
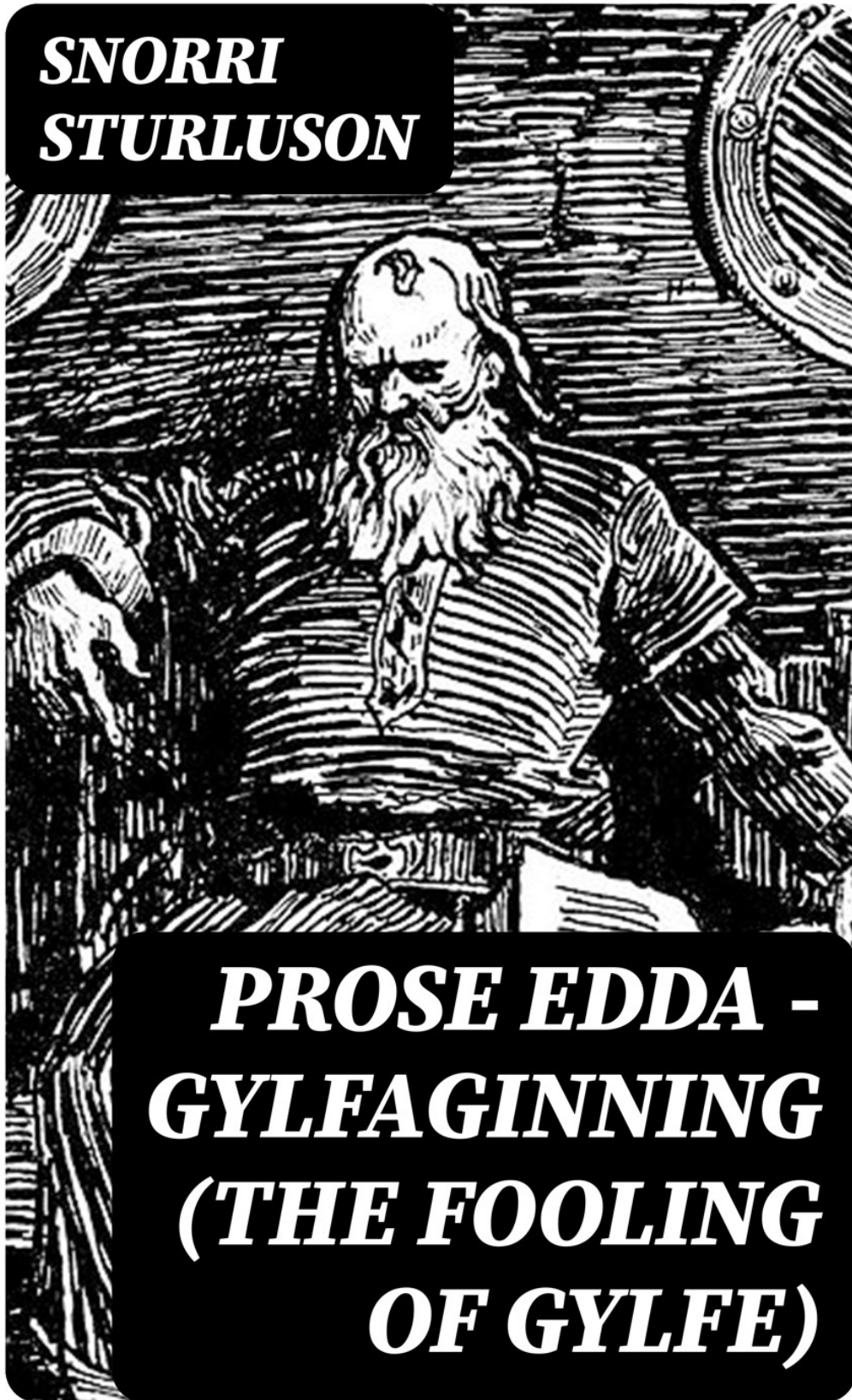


***SNORRI
STURLUSON***



***PROSE EDDA -
GYLFAGINNING
(THE FOOLING
OF GYLFE)***

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Prose Edda — Gylfaginning (The Fooling Of Gylfe)

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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. 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. 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 says Brage, the old skald:

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.

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

Thinking thatchers
Thatched the roof;
The beams of the burg
Beamed with gold.

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; that he had come a long way, and that he sought lodgings for the night. He also asked who owned the burg. 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. 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:

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

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 other next above him, Jafnhar; but the one who sat on the highest throne, Thride. 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.

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

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