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Norse Mythology

Prose Edda

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Snorri Sturluson

Rasmus B. Anderson (1880)

Credits

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About:

The Prose Edda, or Younger Edda, was written about 1220 by the Icelandic poet and statesman Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241) as a handbook for young poets: to understand the figures and names of the old poetry one had to know the myths behind them.

That is why it is the fullest and most orderly account of Norse mythology that has come down to us.

In the Gylfaginning ("The Fooling of Gylfi"), the Swedish king Gylfi travels in disguise to Asgard and questions three mysterious figures — Hár, Jafnhár and Þriði — about the making of the world from the giant Ymir, the tree Yggdrasil, the gods and goddesses, the adventures of Thor, the death of Baldr, Ragnarök and the new world that comes after.

In the Bragarœður ("Bragi's Talk"), the god of poetry tells Ægir of the theft of Iðunn's apples and the origin of the mead of poetry; and the Skáldskaparmál ("The Language of Poetry") gathers further tales, such as Thor's duel with the giant Hrungnir, the gold of the Niflungs and the mill Grótti.

The Christian prologue explains the old gods as human kings who came from Troy.

The English translation is by Rasmus B. Anderson (1880), professor at the University of Wisconsin, who gives the names in Norwegian form (Odin, Loke, Balder, Æger). His footnotes are at the end of each chapter; the translator's preface, introduction and vocabulary are not included.

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PROLOGUE

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1 In the beginning Almighty God created heaven and earth, and all things that belong to them, and last he made two human beings, from whom the races are descended (Adam and Eve), and their children multiplied and spread over all the world.

1.2 But in the course of time men became unequal; some were good and right-believing, but many more turned them after the lusts of the world and heeded not God's laws; and for this reason God drowned the world in the flood, and all that was quick in the world, except those who were in the ark with Noah.

1.3 After the flood of Noah there lived eight men, who inhabited the world, and from them the races are descended; and now, as before, they increased and filled the world, and there were very many men who loved to covet wealth and power, but turned away from obedience to God, and so much did they do this that they would not name God.

1.4 And who could then tell their sons of the wonderful works of God? So it came to pass that they lost God's name; and in the wide world the man was not to be found who could tell of his Maker.

1.5 But, nevertheless, God gave them earthly-gifts, wealth and happiness, that should be with them in the world; he also shared wisdom among them, so that they understood all earthly things, and all kinds that might be seen in the air and on the earth.

1.6 This they thought upon, and wondered at, how it could come to pass that the earth and the beasts and the birds had the same nature in some things but still were unlike in manners.

2 One evidence of this nature was that the earth might be dug into upon high mountain-peaks and water would spring up there, and it was not necessary to dig deeper for water there than in deep dales; thus, also, in beasts and birds it is no farther to the blood in the head than in the feet.

2.2 Another proof of this nature is, that every year there grow on the earth grass and flowers, and the same year it falls and withers; thus, also, on beasts and birds do hair and feathers grow and fall off each year. The third nature of the earth is, that when it is opened and dug into, then grass grows on the mould which is uppermost on the earth.

2.3 Rocks and stones they explained to correspond to the teeth and bones of living things. From these things they judged that the earth must be quick and must have life in some way, and they knew that it was of a wonderfully great age and of a mighty nature. It nourished all that was quick and took to itself all that died.

2.4 On this account they gave it a name, and numbered their ancestors back to it This they also learned from their old kinsmen, that when many hundred winters were numbered, the course of the heavenly bodies was uneven; some had a longer course than others.

2.5 From such things they suspected that some one must be the ruler of the heavenly bodies who could stay their course at his own will, and he must be strong and mighty; and of him they thought that, if he ruled the prime elements, he must also have been before the heavenly bodies, and they saw that, if he ruled the course of the heavenly bodies, he must rule

the sunshine, and the dew of the heavens, and the products of the earth that follow them; and thus, also, the winds of the air and therewith the storms of the sea.

2.6 They knew not where his realm was, but they believed that he ruled over all things on the earth and in the air, over the heavens and the heavenly bodies, the seas and the weather.

2.7 But in order that these things might be better told and remembered, they gave him the same name with themselves, and this belief has been changed in many ways, as the peoples have been separated and the tongues have been divided.

3 In his old age Noah shared the world with his sons: for Ham he intended the western region, for Japheth the northern region, but for Shem the southern region, with those parts which will hereafter be marked out in the division of the earth into three parts.

3.2 In the time that the sons of these men were in the world, then increased forthwith the desire for riches and power, from the fact that they knew many crafts that had not been discovered before, and each one was exalted with his own handiwork; and so far did they carry their pride, that the Africans, descended from Ham, harried in that part of the world which the offspring of Shem, their kinsman, inhabited.

3.3 And when they had conquered them, the world seemed to them too small, and they smithied a tower with tile and stone, which they meant should reach to heaven, on the plain called Sennar.

3.4 And when this building was so far advanced that it extended above the air, and they were no less eager to continue the work, and when God saw how their pride waxed high, then he sees that he will have to strike it

down in some way.

3.5 And the same God, who is almighty, and who might have struck down all their work in the twinkling of an eye, and made themselves turn into dust, still preferred to frustrate their purpose by making them realize their own littleness, in that none of them should understand what the other talked; and thus no one knew what the other commanded, and one broke what the other wished to build up, until they came to strife among themselves, and therewith was frustrated, in the beginning, their purpose of building a tower.

3.6 And he who was foremost, hight Zoroaster, he laughed before he wept when he came into the world; but the master-smiths were seventy-two, and so many tongues have spread over the world since the giants were dispersed over the land, and the nations became numerous. In this same place was built the most famous city, which took its name from the tower, and was called Babylon.

3.7 And when the confusion of tongues had taken place, then increased the names of men and of other things, and this same Zoroaster had many names; and although he understood that his pride was laid low by the said building, still he worked his way unto worldly power, and had himself chosen king over many peoples of the Assyrians.

3.8 From him arose the error of idolatry; and when he was worshiped he was called Baal; we call him Bel; he also had many other names. But as the names increased in number, so was truth lost; and from this first error every following man worshiped his head-master, beasts or birds, the air and the heavenly bodies, and various lifeless things, until the error at length spread over the whole world; and so carefully did they lose the truth that no one knew his maker, excepting those men alone who spoke the Hebrew

tongue,--that which flourished before the building of the tower,--and still they did not lose the bodily endowments that were given them, and therefore they judged of all things with earthly understanding, for spiritual wisdom was not given unto them. They deemed that all things were smithied of some one material.

4 The world was divided into three parts, one from the south, westward to the Mediterranean Sea, which part was called Africa; but the southern portion of this part is hot and scorched by the sun. The second part, from the west and to the north and to the sea, is that called Europe, or Enea.

4.2 The northern portion of this is cold, so that grass grows not, nor can anyone dwell there. From the north around the east region, and all to the south, that is called Asia. In that part of the world is all beauty and pomp, and wealth of the earth's products, gold and precious stones.

4.3 There is also the mid-world, and as the earth there is fairer and of a better quality than elsewhere, so are also the people there most richly endowed with all gifts, with wisdom and strength, with beauty and with all knowledge.

5 Near the middle of the world was built the house and inn, the most famous that has been made, which was called Troy, in the land which we call Turkey. This city was built much larger than others, with more skill in many ways, at great expense, and with such means as were at hand.

5.2 There were twelve kingdoms and one over-king, and many lands and nations belonged to each kingdom; there were in the city twelve chief languages.[5] Their chiefs have surpassed all men who have been in the world in all heroic things.

5.3 No scholar who has ever told of these things has ever disputed this fact, and for this reason, that all rulers of the north region trace their ancestors back thither, and place in the number of the gods all who were rulers of the city.

5.4 Especially do they place Priamos himself in the stead of Odin; nor must that be called wonderful, for Priamos was sprung from Saturn, him whom the north region for a long time believed to be God himself.

6 This Saturn grew up in that island in Greece which hight Crete. He was greater and stronger and fairer than other men. As in other natural endowments, so he excelled all men in wisdom. He invented many crafts which had not before been discovered. He was also so great in the art of magic that he was certain about things that had not yet come to pass.

6.2 He found, too, that red thing in the earth from which he smelted gold, and from such things he soon became very mighty. He also foretold harvests and many other secret things, and for such, and many other deeds, he was chosen chief of the island. And when he had ruled it a short time, then there speedily enough became a great abundance of all things.

6.3 No money circulated excepting gold coins, so plentiful was this metal; and though there was famine in other lands, the crops never failed in Crete, so that people might seek there all the things which they needed to have.

6.4 And from this and many other secret gifts of power that he had, men believed him to be God, and from him arose another error among the Cretans and Macedonians like the one before mentioned among the Assyrians and Chaldeans from Zoroaster.

6.5 And when Saturn finds how great strength the people think they have in him, he calls himself God, and says that he rules heaven and earth and all things.

7 Once he went to Greece in a ship, for there was a king's daughter on whom he had set his heart. He won her love in this way, that one day when she was out with her maid-servants, he took upon himself the likeness of a bull, and lay before her in the wood, and so fair was he that the hue of gold was on every hair; and when the king's daughter saw him she patted his lips.

7.2 He sprang up and threw off the bull's likeness and took her into his arms and bore her to the ship and took her to Crete. But his wife, Juno, found this out, so he turned her (the king's daughter) into the likeness of a heifer and sent her east to the arms of the great river (that is, of the Nile, to the Nile country), and let the thrall, who hight Argulos, take care of her.

7.3 She was there twelve months before he changed her shape again. Many things did he do like this, or even more wonderful He had three sons: one hight Jupiter, another Neptune, the third Pluto.

7.4 They were all men of the greatest accomplishments, and Jupiter was by far the greatest; he was a warrior and won many kingdoms; he was also crafty like his father, and took upon himself the likeness of many animals, and thus he accomplished many things which are impossible for mankind; and on account of this, and other things, he was held in awe by all nations. Therefore Jupiter is put in the place of Thor, since all evil wights fear him.

8 Saturn had built in Crete seventy-two burgs, and when he thought himself firmly established in his kingdom, he shared it with his sons, whom he set up with himself as gods; and to Jupiter he gave the realm of heaven; to

Neptune, the realm of the earth, and to Pluto, hell; and this last seemed to him the worst to manage, and therefore he gave to him his dog, the one whom he called Cerberos, to guard hell.

8.2 This Cerberos, the Greeks say, Herakles dragged out of hell and upon earth. And although Saturn had given the realm of heaven to Jupiter, the latter nevertheless desired to possess the realm of the earth, and so he harried his father's kingdom, and it is said that he had him taken and emasculated, and for such great achievements he declared himself to be god, and the Macedonians say that he had the members taken and cast into the sea, and therefore they believed for ages that therefrom had come a woman; her they called Venus, and numbered among the gods, and she has in all ages since been called goddess of love, for they believed she was able to turn the hearts of all men and women to love.

8.3 When Saturn was emasculated by Jupiter, his son, he fled from the east out of Crete and west into Italy. There dwelt at that time such people as did not work, and lived on acorns and grass, and lay in caves or holes in the earth.

8.4 And when Saturn came there he changed his name and called himself Njord, for the reason that he thought that Jupiter, his son, might afterward seek him out. He was the first there to teach men to plow and plant vineyards. There the soil was good and fresh, and it soon produced heavy crops. He was made chief and thus he got possession of all the realms there and built many burgs.

9 Jupiter, his son, had many sons, from whom races have descended; his son was Dardanos, his son Herikon, his son Tros, his son Ilos, his son Laomedon, the father of the chief king Priamos.

9.2 Priamos had many sons; one of them was Hektor, who was the most famous of all men in the world for strength, and stature and accomplishments, and for all manly deeds of a knightly kind; and it is found written that when the Greeks and all the strength of the north and east regions fought with the Trojans, they would never have become victors had not the Greeks invoked the gods; and it is also stated that no human strength would conquer them unless they were betrayed by their own men, which afterward was done.

9.3 And from their fame men that came after gave themselves titles, and especially was this done by the Romans, who were the most famous in many things after their days; and it is said that, when Rome was built, the Romans adapted their customs and laws as nearly as possible to those of the Trojans, their forefathers.

9.4 And so much power accompanied these men for many ages after, that when Pompey, a Roman chieftain, harried in the east region, Odin fled out of Asia and hither to the north country, and then he gave to himself and his men their names, and said that Priamos had hight Odin and his queen Frigg, and from this the realm afterward took its name and was called Frigia where the burg stood.

9.5 And whether Odin said this of himself out of pride, or that it was wrought by the changing of tongues; nevertheless many wise men have regarded it a true saying, and for a long time after every man who was a great chieftain followed his example.

10 A king in Troy hight Munon or Mennon, his wife was a daughter of the head-king Priamos and hight Troan; they had a son who hight Tror, him we call Thor. He was fostered in Thrace by the duke, who is called Loricos.

But when he was ten winters old he took his father's weapons.

10.2 So fair of face was he, when he stood by other men, as when ivory is set in oak; his hair was fairer than gold. When he was twelve winters old he had full strength; then he lifted from the ground ten bear skins all at once, and then he slew Loricos, the duke, his foster-father and his wife, Lora or Glora, and took possession of Thrace; this we call Thrudheim.

10.3 Then he visited many lands and knew the countries of the world, and conquered single-handed all the berserks and all the giants, and one very big dragon and many beasts. In the north region he found that prophetess who hight Sibyl, whom we call Sif, and married her. None can tell the genealogy of Sif; she was the fairest of all women, her hair was like gold.

10.4 Their son was Loride (Hloride), who was like his father; his son was Henrede; his son Vingethor (Vingthor); his son Vingener (Vingner); his son Moda (Mode); his son Magi (Magne); his son Kesfet; his son Bedvig; his son Atra, whom we call Annan; his son Itrman; his son Heremod (Hermod); his son Skjaldun, whom we call Skjold; his son Bjaf, whom we call Bjar; his son Jat; his son Gudolf, his son Fjarlaf, whom we call Fridleif; he had the son who is called Vodin, whom we call Odin; he was a famous man for wisdom and all accomplishments. His wife hight Frigida, whom we call Frigg.

11 Odin had the power of divination, and so had his wife, and from this knowledge he found out that his name would be held high in the north part of the world, and honored beyond that of all kings. For this reason he

was eager to begin his journey from Turkey, and he had with him very many people, young and old, men and women, and he had with him many costly things.

11.2 But wherever they fared over the lands great fame was spoken of them, and they were said to be more like gods than men. And they stopped not on their journey before they came north into that land which is now called Saxland; there Odin remained a long time, and subjugated the country far and wide. There Odin established his three sons as a defense of the land.

11.3 One is named Veggdegg; he was a strong king and ruled over East Saxland. His son was Vitrgils, and his sons were Ritta, the father of Heingest (Hengist), and Sigar, the father of Svebdegg, whom we call Svipdag.

11.4 Another son of Odin hight Beldegg, whom we call Balder; he possessed the land which now hight Vestfal; his son was Brander, and his son Frjodigar, whom we call Froda (Frode). His son was Freovit, his son Yvigg, his son Gevis, whom we call Gave. The third son of Odin is named Sigge, his son Verer.

11.5 These forefathers ruled the land which is now called Frankland, and from them is come the race that is called the Volsungs. From all of these many and great races are descended.

12 Then Odin continued his journey northward and came into the country which was called Reidgotaland, and in that land he conquered all that he desired. He established there his son, who hight Skjold; his son hight

Fridleif; from him is descended the race which hight Skjoldungs; these are the Dane kings, and that land hight now Jutland, which then was called Reidgotaland.

13 Thereupon he fared north to what is now called Svithjod (Sweden), there was the king who is called Gylfe. But when he heard of the coming of those Asiamen, who were called asas, he went to meet them, and offered Odin such things in his kingdom as he himself might desire.

13.2 And such good luck followed their path, that wherever they stopped in the lands, there were bountiful crops and good peace; and all believed that they were the cause thereof. The mighty men of the kingdom saw that they were unlike other men whom they had seen, both in respect to beauty and understanding.

13.3 The land there seemed good to Odin, and he chose there for himself a place for a burg, which is now called Sigtuna.[6] He there established chiefs, like unto what had formerly existed in Troy; he appointed twelve men in the burg to be judges of the law of the land, and made all rights to correspond with what had before been in Troy, and to what the Turks had been accustomed.

14 Thereupon he fared north until he reached the sea, which they thought surrounded all lands, and there he established his son in the kingdom, which is now called Norway; he is hight Saming, and the kings of Norway count their ancestors back to him, and so do the jarls and other mighty men, as it is stated in the Haleygjatal.[7] But Odin had with him that son who is called Yngve, who was king in Sweden, and from him is descended the families called Ynglings (Yngvelings).

14.2 The asas took to themselves wives there within the land. But some took wives for their sons, and these families became so numerous that they spread over Saxland, and thence over the whole north region, and the tongue of these Asiamen became the native tongue of all these lands.

14.3 And men think they can understand from the way in which the names of their forefathers is written, that these names have belonged to this tongue, and that the asas have brought this tongue hither to the north, to Norway, to Sweden and to Saxland. But in England are old names of places and towns which can be seen to have been given in another tongue than this.

15 [5] Dasent translates “hövuðtungur” (chief or head tongues) with “lords,” which is certainly an error.

16 [6] Near Upsala.

17 [7] A heroic poem, giving the pedigree (tal) of Norse kings.

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GYLFAGINNING I — GEFJUN'S PLOWING

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1 King Gylfe ruled the lands that are now called Svithjod (Sweden). Of him it is said that he gave to a wayfaring woman, as a reward for the entertainment she had afforded him by her story-telling, a plow-land in his realm, as large as four oxen could plow it in a day and a night But this woman was of the asa-race; her name was Gefjun.

1.2 She took from the north, from Jotunheim, four oxen, which were the sons of a giant and her, and set them before the plow. Then went the plow so hard and deep that it tore up the land, and the oxen drew it westward into the sea, until it stood still in a sound. There Gefjun set the land, gave it a name and called it Seeland.

1.3 And where the land had been taken away became afterward a sea, which in Sweden is now called Logrinn (the Lake, the Malar Lake in Sweden). And in the Malar Lake the bays correspond to the capes in Seeland. Thus Brage, the old skald:

2 Gefjun glad
Drew from Gylfe
The excellent land,
Denmark's increase,
So that it reeked
From the running beasts.
Four heads and eight eyes

Bore the oxen
As they went before the wide
Robbed land of the grassy isle.[8]

[3] [8] Heimskringla: Ynglinga Saga, ch. v.

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GYLFAGINNING II — GYLFE'S JOURNEY TO ASGARD

✦

1 King Gylfe was a wise man and skilled in the black art. He wondered much that the asa-folk was so mighty in knowledge, that all things went after their will. He thought to himself whether this could come from their own nature, or whether the cause must be sought for among the gods whom they worshiped. He therefore undertook a journey to Asgard.

1.2 He went secretly, having assumed the likeness of an old man, and striving thus to disguise himself. But the asas were wiser, for they see into the future, and, foreseeing his journey before he came, they received him with an eye-deceit. So when he came into the burg he saw there a hall so high that he could hardly look over it.

1.3 Its roof was thatched with golden shields as with shingles. Thus says Thjodolf of Hvin, that Valhal was thatched with shields:

2 Thinking thatchers
Thatched the roof;
The beams of the burg
Beamed with gold.[9]

3 In the door of the hall Gylfe saw a man who played with swords so dexterously that seven were in the air at one time. That man asked him what his name was. Gylfe answered that his name was Ganglere;[10] that he had come a long way, and that he sought lodgings for the night. He also asked who owned the burg.

3.2 The other answered that it belonged to their king: I will go with you to see him and then you may ask him for his name yourself. Then the man turned and led the way into the hall. Ganglere followed, and suddenly the doors closed behind him.

3.3 There he saw many rooms and a large number of people, of whom some were playing, others were drinking, and some were fighting with weapons. He looked around him, and much of what he saw seemed to him incredible. Then quoth he:

4 Gates all,
Before in you go,
You must examine well;
For you cannot know
Where enemies sit
In the house before you.[11]

5 He saw three high-seats, one above the other, and in each sat a man. He asked what the names of these chiefs were. He, who had conducted him in, answered that the one who sat in the lowest high-seat was king, and hight Har; the one next above him, Jafnhar; but the one who sat on the highest throne, Thride.

5.2 Har asked the comer what more his errand was, and added that food and drink was there at his service, as for all in Har's hall. Ganglere answered that he first would like to ask whether there was any wise man. Answered Har: You will not come out from here hale unless you are wiser.

6 And stand now forth
While you ask;
He who answers shall sit.

[7] [9] Heimskringla: Harald Harfager's Saga, ch. xix.

[8] [10] The walker.

[9] [11] Elder Edda: Havamal.

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GYLFAGINNING III — OF THE HIGHEST GOD

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1 Ganglere then made the following question: Who is the highest and oldest of all the gods? Made answer Har: Alfather he is called in our tongue, but in Asgard of old he had twelve names.

1.2 The first is Alfather, the second is Herran or Herjan, the third Nikar or Hnikar, the fourth Nikuz or Hnikud, the fifth Fjolner, the sixth Oske, the seventh Ome, the eighth Biflide or Biflinde, the ninth Svidar, the tenth Svidrer, the eleventh Vidrer, the twelfth Jalg or Jalk. Ganglere asks again: Where is this god? What can he do? What mighty works has he accomplished?

1.3 Answered Har: He lives from everlasting to everlasting, rules over all his realm, and governs all things, great and small. Then remarked Jafnhar: He made heaven and earth, the air and all things in them. Thride added: What is most important, he made man and gave him a spirit, which shall live, and never perish, though the body may turn to dust or burn to ashes.

1.4 All who live a life of virtue shall dwell with him in Gimle or Vingolf. The wicked, on the other hand, go to Hel, and from her to Niflhel, that is, down into the ninth world. Then asked Ganglere: What was he doing before heaven and earth were made? Har gave answer: Then was he with the frost-giants.

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GYLFAGINNING IV — THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

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1 Said Ganglere: How came the world into existence, or how did it rise? What was before? Made answer to him Har: Thus is it said in the Vala's Prophecy:

2 It was Time's morning,
When there nothing was;
Nor sand, nor sea,
Nor cooling billows.
Earth there was not,
Nor heaven above.
The Ginungagap was,
But grass nowhere.[12]

3 Jafnhar remarked: Many ages before the earth was made, Niflheim had existed, in the midst of which is the well called Hvergelmer, whence flow the following streams: Svol, Gunnthro, Form, Fimbul, Thul, Slid and Hrid, Sylg and Ylg, Vid, Leipt and Gjoll, the last of which is nearest the gate of Hel.

3.2 Then added Thride: Still there was before a world to the south which hight Muspelheim. It is light and hot, and so bright and dazzling that no stranger, who is not a native there, can stand it. Surt is the name of him who stands on its border guarding it.

3.3 He has a flaming sword in his hand, and at the end of the world he will come and harry, conquer all the gods, and burn up the whole world with fire. Thus it is said in the Vala's Prophecy:

4 Surt from the south fares
With blazing flames;
From the sword shines
The sun of the war-god.
Rocks dash together
And witches collapse,
Men go the way to Hel
And the heavens are cleft.[13]

5 Said Ganglere: What took place before the races came into existence, and men increased and multiplied? Replied Har, explaining, that as soon as the streams, that are called the Elivogs, had come so far from their source that the venomous yeast which flowed with them hardened, as does dross that runs from the fire, then it turned into ice.

5.2 And when this ice stopped and flowed no more, then gathered over it the drizzling rain that arose from the venom and froze into rime, and one layer of ice was laid upon the other clear into Ginungagap. Then said Jafnhar: All that part of Ginungagap that turns toward the north was filled with thick and heavy ice and rime, and everywhere within were drizzling rains and gusts.

5.3 But the south part of Ginungagap was lighted up by the glowing sparks that flew out of Muspelheim. Added Thride: As cold and all things grim proceeded from Niflheim, so that which bordered on Muspelheim was hot and bright, and Ginungagap was as warm and mild as windless air.

5.4 And when the heated blasts from Muspelheim met the rime, so that it melted into drops, then, by the might of him who sent the heat, the drops quickened into life and took the likeness of a man, who got the name Ymer. But the Frost giants call him Aurgelmer. Thus it is said in the short Prophecy of the Vala (the Lay of Hyndla):

6 All the valas are
From Vidolf descended;
All wizards are
Of Vilmeide's race;
All enchanters
Are sons of Svarthofde;
All giants have
Come from Ymer.[14]

7 And on this point, when Vafthrudner, the giant, was asked by Gangrad:

8 Whence came Aurgelmer
Originally to the sons
Of the giants?--thou wise giant![15]

9 he said

10 From the Elivogs
Sprang drops of venom,
And grew till a giant was made.
Thence our race
Are all descended,
Therefore are we all so fierce.[16]

11 Then asked Ganglere: How were the races developed from him? Or what was done so that more men were made? Or do you believe him to be god of whom you now spake? Made answer Har: By no means do we believe him to be god; evil was he and all his offspring, them we call frost-giants.

11.2 It is said that when he slept he fell into a sweat, and then there grew under his left arm a man and a woman, and one of his feet begat with the other a son. From these come the races that are called frost-giants. The old frost-giant we call Ymer.

12 Then said Ganglere: Where did Ymer dwell, and on what did he live? Answered Har: The next thing was that when the rime melted into drops, there was made thereof a cow, which hight Audhumbla. Four milk-streams ran from her teats, and she fed Ymer. Thereupon asked Ganglere: On what did the cow subsist?

12.2 Answered Har: She licked the salt-stones that were covered with rime, and the first day that she licked the stones there came out of them in the evening a man's hair, the second day a man's head, and the third day the whole man was there. This man's name was Bure; he was fair of face, great and mighty, and he begat a son whose name was Bor.

12.3 This Bor married a woman whose name was Bestla, the daughter of the giant Bolthorn; they had three sons,--the one hight Odin, the other Vile, and the third Ve. And it is my belief that this Odin and his brothers are the rulers of heaven and earth. We think that he must be so called.

12.4 That is the name of the man whom we know to be the greatest and most famous, and well may men call him by that name.

13 Ganglere asked: How could these keep peace with Ymer, or who was the stronger? Then answered Har: The sons of Bor slew the giant Ymer, but when he fell, there flowed so much blood from his wounds that they drowned therein the whole race of frost giants; excepting one, who escaped with his household. Him the giants call Bergelmer. He and his wife went on board his ark and saved themselves in it. From them are come new races of frost-giants, as is here said:

14 Countless winters
Ere the earth was made,
Was born Bergelmer.
This first I call to mind
How that crafty giant
Safe in his ark lay.[17]

15 Then said Ganglere: What was done then by the sons of Bor, since you believe that they were gods? Answered Har: About that there is not a little to be said. They took the body of Ymer, carried it into the midst of Ginungagap and made of him the earth.

15.2 Of his blood they made the seas and lakes; of his flesh the earth was made, but of his bones the rocks; of his teeth and jaws, and of the bones that were broken, they made stones and pebbles.

15.3 Jafnhar remarked: Of the blood that flowed from the wounds, and was free, they made the ocean; they fastened the earth together and around it they laid this ocean in a ring without, and it must seem to most men impossible to cross it. Thride added: They took his skull and made thereof the sky, and raised it over the earth with four sides.

15.4 Under each corner they set a dwarf, and the four dwarfs were called Austre (east), Vestre (West), Nordre (North), Sudre (South). Then they took glowing sparks, that were loose and had been cast out from Muspelheim, and placed them in the midst of the boundless heaven, both above and below, to light up heaven and earth.

15.5 They gave resting-places to all fires, and set some in heaven; some were made to go free under heaven, but they gave them a place and shaped their course. In old songs it is said that from that time days and years were reckoned. Thus in the Prophecy of the Vala:

16 The sun knew not
Where her hall she had;
The moon knew not
What might he had;
The stars knew not
Their resting-places.[18]

17 Thus it was before these things were made. Then said Ganglere: Wonderful tidings are these I now hear; a wondrous great building is this, and deftly constructed. How was the earth fashioned?

17.2 Made answer Har: The earth is round, and without it round about lies the deep ocean, and along the outer strand of that sea they gave lands for the giant races to dwell in; and against the attack of restless giants they built a burg within the sea and around the earth. For this purpose they used the giant Ymer's eyebrows, and they called the burg Midgard.

17.3 They also took his brains and cast them into the air, and made therefrom the clouds, as is here said:

[18] Of Ymer's flesh
The earth was made,
And of his sweat the seas;
Rocks of his bones,
Trees of his hair,
And the sky of his skull;
But of his eyebrows
The blithe powers
Made Midgard for the sons of men.
Of his brains
All the melancholy
Clouds were made.[19]

[19] [12] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 6.

[20] [13] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 56.

[21] [14] Elder Edda: Hyndla'a Lay, 34.

[22] [15] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 30.

[23] [16] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 31.

[24] [17] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 35.

[25] [18] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 8. In Old Norse the sun is feminine, and the moon masculine. See below, sections 11 and 12.

[26] [19] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 40, 41. Comp. Vafthrudner's Lay, 21.

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GYLFAGINNING V — THE CREATION (CONTINUED)

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: Much had been done, it seemed to me, when heaven and earth were made, when sun and moon were set in their places, and when days were marked out; but whence came the people who inhabit the world? Har answered as follows: As Bor's sons went along the sea-strand, they found two trees. These trees they took up and made men of them.

1.2 The first gave them spirit and life; the second endowed them with reason and power of motion; and the third gave them form, speech, hearing and eyesight. They gave them clothes and names; the man they called Ask, and the woman Embla. From them all mankind is descended, and a dwelling-place was given them under Midgard.

1.3 In the next place, the sons of Bor made for themselves in the middle of the world a burg, which is called Asgard, and which we call Troy. There dwelt the gods and their race, and thence were wrought many tidings and adventures, both on earth and in the sky.

1.4 In Asgard is a place called Hlidskjalf, and when Odin seated himself there in the high-seat, he saw over the whole world, and what every man was doing, and he knew all things that he saw.

1.5 His wife hight Frigg, and she was the daughter of Fjorgvin, and from their offspring are descended the race that we call asas, who inhabited Asgard the old and the realms that lie about it, and all that race are

known to be gods. And for this reason Odin is called Alfather, that he is the father of all gods and men, and of all things that were made by him and by his might.

1.6 Jord (earth) was his daughter and his wife; with her he begat his first son, and that is Asa-Thor. To him was given force and strength, whereby he conquers all things quick.

2 Norfe, or Narfe, hight a giant, who dwelt in Jotunheim. He had a daughter by name Night. She was swarthy and dark like the race she belonged to. She was first married to a man who hight Naglfare. Their son was Aud. Afterward she was married to Annar. Jord hight their daughter. Her last husband was Delling (Daybreak), who was of asa-race.

2.2 Their son was Day, who was light and fair after his father. Then took Alfather Night and her son Day, gave them two horses and two cars, and set them up in heaven to drive around the earth, each in twelve hours by turns. Night rides first on the horse which is called Hrimfaxe, and every morning he bedews the earth with the foam from his bit.

2.3 The horse on which Day rides is called Skinfaxe, and with his mane he lights up all the sky and the earth.

3 Then said Ganglere: How does he steer the course of the sun and the moon? Answered Har: Mundilfare hight the man who had two children. They were so fair and beautiful that he called his son Moon, and his daughter, whom he gave in marriage to a man by name Glener, he called Sun.

3.2 But the gods became wroth at this arrogance, took both the brother and the sister, set them up in heaven, and made Sun drive the horses that draw the car of the sun, which the gods had made to light up the world

from sparks that flew out of Muspelheim. These horses hight Arvak and Alsvid.

3.3 Under their withers the gods placed two wind-bags to cool them, but in some songs it is called ironcold (ísarnkol). Moon guides the course of the moon, and rules its waxing and waning. He took from the earth two children, who hight Bil and Hjuke, as they were going from the well called Byrger, and were carrying on their shoulders the bucket called Sager and the pole Simul.

3.4 Their father's name is Vidfin. These children always accompany Moon, as can be seen from the earth.

4 Then said Ganglere: Swift fares Sun, almost as if she were afraid, and she could make no more haste in her course if she feared her destroyer. Then answered Har: Nor is it wonderful that she speeds with all her might. Near is he who pursues her, and there is no escape for her but to run before him. Then asked Ganglere: Who causes her this toil? Answered Har: It is two wolves.

4.2 The one hight Skol, he runs after her; she fears him and he will one day overtake her. The other hight Hate, Hrodvitner's son; he bounds before her and wants to catch the moon, and so he will at last.[20] Then asked Ganglere: Whose offspring are these wolves?

4.3 Said Har; A hag dwells east of Midgard, in the forest called Jarnved (Ironwood), where reside the witches called Jarnvidjes. The old hag gives birth to many giant sons, and all in wolf's likeness. Thence come these two wolves. It is said that of this wolf-race one is the mightiest, and is called Moongarm. He is filled with the life-blood of all dead men.

4.4 He will devour the moon, and stain the heavens and all the sky with blood. Thereby the sun will be darkened, the winds will grow wild, and roar hither and thither, as it is said in the Prophecy of the Vala:

5 In the east dwells the old hag,
In the Jarnved forest;
And brings forth there
Fenrer's offspring.
There comes of them all
One the worst,
The moon's devourer
In a troll's disguise.

6 He is filled with the life-blood
Of men doomed to die;
The seats of the gods
He stains with red gore;
Sunshine grows black
The summer thereafter,
All weather gets fickle.
Know you yet or not? [21]

7 Then asked Ganglere: What is the path from earth to heaven? Har answered, laughing: Foolishly do you now ask. Have you not been told that the gods made a bridge from earth to heaven, which is called Bifrost? You must have seen it. It may be that you call it the rainbow. It has three colors, is very strong, and is made with more craft and skill than other structures.

7.2 Still, however strong it is, it will break when the sons of Muspel come to ride over it, and then they will have to swim their horses over great rivers in order to get on. Then said Ganglere: The gods did not, it seems to me, build that bridge honestly, if it shall be able to break to pieces, since they could have done so, had they desired.

7.3 Then made answer Har: The gods are worthy of no blame for this structure. Bifrost is indeed a good bridge, but there is no thing in the world that is able to stand when the sons of Muspel come to the fight.

8 [20] That wolves follow the sun and moon, is a wide-spread popular superstition. In Sweden, a parhelion is called Solvarg (sun-wolf).

9 [21] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 43, 44.

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GYLFAGINNING VI — THE FIRST WORKS OF THE ASAS — THE GOLDEN AGE

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: What did Alfather do when Asgard had been built? Said Har: In the beginning he appointed rulers in a place in the middle of the burg which is called Idavold, who were to judge with him the disputes of men and decide the affairs of the burg.

1.2 Their first work was to erect a court, where there were seats for all the twelve, and, besides, a high-seat for Alfather. That is the best and largest house ever built on earth, and is within and without like solid gold. This place is called Gladsheim. Then they built another hall as a home for the goddesses, which also is a very beautiful mansion, and is called Vingolf.

1.3 Thereupon they built a forge; made hammer, tongs, anvil, and with these all other tools. Afterward they worked in iron, stone and wood, and especially in that metal which is called gold. All their household wares were of gold. That age was called the golden age, until it was lost by the coming of those women from Jotunheim.

1.4 Then the gods set themselves in their high-seats and held counsel. They remembered how the dwarfs had quickened in the mould of the earth like maggots in flesh.

1.5 The dwarfs had first been created and had quickened in Ymer's flesh, and were then maggots; but now, by the decision of the gods, they got the understanding and likeness of men, but still had to dwell in the

earth and in rocks. Modsogner was one dwarf and Durin another. So it is said in the Vala's Prophecy:

2 Then went all the gods,
The all-holy gods,
On their judgment seats,
And thereon took counsel
Who should the race
Of dwarfs create
From the bloody sea
And from Blain's bones.
In the likeness of men
Made they many
Dwarfs in the earth,
As Durin said.

3 And these, says the Vala, are the names of the dwarfs:

4 Nye, Nide,
Nordre, Sudre,
Austre, Vestre,
Althjof, Dvalin,
Na, Nain,
Niping, Dain,
Bifur, Bafur,
Bombor, Nore,
Ore, Onar,
Oin, Mjodvitner,
Vig, Gandalf,

Vindalf, Thorin,
File, Kile,
Fundin, Vale,
Thro, Throin,
Thek, Lit, Vit,
Ny, Nyrad,
Rek, Radsvid.

5 But the following are also dwarfs and dwell in the rocks, while the above-named dwell in the mould:

6 Draupner, Dolgthvare,
Hor, Hugstare,
Hledjolf, Gloin,
Dore, Ore,
Duf, Andvare,
Hepte, File,
Har, Siar.

7 But the following come from Svarin's How to Aurvang on Joruvold, and from them is sprung Lovar. Their names are:

8 Skirfer, Virfir,
Skafid, Ae,
Alf, Inge,
Eikinslgalde,
Fal, Froste,
Fid, Ginnar.[22]

[9] [22] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 12, 14-16, 18, 19.

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GYLFAGINNING VII — ON THE WONDERFUL THINGS IN HEAVEN

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: Where is the chief or most holy place of the gods? Har answered: That is by the ash Ygdrasil. There the gods meet in council every day. Said Ganglere: What is said about this place? Answered Jafnhar: This ash is the best and greatest of all trees; its branches spread over all the world, and reach up above heaven.

1.2 Three roots sustain the tree and stand wide apart; one root is with the asas and another with the frost-giants, where Ginungagap formerly was; the third reaches into Niflheim; under it is Hvergelmer, where Nidhug gnaws the root from below. But under the second root, which extends to the frost-giants, is the well of Mimer, wherein knowledge and wisdom are concealed.

1.3 The owner of the well hight Mimer. He is full of wisdom, for he drinks from the well with the Gjallar-horn. Alfather once came there and asked for a drink from the well, but he did not get it before he left one of his eyes as a pledge. So it is said in the Vala's Prophecy:

2 Well know I, Odin,
Where you hid your eye:
In the crystal-clear
Well of Mimer.
Mead drinks Mimer

Every morning
From Valfather's pledge.
Know you yet or not?[23]

3 The third root of the ash is in heaven, and beneath it is the most sacred fountain of Urd. Here the gods have their doomstead. The asas ride hither every day over Bifrost, which is also called Asa-bridge. The following are the names of the horses of the gods: Sleipner is the best one; he belongs to Odin, and he has eight feet.

3.2 The second is Glad, the third Gyller, the fourth Gler, the fifth Skeidbrimer, the sixth Silfertop, the seventh Siner, the eighth Gisl, the ninth Falhofner, the tenth Gulltop, the eleventh Letfet. Balder's horse was burned with him. Thor goes on foot to the doomstead, and wades the following rivers:

4 Kormt and Ormt
And the two Kerlaugs;
These shall Thor wade
Every day
When he goes to judge
Near the Ygdrasil ash;
For the Asa-bridge
Burns all ablaze,--
The holy waters roar.[24]

5 Then asked Ganglere: Does fire burn over Bifrost? Har answered: The red which you see in the rainbow is burning fire. The frost-giants and the mountain-giants would go up to heaven if Bifrost were passable for all

who desired to go there. Many fair places there are in heaven, and they are all protected by a divine defense.

5.2 There stands a beautiful hall near the fountain beneath the ash. Out of it come three maids, whose names are Urd, Verdande and Skuld. These maids shape the lives of men, and we call them norns.

5.3 There are yet more norns, namely those who come to every man when he is born, to shape his life, and these are known to be of the race of gods; others, on the other hand, are of the race of elves, and yet others are of the race of dwarfs. As is here said:

6 Far asunder, I think,
The norns are born,
They are not of the same race.
Some are of the asas,
Some are of the elves,
Some are daughters of Dvalin.[25]

7 Then said Ganglere: If the norns rule the fortunes of men, then they deal them out exceedingly unevenly. Some live a good life and are rich; some get neither wealth nor praise. Some have a long, others a short life. Har answered: Good norns and of good descent shape good lives, and when some men are weighed down with misfortune, the evil norns are the cause of it.

8 Then said Ganglere: What other remarkable things are there to be said about the ash? Har answered: Much is to be said about it. On one of the boughs of the ash sits an eagle, who knows many things. Between his eyes

sits a hawk that is called Vedfolner. A squirrel, by name Ratatosk, springs up and down the tree, and carries words of envy between the eagle and Nidhug.

8.2 Four stags leap about in the branches of the ash and bite the leaves. [26] Their names are: Dain, Dvalin, Duney and Durathro. In Hvergelmer with Nidhug are more serpents than tongue can tell. As is here said:

9 The ash Ygdrasil
Bears distress
Greater than men know.
Stags bite it above,
At the side it rots,
Nidhug gnaws it below.

10 And so again it is said:

11 More serpents lie
'Neath the Ygdrasil ash
Than is thought of
By every foolish ape.
Goin and Moin
(They are sons of Grafvitner),
Grabak and Grafvollud,
Ofner and Svafner
Must for aye, methinks,
Gnaw the roots of that tree.[27]

12 Again, it is said that the norns, that dwell in the fountain of Urd, every day take water from the fountain and take the clay that lies around the fountain and sprinkle therewith the ash, in order that its branches may not wither or decay. This water is so holy that all things that are put into the fountain become as white as the film of an egg-shell As is here said:

13 An ash I know
Hight Ygdrasil;
A high, holy tree
With white clay sprinkled.
Thence come the dews
That fall in the dales.
Green forever it stands
Over Urd's fountain.[28]

14 The dew which falls on the earth from this tree men call honey-fall, and it is the food of bees. Two birds are fed in Urd's fountain; they are called swans, and they are the parents of the race of swans.

15 Then said Ganglere: Great tidings you are able to tell of the heavens. Are there other remarkable places than the one by Urd's fountain? Answered Har: There are many magnificent dwellings. One is there called Alfheim.

15.2 There dwell the folk that are called light-elves; but the dark-elves dwell down in the earth, and they are unlike the light-elves in appearance, but much more so in deeds. The light-elves are fairer than the sun to look upon, but the dark-elves are blacker than pitch. Another place is called Breidablik, and no place is fairer.

15.3 There is also a mansion called Glitner, of which the walls and pillars and posts are of red gold, and the roof is of silver. Furthermore, there is a dwelling, by name Himinbjorg, which stands at the end of heaven, where the Bifrost-bridge is united with heaven. And there is a great dwelling called Valaskjalf, which belongs to Odin.

15.4 The gods made it and thatched it with, sheer silver. In this hall is the high-seat, which is called Hlidskjalf, and when Alfather sits in this seat, he sees over all the world. In the southern end of the world is the palace, which is the fairest of all, and brighter than the sun; its name is Gimle. It shall stand when both heaven and earth shall have passed away.

15.5 In this hall the good and the righteous shall dwell through all ages. Thus says the Prophecy of the Vala:

16 A hall I know, standing
Than the sun fairer,
Than gold better,
Gimle by name.
There shall good
People dwell,
And forever
Delights enjoy.[29]

17 Then said Ganglere: Who guards this palace when Surt's fire burns up heaven and earth? Har answered: It is said that to the south and above this heaven is another heaven, which is called Andlang. But there is a third, which is above these, and is called Vidblain, and in this heaven we believe this mansion (Gimle) to be situated; but we deem that the light-elves alone dwell in it now.

[18] [23] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 24.

[19] [24] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 29.

[20] [25] Elder Edda: Fafner's Lay, 13.

[21] [26] The Icelandic barr. See Vigfusson, _sub voce_.

[22] [27] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 35, 34.

[23] [28] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 22.

[24] [29] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 70.

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GYLFAGINNING VIII — THE ASAS

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: Whence comes the wind? It is so strong that it moves great seas, and fans fires to flame, and yet, strong as it is, it cannot be seen. Therefore it is wonderfully made. Then answered Har: That I can tell you well. At the northern end of heaven sits a giant, who hight Hrasvelg. He is clad in eagles' plumes, and when he spreads his wings for flight, the winds arise from under them. Thus is it here said:

2 Hrasvelg hight he
Who sits at the end of heaven,
A giant in eagle's disguise.
From his wings, they say,
The wind does come
Over all mankind.[30]

3 Then said Ganglere: How comes it that summer is so hot, but the winter so cold? Har answered: A wise man would not ask such a question, for all are able to tell this; but if you alone have become so stupid that you have not heard of it, then I would rather forgive you for asking unwisely once than that you should go any longer in ignorance of what you ought to know.

3.2 Svasud is the name of him who is father of summer, and he lives such a life of enjoyment, that everything that is mild is from him called sweet (svasligt). But the father of winter has two names, Vindlone and Vindsval. He is the son of Vasad, and all that race are grim and of icy breath, and winter is like them.

4 Then asked Ganglere: Which are the asas, in whom men are bound to believe? Har answered him: Twelve are the divine asas. Jafnhar said: No less holy are the asynjes (goddesses), nor is their power less. Then added Thride: Odin is the highest and oldest of the asas. He rules all things, but the other gods, each according to his might, serve him as children a father. Frigg is his wife, and she knows the fate of men, although she tells not thereof, as it is related that Odin himself said to Asa-Loke:

5 Mad are you, Loke!
And out of your senses;
Why do you not stop?
Fortunes all,
Methinks, Frigg knows,
Though she tells them not herself.[31]

6 Odin is called Alfather, for he is the father of all the gods; he is also called Valfather, for all who fall in fight are his chosen sons. For them he prepares Valhal and Vingolf, where they are called einherjes (heroes). He is also called Hangagod, Haptagod, Farmagod; and he gave himself still more names when he came to King Geirrod:

7 Grim is my name,
And Ganglare,
Herjan, Hjalmbore,
Thek, Thride,
Thud, Ud,
Helblinde, Har,
Sad, Svipal,
Sangetal,

Herteit, Hnikar,
Bileyg, Baleyg,
Bolverk, Fjolner,
Grimner, Glapsvid, Fjolsvid,
Sidhot, Sidskeg,
Sigfather, Hnikud,
Alfather, Atrid, Farmatyr,
Oske, Ome,
Jafnhar, Biflinde,
Gondler, Harbard,
Svidur, Svidrir,
Jalk, Kjalar, Vidur,
Thro, Yg, Thund,
Vak, Skilfing,
Vafud, Hroptatyr,
Gaut, Veratyr.[32]

8 Then said Ganglere: A very great number of names you have given him; and this I know, forsooth, that he must be a very wise man who is able to understand and decide what chances are the causes of all these names.

8.2 Har answered: Much knowledge is needed to explain it all rightly, but still it is shortest to tell you that most of these names have been given him for the reason that, as there are many tongues in the world, so all peoples thought they ought to turn his name into their tongue, in order that they might be able to worship him and pray to him each in its own language.

8.3 Other causes of these names must be sought in his journeys, which are told of in old sagas; and you can lay no claim to being called a wise man if you are not able to tell of these wonderful adventures.

9 Then said Ganglere: What are the names of the other asas? What is their occupation, and what works have they wrought? Har answered: Thor is the foremost of them. He is called Asa-Thor, or Oku-Thor.[33] He is the strongest of all gods and men, and rules over the realm which is called Thrudvang. His hall is called Bilskirner. Therein are five hundred and forty floors, and it is the largest house that men have made. Thus it is said in Grimner's Lay:

10 Five hundred floors
And forty more,
Methinks, has bowed Bilskirner.
Of houses all
That I know roofed
I know my son's is the largest.[34]

11 Thor has two goats, by name Tangnjost and Tangrisner, and a chariot, wherein he drives. The goats draw the chariot; wherefore he is called Oku-Thor.[35] He possesses three valuable treasures.

11.2 One of them is the hammer Mjolner, which the frost-giants and mountain-giants well know when it is raised; and this is not to be wondered at, for with it he has split many a skull of their fathers or friends. The second treasure he possesses is Megingjarder (belt of strength); when he girds himself with it his strength is doubled.

11.3 His third treasure that is of so great value is his iron gloves; these he cannot do without when he lays hold of the hammer's haft. No one is so wise that he can tell all his great works; but I can tell you so many tidings of him that it will grow late before all is told that I know.

12 Thereupon said Ganglere: I wish to ask tidings of more of the asas. Har gave him answer: Odin's second son is Balder, and of him good things are to be told. He is the best, and all praise him. He is so fair of face and so bright that rays of light issue from him; and there is a plant so white that it is likened unto Balder's brow, and it is the whitest of all plants.

12.2 From this you can judge of the beauty both of his hair and of his body. He is the wisest, mildest and most eloquent of all the asas; and such is his nature that none can alter the judgment he has pronounced. He inhabits the place in heaven called Breidablik, and there nothing unclean can enter. As is here said:

13 Breidablik it is called,
Where Balder has
Built for himself a hall
In the land
Where I know is found
The least of evil.[36]

14 The third asa is he who is called Njord. He dwells in Noatun, which is in heaven. He rules the course of the wind and checks the fury of the sea and of fire. He is invoked by seafarers and by fishermen. He is so rich and wealthy that he can give broad lands and abundance to those who call on him for them.

14.2 He was fostered in Vanaheim, but the vans[37] gave him as a hostage to the gods, and received in his stead as an asa-hostage the god whose name is Honer. He established peace between the gods and vans. Njord took to wife Skade, a daughter of the giant Thjasse.

14.3 She wished to live where her father had dwelt, that is, on the mountains in Thrymheim; Njord, on the other hand, preferred to be near the sea. They therefore agreed to pass nine nights in Thrymheim and three in Noatun. But when Njord came back from the mountains to Noatun he sang this:

15 Weary am I of the mountains,
Not long was I there,
Only nine nights.
The howl of the wolves
Methought sounded ill
To the song of the swans.

16 Skade then sang this:

17 Sleep I could not
On my sea-strand couch,
For the scream of the sea-fowl.
There wakes me,
As he comes from the sea,
Every morning the mew.

18 Then went Skade up on the mountain, and dwelt in Thrymheim. She often goes on skees (snow-shoes), with her bow, and shoots wild beasts. She is called skee-goddess or skee-dis. Thus it is said:

19 Thrymheim it is called
Where Thjasse dwelt,
That mightiest giant.
But now dwells Skade,
Pure bride of the gods,
In her father's old homestead.[38]

20 Njord, in Noatun, afterward begat two children: a son, by name Frey, and a daughter, by name Freyja. They were fair of face, and mighty. Frey is the most famous of the asas. He rules over rain and sunshine, and over the fruits of the earth. It is good to call on him for harvests and peace. He also sways the wealth of men. Freyja is the most famous of the goddesses.

20.2 She has in heaven a dwelling which is called Folkvang, and when she rides to the battle, one half of the slain belong to her, and the other half to Odin. As is here said:

21 Folkvang it is called,
And there rules Freyja.
For the seats in the hall
Half of the slain
She chooses each day;
The other half is Odin's.[39]

22 Her hall is Sesrynmer, and it is large and beautiful. When she goes abroad, she drives in a car drawn by two cats. She lends a favorable ear to men who call upon her, and it is from her name the title has come that women of birth and wealth are called frur.[40] She is fond of love ditties, and it is good to call on her in love affairs.

23 Then said Ganglere: Of great importance these asas seem to me to be, and it is not wonderful that you have great power, since you have such excellent knowledge of the gods, and know to which of them to address your prayers on each occasion. But what other gods are there? Har answered: There is yet an asa, whose name is Tyr. He is very daring and stout-hearted.

23.2 He sways victory in war, wherefore warriors should call on him. There is a saw, that he who surpasses others in bravery, and never yields, is Tyr-strong. He is also so wise, that it is said of anyone who is specially intelligent, that he is Tyr-learned.

23.3 A proof of his daring is, that when the asas induced the wolf Fenrer to let himself be bound with the chain Gleipner, he would not believe that they would loose him again until Tyr put his hand in his mouth as a pledge. But when the asas would not loose the Fenris-wolf, he bit Tyr's hand off at the place of the wolf's joint (the wrist; Icel. _úlfliðr_[41]). From that time Tyr is one-handed, and he is now called a peacemaker among men.

24 Brage is the name of another of the asas. He is famous for his wisdom, eloquence and flowing speech. He is a master-skald, and from him song-craft is called brag (poetry), and such men or women as distinguish themselves by their eloquence are called brag-men[42] and brag-women. His wife is Idun.

24.2 She keeps in a box those apples of which the gods eat when they grow old, and then they become young again, and so it will be until Ragnarok (the twilight of the gods). Then said Ganglere: Of great importance to the gods it must be, it seems to me, that Idun preserves these apples with care and honesty.

24.3 Har answered, and laughed: They ran a great risk on one occasion, whereof I might tell you more, but you shall first hear the names of more asas.

25 Heimdal is the name of one. He is also called the white-asa. He is great and holy; born of nine maidens, all of whom were sisters. He hight also Hallinskide and Gullintanne, for his teeth were of gold. His horse hight Gulltop (Gold-top). He dwells in a place called Himinbjorg, near Bifrost.

25.2 He is the ward of the gods, and sits at the end of heaven, guarding the bridge against the mountain-giants. He needs less sleep than a bird; sees an hundred miles around him, and as well by night as by day. He hears the grass grow and the wool on the backs of the sheep, and of course all things that sound louder than these.

25.3 He has a trumpet called the Gjallarhorn, and when he blows it it can be heard in all the worlds. The head is called Heimdal's sword. Thus it is here said:

26 Himinbjorg it is called,
Where Heimdal rules
Over his holy halls;
There drinks the ward of the gods
In his delightful dwelling
Glad the good mead.[43]

27 And again, in Heimdal's Song, he says himself:

28 Son I am of maidens nine,
Born I am of sisters nine.

29 Hoder hight one of the asas, who is blind, but exceedingly strong; and the gods would wish that this asa never needed to be named, for the work of his hand will long be kept in memory both by gods and men.

30 Vidar is the name of the silent asa. He has a very thick shoe, and he is the strongest next after Thor. From him the gods have much help in all hard tasks.

31 Ale, or Vale, is the son of Odin and Rind. He is daring in combat, and a good shot.

32 Uller is the name of one, who is a son of Sif, and a step-son of Thor. He is so good an archer, and so fast on his skees, that no one can contend with him. He is fair of face, and possesses every quality of a warrior. Men should invoke him in single combat.

33 Forsete is a son of Balder and Nanna, Nep's daughter. He has in heaven the hall which hight Glitner. All who come to him with disputes go away perfectly reconciled. No better tribunal is to be found among gods and men. Thus it is here said:

34 Glitner hight the hall,
On gold pillars standing,
And roofed with silver.
There dwells Forsete
Throughout all time,
And settles all disputes.[44]

35 [30] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 37.

36 [31] Elder Edda. Loke's Quarrel, 29, 47.

[37] [32] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 46-50.

[38] [33] Oku is derived from the Finnish thunder-god, Ukko.

[39] [34] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 24.

[40] [35] The author of the Younger Edda is here mistaken. See note on page 82 {Footnote 33}.

[41] [36] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 12.

[42] [37] Compare Vainamoinen, the son of Ukko, in the Finnish epic Kalevala.

[43] [38] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 11.

[44] [39] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 14.

[45] [40] Icel. _frú_ (Ger. _frau_; Dan. _frue_), pl. _frúr_, means a lady. It is used of the wives of men of rank or title. It is derived from Freyja.

[46] [41] This etymology is, however, erroneous, for the word is derived from _oln_ or _öln_, and the true form of the word is _ölnliðr_ = the ell-joint (wrist); thus we have _ölnboge_--the elbow; _öln_ = _alin_ (Gr. ὠδίνη; Lat. _ulna_; cp. A.-S. _el-boga_; Eng. _elbow_) is the arm from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, hence an ell in long measure.

[47] [42] Compare the Anglo-Saxon _brego_ = princeps, chief.

[48] [43] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 13.

[49] [44] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 15.

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GYLFAGINNING IX — LOKE AND HIS OFFSPRING

✦

1 There is yet one who is numbered among the asas, but whom some call the backbiter of the asas. He is the originator of deceit, and the disgrace of all gods and men. His name is Loke, or Lopt. His father is the giant Farbaute, but his mother's name is Laufey, or Nal. His brothers are Byleist and Helblinde.

1.2 Loke is fair and beautiful of face, but evil in disposition, and very fickle-minded. He surpasses other men in the craft called cunning, and cheats in all things. He has often brought the asas into great trouble, and often helped them out again, with his cunning contrivances. His wife hight Sygin, and their son, Nare, or Narfe.

2 Loke had yet more children. A giantess in Jotunheim, hight Angerboda. With her he begat three children. The first was the Fenris-wolf; the second, Jormungand, that is, the Midgard-serpent, and the third, Hel.

2.2 When the gods knew that these three children were being fostered in Jotunheim, and were aware of the prophecies that much woe and misfortune would thence come to them, and considering that much evil might be looked for from them on their mother's side, and still more on their father's, Alfather sent some of the gods to take the children and bring them to him.

2.3 When they came to him he threw the serpent into the deep sea which surrounds all lands. There waxed the serpent so that he lies in the midst of the ocean, surrounds all the earth, and bites his own tail.

2.4 Hel he cast into Niflheim, and gave her power over nine worlds,[45] that she should appoint abodes to them that are sent to her, namely, those who die from sickness or old age. She has there a great mansion, and the walls around it are of strange height, and the gates are huge. Eljudner is the name of her hall. Her table hight famine; her knife, starvation.

2.5 Her man-servant's name is Ganglate; her maid-servant's, Ganglot. [46] Her threshold is called stumbling-block; her bed, care; the precious hangings of her bed, gleaming bale. One-half of her is blue, and the other half is of the hue of flesh; hence she is easily known. Her looks are very stern and grim.

3 The wolf was fostered by the asas at home, and Tyr was the only one who had the courage to go to him and give him food. When the gods saw how much he grew every day, and all prophecies declared that he was predestined to become fatal to them, they resolved to make a very strong fetter, which they called Lading.

3.2 They brought it to the wolf, and bade him try his strength on the fetter. The wolf, who did not think it would be too strong for him, let them do therewith as they pleased. But as soon as he spurned against it the fetter burst asunder, and he was free from Lading. Then the asas made another fetter, by one-half stronger, and this they called Drome.

3.3 They wanted the wolf to try this also, saying to him that he would become very famous for his strength, if so strong a chain was not able to hold him. The wolf thought that this fetter was indeed very strong, but also that his strength had increased since he broke Lading.

3.4 He also took into consideration that it was necessary to expose one's self to some danger if he desired to become famous; so he let them put the fetter on him. When the asas said they were ready, the wolf shook himself, spurned against and dashed the fetter on the ground, so that the broken pieces flew a long distance. Thus he broke loose out of Drome.

3.5 Since then it has been held as a proverb, "to get loose out of Lading" or "to dash out of Drome," whenever anything is extraordinarily hard. The asas now began to fear that they would not get the wolf bound. So Alfather sent the youth, who is called Skirner, and is Frey's messenger, to some dwarfs in Svartalfaheim, and had them make the fetter which is called Gleipner.

3.6 It was made of six things: of the footfall of cats, of the beard of woman, of the roots of the mountain, of the sinews of the bear, of the breath of the fish, and of the spittle of the birds.

3.7 If you have not known this before, you can easily find out that it is true and that there is no lie about it, since you must have observed that a woman has no beard, that a cat's footfall cannot be heard, and that mountains have no roots; and I know, forsooth, that what I have told you is perfectly true, although there are some things that you do not understand.

3.8 Then said Ganglere: This I must surely understand to be true. I can see these things which you have taken as proof. But how was the fetter smithied? Answered Har: That I can well explain to you. It was smooth and soft as a silken string. How strong and trusty it was you shall now hear.

3.9 When the fetter was brought to the asas, they thanked the messenger for doing his errand so well. Then they went out into the lake called Amsvartner, to the holm (rocky island) called Lyngve, and called the wolf

to go with them. They showed him the silken band and bade him break it, saying that it was somewhat stronger than its thinness would lead one to suppose.

3.10 Then they handed it from one to the other and tried its strength with their hands, but it did not break. Still they said the wolf would be able to snap it. The wolf answered: It seems to me that I will get no fame though I break asunder so slender a thread as this is. But if it is made with craft and guile, then, little though it may look, that band will never come on my feet.

3.11 Then said the asas that he would easily be able to break a slim silken band, since he had already burst large iron fetters asunder. But even if you are unable to break this band, you have nothing to fear from the gods, for we will immediately loose you again.

3.12 The wolf answered: If you get me bound so fast that I am not able to loose myself again, you will skulk away, and it will be long before I get any help from you, wherefore I am loth to let this band be laid on me; but in order that you may not accuse me of cowardice, let some one of you lay his hand in my mouth as a pledge that this is done without deceit.

3.13 The one asa looked at the other, and thought there now was a choice of two evils, and no one would offer his hand, before Tyr held out his right hand and laid it in the wolf's mouth. But when the wolf now began to spurn against it the band grew stiffer, and the more he strained the tighter it got. They all laughed except Tyr; he lost his hand.

3.14 When the asas saw that the wolf was sufficiently well bound, they took the chain which was fixed to the fetter, and which was called Gelgja, and drew it through a large rock which is called Gjol, and fastened this

rock deep down in the earth. Then they took a large stone, which is called Tvite, and drove it still deeper into the ground, and used this stone for a fastening-pin.

3.15 The wolf opened his mouth terribly wide, raged and twisted himself with all his might, and wanted to bite them; but they put a sword in his mouth, in such a manner that the hilt stood in his lower jaw and the point in the upper, that is his gag. He howls terribly, and the saliva which runs from his mouth forms a river called Von. There he will lie until Ragnarok.

3.16 Then said Ganglere: Very bad are these children of Loke, but they are strong and mighty. But why did not the asas kill the wolf when they have evil to expect from him? Har answered: So great respect have the gods for their holiness and peace-stead, that they would not stain them with the blood of the wolf, though prophecies foretell that he must become the bane of Odin.

4 [45] Possibly this ought to read the ninth world, which would correspond with what we read on page 72, and in the Vala's Prophecy. See also notes. It may be a mistake of the transcriber.

5 [46] Both these words mean sloth.

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GYLFAGINNING X — THE GODDESSES (ASYNJES)

✦

1 Ganglere asked: Which are the goddesses? Har answered: Frigg is the first; she possesses the right lordly dwelling which is called Fensaler. The second is Saga, who dwells in Sokvabek, and this is a large dwelling. The third is Eir, who is the best leech. The fourth is Gefjun, who is a may, and those who die maids become her hand-maidens.

1.2 The fifth is Fulla, who is also a may, she wears her hair flowing and has a golden ribbon about her head; she carries Frigg's chest, takes care of her shoes and knows her secrets. The sixth is Freyja, who is ranked with Frigg.

1.3 She is wedded to the man whose name is Oder; their daughter's name is Hnos, and she is so fair that all things fair and precious are called, from her name, Hnos. Oder went far away. Freyja weeps for him, but her tears are red gold. Freyja has many names, and the reason therefor is that she changed her name among the various nations to which she came in search of Oder.

1.4 She is called Mardol, Horn, Gefn, and Syr. She has the necklace Brising, and she is called Vanadis. The seventh is Sjofn, who is fond of turning men's and women's hearts to love, and it is from her name that love is called Sjafne.

1.5 The eighth is Lofn, who is kind and good to those who call upon her, and she has permission from Alfather or Frigg to bring together men and women, no matter what difficulties may stand in the way; therefore

"love" is so called from her name, and also that which is much loved by men. The ninth is Var. She hears the oaths and troths that men and women plight to each other.

1.6 Hence such vows are called vars, and she takes vengeance on those who break their promises. The tenth is Vor, who is so wise and searching that nothing can be concealed from her. It is a saying that a woman becomes vor (ware) of what she becomes wise. The eleventh is Syn, who guards the door of the hall, and closes it against those who are not to enter.

1.7 In trials she guards those suits in which anyone tries to make use of falsehood. Hence is the saying that "syn is set against it," when anyone tries to deny ought. The twelfth is Hlin, who guards those men whom Frigg wants to protect from any danger. Hence is the saying that he hlins who is forewarned. The thirteenth is Snotra, who is wise and courtly.

1.8 After her, men and women who are wise are called Snotras. The fourteenth is Gna, whom Frigg sends on her errands into various worlds. She rides upon a horse called Hofvarpner, that runs through the air and over the sea. Once, when she was riding, some vans saw her faring through the air. Then said one of them:

2 What flies there?
What fares there?
What glides in the air?

3 She answered

4 I fly not,
Though I fare
And glide through the air

On Hofvarpner,
That Hamskerper,
Begat with Gardrofa.[47]

5 From Gna's name it is said that anything that fares high in the air gnas. Sol and Bil are numbered among the goddesses, but their nature has already been described.[48]

6 There are still others who are to serve in Valhal, bear the drink around, wait upon the table and pass the ale-horns. Thus they are named in Grimner's Lay:

7 Hrist and Mist
I want my horn to bring to me;
Skeggold and Skogul,
Hild and Thrud,
Hlok and Heifjoter,
Gol and Geirahod,
Randgrid and Radgrid,
And Reginleif;
These bear ale to the einherjes.[49]

8 These are called valkyries. Odin sends them to all battles, where they choose those who are to be slain, and rule over the victory. Gud and Rosta, and the youngest norn, Skuld, always ride to sway the battle and choose the slain. Jord, the mother of Thor, and Rind, Vale's mother, are numbered among the goddesses.

9 [47] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 36

10 [48] See page 66.

[11] [49] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 36.

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GYLFAGINNING XI — THE GIANTESS GERD AND SKIRNER'S JOURNEY

✦

1 Gymer hight a man whose wife was Orboda, of the race of the mountain giants. Their daughter was Gerd, the fairest of all women. One day when Frey had gone into Hlidskjalf, and was looking out upon all the worlds, he saw toward the north a hamlet wherein was a large and beautiful house.

1.2 To this house went a woman, and when she raised her hands to open the door, both the sky and the sea glistened therefrom, and she made all the world bright. As a punishment for his audacity in seating himself in that holy seat, Frey went away full of grief. When he came home, he neither spake, slept, nor drank, and no one dared speak to him.

1.3 Then Njord sent for Skirner, Frey's servant, bade him go to Frey and ask him with whom he was so angry, since he would speak to nobody. Skirner said that he would go, though he was loth to do so, as it was probable that he would get evil words in reply.

1.4 When he came to Frey and asked him why he was so sad that he would not talk, Frey answered that he had seen a beautiful woman, and for her sake he had become so filled with grief, that he could not live any longer if he could not get her. And now you must go, he added, and ask her hand for me and bring her home to me, whether it be with or without the consent of her father.

1.5 I will reward you well for your trouble. Skirner answered saying that he would go on this errand, but Frey must give him his sword, that was so excellent that it wielded itself in fight. Frey made no objection to this and gave him the sword.

1.6 Skirner went on his journey, courted Gerd for him, and got the promise of her that she nine nights thereafter should come to Bar-Isle and there have her wedding with Frey. When Skirner came back and gave an account of his journey, Frey said:

2 Long is one night,
Long are two nights,
How can I hold out three?
Oft to me one month
Seemed less
Than this half night of love.[51]

3 This is the reason why Frey was unarmed when he fought with Bele, and slew him with a hart's horn. Then said Ganglere: It is a great wonder that such a lord as Frey would give away his sword, when he did not have another as good. A great loss it was to him when he fought with Bele; and this I know, forsooth, that he must have repented of that gift.

3.2 Har answered: Of no great account was his meeting with Bele. Frey could have slain him with his hand. But the time will come when he will find himself in a worse plight for not having his sword, and that will be when the sons of Muspel sally forth to the fight.

4 [50] This is the Niblung story in a nut-shell.

[5] [51] Elder Edda: Skirner's Journey, 42.

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GYLFAGINNING XII — LIFE IN VALHAL

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: You say that all men who since the beginning of the world have fallen in battle have come to Odin in Valhal. What does he have to give them to eat? It seems to me there must be a great throng of people.

1.2 Har answered: It is true, as you remark, that there is a great throng; many more are yet to come there, and still they will be thought too few when the wolf[52] comes. But however great may be the throng in Valhal, they will get plenty of flesh of the boar Sahrimner. He is boiled every day and is whole again in the evening.

1.3 But as to the question you just asked, it seems to me there are but few men so wise that they are able to answer it correctly. The cook's name is Andhrimner, and the kettle is called Eldhrimner as is here said:

2 Andhrimner cooks
In Eldhrimner
Sahrimner.
'Tis the best of flesh.
There are few who know
What the einherjes eat.[53]

3 Ganglere asked: Does Odin have the same kind of food as the einherjes? Har answered: The food that is placed on his table he gives to his two wolves, which hight Gere and Freke. He needs no food himself. Wine is to

him both food and drink, as is here said:

4 Gere and Freke
Sates the warfaring,
Famous father of hosts;
But on wine alone
Odin in arms renowned
Forever lives.[54]

5 Two ravens sit on Odin's shoulders, and bring to his ears all that they hear and see. Their names are Hugin and Munin. At dawn he sends them out to fly over the whole world, and they come back at breakfast time. Thus he gets information about many things, and hence he is called Rafnagud (raven-god). As is here said:

6 Hugin and Munin
Fly every day
Over the great earth.
I fear for Hugin
That he may not return,
Yet more am I anxious for Munin.[55]

7 Then asked Ganglere: What do the einherjes have to drink that is furnished them as bountifully as the food? Or do they drink water? Har answered: That is a wonderful question. Do you suppose that Alfather invites kings, jarls, or other great men, and gives them water to drink?

7.2 This I know, forsooth, that many a one comes to Valhal who would think he was paying a big price for his water-drink, if there were no better reception to be found there,--persons, namely, who have died from

wounds and pain. But I can tell you other tidings. A she-goat, by name Heidrun, stands up in Valhal and bites the leaves off the branches of that famous tree called Lerad.

7.3 From her teats runs so much mead that she fills every day a vessel in the hall from which the horns are filled, and which is so large that all the einherjes get all the drink they want out of it. Then said Ganglere: That is a most useful goat, and a right excellent tree that must be that she feeds upon.

7.4 Then said Har: Still more remarkable is the hart Eikthyrner, which stands over Valhal and bites the branches of the same tree. From his horns fall so many drops down into Hvergelmer, that thence flow the rivers that are called Sid, Vid, Sekin, Ekin, Svol, Gunthro, Fjorm, Fimbulthul, Gipul, Gopul, Gomul and Geirvimul, all of which fall about the abodes of the asas.

7.5 The following are also named: Thyn, Vin, Thol, Bol, Grad, Gunthrain, Nyt, Not, Non, Hron, Vina, Vegsvin, Thjodnuma.

8 Then said Ganglere: That was a wonderful tiding that you now told me. A mighty house must Valhal be, and a great crowd there must often be at the door. Then answered Har: Why do you not ask how many doors there are in Valhal, and how large they are? When you find that out, you will confess that it would rather be wonderful if everybody could not easily go in and out. It is also a fact that it is no more difficult to find room within than to get in. Of this you may hear what the Lay of Grimner says:

9 Five hundred doors
And forty more,
I trow, there are in Valhal.

Eight hundred einherjes
Go at a time through one door
When they fare to fight with the wolf.[56]

10 Then said Ganglere: A mighty band of men there is in Valhal, and, forsooth, I know that Odin is a very great chief, since he commands so mighty a host. But what is the pastime of the einherjes when they do not drink? Har answered: Every morning, when they have dressed themselves, they take their weapons and go out into the court and fight and slay each other. That is their play. Toward breakfast-time they ride home to Valhal and sit down to drink. As is here said:

11 All the einherjes
In Odin's court
Hew daily each other.
They choose the slain
And ride from the battle-field,
Then sit they in peace together.[57]

12 But true it is, as you said, that Odin is a great chief. There are many proofs of that. Thus it is said in the very words of the asas themselves:

13 The Ygdrasil ash
Is the foremost of trees,
But Skidbladner of ships,
Odin of asas,
Sleipner of steeds,
Bifrost of bridges,

Brage of Skalds,
Habrok of hows,
But Garm of dogs.[58]

14 [52] The Fenris-wolf in Ragnarok.

15 [53] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 18.

16 [54] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 19.

17 [55] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 20.

18 [56] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 23.

19 [57] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 41.

20 [58] Elder Edda: Grimner's Lay, 44.

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GYLFAGINNING XIII — ODIN'S HORSE AND FREY'S SHIP

✦

1 Ganglere asked: Whose is that horse Sleipner, and what is there to say about it? Har answered: You have no knowledge of Sleipner, nor do you know the circumstances attending his birth; but it must seem to you worth the telling.

1.2 In the beginning, when the town of the gods was building, when the gods had established Midgard and made Valhal, there came a certain builder and offered to make them a burg, in three half years, so excellent that it should be perfectly safe against the mountain-giants and frost-giants, even though they should get within Midgard.

1.3 But he demanded as his reward, that he should have Freyja, and he wanted the sun and moon besides. Then the asas came together and held counsel, and the bargain was made with the builder that he should get what he demanded if he could get the burg done in one winter; but if on the first day of summer any part of the burg was unfinished, then the contract should be void.

1.4 It was also agreed that no man should help him with the work. When they told him these terms, he requested that they should allow him to have the help of his horse, called Svadilfare, and at the suggestion of Loke this was granted him.

2 On the first day of winter he began to build the burg, but by night he hauled stone for it with his horse. But it seemed a great wonder to the asas what great rocks that horse drew, and the horse did one half more of the

mighty task than the builder.

2.2 The bargain was firmly established with witnesses and oaths, for the giant did not deem it safe to be among the asas without truce if Thor should come home, who now was on a journey to the east fighting trolls. Toward the end of winter the burg was far built, and it was so high and strong that it could in nowise be taken.

2.3 When there were three days left before summer, the work was all completed excepting the burg gate. Then went the gods to their judgment-seats and held counsel, and asked each other who could have advised to give Freyja in marriage in Jotunheim, or to plunge the air and the heavens in darkness by taking away the sun and the moon and giving them to the giant; and all agreed that this must have been advised by him who gives the most bad counsels, namely, Loke, son of Laufey, and they threatened him with a cruel death if he could not contrive some way of preventing the builder from fulfilling his part of the bargain, and they proceeded to lay hands on Loke.

2.4 He in his fright then promised with an oath that he should so manage that the builder should lose his wages, let it cost him what it would. And the same evening, when the builder drove out after stone with his horse Svadilfare, a mare suddenly ran out of the woods to the horse and began to neigh at him.

2.5 The steed, knowing what sort of horse this was, grew excited, burst the reins asunder and ran after the mare, but she ran from him into the woods. The builder hurried after them with all his might, and wanted to catch the steed, but these horses kept running all night, and thus the time was lost, and at dawn the work had not made the usual progress.

2.6 When the builder saw that his work was not going to be completed, he resumed his giant form. When the asas thus became sure that it was really a mountain-giant that had come among them, they did not heed their oaths, but called on Thor.

2.7 He came straightway, swung his hammer, Mjolner, and paid the workman his wages,--not with the sun and moon, but rather by preventing him from dwelling in Jotunheim; and this was easily done with the first blow of the hammer, which broke his skull into small pieces and sent him down to Niflhel. But Loke had run such a race with Svadilfare that he some time after bore a foal.

2.8 It was gray, and had eight feet, and this is the best horse among gods and men. Thus it is said in the Vala's Prophecy:

3 Then went the gods.
The most holy gods,
Onto their judgment-seats,
And counseled together
Who all the air
With guile had blended
Or to the giant race
Oder's may had given.
Broken were oaths,
And words and promises,--
All mighty speech
That had passed between them.
Thor alone did this,

Swollen with anger.
Seldom sits he still
When such things he hears.[59]

4 Then asked Ganglere: What is there to be said of Skidbladner, which you say is the best of ships? Is there no ship equally good, or equally great? Made answer Har: Skidbladner is the best of ships, and is made with the finest workmanship; but Naglfare, which is in Muspel, is the largest. Some dwarfs, the sons of Ivalde, made Skidbladner and gave it to Frey.

4.2 It is so large that all the asas, with their weapons and war-gear, can find room on board it, and as soon as the sails are hoisted it has fair wind, no matter whither it is going. When it is not wanted for a voyage, it is made of so many pieces and with so much skill, that Frey can fold it together like a napkin and carry it in his pocket.

5 [59] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 29, 30.

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GYLFAGINNING XIV — THOR'S ADVENTURES

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: A good ship is Skidbladner, but much black art must have been resorted to ere it was so fashioned. Has Thor never come where he has found anything so strong and mighty that it has been superior to him either in strength or in the black art? Har answered: Few men, I know, are able to tell thereof, but still he has often been in difficult straits.

1.2 But though there have been things so mighty and strong that Thor has not been able to gain the victory, they are such as ought not to be spoken of; for there are many proofs which all must accept that Thor is the mightiest. Then said Ganglere: It seems to me that I have now asked about something that no one can answer.

1.3 Said Jafnhar: We have heard tell of adventures that seem to us incredible, but here sits one near who is able to tell true tidings thereof, and you may believe that he will not lie for the first time now, who never told a lie before. Then said Ganglere: I will stand here and listen, to see if any answer is to be had to this question.

1.4 But if you cannot answer my question I declare you to be defeated. Then answered Thride: It is evident that he now is bound to know, though it does not seem proper for us to speak thereof. The beginning of this adventure is that Oku-Thor went on a journey with his goats and chariot, and with him went the asa who is called Loke.

1.5 In the evening they came to a bonde[60] and got there lodgings for the night. In the evening Thor took his goats and killed them both, whereupon he had them flayed and borne into a kettle. When the flesh was boiled, Thor and his companion sat down to supper.

1.6 Thor invited the bonde, his wife and their children, a son by name Thjalfe, and a daughter by name Roskva, to eat with them. Then Thor laid the goat-skins away from the fire-place, and requested the bonde and his household to cast the bones onto the skins.

1.7 Thjalfe, the bonde's son, had the thigh of one of the goats, which he broke asunder with his knife, in order to get at the marrow, Thor remained there over night. In the morning, just before daybreak, he arose, dressed himself, took the hammer Mjolner, lifted it and hallowed the goat-skins. Then the goats arose, but one of them limped on one of its hind legs.

1.8 When Thor saw this he said that either the bonde or one of his folk had not dealt skillfully with the goat's bones, for he noticed that the thigh was broken. It is not necessary to dwell on this part of the story. All can understand how frightened the bonde became when he saw that Thor let his brows sink down over his eyes.

1.9 When he saw his eyes he thought he must fall down at the sight of them alone. Thor took hold of the handle of his hammer so hard that his knuckles grew white. As might be expected, the bonde and all his household cried aloud and sued for peace, offering him as an atonement all that they possessed. When he saw their fear, his wrath left him.

1.10 He was appeased, and took as a ransom the bonders children, Thjalfe and Roskva. They became his servants, and have always accompanied him since that time.

2 He left his goats there and went on his way east into Jotunheim, clear to the sea, and then he went on across the deep ocean, and went ashore on the other side, together with Loke and Thjalfe and Roskva. When they had proceeded a short distance, there stood before them a great wood, through which they kept going the whole day until dark.

2.2 Thjalfe, who was of all men the fleetest of foot, bore Thor's bag, but the wood was no good place for provisions. When it had become dark, they sought a place for their night lodging, and found a very large hall. At the end of it was a door as wide as the hall. Here they remained through the night.

2.3 About midnight there was a great earthquake; the ground trembled beneath them, and the house shook. Then Thor stood up and called his companions. They looked about them and found an adjoining room to the right, in the midst of the hall, and there they went in. Thor seated himself in the door; the others went farther in and were very much frightened.

2.4 Thor held his hammer by the handle, ready to defend himself. Then they heard a great groaning and roaring. When it began to dawn, Thor went out and saw a man lying not far from him in the wood. He was very large, lay sleeping, and snored loudly. Then Thor thought he had found out what noise it was that they had heard in the night.

2.5 He girded himself with his Megingjarder, whereby his asa-might increased. Meanwhile the man woke, and immediately arose. It is said that Thor this once forbore to strike him with the hammer, and asked him for his name. He called himself Skrymer; but, said he, I do not need to ask you what your name is,--I know that you are Asa-Thor. But what have you done with my glove?

2.6 He stretched out his hand and picked up his glove. Then Thor saw that the glove was the hall in which he had spent the night, and that the adjoining room was the thumb of the glove. Skrymer asked whether they would accept of his company. Thor said yes.

2.7 Skrymer took and loosed his provision-sack and began to eat his breakfast; but Thor and his fellows did the same in another place. Skrymer proposed that they should lay their store of provisions together, to which Thor consented. Then Skrymer bound all their provisions into one bag, laid it on his back, and led the way all the day, taking gigantic strides.

2.8 Late in the evening he sought out a place for their night quarters under a large oak. Then Skrymer said to Thor that he wanted to lie down to sleep; they might take the provision-sack and make ready their supper. Then Skrymer fell asleep and snored tremendously.

2.9 When Thor took the provision-sack and was to open it, then happened what seems incredible, but still it must be told,--that he could not get one knot loosened, nor could he stir a single end of the strings so that it was looser than before.

2.10 When he saw that all his efforts were in vain he became wroth, seized his hammer Mjolner with both his hands, stepped with one foot forward to where Skrymer was lying and dashed the hammer at his head. Skrymer awoke and asked whether some leaf had fallen upon his head; whether they had taken their supper, and were ready to go to sleep.

2.11 Thor answered that they were just going to sleep. Then they went under another oak. But the truth must be told, that there was no fearless sleeping. About midnight Thor heard that Skrymer was snoring and sleeping so fast that it thundered in the wood.

2.12 He arose and went over to him, clutched the hammer tight and hard, and gave him a blow in the middle of the crown, so that he knew that the head of the hammer sank deep into his head. But just then Skrymer awoke and asked: What is that? Did an acorn fall onto my head? How is it with you, Thor?

2.13 Thor hastened back, answered that he had just waked up, and said that it was midnight and still time to sleep. Then Thor made up his mind that if he could get a chance to give him the third blow, he should never see him again, and he now lay watching for Skrymer to sleep fast. Shortly before daybreak he heard that Skrymer had fallen asleep. So he arose and ran over to him.

2.14 He clutched the hammer with all his might and dashed it at his temples, which he saw uppermost. The hammer sank up to the handle. Skrymer sat up, stroked his temples, and said: Are there any birds sitting in the tree above me? Methought, as I awoke, that some moss from the branches fell on my head. What! are you awake, Thor?

2.15 It is now time to get up and dress; but you have not far left to the burg that is called Utgard. I have heard that you have been whispering among yourselves that I am not small of stature, but you will see greater men when you come to Utgard. Now I will give you wholesome advice.

2.16 Do not brag too much of yourselves, for Utgard-Loke's thanes will not brook the boasting of such insignificant little fellows as you are; otherwise turn back, and that is, in fact, the best thing for you to do. But if you are bound to continue your journey, then keep straight on eastward; my way lies to the north, to those mountains that you there see.

2.17 Skrymer then took the provision-sack and threw it on his back, and, leaving them, turned into the wood, and it has not been learned whether the asas wished to meet him again in health.

3 Thor and his companions went their way and continued their journey until noon. Then they saw a burg standing on a plain, and it was so high that they had to bend their necks clear back before they could look over it. They drew nearer and came to the burg-gate, which was closed.

3.2 Thor finding himself unable to open it, and being anxious to get within the burg, they crept between the bars and so came in. They discovered a large hall and went to it. Finding the door open they entered, and saw there many men, the most of whom were immensely large, sitting on two benches. Thereupon they approached the king, Utgard-Loke, and greeted him.

3.3 He scarcely deigned to look at them, smiled scornfully and showed his teeth, saying: It is late to ask for tidings of a long journey, but if I am not mistaken this stripling is Oku-Thor, is it not? It may be, however, that you are really bigger than you look For what feats are you and your companions prepared?

3.4 No one can stay with us here, unless he is skilled in some craft or accomplishment beyond the most of men. Then answered he who came in last, namely Loke: I know the feat of which I am prepared to give proof, that there is no one present who can eat his food faster than I.

3.5 Then said Utgard-Loke: That is a feat, indeed, if you can keep your word, and you shall try it immediately. He then summoned from the bench a man by name Loge, and requested him to come out on the floor

and try his strength against Loke. They took a trough full of meat and set it on the floor, whereupon Loke seated himself at one end and Loge at the other.

3.6 Both ate as fast as they could, and met at the middle of the trough. Loke had eaten all the flesh off from the bones, but Loge had consumed both the flesh and the bones, and the trough too. All agreed that Loke had lost the wager. Then Utgard-Loke asked what game that young man knew? Thjalfe answered that he would try to run a race with anyone that Utgard-Loke might designate.

3.7 Utgard-Loke said this was a good feat, and added that it was to be hoped that he excelled in swiftness if he expected to win in this game, but he would soon have the matter decided. He arose and went out. There was an excellent race-course along the flat plain. Utgard-Loke then summoned a young man, whose name was Huge, and bade him run a race with Thjalfe.

3.8 Then they took the first heat, and Huge was so much ahead that when he turned at the goal he met Thjalfe. Said Utgard-Loke: You must lay yourself more forward, Thjalfe, if you want to win the race; but this I confess, that there has never before come anyone hither who was swifter of foot than you.

3.9 Then they took a second heat, and when Huge came to the goal and turned, there was a long bolt-shot to Thjalfe. Then said Utgard-Loke: Thjalfe seems to me to run well; still I scarcely think he will win the race, but this will be proven when they run the third heat. Then they took one more heat.

3.10 Huge ran to the goal and turned back, but Thjalfe had not yet gotten to the middle of the course. Then all said that this game had been tried sufficiently. Utgard-Loke now asked Thor what feats there were that he would be willing to exhibit before them, corresponding to the tales that men tell of his great works.

3.11 Thor replied that he preferred to compete with someone in drinking. Utgard-Loke said there would be no objection to this. He went into the hall, called his cup-bearer, and requested him to take the sconce-horn that his thanes were wont to drink from. The cup-bearer immediately brought forward the horn and handed it to Thor.

3.12 Said Utgard-Loke: From this horn it is thought to be well drunk if it is emptied in one draught, some men empty it in two draughts, but there is no drinker so wretched that he cannot exhaust it in three. Thor looked at the horn and did not think it was very large, though it seemed pretty long, but he was very thirsty.

3.13 He put it to his lips and swallowed with all his might, thinking that he should not have to bend over the horn a second time. But when his breath gave out, and he looked into the horn to see how it had gone with his drinking, it seemed to him difficult to determine whether there was less in it than before. Then said Utgard-Loke: That is well drunk, still it is not very much.

3.14 I could never have believed it, if anyone had told me, that Asa-Thor could not drink more, but I know you will be able to empty it in a second draught. Thor did not answer, but set the horn to his lips, thinking that he would now take a larger draught.

3.15 He drank as long as he could and drank deep, as he was wont, but still he could not make the tip of the horn come up as much as he would like. And when he set the horn away and looked into it, it seemed to him that he had drunk less than the first time; but the horn could now be borne without spilling. Then said Utgard-Loke: How now, Thor!

3.16 Are you not leaving more for the third draught than befits your skill? It seems to me that if you are to empty the horn with the third draught, then this will be the greatest. You will not be deemed so great a man here among us as the asas call you, if you do not distinguish yourself more in other feats than you seem to me to have done in this.

3.17 Then Thor became wroth, set the horn to his mouth and drank with all his might and kept on as long as he could, and when he looked into it its contents had indeed visibly diminished, but he gave back the horn and would not drink any more. Said Utgard-Loke: It is clear that your might is not so great as we thought. Would you like to try other games?

3.18 It is evident that you gained nothing by the first. Answered Thor: I should like to try other games, but I should be surprised if such a drink at home among the asas would be called small. What game will you now offer me?

3.19 Answered Utgard-Loke: Young lads here think it nothing but play to lift my cat up from the ground, and I should never have dared to offer such a thing to Asa-Thor had I not already seen that you are much less of a man than I thought. Then there sprang forth on the floor a gray cat, and it was rather large.

3.20 Thor went over to it, put his hand under the middle of its body and tried to lift it up, but the cat bent its back in the same degree as Thor raised his hands; and when he had stretched them up as far as he was able the cat lifted one foot, and Thor did not carry the game any further. Then said Utgard-Loke: This game ended as I expected.

3.21 The cat is rather large, and Thor is small, and little compared with the great men that are here with us. Said Thor: Little as you call me, let anyone who likes come hither and wrestle with me, for now I am wroth. Answered Utgard-Loke, looking about him on the benches: I do not see anyone here who would not think it a trifle to wrestle with you.

3.22 And again he said: Let me see first! Call hither that old woman, Elle, my foster-mother, and let Thor wrestle with her if he wants to. She has thrown to the ground men who have seemed to me no less strong than Thor. Then there came into the hall an old woman. Utgard-Loke bade her take a wrestle with Asa-Thor. The tale is not long.

3.23 The result of the grapple was, that the more Thor tightened his grasp, the firmer she stood. Then the woman began to bestir herself, and Thor lost his footing. They had some very hard tussles, and before long Thor was brought down on one knee.

3.24 Then Utgard-Loke stepped forward, bade them cease the wrestling, and added that Thor did not need to challenge anybody else to wrestle with him in his hall, besides it was now getting late. He showed Thor and his companions to seats, and they spent the night there enjoying the best of hospitality.

4 At daybreak the next day Thor and his companions arose, dressed themselves and were ready to depart. Then came Utgard-Loke and had the table spread for them, and there was no lack of feasting both in food and in drink. When they had breakfasted, they immediately departed from the burg.

4.2 Utgard-Loke went with them out of the burg, but at parting he spoke to Thor and asked him how he thought his journey had turned out, or whether he had ever met a mightier man than himself.

4.3 Thor answered that he could not deny that he had been greatly disgraced in this meeting; and this I know, he added, that you will call me a man of little account, whereat I am much mortified.

4.4 Then said Utgard-Loke: Now I will tell you the truth, since you have come out of the burg, that if I live, and may have my way, you shall never enter it again; and this I know, forsooth, that you should never have come into it had I before known that you were so strong, and that you had come so near bringing us into great misfortune.

4.5 Know, then, that I have deceived you with illusions. When I first found you in the woods I came to meet you, and when you were to loose the provision-sack I had bound it with iron threads, but you did not find where it was to be untied. In the next place, you struck me three times with the hammer.

4.6 The first blow was the least, and still it was so severe that it would have been my death if it had hit me. You saw near my burg a mountain cloven at the top into three square dales, of which one was the deepest,--these were the dints made by your hammer. The mountain I brought before the blows without your seeing it.

4.7 In like manner I deceived you in your contests with my courtiers. In regard to the first, in which Loke took part, the facts were as follows: He was very hungry and ate fast; but he whose name was Loge was wildfire, and he burned the trough no less rapidly than the meat.

4.8 When Thjalfe ran a race with him whose name was Huge, that was my thought, and it was impossible for him to keep pace with its swiftness. When you drank from the horn, and thought that it diminished so little, then, by my troth, it was a great wonder, which I never could have deemed possible.. One end of the horn stood in the sea, but that you did not see.

4.9 When you come to the sea-shore you will discover how much the sea has sunk by your drinking; that is now called the ebb. Furthermore he said: Nor did it seem less wonderful to me that you lifted up the cat; and, to tell you the truth, all who saw it were frightened when they saw that you raised one of its feet from the ground, for it was not such a cat as you thought.

4.10 It was in reality the Midgard-serpent, which surrounds all lands. It was scarcely long enough to touch the earth with its tail and head, and you raised it so high that your hand nearly reached to heaven.

4.11 It was also a most astonishing feat when you wrestled with Elle, for none has ever been, and none shall ever be, that Elle (eld, old age) will not get the better of him, though he gets to be old enough to abide her coming. And now the truth is that we must part; and it will be better for us both that you do not visit me again.

4.12 I will again defend my burg with similar or other delusions, so that you will get no power over me. When Thor heard this tale he seized his hammer and lifted it into the air, but when he was about to strike he saw

Utgard-Loke nowhere; and when he turned back to the burg and was going to dash that to pieces, he saw a beautiful and large plain, but no burg.

4.13 So he turned and went his way back to Thrudvang. But it is truthfully asserted that he then resolved in his own mind to seek that meeting with the Midgard-serpent, which afterward took place. And now I think that no one can tell you truer tidings of this journey of Thor.

5 Then said Ganglere: A most powerful man is Utgard-Loke, though he deals much with delusions and sorcery. His power is also proven by the fact that he had thanes who were so mighty. But has not Thor avenged himself for this? Made answer Har: It is not unknown, though no wise men tell thereof, how Thor made amends for the journey that has now been spoken of.

5.2 He did not remain long at home, before he busked himself so suddenly for a new journey, that he took neither chariot, nor goats nor any companions with him. He went out of Midgard in the guise of a young man, and came in the evening to a giant by name Hymer.[61] Thor tarried there as a guest through the night.

5.3 In the morning Hymer arose, dressed himself, and busked himself to row out upon the sea to fish. Thor also sprang up, got ready in a hurry and asked Hymer whether he might row out with him. Hymer answered that he would get but little help from Thor, as he was so small and young; and he added, you will get cold if I row as far out and remain as long as I am wont.

5.4 Thor said that he might row as far from shore as he pleased, for all that, and it was yet to be seen who would be the first to ask to row back to land. And Thor grew so wroth at the giant that he came near letting the

hammer ring on his head straightway, but he restrained himself, for he intended to try his strength elsewhere.

5.5 He asked Hymer what they were to have for bait, but Hymer replied that he would have to find his own bait. Then Thor turned away to where he saw a herd of oxen, that belonged to Hymer. He took the largest ox, which was called Himinbrjot, twisted his head off and brought it down to the sea-strand. Hymer had then shoved the boat off.

5.6 Thor went on board and seated himself in the stern; he took two oars and rowed so that Hymer had to confess that the boat sped fast from his rowing. Hymer plied the oars in the bow, and thus the rowing soon ended.

5.7 Then said Hymer that they had come to the place where he was wont to sit and catch flat-fish, but Thor said he would like to row much farther out, and so they made another swift pull. Then said Hymer that they had come so far out that it was dangerous to stay there, for the Midgard-serpent.

5.8 Thor said he wished to row a while longer, and so he did; but Hymer was by no means in a happy mood. Thor took in the oars, got ready a very strong line, and the hook was neither less nor weaker. When he had put on the ox-head for bait, he cast it overboard and it sank to the bottom.

5.9 It must be admitted that Thor now beguiled the Midgard-serpent not a whit less than Utgard-Loke mocked him when he was to lift the serpent with his hand. The Midgard-serpent took the ox-head into his mouth, whereby the hook entered his palate, but when the serpent perceived this he tugged so hard that both Thor's hands were dashed against the gunwale.

5.10 Now Thor became angry, assumed his asa-might and spurned so hard that both his feet went through the boat and he stood on the bottom of the sea. He pulled the serpent up to the gunwale; and in truth no one has ever seen a more terrible sight than when Thor whet his eyes on the serpent, and the latter stared at him and spouted venom.

5.11 It is said that the giant Hymer changed hue and grew pale from fear when he saw the serpent and beheld the water flowing into the boat; but just at the moment when Thor grasped the hammer and lifted it in the air, the giant fumbled for his fishing-knife and cut off Thor's line at the gunwale, whereby the serpent sank back into the sea.

5.12 Thor threw the hammer after it, and it is even said that he struck off his head at the bottom, but I think the truth is that the Midgard-serpent still lives and lies in the ocean. Thor clenched his fist and gave the giant a box on the ear so that he fell backward into the sea, and he saw his heels last, but Thor waded ashore.

6 [60] Bonde = peasant.

7 [61] Called Ymer in the Younger Edda, but the Elder Edda calls him Hymer.

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GYLFAGINNING XV — THE DEATH OF BALDER

✦

1 Then asked Ganglere: Have there happened any other remarkable things among the asas? A great deed it was, forsooth, that Thor wrought on this journey. Har answered: Yes, indeed, there are tidings to be told that seemed of far greater importance to the asas. The beginning of this tale is, that Balder dreamed dreams great and dangerous to his life.

1.2 When he told these dreams to the asas they took counsel together, and it was decided that they should seek peace for Balder against all kinds of harm. So Frigg exacted an oath from fire, water, iron and all kinds of metal, stones, earth, trees, sicknesses, beasts, birds and creeping things, that they should not hurt Balder.

1.3 When this was done and made known, it became the pastime of Balder and the asas that he should stand up at their meetings while some of them should shoot at him, others should hew at him, while others should throw stones at him; but no matter what they did, no harm came to him, and this seemed to all a great honor.

1.4 When Loke, Laufey's son, saw this, it displeased him very much that Balder was not scathed. So he went to Frigg, in Fensal, having taken on himself the likeness of a woman. Frigg asked this woman whether she knew what the asas were doing at their meeting. She answered that all were shooting at Balder, but that he was not scathed thereby.

1.5 Then said Frigg: Neither weapon nor tree can hurt Balder, I have taken an oath from them all. Then asked the woman: Have all things taken an oath to spare Balder? Frigg answered: West of Valhal there grows a little shrub that is called the mistletoe, that seemed to me too young to exact an oath from. Then the woman suddenly disappeared.

1.6 Loke went and pulled up the mistletoe and proceeded to the meeting. Hoder stood far to one side in the ring of men, because he was blind. Loke addressed himself to him, and asked: Why do you not shoot at Balder? He answered: Because I do not see where he is, and furthermore I have no weapons.

1.7 Then said Loke: Do like the others and show honor to Balder; I will show you where he stands; shoot at him with this wand. Hoder took the mistletoe and shot at Balder under the guidance of Loke. The dart pierced him and he fell dead to the ground. This is the greatest misfortune that has ever happened to gods and men.

1.8 When Balder had fallen, the asas were struck speechless with horror, and their hands failed them to lay hold of the corpse. One looked at the other, and all were of one mind toward him who had done the deed, but being assembled in a holy peace-stead, no one could take vengeance.

1.9 When the asas at length tried to speak, the wailing so choked their voices that one could not describe to the other his sorrow. Odin took this misfortune most to heart, since he best comprehended how great a loss and injury the fall of Balder was to the asas.

1.10 When the gods came to their senses, Frigg spoke and asked who there might be among the asas who desired to win all her love and good will by riding the way to Hel and trying to find Balder, and offering Hel a ransom if she would allow Balder to return home again to Asgard. But he

is called Hermod, the Nimble, Odin's swain, who undertook this journey. Odin's steed, Sleipner, was led forth. Hermod mounted him and galloped away.

2 The asas took the corpse of Balder and brought it to the sea-shore. Hringhorn was the name of Balder's ship, and it was the largest of all ships. The gods wanted to launch it and make Balder's bale-fire thereon, but they could not move it. Then they sent to Jotunheim after the giantess whose name is Hyrrokken. She came riding on a wolf, and had twisted serpents for reins.

2.2 When she alighted, Odin appointed four berserks to take care of her steed, but they were unable to hold him except by throwing him down on the ground. Hyrrokken went to the prow and launched the ship with one single push, but the motion was so violent that fire sprang from the underlaid rollers and all the earth shook.

2.3 Then Thor became wroth, grasped his hammer, and would forthwith have crushed her skull, had not all the gods asked peace for her. Balder's corpse was borne out on the ship; and when his wife, Nanna, daughter of Nep, saw this, her heart was broken with grief and she died. She was borne to the funeral-pile and cast on the fire. Thor stood by and hallowed the pile with Mjolner.

2.4 Before his feet ran a dwarf, whose name is Lit. Him Thor kicked with his foot and dashed him into the fire, and he, too, was burned. But this funeral-pile was attended by many kinds of folk. First of all came Odin, accompanied by Frigg and the valkyries and his ravens. Frey came riding in his chariot drawn by the boar called Gullinburste or Slidrugtanne.

2.5 Heimdal rode his steed Gulltop, and Freyja drove her cats. There was a large number of frost-giants and mountain-giants. Odin laid on the funeral-pile his gold ring, Draupner, which had the property of producing, every ninth night, eight gold rings of equal weight. Balder's horse, fully caparisoned, was led to his master's pile.

3 But of Hermod it is to be told that he rode nine nights through deep and dark valleys, and did not see light until he came to the Gjallar-river and rode on the Gjallar-bridge, which is thatched with shining gold. Modgud is the name of the may who guards the bridge.

3.2 She asked him for his name, and of what kin he was, saying that the day before there rode five fylkes (kingdoms, bands) of dead men over the bridge; but she added, it does not shake less under you alone, and you do not have the hue of dead men. Why do you ride the way to Hel? He answered: I am to ride to Hel to find Balder. Have you seen him pass this way?

3.3 She answered that Balder had ridden over the Gjallar-bridge; adding: But downward and northward lies the way to Hel. Then Hermod rode on till he came to Hel's gate. He alighted from his horse, drew the girths tighter, remounted him, clapped the spurs into him, and the horse leaped over the gate with so much force that he never touched it.

3.4 Thereupon Hermod proceeded to the hall and alighted from his steed. He went in, and saw there sitting on the foremost seat his brother Balder. He tarried there over night. In the morning he asked Hel whether Balder might ride home with him, and told how great weeping there was among the asas.

3.5 But Hel replied that it should now be tried whether Balder was so much beloved as was said. If all things, said she, both quick and dead, will weep for him, then he shall go back to the asas, but if anything refuses to shed tears, then he shall remain with Hel. Hermod arose, and Balder accompanied him out of the hall.

3.6 He took the ring Draupner and sent it as a keepsake to Odin. Nanna sent Frigg a kerchief and other gifts, and to Fulla she sent a ring. Thereupon Hermod rode back and came to Asgard, where he reported the tidings he had seen and heard.

4 Then the asas sent messengers over all the world, praying that Balder might be wept out of Hel's power. All things did so,--men and beasts, the earth, stones, trees and all metals, just as you must have seen that these things weep when they come out of frost and into heat. When the messengers returned home and had done their errand well, they found a certain cave wherein sat a giantess (gygr = ogress) whose name was Thok. They requested her to weep Balder from Hel; but she answered:

5 Thok will weep
With dry tears
For Balder's burial;
Neither in life nor in death
Gave he me gladness.
Let Hel keep what she has!

6 It is generally believed that this Thok was Loke, Laufey's son, who has wrought most evil among the asas.

7 Then said Ganglere: A very great wrong did Loke perpetrate; first of all in causing Balder's death, and next in standing in the way of his being loosed from Hel. Did he get no punishment for this misdeed? Har answered: Yes, he was repaid for this in a way that he will long remember. The gods became exceedingly wroth, as might be expected.

7.2 So he ran away and hid himself in a rock. Here he built a house with four doors, so that he might keep an outlook on all sides. Oftentimes in the daytime he took on him the likeness of a salmon and concealed himself in Frananger Force. Then he thought to himself what stratagems the asas might have recourse to in order to catch him.

7.3 Now, as he was sitting in his house, he took flax and yarn and worked them into meshes, in the manner that nets have since been made; but a fire was burning before him. Then he saw that the asas were not far distant. Odin had seen from Hlidskjalf where Loke kept himself. Loke immediately sprang up, cast the net on the fire and leaped into the river.

7.4 When the asas came to the house, he entered first who was wisest of them all, and whose name was Kvaser; and when he saw in the fire the ashes of the net that had been burned, he understood that this must be a contrivance for catching fish, and this he told to the asas.

7.5 Thereupon they took flax and made themselves a net after the pattern of that which they saw in the ashes and which Loke had made. When the net was made, the asas went to the river and cast it into the force. Thor held one end of the net, and all the other asas laid hold on the other, thus jointly drawing it along the stream.

7.6 Loke went before it and laid himself down between two stones, so that they drew the net over him, although they perceived that some living thing touched the meshes. They went up to the force again and cast out

the net a second time. This time they hung a great weight to it, making it so heavy that nothing could possibly pass under it.

7.7 Loke swam before the net, but when he saw that he was near the sea he sprang over the top of the net and hastened back to the force. When the asas saw whither he went they proceeded up to the force, dividing themselves into two bands, but Thor waded in the middle of the stream, and so they dragged the net along to the sea.

7.8 Loke saw that he now had only two chances of escape,--either to risk his life and swim out to sea, or to leap again over the net. He chose the latter, and made a tremendous leap over the top line of the net.

7.9 Thor grasped after him and caught him, but he slipped in his hand so that Thor did not get a firm hold before he got to the tail, and this is the reason why the salmon has so slim a tail. Now Loke was taken without truce and was brought to a cave. The gods took three rocks and set them up on edge, and bored a hole through each rock.

7.10 Then they took Loke's sons, Vale and Nare or Narfe. Vale they changed into the likeness of a wolf, whereupon he tore his brother Narfe to pieces, with whose intestines the asas bound Loke over the three rocks. One stood under his shoulders, another under his loins, and the third under his hams, and the fetters became iron.

7.11 Skade took a serpent and fastened up over him, so that the venom should drop from the serpent into his face. But Sigyn, his wife, stands by him, and holds a dish under the venom-drops. Whenever the dish becomes full, she goes and pours away the venom, and meanwhile the venom drops onto Loke's face.

7.12 Then he twists his body so violently that the whole earth shakes, and this you call earthquakes. There he will lie bound until Ragnarok.

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GYLFAGINNING XVI — RAGNAROK

✦

1 Then said Ganglere: What tidings are to be told of Ragnarok? Of this I have never heard before. Har answered: Great things are to be said thereof. First, there is a winter called the Fimbul-winter, when snow drives from all quarters, the frosts are so severe, the winds so keen and piercing, that there is no joy in the sun.

1.2 There are three such winters in succession, without any intervening summer. But before these there are three other winters, during which great wars rage over all the world. Brothers slay each other for the sake of gain, and no one spares his father or mother in that manslaughter and adultery. Thus says the Vala's Prophecy:

2 Brothers will fight together
And become each other's bane;
Sisters' children
Their sib shall spoil.[62]
Hard is the world,
Sensual sins grow huge.
There are ax-ages, sword-ages--
Shields are cleft in twain,--
There are wind-ages, wolf-ages,
Ere the world falls dead.[63]

3 Then happens what will seem a great miracle, that the wolf[64] devours the sun, and this will seem a great loss. The other wolf will devour the moon, and this too will cause great mischief. The stars shall be Hurled

from heaven.

3.2 Then it shall come to pass that the earth and the mountains will shake so violently that trees will be torn up by the roots, the mountains will topple down, and all bonds and fetters will be broken and snapped. The Fenris-wolf gets loose. The sea rushes over the earth, for the Midgard-serpent writhes in giant rage and seeks to gain the land.

3.3 The ship that is called Naglfar also becomes loose. It is made of the nails of dead men; wherefore it is worth warning that, when a man dies with unpared nails, he supplies a large amount of materials for the building of this ship, which both gods and men wish may be finished as late as possible. But in this flood Naglfar gets afloat. The giant Hrym is its steersman.

3.4 The Fenris-wolf advances with wide open mouth; the upper jaw reaches to heaven and the lower jaw is on the earth. He would open it still wider had he room. Fire flashes from his eyes and nostrils. The Midgard-serpent vomits forth venom, defiling all the air and the sea; he is very terrible, and places himself by the side of the wolf.

3.5 In the midst of this clash and din the heavens are rent in twain, and the sons of Muspel come riding through the opening. Surt rides first, and before him and after him flames burning fire. He has a very good sword, which shines brighter than the sun. As they ride over Bifrost it breaks to pieces, as has before been stated.

3.6 The sons of Muspel direct their course to the plain which is called Vigrid. Thither repair also the Fenris-wolf and the Midgard-serpent. To this place have also come Loke and Hrym, and with him all the frost-gi-

ants. In Loke's company are all the friends of Hel. The sons of Muspel have there effulgent bands alone by themselves. The plain Vigrid is one hundred miles (rasts) on each side.

4 While these things are happening, Heimdal stands up, blows with all his might in the Gjallar-horn and awakens all the gods, who thereupon hold counsel. Odin rides to Mimer's well to ask advice of Mimer for himself and his folk. Then quivers the ash Ygdrasil, and all things in heaven and earth fear and tremble.

4.2 The asas and the einherjes arm themselves and speed forth to the battle-field. Odin rides first; with his golden helmet, resplendent byrnie, and his spear Gungner, he advances against the Fenris-wolf. Thor stands by his side, but can give him no assistance, for he has his hands full in his struggle with the Midgard-serpent.

4.3 Frey encounters Surt, and heavy blows are exchanged ere Frey falls. The cause of his death is that he has not that good sword which he gave to Skirner. Even the dog Garm, that was bound before the Gnipa-cave, gets loose. He is the greatest plague. He contends with Tyr, and they kill each other.

4.4 Thor gets great renown by slaying the Midgard-serpent, but retreats only nine paces when he falls to the earth dead, poisoned by the venom that the serpent blows on him. The wolf swallows Odin, and thus causes his death; but Vidar immediately turns and rushes at the wolf, placing one foot on his nether jaw.

4.5 On this foot he has the shoe for which materials have been gathering through all ages, namely, the strips of leather which men cut off for the toes and heels of shoes; wherefore he who wishes to render assistance to the

asas must cast these strips away. With one hand Vidar seizes the upper jaw of the wolf, and thus rends asunder his mouth. Thus the wolf perishes.

4.6 Loke fights with Heimdal, and they kill each other. Thereupon Surt flings fire over the earth and burns up all the world. Thus it is said in the Vala's Prophecy:

5 Loud blows Heimdal
His uplifted horn.
Odin speaks
With Mimer's head.
The straight-standing ash
Ygdrasil quivers,
The old tree groans,
And the giant gets loose.

6 How fare the asas?
How fare the elves?
All Jotunheim roars.
The asas hold counsel;
Before their stone-doors
Groan the dwarfs,
The guides of the wedge-rock.
Know you now more or not?

7 From the east drives Hrym,
Bears his shield before him.
Jormungand welters
In giant rage
And smites the waves.

The eagle screams,
And with pale beak tears corpses,
Naglfar gets loose.

8 A ship comes from the east,
The hosts of Muspel
Come o'er the main,
And Loke is steersman.
All the fell powers
Are with the wolf;
Along with them
Is Byleist's brother.[65]

9 From the south comes Surt
With blazing fire-brand,--
The sun of the war-god
Shines from his sword.
Mountains dash together,
Giant maids are frightened,
Heroes go the way to Hel,
And heaven is rent in twain.

10 Then comes to Hlin
Another woe,
When Odin goes
With the wolf to fight,
And Bele's bright slayer[66]

To contend with Surt.
There will fall
Frigg's beloved.

11 Odin's son goes
To fight with the wolf,
And Vidar goes on his way
To the wild beast.[67]
With his hand he thrusts
His sword to the heart
Of the giant's child,
And avenges his father.

12 Then goes the famous
Son[68] of Hlodyn
To fight with the serpent.
Though about to die,
He fears not the contest;
All men
Abandon their homesteads
When the warder of Midgard
In wrath slays the serpent.

13 The sun grows dark,
The earth sinks into the sea,
The bright stars
From heaven vanish;
Fire rages,

Heat blazes,
And high flames play
'Gainst heaven itself.[69]

14 And again it is said as follows:

15 Vigrid is the name of the plain
Where in fight shall meet
Surt and the gentle god.
A hundred miles
It is every way.
This field is marked out for them.[70]

16 [62] Commit adultery.

17 [63] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 48, 49.

18 [64] Fenris-wolf.

19 [65] Loke.

20 [66] Frey.

21 [67] The Fenris-wolf.

22 [68] Thor.

23 [69] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 50-52, 54-57, 59, 60, 62, 63.

24 [70] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 18.

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GYLFAGINNING XVII — REGENERATION

✦

1 Then asked Ganglere: What happens when heaven and earth and all the world are consumed in flames, and when all the gods and all the einherjes and all men are dead? You have already said that all men shall live in some world through all ages. Har answered: There are many good and many bad abodes. Best it is to be in Gimle, in heaven.

1.2 Plenty is there of good drink for those who deem this a joy in the hall called Brimer. That is also in heaven. There is also an excellent hall which stands on the Nida mountains. It is built of red gold, and is called Sindre. In this hall good and well-minded men shall dwell. Nastrand is a large and terrible hall, and its doors open to the north.

1.3 It is built of serpents wattled together, and all the heads of the serpents turn into the hall and vomit forth venom that flows in streams along the hall, and in these streams wade perjurers and murderers. So it is here said:

2 A hall I know standing
Far from the sun
On the strand of dead bodies.
Drops of venom
Fall through the loop-holes.
Of serpents' backs
The hall is made.

3 There shall wade
Through heavy streams
Perjurers
And murderers.

4 But in Hvergelmer it is worst.

5 There tortures Nidhug
The bodies of the dead.[71]

6 Then said Ganglere: Do any gods live then? Is there any earth or heaven? Har answered: The earth rises again from the sea, and is green and fair. The fields unsown produce their harvests. Vidar and Vale live. Neither the sea nor Surfs fire has harmed them, and they dwell on the plains of Ida, where Asgard was before.

6.2 Thither come also the sons of Thor, Mode and Magne, and they have Mjolner. Then come Balder and Hoder from Hel. They all sit together and talk about the things that happened aforetime,--about the Midgard-serpent and the Fenris-wolf. They find in the grass those golden tables which the asas once had. Thus it is said:

7 Vidar and Vale
Dwell in the house of the gods,
When quenched is the fire of Surt.
Mode and Magne
Vingner's Mjolner shall have
When the fight is ended.[72]

8 In a place called Hodmimer's-holt[73] are concealed two persons during Surt's fire, called Lif and Lifthraser. They feed on the morning dew. From these so numerous a race is descended that they fill the whole world with people, as is here said:

9 Lif and Lifthraser
Will lie hid
In Hodmimer's-holt.
The morning dew
They have for food.
From them are the races descended.[74]

10 But what will seem wonderful to you is that the sun has brought forth a daughter not less fair than herself, and she rides in the heavenly course of her mother, as is here said:

11 A daughter
Is born of the sun
Ere Fenrer takes her.
In her mother's course
When the gods are dead
This maid shall ride.[75]

12 And if you now can ask more questions, said Har to Ganglere, I know not whence that power came to you. I have never heard any one tell further the fate of the world. Make now the best use you can of what has been told you.

[13] Then Ganglere heard a terrible noise on all sides, and when he looked about him he stood out-doors on a level plain. He saw neither hall nor burg. He went his way and came back to his kingdom, and told the tidings which he had seen and heard, and ever since those tidings have been handed down from man to man.

[14] [71] Elder Edda: The Vala's Prophecy, 40, 41.

[15] [72] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 51.

[16] [73] Holt = grove.

[17] [74] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 45.

[18] [75] Elder Edda: Vafthrudner's Lay, 47.

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GYLFAGINNING — AFTERWORD

✦

1 The asas now sat down to talk, and held their counsel, and remembered all the tales that were told to Gylfe. They gave the very same names that had been named before to the men and places that were there.

1.2 This they did for the reason that, when a long time has elapsed, men should not doubt that those asas of whom these tales were now told and those to whom the same names were given were all identical. There was one who is called Thor, and he is Asa-Thor, the old. He is Oku-Thor, and to him are ascribed the great deeds done by Hektor in Troy.

1.3 But men think that the Turks have told of Ulysses, and have called him Loke, for the Turks were his greatest enemies.

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BRAGARÆÐUR I — ÆGER'S JOURNEY TO ASGARD

✦

1 A man by name Æger, or Hler, who dwelt on the island called Hler's Isle, was well skilled in the black art. He made a journey to Asgard. But the asas knew of his coming and gave him a friendly reception; but they also made use of many sorts of delusions.

1.2 In the evening, when the feast began, Odin had swords brought into the hall, and they were so bright that it glistened from them so that there was no need of any other light while they sat drinking. Then went the asas to their feast, and the twelve asas who were appointed judges seated themselves in their high-seats.

1.3 These are their names: Thor, Njord, Frey, Tyr, Heimdal, Brage, Vidar, Vale, Uller, Honer, Forsete, Loke. The asynjes (goddesses) also were with them: Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Idun, Gerd, Sigyn, Fulla, Nanna. Æger thought all that he saw looked very grand. The panels of the walls were all covered with beautiful shields. The mead was very strong, and they drank deep.

1.4 Next to Æger sat Brage, and they talked much together over their drink. Brage spoke to Æger of many things that had happened to the asas.

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BRAGARÆÐUR II — IDUN AND HER APPLES

✦

1 Brage began his tale by telling how three asas, Odin, Loke and Honer, went on a journey over mountains and heaths, where they could get nothing to eat. But when they came down into a valley they saw a herd of cattle. From this herd they took an ox and went to work to boil it. When they deemed that it must be boiled enough they uncovered the broth, but it was not yet done.

1.2 After a little while they lifted the cover off again, but it was not yet boiled. They talked among themselves about how this could happen. Then they heard a voice in the oak above them, and he who sat there said that he was the cause that the broth did not get boiled. They looked up and saw an eagle, and it was not a small one.

1.3 Then said the eagle: If you will give me my fill of the ox, then the broth will be boiled. They agreed to this. So he flew down from the tree, seated himself beside the boiling broth, and immediately snatched up first the two thighs of the ox and then both the shoulders.

1.4 This made Loke wroth: he grasped a large pole, raised it with all his might and dashed it at the body of the eagle. The eagle shook himself after the blow and flew up. One end of the pole fastened itself to the body of the eagle, and the other end stuck to Loke's hands.

1.5 The eagle flew just high enough so that Loke's feet were dragged over stones and rocks and trees, and it seemed to him that his arms would be torn from his shoulder-blades. He calls and prays the eagle most

earnestly for peace, but the latter declares that Loke shall never get free unless he will pledge himself to bring Idun and her apples out of Asgard.

1.6 When Loke had promised this, he was set free and went to his companions again; and no more is related of this journey, except that they returned home. But at the time agreed upon, Loke coaxed Idun out of Asgard into a forest, saying that he had found apples that she would think very nice, and he requested her to take with her her own apples in order to compare them.

1.7 Then came the giant Thjasse in the guise of an eagle, seized Idun and flew away with her to his home in Thrymheim. The asas were ill at ease on account of the disappearance of Idun,--they became gray-haired and old. They met in council and asked each other who last had seen Idun. The last that had been seen of her was that she had gone out of Asgard in company with Loke.

1.8 Then Loke was seized and brought into the council, and he was threatened with death or torture. But he became frightened, and promised to bring Idun back from Jotunheim if Freyja would lend him the falcon-guise that she had. He got the falcon-guise, flew north into Jotunheim, and came one day to the giant Thjasse. The giant had rowed out to sea, and Idun was at home alone.

1.9 Loke turned her into the likeness of a nut, held her in his claws and flew with all his might. But when Thjasse returned home and missed Idun, he took on his eagle-guise, flew after Loke, gaining on the latter with his eagle wings.

1.10 When the asas saw the falcon coming flying with the nut, and how the eagle flew, they went to the walls of Asgard and brought with them bundles of plane-shavings. When the falcon flew within the burg, he let

himself drop down beside the burg-wall.

1.11 Then the asas kindled a fire in the shavings; and the eagle, being unable to stop himself when he missed the falcon, caught fire in his feathers, so that he could not fly any farther. The asas were on hand and slew the giant Thjasse within the gates of Asgard, and that slaughter is most famous.

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BRAGARÆÐUR III — HOW NJORD GOT SKADE TO WIFE

✦

1 Skade, the daughter of the giant Thjasse, donned her helmet, and byrnie, and all her war-gear, and betook herself to Asgard to avenge her father's death. The asas offered her ransom and atonement; and it was agreed to, in the first place, that she should choose herself a husband among the asas, but she was to make her choice by the feet, which was all she was to see of their persons.

1.2 She saw one man's feet that were wonderfully beautiful, and exclaimed: This one I choose! On Balder there are few blemishes. But it was Njord, from Noatun. In the second place, it was stipulated that the asas were to do what she did not deem them capable of, and that was to make her laugh.

1.3 Then Loke tied one end of a string fast to the beard of a goat and the other around his own body, and one pulled this way and the other that, and both of them shrieked out loud. Then Loke let himself fall on Skade's knees, and this made her laugh.

1.4 It is said that Odin did even more than was asked, in that he took Thjasse's eyes and cast them up into heaven, and made two stars of them. Then said Æger: This Thjasse seems to me to have been considerable of a man; of what kin was he? Brage answered: His father's name was Olvalde, and if I told you of him, you would deem it very remarkable.

1.5 He was very rich in gold, and when he died and his sons were to divide their heritage, they had this way of measuring the gold, that each should take his mouthful of gold, and they should all take the same number of mouthfuls. One of them was Thjasse, another Ide, and the third Gang. But we now have it as a saw among us, that we call gold the mouth-number of these giants.

1.6 In runes and songs we wrap the gold up by calling it the measure, or word, or tale, of these giants. Then said Æger: It seems to me that it will be well hidden in the runes.

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BRAGARÆÐUR IV — THE ORIGIN OF POETRY

✦

1 And again said Æger: Whence originated the art that is called skaldship? Made answer Brage: The beginning of this was, that the gods had a war with the people that are called vans. They agreed to hold a meeting for the purpose of making peace, and settled their dispute in this wise, that they both went to a jar and spit into it.

1.2 But at parting the gods, being unwilling to let this mark of peace perish, shaped it into a man whose name was Kvaser, and who was so wise that no one could ask him any question that he could not answer. He traveled much about in the world to teach men wisdom. Once he came to the home of the dwarfs Fjalar and Galar.

1.3 They called him aside, saying they wished to speak with him alone, slew him and let his blood run into two jars called Son and Bodn, and into a kettle called Odrarer. They mixed honey with the blood, and thus was produced such mead that whoever drinks from it becomes a skald and sage.

1.4 The dwarfs told the asas that Kvaser had choked in his wisdom, because no one was so wise that he could ask him enough about learning.

2 Then the dwarfs invited to themselves the giant whose name is Gilling, and his wife; and when he came they asked him to row out to sea with them. When they had gotten a short distance from shore, the dwarfs

rowed onto a blind rock and capsized the boat. Gilling, who was unable to swim, was drowned, but the dwarfs righted the boat again and rowed ashore.

2.2 When they told of this mishap to his wife she took it much to heart, and began to cry aloud. Then Fjalar asked her whether it would not lighten her sorrow if she could look out upon the sea where her husband had perished, and she said it would.

2.3 He then said to his brother Galar that he should go up over the doorway, and as she passed out he should let a mill-stone drop onto her head, for he said he was tired of her bawling, Galar did so. When the giant Suttung, the son of Gilling, found this out he came and seized the dwarfs, took them out to sea and left them on a rocky island, which was flooded at high tide.

2.4 They prayed Suttung to spare their lives, and offered him in atonement for their father's blood the precious mead, which he accepted. Suttung brought the mead home with him, and hid it in a place called Hnitbjorg. He set his daughter Gunlad to guard it.

2.5 For these reasons we call songship Kvaser's blood; the drink of the dwarfs; the dwarfs' fill; some kind of liquor of Odrarer, or Bodn or Son; the ship of the dwarfs (because this mead ransomed their lives from the rocky isle); the mead of Suttung, or the liquor of Hnitbjorg.

3 Then remarked Æger: It seems dark to me to call songship by these names; but how came the asas by Suttung's mead? Answered Brage: The saga about this is, that Odin set out from home and came to a place where nine thralls were mowing hay. He asked them whether they would like to have him whet their scythes. To this they said yes.

3.2 Then he took a whet-stone from his belt and whetted the scythes. They thought their scythes were much improved, and asked whether the whet-stone was for sale. He answered that he who would buy it must pay a fair price for it. All said they were willing to give the sum demanded, and each wanted Odin to sell it to him.

3.3 But he threw the whet-stone up in the air, and when all wished to catch it they scrambled about it in such a manner that each brought his scythe onto the other's neck. Odin sought lodgings for the night at the house of the giant Bauge, who was a brother of Suttung.

3.4 Bauge complained of what had happened to his household, saying that his nine thralls had slain each other, and that he did not know where he should get other workmen. Odin called himself Bolverk. He offered to undertake the work of the nine men for Bauge, but asked in payment therefor a drink of Suttung's mead.

3.5 Bauge answered that he had no control over the mead, saying that Suttung was bound to keep that for himself alone. But he agreed to go with Bolverk and try whether they could get the mead. During the summer Bolverk did the work of the nine men for Bauge, but when winter came he asked for his pay. Then they both went to Suttung.

3.6 Bauge explained to Suttung his bargain with Bolverk, but Suttung stoutly refused to give even a drop of the mead. Bolverk then proposed to Bauge that they should try whether they could not get at the mead by the aid of some trick, and Bauge agreed to this.

3.7 Then Bolverk drew forth the auger which is called Rate, and requested Bauge to bore a hole through the rock, if the auger was sharp enough. He did so. Then said Bauge that there was a hole through the

rock; but Bolverk blowed into the hole that the auger had made, and the chips flew back into his face.

3.8 Thus he saw that Bauge intended to deceive him, and commanded him to bore through. Bauge bored again, and when Bolverk blew a second time the chips flew inward. Now Bolverk changed himself into the likeness of a serpent and crept into the auger-hole. Bauge thrust after him with the auger, but missed him. Bolverk went to where Gunlad was, and shared her couch for three nights.

3.9 She then promised to give him three draughts from the mead. With the first draught he emptied Odrarer, in the second Bodn, and in the third Son, and thus he had all the mead. Then he took on the guise of an eagle, and flew off as fast as he could. When Suttung saw the flight of the eagle, he also took on the shape of an eagle and flew after him.

3.10 When the asas saw Odin coming, they set their jars out in the yard. When Odin reached Asgard, he spewed the mead up into the jars. He was, however, so near being caught by Suttung, that he sent some of the mead after him backward, and as no care was taken of this, anybody that wished might have it. This we call the share of poetasters.

3.11 But Suttung's mead Odin gave to the asas and to those men who are able to make verses. Hence we call songship Odin's prey, Odin's find, Odin's drink, Odin's gift, and the drink of the asas.

4 Then said Æger: In how many ways do you vary the poetical expressions, or how many kinds of poetry are there? Answered Brage: There are two kinds, and all poetry falls into one or the other of these classes. Æger asks: Which two? Brage answers: Diction and meter. What diction is used in poetry? There are three sorts of poetic diction. Which?

4.2 One is to name everything by its own name; another is to name it with a pronoun, but the third sort of diction is called _kenning_ (a poetical periphrasis or descriptive name); and this sort is so managed that when we name Odin, or Thor or Tyr, or any other of the asas or elves, we add to their name a reference to some other asa, or we make mention of some of his works.

4.3 Then the appellation belongs to him who corresponds to the whole phrase, and not to him who was actually named. Thus we speak of Odin as Sigtyr, Hangatyr or Farmatyr, and such names we call simple appellatives. In the same manner he is called Reidartyr.

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BRAGARÆÐUR — AFTERWORD

✦

1 Now it is to be said to young skalds who are desirous of acquiring the diction of poetry, or of increasing their store of words with old names, or, on the other hand, are eager to understand what is obscurely sung, that they must master this book for their instruction and pastime.

1.2 These sagas are not to be so forgotten or disproved as to take away from poetry old periphrases which great skalds have been pleased with. But christian men should not believe in heathen gods, nor in the truth of these sagas, otherwise than is explained in the beginning of this book, where the events are explained which led men away from the true faith, and where it, in the next place, is told of the Turks how the men from Asia, who are called asas, falsified the tales of the things that happened in Troy, in order that the people should believe them to be gods.

2 King Priam in Troy was a great chief over all the Turkish host, and his sons were the most distinguished men in his whole army. That excellent hall, which the asas called Brime's Hall, or beer-hall, was King Priam's palace. As for the long tale that they tell of Ragnarok, that is the wars of the Trojans.

2.2 When it is said that Oku-Thor angled with an ox-head and drew on board the Midgard-serpent, but that the serpent kept his life and sank back into the sea, then this is another version of the story that Hektor slew Volukrontes, a famous hero, in the presence of Achilleus, and so drew the latter onto him with the head of the slain, which they likened unto the head of an ox, which Oku-Thor had torn off.

2.3 When Achilleus was drawn into this danger, on account of his daring, it was the salvation of his life that he fled from the fatal blows of Hektor, although he was wounded. It is also said that Hektor waged the war so mightily, and that his rage was so great when he caught sight of Achilleus, that nothing was so strong that it could stand before him.

2.4 When he missed Achilleus, who had fled, he soothed his wrath by slaying the champion called Roddros. But the asas say that when Oku-Thor missed the serpent, he slew the giant Hymer. In Ragnarok the Midgard serpent came suddenly upon Thor and blew venom onto him, and thus struck him dead.

2.5 But the asas could not make up their minds to say that this had been the fate of Oku-Thor, that anyone stood over him dead, though this had so happened. They rushed headlong over old sagas more than was true when they said that the Midgard-serpent there got his death; and they added this to the story, that Achilleus reaped the fame of Hektor's death, though he lay dead on the same battle-field on that account.

2.6 This was the work of Elenus and Alexander, and Elenus the asas call Ale. They say that he avenged his brother, and that he lived when all the gods were dead, and after the fire was quenched that burned up Asgard and all the possessions of the gods. Pyrrhos they compared with the Fenris-wolf.

2.7 He slew Odin, and Pyrrhos might be called a wolf according to their belief, for he did not spare the peace-steads, when he slew the king in the temple before the altar of Thor. The burning of Troy they call the flame of Surt. Mode and Magne, the sons of Oku-Thor, came to crave the land of Ale or Vidar. He is Æneas. He came away from Troy, and wrought thereupon great works.

2.8 It is said that the sons of Hektor came to Frigialand and established themselves in that kingdom, but banished Elenus.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — THOR AND HRUNGNER

✦

1 Brage told Æger that Thor had gone eastward to crush trolls. Odin rode on his horse Sleipner to Jotunheim, and came to the giant whose name is Hrungner. Then asked Hrungner what man that was who with a golden helmet rode both through the air and over the sea, and added that he had a remarkably good horse.

1.2 Odin said that he would wager his head that so good a horse could not be found in Jotunheim. Hrungner admitted that it was indeed an excellent horse, but he had one, called Goldfax, that could take much longer paces; and in his wrath he immediately sprang upon his horse and galloped after Odin, intending to pay him for his insolence.

1.3 Odin rode so fast that he was a good distance ahead, but Hrungner had worked himself into such a giant rage that, before he was aware of it, he had come within the gates of Asgard. When he came to the hall door, the asas invited him to drink with them. He entered the hall and requested a drink.

1.4 They then took the bowls that Thor was accustomed to drink from, and Hrungner emptied them all. When he became drunk, he gave the freest vent to his loud boastings. He said he was going to take Valhal and move it to Jotunheim, demolish Asgard and kill all the gods except Freyja and Sif, whom he was going to take home with him.

1.5 When Freyja went forward to refill the bowls for him, he boasted that he was going to drink up all the ale of the asas. But when the asas grew weary of his arrogance, they named Thor's name.

1.6 At once Thor was in the hall, swung his hammer in the air, and, being exceedingly wroth, asked who was to blame that dog-wise giants were permitted to drink there, who had given Hrungner permission to be in Valhal, and why Freyja should pour ale for him as she did in the feasts of the asas.

1.7 Then answered Hrungner, looking with anything but friendly eyes at Thor, and said that Odin had invited him to drink, and that he was there under his protection. Thor replied that he should come to rue that invitation before he came out. Hrungner again answered that it would be but little credit to Asa-Thor to kill him, unarmed as he was.

1.8 It would be a greater proof of his valor if he dared fight a duel with him at the boundaries of his territory, at Grjottungard. It was very foolish of me, he said, that I left my shield and my flint-stone at home; had I my weapons here, you and I would try a holmgang (duel on a rocky island); but as this is not the case, I declare you a coward if you kill me unarmed.

1.9 Thor was by no means the man to refuse to fight a duel when he was challenged, an honor which never had been shown him before. Then Hrungner went his way, and hastened with all his might back to Jotunheim. His journey became famous among the giants, and the proposed meeting with Thor was much talked of.

1.10 They regarded it very important who should gain the victory, and they feared the worst from Thor if Hrungner should be defeated, for he was the strongest among them.

1.11 Thereupon the giants made at Grjottungard a man of clay, who was nine rasts tall and three rasts broad under the arms, but being unable to find a heart large enough to be suitable for him, they took the heart from a mare, but even this fluttered and trembled when Thor came.

1.12 Hrungner had, as is well known, a heart of stone, sharp and three-sided; just as the rune has since been risted that is called Hrungner's heart. Even his head was of stone. His shield was of stone, and was broad and thick, and he was holding this shield before him as he stood at Grjottungard waiting for Thor.

1.13 His weapon was a flint-stone, which he swung over his shoulders, and altogether he presented a most formidable aspect. On one side of him stood the giant of clay, who was named Mokkerkalfe. He was so exceedingly terrified, that it is said that he wet himself when he saw Thor. Thor proceeded to the duel, and Thjalfe was with him.

1.14 Thjalfe ran forward to where Hrungner was standing, and said to him: You stand illy guarded, giant; you hold the shield before you, but Thor has seen you; he goes down into the earth and will attack you from below. Then Hrungner thrust the shield under his feet and stood on it, but the flint-stone he seized with both his hands.

1.15 The next that he saw were flashes of lightning, and he heard loud crashings; and then he saw Thor in his asa-might advancing with impetuous speed, swinging his hammer and hurling it from afar at Hrungner. Hrungner seized the flint-stone with both his hands and threw it against the hammer. They met in the air, and the flint-stone broke.

1.16 One part fell to the earth, and from it have come the flint-mountains; the other part hit Thor's head with such force that he fell forward to the ground. But the hammer Mjolner hit Hrungner right in the head, and

crushed his skull in small pieces. He himself fell forward over Thor, so that his foot lay upon Thor's neck.

1.17 Meanwhile Thjalfe attacked Mokkerkalfe, who fell with but little honor. Then Thjalfe went to Thor and was to take Hrungner's foot off from him, but he had not the strength to do it. When the asas learned that Thor had fallen, they all came to take the giant's foot off, but none of them was able to move it. Then came Magne, the son of Thor and Jarnsaxa.

1.18 He was only three nights of age. He threw Hrungner's foot off Thor, and said It was a great mishap, father, that I came so late. I think I could have slain this giant with my fist, had I met him. Then Thor arose, greeted his son lovingly, saying that he would become great and powerful; and, added he, I will give you the horse Goldfax, that belonged to Hrungner.

1.19 Odin said that Thor did wrong in giving so fine a horse to the son of a giantess, instead of to his father. Thor went home to Thrudvang, but the flint-stone still stuck fast in his head. Then came the vala whose name is Groa, the wife of Orvandel the Bold. She sang her magic songs over Thor until the flint-stone became loose.

1.20 But when Thor perceived this, and was just expecting that the flint-stone would disappear, he desired to reward Groa for her healing, and make her heart glad. So he related to her how he had waded from the north over the Elivogs rivers, and had borne in a basket on his back Orvandel from Jotunheim; and in evidence of this he told her how that one toe of his had protruded from the basket and had frozen, wherefore Thor had broken it off and had cast it up into the sky, and made of it the star which is called Orvandel's toe.

1.21 Finally he added that it would not be long before Orvandel would come home. But Groa became so glad that she forgot her magic songs, and so the flint-stone became no looser than it was, and it sticks fast in Thor's head yet. For this reason it is forbidden to throw a flint-stone across the floor, for then the stone in Thor's head is moved. Out of this saga Thjodolf of Hvin has made a song:

2 We have ample evidence
Of the giant-terrifier's[77] journey
To Grjottungard, to the giant Hrungner,
In the midst of encircling flames.
The courage waxed high in Meile's brother;[78]
The moon-way trembled
When Jord's son[79] went
To the steel-gloved contest.

3 The heavens stood all in flames
For Uller's step-father,[80]
And the earth rocked.
Svolne's[81] widow[82] burst asunder
When the span of goats
Drew the sublime chariot
And its divine master
To the meeting with Hrungner.

4 Balder's brother[83] did not tremble
Before the greedy fiend of men;
Mountains quaked and rocks broke;
The heavens were wrapped in flames.

Much did the giant
Get frightened, I learn,
When his bane man he saw
Ready to slay him.

5 Swiftly the gray shield flew
'Neath the heels of the giant.
So the gods willed it,
So willed it the valkyries.
Hrungner the giant,
Eager for slaughter,
Needed not long to wait for blows
From the valiant friend of the hammer.

6 The slayer[84] of Bele's evil race
Made fall the bear of the loud-roaring mountain;[85]
On his shield
Bite the dust
Must the giant
Before the sharp-edged hammer,
When the giant-crusher
Stood against the mighty Hrungner,

7 And the flint-stone
(So hard to break)
Of the friend of the troll-women
Into the skull did whiz
Of Jord's son,[86]

And this flinty piece
Fast did stick
In Eindride's[87] blood;

[8] Until Orvandel's wife,
Magic songs singing,
From the head of Thor
Removed the giant's
Excellent flint-stone.
All do I know
About that shield-journey.
A shield adorned
With hues most splendid
I received from Thorleif.

[9] [77] Thor's.

[10] [78] Thor.

[11] [79] Jord's (= earth's) son = Thor.

[12] [80] Thor.

[13] [81] Odin's.

[14] [82] The earth.

[15] [83] Thor.

[16] [84] Thor.

[17] [85] The giant Hrungner.

[18] [86] Thor.

[19] [87] Thor's.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — THOR'S JOURNEY TO GEIRROD'S

✦

1 Then said Æger: Much of a man, it seems to me, was that Hrungner. Has Thor accomplished any other great deeds in his intercourse with trolls (giants)? Then answered Brage: It is worth giving a full account of how Thor made a journey to Geirrodsgard.

1.2 He had with him neither the hammer Mjolner, nor his belt of strength, Megingjard, nor his steel gloves; and that was Loke's fault,--he was with him. For it had happened to Loke, when he once flew out to amuse himself in Frigg's falcon-guise, that he, out of curiosity, flew into Geirrodsgard, where he saw a large hall.

1.3 He sat down and looked in through the window, but Geirrod discovered him, and ordered the bird to be caught and brought to him. The servant had hard work to climb up the wall of the hall, so high was it. It amused Loke that it gave the servant so much trouble to get at him, and he thought it would be time enough to fly away when he had gotten over the worst.

1.4 When the latter now caught at him, Loke spread his wings and spurned with his feet, but these were fast, and so Loke was caught and brought to the giant. When the latter saw his eyes he suspected that it was a man. He put questions to him and bade him answer, but Loke refused to speak.

1.5 Then Geirrod locked him down in a chest, and starved him for three months; and when Geirrod finally took him up again, and asked him to speak, Loke confessed who he was, and to save his life he swore an oath to Geirrod that he would get Thor to come to Geirrodsgard without his hammer or his belt of strength.

2 On his way Thor visited the giantess whose name is Grid. She was the mother of Vidar the Silent. She told Thor the truth concerning Geirrod, that he was a dog-wise and dangerous giant; and she lent him her own belt of strength and steel gloves, and her staff, which is called Gridarvol. Then went Thor to the river which is called Vimer, and which is the largest of all rivers.

2.2 He buckled on the belt of strength and stemmed the wild torrent with Gridarvol, but Loke held himself fast in Megingjard. When Thor had come into the middle of the stream, the river waxed so greatly that the waves dashed over his shoulders. Then quoth Thor:

3 Wax not Vimer,
Since I intend to wade
To the gards of giants.
Know, if you wax,
Then waxes my asa-might
As high, as the heavens.

4 Then Thor looked up and saw in a cleft Gjalp, the daughter of Geirrod, standing on both sides of the stream, and causing its growth. Then took he up out of the river a huge stone and threw at her, saying: At its source the stream must be stemmed.[88] He was not wont to miss his mark.

4.2 At the same time he reached the river bank and got hold of a shrub, and so he got out of the river. Hence comes the adage that _a shrub saved Thor_.[89] When Thor came to Geirrod, he and his companion were shown to the guest-room, where lodgings were given them, but there was but one seat, and on that Thor sat down.

4.3 Then he became aware that the seat was raised under him toward the roof. He put the Gridarvol against the rafters, and pressed himself down against the seat. Then was heard a great crash, which was followed by a loud screaming. Under the seat were Geirrod's daughters, Gjalp and Greip, and he had broken the backs of both of them. Then quoth Thor:

5 Once I employed
My asa-might
In the gards of the giants.
When Gjalp and Greip,
Geirrod's daughters,
Wanted to lift me to heaven.

6 Then Geirrod had Thor invited into the hall to the games. Large fires burned along the whole length of the hall. When Thor came into the hall, and stood opposite Geirrod, the latter seized with a pair of tongs a red-hot iron wedge and threw it at Thor. But he caught it with his steel gloves, and lifted it up in the air. Geirrod sprang behind an iron post to guard himself.

6.2 But Thor threw the wedge with so great force that it struck through the post, through Geirrod, through the wall, and then went out and into the ground. From this saga, Eilif, son of Gudrun, made the following song, called Thor's Drapa:

7 The Midgard-serpent's father exhorted
Thor, the victor of giants,
To set out from home.
A great liar was Loke.
Not quite confident,
The companion of the war-god
Declared green paths to lie
To the gard of Geirrod.

8 Thor did not long let Loke
Invite him to the arduous journey.
They were eager to crush
Thorn's descendants.
When he, who is wont to swing Megingjard,
Once set out from Odin's home
To visit Ymer's children in Gandvik,

9 The giantess Gjalp,
Perjured Geirrod's daughter,
Sooner got ready magic to use
Than the god of war and Loke.
A song I recite.
Those gods noxious to the giants
Planted their feet
In Endil's land,

10 And the men wont to battle
Went forth.
The message of death

Came of the moon-devourer's women,
When the cunning and wrathful
Conqueror of Loke
Challenged to a contest
The giantess.

11 And the troll-woman's disgracer
Waded across the roaring stream,--
Rolling full of drenched snow over its banks.
He who puts giants to flight
Rapidly advanced
O'er the broad watery way,
Where the noisy stream's
Venom belched forth.

12 Thor and his companions
Put before him the staff;
Thereon he rested
Whilst over they waded:
Nor sleep did the stones,--
The sonorous staff striking the rapid wave
Made the river-bed ring,--
The mountain-torrent rang with stones.

13 The wearer of Megingjard
Saw the flood fall
On his hard-waxed shoulders:
He could do no better.
The destroyer of troll-children

Let his neck-strength
Wax heaven high,
Till the mighty stream should diminish.

14 But the warriors,
The oath-bound protectors of Asgard,--
The experienced vikings,--
Waded fast and the stream sped on.
Thou god of the bow!
The billows
Blown by the mountain-storm
Powerfully rushed
Over Thor's shoulders.

15 Thjalfe and his companion,
With their heads above water,
Got over the river,--
To Thor's belt they clung.
Their strength was tested,--
Geirrod's daughters made hard the stream
For the iron rod.
Angry fared Thor with the Gridarvol.

16 Nor did courage fail
Those foes of the giant
In the seething vortex.
Those sworn companions
Regarded a brave heart

Better than gold.
Neither Thor's nor Thjalfe's heart
From fear did tremble.

17 And the war companions--
Weapons despising--
'Mong the giants made havoc,
Until, O woman!
The giant destroyers
The conflict of helmets
With the warlike race
Did commence.

18 The giants of Iva's[90] capes
Made a rush with Geirrod;
The foes of the cold Svithiod
Took to flight.
Geirrod's giants
Had to succumb
When the lightning wielder's[91] kinsmen
Closely pursued them.

19 Wailing was 'mongst the cave-dwellers
When the giants,
With warlike spirit endowed,
Went forward.
There was war.

The slayer of troll-women,
By foes surrounded,
The giant's hard head hit.

20 With violent pressure
Were pressed the vast eyes
Of Gjalp and Greip
Against the high roof.
The fire-chariot's driver
The old backs broke
Of both these maids
For the cave-woman.

21 The man of the rocky way
But scanty knowledge got;
Nor able were the giants
To enjoy perfect gladness.
Thou man of the bow-string!
The dwarf's kinsman
An iron beam, in the forge heated,
Threw against Odin's dear son.

22 But the battle-hastener,
Freyja's old friend,
With swift hands caught
In the air the beam
As it flew from the hands

Of the father of Greip,--
His breast with anger swollen
Against Thruda's[92] father.

23 Geirrod's hall trembled
When he struck,
With his broad head,
'Gainst the old column of the house-wall.
Uller's splendid flatterer
Swung the iron beam
Straight 'gainst the head
Of the knavish giant.

24 The crusher of the hall-wont troll-women
A splendid victory won
Over Glam's descendants;
With gory hammer fared Thor.
Gridarvol-staff,
Which made disaster
'Mong Geirrod's companion,
Was not used 'gainst that giant himself.

25 The much worshiped thunderer,
With all his might, slew
The dwellers in Alfheim
With that little willow-twig,
And no shield

Was able to resist
The strong age-diminisher
Of the mountain-king.

26 [88] Icelandic proverb.

27 [89] Icelandic proverb.

28 [90] A river in Jotunheim.

29 [91] Thor's kinsmen = the asas.

30 [92] Thruda was a daughter of Thor and Sif.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — IDUN

✦

1 How shall Idun be named? She is called the wife of Brage, the keeper of the apples; but the apples are called the medicine to bar old age (ellilyf, elixir vitæ). She is also called the booty of the giant Thjasse, according to what has before been said concerning how he took her away from the asas. From this saga Thjodolf, of Hvin, composed the following song in his Haustlong:

2 How shall the tongue
Pay an ample reward
For the sonorous shield
Which I received from Thorleif,
Foremost 'mong soldiers?
On the splendidly made shield
I see the unsafe journey
Of three gods and Thjasse.

3 Idun's robber flew long ago
The asas to meet
In the giant's old eagle-guise.
The eagle perched
Where the asas bore
Their food to be cooked.
Ye women! The mountain-giant
Was not wont to be timid.

4 Suspected of malice
Was the giant toward the gods.
Who causes this?
Said the chief of the gods.
The wise-worded giant-eagle
From the old tree began to speak.
The friend of Honer
Was not friendly to him.

5 The mountain-wolf from Honer
Asked for his fill
From the holy table:
It fell to Honer to blow the fire.
The giant, eager to kill,
Glided down
Where the unsuspecting gods,
Odin, Loke and Honer, were sitting.

6 The fair lord of the earth
Bade Farbaute's son
Quickly to share
The ox with the giant;
But the cunning foe of the asas
Thereupon laid
The four parts of the ox
Upon the broad table.

7 And the huge father of Morn[93]
Afterward greedily ate
The ox at the tree-root.
That was long ago,
Until the profound
Loke the hard rod laid
'Twixt the shoulders
Of the giant Thjasse.

8 Then clung with his hands
The husband of Sigyn
To Skade's foster-son,
In the presence of all the gods.
The pole stuck fast
To Jotunheim's strong fascinator,
But the hands of Honer's dear friend
Stuck to the other end.

9 Flew then with the wise god
The voracious bird of prey
Far away; so the wolf's father
To pieces must be torn.
Odin's friend got exhausted.
Heavy grew Lopt.
Odin's companion
Must sue for peace.

10 Hymer's kinsman demanded
That the leader of hosts
The sorrow-healing maid,
Who the asas' youth-preserving apples keeps,
Should bring to him.
Brisingamen's thief
Afterward brought Idun
To the gard of the giant.

11 Sorry were not the giants
After this had taken place,
Since from the south
Idun had come to the giants.
All the race
Of Yngve-Frey, at the Thing,
Grew old and gray,--
Ugly-looking were the gods.

12 Until the gods found the blood-dog,
Idun's decoying thrall,
And bound the maid's deceiver,
You shall, cunning Loke,
Spake Thor, die;
Unless back you lead,
With your tricks, that
Good joy-increasing maid.

13 Heard have I that thereupon
The friend of Honer flew
In the guise of a falcon
(He often deceived the asas with his cunning);
And the strong fraudulent giant,
The father of Morn,
With the wings of the eagle
Sped after the hawk's child.

14 The holy gods soon built a fire--
They shaved off kindlings--
And the giant was scorched.
This is said in memory
Of the dwarf's heel-bridge.[94]
A shield adorned with splendid lines
From Thorleif I received.

15 [93] A troll-woman.

16 [94] Shield.

SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — ÆGER'S FEAST

✦

1 How shall gold be named? It may be called fire; the needles of Glaser; Sif's hair; Fulla's head-gear; Freyja's tears; the chatter, talk or word of the giants; Draupner's drop; Draupner's rain or shower; Freyja's eyes; the otter-ransom, or stroke-ransom, of the asas; the seed of Fyrisvold; Holge's how-roof; the fire of all waters and of the hand; or the stone, rock or gleam of the hand.

2 Why is gold called Æger's fire? The saga relating to this is, as has before been told, that Æger made a visit to Asgard, but when he was ready to return home he invited Odin and all the asas to come and pay him a visit after the lapse of three months. On this journey went Odin, Njord, Frey, Tyr, Brage, Vidar, Loke; and also the asynjes, Frigg, Freyja, Gefjun, Skade, Idun, Sif.

2.2 Thor was not there, for he had gone eastward to fight trolls. When the gods had taken their seats, Æger let his servants bring in on the hall floor bright gold, which shone and lighted up the whole hall like fire, just as the swords in Valhal are used instead of fire. Then Loke bandied hasty words with all the gods, and slew Æger's thrall who was called Fimafeng.

2.3 The name of his other thrall is Elder. The name of Æger's wife is Ran, and they have nine daughters, as has before been written. At this feast all things passed around spontaneously, both food and ale and all the utensils needed for the feasting. Then the asas became aware that Ran had a net in which she caught all men who perish at sea.

2.4 Then the saga goes on telling how it happens that gold is called the fire, or light or brightness of Æger, of Ran, or of Æger's daughters; and from these periphrases it is allowed to call gold the fire of the sea, or of any of the periphrases of the sea, since Æger and Ran are found in periphrases of the sea; and thus gold is now called the fire of waters, of rivers, or of all the periphrases of rivers.

2.5 But these names have fared like other periphrases. The younger skald has composed poetry after the pattern of the old skalds, imitating their songs; but afterward they have expanded the metaphors whenever they thought they could improve upon what was sung before; and thus the water is the sea, the river is the lakes, the brook is the river.

2.6 Hence all the figures that are expanded more than what has before been found are called new tropes, and all seem good that contain likelihood and are natural. Thus sang the skald Brage:

3 From the king I received
The fire of the brook.
This the king gave to me
And a head with song.

4 Why is gold called the needles or leaves of Glaser? In Asgard, before the doors of Valhal, stands a grove which is called Glaser, and all its leaves are of red gold, as is here sung:

5 Glaser stands
With golden leaves
Before Sigtyr's halls.

6 This is the fairest forest among gods and men.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — LOKE'S WAGER WITH THE DWARFS

✦

1 Why is gold called Sif's hair? Loke Laufey's son had once craftily cut all the hair off Sif; but when Thor found it out he seized Loke, and would have broken every bone in him, had he not pledged himself with an oath to get the swarthy elves to make for Sif a hair of gold that should grow like other hair.

1.2 Then went Loke to the dwarfs that are called Ivald's sons, and they made the hair and Skidbladner, and the spear that Odin owned and is called Gungner. Thereupon Loke wagered his head with the dwarf, who hight Brok, that his brother Sindre would not be able to make three other treasures equally as good as these were.

1.3 But when they came to the smithy, Sindre laid a pig-skin in the furnace and requested Brok to blow the bellows, and not to stop blowing before he (Sindre) had taken out of the furnace what he had put into it.

1.4 As soon, however, as Sindre had gone out of the smithy and Brok was blowing, a fly lighted on his hand and stung him; but he kept on blowing as before until the smith had taken the work out of the furnace. That was now a boar, and its bristles were of gold.

1.5 Thereupon he laid gold in the furnace, and requested Brok to blow, and not to stop plying the bellows before he came back. He went out; but then came the fly and lighted on his neck and stung him still worse; but he continued to work the bellows until the smith took out of the furnace the gold ring called Draupner.

1.6 Then Sindre placed iron in the furnace, and requested Brok to work the bellows, adding that otherwise all would be worthless. Now the fly lighted between his eyes and stung his eye-lids, and as the blood ran down into his eyes so that he could not see, he let go of the bellows just for a moment and drove the fly away with his hands.

1.7 Then the smith came back and said that all that lay in the furnace came near being entirely spoiled. Thereupon he took a hammer out of the furnace. All these treasures he then placed in the hands of his brother Brok, and bade him go with Loke to Asgard to fetch the wager. When Loke and Brok brought forth the treasures, the gods seated themselves upon their doom-steads.

1.8 It was agreed to abide by the decision which should be pronounced by Odin, Thor and Frey. Loke gave to Odin the spear Gungner, to Thor the hair, which Sif was to have, and to Frey, Skidbladner; and he described the qualities of all these treasures, stating that the spear never would miss its mark, that the hair would grow as soon as it was placed on Sif s head, and that Skidbladner would always have fair wind as soon as the sails were hoisted, no matter where its owner desired to go; besides, the ship could be folded together like a napkin and be carried in his pocket if he desired.

1.9 Then Brok produced his treasures. He gave to Odin the ring, saying that every ninth night eight other rings as heavy as it would drop from it; to Frey he gave the boar, stating that it would run through the air and over seas, by night or by day, faster than any horse; and never could it become so dark in the night, or in the worlds of darkness, but that it would be light where this boar was present, so bright shone his bristles.

1.10 Then he gave to Thor the hammer, and said that he might strike with it as hard as he pleased; no matter what was before him, the hammer would take no scathe, and wherever he might throw it he would never lose it; it would never fly so far that it did not return to his hand; and if he desired, it would become so small that he might conceal it in his bosom; but it had one fault, which was, that the handle was rather short.

1.11 The decision of the gods was, that the hammer was the best of all these treasures and the greatest protection against the frost-giants, and they declared that the dwarf had fairly won the wager. Then Loke offered to ransom his head. The dwarf answered saying there was no hope for him on that score.

1.12 Take me, then! said Loke; but when the dwarf was to seize him Loke was far away, for he had the shoes with which he could run through the air and over the sea. Then the dwarf requested Thor to seize him, and he did so. Now the dwarf wanted to cut the head off Loke, but Loke said that the head was his, but not the neck.

1.13 Then the dwarf took thread and a knife and wanted to pierce holes in Loke's lips, so as to sew his mouth together, but the knife would not cut. Then said he, it would be better if he had his brother's awl, and as soon as he named it the awl was there and it pierced Loke's lips. Now Brok sewed Loke's mouth together, and broke off the thread at the end of the sewing. The thread with which the mouth of Loke was sewed together is called Vartare (a strap).

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — THE NIFLUNGS AND GJUKUNGS

✦

1 The following is the reason why gold is called otter-ransom: It is related that three asas went abroad to learn to know the whole world, Odin, Honer and Loke. They came to a river, and walked along the river-bank to a force, and near the force was an otter. The otter had caught a salmon in the force, and sat eating it with his eyes closed.

1.2 Loke picked up a stone, threw it at the otter and hit him in the head. Loke bragged of his chase, for he had secured an otter and a salmon with one throw. They took the salmon and the otter with them, and came to a byre, where they entered. But the name of the bonde who lived there was Hreidmar. He was a mighty man, and thoroughly skilled in the black art.

1.3 The asas asked for night-lodgings, stating that they had plenty of food, and showed the bonde their game. But when Hreidmar saw the otter he called his sons, Fafner and Regin, and said that Otter, their brother, was slain, and also told who had done it.

1.4 Then the father and the sons attacked the asas, seized them and bound them, and then said, in reference to the otter, that he was Hreidmar's son. The asas offered, as a ransom for their lives, as much money as Hreidmar himself might demand, and this was agreed to, and confirmed with an oath. Then the otter was flayed.

1.5 Hreidmar took the otter-belg and said to them that they should fill the belg with red gold, and then cover it with the same metal, and when this was done they should be set free. Thereupon Odin sent Loke to the

home of the swarthy elves, and he came to the dwarf whose name is Andvare, and who lived as a fish, in the water.

1.6 Loke caught him in his hands, and demanded of him, as a ransom for his life, all the gold that he had in his rock. And when they entered the rock, the dwarf produced all the gold that he owned, and that was a very large amount. Then the dwarf concealed in his hand a small gold ring. Loke saw this, and requested him to hand forth the ring.

1.7 The dwarf begged him not to take the ring away from him, for with this ring he could increase his wealth again if he kept it. Loke said the dwarf should not keep as much as a penny, took the ring from him and went out. But the dwarf said that that ring should be the bane of every one who possessed it.

1.8 Loke replied that he was glad of this, and said that all should be fulfilled according to his prophecy: he would take care to bring the curse to the ears of him who was to receive it. He went to Hreidmar and showed Odin the gold; but when the latter saw the ring, it seemed to him a fair one, and he took it and put it aside, giving Hreidmar the rest of the gold.

1.9 They filled the otter-belg as full as it would hold, and raised it up when it was full. Then came Odin, and was to cover the belg with gold; and when this was done, he requested Hreidmar to come and see whether the belg was sufficiently covered.

1.10 But Hreidmar looked at it, examined it closely, and saw a mouth-hair, and demanded that it should be covered, too, otherwise the agreement would be broken. Then Odin brought forth the ring and covered with it the mouth-hair, saying that now they had paid the otter-ransom.

1.11 But when Odin had taken his spear, and Loke his shoes, so that they had nothing more to fear, Loke said that the curse that Andvare had pronounced should be fulfilled, and that the ring and that gold should be the bane of its possessor; and this curse was afterward fulfilled. This explains why gold is called the otter-ransom, or forced payment of the asas, or strife-metal.

2 What more is there to be told of this gold? Hreidmar accepted the gold as a ransom for his son, but Fafner and Regin demanded their share of it as a ransom for their brother. Hreidmar was, however, unwilling to give them as much as a penny of it. Then the brothers made an agreement to kill their father for the sake of the gold.

2.2 When this was done, Regin demanded that Fafner should give him one half of it. Fafner answered that there was but little hope that he would share the gold with his brother, since he had himself slain his father to obtain it; and he commanded Regin to get him gone, for else the same thing would happen to him as had happened to Hreidmar.

2.3 Fafner had taken the sword hight Hrotte, and the helmet which had belonged to his father, and the latter he had placed on his head. This was called the Æger's helmet, and it was a terror to all living to behold it. Regin had the sword called Refil. With it he fled.

2.4 But Fafner went to Gnita-heath (the glittering heath), where he made himself a bed, took on him the likeness of a serpent (dragon), and lay brooding over the gold.

3 Regin then went to Thjode, to king Hjalprek, and became his smith. There he undertook the fostering of Sigurd (Sigfrid), the son of Sigmund, the son of Volsung and the son of Hjordis, the daughter of Eylime. Sigurd

was the mightiest of all the kings of hosts, in respect to both family and power and mind.

3.2 Regin explained to him where Fafner was lying on the gold, and egged him on to try to get possession thereof. Then Regin made the sword which is hight Gram (wrath), and which was so sharp that when Sigurd held it in the flowing stream it cut asunder a tuft of wool which the current carried down against the sword's edge.

3.3 In the next place, Sigurd cut with his sword Regin's anvil in twain. Thereupon Sigurd and Regin repaired to Gnita-heath. Here Sigurd dug a ditch in Fafner's path and sat down in it; so when Fafner crept to the water and came directly over this ditch, Sigurd pierced him with the sword, and this thrust caused his death.

3.4 Then Regin came and declared that Sigurd had slain his brother, and demanded of him as a ransom that he should cut out Fafner's heart and roast it on the fire; but Regin kneeled down, drank Fafner's blood, and laid himself down to sleep.

3.5 While Sigurd was roasting the heart, and thought that it must be done, he touched it with his finger to see how tender it was; but the fat oozed out of the heart and onto his finger and burnt it, so that he thrust his finger into his mouth.

3.6 The heart-blood came in contact with his tongue, which made him comprehend the speech of birds, and he understood what the eagles said that were sitting in the trees. One of the birds said:

4 There sits Sigurd,
Stained with blood.
On the fire is roasting

Fafner's heart.
Wise seemed to me
The ring-destroyer,
If he the shining
Heart would eat.

5 Another eagle sang:

6 There lies Regin,
Contemplating
How to deceive the man
Who trusts him;
Thinks in his wrath
Of false accusations.
The evil smith plots
Revenge 'gainst the brother.[95]

7 Then Sigurd went to Regin and slew him, and thereupon he mounted his horse hight Grane, and rode until he came to Fafner's bed, took out all the gold, packed it in two bags and laid it on Grane's back, then got on himself and rode away. Now is told the saga according to which gold is called Fafner's bed or lair, the metal of Gnita-heath, or Grane's burden.

8 Then Sigurd rode on until he found a house on the mountain. In it slept a woman clad in helmet and coat-of-mail. He drew his sword and cut the coat-of-mail off from her. Then she awaked and called herself Hild. Her name was Brynhild, and she was a valkyrie. Thence Sigurd rode on and came to the king whose name was Gjuke.

8.2 His wife was called Grimhild, and their children were Gunnar, Hogne, Gudrun, Gudny; Gothorm was Gjuke's step-son. Here Sigurd remained a long time. Then he got the hand of Gudrun, Gjuke's daughter, and Gunnar and Hogne entered into a sworn brotherhood with Sigurd.

8.3 Afterward Sigurd and the sons of Gjuke went to Atle, Budle's son, to ask for his sister, Brynhild, for Gunnar's wife. She sat on Hindfell, and her hall was surrounded by the bickering flame called the Vafurloge, and she had made a solemn promise not to wed any other man than him who dared to ride through the bickering flame.

8.4 Then Sigurd and the Gjukungs (they are also called Niflungs) rode upon the mountain, and there Gunnar was to ride through the Vafurloge. He had the horse that was called Gote, but this horse did not dare to run into the flame. So Sigurd and Gunnar changed form and weapons, for Grane would not take a step under any other man than Sigurd.

8.5 Then Sigurd mounted Grane and rode through the bickering flame. That same evening he held a wedding with Brynhild; but when they went to bed he drew his sword Gram from the sheath and placed it between them.

8.6 In the morning when he had arisen, and had donned his clothes, he gave to Brynhild, as a bridal gift, the gold ring that Loke had taken from Andvare, and he received another ring as a memento from her. Then Sigurd mounted his horse and rode to his companions. He and Gunnar exchanged forms again and went back to Gjuke with Brynhild. Sigurd had two children with Gudrun. Their names were Sigmund and Swanhild.

9 Once it happened that Brynhild and Gudrun went to the water to wash their hair. When they came to the river Brynhild waded from the river bank into the stream, and said that she could not bear to have that water in her hair that ran from Gudrun's hair, for she had a more high-minded husband.

9.2 Then Gudrun followed her into the stream, and said that she was entitled to wash her hair farther up the stream than Brynhild, for the reason that she had the husband who was bolder than Gunnar, or any other man in the world; for it was he who slew Fafner and Regin, and inherited the wealth of both.

9.3 Then answered Brynhild: A greater deed it was that Gunnar rode through the Vafurloge, which Sigurd did not dare to do. Then laughed Gudrun and said: Do you think it was Gunnar who rode through the bickering flame? Then I think you shared the bed with him who gave me this gold ring.

9.4 The gold ring which you have on your finger, and which you received as a bridal-gift, is called Andvaranaut (Andvare's Gift), and I do not think Gunnar got it on Gnita-heath. Then Brynhild became silent and went home. Thereupon she egged Gunnar and Hogne to kill Sigurd; but being sworn brothers of Sigurd, they egged Guthorm, their brother, to slay Sigurd.

9.5 Guthorm pierced him with his sword while he was sleeping; but as soon as Sigurd was wounded he threw his sword, Gram, after Guthorm, so that it cut him in twain through the middle. There Sigurd fell, and his son, three winters old, by name Sigmund, whom they also killed. Then

Brynhild pierced herself with the sword and was cremated with Sigurd. But Gunnar and Hogne inherited Fafner's gold and the Gift of Andvare, and now ruled the lands.

10 King Atle, Budle's son, Brynhild's brother, then got in marriage Gudrun, who had been Sigurd's wife, and they had children. King Atle invited Gunnar and Hogne to visit him, and they accepted his invitation. But before they started on their journey they concealed Fafner's hoard in the Rhine, and that gold has never since been found.

10.2 King Atle had gathered together an army and fought a battle with Gunnar and Hogne, and they were captured. Atle had the heart cut out of Hogne alive. This was his death.

10.3 Gunnar he threw into a den of snakes, but a harp was secretly brought to him, and he played the harp with his toes (for his hands were fettered), so that all the snakes fell asleep excepting the adder, which rushed at him and bit him in the breast, and then thrust its head into the wound and clung to his liver until he died.

10.4 Gunnar and Hogne are called Niflungs (Niblungs) and Gjukungs. Hence gold is called the Niflung treasure or inheritance. A little later Gudrun slew her two sons and made from their skulls goblets trimmed with gold, and thereupon the funeral ceremonies took place. At the feast, Gudrun poured for King Atle in these goblets mead that was mixed with the blood of the youths.

10.5 Their hearts she roasted and gave to the king to eat. When this was done she told him all about it, with many unkind words. There was no lack of strong mead, so that the most of the people sitting there fell asleep.

On that night she went to the king when he had fallen asleep, and had with her her son Hogne. They slew him, and thus he ended his life.

10.6 Then they set fire to the hall, and with it all the people who were in it were burned. Then she went to the sea and sprang into the water to drown herself; but she was carried across the fjord, and came to the land which belonged to King Jonaker. When he saw her he took her home and made her his wife. They had three children, whose names were Sorle, Hamder and Erp. They all had hair as black as ravens, like Gunnar and Hogne and the other Niflungs.

11 There was fostered Swanhild, the daughter of Sigurd, and she was the fairest of all women. That Jormunrek, the rich, found out. He sent his son, Randver, to ask for her hand for him; and when he came to Jonaker, Swanhild was delivered to him, so that he might bring her to King Jormunrek.

11.2 Then said Bikke that it would be more fitting that Randver should marry Swanhild, he being young and she too, but Jormunrek being old. This plan pleased the two young people well. Soon afterward Bikke informed the king of it, and so King Jormunrek seized his son and had him brought to the gallows.

11.3 Then Randver took his hawk, plucked the feathers off him, and requested that it should be sent to his father, whereupon he was hanged. But when King Jormunrek saw the hawk, it came to his mind that as the hawk was flightless and featherless, so his kingdom was without preservation; for he was old and sonless.

11.4 Then King Jormunrek riding out of the woods from the chase with his courtiers, while Queen Swanhild sat dressing her hair, had the courtiers ride onto her, and she was trampled to death beneath the feet of the horses. When Gudrun heard of this, she begged her sons to avenge Swanhild.

11.5 While they were busking themselves for the journey, she brought them byrnies and helmets, so strong that iron could not scathe them. She laid the plan for them, that when they came to King Jormunrek, they should attack him in the night whilst he was sleeping. Sorle and Hamder should cut off his hands and feet, and Erp his head.

11.6 On the way they asked Erp what assistance they were to get from him, when they came to King Jormunrek. He answered them that he would give them such assistance as the hand gives the foot. They said that the feet got no support from the hands whatsoever.

11.7 They were angry at their mother, because she had forced them to undertake this journey with harsh words, and hence they were going to do that which would displease her most. So they killed Erp, for she loved him the most. A little later, while Sorle was walking, he slipped with one foot, and in falling supported himself with his hands.

11.8 Then said he: Now the hands helped the foot; better were it now if Erp were living. When they came to Jormunrek, the king, in the night, while he was sleeping, they cut off both his hands and his feet. Then he awaked, called his men and bade them arise. Said Hamder then: The head would now have been off had Erp lived.

11.9 The courtiers got up, attacked them, but could not overcome them with weapons. Then Jormunrek cried to them that they should stone them to death. This was done, Sorle and Hamder fell, and thus perished

the last descendants of Gjuke.

12 After King Sigurd lived a daughter hight Aslaug, who was fostered at Heimer's in Hlymdaler. From her mighty races are descended. It is said that Sigmund, the son of Volsung, was so powerful, that he drank venom and received no harm therefrom. But Sinfjotle, his son, and Sigurd, were so hard-skinned that no venom coming onto them could harm them. Therefore the skald Brage has sung as follows:

13 When the tortuous serpent,
Full of the drink of the Volsungs,[96]
Hung in coils
On the bait of the giant-slayer,[97]

14 Upon these sagas very many skalds have made lays, and from them they have taken various themes. Brage the Old made the following song about the fall of Sorle and Hamder in the drapa, which he composed about Ragnar Lodbrok:

15 Jormunrek once,
In an evil dream, waked
In that sword-contest
Against the blood-stained kings.
A clashing of arms was heard
In the house of Randver's father,
When the raven-blue brothers of Erp
The insult avenged.

16 Sword-dew flowed
Off the bed on the floor.
Bloody hands and feet of the king
One saw cut off.
On his head fell Jormunrek,
Frothing in blood.
On the shield
This is painted.

17 The king saw
Men so stand
That a ring they made
'Round his house.
Sorle and Hamder
Were both at once,
With slippery stones,
Struck to the ground.

18 King Jormunrek
Ordered Gjuke's descendants
Violently to be stoned
When they came to take the life
Of Swanhild's husband.
All sought to pay
Jonaker's sons
With blows and wounds.

[19] This fall of men
And sagas many
On the fair shield I see.
Ragnar gave me the shield.

[20] [95] Elder Edda: the Lay of Fafner, 32, 33.

[21] [96] The drink of the Volsungs = venom; the tortuous venom-serpent = the Midgard-serpent.

[22] [97] Thor.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — MENJA AND FENJA

✦

1 Why is gold called Frode's meal? The saga giving rise to this is the following:

2 Odin had a son by name Skjold, from whom the Skjoldungs are descended. He had his throne and ruled in the lands that are now called Denmark, but were then called Gotland. Skjold had a son by name Fridleif, who ruled the lands after him. Fridleif's son was Frode.

2.2 He took the kingdom after his father, at the time when the Emperor Augustus established peace in all the earth and Christ was born. But Frode being the mightiest king in the northlands, this peace was attributed to him by all who spake the Danish tongue, and the Norsemen called it the peace of Frode.

2.3 No man injured the other, even though he might meet, loose or in chains, his father's or brother's bane. There was no thief or robber, so that a gold ring would be a long time on Jalanger's heath. King Frode sent messengers to Svithjod, to the king whose name was Fjolner, and bought there two maid-servants, whose names were Fenja and Menja. They were large and strong.

2.4 About this time were found in Denmark two mill-stones, so large that no one had the strength to turn them. But the nature belonged to these mill-stones that they ground whatever was demanded of them by the miller. The name of this mill was Grotte. But the man to whom King Frode gave the mill was called Hengekjapt.

2.5 King Frode had the maid-servants led to the mill, and requested them to grind for him gold and peace, and Frode's happiness. Then he gave them no longer time to rest or sleep than while the cuckoo was silent or while they sang a song.

2.6 It is said that they sang the song called the Grottesong, and before they ended it they ground out a host against Frode; so that on the same night there came the sea-king, whose name was Mysing, and slew Frode and took a large amount of booty. Therewith the Frode-peace ended.

2.7 Mysing took with him Grotte, and also Fenja and Menja, and bade them grind salt, and in the middle of the night they asked Mysing whether he did not have salt enough. He bade them grind more. They ground only a short time longer before the ship sank. But in the ocean arose a whirlpool (Maelstrom, mill-stream) in the place where the sea runs into the mill-eye. Thus the sea became salt.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — THE GROTTESONG

✦

1 Now are come
To the house of the king
The prescient two,
Fenja and Menja.
There must the mighty
Maidens toil
For King Frode,
Fridleif's son.

2 Brought to the mill
Soon they were;
The gray stones
They had to turn.
Nor rest nor peace
He gave to them:
He would hear the maidens
Turn the mill.

3 They turned the mill,
The prattling stones
The mill ever rattling.
What a noise it made!
Lay the planks!

Lift the stones![98]
But he[99] bade the maids
Yet more to grind.

4 They sang and swung
The swift mill-stone,
So that Frode's folk
Fell asleep.
Then, when she came
To the mill to grind,
With a hard heart
And with loud voice
Did Menja sing:

5 We grind for Frode
Wealth and happiness,
And gold abundant
On the mill of luck.
Dance on roses!
Sleep on down!
Wake when you please!
That is well ground.

6 Here shall no one
Hurt the other,
Nor in ambush lie,
Nor seek to kill;
Nor shall any one

With sharp sword hew,
Though bound he should find
His brother's bane.

7 They stood in the hall,
Their hands were resting;
Then was it the first
Word that he spoke:
Sleep not longer
Than the cuckoo on the hall,
Or only while
A song I sing:

8 Frode! you were not
Wary enough,--
You friend of men,--
When maids you bought!
At their strength you looked,
And at their fair faces,
But you asked no questions
About their descent.

9 Hard was Hrungner
And his father;
Yet was Thjasse
Stronger than they,
And Ide and Orner,

Our friends, and
The mountain-giants' brothers,
Who fostered us two.

10 Not would Grotte have come
From the mountain gray,
Nor this hard stone
Out from the earth;
The maids of the mountain-giants
Would not thus be grinding
If we two knew
Nothing of the mill.

11 Through winters nine
Our strength increased,
While below the sod
We played together.
Great deeds were the maids
Able to perform;
Mountains they
From their places moved.

12 The stone we rolled
From the giants' dwelling,
So that all the earth
Did rock and quake.
So we hurled

The rattling stone,
The heavy block,
That men caught it.

13 In Svithjod's land
Afterward we
Fire-wise women,
Fared to the battle,
Byrnies we burst,
Shields we cleaved,
Made our way
Through gray-clad hosts.

14 One chief we slew,
Another we aided,--
To Guthorm the Good
Help we gave.
Ere Knue had fallen
Nor rest we got.
Then bound we were
And taken prisoners.

15 Such were our deeds
In former days,
That we heroes brave
Were thought to be.
With spears sharp

Heroes we pierced,
So the gore did run
And our swords grew red.

16 Now we are come
To the house of the king,
No one us pities.
Bond-women are we.
Dirt eats our feet,
Our limbs are cold,
The peace-giver[100] we turn.
Hard it is at Frode's.

17 The hands shall stop,
The stone shall stand;
Now have I ground
For my part enough.
Yet to the hands
No rest must be given,
'Till Frode thinks
Enough has been ground.

18 Now hold shall the hands
The lances hard,
The weapons bloody,--
Wake now, Frode!
Wake now, Frode!

If you would listen
To our songs,--
To sayings old.

19 Fire I see burn
East of the burg,--
The warnews are awake.
That is called warning.
A host hither
Hastily approaches
To burn the king's
Lofty dwelling.

20 No longer you will sit
On the throne of Hleidra
And rule o'er red
Rings and the mill.
Now must we grind
With all our might,
No warmth will we get
From the blood of the slain.

21 Now my father's daughter
Bravely turns the mill.
The death of many
Men she sees.
Now broke the large

Braces 'neath the mill,--
The iron-bound braces.
Let us yet grind!

22 Let us yet grind!
Yrsa's son
Shall on Frode revenge
Halfdan's death.
He shall Yrsa's
Offspring be named,
And yet Yrsa's brother.
Both of us know it.

23 The mill turned the maidens,--
Their might they tested;
Young they were,
And giantesses wild.
The braces trembled.
Then fell the mill,--
In twain was broken
The heavy stone.

24 All the old world
Shook and trembled,
But the giant's maid
Speedily said:
We have turned the mill, Frode!

Now we may stop.
By the mill long enough
The maidens have stood.

25 [98] These words are spoken by the maidens while they put the mill together.

26 [99] Frode.

27 [100] The mill.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — ROLF KRAKE

✦

1 A king in Denmark hight Rolf Krake, and was the most famous of all kings of olden times; moreover, he was more mild, brave and condescending than all other men. A proof of his condescension, which is very often spoken of in olden stories, was the following: There was a poor little fellow by name Vog.

1.2 He once came into King Rolf's hall while the king was yet a young man, and of rather delicate growth. Then Vog went before him and looked up at him. Then said the king: What do you mean to say, my fellow, by looking so at me?

1.3 Answered Vog: When I was at home I heard people say that King Rolf, at Hleidra, was the greatest man in the northlands, but now sits here in the high-seat a little crow (krake), and it they call their king. Then made answer the king: You, my fellow, have given me a name, and I shall henceforth be called Rolf Krake, but it is customary that a gift accompanies the name.

1.4 Seeing that you have no gift that you can give me with the name, or that would be suitable to me, then he who has must give to the other. Then he took a gold ring off his hand and gave it to the churl. Then said Vog: You give as the best king of all, and therefore I now pledge myself to become the bane of him who becomes your bane. Said the king, laughing: A small thing makes Vog happy.

2 Another example is told of Rolf Krake's bravery. In Upsala reigned a king by name Adils, whose wife was Yrsa, Rolf Krake's mother. He was engaged in a war with Norway's king, Ale. They fought a battle on the ice of the lake called Wenern.

2.2 King Adils sent a message to Rolf Krake, his stepson, asking him to come and help him, and promising to furnish pay for his whole army during the campaign. Furthermore King Rolf himself should have any three treasures that he might choose in Sweden. But Rolf Krake could not go to his assistance, on account of the war which he was then waging against the Saxons.

2.3 Still he sent twelve berserks to King Adils. Among them were Bodvar Bjarke, Hjalte the Valiant, Hvitserk the Keen, Vot, Vidsete, and the brothers Svipday and Beigud. In that war fell King Ale and a large part of his army. Then King Adils took from the dead King Ale the helmet called Hildesvin, and his horse called Rafn.

2.4 Then the berserks each demanded three pounds of gold in pay for their service, and also asked for the treasures which they had chosen for Rolf Krake, and which they now desired to bring to him. These were the helmet Hildegolt; the byrnie Finnsleif, which no steel could scathe; and the gold ring called Sviagris, which had belonged to Adils' forefathers.

2.5 But the king refused to surrender any of these treasures, nor did he give the berserks any pay. The berserks then returned home, and were much dissatisfied. They reported all to King Rolf, who straightway busked himself to fare against Upsala; and when he came with his ships into the river Fyre, he rode against Upsala, and with him his twelve berserks, all peaceless.

2.6 Yrsa, his mother, received him and took him to his lodgings, but not to the king's hall. Large fires were kindled for them, and ale was brought them to drink. Then came King Adils' men in and bore fuel onto the fireplace, and made a fire so great that it burnt the clothes of Rolf and his berserks, saying: Is it true that neither fire nor steel will put Rolf Krake and his berserks to flight? Then Rolf Krake and all his men sprang up, and he said:

3 Let us increase the blaze
In Adils' chambers.

4 He took his shield and cast it into the fire, and sprang over the fire while the shield was burning, and cried:

5 From the fire flees not he
Who over it leaps.

6 The same did also his men, one after the other, and then they took those who had put fuel on the fire and cast them into it. Now Yrsa came and handed Rolf Krake a deer's horn full of gold, and with it she gave him the ring Sviagris, and requested them to ride straightway to their army. They sprang upon their horses and rode away over the Fyrisvold.

6.2 Then they saw that King Adils was riding after them with his whole army, all armed, and was going to slay them. Rolf Krake took gold out of the horn with his right hand, and scattered it over the whole way. But when the Swedes saw it they leaped out of their saddles, and each one took as much as he could. King Adils bade them ride, and he himself rode on with all his might.

6.3 The name of his horse was Slungner, the fastest of all horses. When Rolf Krake saw that King Adils was riding near him, he took the ring Sviagris and threw it to him, asking him to take it as a gift. King Adils rode to the ring, picked it up with the end of his spear, and let it slide down to his hand. Then Rolf Krake turned round and saw that the other was stooping.

6.4 Said he: Like a swine I have now bended the foremost of all Swedes. Thus they parted. Hence gold is called the seed of Krake or of Fyrisvold.

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SKÁLDSKAPARMÁL — HOGNE AND HILD

✦

1 A king by name Hogne had a daughter by name Hild. Her a king, by name Hedin, son of Hjarrande, made a prisoner of war, while King Hogne had fared to the trysting of the kings.

1.2 But when he learned that there had been harrying in his kingdom, and that his daughter had been taken away, he rode with his army in search of Hedin, and learned that he had sailed northward along the coast. When King Hogne came to Norway, he found out that Hedin had sailed westward into the sea. Then Hogne sailed after him to the Orkneys.

1.3 And when he came to the island called Ha, then Hedin was there before him with his host. Then Hild went to meet her father, and offered him as a reconciliation from Hedin a necklace; but if he was not willing to accept this, she said that Hedin was prepared for a battle, and Hogne might expect no clemency from him. Hogne answered his daughter harshly.

1.4 When she returned to Hedin, she told him that Hogne would not be reconciled, and bade him busk himself for the battle. And so both parties did; they landed on the island and marshaled their hosts. Then Hedin called to Hogne, his father-in-law, offering him a reconciliation and much gold as a ransom.

1.5 Hogne answered: Too late do you offer to make peace with me, for now I have drawn the sword Dainsleif, which was smithied by the dwarfs, and must be the death of a man whenever it is drawn; its blows never miss

the mark, and the wounds made by it never heal. Said Hedin: You boast the sword, but not the victory. That I call a good sword that is always faithful to its master.

1.6 Then they began the battle which is called the Hjadninga-vig (the slaying of the Hedin_ians_); they fought the whole day, and in the evening the kings fared back to their ships. But in the night Hild went to the battlefield, and waked up with sorcery all the dead that had fallen.

1.7 The next day the kings went to the battlefield and fought, and so did also all they who had fallen the day before. Thus the battle continued from day to day; and all they who fell, and all the swords that lay on the field of battle, and all the shields, became stone.

1.8 But as soon as day dawned all the dead arose again and fought, and all the weapons became new again, and in songs it is said that the Hjadnings will so continue until Ragnarok.

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