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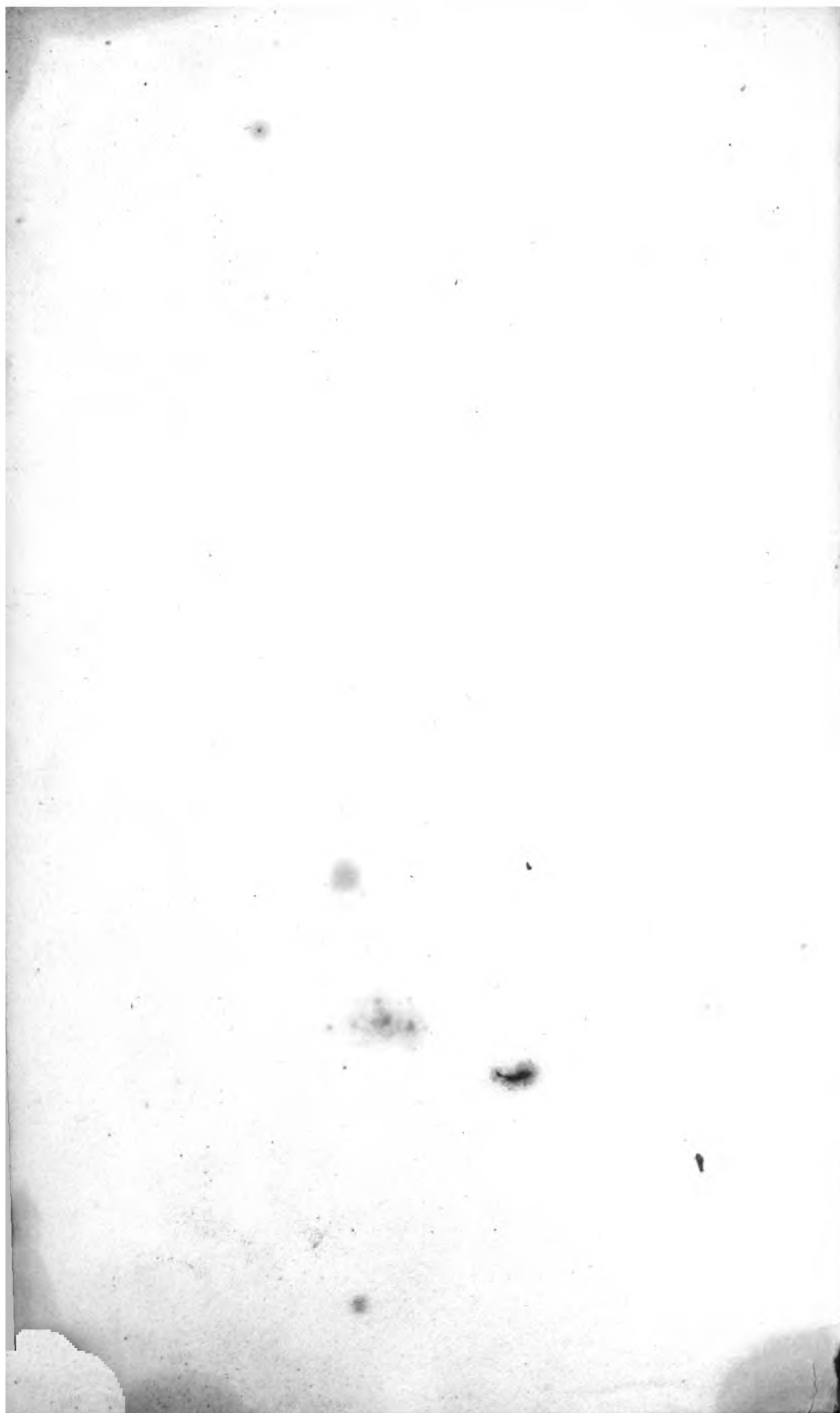
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THE
I N V A S I O N.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE COLLEGIANS," &c.

One foot on sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never.

Shakspeare.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE INVASION.

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAVING Elim in the Coom na Druid, an unwilling guest, let us now return to the college of Muingharidh where Kenric, the Anglo-Saxon, still pursued his studies.

His loneliness, after the departure of his friend, served only to increase his diligence, and he laboured anew at all his studies with such a closeness of application as almost to eclipse

the memory of the departed Ithian. Within a year after the latter had left the seminary, Kenric also departed for Inismore, being accompanied by the same old man, his uncle Vuscfræa, who had left him at the college when a child, and who now came to recal him.

On the day when he was about to leave Muingaridh, the Regent did not content himself, as in the case of Elim, with simply advising him to persevere. Taking him aside he embraced him kindly, blessed him, and then spoke as follows :

“ Elim, thy friend, I understand, has done us no less honour in his government, than when he was a pupil in our school. Mayest thou be like him, Kenric ! Thou hast discharged thy part most gratefully to thy instructors. Be careful of the good habits thou hast acquired ; be exact in the use of time ; be diligent ; beware of enthusiasm, of inconstancy ; be sparing of thy natural fer-

vency ; give gaiety and cheerfulness to all, but keep thy feeling for thy duty."

So saying, he embraced the young Northumbrian and bade him farewell. On his return to Northumberland, he found Domnona altered likewise. A lingering sickness had abated somewhat of her animal spirits, and she had grown thoughtful and domesticated. Her evenings were spent by her own hearth, and the golden head-band and glittering necklace had given place to the kerchief which enveloped the head and shoulders in matronly and ample folds. The themes of her eulogy were no longer what they had been, and it was easy for her son to feel that she was changed in mind like himself. The mother and son became now united more fervently than before, while Ailred, nothing altered, except in years, continued to serve the duke, to drink his horn of ale, and frown over his game of tœfl.

About this time it was that the famous Charlemagne, desirous of promoting the love of learning in his dominions, obtained, through the mediation of Offa, king of Mercia, the assistance of the learned Alcuin, for the furtherance of his object. It happened that the uncle of Kenric, who had given him his earliest instructions, was not unknown to that distinguished scholar. Finding that his nephew now evinced no disinclination to devote his life to letters, old Vusfræa proposed to Ailred and Domona, that their son should be sent abroad, for some years, under the protection of Alcuin. He had reason to judge that the latter would acquiesce in such an arrangement when he should be made acquainted with the extent of Kenric's acquirements, and with his ardent love of letters, and his instances were at length successful with his parents. Alcuin, after a few interviews with the young scholar, accorded his assent, and even

expressed to Vuscfraea, a high opinion of his future prospects in literature, an accomplishment then valued in proportion to its rarity on the continent. To which the grey bearded old disciplinarian replied with a thoughtful headshake—“That is a matter of little consequence. Kenric’s head is high enough already.”

The day of departure arrived, and a second time the young Anglo-Saxon left his home. A handsome car, harnessed to a pair of young oxen, and drawn up at the door of Ailred’s dwelling, attracted the attention of his fellow townsmen, and a loitering crowd collected to witness the departure of the young student, whose piety and learning had already made him known throughout his native valley. He parted now from his parents with greater regret on both sides, than when he had embarked for Inisfail under the guardianship of Vuscfraea. Even Ailred, to whom

he had insensibly endeared himself by his quiet assiduity and tranquil virtue, grieved at bidding him farewell, though he had hardly ever spoken kindly to him since his return from Muingharidh. Domnona also wept while she counselled him.

But his severe old uncle Vusfræa surprised him more than all at his departure. Kenric went to bid him farewell at his own school-room, from which he would not absent himself a day even for an occasion like the present. Kenric was in high spirits, indulging even to exultation the sanguine delight he felt in the contemplation of the novel field on which he was about to enter. Vusfræa, whom he found towering like an old oak above a crowd of little noisy Northumbrian disciples, to whom he was about to give their daily lecture, did not seem at once disposed to enter into this gaiety of temper. He took his nephew apart from his pupils, and after reproving

him with even more sharpness than usual, for some defects in his attire which he condemned as vain and frivolous, spoke as follows :

“ Wherever in the dominions of Charlemagne, Alcuin and you may take up your residence, you will find virtue cultivated in various walks. The class with whom you are about to have the nearest connexion, are those who cultivate human knowledge for the advantage of their race. Strive to excel the most strenuous in this—but have a care of pride.”

So saying he suddenly threw his arms about his nephew's neck, and then, as if ashamed of the unusual weakness, returned to his pupils. Kenric left the house with spirits somewhat abated. The strokes of the rod resounding by way of announcement against the wooden walls of the lecture room, as the old man returned to his place, followed him down the street, and the

harsh and rigorous tones of "Lilla, Oswy, silence! To your place, Coifi! silence!" showed that the fit of tenderness, so rarely indulged, had passed entirely away.

CHAPTER XX.

IN those days, when the opportunities of distant communication were much rarer than in ours, the care of a parent for an absent child may be well supposed more weighty than at present. The first accounts which reached Dommona of her son delighted her with the assurance of his continued gentleness, his modest and cheerful assiduity, in all his exercises. More than a year elapsed before she heard again, and then he had already begun to justify the prognostic of Alcuin, and even, it was said, attracted the notice of Charlemagne himself.

In the midst of these new honours, almost too weighty for so young a head, Kenric having completed the time which he originally proposed spending on the continent, turned his attention homeward. Leaving Alcuin in Tours, he returned to his father's house, where he was received by Ailred with gladness, and by Domnona with a mother's welcome. The latter, however, found him altered for the worse in his appearance. He had left her a healthful and serene-eyed boy, in a plain red tunic, and with a handsec thrust in his girdle, and he now crossed her threshold with a thin and worn countenance, and a slighter frame, on which was hung one of those uncomfortable graceful saga, of which Charlemagne complained so feelingly. A dagger, highly ornamented, had usurped the place of the handsec in his girdle, and there was moreover in the half shut eyes and languidly curling lip of the tra-

velled and applauded Kenric, an unpleasant expression for which Domnona could not account.

A week passed away in joy, and Kenric seemed to his mother the same as ever in affection and in duty. One thing only perplexed her, and that was that he manifested no desire to see his old uncle Vuscfræa, although the latter was now lying sick in the town, and visited by herself, to Kenric's knowledge, regularly twice a day. The old man seemed pained at length at this neglect, little as he had been in the habit of giving expression to his feelings, and on his recovery bade Domnona say to her son that he longed to see and speak with him. The brow of Kenric fell at the proposal, but he complied without farther delay. His mother observed at his departure that he had changed his fine French sagum, for a homelier surcoat of Saxon manufacture; but, on her enquir-

ing the reason of it, he made some hasty answer, and departed half blushing and half frowning.

He raised the wicket-latch, and beheld Vusfræa seated at his afternoon meal. Before him stood an oval table covered with a cloth, a convenience not unknown to the Anglo-Saxons, on which were placed a cup of milk with an empty plate and handsec, on which the white headed old man was in the act of placing a small pittance of roast meat, presented to him on a little spit, by his youthful attendant Webba.

A lofty four legged trivet, placed over the blazing fagots, contained some boiling vegetables, and a small cake of wheaten flour rested on the table against an empty bowl.

A slight colour passed over the wrinkled cheeks of the aged teacher as he recognized his nephew. He rose to embrace him, which he

did in silence, but affectionately, and said as he resumed his seat :

“Thou art welcome, Kenric, though thou hast waited for my bidding.”

Kenric having no true excuse to offer, was forced to remain silent ; and his uncle proceeded with his meal. After he had left him standing in the same place long enough to make him feel awkward and embarrassed, he said in a calm voice :

“Thou art grown a great man, they tell me, Kenric, since we parted. Is it true, my boy ? They tell me thou hast written books, child, hast thou ?”

Kenric, long unaccustomed to so familiar a mode of address, returned an assent as careless as he dared, and the mutual silence was resumed.

“And how were thy treatises entitled, Ken-

ric?" was the next sentence that came from the old schoolmaster.

Kenric, who did not think there was a person of education in Europe, unacquainted with the names or subjects of his books, replied in a still more careless tone :

"One called the *Currus Triumphalis Virgilio*, and another *De natura Mundi, et Astrorum.*"

"*Et Astrorum!*" echoed Vuscfræa, looking at him in astonishment; "that was a flight indeed. Thou art welcome, Kenric, from the stars. Thou hadst need of a *currus triumphalis* indeed for such a race; *De natura mundi et astrorum!* And what hadst thou to say about the stars, Kenric?"

"Only what the great Virgil* said before me, uncle," answered Kenric; "the theory was his, not mine."

* The Bishop of Saltsburg.

“The great Virgil,” said the old man musing ;
“I understand. Some new-fangled notion, of little consequence to an old man like me. . . Thou needst not seek to make me comprehend it,” he added, perceiving his nephew about to speak.
“I shall learn its truth or falsehood before long in the natural course of things, without wasting time about it here. So thy good friend Virgil, and thyself, may keep your knowledge of the stars for those who have some use of it. *De natura astrorum!*” he added, in a low voice, resuming his meal, “high enough, in truth.”

“I will send you to-morrow, uncle, by Webba,” answered Kenric, in a conciliating tone, “two handsomely illuminated copies I have caused to be made of both books by the most famous scribes in Tours, and perhaps when you look into them they may interest you more.”

The old schoolmaster was silent for a time,

and looked a little softened. "Send me those copies, Kenric," he added in an altered tone; "there may be more in this theory than the name would promise, after all. But to imagine a young man supposing himself qualified, by a journey through Gaul and Bavaria, to write a book on the nature of the stars, appears somewhat strange."

He now bade Webba place a stool for his nephew, and observed, as he took his seat, in a tone of still increasing satisfaction :

"I am glad to see that the fashions of Gaul have not made thee ashamed of our Saxon apparel, Kenric; though, indeed, it suits not well with the costliness of thy under garments. What ornament is that thou wearest in thy girdle?"

"This uncle?" asked Kenric, laying his hand upon his dagger.

"Aye, that toy at thy side, what is it?"

“A—a kind of—handsec, uncle,” answered Kenric, with hesitation.

“A handsec? Let me see it,” said the old man. “This a handsec!” he cried, comparing it with the Saxon knife upon his plate. “Double edged, and pointed as a needle!” he added, after he had drawn it from the scabbard, and contemplated the glittering little blade with a curious eye. “This is but an ungainly knife for the table, Kenric.”

“It is not intended for that use, Vuscfraea,” said his nephew.

“For what then?” asked the old man.

“For—for—why, it is a common article of wear in Tours,” answered Kenric, blushing.

“For bloodshed, is it not?” asked his uncle. “And is it to hide this Gaulish weapon, Kenric, that you keep the Saxon cloak? Is this the handsec they taught you to use in Tours? Is

this your study too, besides the nature of the stars? Kenric," he added, "bid me break this weapon!" And he placed his clouted shoe upon the naked blade.

"Not for the world!" cried Kenric, starting from his seat. "It was the gift of Charlemagne himself."

"So much the worse," said Vuscfraea; "So much the worse, my son. It is a bad sign when a Christian turns the weapons of blood into toys of vanity and pride. Let Charlemagne keep his gifts for his warriors, my boy, but your vocation is a peaceful one. I do not like to see it I tell thee. I do not like it, Kenric. Bid me break the weapon. It is no scholar's toy."

"Indeed, I cannot, uncle," answered Kenric. "It is a gift I prize too highly. I never intend to use it in any way whatever, but indeed I will

not wrong the Emperor's bounty. Give me the dagger, uncle."

Vuscfraea paused for a little time, and then, sheathing the weapon, handed it to him, saying, in an altered tone: "Well! take it, but beware of it."

Soon after the young Northumbrian returned to his father's dwelling, somewhat depressed in spirits, and wondering what it was in his own character of which his uncle appeared so distrustful.

CHAPTER XXI.

DOMNONA perceived, but could not understand, the self-conceited turn of mind which had already influenced the manner and conversation of her son, and the bent of his thoughts upon many subjects, in themselves, perhaps, of little importance. It would seem as if he had not himself escaped the taint of the spirit of subtlety against which he contended in his writings, and which had already begun to disgrace the learning of the continental schools; or rather as if he could not touch it even in hostility without soiling

the dove-like innocence of his own character. Still farther spoiled by the adulation which followed his success, he had insensibly acquired a tinge of egotism in all he said and did. He had indeed been altered during his absence, and not in frame alone. Once he was ignorant of vanity; now he talked a great deal against it. Once he was humble; now he praised humility. Once he was known to practise virtue; now he was heard extolling and applauding it. Once he avoided vice; now he declaimed against it. All this, it is true, was well, and sounded well in the ears of Domnona, but yet, without knowing why, she could not help sometimes sighing at the recollection of the silent, fervent boy who had returned to her from Inisfail, and whose virtues were unknown outside their own small neighbourhood.

She was too simple, however, in her own mind, to venture any condemnation of a change,

the cause of which she was not even able to understand. It is true Kenric did not find his father so complying ; but then Ailred, though he sought to check this spirit, did so not in the manner most likely to do good to his son. It may be well supposed, from the little already mentioned of his character, that he was not a man likely to apply the best remedy to the disease by which the latter was affected, or patiently to endure its consequences. The sickly Domnona saw, with increasing pain, that this was likely to lead to important disagreements between Kenric and his father. The latter complained to her that what he chiefly disliked was, not the frequent occasion his son took of expressing a different opinion from his own, but the manner in which he did so. It was not that he ever dared to use any openly disrespectful language, or proceeded to actual altercation with his parent, but there

was a degree of contempt in his look and words which seemed as strange as it was detestable. Could it be that Kenric, the flattered and successful, had begun to despise in his aged father the want of those endowments by which he was himself distinguished, and that the holy law of nature, and the still holier law of nature's origin, were lost and forgotten in the pride of intellect? Was Ailred, now, in the eyes of the successful Kenric only one of those dim-eyed guardians of genius, (who are mentioned, with so much contempt in modern biographies, as only occupied in thwarting the lofty destinies of their charge,) and was Kenric himself in his own eyes the unappreciated child of thought? These were questions which the latter never dreamed of asking his own heart, and which no mortal tongue beside could answer; but yet his conduct augured little better. Whenever, on whatever question, a difference of

opinion arose between Ailred and his son, the manner of Kenric would lead a stranger to think that he was the superior, or that he was at least some great philosopher listening with tolerance and assumed good humour to the fancies of his amanuensis. If he delivered an opinion, it was in a careless tone, as a matter of course, and with the air of one who hardly expected to be understood. If he condescended to argue a point, it was in short muttered sentences, and with an appearance of indifference, as if there were no necessity for, nor any use in his putting forward the strength of his mind; and even those were sometimes uttered as if in soliloquy with himself, rather than directly addressing his parent. If the latter grew warm, (which was an usual effect of their conversations,) the countenance of Kenric exhibited a duteous effort to repress a smile; according as the old man's choler rose, the son's

ostentatious serenity increased, and when at length they separated, the latter would stroke his young beard, as if he had only just undergone what was natural and unavoidable, observing, perhaps, to the afflicted Domnona, that this could not be helped, for his father "did not understand him." By which fine phrase he was modest enough to mean that his parent did not, or could not, comprehend the nature of his character. Every succeeding collision of this kind only produced a recoil that left the father and son at a greater distance than before; and shocking as the prospect seemed, it was impossible that discussions, which never terminated amicably, could avoid producing some decisive rupture at the end. This it was that the weak-minded, though affectionate Domnona foresaw and dreaded.

The occasion for which Kenric's conduct afforded such reasonable grounds of apprehension

arrived at last. We have already mentioned the Anglo-Saxon chief or noble, whose castle stood in the valley, and on whom Ailred was dependent. This lord was a man of some peculiarities of character, having a great desire to pass for knowing more of books, particularly in matters of morality and science, than was in any way general amongst the laity of his time. In all these matters, Ailred, who was himself profoundly ignorant, made it a point to yield up his opinion to that of his patron, and found his interest in this compliance. But Kenric, who soon perceived and despised this spirit, with a scorn that was even more manifest than when he hated meanness more sincerely, without considering either the feelings or the real advantage of his erring parent, sought every means of mortifying him by a display of independence of mind that often looked more like arrogance.

This nobleman, having heard of Kenric's fame, and being touched with a desire of doing something for the advantage of the son of Ailred, made a proposal, which the latter accepted with rapturous gratitude. This was no less than an offer of his personal introduction of Kenric to the court of Offa, his own relative, and king of Mercia, then the most celebrated monarch of the Heptarchy, and a great encourager of learning.

But in order, as he said, to ascertain the soundness of the young scholar's qualifications, for his own satisfaction, before he would venture to take upon him the dignity of patron, the Saxon duke invited the father and son to spend an evening together at his castle.

Kenric was not pleased at the idea of being schooled and questioned by an uninformed Anglo-Saxon duke, from whom he could receive no higher

honour than that of finding him, perhaps, after a pompous examination, condescend to agree with Charlemagne and other great men. He was ashamed, however, to let his mother see his vanity, and he agreed to accompany his father to the castle.

He dressed himself for the occasion, so plainly, that even old Vusfræa could not have discovered a single gleam of gaudiness in all his apparel. His tunic was of the coarsest blue, and the Saxon handsec had once more taken place of the gift of Charlemagne. Domnona told him she thought their host would be offended if he should take notice of this little discourtesy. But this only made Kenric imagine that there would be more spirit and independence in adhering to his own notion. This he proved to her by many eloquent arguments, which Domnona was unable to answer, though she

seemed unsatisfied at the end, for she said as they parted :

“ Let Vuscfræa say what he will, I had rather see thee now, my child, in all thy Gaulish gaudiness than that plain Saxon dress.”

Before Kenric could make any reply, old Ailred came from their dwelling, and summoned him to depart.

“ Kenric,” said his father, whose less active eye did not detect the faulty attire, which made Domnona anxious, or perhaps whose more thorough knowledge of the duke prevented his participating in her uneasiness : “ I have a caution to give thee, lest thou stumble on the threshold of thy fortune. The duke will have his way, mark that. Be guided by me therefore, for I know him better than thou, and know better what will please him. Observe me when the attendant has filled the wine-cups. Whenever

thou strikest the chord amiss in the discourse, I will touch the brim with the point of my handsec, just to make it ring; when thou art about to do mischief, it shall be stricken twice; but when I would have thee altogether hold thy peace, I will strike a third time, and beware how thou proceedest after."

To this Kenric offered no reply, and they proceeded in silence to the castle. They found the duke attended only by a few necessary domestics, for he wished that their conversation should be private. To Kenric's great astonishment, he soon beheld in the nobleman a good natured simple man; and almost the first sentence he spoke on seeing the son of Ailred, showed how little occasion there was either for the vaunted spirit of the latter, or for Domnona's fear.

"What, Ailred!" said he, "this thy boy? this the disciple of Alcuin? I feel a pleasure in

the very sight of him. I am glad, young man," said he, surveying Kenric's dress with a delighted eye, "to see that thou keepest an humble spirit in thy good fortune, and that fame, which crazes older brains, has planted no folly in thine. I am glad to see that thy long residence amid the fopperies of Paris and of Tours, has not tempted thee to fling aside the homely Saxon garb."

Kenric, who had prepared himself for haughtiness, and even for coldness, was not on his guard against undeserved eulogy, and he blushed deeply with a conscious shame, longing now as much for his French attire, as he had for the Saxon, when he visited his uncle.

"Have done blushing, Kenric," said the duke, good humouredly, observing his confusion; "thy ears ought to be better accustomed to the sound of praise at this time, than to bring the blood

into thy cheeks at the commendation of a poor Northumbrian duke, whose only boast is that he can read what thou writest. I am glad to see thee in my hall, heartily glad.”

Pleased, but humbled, Kenric took his seat near the hearth, at the duke's desire. After dinner, which consisted of little more than boar's head and apples, while an attendant, kneeling on one knee, presented a wine cup of the darkest jet to each of the company, the noble host commenced a more intimate conversation with the young scholar. Allured by the affability of the chieftain's manner, and pleased with the deference which he appeared to have for his opinions and sentiments, Kenric was gradually led into a free and cheerful communication of what he had seen and thought during his life in Gaul and in Bavaria. He described the schools, the cities, the churches, the

monasteries, and something of the courts of the continent. He spoke with simplicity, and the duke listened with pleasure, while Ailred sat silently diminishing the contents of his polished wine-cup, the brim of which he did not once see occasion to touch during the whole discourse.

CHAPTER XXII.

BUT so flattering a calm only aggravated the horror of the storm which succeeded. Kenric was speaking of a reverend person who had distinguished himself in Luxieu by his hospitality, his munificence, and his capacity for letters.

“By those who knew better than any layman could,” said Kenric, “it was reputed of him that he could only be charged with one public error in all his life, and that was his too great obstinacy in holding out about the time of celebrating Easter.”

Here he started, for he suddenly heard his father's wine-cup ring. Duke Elfwin, however, not seeming to take any notice of what had been said, Kenric proceeded in his account of the individual of whom he had been speaking, and at the conclusion was asked by the duke what he thought himself of the question to which he had been alluding.

Kenric, a little surprised at the query, excused himself from pronouncing any opinion, saying that he had never considered himself qualified to enter on questions of that kind.

"Thy modesty is apparent," said the duke, "but thou art a scholar, Kenric, and this is, in a great measure, a question relating to the mere computation of time."

"True," replied Kenric, "but it also comprehends a point of ecclesiastical discipline, in which a layman must be only an intermeddling judge."

The cup rung twice in the hands of Ailred.

“ Well, well,” said Elfwin, a little disconcerted, “ as a scholar and a man of science, thou hast, at least, an opinion on one side or the other.”

“ My stock of science,” said Kenric, and he paused a moment, for this brought Elim and Muingharidh to his recollection ; “ my stock of science is very small indeed ; but the little knowledge I have would incline me to the opinion of the individual of whom we have just been speaking.”

Here Ailred, with a significance that he intended should not be mistaken, struck the wine-cup three times, and enforced the action by a stern look at his son.

“ Thou art aware,” said duke Elfwin, in a tone of greater depth and seriousness than he had hitherto used, and after he had deliberated long

in silence, "that this question was decided before thy father saw the light in our own kingdom of Northumbria. Let us hear what grounds thou hast for retaining an opinion which has been so long since given up by its most obstinate adherents."

"Mistake me not, I intreat you," answered Kenric; "you only asked my opinion as to the question of chronology, in which I am rather inclined to agree with the worsted side at the discussion to which you have referred."

"And wherefore?" asked the duke.

"Simply," answered Kenric, "because, from the little I know about such sciences, I should be inclined to prefer the calculations of Anatolius to those of Victorius."

"Tush," said duke Elfwin, hastily, "that old argument has been urged both in Burgundy and here, until we are weary of hearing it."

“ I make no show of novelty in it,” answered Kenric, looking a little annoyed, “ but if it be sound and just, it may be well excused for being reverend.”

“ And so upon this reverend argument, which was reverend enough, in thy grandsire’s days, to die a natural death before he did, thou still clingest to an opinion which has been ceded long since, all over the continent, in Huy, in Ulladh, and the whole of Inisfail ; in short, every where.”

“ Is not this hard ?” said Kenric, kindling a little, and no longer heeding the warnings of Ailred’s wine-cup, which, drained of its contents, now rung a perpetual peal. “ I told thee at the first that my opinion merely regarded the chronological question.”

“ Thou didst say so,” answered duke Elfwin, with more distance of manner than before, “ but the one opinion seems only a foundation for the

other. If Anatolius were right in his calculations, then surely the upholders of the new ordinance, as it was called, were in the wrong."

"True, Elfwin," said Kenric, "they were in the wrong as to the computation and adjustment of time, but right nevertheless in their decision; for I hold it a matter of little consequence whether Easter be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the moon of the first month, or on the seventh day following, in comparison with the advantage of having all the Christian world united to celebrate it at the same time."

"So thou *hast* an opinion after all, I find," said duke Elfwin, "and on the ecclesiastical question too. I thought what thy modesty would come to."

"An opinion indeed," said Kenric, "but it is on the side of submission."

"And that is a new side for thee to be found

on," cried Ailred, breaking in upon the discourse with sudden warmth, and casting an angry look at his son.

"Nay," said duke Elfwin, smiling, "thou need'st not be angry at his apostacy awhile, for wherever he has learnt it, thy son has the knack of taking over his own opinion to the submissive side along with him."

Kenric, roused by this double assault, now entered with greater zeal into the defence of his own views, and the discussion became close and ardent to a degree that suited neither the difference in years nor rank. The duke dwelt with weight on the moral expediency of the decision which had eventually been adopted, cited many pressing authorities, and urged many excellent reasons in its favour, all of which Kenric admitted without debate, clinging only to the single position that he himself was in the right

about the chronological part of the question, and proving it by many elaborate arguments drawn from the adjustment of lunations, the time of the equinoxes, and other grounds of that nature. Unable to obtain, from his young opponent, even the shew of deference and reserve which common propriety would have recommended upon a point on which there was no pressing necessity for making a convert, Elfwin carried the war of words into a more extensive field of church history and discipline, with which he believed no layman could be more familiar than himself. But here again he found himself in error, for Kenric, though he entirely agreed with the duke on all important points, yet clung with a contumacious tenacity to trifles, which Elfwin thought decorum might have induced him to suppress, at least, if not to surrender. But Kenric, accustomed to the society of scholastic disputants, and wholly igno-

rant of that kind of generosity which imposes a restraint upon selfwill, forgot all courtesy in pursuing his own notions. Ailred, guided much more by the manner of the discourse, than by its meaning, of which indeed he had long since lost all scent, wondered how argument could run so high between two persons so well agreed as he heard Kenric, at every instant, declare they were. He became, however, himself at length of this opinion, when he observed the duke (whom he never in his life knew to yield to any man in argument) grow silent, and resume his good humour; for Elfwin had in fact begun to discover something ridiculous in his own conduct.

But this flattering illusion was removed before they separated for the night. Taking Ailred apart, after giving him some commissions to execute on the following day, he commended the

learning and ability of Kenric, which he said were fully equal to what he had expected; and concluded by saying:

“Thou wilt not fail thyself to be present at the castle before sunset; but thy son need not accompany thee any more, for he is a great deal too clever for any office that I could procure him.”

Stunned, as if by a thunder-clap, Ailred saw the duke retire, without the power of replying either by speech or gesture. Kenric having now made ready, they took their departure together, the father observing a strict silence on their way home, while the son indulged the most self-complacent fancies, supposing that he had elevated himself considerably in the estimation of his Saxon patron, and sustained his continental reputation with success. On their reaching home, Ailred, feeling no inclination for his nightly ale

and toefl, spent the evening by his own fireside, listening in silence to the foolish flights of Kenric, who little imagined what a morning was before him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE Anglo-Saxon household met as usual at their early meal on the following day. The same portentous silence was observed by the master of the family; while Kenric still continued to converse with confidence and freedom, and was only deterred, by a glance from Domnona, who saw by Ailred's countenance that he was not pleased, from alluding to the occurrence of the preceding evening. Kenric, imagining that he had now demonstrated to his father that great superiority which he was so often anxious to display before him,

supposed that the silence of Ailred proceeded from tardy conviction, and left the room, to meditate on the course which he should next take. Now in his mood of delight he felt his filial affection awakened, and reproached himself for his many disrespectful altercations with his father. He determined, before he should leave his home for the court of Mercia, to ask the forgiveness of Ailred, for his past disobedience and neglect, and not to desist until he had obtained it. The more he meditated, the stronger his remorse became, and the many slights by which he had been accustomed to irritate and annoy his parent, now that they were going to part, came back upon his mind with all their unnatural culpability unveiled.

While he leaned with one shoulder against the outer wall of the building, thinking on those things, with eyes fixed upon the ground, in grief

and shame, his father gave Domnona an account of what had taken place on the preceeding evening. He spoke with much gesticulation, pacing up and down before the chair on which Domnona sat, now stopping short to address her more directly, now bracing the girdle of his tunic more tightly, or flinging back the long white hairs which anger brought upon his forehead. His wife, meantime, sat following him with grieved and wondering eyes, while with one hand she stroked the back of a glossy black cat, which, with the instinct that attaches this animal to invalids in a family, was pacing back and forward from her lap to the table which stood near, purring aloud, and evincing little sympathy with the scene of human agitation which had commenced before it. Ailred concluded his narrative by informing his wife of the parting speech of Elfwin.

“ Not go with thee again !” cried Domnona,

turning in sudden alarm upon her seat: "what, Ailred! would the duke forswear his word?"

"He never pledged it," answered Ailred, "and if he had, I would not have censured him. Thy darling, Domnona, thy keen-witted darling, has the knack of making even falsehood look excusable. Kenric has too much wit for making, or at all events for keeping, friends. To dare the duke at his own table, about a question of stars and moonshine, and stumble over a straw, on the very threshold of his favour! Evil is the star of such a moon-struck madman; evil is the knowledge that fools his understanding, and the books that have taught him pride and disobedience. This is thy hope, thy joy, Domnona. This is he whom thou and old Vuscfraea (another crazy visionary,) wouldst have me send to the schools of Inisfail, to fill his head with the off-scourings of other men's brains, and pride him-

self upon such trash, more than an honest man upon his own plain thoughts. A parcel of cozening rubbish of parchment and daubing and scratching, fit only to blear the eyes and addle the heads of simple citizens, and come between them and their livelihood at the end. I wonder much why the monks will encourage such doings, to withdraw men out of their vocation, and give them a longing after matters that were better let alone."

"Thy brother," said Domnona, "often repeats that the mischief in such cases is not in the learning, but in the learners."

"He may say what he will, and thou mayest second him as thou didst before," replied her husband, "but this I will uphold, that had I made him, as I then designed, a page in the household of Elfwin, he would be now a happier and perhaps a wiser man, notwithstanding all his gift of

words and his knowledge of the stars. But let the stars take care of him, for I will do no more. He mars his own fortune, and he will not let others make it. Let us see, then, what his wit will do for him."

Domnona now interposed in a pacificatory manner between her husband and his anger. She represented to him that he attached, perhaps, too much importance to a hasty expression of the duke, and recommended that Kenric should be induced to do something by way of amends, which she thought would be likely to reconcile Elfwin to his abandoned project. The idea seemed to diminish the resentment of Ailred, and he consented to discuss the subject with his son.

Soon after, Kenric entered the apartment with an altered and a serious air, prepared for satisfaction. Ailred turned silently to the fire as he made his appearance, while Domnona,

after a little pause, said, with suppressed uneasiness :

“ Kenric, thy father says thou hast given him reason of offence.”

Kenric looked towards his father as if to know his fault. Somewhat appeased with his submissive air, the latter said :

“ Wilt thou tell wherefore thou didst not regard the warning I gave thee last night on our way to the castle? Dost thou remember the solemnity of my injunction? I told thee to beware how thou shouldst disregard it, and wherefore was I not obeyed?”

Kenric appeared surprised to find that this was one of the grounds of offence of which his father complained, but he said nothing in reply.

“ Answer me,” said Ailred, with increasing earnestness, “ didst thou not think of that? Didst thou forget my presence? Didst thou not

hear the wine-cup ring, ring, ring, till I had hacked the brim with my handsec into the likeness of a victualler's chopping block? And, if thou hadst forgotten that thou wert my son as thou often didst before, I could have forgiven it; but, thou unnatural! didst thou not remember that thou sat'st in presence of the duke?"

Kenric bent his head to conceal a smile, which, even in this serious moment, he could not suppress.

"Dost thou smile at that?" cried Ailred, "dost thou slight our patron?"

"Surely father," answered Kenric, "thou wouldst not have had me go against my conscience to give up my opinion."

"What was it?" cried Ailred. "A trash of lunations and star gazing! Thy conscience, truly! Thou hast a conscience nice enough for thine own pride, but very easy for thy duties as a son and

subject. Ah, one ounce of wholesome brain in thy own head, would have been worth more to thee than all that ever oozed out on sheepskin from the addle pates of thy instructors. Thy opinion, say'st thou? Will thy opinion put a cloak upon thy back, or a house over thy head (though it be hardly worth the covering)? Will thy opinion feed thee? Will it be a duke to thee, now that thou hast lost Elfwin for ever?"

"Lost, father!" exclaimed Kenric, in astonishment.

"Thou luckless boy!" replied the latter, "the duke renounces thee! I am no more to bring thee to the castle to gainsay him at his own fireside."

So saying, he turned away, while Kenric remained silent for a time, struggling within himself at what he had just heard. At length, with a manner deeply affected, he said to Ailred:

“ Father, if I offended you by what took place last night at the duke’s, I am sorry for it, and ask your forgiveness.”

“ Foolish boy!” cried Ailred, “ of what avail is my forgiveness? Thou hast as little wit in thy repentance as in thy fault. The duke’s forgiveness is more to thy purpose. What a turmoil dost thou make about thy opinion! What was it I demanded of thee? To deny thy creed, forswear thy country, or forsake thy king? I did but seek to keep thee to thy place, which thou presumedst to forsake for an apish fancy of crazy dates and figures that have stuffed thy brain within till common sense was elbowed on the outside. I bade thee hold thy peace, and thou wouldst not. That was thy fault, and is thy fault, and shall be thy fault until thou hast humbled thy proud heart to seek forgiveness for it.”

“Of thee, father, I do,” said Kenric, anxiously, “but not of the duke.”

“Of the duke thou must and shalt!” cried Ailred.

Kenric was silent.

“Have patience with him, Ailred!” said Domnona.

“I will not have patience,” cried her husband. “I will have what I like! Look at him, how he smiles at that! Out of my sight, witless!” he cried, losing all self-command. “If pride will be father, and mother, and duke, and house, and food, and clothing, and all to thee, away with it elsewhere, for thou shalt not inherit a bean-stalk that is mine!”

Kenric, who never dreamed that his father’s anger could proceed to so serious a length as this, started and looked astounded.

“Oh, husband,” said Domnona, “will you renounce your child?”

“I can, and will,” cried Ailred, “unless he will consent to go with me to the duke on my return.”

“This is harder, and harder,” said Kenric.

“And it will be harder still,” cried Ailred, “if it be not done ere long. So let him decide before we meet again, whether he will take the fortune which I offer him, or go to seek his own.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

SAYING this, he hurried out of the house, leaving Domnona afflicted and irresolute; while Kenric, spreading his hands over his eyes, remained standing in the middle of the floor.

“Run after him, Kenric!” said his mother, “run after him at once, and tell him you are ready to consent. How could you part in anger with your father?”

Still Kenric did not move.

“He is past the stream already,” cried Domnona, after looking out of the wicket door;

“run, Kenric, run, or you will not overtake him.”

“Mother,” said Kenric, in a tremulous voice, and uncovering a face that now looked pale and frightened, “I am afraid it is a demon that possesses me, but I cannot cast him out.”

“You can, my child,” exclaimed the anxious mother; “fly from him! he never will follow you to your father’s feet.”

After another pause, Kenric said :

“I would go, mother, only for one thing, and that is what he said about disinheriting me. The duke would think it was because I was afraid of that.”

“And wilt thou forbear to do right,” said his mother, “for fear of what the duke may think? The duke will think all the better of thee, and thou wilt think the better of thyself,

and there is one beside, my child, who will think the better of thee also."

"I will consider of it," said Kenric, going towards the door.

"Do not, my darling!" cried Domnona, seizing his hand, "I warn thee do not! Thy course is plain enough, and do not go to parley with bad thoughts."

"I will consider of it, mother," repeated Kenric, in a trembling voice; "let me go, mother; I will think about it."

He left the house, and slept that night at his uncle's. It was a troubled night, nor did the morning bring him peace. Often did he resolve upon yielding to his father's will, but ever some new argument arose to unfix his mind again; and the longer he deliberated, the greater appeared the difficulty of retracing his steps, the more unjust appeared the duke, the harsher seemed his

father, and the more bitter became the humiliation of compliance. A second day went by, and a third, and his foot had not been seen upon his father's threshold. Every succeeding morning only found him more at rest in his state of alienation. The days, instead of being consumed as they were at first, in deep and troubled reflection on the circumstances by which this was occasioned, were now spent in rambling through the neighbourhood, taking a part in the whimsical amusements of the town, or in listening at even-fall, near the bridge, as in his boyhood, to the wild songs and stories of the wandering harpers, who still continued to frequent the place. These coming on him in his unsettled state, brought with them fancies and visions that had long been kept at a distance by severe habits of study, and a persevering regularity of life, and still further withdrew his mind from the thoughts that were

most necessary to him. An accident decided his destiny.

One morning, while he was engaged assisting Vusfræa in his task of instruction, there came to the school a singular looking man, having a quantity of books, with which he travelled through the country, for the purpose of disposing of them at the different schools. Entering into conversation with Vusfræa, he displayed a depth of erudition and a degree of skill in argument which wholly fascinated Kenric, and annoyed Vusfræa by so many discomfitures, that the old disciplinarian afterwards said, he doubted him for being little better than he ought to be. He also manifested an extensive acquaintance with the manners of other countries, particularly those of the north, with which Kenric was but little acquainted. His youth, he told them, had been passed in that part of Scandinavia called

Sitheod,* which bordered on the Gulf of Bothnia, and he had been left on those coasts by the Sea-Kings, in one of their descents for the purposes of plunder. Since that time, he had devoted himself, as far as his poverty permitted him, to letters, and was now about to proceed to Cair-grant,† in East Anglia, whose hapless sovereign, in Kenric's childhood, had paid so dearly for his confidence in the now repentant Offa ; and which was still distracted by continual political tumults. There, however, as the stranger asserted, the greatest encouragement was afforded to learning, and merit ever certain of distinction.

On the following night, as Kenric lay awake, the project entered his mind of performing the long journey thither, unassisted, with this stranger, and there, in the phrase of Ailred, seeking his own fortune. Now, moreover, for the first time in his

* Sweden.

† Cambridge.

life, a pleasure, of a new and a disturbing kind, took place of the home-bred serenity which, of late, though often clouded, had still maintained its sunny empire in his heart. He thought, and his mind darkened as the suggestion grew upon it, that it would be a good thing to work out, single-handed, his way to eminence and to condition, without any aid from those who valued their assistance at a price so painful. The dream soon filled his soul, and a greedy imagination ran ardently through all the details of a future, brilliant with renown and fortune. The spirit of pride, having already secured her conquest, handed over her blinded captive to the spirit of ambition, and between them, peace and liberty were lost. Little prospect was there now of Kenric's returning to his father's house, and receiving his forgiveness. The natural authority of the latter no longer appeared to overbalance the hardness of his demand; and Kenric,

after spending a sleepless and a feverish night, arose in the morning, an altered being; no longer wavering in mind; full of activity and ardour, as he had been before his leaving home: but the flame was kindled at a different fire. Restless, eager, and anxious, every hour appeared lost until he had procured from his father's dwelling his small share of property, consisting chiefly of books and apparel. The greater portion of the latter he left in the keeping of his uncle, taking with him only the Anglo-Saxon dress, which he wore in order to avoid any appearance that might excite a troublesome curiosity on the road, and a small bundle, containing his handsome Gallic attire, together with half a dozen manuscripts on coarse vellum: a treasure far more costly, among which his own small treatises were not forgot.

Having made all ready, he bade farewell to old Vuscfraea, whose influence it may be judged

could hardly alter his resolution, after that of his parents had failed. More than once he thought of leaving the town without even returning to bid them farewell ; for he knew his father, far from consenting to his project, would only increase in anger at the hearing it. But affection, and an idea that there might appear a want of courage in a secret departure, made him reject the suggestion, and he went on a Sabbath evening, the eighth after his first absence, to inform them both of his resolution. He found only Ailred in the house, his mother being at church. As he supposed, his father was astonished, and displeased beyond all bound at this scheme, which resembled nothing that he could have expected. Kenric, however, already prepared for this, was obstinate, and answered not a word (an unusual symptom) to all his father said. Perplexed by this silence, Ailred, after he had expressed with the utmost

vehemence his detestation of the folly of this new notion, changed his manner a little at the end, and said in a more quiet tone :

“ Wilt thou tell me if thou art really bent upon this brainless project? The duke is ready, I tell thee he is willing, to receive thee. It was but last night he asked to see thy treatise of the stars, and in a tone that showed me he had spoken hastily before. The duke is forgiving—I—thou rebel! I am forgiving also, and wilt thou alone be obstinate? Once more I ask thee, art thou bent upon this scheme ?”

Kenric answered now in the affirmative, with less hesitation than he had when first he brought his mind to utter it.

“ Then go,” cried Ailred, in a voice that, in spite of his change, struck fear into the heart of Kenric, “ go, follow your own course, and see if it will better mine.”

He was hastening from the place, with a countenance inflamed with passion, when Kenric suddenly threw himself on his knees before him.

“Father,” said he, “give me at least thy blessing on my journey.”

“My blessing, hypocrite! My blessing?” cried Ailred, “it is the blessed Sabbath, so thou shalt only go without it!”

With these words he departed. Domnona, entering shortly after, found her son still lingering in the place, but he said nothing to her of what had passed. He bade her good night in a confused and hurried manner, without even telling her, as he had designed, of his projected journey, or heeding much the instances she used to detain him. The following morning beheld him, with the venter of books, crossing the mountain road that led from his native valley, to which he now bade, notwithstanding the fervour of his awaken-

ing passion, a farewell of bitter and not untroubled grief. The recollection of what his mother must feel at his leaving home without a parting word to her, who had loved him so truly and so tenderly, already gave him some experience of remorse and shame, but neither these nor better feelings were any longer powerful enough to induce him to return again to his father's dwelling.

When Ailred heard of the departure of his son, his own feeling of disappointment was in some degree mitigated by the triumph which it afforded him over the judgment of Vuscfræa, and of his wife, at whose instance he had been early induced to send his son to Inisfail for education.

“This,” said he, “is the fruit of rearing youth to letters; taking their fingers from the plough, or the sword hilt, to be cramped with the scrawling and scratching of dried sheep-skins, of no use, that I can see, except to turn men's eyes awry, to hoop

the back, to stuff the brain with thoughts only good for perplexing honest men, and the breast with the insufferable fumes of pride ! Praised be the Sea-kings of the north, against whom Vuscfræa rails so hard for their book-burning on the coasts of Charlemagne ! A blessing on their labours, and may they never want fire while the monks supply such fuel ! I would their hands had fallen on Kenric's rubbish. And were it Kenric only I had lost, there were some comfort left ; but what, what now shall repay the cost, the heavy cost, of his education charges ? So much to fit him out to Inisfail, so much to France, and all the treasure squandered on virtuous books ! Surely, some strange illusion warped my sense when first I yielded up my own clear judgment, to let myself be guided by a woman and a scholar ! ”

On Domnona the ungrateful conduct of their child produced a deeper and more lasting im-

pression. The idea continually haunted her, and was strengthened by the timid disposition of mind occasioned by her ill-health, that her own misgovernment and weak-minded indulgence, had occasioned the ruin of Kenric, and that had she been a better mother, he would not have proved so bad a son. This reflection, not altogether unfounded, weighed heavily upon her mind, and produced an effect which will appear in the sequel.

CHAPTER XXV.

LEAVING Kenric to pursue his adventurous journey to East Anglia, we will now return to Elim, whom we left in the hands of Tuathal, on his way to the prison of the Coom. It was bright moonlight as they crossed the bridge, and Tuathal, after sincerely condoling with the Ithian on his misfortune, entered into a long conversation, by far the greater part of which was borne by himself, upon the respective history and manners of the O'Haedhas and his own tribe.

“ I would,” said he, “ that the Ard-Draithe

had spared thee but a single day that thou mightest have the satisfaction of witnessing a single muster in the Coom. Since the Ard-Draithe has laid down the gen and skiagh, the charge of our warlike force devolves on me, and never task was laid on hands more willing. Thou seest that long and reed-roofed building on the river side, with the moon now shining full upon its oaken front?"

"I do," said Elim, with a listless air.

"In that," resumed Tuathal, "we keep two hundred chariots of all kinds, from the ornamented carbudh, which sometimes bears Aithne to one of the Christian convents in the neighbourhood, to the terrific carbudh-scarradh, with its glittering scythes and barbed hooks, that make the battlefield a bloody harvest. On the other side are stables of our marc-sliadh, where the snorting of the steeds (the true Asturian breed) even now

disturbs the midnight stillness of the valley. Behind it is an armourer's forge, in which, returning from the festival, the workman has already resumed his toil; and yonder, where thou seest a guard of galloglachs, is our armoury. And here," said he, pointing to a building at no great distance from the Dun, "is the Caircer na Nguiall, the chief prison of the Coom, where thou must wait the common chance of war."

Elim raised his eyes, and beheld before him an edifice of moderate size, surrounded by a moat which was supplied with water through a subterranean passage from the river. It was defended by a breast-work of earth and stone, bound with felled trees, and surmounted by a strong palisading. Passing a little drawbridge, they entered the prison by a strong door, formed of a single piece of oak, and descending a flight of broad stone steps, found themselves in an extensive

chamber, comfortless and unsupplied with any other furniture than some heaps of rushes which seemed meant for places of repose. Here Elim was left to such rest as he might find in such a place and under such circumstances, while Tuathal, with Eimhir and the galloglachs, kept guard without: now singing as he walked to and fro in the moonlight, now addressing himself in a loud tone to the galloglachs, and sometimes to the prisoner. Sudden and cruel as this destiny appeared to Elim, he was too well accustomed to the mastership of his own mind (that best of subjects, or most formidable of rebels), to suffer himself to be cast down by what appeared inevitable. Drawing a small crucifix from his bosom, and contemplating it in motionless silence for some moments, he addressed himself to his devotions, and spent some time in prayer. This duty performed, he drew from the lining of his tunic a

string of tablets of beechen wood, and with a pencil of black slate wrote down in the ogham, or occult writing of the senachies, his last wishes with regard to his sept, trusting that he might find some opportunity of transmitting it to Matha. A brazen grating in the massy wall, gave him a view of a portion of the vale, bounded by a lofty range of crag which descended in almost a perpendicular line upon the river, the bubbling of which he could faintly hear in the stillness of the moonlight calm. Near the water's edge, at no considerable distance, appeared the forge of the armourer, strongly illuminated, and throwing its glowing light across the paly surface of the stream, while the strokes of the workman, even at this late hour, re-echoed with a lonesome sound along the shaded crags. Not indifferent to his fate, but yet prepared to meet it, Elim consoled himself with the recollection, that his sept had already

found able protectors in the Caufinny, and in Matha, and resigned himself with his best efforts to the termination of his own career, and the disappointment of his earthly hopes. Never much given to the indulgence of what is called sensibility (too often the fruitful source of fancied and of real misery), he was the better enabled to meet the present crisis without disturbance of mind.

He had not been long alone when the door opened, and he beheld the gaunt figure of Duach descending the steps. The kern, who admired the constancy of demeanour exhibited by the young chieftain, had come to commiserate his situation, and to offer what services he could for its alleviation.

“Thy bones,” said he, “at least, shall slumber with thy people. I, that carried thee living, can carry thee dead. Drawing water they would

keep thee ever in the sight of bright Samhuin, wert thou to have thy cairn in the Coom; the shades of our own sept, I mean. Thou wilt rest quieter with thine own people; the O'Haedha's shall sing thy praise and raise thy cairn."

Elim thanked the kern, and recollecting what Aithne had said of his fidelity to any trust which he had once undertaken, determined to make him the bearer of his last testament to Inbhersceine. The latter now entered into a free discourse with the Ithian, making particular enquiries concerning all the localities of the harbour of Fiontragha, the scene of that celebrated fight, the memory of which seemed ever floating like a hallucination on his mind.

Soon after he observed the kern pacing up and down the room with gigantic strides, striking with his arms through the empty air, and mouthing in a furious manner, but without uttering a

sound. After contemplating him with astonishment for some minutes, the Ithian exclaimed :

“ In the name of sanity, Duach, wilt thou tell me what these gestures mean ? ”

Duach stopping short in his career, looked over his shoulder, and said :

“ Didst thou ever hear a Fochlucan relate the narrative of the Catha Fiontragha ? ”

“ Never, ” answered Elim.

Without permission granted or asked, Duach planted himself in the centre of the prison, in the attitude of one about to utter an oration, and Elim, conceiving that he should be less interrupted by his speech than his questions, suffered him to proceed, while he lay down on one of the rush beds, and soon lost all consciousness of the presence of the kern. In the meantime, the latter, in a voice of thunder, and with his huge

arms swinging on all sides, like the sails of a windmill, commenced the redoubted narrative :

“ In the days of old, there reigned in Hesperia a renowned, magnanimous, and heroic king, called Dara Doun Mac Laskien Loumlunig, who styled himself king of kings, and lord of the universe. Having subdued all parts of the known world, Ireland only excepted, and being informed that an island remained unconquered, he immediately dispatched couriers to his tributary kings and princes, with positive orders to join him with their respective forces : to the mighty and powerful kings of France, of Spain, of Denmark, of Greece, of India ; to Mougand Muncusker Mac Dounha, king of Getulia, to the king of Cyprus, to——”

The catalogue of potentates was cut short by the opening of the prison door, which made

Duach start and sieze his javelin with a sudden cry of "Dara Doun a-bo! Who is there?"

The ceasing of the thunder-sounding narrative awakened Elim, who was much surprised at seeing Duach with javelin raised in act to strike. While he sat still half asleep in this condition, he heard low voices at the door, which, opening presently, admitted Banba, wrapped in a purple cloak and hood, through which the Ithian recognized her figure, and bearing in her hand a lighted lamp.

The astonishment with which Aithne, on the arrival of Tuathal, had learned the real name and rank of the young Ithian prisoner, was mingled with a singular impression of pleasure. She had heard much since her arrival in the Coom of the active government of O'Haedha, and of his successful exertions in promoting the peaceful prosperity of his people. She had heard all this, it is

true, through the lips of persons prejudiced against Elim, by feudal enmity, by attachment to those abuses which it was the Ithian's object to remove, and by jealousy of all improvement. Through the colouring, however, of this prejudice, Aithne had penetration enough to discern, in the character of the new Ithian chief, a mind and understanding very superior to those of his censurers, high views of human happiness, and an ardent benevolence. She observed, likewise, with a feeling of secret pleasure and surprise, that the spirit of his government, and his conception of the causes which occasioned the evils of his country, were precisely those which she had long wished to see adopted by the princes of the island; and she had often, in playful discourse with the Ard-Draithe, longed for the government of a sept, in order that she might confute him with example. The history of the old

dissension between the sept of O'Haedha and the Ard-Draithe, was not unknown to her; but whatever the question of Baseg's right might be, it appeared to her atrocious that this unoffending chief should be sacrificed to the barbarian vengeance of the Ard-Draithe. She determined, therefore, at any hazard, to effect his freedom; and it was with this view, after a new interview with the Ard-Draithe, that Banba now was sent to summon the young Ithian once more to the Dun.

Rising quickly, and passing the guard, who made way for him in silence, O'Haedha approached the deserted building, accompanied by Duach and his wife, and escorted by two well-armed galloglachs. On entering the outer chamber, now lonely with its expiring lights and scattered flowers, he saw Aithne standing on the floor, with her veil close drawn about her shoulders,

and seeming to be wrapt in thought. At a little distance sat the Ard-Draithe, looking out in silence on the moonlit river.

“Ithian,” said the latter, as Elim appeared before him, “reflection has been thy friend. It has told me that forgiveness is the parent of goodwill, and better is friendship with loss, than enmity with gain. Thou art free to go as thou hast come, but with the condition that all thy prisoners be restored unharmed.”

Surprised as he was at this sudden change of purpose, Elim offered little in reply, farther than to accept the conditions on which his liberty was granted; stipulating, nevertheless, that the loss his people had sustained in their property should be made good by their aggressors. To this the Ard-Draithe consented, at the same time signifying to Elim that he must depart at once, as, if he were to wait till morn, the relatives of the de-

ceased might make his journey dangerous. There appeared to Elim, in the manner of the Ard-Draithe, a singular absence of all recollection of former injury; nor could he himself avoid, at times, almost forgetting, in the open unconscious manner of the Druid, that he really beheld the person who had left him fatherless in childhood. Rightly supposing that he was indebted to the influence of Aithne for this final resolution, he addressed her at his departure, in terms of the warmest gratitude.

“For thy sake, kindest maiden,” he said, “thy kinsmen shall be transmitted to the Coom as tenderly as if they were our own. Farewell! I owe thee life, and will not soon forget it.”

So saying, and hastening to the place where Duach held his hobbie and his dog, he travelled homeward in the moonlight, not regretting the

pursuit which had introduced him to a being whose mind and dispositions seemed almost moulded on his own. He was accompanied, for a considerable part of the way, by Duach, who left him after he had passed the frontier. The sun was fully risen when he arrived at Iubhersceine, where he found all assembled under arms, and in extreme confusion at his absence. In a few days, Moyel was dispatched with a party of mounted hobbelers to convey the prisoners to the Coom, and so ended for the present the adventure of the Druid's valley.

Two months had rolled away, before accident again brought Elim into commerce with its inhabitants. In the meantime he applied himself vigorously to the prosecution of his designs. Having succeeded to his utmost wishes in establishing a regular order of industry and peace in his own sept, he next turned his attention to the second

part of his plan—the extending the intercourse of his sept with those of the surrounding princes, and establishing a general system of trade. So haughty, however, were the great body of those chieftains, and so little disposed to second the young chieftain's views, that his success was but indifferent. At the provincial Feis, which was held at the court of Airtree, in Luimneach na Luingas, O'Haedha made his first appearance in a legislative assembly. Before the Righ, the Airighs, the lesser chieftains, and the clergy, he modestly unfolded his views, and enforced them with all the eloquence of which he was master. To some, who objected that the warlike character of the country was better preserved by keeping the septs apart, Elim proved the contrary, by the discipline of his own, the superiority of which none ventured to contest. He showed that, instead of upholding the principle of justice,

the true foundation and support of military courage, such party bigotry tended only to perpetuate family feuds, and to engender hideous passions in the national character. The king, Airtree, was amongst the first who favoured Elim, and warmly seconded his views. Others, who preferred the renown of their own names, to the glory and happiness of the country, held aloof, and said with scorn, that they did not want to see the isle transformed into a nation of "ceanuighes." Airtree, however, and a few of the most candid, entered heartily into Elim's spirit of improvement and of union. Roads were made, and harbours opened; officers were appointed, by general election at the Feis, to protect and regulate the affairs of trade along the coast, and in the inland towns; with power to dismiss the refractory and the dishonest. Thus prosperous in his efforts, Elim returned to his sept with a great increase

of influence, and doubly ardent in the pursuit of his designs.

Soon after an instance was afforded him of the extremes into which his countrymen were sometimes hurried by the national spirit he deplored, and in a quarter to which he often turned in his moments of reflection. One day it happened that he accompanied O'Driscol, his uncle, who had been for some time at Inbhersceine, to that part of the coast where the small vessel lay at anchor that was to convey him to the Canfinny's house at Cleir. Before noon they had weighed anchor, and Elim, riding at the head of his troop along the sandy beach, watched the course of the stout little yew vessel, until it was hidden from his view by a rocky projection of the land.

On a sudden, Moyel pointed out to the observation of his chieftain, a party of mounted

galloglachs, galloping swiftly along the margin of the sea. On their nearer approach, the Ithian perceived that the first rider was Tuathal, and his countenance betrayed, as he approached, a strange mixture of agitation and of joy. A band of marauders had entered the Druid's valley at midnight, setting fire to the shielings and the standing corn, driving the herds, and penetrating at length to the very Dun of the Chief Druid. He had not time, he said, at present, to make Elim acquainted with the details, for the Ard-Draithe had been grievously wounded, and he was now hastening to Rath-Aidan, to entreat the advise of Fighnin, the famous surgeon of the sept. If O' Haedha, however, chose to accompany him to the Coom, he might count on a safe conduct there and home again, and could satisfy himself upon the scene of the calamity.

Elim readily assented, bidding Moyel return

with the escort and inform his parent in what direction he was gone, as also to command the immediate departure of Fighnin. On the way, as they rode rapidly along through glen and woodland, Tuathal informed him of the cause of the aggression which they had suffered.

“The Ard-Draithe,” said he, “was somewhat nice on points of hereditary right, and not a little positive in enforcing them. Understanding from the old Brehoun, that the chieftain of the Delvins had been in old times the vassal of his ancestors, he sought to renew the claim, by sending him as *tuarasdal* (or wages conferred by a superior on his dependent), a present of forty kine, as many copper cauldrons, as many crimson cloaks, and as many gold handled swords. The chieftain, however, not only rejected the gifts, but sent double the quantity in return. The Ard-Draithe, in rejecting these, was rash

enough to speak harshly of the giver, and, in allusion to his talent for verse-making, which is acknowledged to be great, had the misfortune to call him a "rhymmer." For this offence he has wasted our valley, entering it, contrary to all law and honour, in the night-time, and I fear the Ard-Draithe's life will pay the forfeit of his taunt. I grieve for it on Aithne's account, for she loved him like a father."

On entering the Coom nothing could exceed the picture of desolation which was presented to the eyes of Elim. A number of newly erected cairns appeared along the river side; whole sides of the mountain ground were blackened from the recent conflagration; shrieks were heard at intervals; and female figures were seen, some flying in various directions, some sitting down and crying aloud by their ruined shielings. On arriving at the Dun, they found it crowded with anxious faces, shadow-

ed by the overhanging hood, and expressing the different emotions of grief, impatience, curiosity, and pity. In the inner room, he was told, was the wounded Ard-Draithe; with his niece, who had not left his pillow since he had been laid upon it. Some hours passed away, during which, Elim saw no one from whom he could obtain a distinct account of what had taken place, except old Eogan Bel, the story-teller, who told him that he knew something of the kind would take place, for he had looked at morning through the blade-bone of a wolf, and saw spots of blood on the wall. The following were the circumstances, some idea of which he was enabled to collect from the old *dresbdeartach*.

“The silence of night had sunk upon the valley, and nearly all, except the inmates of the Dun, were at repose. The Ard-Draithe, who, only in that very week, had sent back the tuarasdal

of the lord of the Delvins, was still extremely troubled at the affront which had been offered him, and paced up and down the apartment, in high indignation. Aithne, who sat on her tripod, observing him in silence, with a mixture of pity and affection, ventured at length to break in upon his reflections.

“ ‘ Dear father,’ she said, ‘ why will you suffer such a trifle to prey upon your spirits ? ’

“ ‘ A trifle ! ’ said the Ard-Draithe, stopping short, and gazing steadfastly upon her ; ‘ a trifle, for this cast-away child of Cathair-More, this keeper of mercenaries, a hireling *boulum skiagh*, to send tuarasdal to the head of the sept of Coom na Druid, one of the oldest stocks that bloom in Inisfail ? A secret stabber too ! he has been known ere now to deal an underhand blow against an enemy. A trifle ! It is thus you women ever judge. What touches not your own

thin flaxen follies, your spindles, your distaffs, and your love-tales, are trifles, though the honour of a sept be brought in question. Tuarasdal to me! An ancestor of mine was slain at the Tor Conuing, close upon Lough Erne, the palace of the Fomharaigh, almost the earliest colonists of Erin. Tuarasdal to me! Ben Hedir, Muir-theimne, Maigh Laighean, a thousand other fights bore testimony to the honour of our name, before the ancestor of this Delvin mercenary had got a cantred of his own to rest on.'

“ ‘ Yet, is it not a trifle, dearest father,’ continued Aithne, ‘ compared with the peace of your own mind, the quiet of two great townships, and the happiness of Inisfail? Ah, pride of birth, and rivalry of place and station, will keep our isle from peace, as long as there are senachies and bards in Erin. But hark! what sound is in the Coom?’

“ ‘ It is the muttering of thunder on the crags,’ said Eogan.

“ ‘ It cannot be,’ said the Ard-Draithe, ‘ for the night, though moonless, is without a cloud. It is the rushing of a torrent in the bed of the river. The rain has fallen heavy on the mountains, though here the weather has been dry and sunny.’

“ They were silent for some minutes

“ ‘ Father!’ said Aithne, springing from her seat, and flying to the old man’s side, ‘ Dear father, do you hear?’

“ ‘ Well, Aithne? Well my child?’ said the old man, caressing her head with one hand, while she clung to his arm in intense anxiety.

“ ‘ It is not thunder! it is no torrent!’ said the maiden in a voice below her breath; then, with a sudden shriek of woe and terror, she exclaimed: ‘ O father, save thy people! save thyself! There

are enemies in the Coom ! It is the shout of men that we have heard.'

" At the same instant, the galloping of many hundred horse was heard in the calm night along the river side ; lights rose in the distance until the sky grew red with the deep reflection, and shouts, like those of a ferocious multitude, were mingled with piteous shrieks, and cries of the most heart-piercing anguish. It was the lord of the Delvins who had come to seek satisfaction for having been called a ' rhymer' by the Ard-Draithe.

" 'To arms ! The trompa ! Sound the alarm at once !' cried the old man, ' Aithne to your chamber ! Tuathal, to the Caircer ! Guard you the armoury and stables, and leave the Dun to me.'

" The surprise, however, was too complete to render it possible for the inhabitants of the valley to offer any effectual resistance. In a short time

all was ruin, with the exception of the Dun, and the places committed to the charge of Tuathal, where the fight was still maintained with desperate vigour. The invaders passed the bridge, and the battle raged before the very threshold of the Dun. They were repulsed from this last hold, but not until the Ard-Draithe's taunt was at least adequately avenged. While the fight continued on the bridge, a shriek was heard from the interior of the Dun, and many rushed to the protection of the Ard-Draithe's niece.

“The cry, however, was not for herself. On reaching the entrance of the recess, they found the Ard-Draithe lying speechless, and with the look of a dying man, upon the floor, while Aithne, with an appearance of dismay and settled horror, was staunching, with her veil, the blood which flowed from a wound in his neck. In the meantime the pursuit continued in the Coom, and

Elim learned with surprise that great part of the inhabitants were still absent from the place, engaged, as it was supposed, in the work of retaliation. Among others, Duach was not to be found, and his absence increased the anxiety of Aithne."

Scarcely had Eogan concluded his narrative, when the hanging which veiled the door of the Ard-Draithe's chamber was put aside, and Tuathal, looking out, beckoned to the Ithian chief that he might enter. Elim arose immediately and obeyed the signal. The light in the sick room was so dull that it was some time before he could clearly discern the figure of Aithne, sitting on a heap of wolf skins, by the Ard-Draithe's bed. She turned around on the entrance of the Ithian, and, without rising, greeted him in the kindest manner. Her grief, though deep-seated, was not of that selfish and ungo-

vernable kind which sacrifices all consideration of others to its own indulgence ; and Elim could not help admiring the simple and natural courtesy with which, even under the pressure of such deep calamity, she expressed pleasure at the sight of a stranger, to whom she had been once of service. Soon after the aged Fighnin arrived, accompanied by his three overgrown daltadhs, whose faces, solemn even in scenes of joy, assumed on this occasion a sepulchral ghastliness of aspect ; looking, as Banba said, “ like owls assembling on a cairn.” While the old Fighnin was busy in examining the wound of Cónraoi, one of these disciples asked Aithne to assist in preparing some simples for the dressing, and raised her spirits a little by relating numerous instances of astonishing cures, which they had made, in their course of practise. These hopes, however, were entirely banished when she heard, as Fighnin

raised his head and looked on those around him, the despairing proverb that, "the king's war surgeon would not save him."

Understanding this to be the case, the Ard-Draithe desired that he might be placed before the outer entrance of the Dun, in order that he might behold the valley ere he died. His wish was gratified, and he remained surrounded by his silent friends awaiting the last pulse of life. On his right stood Aithne and the Ithian; on his left were Fighnin, Eogan, and others of the household; while, ranged in the back-ground, like sentinels of death, appeared the motionless frames, huge eyes, and pendant cheeks, of the three daltadhs. To Elim's whispered question, Aithne replied, that all her influence had been tried in vain to induce him to prepare for death or even to forgive his enemy. Still the occasion seemed so desperate that Aithne, trusting to his love for

her, addressed him once again in a calm and measured voice :

“ Ard-Draithe,” she said, gazing on his face with an expression of the tenderest interest, and raising one hand with a slightly admonitory air, “ I entreat thee, by thy love for Carthan, and by thy reverence for my father’s spirit, if thou wilt not die as Carthan died, at least depart in peace with all mankind.”

“ With all, except the Delvins,” answered the Ard-Draithe.

“ With them too, father,” said his niece, “ forgive them too, if thou wouldst be forgiven.”

“ I forgive the O’Haedhas, and the O’Driscol’s, but I cannot forgive the Delvins,” answered the wounded man.

“ Father,” said Aithne, “ Carthan has warned thee ; I have warned thee. Thou hast had time

enough, and it is coming to an end. At least, at least, forgive the Delvins, father."

The Ard-Draithe paused, and continued looking out in silence on the Coom. The sun had long gone down, but his yellow light still rested on the broken summit of the crags. On a sudden the guards were heard to challenge on the bridge, and presently a gory figure, panting heavily, and seeming quite exhausted, appeared upon the threshold, bearing in one hand a bloody skene, while, with the other, he held suspended by the long red hair a human head, the features of which still quivered with the dying agony.

"Coun Crehir go bragh!" shouted Duach, as he flung the ghastly burthen on the ground, and sunk bereft of strength upon the threshold.

"It is the chieftain of the Delvins' head," said Eogan.

All started at the sudden apparition. The Ard-Draithe raised himself on his elbow to look upon the gory trophy, and said, with a shocking and revengeful smile :

“ The rhymer ! the paltry rhymer ! ”

At the same instant, sinking back upon his couch, he died. Aithne raised up her hands with a cry of terror and of anguish, and was conveyed in deep affliction to her chamber.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE tidings spread through the valley and increased its desolation. Deep gloom abode upon the Coom, and every aspect wore the character of woe. Elim, who keenly participated in this sorrow of a people for a beloved ruler, remained at the Dun to witness the celebration of the wake. The Ard-Draithe's niece did not again appear throughout the ceremony. The Dun was crowded with the nearer friends of the deceased prince, while numbers, whom the building could not accommodate, remained without upon the platform, where they were served

with the same refreshments which were prepared for those within. The most mournful strains were played from time to time by the solitary harp of Irial, the principal crotarie. In the morning preparations were made for interring the body according to the ancient Druid forms.

The place selected for the burial was, according to the Ard-Draithe's own desire, that part of the islet which adjoined the bridge. Before sunrise, the procession began to move from the open welling. First came a troop of kerne, two by two, and followed by the corpse, borne in its shroud, between six bareheaded galloglachs. Next came four Druid flamens, in their robes of white, with emblematic representations of the heavenly bodies which they venerated, and close behind, in garments of the six bright colours allowed to the royal and the learned, the Ard-bre-houn, with his scroll of written laws, of fiscal and

of mensal rights, and the Ard-senachie with his roll of genealogies and family history. These were followed by the Ard-filea and Ard-crotarie, also in robes of white, but wearing the birrede and golden ring. Then came a group of women mourners, with long white kerchiefs on their heads, and voices loud in grief. The procession was closed, as it began, by a body of kerne, and drew after it a long train of men, women, and children, warriors, shepherds, and agriculturists, who mourned scarce less for their chieftain's death, than for their own ruin. On arriving at the place of interment, they found a grave open, composed of burnt brick and cement, in the form of a coffin, the bottom being of smooth marble, and bearing various inscriptions of the name, the age, the rank, and family of the deceased. In this the corpse was laid, with his armour on, and a sword by his side. The Druids having performed their

rites, the *Ard-senachie* arose, and standing at the head of the grave, which lay to the west, recited aloud the pedigree of the deceased, which he traced from his father up to Partholan, the first colonist of the isle. When he had ceased, the sounds of mournful music broke upon the rite, and the *Racaraide* (rhapsodist) followed up the ceremony by a species of extemporaneous song entitled the *caoine*, in which were enumerated the many virtues of the deceased. The multitude at length, as if overcome by the exciting strain, united in one wail of grief, after which the body of the chieftain, with his arms, was covered in with a flag exactly fitting the orifice of the tomb. The drawbridge was then let down, and each of the spectators, as he passed, cast a stone upon the mound, until a heap was raised above of a prodigious height. This ceremony was continued by new comers through the day, until the cairn

had received its tribute from every hand in the Coom. The evening came at length, and the bereaved people returned with heavy hearts to their several places of abode, to converse by their hearths, or near their ruined dwellings, on this disastrous change, and to meditate on the uncertainty of human happiness.

On the following day Tuathal was elected Ard-Draithe in the room of the deceased. The Ithian remained to see him receive the white wand before he turned his steps once more to Inbhersceine. In the course of some months, the rumour was general of a marriage between Elim and the Ard-Draithe's niece. The latter, after the death of her protector, had remained in the Dun under the protection of Eira, the mother of the new Ard-Draithe, an aged Druidess, with the haughtiest blood of her exclusive tribe within her veins. Long jealous of Aithne's

influence over the Ard-Draithe, she used little ceremony in the assertion of her newly acquired power, and made the change to the young orphan so painful, that she meditated withdrawing herself from the place, and seeking shelter in the court of Airtree.

This resolution was delayed by her attachment to the Coom, of which a portion was now exclusively her own, and finally prevented by a new course of events. On her own holding the exclusive regulations, which were still maintained on that of the Ard-Draithe, were not enforced; and O'Headha was frequently amongst the visitors to the small dwelling which Carthan had erected in this portion of the valley. Here their acquaintance ripened into intimate friendship. Equal in mind, in rank, alike in tastes and dispositions, each felt the interest of a relative in the pursuits and prospects of the other. Elim

communicated his projects, his progress, and his difficulties, and Aithne heard him with undisguised sympathy, and with silent admiration. Still there was nothing to warrant the rumour above-mentioned; and, as usual, the parties most concerned were the least aware of its existence.

In the course of time, however, their intimacy assumed a form which seemed to furnish ground for the conjecture. By the invitation of Matha, Aithne had spent a moon of social happiness at Inbhersceine, where longer acquaintance secured to her the general regard which her first appearance had bespoke. Old customs and manners, almost forgotten during her long residence amongst the Druids, had here presented themselves to her view, with all the charm of early association to recommend them, and she looked and listened like one who has escaped from the stagnation of a long imprisonment, to a circle of early

friends and associates, all active and cheerful in their old pursuits. She heard from the chieftains, who often visited Rath-Aidan, the latest news of Donacha, the Ard-righ, and of Airtree, her maternal uncle. She admired the new features of social improvement which appeared in Elim's territory, the activity of the inhabitants, their intercourse with surrounding states, their trade, their intelligence, and their rising wealth. She wondered at the indefatigable ardour of O'Headha, his perseverance, and his unceasing efforts for the welfare of the people, not less than at the evenness of temper and unclouded cheerfulness of heart and mind, with which the whole was executed. Many days were spent in visiting the most remarkable portions of the surrounding scenery, as well as the schools and villages, throughout the territory.

“I had little idea,” said Elim, to his young

friend, as they returned together from one of those excursions, "when first I entered on the government of my sept, of the difficulty which I should find in effecting what I had long before designed. My power over my people is nominally absolute (excepting that in cases of oppression they have a privilege of appeal to the provincial, and thence to the national Feis), and yet it is with the utmost caution that I can ever dare to use it. Men are so jealous of authority, even of their own creation, there is such a spirit of selfish pride in our nature, such a difficulty in acknowledging a superior, that it is dangerous to force us even to our own advantage. Many a more potent governor than O'Haedha has lost his people's confidence, and his own power, to an impatience for their welfare, and a want of care in considering their prejudices. It is also certain, perhaps owing to the same jealousy, that the capability of

doing public good, diminishes in proportion as the extent of the sovereign's authority increases. There is no prince in Inisfail, perhaps, who possesses more the affections and the confidence of his sept than I do, and yet I know that I could do more for their advantage as chief officer of a republic, or of a limited monarchy, than now, with absolute power at my disposal. The utmost confusion of ranks, great indolence, or rather fitful and ill-regulated labour, strong party feuds, and debasing excesses, were very general amongst the people on my return from Muingharidh, and yet the resistance to improvement was only equalled by the general readiness to admit its necessity. In imitation (if I might dare to name an example so sacred,) of him who, feeling for the weakness of the nature he had created, commenced his career of spiritual instruction, by diffusing temporal blessings, and thus gained the

affections, while he sought to convince the reason, of his hearers ; my first efforts were employed in promoting the actual and unquestioned advantage of the little state, and thus generating a spirit of improvement, so that, before the disagreeable work of reformation was begun, the minds and wishes of a great many had almost anticipated my designs. In a wealthy, ignorant, and licentious district, where the reinforcement of forgotten sumptuary laws would have excited haughty and indignant feelings, I was content to establish schools, to reach the hearts of the people through their children, and to win their confidence by serving them in their own way. Love of letters is a feature in our national character. Though ignorant themselves, they were pleased to see their sons instructed, and the love of order, public decorum, and good government, became so general there ere long, that the law of Ibreach-

ta, and the code of Feidlimidh, were applied for, while I was awaiting the favourable moment to proclaim them. In another township, poor, proud, and barbarous, the scattered progeny (forgive the allusion,) of the ancient ethnic race, where even the establishment of a school would have alarmed all the hereditary prejudices of the people, I was satisfied to give them humbler blessings. They were fishermen, and I improved their currachs and their harbours; establishing a profitable traffic between them and the other townships. Thus disarmed of their fears, the rest was easily done, and the schools and churches which we have visited to day are all within that district. The brief experience I have had, convinces me that a governor who wishes to promote the real advantage of his people, must often sacrifice his views to theirs, when they do not violate principles that are immutable."

With such conversation, varied with lighter talk, they reached the valley of Rath-Aidan. Aithne, who was queenly, as Elim was monarchical, in feeling, listened with intelligence and interest, and Elim spoke with the freedom and pleasure which every one experiences in communing with a sympathising mind. They talked of Aithne's approaching return to the Coom, which was fixed for the second day following. The introduction of this subject made Elim silent, and they rode along the valley for some time without speaking. The young chieftain, looking aside, seemed occupied in contemplating the play of the evening sunshine through the scarcely moving boughs.

“ But,” he said, as if starting from a fit of forgetfulness, “ I should never tell thee, Aithne, of my designs, or their success, for I have remarked, that since thy coming to Rath-Aidan, thou hast never

once bestowed a word of praise on either. Thou wert freer of thine applause when I was an unknown prisoner in Dun Druid, than now with all my additional recommendations. The proverb has been reversed in my experience. Yet I must not be ungrateful neither. The prisoner was indebted to thee for something more than praise."

Aithne was silent for some time, and said, with a smile:—

"Thou canst not justly claim what was acquired by a cheat, for though my commendation was sincere, thou didst not fairly come by it. I took thee only for the most intelligent of O'Hadha's officers; perhaps, I said, his gallantest tioseach. I little knew how valuable was the life for which I asked. Thou owest me no special gratitude, for I should have done the same if thou wert the humblest kern in Inisfail, when I thought thy life was in my hands."

“I would,” said Elim, quickly, in an earnest voice, “that it were in thy hands again, for ever!”

Aithne, surprised and slightly confused, made no reply; and Elim, himself much moved, and trembling for the effect of what he had said, observed, with relief and hope, as he assisted her to alight within the Rath, the agitation which his words had caused in the mind of the self-governed and unyielding Aithne.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ON the following day, intended to precede that of Aithne's departure, an accident afforded Elim the opportunity of repaying the obligation which he owed to the Ard-Draithe's niece, since the first occasion of their meeting. The duties of the morning being discharged, an excursion was proposed to the great cascade, which lay among the Sliabh Miskisk range of mountains. Long ere noon, the hobbies which bore the party were footing briskly along the stony way which led to this well-known scene of wonder and of beauty.

The company consisted of Elim, Aithne, Airtree, the young prince of Leath Mogha, and the old school-fellow of the Ithian (who had lately come hither to meet his cousin during her stay at Inbhersceine), of Melcha, Elim's first instructress, O' Driscol, her brother, and two or three neighbouring chieftains. Their attendants, a body equally numerous, amongst whom were Moyel and Duach (who had scarce lost sight of Aithne since she left Rath-Aidan), came after at a moderate distance.

Ascending a rocky mountain, which, at the height of more than two thousand feet, overlooks the sea-green waters of the bay, they found themselves, as they reached the summit, on the borders of a lake formed by the confluence of many a rivulet, descending from eminences still more lofty. Approaching that portion of the height which looked upon the sea, they suddenly reached the

brink of a craggy precipice, descending, in an almost perpendicular line, to a depth of half the mountain. A channel, of about thirty feet across, conducted the waters from the tranquil bosom of the lake, to the brink of this terrific fall. From thence it descended, in a hoary sheet, encountering no resistance till it was dashed to foam and mist upon an enormous ledge of rock at a thousand feet beneath, making the mountain tremble beneath the feet of the travellers. And here they were delighted with a gorgeous spectacle. The mists occasioned by the great concussion reascended in hazy volumes to nearly a third of the mountain height, forming, as the sunshine from the south struck through their hoary involutions, a succession of brilliant irises. Again, out bursting from the base of this vapoury column, the watery mass appeared, bounding in foam and thunder from rock to rock, until it reached a lower pre-

cipice, from whence it was conducted by an arched fall to the shore of Inbhersceine.

While they remained gazing in silent enjoyment on this scene, and listening to the mighty sounds that, booming from the depths below, resounded far among the mountain solitudes, Elim, standing apart with the Ard-Draithe's niece, endeavoured to renew the conversation of the previous evening. During the morning, the spirits of the latter seemed unusually high, and this circumstance, he knew not why, had rather a depressing effect on Elim's mind.

“Does Aithne,” he said at length, in a voice which conveyed an inexpressible feeling of anxiety, respect, and tenderness united, “does Aithne forget what took place last evening, in the valley of Rath-Aidan?”

Aithne, turning aside, covered her eyes with her hand, and seemed for some moments to be

wrapt in thought. She said, at length, without changing her posture :

“ I never shall forget it, Elim.”

“ Could I then hope,” said the chieftain, thrilled by her words, and the accent in which they were spoken, “ that Aithne would permit me to renew it ? ”

Aithne was once more silent, and, after a longer pause, replied in a tone less firm than before :

“ When Elim pleases, so that it be not now.”

“ It is enough,” said Elim, with delight ; “ it is happiness enough, at present, that Aithne gives me leave to hope.”

Soon after, descending the mountain, the party, ignorant of the important scene that had taken place, and wondering at the altered manner both of Aithne and her friend, continued their

journey towards the coast. The latter seemed to have regained his spirits rapidly, and conversed as usual, only addressing himself to Aithne, with closer attention than before. Understanding, which was the truth, that their fair guest desired he should defer any farther conversation on the subject until she had returned to her patrimonial residence, he at once made up his mind to the restraint, and directed his discourse to indifferent matters, with the force of mind and alacrity of spirits which are generally the property of a well-intentioned disposition. It is singular, nevertheless, although a fact which is recorded on the best authority, that his success in this effort of self-restraint did not seem to increase the cheerfulness of Aithne ; but, on the contrary, that she seemed to assume the spiritless mood, according as Elim mastered it. The causes of those changes we

leave to the discussion of others: it is sufficient for us to have related what took place before the eyes of the spectators.

The tide was low, and they continued their journey along the coast. Arriving at the foot of the green lawn which lay before the abode of Fighnin, the physician, O'Haedha was obliged to absent himself for a little time from his company, in order to transact some business with the man of medicine. Before his return, they had scattered themselves in different parts of the shore. O'Driscol, Melcha, and one or two of the chieftains, having delivered their hobbies to their attendants, were conversing on the green where Elim left them. Aithne, accompanied by her cousin, had crossed, on foot, the sands, not yet covered by the tide, to a mass of rocks at a little distance from the shore, for the purpose of gathering some weed that grew among the

yellow maiden-hair with which the rock was clothed. Duach, in the meantime, held the horses of both upon the shore. Unlike the general iron-bound character of the coast, which, for the most part, meets, with a stern rebuff, the long travelled waters of the western ocean, they were suffered here to die in peace upon a sandy shore.

“Dost thou not observe,” said O’Driscoll, soon after Elim had left them, “that the tide has ceased to advance upon the strand, though it is far from the flood.”

“I did not observe the waters,” said a chieftain, who sat near, “but, looking out on the ocean, do not that distant point of land and vessel, anchored near, seem strangely lifted in the air.”

“The sea between,” said Melcha, “appears as if it had swollen in a singular manner.”

“And I hear a sound,” added another, “a low deep roar, as if of distant billows, although the wind scarcely moves amongst those branches.”

At this moment, Elim re-appeared. On looking toward the sea, he was surprised to observe, that the waters rather fell than rose, and even where they still spread their calm and gently undulating sheet of silver, the craggy and weed-covered deformities, that at long intervals speckled its brightness, showed it to be of a shallowness that was perplexing and preternatural. The true cause of these appearances now darted upon Elim's mind. With a pang of anxiety, he sprung on his horse, and galloped toward the rock where Aithne and Airtree were standing.

“To the shore,” he shouted aloud, and waved his hand as he approached. “To the shore, at once, for your lives! It is the Death-Wave!”

Airtree, perplexed, remained where he was.

Elim in a few seconds had sprung from his hobbie, placed Aithne without ceremony before him, and remounting, galloped with increasing swiftness to the shore. Airtree, totally bewildered, could only follow on foot, at such rate as he was able to use. Duach, who observed with astonishment the action of Elim, sprung on one of the hobbies, and raising his war cry of "Coun Cre-hir a-bo!" hastened to the assistance of the young prince. Without even alighting, he lifted him to the horse as if he were a child, and in a few seconds the animal, labouring under a heavier burthen than before, retraced his footprints with diminished speed. Scarcely had Elim reached the higher ground with his charge, when, rising far behind them towards the mouth of the bay, the party on shore beheld the waters swell into that fatal billow, which they had been taught to expect from the sucked-up shallowness of those upon the

beach. The range of liquid mountain, gaining fast upon Duach and Airtree, rolled gloomily inward with a roar of wakening anger. With breath retained, and looks of eager terror, the group on shore beheld the frightful competition. The billow gathered to its height, the green grew hoary, the summit sharpened, and was crested with a streaming mist, until, at length, overbalanced by the increasing acclivity, it came crashing to the base, in sheets of streaky white. In an instant the shore presented one great field of foam, the tumult reaching even to the foot of the hillock, which gave the party their security. The prince, the kern, and the hobbie, less fortunate than those who went before them, all three were rolled along the sand, and a cry of agony burst from their hopeless friends. When the uproar subsided, the hobbie re-appeared, staggering in shallow water towards the shore; and Duach and Airtree were soon after

seen bending their strength against the returning current, which fortunately here was not of depth sufficient to hurl them back into the bosom of the waters. The hand of the kern still grasped the girdle of the prince, nor did he relinquish the hold until both had gained the shore.

It was discovered, on examination, that neither had received any more serious injury than the wetting of their garments, and the loss of breath, so that what had threatened to be a fatal accident, in a few minutes became a subject of mirth and laughter. On the way home, Elim was called on to explain the cause of the singular phenomenon which had diversified their day's amusements with so important an adventure. This, however, he was unable to do. It was a circumstance of rare occurrence, and was regarded by the peasantry with a kind of superstitious fear. It took place in the calmest weather, and was

spoken of with reluctance by those who lived upon the coast.

Arrived at Rath-Aidan, as soon as the disaster of the young prince was rectified, preparations were made for celebrating, with appropriate festivity, the last evening of Aithne's visit at Rath-Aidan. The hall was lighted up with more than usual splendour; old Conla sung, and Diermodh played, their deepest and their liveliest; and the dancers gave mirth and spirit to the assembly. In the course of the evening, Elim showed that he was not so absorbed in the cares of his station as to despise or neglect those lighter accomplishments, which form a necessary and useful relaxation to the more arduous duties of life. During a pause made by the dancers, he took a harp from one of the crotaires, and accompanied himself in the following song:

I.

Come to Glengariff! come!
 Close by the sea,
 Ours is a happy home
 Peaceful and free.
 There, there, far away,
 Happy by our sunny bay
 We live from day to day,
 Blithe as the bee.
 For ours is a sunny home
 Joyous and free,
 Come to Glengariff! come!
 Close by the sea.

II.

Thine is a mountain hoar
 Frowning and wild,
 Ours is a lowland shore
 Fertile and mild.
 There, there, loud and strong,
 Sudden tempests drive along;
 Here, their gentle song
 Scarce moves the tree!
 For ours is a lowland home
 Peaceful and free;
 Come from the mountain! come!
 Come to the sea!

Although Aithne's high opinion of the young
 Ithian was founded on grounds more solid than

his talents in the festival, it would be denying her the nature of her sex to assert, that she did not listen with a woman's feelings to his graceful minstrelsy, or that the slender reasoning thus conveyed, was the least persuasive he had used in the course of their acquaintance. Throughout the evening, at morn, and on her journey homeward, the burden

Come to Glengariff! come!

Close by the sea!

dwelt on her hearing with increased effect, as absence appropriated the invitation to herself.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE daughter of Carthan arrived in the Coom with something of the feeling of a school-girl, who, after vacation time, revisits the sober stools and every day faces of an academy. The Coom itself looked dreary beyond expression, and she felt, when passing the little bridge that led to the Dun, as if she were about to enter the gates of a prison-house. The manners of her sept, moreover, appeared to her altered eyes with a strangeness that surprised her ; and, added to these subjects of depression, was the lonely look of the Ard-Draithe's hearth, by which her eye no longer

found the Ard-Draithe's reverend figure. He, who loved her with a father's affection, was now lying under a cairn by his native stream ; and though she still had much to which her affections clung, there was no intimacy left on which her mind could rest. Some relief she found, however, in the exertions she made to restore her portion of the Druid's valley to the condition in which Carthan once preserved it. Taking Matha for her model, she undertook, with a sanguine and active spirit, the improvement of all the households under her authority, having wisdom enough to commence with her own. Beneath that roof, where she was able to exercise a constant vigilance, her exertions were attended with some success, but the lever of her feminine influence was too slight to lift the heavy mass of indolence that extended all beyond it.

Amongst the numerous families who dwelt in

this portion of the Coom na Druid, was that of Du-ach, the most useful of Tuathal's kerne in time of war; the most sluggish, in time of peace, amongst the tenants of the valley. A peillice, or hurdle dwelling, from the wicker walls of which the muddy plaister had been washed away, while the loose wolf and fox skins that formed the roof were lifted by every wind, enclosed the hooded warrior and his wife, with a brood of plump and fierce, but filthy, children. A broken palisade surrounded this abode, enclosing a stagnant pond, between which and the ever-open doorway, the place was trodden into a mass of mire by the trampling of kine and children. From the centre of the roof arose, throughout the day, a dense cloud of smoke, which blackened the branches of an aged elm that stretched its sheltering arms, as if in pity of the negligent or neglected inmates, above the shattered roof.

This man, the reader may remember, was the same to whose personal activity Elim was indebted for his first introduction to the household of the Ard-Draithe, and to him now, in the zeal of her reforming energy, did Aithne direct her steps. Clad in a mantle of the bright purple of Cualgne, with a veil brought over her head, and fastened on her bosom with a golden bodkin, she appeared, one morning, not long after her return from Rath-Aidan, before the shattered gate of the peillice. Here she paused, unwilling to wade, with her neatly-fastened brogs, through the mass of mire between her and the house. Duach, just risen from his pallet of loose rushes, on which his family yet lay huddled together, observed her hesitation, and judging what her intention was, hastened with great strides across the slough. Without word or gesture of apology, he flung his long and sinewy arms around her figure, and lifting

her from the earth, did not relinquish his hold until, with the same prodigious strides, he had placed her on the floor of the peillice.

“ There art thou, Aithne !” he exclaimed, contemplating her with admiration and warm attachment, “ there art thou, in the middle of our floor, and a comelier sight than ever ornamented it till now ! I would thy father’s child had a beard, that I might kiss it, to show the moon and stars how I revere thee !”

The chieftain’s daughter thanked him with a smile.

“ And what must I do for thee now ?” he said, with eagerness, wrapping his huge mantle close about his figure. “ Dost thou hate the Ithians, from whom thou hast returned, and shall I fire their dwelling ? or have they a lamb thou lovest, that I may drive it, as many a flock of ours was driven of late ? or, shall Geide and Fiachadh

gather flowers for thee in the woods, or rob the hoopoe's nest, as they often did in the old Ard-Draithe's days?"

"No, Duach," answered Aithne, "that time is past and gone. I often sought thee for my own sake, hitherto, but now I come for thine."

"I am sorry," said Duach, with an uneasy look (for rumour had already given him a surmise of her intention), "to see thy father's daughter bent upon so foolish a business."

"Thou wilt not find it so," said Aithne, "if thou beest as well disposed for thine own advantage as I am."

Duach shrugged his broad shoulders, and Aithne introduced the unpleasing subject of reform, by reminding him of the appearance this portion of Coom na Druid once presented, when her father was alive to govern its inhabitants; how changed it had become since then, and how

desirable it was, that something should be done for its improvement. To this, Duach only answered by short sentences, now looking heavily on the ground, now heaving up one shoulder and now another, and tossing his head with an appearance of hopelessness rather than dissent.

“It is true, every word of it is true,” said he, “but it will never do. It is a plan that will never answer: the laziness is sunk into their hearts, and nothing but the sight of the fire and steel will drive it out. And, poor people! what wonder is it? They have labour enough in time of war without making peace itself a trouble to them.”

“Give thyself no uneasiness as to what others may do, Duach,” said Aithne, “but do thy own part well.”

“My part!” exclaimed Duach, looking round upon her with affected surprise, “and what would Aithne have me do in the business?”

“ Surely,” answered Aithne, “ thou dost not mean to hold thyself forth as a model among my kinsman’s people ?”

“ I do not know,” replied the kern, with a disappointed look ; “ surely I am always there when I am wanted.”

“ That may be enough for Tuathal,” answered Aithne, “ but not for thine own happiness.”

“ Happiness !” exclaimed Duach, “ let Aithne be at peace : I have more happiness than I want, or deserve ; happiness ! What should a poor kern, like Duach, want with happiness ? Good food and housing is enough for Duach.”

“ Thou art strangely perverse,” said Aithne, “ the roof is almost blown from thy dwelling, thy gateway choked with mire, thy children,” she added, pointing to the little urchins who gathered round, with gaping mouths and eyes, to hear the

lecture, "are destitute of hood or cota, and thou sayest thou hast enough of happiness; thou shouldst rise day after day before the sun, and labour through every hour of his course until all this is altered."

"I do not know, Aithne," said Duach, tossing his head, "my roof I promise thee to mend as soon as the yeaning season comes, when the wolves shall be in plenty in the Coom. I should not want peltry now, either for roofing or for clothing, but for those ruffian spoilers of the Delvins, who left me not a skin beside my own, and I can hardly say they left that whole. As for the gateway, in the summer season, which is now approaching fast, it is as dry as our floor, and in the winter, if it keep a woman on the outside, are not my arms or Banba's strong enough to save her from foul brogs? and if we are not within, what need has she to cross? As for men

and kine, they can wade through. My children, lazy brood!" he added, driving them away into different corners, "they want nothing but years to help their tioseach in battle, or their mother at the quern; and as for rising every day before the sun, to what purpose should I do so?"

"Thou wouldst find it both pleasanter and more profitable than sleeping late," answered Aithne.

"Daughter of Modharuith," said Duach, "tell that to those who have not tried both. In troubled times, indeed, to drive a herd, or fire a hostile brugh, I understand that it is pleasant; but to rise before the sun with nothing to do but weave a skiagh, or whet a rusty sparthe, which can better be done at noon, when his light is broadest, that, Aithne, is jesting against reason and experience. But, Aithne, see! there's one descending the hill with Moyel close behind. If

thou wouldst make *ceanuighes* of thy father's people, O'Haedha will instruct thee."

Raising her eyes, Aithne beheld, in the direction pointed out by the kern, the Ithian chief, in the act of leading his hobbie down the steep. Hastily throwing down her veil, yet not so quickly as to prevent Duach from observing, with a secret smile, the sudden blush that overspread her features, she left the cottage (being conveyed across the entrance in the same manner as before). She then hastened to the small dwelling, in which she usually spent most of her time throughout the day, and where she was at liberty to receive her Christian friends.

She had entered the house before O'Haedha reached the base of the mountain, from which he had first beheld the Coom na Druid. Folding her hands close, as if in deep emotion, she endeavoured, by a moment's recollection, to prepare

for receiving the Ithian, with her accustomed ease, and then remained looking out quietly on the lake, the island, and the opposite mountain. Hearing a step without, she turned, and saw O'Haedha, entering with an expression of delight, though frank and undisguised, yet not unmingled with embarrassment.

“Thou seest, Aithne,” he said, advancing quickly, “that I have followed thee.”

“I am glad to see thee, Elim,” said the daughter of Carthan, “glad to see any one from Inbhersceine.”

After enquiring with a natural warmth of manner for Matha, and her newly acquired friends, Aithne was in turn assailed by the questions of O'Haedha. She communicated the occurrence of the morning, with the characteristic reasoning of Duach, in defence of indolence.

“And here am I once more,” she concluded

after a few minutes' conversation had restored both to their usual manner, "queen of my own domain, with nothing to do all day but lament my inability to serve my father's kerne, and at evening to sit quiet in the Dun ; to listen to the river rushing through the crag, the wind rustling through the roof broom, and the mournful note of the old crotarie's clarsech at the fireside, for he has not spirit to touch it since his patron died."

While she spoke, Elim had arisen and walked towards the window, where he remained for a few moments, endeavouring to prepare himself for the trying part he was about to act, which was of too important a nature to himself, and to his people, not to cause him keen anxiety. At length, after a pause of deep silence on both sides, the chieftain, with something, yet not all, of the accustomed grace and self possession of his manner, approached the daughter of Carthan, and address-

ed her with a distinct, though tremulous utterance.

“Aithne,” said he, “before you left Rath-Aidan, you gave me leave to hope, and yet I cannot tell you in what torture I have passed the last two weeks. I implore you, Aithne, to end it, by holding me no longer in suspense. You can make many happy, Aithne, by your answer. I intreat you, hear me kindly. You have the esteem of Matha, and the affections of our people; you have Elim’s ardent love.”

Aithne listened, with her forehead resting on her hand, and the emotion of her mind appearing in spite of her efforts to command it.

“Do, Aithne, hear me generously,” continued the chieftain, with fervour, “be favourable, Aithne, I intreat thee; consent to be our people’s queen; be Matha’s daughter; be the blessing of the life you once preserved. Or, if you know of

any difficulty—” he added, observing that she delayed to reply.

“I know but of one,” said Aithne, “and that lies not with me.”

The rapture which Elim received from this confession was expressed with appropriate ardour. It was even some time before he called to mind that there was any qualifying clause in the favourable answer he had received.

“My father,” said the daughter of Carthan, in explanation, “at his death, enjoined me never to take this step without the consent of his old patron, Niall, the Ard-righ, at present in the isle of Huy.”

“From what thou hast said of Niall’s character,” said Elim, “I have no reason to apprehend an obstacle from him?”

“None, I believe,” was Aithne’s answer.

O’Haedha rose, as if about to enter at once

upon the journey. Turning once more, however, and looking on Aithne, with a happy smile, he said :—

“ This difficulty over, then, I have no more to fear from Aithne ? ”

At this appeal, the Druid's niece turned round in her seat, and answered in a tone of the most earnest kindness :—

“ Why should I hesitate, Elim, to answer thee directly ? Why should I conceal from thee the happiness that thou hast given me ? Be successful with Niall, and thou wilt find no difficulty in persuading Aithne to give her hand where she has already given—— ” she paused a moment in deep agitation, and then added, extending her hand, and smiling calmly—“ her affections.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

THUS prosperous, Elim lost no time in making the necessary preparations for his departure. They were few, for he resolved to make the journey without any state, taking with him only a single attendant. Committing the government once more to the care of Matha and his officers, he rode from the valley, intending to take the road to Atha Cliath,* and thence to proceed through Inismore, to the scene of Niall's exile. This route afforded him a satisfaction in the pros-

* Dublin.

pect it presented of enabling him to visit the Dene of Ouse, the birth-place, and perhaps once more the abode, of his school companion, Kenric. He rode along, indulging the brightest hopes for his own happiness, and the increasing glory of his country, which might ere long obtain for her the same rank in the political, that she already held in the literary, and more than all in the religious, world. His speculations on the prospects of his native isle were, however, somewhat clouded by an incident which befel him on the way.

He entered, about noon, on one of the brightest days of summer, a glen of barren crag and mountain, where he found a solitary wanderer, thridding his way with slow and doubtful steps amongst the rocks, which lay so thick and massy on the ground, as almost to forbid the passage of the horses. The costume of the stranger appeared so singular, that Elim would have taken him

for a foreigner, but for the tone and language in which he addressed them as they overtook him. He was seated, sidewise, on the croup of a small hobbie which bent beneath the weight of two heavily laden cronnogs of forest skins.

“Cead falta, brother lunatics!” he exclaimed, in a laughing tone, as the travellers approached.

“I thank thee for thy greating,” answered Elim, “though I know not why thou shouldst call us out of our names, at the first sight.”

“Nay, so think all the lunatics on earth,” replied the pilgrim, “the wise man only knows himself a fool. But, craving pardon for my jest, knowest thou not that this glen is the famous Cloun ga nalth, the Paradise of lunatics, where all the madmen in the kingdom come within twenty-four hours after they lose their senses.”

Elim, now remembered to have heard Duach tell how the King of France, growing

delirious with fear of the redoubted Isker, at the great battle of Ventry Harbour, was carried through the air, in a frightful manner, to a glen of this name. Entering into farther conversation with the stranger, he discovered that he was one of those travelling *ceanuighes*, or merchants, who trafficked in the produce of the southern coasts, and often extended their peregrinations to Inismore, to Gaul, to the Italian states, and even to the most distant nations of the east. He was astonished to hear, from this commercial pilgrim, accounts of Chinese manners, the result of actual observation, and descriptions of those of other nations, the veracity of which he found it impossible to doubt. Always certain of acquiring useful knowledge from such persons, Elim continued to converse freely with the merchant, as they rode together through the glen. He received, amongst other pieces of intelligence, one which filled him

with anxiety. The merchant related that the deepest apprehension prevailed along the continental coasts in consequence of the re-appearance, in prodigious force, of those northern pirates, called, in their own language, the Vikingr, or Bay-kings, whose ferocity, during former descents upon the shores of southern Europe, had given the inhabitants cause to remember them with terror. They had already, as Elim now for the first time understood, made their appearance at the isle of Rech-rin, on the northern coast of Ulladh, where they landed for the purposes of plunder; and he remembered having heard old Clothra say that their sails had been descried off the western coast, immediately before his return to Rath-Aidan from Muingharidh. O'Haedha was sufficiently aware of the sanguinary character of this fierce people, who made war their passion, their toil, and their amusement, to feel keenly for the peace of Inis-

fail, which he well supposed could not long escape the search of these barbarous adventurers, and which, from internal want of union, was far from being in a condition to resist any formidable invasion. The general history of the race he knew already, and the merchant supplied him with many additional particulars of their character and manners, which added force to his previous conception of both. They were, he knew, the descendants of a race that once had made the masters of the world look pale. He had heard in his youth of the Cimbri, who had for many years filled Rome with terror and mourning; of the bloody field of Verceil, where the baton of Marius almost extirpated their nation; of the desperate and savage ferocity of their women, who, standing on their baggage chariots, hewed down alike the pursued and the pursuing; nay, with a more than bestial obstinacy, dashed their children

against the ground, and flung themselves beneath the chariot wheels of the victorious Roman. That spirit of arms which, in a better cause, might have deserved the name of valour, had not, however, perished with the luckless victims of Verceil. The fugitive remnant of their race transmitted it, undiminished in its violence, and its disregard of every restraint, whether moral, natural, or religious, to their descendants in the north. Flying to the shores of the Scaggerac and Bothnia, they fell, in the course of time, under the dominion of Sigge, a follower of Mithridates, and also a fugitive from Roman enmity. There he founded a monarchy, and, being himself a Scythian, assumed the name of Odin, who was the Scythian divinity. On the death of the sage, Mimer, who was much esteemed for wisdom, Odin had his head cut off, and pretending that he had, by his enchantments, restored to it the use of speech, the oracles of Mimer's

head became, ere long, the wonder of the north ; insomuch that the fame of the head, when living, was nought in comparison with that which it enjoyed when separated from the trunk. Perceiving his end to draw near, Sigge assembled his friends, and, in their presence, gave himself nine wounds, in the form of a circle, with the point of a lance, and gashed his skin in various places with his sword. Dying, he declared that he was going back into Scythia, to take his seat amongst the other gods, at an eternal banquet, where he would receive, with great honour, all who should expose their lives in war. He then expired, and his body was burnt at Sigtuna. Such was the origin of Odin, of Valhalla, and of that sanguinary thirst of war by which the northern states were yet distinguished. They were taught from childhood to despise the fear of death, and they never shrink from inflicting

what they themselves regarded without dismay. Valour, with them, was the only quality that deserved the name of virtue; and what, in kinder lands, was termed cruelty, to them was sport and pastime. Not bribes, nor prayers, nor tears, were ever known to check the northmen in their thirst of blood. They scorn the soft affection that vents itself in grief for friends departed, and even the holy sorrow of repentance was to them a subject of derision and contempt. Their gods, as they believed, delighted in carnage; and in proportion to the havoc they made on earth, was their recompense to be in the heaven of Odin. They came from a land where winter held eternal sovereignty, and their tempers were as stern, as stormy, and as dark as the atmosphere that brooded on their icy hills and barren precipices. Their ears were never soothed with the sound of summer airs; their eyes were never

charmed with the sight of Nature in her garb of summer bloom. They were nursed on the breast of terror, and their thoughts and actions were directed to inspire that passion in other hearts which they never suffer to disturb their own. Cold as their hills of ice, fierce as their tempests, hard and implacable as their sea-beat cliffs, and gloomy as their lowering skies, it were as well to seek mercy of the deep, when it was chafed by winter's fiercest storm, as of a northern warrior, and least of all of those who made the waves their territory, the terrible Bay-kings. This species of sovereignty, so singular in the history of mankind, originated in a species of necessity. It was the practice of their land-kings, when straightened in the power of providing kingdoms for their sons, to bestow on some of them a fleet of ships, with the title of Vikingr, or Bay-king. This fleet was manned by warriors, whose boast it was, that they had

never slept beneath a roof, nor quaffed the drinking cup beside a hearth. Their common food was the undressed flesh of horses, and their draught was frequently the blood, which they drank from wild bulls' horns, and sometimes from the skulls of vanquished foes. On preparing for an expedition, they mustered on the coasts of their native land, like birds of passage gathering for flight. One was selected as a victim to propitiate their slaughter-loving god. Even their destined chief was sometimes known to sink beneath the sanguinary ox-yoke of their sacrificing priest, for their sullen deity would often turn aside from less than princely gore. Thus, with their minds prepared for carnage, they launched upon the billows of their wintry seas, and woe befel the coast on which their prows were stranded first.

Such were the reflections and the remembrances that made Elim listen with anxiety to

the merchant's information. On arriving at a convent, where he remained for the night, he found, in the refectory of strangers, a company of various professions, pilgrims, merchants, and other travellers, amongst whom the principal subject of conversation was the same which had occupied his own attention on the way, the descent of the Fionn Geinte on Rechrin isle, and the devastation committed by that fearful scourge on some continental coasts. With hopes less brilliant than at morning, as to the opening prosperity of his native land, Elim retired to his chamber.

In the morning, the ceanuíghe, standing on the road as Elim issued from the convent, accosted him by his family name, and said :—

“ I did thee a service, O'Haedha, before thou couldst value it. It was I who warned Matha, at Ross Ailithri, where they had just been

giving thee a name, to be on her guard against the thanist, Baseg."

"And what acknowledgment, good friend," said Elim, "(for I confess the obligation,) dost thou look for at my hands?"

"But to heed my voice again," replied the merchant. "Thou art on thy way to Inisfail, and I have good reason to bid thee beware of Baseg till."

Elim thanked him, and would have inquired farther, but the merchant bade him farewell, and turned off a different road. The young Ithian continued his journey to Atha Cliath, from whence he soon embarked for Inismore.

CHAPTER XXX.

PASSING, before Elim, into Inismore, let us return to Kenric, whom we left pursuing his adventurous journey to Cair Grant, in company with the Scandinavian book-vender. They had not travelled many days together, when the attention of the young Northumbrian was strongly excited by some peculiarities of manner in the stranger, which seemed not in harmony with his declared character. He proclaimed himself a Swede, yet he spoke Kenric's native tongue with perfect fluency; he played the harp with some

skill, though in a peculiar style, and sung words in a language strange to Kenric, which he asserted to be in part his own, and partly the productions of an Upsal scald, who had been for a time his tutor in the art. He declared himself a Scandinavian; and yet, as they sometimes continued their journey by night along the Gwethelin (one of the four great highways of Dunwallon), the Northumbrian observed symptoms of a passion to which it was, amongst the northmen, a capital offence to yield, and which is looked upon, by almost all mankind, as an evidence of internal baseness.

On the eighth day, at noon, they reached the hapless Cair Dorme, ere long once more to smoke in ruins, on the banks of Nene. Passing through the town, Inguar (for so was Kenric's new companion named) invited the latter to turn aside, and rest awhile, under the shade of a small ash

grove, upon the brink of the river. Here, as they shared their mid-day meal, the Scandinavian made his young companion acquainted with a considerable portion of his history. It is necessary for us to detail the whole at greater length, that the reader may understand the cause of those events, which, as mentioned in the last chapter, had already begun to menace the tranquillity of Inisfail. For this purpose, we must turn our eyes awhile from western Europe to a gloomier land, and a darker picture of the times to which our tale belongs.

The Finnish merchants who crossed the dreary moors of northern Sithead, on their way to the cities of Upsal and Sigtuna, stopped often at the cottage of a man named Gothurn. The trade by which this person obtained a livelihood, for himself and for an only son, was that of hunting martins, otters, and of decoying wild deer from

the waste, by means of tame animals of the same species, like those of which the voyager, Oshtere, made a present to king Alfred. In addition to the toil which he found necessary to the support of both, he was obliged to furnish to the neighbouring Fylki-kongr, or Land-king, an annual subsidy of the skins of the animals they slew in the chase, together with a bear-skin cloak of his own manufacture.

Inguar endured this life of monotony and suffering with more impatience than his aged parent. In the latter, custom had in a great measure wearied out the desire of change, and he appeared contented enough with his situation, except when provoked to anger by some mark of malice or of craft in Inguar. In other respects, he was a stern and silent man, and seldom conversed with the youth on any other subject than that of the chase, or their domestic occupations.

It happened that, one day, while his father was out with the decoy, a Finnish merchant having several horses laden with peltry and cables of whale hide and seal-skin, stopped at the door of Gothurn, in order to procure refreshment. Inguar, who never before had seen so large a cavalcade, and hoped to receive some proportionable fee, made haste to prepare the house for the reception of the stranger and his company. He strewed fresh rushes on the ground, and spread before them venison and mead, in such abundance as the cottage could afford. The travellers proceeded to consume their meal in silence, while Inguar, retiring to a corner of the hut, continued to gaze, with wonder, on the persons and attire of all.

When the travellers had concluded their repast, each placed a liberal gift in the hand of their boy host, except one, an old gray-headed man, who said, as he patted him upon the head :

“ Child, I have nothing to give thee in return for thy entertainment, but if ever thou travellest to Upsal, and seekest the dwelling of the Magus, Kurner, thou wilt be welcome to as good a turn.”

Inguar, who never expected to go to Upsal, returned with a sulky look this empty handed recompense, and stood in the doorway long after the cavalcade departed, thinking more of this man's avarice, than of the generosity of all the rest.

In some time after, the aged Gothurn, finding his end draw near, despatched his son across the moors, with intelligence of his sickness, to a relative who lived in a village near the sea-side. Inguar, who had never been farther than a mile or two from his father's cottage, undertook this journey with a mixture of eagerness and apprehension. Late in the evening of the following day,

he arrived at the place which had been described to him. Inquiring by name for the house of his kinsman, he was directed by a shepherd to a small hut, near the end of the village, at the door of which sat the man he sought, engaged in repairing the sides of his skin-boat with a piece of whale-hide. Inguar advanced, and, after kissing his beard, delivered him the message with which his father had entrusted him. The man lifted his hands in wonder when he heard it.

“Oh, Ake Thor!” said he, “if this be not a strange adventure! Thirteen times has the mid-winter month returned since he left our village. And art thou the son of Gothurn?”

“Gothurn had but one child when he departed,” said an old white-haired woman, who sat spinning wool near the door of the hut; “I remember the occasion well. He had been two years wedded; I know it well, for I carried

one of the lights before the bride, and he lost her before the nightless month. He was sitting one night," she added, letting her distaff hang by her side, and suspending the motion of her wheel, "mending his nets upon the shore, when the Singing Neck allured his wife into the waters, where she perished. After the next day, we heard no more of Gothurn and his child." When she had said this, she twirled the wheel, and resumed the action of the distaff.

"I know not where my father came from," answered Inguar, "but this I know, that he is dying now in the waste, where we have lived together from my childhood."

He was silent, for he perceived that a crowd of the inhabitants of the village, men and women, had gathered around, and were eyeing him from head to foot, with looks of wonder. The relative of Gothurn gave him welcome, and told him

that most of the persons whom he beheld were his relations. They were subjects of the same Land-king, and living chiefly by fishing, except when they were tempted, by the desire of plunder, to join the Bay-kings of the Baltic, in their descents upon the coasts of Livonia and Poland. Inguar gazed with astonishment on every thing he saw ; on the boats, on the children, on the household animals ; and he pleased himself chiefly, during the night, in prying into every corner of the house, and asking useless questions.

In the morning, all the relatives of Gothurn, whom the village contained, prepared to return with Inguar, to the sick man's cottage. A numerous company was thus assembled on the following evening, beneath the roof of their humble dwelling, and a scene of revelry commenced, such as Inguar, never in his life before had witnessed. He was still farther astonished, when, in a few

days after their arrival, he saw his sickly parent expire beneath the knife of his relative, the fisherman, who, according to the custom of those nations, anticipated, in this manner, the natural stroke of death.

It was in the end of the insect month, when the friends of the dead, after wrapping his body in ice, which they had the art of producing in the hottest seasons, in order to preserve it during the period of the wake, commenced the usual festivities which preceded the interment of the corpse. For nearly a month, the house was in a constant uproar with feasting on venison, drinking of mead and ale, singing, dancing, and other diversions, until all the provisions, comprising even that portion which was reserved for the Land-king's subsidy, were utterly consumed. They then laid out the body, dressed it in furs of beasts, and woollen garments, conveyed it to the place of sepulture,

and buried it beneath a mound of earth, interring with it, at the same time, a portion of the owner's wealth, as the custom of the country recommended.

Inguar, who had freely entered into the enjoyment of the tribe, surprised them all by refusing the offers which they made of permitting him to return and to live with them at the village. When they were out of sight, he hastened to his father's grave, opened it, and possessing himself of the little treasure it contained, threw down the earth again upon the corpse and returned to the cottage. Soon after, while he stood considering his situation near the cottage door, he was surprised by the arrival of the servant of the Land-king, who came as usual to collect his master's tribute. Inguar related to him what had taken place, and showed him why it was that he was unprovided with the means of satisfying his demand.

“ Let that excuse you,” said the emissary, “ with the Fylki Kongr himself, but it is my business, without any argument, to make prisoners of all who are defective. Bind him fast,” said he to his soldiers, “ and bring him away.”

The men, who were all attired in hauberks and leathern helmets, and armed with skiolds and brazen-headed spears, advanced and tied the youth as they were ordered. They were joined on the route by many similar companies, and Inguar heard them talk much, as they mingled their troops, of the wars between the Swedish and Nordman kings, and of the dexterity of their own Land-king in the sports and exercises which became a soldier. No one, they said, could contend with him in the use of the two-edged spada, the spear, and the battle-axe, double or single. No one kept so firm a seat on horseback ; no one swam so well as he ; he could make, of his

skiold, a boat upon the waves, and a house upon the land; he could skate with the speed of an eagle; he could dart the lance; and he knew how to manage an oar with inimitable skill.

“ But now,” said the person who was speaking in praise of the Land-king, “ the snow of the brain hangs white upon his shoulders, and his valour has descended on his son, the forest of whose head is still as black as midnight. Praise to the young Vikingr! Praise to Gurmund! he even excels his father. I have seen him in the ship, while the rowers were plying on their benches, walk without the vessel on the moving oars, and never miss his footing. He is a wondrous prince! I have seen him keep three daggers in the air, without once wounding his fingers, a feat which no hero that our country has ever produced, has to my knowledge exceeded.”

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN the castle of this accomplished monarch, Inguar was detained a prisoner for a week. It was a building of vast extent, crowded with troops, and enclosed by a rough stone wall, called, from its numerous windings, the Dragon of the castle. In the turret, where he was confined, he found two prisoners already, who had fallen by the chance of war into the hands of the Land-king. One of these was a blue-eyed and fair-haired young man, who wore a tunic of fine linen, the collar and borders of which were curiously em-

broidered, and his hair, which he was continually palming and dressing, was platted to its full length behind. Over his shoulders hung a short gaudy cloak, and on his head he wore a kind of conical hat adorned with several coloured circles. He was the first to accost Inguar, using the dialect of Denkirke,* which resembled that of Inguar's native tongue. He informed the latter that he had been now for nearly thirty nights a prisoner with his brother in the place, and that he was the son of a Danish Bay-king, who, after having enriched himself by the plunder of many a southern coast, had purchased a tract of land near the Sound, and thus became a Thiod-Kongr, or Land-king. "But at his death," added Ferreis, "he caused all his riches to be buried in some secret place, in order that he might compel his sons to become pirates. His war-horse,

* Denmark.

his brazen armour, his gilded helmet, and his painted skiold, he caused to be interred in his own monument. His riches I cared not for, but that beautiful helmet! If he had not been my father, I would have robbed his grave for it."

The other prisoner, a fierce and haughty looking man, addressed not a word to Inguar during the first day of his imprisonment, and often in a sullen tone reproved the levity of his younger brother, who was for ever talking, for ever shifting from place to place, now platting his hair, now changing from one foot, now another, now eyeing Inguar's dress with a look of mockery, which the latter did not forget, and smiling once or twice, as his eye rested upon a rent in his woollen tunic, or a bare patch in his skin coat, where use had worn off the fur.

He was seated one evening on the winding

staircase of the turret, when Ferreis came softly behind him and said :

“ Ho ! Inguar ! art thou willing to take a leap for liberty ? ”

“ The churl’s blood has not heat enough,” said the voice of Yrling, speaking from the room above.

“ Hush ! softly ! he must try it,” said Ferreis, “ a dagger’s point behind may spur him to it. Canst thou swim ? ” he added, in a whisper, to Inguar.

“ Yes,” answered Inguar, “ I learned that in the lakes where we used to watch for otters.”

“ Thou hast a lake to brave at present,” answered Ferreis, “ that will try thy sinews, and thou never dealtest more unkindly by an otter than Harold’s Nordmen will by thee, if they fish thee out of it. Keep a strong heart, for thou must battle with the ocean for a time.”

Inguar, without answering, followed him up the steps and was conducted to one of the windows that overlooked the ocean. Here, while Ferreis was occupied in removing the grouted cement that bound the corner stones to the body of the wall, Yrling, the other prisoner, entered for the first time into lengthened conversation with Inguar. He proposed to the latter that in case of their effecting an escape, which was very doubtful, he should, like them, take arms in the service of some Bay-king, and thus enrich himself by plunder, and make his name renowned by slaughter.

“If thou fight,” said Yrling, “like a valiant warrior, fearless of death thyself, and unsparing of the blood of thine enemies; if thou die, as every freeman swears to do, with arms in thine hand, thy valour shall be well rewarded. Thou shalt sit after death in the halls of Vingolf and

Valhalla, and eat thy fill of pork for ever amongst the heroes. Odin, whose delight it is to behold good blows on earth, and to see the sword of the valiant gash the body of the conquered, will reward thee in his palaces hereafter."

While he spoke thus, Ferreis reminded them that it was time to commence their operations, and they made ready accordingly. Night now had fallen, and a strong wind rushing shoreward from the ocean, made its waters chafe noisily against the base of the tower. While Ferreis removed the stones, Yrling gazed, with his arms folded, upon the lurid streak of twilight which yet reddened the waves of the rolling gulf of Bothnia, and Inguar looked upon the waters with a secret fear which he dared not suffer to become apparent. Yrling, now placing his foot upon the window seat, and compressing his person into a small compass, suffered himself to drop head-

foremost from the aperture. They listened for his fall, but the height and roar of waters prevented the sound from reaching them. Ferreis then pointed to Inguar a watch-fire on a distant part of the coast, toward which he should direct his course, and bade him follow Yrling. The latter dared not hesitate, although he felt a sudden chill when he listened to the comfortless tumult of the waves beneath him. Of the height he could not judge, for the darkness hid the ocean from his eyes. Feeling, however, the hilt of his companion's dagger on his shoulders, he suddenly raised his hands above his head, and dived stone-like into the thick gloom. The waters received him, after his long descent, deep into their bosom. He arose slowly to the air, stunned and enfeebled by the stern concussion. The breakers foamed about his head, and it was some moments before he could recover the view of the distant watch-

fire. Renewing his vigour at prospect of the weary distance which lay between him and safety, he extended his person on the surface, and with difficulty reached the shore.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON the fourth day after their escape, they were able to perceive, upon a wide and fertile plain, the mass of clustered cottages, in the midst of which the great temple of Upsal arose like an architectural mountain. They travelled by the Morasteen, a circle of enormous stones, which Ferreis pointed out to Inguar as the place in which the Swedish monarchs were inaugurated. Passing this place, a journey of half a morn brought them within the ramparts of the great metropolis of Sitheod. "This is Up-

sal," said Yrling, deigning almost for the first time to look round upon Inguar; and the latter felt his heart beat within him at a word of which he had heard so much. His companions, observing the wonder with which he gazed on every thing that he beheld, interested themselves with some kindness in making known to him the different objects that seemed to fix his attention. "Yonder," said Yrling, "is the dwelling of the currier who prepares leather for the coats and helmets of the warriors." "And opposite to him," said Ferreis, "dwells the worthiest weaver of woollen stuff in all Sitheod." "That fire," said Yrling, "which thou seest yonder on the far bank of the Sala, comes from the forge of Biger, the king's armourer." "And there," said Ferreis, farther still along the bank, thou mayest discern the abode of the king's tailor." "Yonder," said Yrling, "arise the

towers of the royal residence of Sitheod; and here," he added, "is the temple of the Supercilious."

Inguar stopt to gaze upon the gigantic edifice. The houses which they had hitherto passed, were for the most part such as they continue to the present day, simple buildings of wood, with roofs of turf. But now he stood to contemplate a building of a magnitude that was to him marvellous. A grove of broad-stemmed oaks surrounded a circular edifice, considerably higher than the spreading tops of the trees. A deep shade was thus cast upon the building, which seemed fashioned chiefly of wood, but impressing a feeling of awe on the imagination by its great magnitude. Around the open door, the Magi appeared, some passing in and out, and others seated in the shadow of the porch.

While Ferreis, went to make their arrival

known to their patron at the palace, Yrling bade the young Swede accompany him into the building. They arrived before the door of the temple, and were about to enter. "A Danish follower of Jarl Torquetil," said Yrling, addressing one of the Magi, who seemed inclined to oppose his entrance, "desirous to return thanks to Odin, for safe deliverance from bondage, and the disgrace of a dungeon." The minister gave way, and he entered, making Inguar follow close behind him.

The Swede, bewildered by the sudden splendour with which he found himself surrounded, placed for a moment his hand upon his eyes, and remained lost in admiration. After a pause, he ventured to look around him, and contemplate the stupendous and magnificent interior with a steadier eye. It was an oval building, vast in circumference, and deeply gilded all around, so as

to resemble one enormous pile of gold. A solid chain of the same precious metal, nearly a thousand ells in length, ran around the roof; and below, at the opposite side of the building, appeared the door, which conducted to the inner temple, or the place of sacrifice. The roof was carved into sculptured images of the different idol-deities of Scandinavia; and around the building were ten recesses, in each of which was contained the statue of an idol. There smiled the beautiful Blader, the lovely son of Odin, upon whose columns verses were engraved, which had the power of restoring the dead to life. Here frowned the fierce Niord, lord of the elements, whose task it was to govern the winds, the waters, and the up-bursting fire. Here stood the warlike Tyr, the giver of success in battle, and the model of the brave. Here sat the solemn Brage, whose thoughts were ever wise, and

whose words were ever eloquent and flowing, the prince of poetry, and the patron of the scalds. There too, appeared the watchful Heimdall, of the golden teeth, the centinel of Heaven; the sightless Hoder; the silent Vidar, whose strength almost equalled that of Thor himself, and whose magic shoes enabled him to tread on air and ocean, with a foot as firm as on the solid earth; Vali, the hero and the archer; and Uller, balanced on his flying skates, and holding aloft in his hand the bow, whose feathered message he could make so fatal. Completing the circle of the building, and again conducting the beholder to the smiling Blader, appeared his son Torsete, the peacemaker, a neglected god, whose task it was to reunite the broken friendships of men, and of the deities themselves.

Looking up, at Yrling's bidding, to the sculptured roof, the young Swede discerned the gigantic

forms of the principal goddesses of the Scandinavian idolatry. Here Saga sat in her lofty dwelling of Suarbeck ; there Eira, goddess of the art of healing, seemed stooping to cull simples at her feet ; and standing near, close veiled, appeared the figure of Gefione, goddess of chastity, a virtue ranking high in the morals of the north. Seated in a chariot drawn by cats, he next beheld the celebrated Freya, so highly honoured in Sitheod, whose beauty surpassed that of all but Frigga herself, and whose dwelling was in the paradise called Folvanga. She was here represented following the track of the faithless Oder, and weeping tears of gold upon the nations as she passed. Siofna, who inspired, and Lofna, who re-animated, the passion of love ; Vara, the avenger of broken vows ; Vora, goddess of curiosity and penetration ; Synia, the portress of Valhalla ; and Lyna, the guardian of those

whom Frigga had delivered from danger, here also had their effigies. Neither above nor below, however, could Inguar discover those of the three great deities of war, Odin, Thor, and Frigga, which were preserved, as Yrling told him, in an inner chamber of the temple, esteemed more sacred than this in which they stood.

Turning his eyes to the centre of the roof, Inguar next beheld the sculptured city of the gods, overshadowed by the towering ash, called Ydrasil, beneath whose boughs the deities were supposed to assemble for the purposes of justice. At the foot of the tree appeared the three Scandinavian destinies, Unda, Verdandi, and Skulda (the Past, the Present, and the Future), drawing water from the Fountain of Time past, which bubbled at its roots, and in whose waves it was believed the Spirits of Wisdom and of Prudence lay concealed. With this water they bedewed the ash,

and kept it ever green. The drops, descending from its leaves, fell to the earth, and formed, it was said, the honey which the bees extracted from the flowers. The topmost branches of the ash were concealed amid the clouds, its boughs seemed spread over all the earth, and its three roots extended, one through the city of the gods, and another to the Forest of Iron, on a distant part of the roof, where dwelt the sorcerers of the north, together with their giant brood, the monster Managarmer, who fed upon the flesh of the dying, and those two wolves who howled for ever in the track of the sun and of the moon. One of the Magi, observing the attention with which Inguar contemplated the hideous monsters of the Iron Forest, gravely informed him, that only a few days before, Managarmer and the wolves had made a vigorous attempt to swallow up the sun at noon day. They so far succeeded, that his

light was considerably diminished, and but for the terrific uproar made by the inhabitants of Upsal, there was little doubt, he said, that it would have been extinguished altogether. Following with his eye the course of the third root, Inguar traced it through what was meant to represent the surface of the earth, as far down as the nine worlds of Hella, where it was gnawed by the serpent called Nidhoger. Here, likewise, the artist had exerted his skill on a more terrible subject. The nine great gates of the dreadful prison-house appeared from wall to wall, opposite the northern extremity of the ceiling. Half-painted and half-sculptured in the wood, the horrors of the place were plainly visible. There rained the poison showers through a thousand springs, and embedded in the horrid walls appeared the mangled carcasses of serpents, which supplied materials for the hideous masonry. A

winged dragon, blacker than the night, was seen hovering in a circle above the multitude of those who were sentenced to the Evil Home, and preparing to make its accustomed banquet on the bodies of the impious, and those who died of age or of disease. Here, seated on her gloomy throne, appeared Hella, the daughter of the giantess Angerbode, and the dreadful sovereign of the place; whose hall was Grief, whose table was Famine, whose knife was Hunger, whose servants were Delay and Slackness, whose gate was Precipice, whose porch, Faintness, whose couch, Pain and Sickness, and whose tent was Cursing and Howling. Not the least hideous object of the whole was the ghastly figure of the queen herself, the Scandinavian death, half coloured blue and half the hue of living flesh. With a gathered brow and lips apart with fear, Inguar contemplated the terrors of this place of

punishment, so wildly, yet so strikingly embodied in the language of the Edda and Voluspa.

At this moment, Yrling beckoned him to where he stood. "Observe," said he, pointing upward to the ceiling, "that courteous figure which seems to move, amid the divine assembly, with so much grace and dignity. That is Snotra, the goddess of good manners, there too are Jord, and Rinda the wife of Odin; and behind, with feet prepared for active movement, and looking back like one who waits for some command, is Gna, the messenger of Frigga. The group of virgins, whom thou seest with goblets in their hands, and robes that hang so light about their forms, are the Valkyries whom Odin sends into the battle to mark out the victors, and those who shall be slain. The two, who pass before, are Gudar and Rostra, chief of the Valkyries, and around are the thousand spirits

of the elements and all the planets. But on what is thine eye fixed with so eager an attention?"

"Seest thou not," said Inguar, "that eagle with outspread wings, who sits upon the topmost branch of the mighty tree, and whose eye, bent downward, seems to regard the shape of the squirrel, which appears ascending rapidly amid the branches? What are those figures, and what is their interpretation?"

"Thou enquirest," answered the Dane, "into a mystery concerning which thou canst learn nothing of me. All I can tell thee is that the bird is a bird of astonishing sagacity, and that the squirrel continually hastens up and down the tree between its top, which is above the heavens, and its third root, which penetrates the depths of Hella. His pleasure is to sow discord between the Eagle and the serpent Nidhoger, whose fangs are busy on its root. This shall continue till the

twilight of the gods shall come, when Loke the Accuser shall be unchained ; when his monstrous offspring, the wolf Fenris, shall open those tremendous jaws which touch the heavens and the earth, and would extend farther if there were space sufficient ; when Surtur, the great black, shall annihilate the gods themselves, darting flame and horror over all the earth, and reducing all things human and divine to one terrific wreck. Wo to the earth ! Wo to the heavens ! Wo to the race of Aske and of Embla, when Loke shall be set free !”

“ And thus,” said Inguar, fearfully, “ thus is it that all things shall terminate ?”

“ Not for eternity,” replied the Dane, “ else wherefore should Odin be adored as the father of ages ? Out of the hideous mass shall arise a new world, more lovely than the present, a new heaven called Gimle, a palace more splendid than the sun, and with a roof of gold, and a new hell, Nastrande,

the shore of the dead, which shall remain for ever.”

Inguar was silent, and remained for some time pondering on what he had heard, half satisfied, half anxious still to be informed, like one who has drunk beyond moderation of an intoxicating beverage, and wavers between forbearance and desire. He walked slowly around the temple as the level and yellow sun sent lengthened streams of light across the solemn interior, now striking on the form of a gigantic idol, and now reflected with a dazzling splendour from the golden wall.

After they had spent a sufficient time in admiring the place, Ferreis, returning from the palace, entered the temple, and informed his brother that the Jarl had, since their captivity, embraced the life of a Vikingr, and was now absent on an expedition to the coasts of Poland. They were, however, well remembered at the castle of

the king, his father, and their reception there was certain to be favourable. Inguar cast on them an imploring look, as they turned to bid him farewell.

“And are you going to leave me,” he said, “a stranger, friendless, and fortuneless, in this great city?”

“Strangers ourselves,” answered Yrling, “friendless and fortuneless we entered Upsal, and by our own exertions we hewed out our way to fortune and to friends. Thou art young and strong, and the city is large. We could be of little use to thee, and thou wouldst but encumber us.”

“Be of good heart,” said Ferreis, perceiving Inguar droop at these words; “thou hast a handsome frame, and if thou wouldst but learn to plat thine hair, and obtain a comelier attire, there is no telling how high thy condition yet may reach.”

They departed, and Inguar, passing out of the temple, went to lean against the lofty oaks, where he wept bitterly.

In this situation he did not continue long unobserved. One of the Magi, who was pacing up and down before the porch, and eyeing him askance, while he perused the Runic tablets which he carried in his hand, at length drew nearer, and accosted him in a voice which Inguar thought he recognised. On looking up, he had no difficulty in remembering the countenance of Kurner, the old man who had treated him so ill at his father's cottage.

When he had made himself known to the Magus, the latter interrupted him with a gesture of assent—"I know thee well," said he, "and remember well the promise which I made thee. What service canst thou render me in case I feel inclined to take thee into my employment?"

“ I can decoy the wild deer from the waste,” answered Inguar, readily, “ and know how to lay traps for martins. I am skilled also in the hunting of otters, and have sometimes even brought the brown bear low with the javelin. In fishing, also——”

“ I fear,” interrupted Kurner, with a smile, “ thou wilt find little scope for the use of thy talents in Upsal, and still less in the service of a Magus. But follow me,” he added, “ thou art a promising youth, and I may find employment for thee till thou canst meet a better master.”

Inguar followed him through a number of wooden cottages, scattered irregularly along the banks of the Sala, and at length arrived at a small house little superior to those which were inhabited by the ordinary citizens. At a little distance beyond it were the suburbs of the city, which, as Inguar could perceive, were inhabited by people

of the very lowest rank, dwelling some in miserable huts, others under the shelter of ditches, hollowed out to receive them, and some had even taken up their abode in the clefts of the rocks which overhung the river side. The interior of Kurner's dwelling was plain, and not the cleanliest in Upsal. A thick, heavy post, arising from the centre of the floor, supported the turfen roof, and the furniture consisted of a table and two stools. Along the walls were many wooden shelves, on which were placed a great number of Runic tablets, such as that which Inguar had seen him reading, and which were composed of ash, of birchwood, or of the inner bark of trees. The Magus set forth the table, and placing on it some horse flesh, with a brazen cup of ale for Inguar, and another of more delicious pigment for himself, bade the latter sit and eat, a command which Inguar readily obeyed.

After their repast had been concluded, the latter, at the desire of Kurner, gave him a detailed and candid narrative of his late adventures, reserving to himself those circumstances only which immediately followed the burial of his father. For some time after he continued in the service of the Magus, his chief employments being to attend on the person of his master, to bear his robes and tablets to the temple on days of solemn service, and to prepare for him the draught of pigment, which he loved ; a delicious beverage, composed of the sweetest honey that Estland sent to the city, of wine from the southern coasts, and of stimulating spices. Inguar longed to make farther enquiries respecting the mysteries of the temple, but the Magus was studious and reserved in his habits, and not a little dirty, so that Inguar, finding his employments at the same time incessant and monotonous, became almost as weary

of them as he had ever been of hunting deer upon his native moor.

This tediousness was relieved by a discovery which he made in the course of a month. He had long observed that the sides of the table, the stools, and even the head and foot of the bed or couch in which his master slept at night, were covered with figures, and a little examination enabled him to perceive that they were the same with those which were written on the bark and ashen tablets used by the Magus. This led him to many conjectures on the mystery of reading, but supposing that some supernatural gift was requisite for that accomplishment, he refrained from questioning Kurner, while his veneration for his character increased. The latter frequently detected him in the act of poring over the inscriptions, and sometimes imitating them with black slate on the walls and pillars of the house. This circum-

stance awakened his interest, and he kindly afforded to Inguar the opportunity of acquiring the knowledge for which he seemed to have so keen a thirst. After he had, by the exercise of a capacity, whose vigour astonished his master, rendered himself somewhat proficient in the interpretation of the Runes, he ventured to intimate to Kurner, the desire which he felt of being initiated into the depths of the sanguinary mythology of his nation. The latter looked grave and even sad at the request, but promised to take an early occasion of leading him to the interior of the temple, and explaining to him those mystical emblems, respecting which Yrling the Dane had left him still in ignorance.

One day, while Inguar was employed in cooking their simple meal of flad-brod, or oaten bread, and horse-flesh, a sudden tumult was heard in the streets of Upsal. Immediately after, a

loud shout arose, mingled with the clashing of shields and spears like those sounds of applause which the people used at the assemblies of the judges. It was answered as he could observe in the direction of the river.

“The Vikingr!” was the first word which he could distinguish in the general acclamation; “The Vikingr! Torquetil, the Vikingr!”

Joining the crowds who hurried past the door of Kurner’s house, Inguar soon beheld a sight that was to him as grand as it was new. The river was darkened at a distance by a fleet of vessels of various sizes, some with sails expanded and swelling in the wind, others darting along with oars as light and nimble as the fins of a dolphin. As they approached the land, it was easy by its size and splendour to distinguish the bark of the Bay-king. It was a vessel of pine-wood, manned by rowers and warriors, among

whom appeared the Jarl Torquetil himself, remarkable above the rest by the size of his person, and by the painted emblems on his skiold. While Inguar stood contemplating the spectacle, he felt a hand upon his shoulder, and the voice of Kurner sounded in his ear :

“ Inguar,” said he, “ does thy curiosity still hold respecting the secrets of the temple ? ”

Inguar eagerly replied in the affirmative.

“ Then follow me,” said the Magus, “ and when we have dispatched our noontide meal thou shalt be satisfied.”

The youth observed, during their repast, that the eyes of Kurner were often fixed upon him with a mournful expression. When it was concluded, he arose, and bidding Inguar follow him, proceeded in the direction of the temple.

Arrived at the place, they remained for some time silent, while the broad shield of day sunk

slowly and with a solemn splendour behind the shining roofs of the city. The moon, as she went down, put on a deeper gold, and the stars came faintly forth to twinkle in the darkening air. By degrees, the number of passers by the temple became fewer, the murmur of the city diminished, and no sound disturbed the solemn stillness of the hour, except the distant ringing of some armourer's anvil, or the splash of passing oars upon the breezy Sala. Sitting at the porch of the temple, and fixing his eyes upon the heavens, Kurner resumed his speech. He instructed Inguar, now, without reserve, in all the mystic records which were contained in the Runic tablets of the Magi. He taught him, how in the beginning, before the sun arose or the earth was yet in being, a brood of giants dwelt in the forest of Iron; he told him of the wars between those giants and the gods; he taught him how the sons of Bor, overcoming

the giant Rymer, formed from his lifeless frame the world in which they dwelt. The earth, he said, they fashioned of his flesh, the mountains of his bones, the sea and rivers of his blood, and of his teeth and the splinters of those bones which they had broken, they formed the scattered rocks that make the midnight horrid. The skull, he said, they shaped into this glorious vault of heaven, and the stars which twinkled now above their heads, were the tapers which they hung within the dome to give it light; he taught him likewise, how the human race began; how the slayers of Rymer, walking on the shore, found floating on the ocean surge two logs of wood, of which they formed the first man, Aske, and Embla his spouse. He described to him the car of Sunna, composed from the flames of the southern world, and the skins of air which were placed beneath the horses of the Shining Mane,

to cool their blood, and to make the morning winds. He placed before him in sounding words the many glorious dwellings of the gods whose images he beheld around him; he told him of the Accuser Loke, and of his wars against the deities; how he was seized, and bound, and doomed to dwell in torture upon three sharp rocks until the twilight of the gods, when the ship Naglefara, composed of dead men's nails, and piloted by the giant Rymer, should be set afloat; how the Accuser howled and writhed beneath the dripping venom of the serpent which the vengeance of Odin had suspended above his head; how his convulsions frequently shook down the cities and the towers of earth; and how since those fierce wars the watchful Heimdall was left in charge of the Celestial Fort; the White god, whose teeth are of the purest gold, who sleeps by night less soundly than a bird, whose sight embraces by

day a circle of a hundred leagues around him, whose ear is so fine, that he can hear the grass grow on the earth, and the wool on the sheep's back, and who bears in his hand an alarum trumpet, the blast of which is heard from heaven to earth, and even to the depths of Hella.

As he concluded, Kurner bent upon the youth that mournful gaze which had so often excited his curiosity. "I would," said he, "that this were all I had to tell thee of the mysteries of Odin's creed, but thou hast secrets yet more horrible to learn, for which it were as well prepare thee before hand. The chamber to which thou art about to be admitted is the place of sacrifice, where oft, though seldom mentioned in the common ear, the altars of the three chief deities are stained with the gore of human offerings."

Inguar observed the Magus shudder as he spoke these words, and he started himself at the

announcement, though fearful of suffering Kurner to observe his horror. The latter, however, did not seem displeased at the passing sign of natural sensibility.

“Thither,” said he, “we cannot penetrate, until the temple is deserted, and the Runner has retired to take his nightly rest. Wrap thyself in this bearskin, and follow me once more into the building. Thou shalt rest upon the bench within until the Frosty Mane* gleams from the mid heaven, and the priestess only is left, who keeps watch beside the altar of Odin.”

The night had now completely fallen, and as they passed the doorway, they heard within the temple only the echoing footstep of one of the Magi, returning to his home until the morning. Inguar followed his master to the bench of which he had spoken, and rolling the bear-

* The Moon.

skin close around his person, reclined at length, while the Magus, proceeding onward, disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

' SLEEP surprised him in the attitude of rest. His brain was haunted by dreams of the things which had been told to him, and his visions changed rapidly and frequently from the most glorious to the most appalling fancies. Now borne by the goat-drawn car of Oka Thor, he flew through the portals of Biskerner, his celestial palace, and wandered in amaze amid the five hundred and forty gorgeous halls into which it was divided. Now he aimed the arrows of the son of Rinda, now darted along with dizzy speed upon the

skates of Uller, now hung upon the music which flowed from the lips of Brage, and now with glowing breast he swung the ponderous battle-axe of Tyr. Then borne in the Flying Shoes of Vidar, he scaled the many coloured bridge, Befrost,* and almost stole upon the sleeping centinel of Heaven. Then did he see the watchful Heimdall startled by his sounding footstep on the Rainbow, awake in haste, and snatching his terrific trumpet, blow out a blast that shook the universe. Then, flying far, he passed the stormy region of Noatun, and beheld its monarch Niord, chastising the rebellious winds and the tempestuous ocean. Again his vision changed, and he found himself hurrying downward to the nine gloomy worlds of Hella. He saw the Accuser Loke, of handsome figure and perfidious eye, bound on three pointed rocks, and howling

* The Rainbow.

beneath the poison-spume of the serpent who wound his giant circle with untiring wings above the region of the dead. There fell the venom showers upon those who had died basely of disease or age, and here through the thick gloom he heard the fearful complaints of the despairing vicious.

In the midst of these terrors, the Magus came to awaken his disciple. It was now dark midnight, and the gloom in the temple was so dense that Inguar was tempted for some moments to believe his vision real. Recovering his recollection, he arose and followed his master, who, after having secured the gate of the building, proceeded across the interior to the door of the inner recess. The darkness was so great that Inguar could only follow the Magus by the sound of his feet. On arriving at the inner door, Kurner paused and knocked gently with one finger slightly bent.

The door was thrown open by an aged priestess, and a sudden burst of light shone out upon the pair, and struck far behind them into the temple. They entered quickly, and the door was closed again. The priestess, gathering, with a proud action, and a sullen scowl at Inguar, her flowing robes around her, moved slowly toward the fire which burned within, while Inguar gazed around with a gloomy and a troubled awe. On an altar of great extent, which was raised on the opposite side, he beheld the three gigantic idols of the supreme deities, whose places, as he had heard Yrling say, were missing in the outer temple. The discourse of Kurner had enabled him to recognize, by their attributes, the names of each. The throne and sword, together with his massive armour, announced the first as the warlike Odin, worshipped here as the Father of Battles. On his left stood Thor, the Active,

crowned with a diadem of stars, encircled with his belt of strength, and grasping in either iron gauntlet his sceptre and the club Thiolner, terror of the giants. Again, upon the left of Thor, he beheld the lofty Frigga, holding in the one hand a sword, and in the other a bow. Around this altar was an open space, and on the opposite side arose a second, lesser in size, and plated with sheets of iron. From this ascended the flame of the perpetual fire, and near it stood the wrinkled priestess, still and motionless as a statue. Upon the altar lay a brazen vase, and near it a brush, used in sprinkling the blood of the victims on the bye-standers, together with several broken masses of flint. Beneath these there hung a ponderous silver ring, which was smeared with something that, to Inguar's eye, appeared like clotted gore. The strong flame ascending toward the roof, flung all around it an unequal

splendour, and lit the features and the figures of the armed idols with a changeful and uncertain brightness. It shone likewise upon the curtained recess which led to the chamber of the priestess, to the apartment of Heida, the prophetess, and the abode of the great Oracle, which, as Inguar had often heard, excelled all those in Nordland, in Denkirke, and even in Dalia. It gleamed, moreover, on the withered form and haughty features of the priestess, who, by her scornful gaze and high deportment, seemed to esteem herself scarce less divine than the idols which she served.

After a sufficient time had been allowed to render the eyes of Inguar familiar with the wondrous sights by which he was surrounded, they departed from the temple, and, with thoughtful steps, pursued their way in silence through the midnight streets, until they reached the dwelling of the Magus.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FOR several days after, the Magus appeared absorbed in the deepest dejection, nor did Inguar venture to address him upon former subjects, although his breast was oppressed with thoughts and feelings which he longed to utter. At length, the health of Kurner began to yield to his depression, and he was unable to attend his customary duties at the temple. Inguar prepared, as usual, his beverage of pigment, and served him with an assiduity sincere, at least, if not disinterested. He found means, moreover, to pursue

his study of the Runic characters, and was, ere long, almost accomplished in the art. So great was his proficiency, that Kurner, while he was himself disabled by sickness, employed him in tracing runes for those who came to consult him on their destinies, and to employ his magic influence in their favour. As Kurner enjoyed no slender reputation in the city, the number of those applications was not small. The Magus had his runes to suit the character of every enquirer. There were victorious runes to give the warrior confidence, and bitter runes to avenge the injured on his foe. There were also runes for the sick, and runes for desponding lovers; runes for the evil-minded; runes for the melancholy; runes for those who set out upon a journey; and runes for those who sought prosperity at home by quiet traffic. There was no species of ill so terrible, no good so desirable, that the one

might not be won, and the other averted by Kurner's mystic scrolls. Nor did their efficacy diminish when the magus was constrained to employ the hand of Inguar in their fabrication, nor was the number of applicants diminished. The characters inscribed in every case were nearly similar, but Inguar knew how to vary the material, and the mode of writing, according to the necessities of each. Sometimes they were inscribed from right to left, sometimes from top to bottom; sometimes they described a circle, and sometimes the letters ran counter to the course of the sun. Some were written on polished pieces of ash, some on the bark of birch, some on the leaves of trees, and some on parchment. He acquired, moreover, at this time, some knowledge of the imperfect astronomy of the north-erns; he spent much time at night, wrapped in his comfortable bearskin, and heedless of the

freezing air, in observing the movements of the Great Dog; that wondrous star that never bathes its light in the waves of ocean, and by means of which the piratical Vikingr was enabled to extend his rapacious excursions to the distant shores of Livonia, and even through the dangerous Scaggerac, as far as the fertile regions of the south. The thirst of knowledge grew upon him as he proceeded, and he longed to share in the adventures of the Bay-kings.

The disease of Kurner, which at first seemed only the effect of mental sorrow, assumed, by slow degrees, a dangerous character. His bodily strength became exhausted, his flesh decreased, and his whole frame exhibited the signs of an irretrievable decay. As his vigour diminished, his conversation also lost its active character. It was now almost confined to questions which regarded their daily traffic, to expressions of

discontent at the manner in which his food was prepared, and to complaints of Inguar's indifference in discharging the other duties of the lonely household.

Towards the close of a midwinter night, while Inguar was sleeping on a bed of rushes at the foot of the narrow wooden couch on which his master lay, he was awakened by the voice of the latter. He arose with speed, and hastened to the side of the bed. Kurner was sitting up, and supporting his back against the lettered board which formed the bed's head.

"Inguar," said he, after a long silence, and in a voice no longer querulous, "thou must shortly seek another master. Thy services to me will be ended sooner than thou art aware."

The youth, terrified, uttered a hasty expression of dissent.

"My kinsmen," continued the Magus, "will

divide my goods, of which thou knowest there is but a scanty portion, and thou wilt be left bare as when I met thee first. Thou hast acquired, however, an inward treasure, which, if thou beest wise, will save thee from the extreme of penury. The dreadful Hella, the parti-coloured queen, has struck the springs of life within my breast, and I feel them yielding even while I speak. Now let me die in silence."

A short time elapsed before another word was spoken. It was Kurner who broke the silence.

"I have long observed," he said, after bending on the young Swede a gaze already haggard with the approach of death, "that thou dost not share the iron spirit of our countrymen. I saw thee shudder in the place of sacrifice when thine eye first fell upon the gory armilla, and I could also see that the description of the sanguinary pastimes of Valhalla afforded thee but little

satisfaction. It is therefore, Inguar, I am led to speak to thee without reserve, and to warn thee of the dangers by which thou art encompassed. If thou wouldst shun the torture of remorseful recollections, the living Hella of the heart, avoid the service of the gods of Upsal. Thou seest these aged hands. From my early childhood was I devoted in their temple, and yet not custom's self can make my soul contented when I think of the horrors which these hands have wrought within that temple in the dreadful name of Odin. I do not agree with some impious Nordmen, who openly declare that they rely much more upon the strength of their own arms than on the aid of any deity, nor with the insolent Rolf of Denkirke, who called the Father of Battles a blustering spirit, and refused him sacrifice, nor yet with certain licentious scalds, who dared to utter the same sentiments in public places, heed-

less of the anger of the gods, and of the laws, which doom such impious speakers to perpetual exile. I do not agree with them in thoughts so foolish, because there is that within our breasts, and all around us, which plainly says that we are under the dominion of some great directing deity, and their denial sprung from pride alone; pride of valour in the warrior, and pride of genius in the scald. But of this, I am equally assured, that if truth exist on earth, it is not in the service of the slaughter-loving gods of Upsal. At least, young friend, be very sure of this; there is no peace of heart for him who serves their temple."

Inguar listened in silence, and with deep attention, but made no reply. Soon after, the weakness of the Magus seemed increasing. He turned with an effort on his seat, and extended his arms toward the astonished Swede.

"Assist me, Inguar," said he, "to pass into

the air, that I may look upon the heavens before I die."

"Thou hast not strength sufficient," replied Inguar, anxiously, "and the night is piercing cold."

"It is not colder," rejoined the Magus, "than these limbs will be before the day returns. My strength is little, but it is fit I use it, for it will not long be left me."

The young man aided him in rising, and did not withdraw his support till he had placed him on a seat without the dwelling. The night was calm, and stilly cold, like death. From his seat the eyes of the expiring Magus could discern the frozen surface of the Sala, and the distant plains and leafless forests of Sitheod. The sky was starlit and serene, and the broad full moon descended slowly down the distant steep of heaven. The Magus, as he gazed upon the car of Mane, seem-

ed, by the expression of his eyes, to be absorbed in the deepest contemplation.

“Whither I go, Inguar,” said he, “I know not, but I will not, like my countrymen, hasten to begin the doubtful journey by offering violence to the work of the divinity within my frame. I have never learned,” he said, lifting his hands and eyes to heaven, “what God it was who formed those glorious stars, and that beautiful moon; but to him, whoever he be, I recommend my spirit.”

Saying these words, the Magus sunk down, and expired upon his seat.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HE had truly judged that Inguar would meet little kindness from his kinsmen. To the astonishment of all, no trace could be discovered of the wealth which Kurner was supposed to have amassed. Nothing could exceed the industry of the search which was made by the friends of the deceased ; but it was a fruitless labour, and the inference only remained, that it had been destroyed or secreted by its possessor for some unaccountable reason. Some of them were so malicious as to insinuate that his young scribe

must have had some hand in its abduction, and this suggestion brought on Inguar a load of abuse and violence. They railed at him in the most bitter and offensive terms, and stripped him of every thing except his clothing and his book of runes, which latter they left him, only through fear of the spirits, who were bound, as they believed, to obey its mystic characters. They then divided the spoils of the dead among them, and thrusting Inguar from the door, recommended him to be grateful for having retained his life after his delinquency.

Crafty as he was cautious, Inguar had still less doubt than his kinsmen respecting the property which Kurner left. He was aware of the existence of that diseased instinct, to which even minds of the highest tone are not inaccessible, by which men are led to gather and secrete vast sums of wealth, with no other object than

the mere indulgence of the detestable passion which we are forbid to name; and which frequently induced them, with an unaccountable selfishness, to bury with themselves the knowledge of their useless riches. The young Swede also knew that the dupes who came to be enlightened, by the Magus, on their future history, compounded for their own fortunes by making his. He had often observed the satisfaction which the latter seemed to enjoy in these profits, with how careful a nicety he weighed the silver, depositing each portion in his purse, after long and pleased inspection; for none, perhaps, are more apt, when not most watchful against indolence, to fall into sordid habits, both of body and mind, than the studious and the solitary. These reflections led Inguar to examine a small garden, to which he was aware the Magus often retired at the close of day. But the morbid ingenuity of the

old man's only passion, had enabled him to baffle all attempts at discovery, and Inguar left the place in disappointment.

Approaching a little valley near the house, he saw, beneath the shelter of a rock, a man in the habit of a scald, walking to and fro in the greatest perplexity, and repeating aloud some lines of a droquet, or song, of the peculiar prosody of which the following veracious translation may furnish some idea :

“ Fiercer far than furious war,
Rough as ruffled rivers,
Carried in thy crashing car,
Quick-eyed maid of quivers.”

“ Quick-eyed maid ? No ! ” continued the bard, in prose, and shaking his head ! “ Quick-eyed lady ? No ; Quick-eyed—quick-eyed—quick-eyed. What will become of me ? I shall never do it. Quick-eyed—”

Inguar, who knew just enough of the poetry

of the scalds, to see the nature of the bard's dilemma, said aloud, after standing for some time, amused with the display of poetic agony :

“ Quick-eyed queen of quivers.”

The scald started as if Brage himself, the Scandinavian Apollo, had descended to assist his labours. He flew to Inguar, clasped him around the neck, and discovering that he was but a human being in want of employment, at once received him into his own service. Here he remained for some time, his chief occupation being that of listening to the poet's high encomiums on himself, and his equally liberal abuse of every other scald in Upsal. These were interspersed with occasional strictures on the degeneracy of public taste, and the difficulties true merit had to contend with in its way to public favour. This easy life continued until his new master discovered that Inguar had, in point of fact, little ear either for

poetry or music, and that the timely succour he had lent, in the droquæt or ode to Frigga, was more the effect of accident, than genius or skill. On making this discovery, he made no ceremony whatever of turning the young Swede out of his house as an impostor.

Once more without a friend, Inguar went down alone to the banks of the Sala, to meditate on what he should do. The river, in some places, was covered from bank to bank with a solid crust of ice, and many of the citizens were passing from one shore to the other, as over a bridge. Inguar passed over with the rest, and arrived at the forge of the king's armourer, which had been pointed out to him by Yrling the Dane, on the morning of his first entry into Upsal. The ringing of the hammer attracted his attention, and looking in, he saw, by the light of the furnace, the figure of his old acquaintance Ferreis. He

was standing near the anvil, and examining, with a gratified eye, the shining blade of the weapon, the scabbard of which was already suspended to his side. It seemed by the countenance of the workman, who, with brawny arms folded athwart his chest, looked alternately from the weapon to the eyes of his customer, that it was a new purchase, of which the latter was admiring the beauty and completeness.

“ I will have it inscribed with the handsomest Runic,” said Ferreis, enclosing it at length within the scabbard, “ and I will give it a double name. Inasmuch as it is keen, it shall be called Destroyer, and whereas it is beautiful it shall be termed Dazzler. Destroyer it shall be, when it shines in the bath of blood upon the billows of the ocean, and it shall be Dazzler, when it hangs peacefully by my side, at the evening festival.”

Bidding the armourer farewell, and coming forth, he recognized Inguar, and accosted him with kindness. The latter made known to him his desolate condition, and Ferreis proffered his assistance to get him introduced into the service of the Jarl Torquetil. Inguar accepted with thanks the proffer of the Dane, and followed him upon the instant to the place where the fleet of the Vikingr, for the most part locked in ice, were stationed. Upon the shore, and in many parts of the frozen river, the vigorous and large-boned troops of the Bay-king were engaged in martial exercises. Some wheeled and darted on the rapid skates, some flung the spear, some sent the arrow whistling at the painted target. Some, in mock combat, brandished the spada and the halberd; and a few, of the rank of leaders, were seen gracefully fencing with the lighter *swerd*, such as Ferreis had purchased

from the armourer, which resembled in its curve the sabre of the east. They found the Jarl standing near his ship, out of which he had never closed an eye since he embraced the kingdom of the seas. He readily agreed to the request of Ferreis, after he had learned from the lips of Inguar himself, that he could not only catch martins and otters, but also trace the runes in every direction, and declare at what times the Goddess Frigga made her distaff† visible beneath the Road of Winter.*

Different, from this time, was the life of Inguar from what it had been in the house of the mild Kurner, and different were the habits and tempers of his new companions. A warrior professed, it now became his duty to acquire a warrior's vigour and a warrior's dexterity. His moods of silent thought gave place to habits of

* The three stars in Orion's belt.

† The milky way.

sharp and rapid converse ; his boyish limbs were made to anticipate the firmness of maturity ; and his soft and tender flesh acquired the hardness and the strength which were needful for the dealing and avoiding death. He was taught to move in armour, to cover his person with the skiold, to cast the spear, to use the grappling iron, to ride, to skate, to do all, in short, that constituted in northern eyes the outward merit of an accomplished warrior. As to the interior, his companions excelled him at an almost hopeless length. At first, indeed, he listened to their narratives, for he longed to add something to the knowledge which he had obtained from Kurner, but none of Torquetil's followers had ever passed the Sound, and their victims were commonly of customs somewhat similar to their own. From the moment he became satisfied of this, Inguar avoided rather than sought the intimacy of the sea

people; and he became more weary of the mechanical and objectless round of corporeal exercises, which were now his sole employment, than he had ever been of the silent monotony of the household of his late master. Still more weary did he become of the character of the people. Pride, excessive even to absurdity, sensuality of the coarsest order, and an unsparing cruelty of heart, were vices that seemed to brood over the city like its own dark northern atmosphere. Bloodshed was common, although the country was at peace, for scarcely a day went by on which some insult was not given and avenged in single combat. There was in the conduct of those duels, as in all the warlike etiquette of the northmen, a species of extravagant and barbarian honour, the spirit of which, not a thousand years of what is called improvement, have banished from the bosom of the world to which they left it. Of this singular prin-

ciple, Inguar witnessed a remarkable example within a few months after entering the service of Torquetil.

Yrling, the Dane, in an altercation with a warrior of equal rank, having undergone the epithet of "Nithing," (a term equivalent to poltroon,) struck the insulter and challenged him to make good his charge upon the spot. A space was cleared upon the ice where the taunt was given, and Yrling succeeded in overthrowing and disarming his opponent; in doing so, however, he lost his own weapon. The "honourable code" of the day rendered it imperative on the person so insulted to be satisfied with nothing less than the death of his antagonist. Yrling, aware of this, placed his knee upon his enemy's breast, and endeavoured, with a savage calmness, that made Inguar shudder, to strangle him to death. The vanquished Swede, abhorring this blood-

less agony, besought him to fetch his sword, and pledged himself to wait his return without changing his position. To the astonishment of Inguar, Yrling at once consented; and, still more to his surprise, the vanquished kept his word, although he might have easily, by its violation, recovered his own weapon and renewed the combat. The Dane returned and wiped away his shame with the blood of his unresisting foe. The warriors who were present lifted him on their shoulders as they were wont to do their newly elected kings, and bore him to his ship in triumph. The Vikingr, when he heard it, gave him leave to add a new honour to his skiold, and a sounding dro-quæt was composed for the occasion by an eminent scald. Meantime the body of the Swede was buried under a mound of earth upon the shore.

Such were the progenitors of European honour; such were the haughty fathers of the duel, whose

spirit, descending to the nations which they half subdued, deluged France with blood, and gave birth to scenes which rivalled the gladiatorial shows of ethnic Rome in extent and in barbarity.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WITH the return of spring, the day of Odin's yearly festival approached. Inguar was anxious for its arrival only because it was intended to precede, by a few days, the sailing of the Vikingr's fleet on a piratical excursion to the coasts of southern Europe. The waters of the Sala were now again unlocked, and the armed barks tossed their prows upon its wave, like war-steeds tugging at the bridle and impatient for the charge. During the few days which ushered in the festival, the ways of the city became crowded with new-

comers. New fleets of the small trading ships arrived in the river, laden with the choicest skins, and with store of fish from the Baltic; and the market-place was crowded with yokes of oxen, lowing lonesomely beneath their burthens of honey and fish, from the plains and lakes of Estland. The noise of hammering, and the voices of artificers busily at work, were heard daily within the temple, and all mouths were filled with talk of the approaching day of sacrifice.

Upon the morning of the festival, Inguar took his place among others near the temple porch. As far as the eye could reach, in the direction of the royal castle of Upsal, the streets were thronged with the artisans of the city, the country shepherds, known by their bended staves, the skin-clad merchants from the interior, and the isle of Aland, and the sharp-eyed mariners who traded between the Baltic and the Gulf

of Bothnia. A passage was preserved through the midst, in order to afford room for the procession, which was expected shortly to approach. The mind of Inguar reverted, while he waited the coming of the barbarous pomp, to the warning speech of the compassionate Magus.

After some hours of tedious expectation, and many false alarms and disappointments, the sound of distant music made the arrival of the pageant certain. Heads were thrust out along the eager line, and a murmur, as of a hoarse torrent, arose from the people, when the gleaming lances of the first horsemen came in view. They were a troop of iron-fisted Swedes, whose thick-limbed and broad-breasted steeds made the stones shoot fire wherever they set their hoofs. In the midst of these appeared a species of four wheeled chariot, the body consisting merely of a coloured cloth suspended between four gilded posts, in which were seated

the Runner, the Adelfrunner, the Diar, and the Hofgodar of the temple. Then followed the scalds, on foot, some singing songs of praise, in which Odin was celebrated under all his terror-striking epithets, while others accompanied the strain with the sound of the tabor and the trumpet, the rapid pipe and flute, the citola, the cymbal, the systrum and the campanula. The next in order were the victims of the sacrifice, guarded by two lines of foot soldiers armed in the pliant hauberk, with helms of tough bull-hide, and one-edged battle-axes. Twelve horses, of a deep and shining black, whose backs had never bent to human servitude, were led in front, rearing fiercely at the unaccustomed restraint, and striving to paw down the servants of the temple by whom they were conducted to their death. In gentler fashion, and lowing mournfully for their native meadows, appeared six yoke of oxen,

snowy white, and garlanded with the few wild flowers that blossomed in those dreary plains. Next came as many dogs, of the fierce and sagacious breed which was used to chase the bear, led on in couples, some with up-pointed snout, sending forth a doleful howl into the heavens, and others as they run along busily snuffing the earth, or looking from side to side with active and enquiring face. The line of victims was closed by a score of falcons from the cliffs of Bothnia, each borne on the hand of a slave, an offering almost too precious even for the altar of Odin himself. Behind the row of victims, standing in a simple car, of which the sides and wheel-spokes were richly carved and gilded, appeared the aged King of Sitheod. Over a snow-white tunic, curiously gathered on the breast, and embroidered around the edges, he wore a purple cloak, which was fastened on the right shoulder

by a clasp of gold. A long gray beard descended so as to hide a portion of his breastplate, and his hoary hair was pressed close and straight upon his temples by the massive golden crown. In his hand he held a capacious censer of the same metal, and his feet were covered with the pointed shoe, which was worn by all classes. He was followed by his son Torquetil, the Bayking, on horseback, accompanied by many of his captains, among whom Ferreis, and his brother Yrling, rode at no great distance from his person. The procession was closed by a numerous troop of horsemen armed like those by whom it was preceded, with the addition only of a ponderous mallet, a singular weapon, borrowed from the Saxons, which was suspended from the saddles. The armed retinue, which accompanied the procession, and followed the royal car, could not, on Inguar's computation, have fallen short of

five thousand warriors, equipped from head to foot. When the gray-haired monarch came within view of the multitudes who were assembled around the temple, their acclamations drowned the minstrelsy of the scalds, the trampling of the thousands of horsemen, and the lowing of the cattle. The soldiers clashed their swords and spears against their skiolds, and added a brazen tumult to the general peal of ecstasy.

As Inguar yet was member of no Gild, or society of warriors, he could not be admitted to the place of sacrifice, and he forbore to enter the temple, as it would not be in his power to be present at the ceremony. Ere long, however, an opportunity was afforded him of meriting the honour, for the want of which he was excluded. Walking thoughtfully along the streets, and pausing only at intervals, to admire some novelty of dress or figure amid the groups of strangers

who thronged the city, he stopped, at length, before the open gateway of the royal palace. It was a building somewhat like that of the Fylki-Kongr, to which he had been taken from Gothurn's cottage, and like it was built upon a rocky elevation, with a deep and well-filled moat; but its extent was much more considerable, and the armed troops, by which it was defended, far exceeded in number and equipments those of the tributary sovereigns. While he stood gazing on the gloomy towers, and listening to the distant din of the idolators, his ear was startled by cries of terror, and a rushing of hurried feet upon his right. Almost at the same instant an armed figure came hurrying down the steep which led from the postern to the draw-bridge, and darted by the drabants, who shrunk aside, all weaponed as they were, as if they had been struck with fear. The guards who sur-

rounded the gateway leading to the drawbridge, seemed also panic-struck, and made way in haste, as if for something sacred. The multitude without fled, huddling together, in all directions, as the waters of a lake into which some ponderous mass has been suddenly precipitated. Inguar alone, who knew not the nature of the evil from which they fled, remained without changing his position to gaze upon the furious warrior. The latter stopped, at length, in the centre of the open space before the castle, and, sending forth, from the depth of his lungs, a broken howl, resembling the cry of a rabid dog, abandoned himself to a paroxysm of delirious rage. He rent from his shoulders the cloak which was his principal covering, whirled his naked spada above, behind, and before him, with a rapidity that made its gleaming reflection alone visible in the air, and sometimes gnawed the edges of his iron shield,

growling deeply, and casting threatening looks from side to side, like a jealous mastiff at his bone.

After the first effect of the panic occasioned by his appearance had subsided, the people turned to gaze upon the maniac (for such he appeared). Amid the clamour of a thousand tongues, the yelping of dogs, the screaming and laughter of children, the shrill conflict of women's voices, and the hoarse and hurried questions of the men, Inguar was able to gather some sentences with distinctness. "It is the Berserkir," said one. "Take him, or hew him down!" exclaimed a soldier, grasping the handle of his battle-axe. "No, no!" cried a third, seizing the arm of the doubtful warrior, "let him alone, for it is the spirit of Odin fills him." "It is against the law," said a fourth, "that those phrenzies should be indulged out of the battle." Thus were the crowd divided in their minds, and

none, not even the warriors, dared to attack a being who was supposed by many to be inspired by Odin himself, with the zeal of havoc which appeared in his looks and actions.

At length a cry arose of "Torquetil! Torquetil! Behold the Jarl! the Vikingr!" and a war-horse charged with the burden of the renowned warrior came like a whirlwind from the temple. Reining up his steed when he came in sight of the infuriated soldier, he shook his spear with a menacing air, and shouted aloud:

"What now, Bascai? How comes it that you have lost all fear of the decree of the chiefs, by which these humours are forbidden out of war? Lay down your spada, or by the shoulder of my horse, and by the edge of my sword, I'll make you do it."

The berserkir answered him by a renewed yell of insane ferocity. He continued to brandish his

weapon, with a violence so heedless, that it grazed the neck of the Vikingr's steed, and drew forth a stream of crimson over the shining black. The animal neighed with anger, and reared so suddenly upon its hinder feet, as almost to unfix the seat of the practised horseman on its back. The soldiers, now forgetting their superstition in the indignation they felt at beholding the insult offered to their chief, rushed all with one accord upon the Berserkir, and sought to drag him, living or dead, within the castle walls. But this was not a feat to be accomplished without bloodshed. The savage recusant, throwing his broad skiold before him, rushed fearlessly upon the armed throng, and broke the line of his assailants with an irresistible and crushing vigour. His limbs, disencumbered of the weight of mail, gave him an advantage over the harnessed figures that encompassed him, and his strength and nimbleness, aided by the

preternatural excitation of his phrenzy, made his presence fatal to several of his assailants. Dismay went with him wherever he turned, and the clamorous press had scarcely closed behind him, when the terror of his aspect, and his gory spada, made his foes recoil in front. For several minutes, the popular belief, which supposed that persons so affected were invulnerable, seemed to be almost justified. But nature could not long administer to a demand so excessive. The Berserkir weakened. He ceased to utter the terrific yell, with which at first he had made the streets re-echo. He drew his breath with sobs, and his blows rang harmless on the scales of the helmet, or failed to divide the iron-bound skiold as they were wont. His depression augmented as rapidly as the excitement by which it had been preceded, and he was able to offer but a faint resistance when Inguar, who could be bold upon occasion, seeing

his weakness, and watching his opportunity, sprung within his skiold, and twined his arms with all his youthful force around the thick and shaggy neck of the barbarian. Both came together to the ground, amid the shouts of the multitude. At the same instant a blow from the battle-axe of Yrling struck the steaming weapon from the grasp of the Berserkir. The latter, unable to disengage himself, or to wound his enemy, made an effort to fold him with the hollow of his skiold, and crush him to death against the earth. But the people now closed in, and rescued the young soldier from his grasp. The Berserkir they bore into the castle. Others, without much ceremony, removed the bodies of the slain ; while several of the people gathered around Inguar to offer their assistance and congratulations. A currier, as he wiped with his leathern apron the soil of the combat from the person of the latter,

said he knew how it would end, for the valour of these Berserkir was like undressed peltry, that showed well at first, but wore badly. "They make bad soldiers, as thou sayest, truly," observed a warrior, who was wiping his helmet close at hand, "for the strength which they show at the onset never fails to desert them at the second charge. Thou hast seen a stripling too mighty for such a moving tower as Bascai." "Who is the stripling?" asked a third. "Look again?" said a fourth, "rememberest thou not the face of him who wrote the runes during the sickness of Kurner Magus?" "Be silent," cried a fifth, "and make way for the Vikingr."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TORQUETIL approached, and having discovered that the victor was the young man whom he had a few months before received into his service, enquired of Yrling whether he was yet a member of any Gild. Being answered in the negative, he commanded Inguar to follow him to the temple.

It was now high noon, and a cold sunshine lighted the scene of the festivity. Several fires were made in the streets, which led to the porch of the sacred edifice, at which were seen the artisans of the city, and many of the Vikingr's

troops, employed in cooking the flesh of the victims, which was distributed to the multitude, and in passing round the intoxicating cup of Odin. Following his sovereign into the temple, Inguar was surprized to see the wide area crowded with people, who were seated at tables, and occupied like the multitude without, in making merry with the cheer which had been already divided to them from the sacrifice. The clamour here was prodigious, for many were already intoxicated, angry voices were mingled with the sounds of mirth, and at intervals a pair of warriors might be seen rising from table with haughty looks, and issuing from the building accompanied by a few of their companions to decide some difference in single combat. It seldom happened that more than one of the parties returned, and when he did, the absence of his antagonist seemed to make little alteration in the cheer of the assembly. At

the entrance of the place of sacrifice, Inguar was commanded to stand still, while the Vikingr proceeded in order to procure him admission from the chief priest. He remained listening to the noisy joy which now prevailed in the temple, and gazing on the savage faces which were half obscured by the vapour of the steaming feast, on the golden walls, and on the visages of the ten idols, down which the condensed mists ran trickling like a warrior's sweat. He looked on, in a musing posture, and thought of the lonely evening on which the Magus had led him into the still and solemn edifice, and impressed his mind with the awful wonders of the triple universe. The advice of the Magus, also, in his dying moments, he did not forget.

In a short time, the two young Danes came to conduct him into the place of sacrifice. Its appearance now was somewhat different from

what it had been when he saw it at midnight, under the guidance of Kurner. Three virgins appeared together by the fire of Odin. The space before the altar of the three great idols was covered with vessels of brass and stone, which were filled with blood, and before the iron-plated altar, on the opposite side, stood the chief-priest of Odin, a hoary man, with two of the inferior ministers. Torquetil, together with Yrling, Ferreis, and other members of their gild, stood near the entrance to witness the approaching ceremony. At a sign given by the aged Runner, Inguar was commanded to come forward and stand, all armed as he was, in the space before the altar, on which the eternal fire was burning. The Runner then taking in his hand the brush which lay upon the altar, and wetting the hairs in one of the bloody vases, sprinkled it upon the persons of the youth and of the bye-standers, and rubbed

it over the silver armilla which hung from the altar of iron. With his right hand ungauntleted, and grasping the gory ring, Inguar then repeated the form of the oath, by which he became a member of the gild to which the Danes belonged. He swore to be true to his brotherhood, to defend their lives while they retained them, to avenge their deaths when they should fall, and never to lay down his own arms but with his life. The laws of the gild were then recited before him, by which he was prohibited from ever declining the combat with a single adversary, and from seeking safety by flight from less than five opponents. Inguar, with head erect, listened to the rule of the society in silence; and then, after washing his bloody hand, accompanied his brethren to their place in the festival.

In passing the royal table, he saw, more nearly than when he had beheld him in the procession,

the gray-haired monarch, who was seated with the twelve judges of the city, drinking large draughts of mare's milk and pigment. Inguar took his place next to Ferreis, at the table of Torquetil, and after quenching his thirst, rendered ardent by his late encounter, with a horn of morat, began to observe the proceedings of those by whom he was surrounded. At several tables the warriors were noisily occupied at dice, and other games, and Inguar was astonished to observe the self-restraint and forced equanimity which the gamblers manifested, while they often staked their liberty, and even their very lives, upon a throw. A clear space had been made before the royal table for the dancers, who, at certain intervals, accompanied by the music of the lyre and cymbal, excited the admiration of the assembly by their surprising agility, and the difficult postures which they knew how to exhibit.

Sometimes a warrior chose to assist in those performances, and won the tumultuous applause of the spectators by his dexterity in twirling a number of balls and daggers in the air together, without damage to his fingers. In this respect Ferreis obtained high distinction for himself and for his favourite Dazzler, but not without having a corresponding mortification to encounter. Returning on tiptoe to the table, full of self-approbation, and delighted with the plaudits by which he was followed, he happened to mistake the place of Jarl Anslaff, one of Torquetil's captains, for his own. The mistake was scarcely made, when Anslaff, who had been speaking to one of the scalds, returned, and chafed indignantly to find his place usurped. Ferreis was in the act of adjusting the belt of Dazzler, with a smile of self-complacency, when a drabant approached at the command of the Vikingr, and

conducted him to the lowest seat at the table, amid the gibes and laughter of his companions in arms. They did not proceed to the length of throwing bones at him, as the curial law of King Cnute afterwards permitted, but his mortification without it was abundant. "O haughty Odin!" exclaimed his brother Yrling, in a low voice, as he gazed upon him with a look of indignant shame, "it is pitiful that so worthy a heart, and so honourable a mind, should be doomed to the ignominy of so contemptible a folly."

As the early twilight fell, torches were lighted in the temple, and the glaring lustre which they threw over the scene of festivity, gave a gloomier character to the licentious and riotous debauch. The songs and music of the scalds were, to the mind of Inguar, the most agreeable features in the distorted joy of the meeting, and to those, unmusical as he was, he listened with a still atten-

tion. Their poetry had the same air of gloomy exaggeration and wildness of imagery which had impressed his imagination so deeply in hearing the wonders of their mythology from the lips of the Magus. They celebrated the praises of the aged king, and of his ancestors. They sung also of the feats of Torquetil, upon the field of Pirates, for so they termed the ocean. They compared him standing in his ocean-horse, to the giant Rymer, piloting the ship Naglefara, amid the wreck of the vessel that floats upon the Ages, and added much more than Inguar could at all comprehend. One droquet in particular attracted universal admiration, by the grandeur of its imagery, and the exactness of its prosody. It would be difficult to convey to the reader's mind an idea of the singular metre in which it was clothed, but the following was the tenour of the thoughts :

What darkness is this on the blood of Poland's vallies ?
Why is the shining mane obscured, and the Car of Sunna arrested in the scull of Ymer ?
Fly ! fly ! ye men of the shore !
They are the steeds of the wave, they are the skates of the Bay-king !
Fly to the extreme of the foundation of the Air !
Let the daughter of night conceal you beneath her bones,
For the hailstones of the helmets are above your heads,
And the sweat of the earth will shortly be turned into blood.
Know ye not Torquetil ? Fear ye not the torch of his face ?
His dreadful presence makes the crash of arms more fatal,
His hand was never yet withheld from bloodshed,
His heart is ignorant of the feeling of forgiveness,
The groans of the dying, the shrieks of the despairing mother,
The wail of the young infant turn him not aside,
Wherever he treads the very earth is robbed of her fleece.
And the naked coasts he leaves after him confess his power.
He is subtler than Loke, he is stronger than the whole brood
of giants,
And I doubt whether Thor himself would be able to resist his
prowess.

A tumult of applause from the assembly declared their admiration of the minstrel's skill, and of the character which formed his subject. Torquetil accorded him a pair of brazen gauntlets, in testimony of the gratification which he

had received, although Inguar found an impossibility in comprehending more than half of the composition. From this he was relieved by Ferreis, who, with a characteristic levity, had now forgotten his disgrace, and resumed his former position by the side of his new companion in arms. He explained to him the meaning of the terms by which he had been perplexed; and placed in his hands a Runic treatise on the art of poetry, which had been written by one of the scalds, for the dull of brain amongst his brother minstrels, and their auditors. This, Ferreis said, they should peruse together more at leisure, but in the meantime, he made him observe that it contained likewise a catalogue explanatory of the mystical imagery which had bewildered Inguar. "Thou observest," said the Dane, "with what expansion of soul he terms the rivers of Poland, the blood of her vallies, and the sweat of the

earth ; with what fire and spirit he compares the ships of Torquetil to sea-horses, and calls them the skates of the pirates ; with how noble an elevation of mind he terms earth the foundation of the air, and bids her hide the unhappy fugitives beneath the rocks, which he likens to her bones. To give a just notion of the devastation which attends the presence of the Vikingr, he says boldly, that his presence robs the very earth of the green herbage, which is her fleece, and he concludes the eulogy by verging in the zeal of his commendation upon the borders of impiety." Ferreis then proceeded to expatiate upon the metrical beauties of the composition, and bade Inguar remark, that every verse comprehended exactly six syllables, that in every two verses three words commenced with the same letter, and that in every verse two syllables occurred of the same sound, like the returning stroke of the cymbal

in a concert of the scalds. He was proceeding to explain the difference between the perfection and the imperfection of this syllabic harmony when the voice of a second minstrel interrupted him. The accent of Nordland was upon his tongue, and to the astonishment of those who heard him, instead of emulating his predecessor upon the theme which he had chosen, he sung the praises of a rival sovereign, the King of Nordland, and of his son, Gurmund, whom Inguar remembered to have heard spoken of by the troops of the Land-king, in whose castle he had been a prisoner. The latter, in an especial manner, was the subject of his applause, and he described, in terms more simple than his predecessor, but yet with no less effect, the lovely country which he had beheld in his excursions to the south, and of which he intended shortly to possess himself. "Those," he said, "who had always spent their

lives under a chilling northern sky, could form no adequate notion of that delicious region. Not even the heaven of Gimle, not even the palace of the golden roof, could afford a greater variety of joy. It was an island beautiful as it was remote. It lay far off among the beams of the setting sun. Its shores were clothed with trees of an ever-moving verdure ; its air was bland and temperate, as if it had never been broken by the cry of war ; the soil was fruitful, and the halls of Blitner were not serenest than its inland groves. Eternal sunshine dwelt upon its hills, and eternal music sounded in its vallies, for scarce a finger there but was familiar with the harpstrings. But the people were not worthy of their climate. Though fond of action, and not contemptible in war, yet they were not ashamed to consider peace a blessing ; and the men were often there as tender of heart, as the youngest mothers

of the north. They wept for their buried friends; they wept at the sight of suffering in others, and they were often observed to weep, even for the offences themselves in secret had committed against heaven. With a race so weak of heart, how could the arms of Gurmund fail to be successful? He would come upon them like the thunder from the womb of the black north, like the river of spring, leaping down from the dissolving hills of snow, like the ruin upbursting through the earth, when the Accuser Loke is writhing in the Evil Home. Their sunshine he would darken; their music he would turn into shrieking; he would give them cause for tears, and he would share amongst his stern-hearted followers the delights which he had sought so far, and won so dearly."

There was no one to reward the singer of the Nordman's praise, and soon afterwards, the

king arose to return to his castle, and Torquetil to his ship, in which his example was followed by many of his troops, including Inguar, who now strictly obeyed that rule of a Vikingr's life, which forbade his ever sleeping under a roof, or drinking by a hearth on shore.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE same riotous mirth which filled the temple and the streets of Upsal, on the day of the festival, and during the whole night, continued with little intermission, until the time arrived for the sailing of the Vikingr's fleet. The days were spent in coarse intemperance, and during the night the passing torches shone on groups of noisy men, intoxicated by strong drink, or by the rage of quarrel and contest; on the bodies of those whom drunkenness had overthrown, and not unfrequently on some who had fallen victims

to a long cherished revenge, or to a sudden enmity.

The place appointed for the naval sacrifice, intended to propitiate the gods at their departure, was near the Morasteen, or stone circle, which had attracted the attention of Inguar on the morning when he first entered Upsal. The day was not so auspicious as that which had ushered in the festival of Odin, and the hopes of the sea-people were obscured by many gloomy omens. A shower of blood, it was said, had turned the snow to crimson, on the housetops, and the Raven on the banner of the Vikingr's ship was observed to droop its wings. These, and other similar auguries, made it appear expedient to propitiate the offended gods by a sacrifice of a more precious kind than that with which the day of Odin had been celebrated.

A council was held at the Morasteen early

in the morning, before the sacrifice commenced. It consisted of the aged King, of Torquetil, of twelve judges, and of the assembly of the people, most of whom attended in arms. Here the necessity of the contemplated expedition was discussed, the increasing wants of the people were insisted on, and the shameful life of peace which they had now been leading since the month of short days. Whenever any of the speakers gave utterance to a sentiment favourable to war, the people manifested their approbation by loud shouts, by the clashing of their lances, and the striking together of their mighty skiolds. The expediency of war having been assented to by acclamation, the next question to be considered was the choice of a leader, and "Torquetil" was the name which resounded in every mouth. The election having been completed, a space was opened at the entrance of the Morasteen, in order

to admit the captains of the fleets, who, according to custom, were to convey the Vikingr on their shoulders to the place of sacrifice.

The temple appointed for the rite was a subterranean crypt, within a short distance of the Morasteen. In the midst of an aged oak wood a mound arose which seemed partly artificial and partly natural, indented with circular ridges to its summit, and covered with the few wild flowers which the season and the climate allowed to put forth their tender bloom upon the air. The base was surrounded by great unhewn uprights, like those of the stone circle, and one larger than the rest appeared upon the summit. On one side appeared an opening, into which those only were permitted to enter whose presence was necessary to the progress of the ceremony, and the orifice was so low that they were compelled to creep in upon their knees. As

the moment of sacrifice drew nigh, the demeanour of the multitude who thronged the wood and the neighbouring plain was altered, and to the mind of Inguar the whole scene had something in gloomy accordance with the fearful rites which were about to be performed. A dead calm lay upon the breast of nature, and the dark vapours gathered overhead from all parts of the horizon, like spirits of evil assembled to brood over the festival of hell. Not a leaf was stirred upon the old oak wood, and no other noise was made by the assembled people than the unavoidable sound arising from the concourse of so vast a multitude. All waited with suppressed anxiety the appearance of the Magus, who was to announce to them the acceptance of the unnatural offering. At length, a gory figure was seen to issue from the mouth of the crypt, and all eyes were eagerly turned upon the face of the officiating minister. Dismay, how-

ever, was the consequence of what he said. He came to announce to them the unabated anger of the gods. The three victims had died successively beneath the blow of the fatal ox-yoke, but in every one of them the current of the heart was still as frozen water. The gods, he said, were only to be appeased by the blood of some member of their own troop, and the gild in which Inguar had been lately enrolled was commanded to prepare for the casting of lots.

Some heard this with shuddering, but it was only momentary. The greater number felt more troubled in mind at the gloom which brooded over their war prospects, than at the individual violence by which the life of each was menaced. The members of the gild entered the orifice of the crypt in silence, and Inguar had now an opportunity, which even the fear of death did not prevent his using, of bestowing an eager scrutiny on the ap-

pearance of the place, and of its inmates. After passing a long gallery, which rather became narrower than otherwise, as they advanced, he found himself in a kind of cavern having eight sides, and vaulted in above by large flat stones. Three recesses in the cavern, opposite to the entrance, contained as many roughly hewn images of the same idols which Inguar had seen in the place of sacrifice at Upsal. An altar was raised in the midst, before which the victims of the gloomy superstition of the north lay, cold and ghastly, by the empty vessels of stone. The vault, together with its hideous group of figures, both living and dead, both natural and imitative, was only lighted by the now mouldering fire, which burned in the centre of the altar. The members of the gild stood all erect, and motionless as iron, while the Magus, after shaking together the lots in helmet, drew forth the name of him who

was to be the victim. It was that of Yrling the Dane.

There was deep silence for some moments after the name had been announced, and then the conduct of the spectators was such as it might have been if Yrling had been suddenly called to the enjoyment of some great distinction. They viewed him with looks of admiration, as one predestined to the plains of Ida, and pressed around him with expressions of esteem and admiration. Yrling had formed to himself exalted visions of the renown and power which he should acquire in the ensuing expedition, and there was nothing which he less expected than this fatal interruption to his career of fame. Not even, however, for an instant, did the suddenness of the change affect his look or his deportment. He neither appeared more ardent, nor less firm. The same stern and gloomy energy of mind which governed

all his conduct, made itself strongly manifest at this moment also, and not even his brother's eye could detect, in his gesture or accent, the slightest testimony that nature had gained any thing within his breast. A haughty curl was on his lip; and his look, as he laid aside his helmet, seemed to rest with scorn upon whatever it beheld. His only words, as he submitted himself to his fate, were addressed to his executioner:—

“Thou wilt have fulfilled,” said he, “all that I desire in death, when thou hast provided that no bondsman shall be permitted to lay his hand upon my corpse, and that no hired scald shall sing my death-song. That duty may best be done by my brother Ferreis, for it is he who best can tell my deeds.”

One day, soon after that of the sacrifice, while all the warriors were busily occupied in mending

old armour, polishing shields, brightening rusty spadas, and making other warlike preparations, Inguar was thus accosted by the now lonely Ferreis:—

“Inguar, hast thou as yet selected a foster-broder in the gild?”

Inguar answered in the negative, for he knew no one with whom he wished to form a connection so lasting and intimate.

“Be mine, then,” said the Dane. “The Vikingr is bent on directing his prows beyond the Sound, and even across the stormy Categat, into the great ocean that flows toward the setting sun. My brother Yrling is at the banquet of the gods, and I have not a friend whom I would entrust so far as thyself. Let us make this compact, and preserve it.”

Inguar gave a ready consent, and Ferreis immediately applied to one of the magi to receive

their vows. The latter acquiesced, and digging a clod of earth, bade them follow him into the temple. They stood before the recess which contained the image of the warlike Tyr, and here, at the desire of the priest, the left arms of both were made bare as far as the elbow. Their weapons were next unsheathed, and Ferreis, making an incision in his flesh with a small dagger, handed the bloody weapon to his friend to imitate his example. The blood of both was received by the magus into the same silver cup, and the spada of Inguar and the shining sword of Ferreis were smeared with the mingled gore. Dividing the earthen clod, and placing a portion on the head of each, the Magus then heard them vow an everlasting friendship, and swear by the edge of the bloody weapons at their feet that the death of one should not pass unrevengeed by his survivor. Their weapons then were

cleansed and returned to the scabbard; the wounds of both were staunched, and the foster-brothers returned together to the ship of the Vikingr.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE morning came, and the fleet went swiftly down the Sala, leaving behind them along the shores almost the whole population of Upsal and its neighbourhood, who had assembled to cheer them with a loud farewell. Before sunset, the billows of the Baltic rocked their barbed prows, and Inguar, as he took his turn at the oar, looked back to his native country, over which the shades of night were now descending. As he felt the mighty ocean heave beneath, it seemed to him as if the great element were a docile creature

appointed to bear him to the accomplishment of new and great adventures. It was now, while the sun went down behind the cold hills of Sith-eod, and the fleet of the Vikingr cut its way rapidly over the almost breathless waters, that Ferreis first attempted to fulfil his brother's parting wishes. The Jarl Torquetil, whose eye was fixed on Inguar at the oar, looked quickly round on hearing the first burst of the death-song, for it seemed to him like a new presage of evil, in addition to those which had preceded their departure. He did not, however, attempt to interrupt the strain, to which, by degrees, the whole fleet became attentive. The rushing sound of prows against the coming wave was gradually diminished to a peaceful ripple, the dipping of the measured oars became more gentle, and at length the voice of the orphan minstrel was the only sound which the great armament sent over

the quiet waters. Like all the extemporaneous compositions of the northern poets, it was much more simple than those which were the offspring of art and of reflection.

THE QUIDA OF YRLING, THE DANE.

“ O shores of Sitheod ! O hills of Sitheod, so distant and so cold ! I sing to you a farewell song ; the death-song of Yrling, the death-song of my brother, who died in your land.

Thou, Odin, knowest how his spirit rose in the battle. Thou, Ake Thor, canst tell what strength was in his arm. He stood as a god on earth, and it was fit that for the gods he should be slain.

His shield was white when he left Denkirk, and painted with a thousand honours, now it is buried in his grave. He slept beneath it in the wars ; he swam upon it in the strife at

sea ; it covered him in the battle ; he rests upon it in his tomb, for Yrling was a warrior.

When last we left Sitheod, his sword was the keenest in the fleet of the Bay-king. It is rusting now in darkness by his side, and his arm is not less cold. Never again shall Yrling scatter terror on the coasts ; never again shall he fill his bark with spoil. The gayest attire and the richest ornaments were the accustomed harvest of his battle-axe.

I now go forth alone, though Yrling was my brother. We were twinned together ; together we were taught the arts of war ; we left our home together ; together we fought, together we were captives, together we escaped ; we always lived together, but together we did not die.

Shades of the departed brave ! Heroes of Valhalla ! He whom you envied while on earth, is now again your rival on the plains of Ida.

Receive him, O Vingolf, in your sounding halls !
Attend him with the sparkling mead, ye Valkyries,
for he served you well in the battle.

Cold hills of Sitheod, I leave you now alone,
and without sorrow except for the bones of Yrling.
Dance, nor fight, nor feast, nor noisy havoc shall
ever now be pleasing to my heart, for the wea-
pons of Yrling shall never more drink blood."

There was something in the voice and man-
ner of Ferreis, while he sung, which would have
raised him in the opinion of his foster-broder,
but that his esteem was qualified by an unseason-
able outbreak of the habitual foible of the Dane.
In a few days after, when they meditated a de-
scent upon the shores of Rugen, in order to in-
crease their supply of provisions, Inguar heard
his friend lament that his purple cloak was ruined
on the morning when he crept into the gallery of
the gloomy crypt which adjoined the Morasteen.

“It was not accident then,” thought Inguar, “that made him class the plunder of apparel amongst the virtues of his brother Yrling.”

The descent was made, and the sword of Inguar for the first time tasted blood. So brief, however, and so ineffectual was the resistance offered that the circumstance would hardly deserve mention, were it not for an incident which drew on Inguar the attention of his brother-pirates.

Five of the sea-warriors, among whom were the two foster-brothers, set together upon a single islander, allured by a pair of curiously ornamented boots, the spoil of a Saxon conquest, which graced his sinewy ankles. The limbs which bore them were nimble, and at sight of the hopeless odds their owner turned and fled. After pursuing him a little way into the interior, three of the pursuers gave up the chase, and it was continued

only by Ferreis and Inguar; by the former for love of the boots, by the latter for love of his foster-broder. Thrice was the javelin of Inguar raised to cut short the islander's retreat, and as often did the virgin weapon drop harmless by his side. Often had it made the target ring at Upsal, but never before had its brazen point drank blood. At length, Ferreis closed upon the islander. The latter, seeing Inguar at a distance, and trusting in his superior strength, no longer refused the combat. He turned upon the Dane, and dealt with his battle-axe a blow upon his skiold, that made its iron scales ring loudly, and brought Ferreis staggering on his knee. Before the blow could be renewed, and before Destroyer could avenge the insult, the weapon of Inguar came hissing through the air, and pierced the brain of the stranger. Ferreis began to strip the unhappy islander of his dress and arms, not by any means omitting the

boots, which had so nearly escaped him. They were not yet, however, by the laws of the Vikingr, indisputably his. All the spoils that had been taken in the morning were collected together, according to custom, on the sea-shore, in order that they might be divided amongst the warriors by lot, and with a trembling hand Ferreis deposited the boots upon the common heap, around which the troops were gathered with covetous eyes. Here they attracted the attention of Torquetil, who, setting them apart with the butt of his lance, requested in the tone of one who did not expect to be refused, that he might be permitted to retain them for himself. The sullen looks of the greedy crew betrayed the unwillingness which no tongue desired to be the first in declaring. Inguar, however, who saw the anxiety of his foster-broder, walked toward the Vikingr, and seizing the boots which they had earned so dearly, flung them back

upon the heap. "If the lots declare them thine," said he, "thou mayest claim them, and not otherwise; for lives as valiant as thine own have been adventured for this spoil."

A low clashing of arms announced the general approbation of this speech, and the casting of lots commenced. The boots were amongst those things which fell to the share of Inguar, and he gave them to Ferreis. The latter was deeply grateful for the gift.

"The preservation of my life," said he, as he drew on the boots, "was nothing, for that Destroyer might have done without thee; but the preservation of my boots, from the great hoofs of Torquetil, is what endears thee to my heart. I will call the one Defiance, and the other Rugen, and together they shall be termed the Foster-brothers in commemoration of this day's adventure. They shall be dear to me as the shining handy-work of

Biger, the armourer of Upsal, which hangs from my girdle. But for thee, thou wilt do well to beware of the Vikingr.”

CHAPTER XL.

THE month of fair days had gone by, and the nightless month had already warmed the frozen mountains of the north, before the fleet of the adventurers, leaving behind them all sight of shore, ventured to direct their course by the guidance of the stars alone. At first, directing their prows northward from the Skaggerac, along the coasts of Nordland, they had proceeded so far, that in the calm nights the thunder of the great whirlpool of the north was heard distinctly by the pilots. It was then that, opposing their sculptured sterns to

the hills of Nordland, they ventured out upon the great abyss of ocean, careful to keep at night the light of the Great Dog upon the right side of the ship, and that of the Shining Mane at noon upon the left. They came nearly within sight of that lonely isle* of snow, which, not long after, was discovered by the ships of the Vikingr Neddod, and peopled by the men of Nordland. Here the wind struck them on the right, and the rowers rested from their labour. Turning their prows toward the World of Fire, † and spreading their broad sails upon the mast, they darted swiftly along the surface of the sea, like ravenous dolphins in pursuit of prey. It was now that the sluggish temper of the warriors made itself apparent. By day they did nothing but devour their undressed meat, pass round the drinking cup without distinction of persons, until all, except the pilots and the captains, were intoxicated, and

* Iceland.

† So they termed the south.

murmur sulkily against their leader. By night they slept in heaps like swine in the bottom of the boats. They were dissatisfied at being now a month without the opportunity of plunder, for, lazy as they were, the hope of havoc never failed to rouse them.

The crews having nothing else to occupy their attention, began to recal to mind the fatal omens which had preceded their departure, and many said that they would be fulfilled through the indiscretion of Torquetil in venturing on so long a course at sea. On the fifth day after they had turned their prows to the south, there was a whisper among the crew of the Vikingr, that the Raven had been seen a second time to droop his wings that morning. To many this was a sure denotement of a speedy and a dark adventure, and, superstitious as the omen was, the result did not belie it.

Toward noon, a cry from one of the ships on the left aroused Inguar from one of his moods of meditation. It became general throughout the fleet, and the youth on looking up saw all heads turned toward the east. In that direction Inguar also looked, and the cause of their alarm was manifest. A fleet, of more than two hundred sail, darkened the surface of the horizon, nearly trebling in number the force of the Vikingr of Sitheod. Prudence would have suggested flight, but this was against the war-customs of the north in any circumstances. The Vikingr, hoisting the Raven banner with his own hand, and waving it aloft, gave orders to prepare for battle. The ringing of harness, the rapid movement of the warriors, the gleaming of battle-axes, and the gathering of shining skiolds in line of defence, manifested the readiness with which this order was obeyed, although the gloomy omens

gave their enemies a manifest advantage, by destroying their own confidence of conquest. The hour of their mid-day meal had not yet arrived, so that the men were all perfectly sober; and even if it were otherwise, the point of honour was so strict among these men of blood and pride, that not a weapon would have been unsheathed against them until they could fight on terms of perfect equality. The Jarl Torquetil, having given orders that they should advance to meet the foe, for the hostile banners of Nordland had been already recognized, the fleet proceeded to join conflict in a regular order; the rowers measuring their strokes with steadiness, and chaunting their war song aloud, while the warriors broke its burthen with shouts of defiance as fierce as they were brief. Both fleets advanced to the shock, after the manner of their land forces, in the form of a wedge. The Jarl's

ship was in the front, and Inguar, as he waited the moment of action, with an anxious spirit, turned round to observe the sanguine countenances of his fellow-warriors.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE name of Gurmund, the youthful Viking of Nordland (soon after a sound of terror on the western and southern coasts of Europe), had also long been formidable amongst the iron-hearted pirates of the north. Inguar, who had often heard it, stood up in haste to gaze upon the sanguinary hero. It was easy, by its size and splendour, to see that the foremost ship was that of the renowned king of the sea. It was a vessel of pinewood, manned by rowers and warriors in coats of shining mail. The gun-

wales were richly adorned with plates of gold and silver, and on the mast-head was the gilded figure of a cormorant, placed on a spindle, and indicating, by its changes of position, the direction of the wind. The stern was decorated with the statue of a bull with gilded horns; and in the prow, the Enchanted Standard waved heavily above the whitened waters. Behind the rowers, distinguished above the rest by his lofty position in the ship, by the grandeur of his form, by his gilded helmet, and his coat of brazen armour, stood the Vikingr, as motionless in figure as he was reputed to be immoveable in courage and in cruelty. His only weapon was a ponderous club of oak, which rested on his shoulder, and was stuck round in a fearful manner with the heads of lances. It was his boast, that this barbarous weapon never had been cleansed from the gore with which it was im-

brued in battle; and that not even the magic armour forged by the dwarfs of Lapland was able to resist its stroke. Close behind this bark were those of Bascai and of Halfden, the unhappy chiefs, for whom, in after years, the Quida was sung upon the hills of Ashdown, in the hearing of the triumphant camp of Ethelred and Alfred. On the stern of the one appeared a gilded lion, and on that of the other a dragon of burnished brass. Next to these were Osberne and Harold, and many another chief, whose names were afterwards recorded in the cruel annals of Ireland and of Saxon England. Their vessels were scarcely less formidable, though not so splendid, as that of the Bay-king. The remainder of the fleet were a kind of twelve-oared barks, some well provided with arrows, and ponderous stones for the catapulta; while all were furnished with the common weapons of offence,

besides cables made from the hide of the northern horse-whale, and grappling-irons which they used, as the eagle does his talons, to hold their enemy to the combat. The skiolds of the warriors formed a shining wall of defence round every vessel, and glittered in the sunshine along the oblique line of the great wedge.

When the two fleets had approached within a bow-shot of each other, the Nordmen divided their force, in order that they might engage on equal terms. The combat then began with songs and shouts of furious defiance. The rowers leaned upon their ashen oars, and made the vessels speed to the conflict like war-steeds to the shock. It was brief and bloody. The depressing presage of the warriors of Sitheod diminished their energy, and the catapulta gave the Nordmen a terrific advantage; masses of rock were

hurled in showers through the air, and the ships of their enemies went down as fast as sand-shells near a beach. Shouts, groans, and yells of hatred accompanied the flight of the arrows, and the stroke of the ringing battle-axe; and the lonely wilderness of ocean, so short a time before a lifeless waste, was now a scene of sanguinary and extensive tumult. Not even here, amid the still remoteness of this watery solitude, could peace remain secure from human passion. Some were struck in the ship, some went down quickly, embarrassed by the weight of armour, or caught in the rigging of the sinking vessels, while many received the death-blow as they swam upon their wooden skiolds. The waves acquired the tinge of human blood, and the winds were loaded with the laughter of the desperate, and the shouts of the triumphant. At length the remnant of the

fleet of Torquetil, disheartened by the recollection of the fatal bodements, and losing all fear of disgrace in sudden panic, turned aside their prows and fled, leaving Torquetil alone in the centre of the hostile force. They were pursued by Bascai, and many others, in the direction of those islands to which, to-day, we give the name of Ferro; nor did either those who fled, or those who followed, ever again rejoin the warriors they had left. The ship of Torquetil did not long maintain the conquest, although the Nordman, grappling singly with his rival, forbade the approach of any other vessel. The men of Sitheod were hewn down like young oaks, and Inguar, with astonishment, saw that Ferreis, their commander, and himself, were amongst the few who yet survived. Having lost his weapons in the fight, he owed his life to the mercy of a fair-

haired Nordman, who, pitying his youth, bade him enter the ship of Thorgils, and take refuge underneath his skiold. At this moment Ferreis had an opportunity of repaying the debt which Inguar laid on him at Rugen. The latter was about to spring amongst the Nordmen, when Torquetil, casting an eye askance, suddenly aimed at him a blow with his battle-axe, exclaiming, "Ha! runaway!" The stroke was intercepted by Ferreis, who was on the watch for some attempt of the kind, and in the next instant the terrible club of Thorgils had crushed the spine of the revengeful Bay-king of Sitheod.

The few surviving warriors conceived it no disgrace to accept of quarter from a chief like Thorgils, and were received into his service. Three rapid hours of gloomy suspense and fearful violence had passed since first the cry on the

left had startled Inguar, and now the bloody waves were all that he beheld of the great body of his late companions.

THE END OF VOL. II.

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