of water. No one knows how deep the lake is. The noisy winds raise the black waves until the air grows gloomy and the heavens shed tears. You know not this dreadful place. If you dare seek it and come back from the strife, I will give you money and treasures of gold."

The Way to the Pool

Then the brave Beowulf replied: "Better is it for every one to avenge his friend than that he greatly mourn. Each of us must await the end of his life. Let them who can, work high deeds of honour. Let us go quickly to seek Grendel's mother. I promise you she shall not escape; neither in the sea nor in the bosom of the earth, in the mountain wood nor in the ocean's ground."

Then was the heart of the old king glad to hear these brave words. Horses were brought out and troops of men set forth towards the home of the dreadful shadows. The road was narrow and dark, an unknown way. Soon they saw the mountain-trees leaning over the rock, a joyous wood. The water below was dark and gloomy. Many strange creatures could be seen moving in the deep pool.

Now Beowulf clad himself in his war-gear. The coat of rings was about his breast so that no grip could injure his life. On his head he wore a bright helmet wrought with strength so that no battle-axe could break it. Then a prince of Hrothgar gave him a famous sword named Hrunting. This was one of the old treasures. Never in battle had it failed those who dared to go in ways of terror. This was not the first time that it had done brave deeds.

Then said Beowulf: "Now, O king, I am ready for my journey. Bear in mind what you have said—if I for your need should lose my life, that you would be to me as a father. If, then, war takes me off, be a friend to my comrades. Send to Hygelac the treasures you have given to me, so that he may know that I found a good king in you. Now with the good sword Hrunting will I seek out the foe."

With these words Beowulf leaped into the lake.

Beowulf in the Pool

All that day he sank into the water before he beheld the ground-bed of the pool. Then he saw the fierce creature who for a hundred years had held the floods. Eagerly she seized him and bore him to her dwelling. Many a sea-monster broke through his warlike coat. At last the warrior found himself in a great room where the waters did not enter. Then a fierce light shone brightly upon him, and by its gleam he saw the sea-wolf. With a loud cry he struck her with his good broad sword, but it would not bite or injure her. This was the first time its power had failed. Beowulf remembered his former deeds of bravery and threw down his useless sword to use the strength of his hands alone. He seized the sea-creature and made her bow to the earth, but fiercely she grasped the brave warrior and overthrew him so that he was like to perish.

Him she would have slain, but his good coat withstood her sword. The Ruler of the Skies was his friend, for on the wall was a great sword so heavy that other men could not use it. This sword Beowulf seized gladly. Angrily he struck the sea-wolf, and the sword passed through her neck. Down on the ground she sank. The warrior rejoiced in his work. He looked through the great dwelling and saw Grendel lying lifeless. With a strong blow Beowulf cut off the head of the monster, but the hot blood melted the sword and nothing was left but the hilt. The blade melted away as ice melts when the Father, who has power over the seasons, unbinds the bands of the frost-king.

The men at the shore, watching, saw the water all coloured with blood, and feared their great leader was dead. The king and noble Danes spoke of the brave hero with praise and sorrow. When noon came, they went back to the great hall sadly, thinking Beowulf the daring had been slain by the fearful monster.

Beowulf's Return

But the Goths stayed by the shore, though little hoping to see their dear lord again. But soon the water cleared and they saw their brave leader swimming toward them with the head of Grendel and the hilt of the great sword. Then they went to him, thanking God. The stout band of thanes rejoiced that their lord had returned. Forth they went on the narrow road, rejoicing. Four of the strong men bore the heavy head of Grendel. Beowulf proudly led his brave men. The prince of the thanes entered the great hall, with glory crowned, to greet Hrothgar. The warriors bore the great head of Grendel into the hall before the king and his men.

"Behold, O king!" said Beowulf, "the head of the sea-monster! I hardly with life came from the battle under the water. Had not God helped me, I had not conquered. The good sword Hrunting could not harm my foe, but the Ruler of men guided me to see on the wall an old strong sword, and with it I slew her. Then I cut off the head of the monster Grendel. In his hot blood was the good sword melted, and I brought only the hilt away. I now promise thee that in Heorot all may sleep safe from harm, for I have slain thy foes, Grendel and his mother, and have given peace to thy land and people."

Then did Beowulf give the sword-hilt to Hrothgar. The good king said: "Thy glory is exalted, friend Beowulf, over every nation. Long shall thou be a comfort to thy people and a help to the warriors. Now is the flower of thy might. Long may it be before thy strength departs in fire's clutch, or rage of flood, or arrow's flight, or age or blindness takes thee. Go now to thy seat at the feast as a guest of honour."

Hrothgar honours Beowulf

Then Beowulf went to the seat of honour in great joy, and all were merry. The helm of night grew dark; the warriors left their seats. They greeted Beowulf and wished him well to rest. In the gold-roofed hall well slept the prince until the black raven saw the coming of the bright sun. At the first light the Goths hastened to the good ship, eager to be gone to their homes.

When all were ready, Beowulf said: "O king, we seafarers wish to seek our homes. Here have we been kindly treated. If there is more that I can do, O lord of men, I shall always be ready. If when far away I hear that foes surround thee, I shall come to help thee with many warriors. Well I know that my king, Hygelac, will send me to thy aid."

Then Hrothgar spoke: "Into thy mind has the wise God sent these kind words. Never have I heard wiser words from one so young. Thou art strong and wise, and I think that if death should take Hygelac, the people would wish thee for their king. So well hast thou borne thyself that there shall be peace between the Danes and Goths, and many a gift I shall send to thee over the great sea."

Then Hrothgar gave to Beowulf rich gifts and bade him seek his home in safety. The good king wept when he said good-bye, for he loved the noble youth and was sad to have him go away over the deep sea.

Beowulf was glad and proud of the king's praise. He set sail from the land of Hrothgar, and often he and his men admired the rich gifts of the great and good king.

Beowulf and Hygelac

Over ocean-stream went the brave youths and soon saw the shores of the Goths, their homeland. Beowulf and his men brought the ship high up on the shore lest the billow's force might wreck it. Then Beowulf ordered them to carry the noble gifts of Hrothgar. Near the sea-wall was the home of Hygelac. The bright sun, the candle of the world, was shining when the brave Beowulf and his men went to greet their king. Hygelac was glad to see their safe returning, and said: "Tell me, friend Beowulf, how the Danes treated you. Long have I feared for you, knowing you would meet Grendel, the deadly foe of men."

Beowulf answered: "Right well did Hrothgar greet me and gave me a seat in his hall next his own son. All the people were gay, and never have I seen a grander hall or greater cheer. Oft the sweet queen left her seat and spoke to the young warriors, giving one and another a wreath. Oft their young daughter bore the mead-cup to her father's friends.

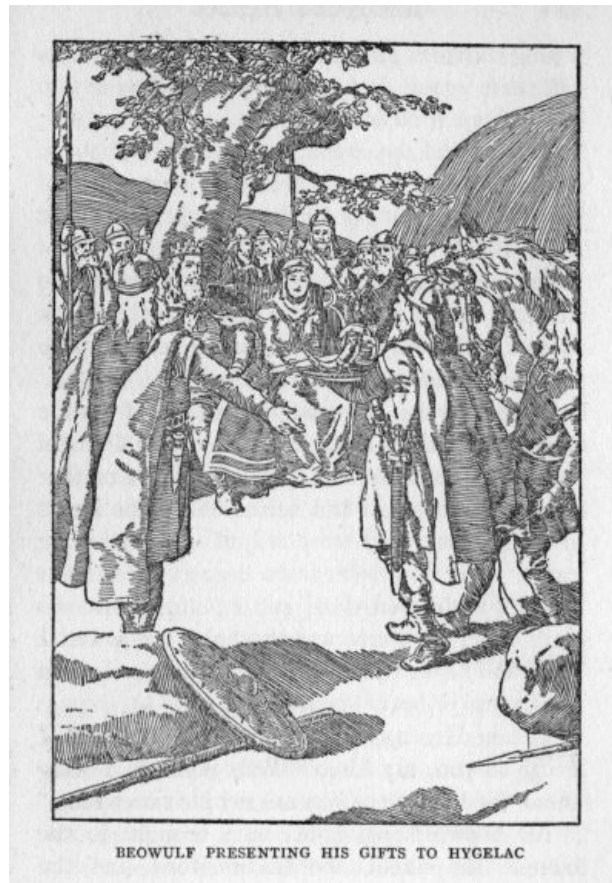
"So all the day we spent in song and story. At night the beast Grendel came. First he seized and slew one of my kindred, and then sought me. But I seized his right hand and would not let go my hold. Long we fought, and at last he fled, in the night, to his home in the black waters. But his hand and arm

were torn from him, and from this wound he died.

"Much praise and many gifts I had from the old king, when he learned that the cruel Grendel must die. But the next night Grendel's mother crept up to the hall and seized one of the king's good friends. Sad were we all when morning came. The king with tears begged me to hunt out the wicked creature, and I plunged into the dark waters. Fierce was the fight, but at last I won, and never will Hrothgar's hall be sad again at the loss of brave warriors.

"Then Hrothgar gave me rich gifts which I bring to you, my king. With gladness I bring them, for because of you are my pleasures long."

As Beowulf spoke, his men brought in the banner, the shield, the battle-sword, and the helmet. They also brought four fiery steeds with rich trappings, fit for a king. All these did Beowulf give to his friend, the king Hygelac. To the queen he gave the lovely collar Hrothgar's queen had given to him, beautiful and rare with jewels. He also gave her three black horses with saddles bright.



BEOWULF PRESENTING HIS GIFTS TO HYGELAC

The king and queen rejoiced in the precious gifts and in the love of this brave warrior. To Beowulf the king gave a sword of wonder, the best treasure he had, adorned with gold. Also he gave him many, many rings of gold and a beautiful palace.

So there was love between the king and the brave hero.

The Dragon of the Mountain

After many years, when the king and his son had perished in the wars, the Goths chose Beowulf for their king. No better king could they have, and for many years he ruled over them. He was a wise king and brave. The people loved him much.

Then a strange story came to his ears: that far away in a dark cave lived a terrible dragon. The way to his lair was rough and steep. In this cave was much treasure, and the dragon was guarding it.

Many men had gathered the treasures in this cave. Swords, helmets, and shields, and rings were hidden there in time of war, so that the enemy could not find them. For many years these treasures were collecting there. At last a dragon came, a fierce creature, and for three hundred winters he had kept watch with his fiery eyes.

At last a man found the cave filled with the treasures. The dragon was asleep, so the man took a golden cup and bore it home to his lord. Thus the secret of the hoard became known.

When the fearful dragon awoke and found that one of his treasures had been taken, he was very angry. Fire came from his nostrils and from his wicked mouth. He would find the man who had done this thing.

Then the dragon began to burn all the houses round. Nothing living was left. Ruin and death were in his path. Then he darted back to the dark cave. He trusted in its darkness, but in vain.

Beowulf goes against the Dragon

When Beowulf heard that his men were driven from their burning homes, his heart was hot with anger. He ordered a war-board of iron made, for well he knew that forest-wood could not help him against fire. All the foes of the kingdom Beowulf had turned to friends, and for many years had ruled the Goths in peace and joy. But now he must go against the fearful dragon who was guarding the hoard of treasures.

The man who had taken the cup showed them the path, for he alone knew the way. When they came to the mound near the great sea-waves, Beowulf said farewell to his warriors. For him alone was the fight with the enemy of his people, the fire-breathing dragon.



THE DRAGON

Sad was the hero at heart, for he knew this was his last fight. "I have dared many battles in my youth, and I will now, as safe guardian of my people, seek out this wicked creature in his earth-hall."

Beowulf then greeted each of his men, saying: "I would not bear a weapon against this dragon, but would fight him as I did Grendel, only I must expect hot fire. Await me near this mound. This is a battle for me, not for you or for any other man. I shall obtain the gold, or war shall conquer me, your lord."

Then the bold king, trusting in his good sword, went forth to battle, with his helmet and his shield. When he came to the mound by the sea he saw an arch of stone, and a stream flowing from the mound. The water was boiling hot and he could not get near the hoard unburned. Then the brave war-lord shouted to the dragon. First came forth from the mountain the hot breath of the dreadful monster. The earth shook and flames burst forth. The good king drew his sword and waited. When the dragon came, Beowulf strode at it with his sword, and fierce was the conflict. The hero knew that he would fall in the battle, but he would kill the dragon first. It is a brave man who enters such a deadly contest.

Beowulf's men had sought safety, but one of them felt that he must help his lord in this hour of deadly battle. He said: "Now Beowulf, our great lord, has need of us. Although he is the greatest of warriors and wishes to do this brave deed alone, yet he has need of our swords! Let us help our warlike leader. For me, I well know that Beowulf shall not fall alone."

Wiglaf aids his King

Then the noble Wiglaf went to his lord and said: "Dear Beowulf, once did you say that never would your greatness sink. But in this great deed I shall help."

After these words the dragon came forth in great anger. The fiery flames burned the broad wooden shield of Wiglaf. Then the young, brave hero fought from behind the great iron shield of his leader, Beowulf. Now this warlike king called to mind the glorious deeds of his youth. With all his strength he struck with his sword, but it broke in his hand. Then rushed out for the third time the deadly dragon and wound himself about his kingly foe.

To help the king in his great need did Wiglaf strike the dreadful foe. The king drew his deadly knife and together they destroyed the fiery creature. Then both rejoiced.

But now the wound in the breast of Beowulf began to burn. Wiglaf brought water to help the king. Then Beowulf spoke: "My joy in earth has gone. I have ruled this people fifty winters. All kings are my friends. Never have I spoken falsely, and for this I have joy to-day. Go quickly, dear Wiglaf, and find the treasures guarded by the great dragon, that I may behold all the jewels, the precious gems for which we fought."

Many wonders did Wiglaf find and bring to the eyes of his dying king: jewels, helmets, rings, shields, swords rich with gold and jewels. Most beautiful was a banner of cloth of gold so bright that it made the dark cave light.

The Death of Beowulf

When Beowulf saw these things of wonderful beauty, he said: "I thank the Father of the gods, for all; because I have been able to kill the great dragon and give my life for my people. No longer may I stay here. Tell my brave warriors to make a mound near the sea, so high that sailors may see it from afar and call it Beowulf's mound."

Then from his neck the bold-hearted prince took a golden ring and gave it to the young warrior. To him also he gave his helmet and shield and bade him use them well. "Thou art the last of our race. All my kinsmen fate has swept away. I shall follow them." These were the last words from the heart of the hero.

When the thanes came to where Wiglaf sat by his dead lord, the young warrior said: "The great prince who gave you rings, and shields, and homes, could not boast of you when need came. He alone conquered the beast. I could help him little, but yet I did what I could to help the good king. Death is better for every one than a life of reproach."

Then he told them of the wish of Beowulf and bade them prepare the mound by the shore of the noisy sea. Many, many warriors came to see the great king. Much they loved him and admired his great strength. Much they mourned for him and tears fell. All day they sat by the sea and spoke no word. They looked with dread at their great foe. Fifty feet long it stretched on the ground. At last the warriors threw the great dragon into the sea, never again to be seen by men.

Then Wiglaf took the warriors into the dark cave to see the treasures hoarded there. For a thousand years had gold and gems and jewelled armour been gathered there. Now there were more treasures than man could count. The Goths were amazed to see such treasures, but they wished not to take them for their own. They heaped high the mountain-pines for a funeral pile. To this they carried the precious treasures of the cave. Here they placed the king, so dearly loved. Then the greatest of the warriors kindled the pine trees high. The roaring flames arose; sounds of weeping were heard. Sad they waited until all was destroyed by the flames. Then they began the mound in honour of their lord. Ten days they worked, and built the mound so high that sea-farers far away could see it and say, "There is the mound of the good Beowulf, the king of the Goths."

And his people said: "Our Beowulf was of all kings the mildest, the noblest of men, the gentlest to his people and most worthy of praise."

PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY OF PROPER
NAMES

Marked vowels are pronounced as follows: fáce, fán, fár, éve, fêrn,
éver, évent, pín, ice, ór, open, ódd, concér, úp, fúll.

THE STORY OF FRITHIOF

Æger	Á'jir	Halfdan	Hálv'-dán
Angantyr	Áng'-án-tír	Helge	Hél'-gá
Angurvadel	Án'-gúr-vá-del	Hilding	Hil'-díng
Atle	Át'lé	Hoder	Hé'-dér
Balder	Bál-dír	Ingeborg	Éng'-ö-börg
Bele	Bá'-lá	Odin	Ó'dín
Bifrost	Bé'-frést	Ring	Ríng
Bjorn	B'yörn'	Saga	Sá'-gá
Broge	Bró'-gé	Sleipner	Slíp'-nêr
Ellide	Él-lé'dé	Thor	Thór'
Forseti	För-sé'tí	Thorsten	Thór'-stén
Framness	Frám'-náes	Valhalla	Vál'-há-lá
Freya	Fri'-yá	Vilking	Vik'-íng
Frithiof	Frit'-yöf	Volund	Vé'-lúnd
Frigg	Frig		

THE STORY OF BEOWULF

Beowulf	Bá'-ö-wúlf	Hrothgar	Hröth'-gár ¹
Breca	Bré'-ká	Hrunting	Hrún'-tíng ¹
Danes	Dánes	Hygelac	Hé'-jé-lák
Goths	Göths	Sheaf	Shéf
Grendel	Grén-dél	Wiglaf	Wíg'-láf
Heorot	Héör'ót		

¹ Aspirate the h.

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