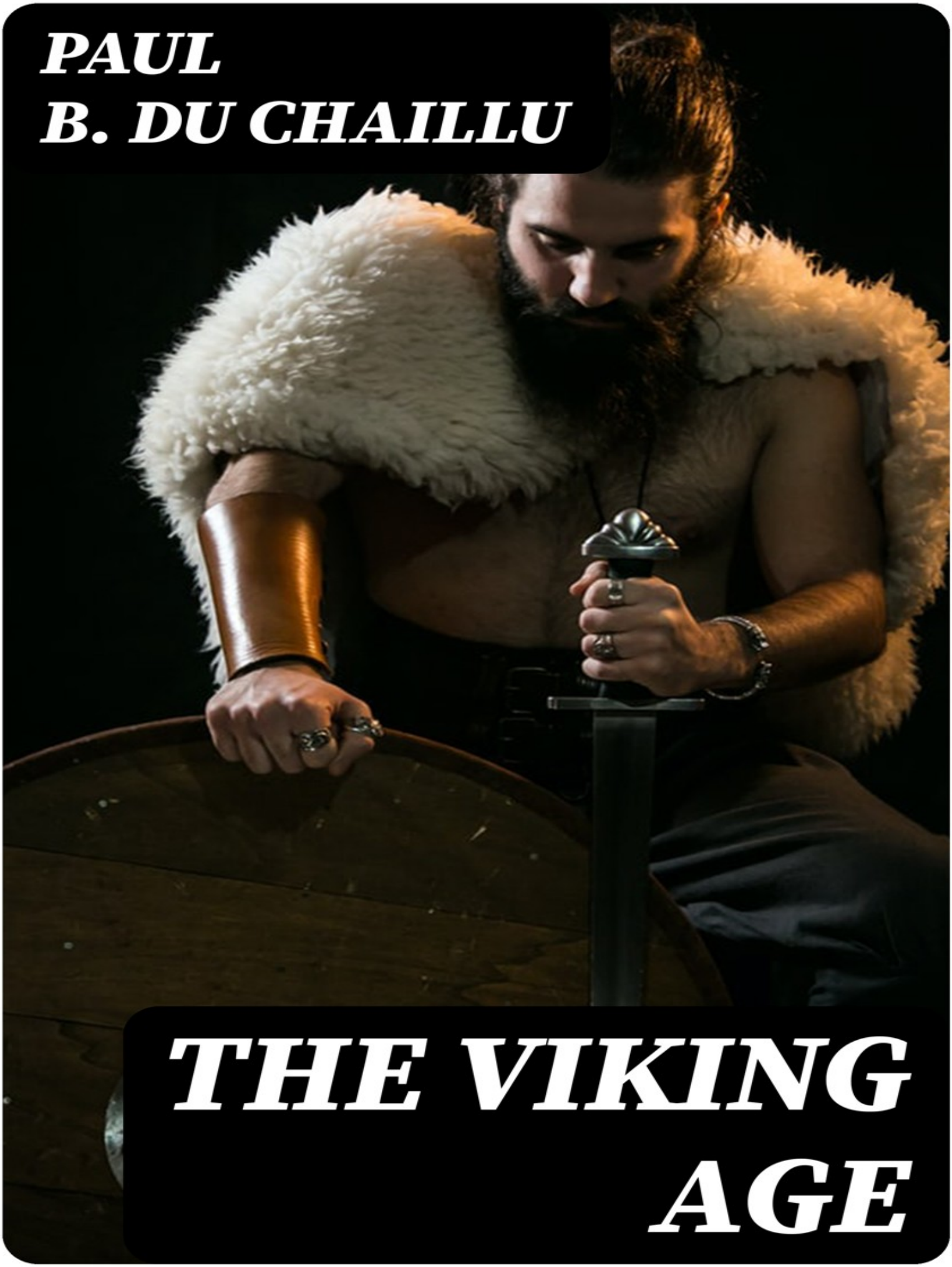
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The Viking Age

The Early History and Customs of the Ancestors of the English-Speaking Nations

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VOLUME 1

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CHAPTER I.
CIVILISATION AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE NORTH.

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Early antiquities of the North—Literature: English and Frankish chronicles—Early civilisation—Beauty of ornaments, weapons, &c.

A study of the ancient literature and abundant archæology of the North gives us a true picture of the character and life of the Norse ancestors of the English-speaking peoples.

We can form a satisfactory idea of their religious, social, political, and warlike life. We can follow them from their birth to their grave. We see the infant exposed to die, or *water sprinkled*,[1] and a name bestowed upon it; follow the child in his education, in his sports; the young man in his practice of arms; the maiden in her domestic duties and embroidery; the adult in his warlike expeditions; hear the clash of swords and the songs of the *Scald*, looking on and inciting the warriors to greater deeds of daring, or it may be recounting afterwards the glorious death of the hero. We listen to the old man giving his advice at the *Thing*.[2] We learn about their dress, ornaments, implements, weapons; their expressive names and complicated relationships; their dwellings and convivial halls, with their primitive or magnificent furniture; their temples, sacrifices, gods, and sacred ceremonies; their personal appearance, even to the hair, eyes, face and limbs. Their festivals, betrothal and marriage feasts are open to us. We are present at their athletic games preparatory to the stern realities of the life of

that period, where honour and renown were won on the battle-field; at the revel and drunken bout; behold the dead warrior on his burning ship or on the pyre, and surrounded by his weapons, horses, slaves, or fallen companions who are to enter with him into *Valhalla*;[3] look into the death chamber, see the mounding and the *Arvel*, or inheritance feast.

These Norsemen had carriages or chariots, as well as horses, and the numerous skeletons of this animal in graves or bogs prove it to have been in common use at a very early period. Their dress, and the splendour of their riding equipment for war, the richness of the ornamentation of their weapons of offence and defence are often carefully described. Everywhere we see that gold was in the greatest abundance. The descriptions of such wealth might seem to be very much exaggerated; but, as will be seen in the course of this work, the antiquities treasured in the museums of the North bear witness to the truthfulness of the records. The spade has developed the history of Scandinavia, as it has done that of Assyria and Etruria, but in addition the Northmen had the Saga and Edda literature to perpetuate their deeds.

We are the more astonished as we peruse the Eddas and Sagas giving the history of the North, and examine the antiquities found in the country, for we hear hardly anything about the customs of the people from the Roman writers, and our ideas regarding them have been thoroughly vitiated by the earlier Frankish and English chronicles and other monkish writings, or by the historians who have taken these records as a trustworthy authority.

Some writers, in order to give more weight to these chronicles, and to show the great difference that existed between the invaders and invaded, and how superior the

latter were to the former, paint in a graphic manner, without a shadow of authority, the contrast between the two peoples. England is described as being at that time a most beautiful country, a panegyric which does not apply to fifteen or twenty centuries ago; while the country of the aggressor is depicted as one of swamp and forest inhabited by wild and savage men. It is forgotten that after a while the people of the country attacked were the same people as those of the North or their descendants, who in intelligence, civilisation, and manly virtues were far superior to the original and effete inhabitants of the shores they invaded.

The men of the North who settled and conquered part of Gaul and Britain, whose might the power of Rome could not destroy, and whose depredations it could not prevent, were not savages; the Romans did not dare attack these men at home with their fleet or with their armies. Nay, they even had allowed these Northmen to settle peacefully in their provinces of Gaul and Britain.

No, the people who were then spread over a great part of the present Russia, who overran Germania, who knew the art of writing, who led their conquering hosts to Spain, into the Mediterranean, to Italy, Sicily, Greece, the Black Sea, Palestine, Africa, and even crossed the broad Atlantic to America, who were undisputed masters of the sea for more than twelve centuries, were not barbarians. Let those who uphold the contrary view produce evidence from archæology of an indigenous British or Gallic civilisation which surpasses that of the North.

The antiquities of the North even without its literature would throw an indirect but valuable light on the history of the earlier Norse tribes, the so-called barbarians, fiends, devils, sons of Pluto, &c., of the Frankish and English chronicles. To the latter we can refer for stories of terrible

acts of cruelty committed by the countrymen of the writers who recount them with complacency; maiming prisoners or antagonists and sending multitudes into slavery far away from their homes. But the greatest of all outrages in the eyes of these monkish scribes was that the Northmen burned a church or used it for sheltering their men or stabling their horses.

The writers of the English and Frankish chronicles were the worst enemies of the Northmen, ignorant and bigoted men when judged by the standard of our time; through their writings we hardly know anything of the customs of their own people. They could see nothing good in a man who had not a religion identical with their own.

Still allowance must be made for the chroniclers; they wrote the history of their own period with the bigotry, passions, and hatreds, of their times.

The striking fact brought vividly before our mind is that the people of the North, even before the time when they carried their warfare into Gaul and Britain, possessed a degree of civilisation which would be difficult for us to realise were it not that the antiquities help us in a most remarkable manner, and in many essential points, to corroborate the truthfulness of the Eddas and Sagas.

The indisputable fact remains that both the Gauls and the Britons were conquered by the Romans and afterwards by the Northern tribes.

This Northern civilisation was peculiar to itself, having nothing in common with the Roman world. Rome knew nothing of these people till they began to frequent the coasts of her North Sea provinces, in the days of Tacitus, and after his time the Mediterranean. The North was separated from Rome by the swamps and forests of Germania—a vague term given to a country north and

north-east of Italy, a land without boundaries, and inhabited by a great number of warlike, wild, uncivilised tribes. According to the accounts of Roman writers, these people were very unlike those of the North, and we must take the description given of them to be correct, as there is no archæological discovery to prove the contrary. They were distinct; one was comparatively civilised, the other was not.

The manly civilisation the Northmen possessed was their own; from their records, corroborated by finds in Southern Russia, it seems to have advanced north from about the shores of the Black Sea, and we shall be able to see in the perusal of these pages how many Northern customs were like those of the ancient Greeks.

A view of the past history of the world will show us that the growth of nations which have become powerful has been remarkably steady, and has depended upon the superior intelligence of the conquering people over their neighbours; just as to-day the nations who have taken possession of far-off lands and extended their domain, are superior to the conquered.

The museums of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Christiania, Bergen, Lünd, Göteborg, and many smaller ones in the provincial towns of the three Scandinavian kingdoms, show a most wonderful collection of antiquities which stand unrivalled in Central and Northern Europe for their wealth of weapons and costly objects of gold and silver, belonging to the bronze and iron age, and every year additions are made.

The weapons found with their peculiar northern ornamentation, and the superb ring coats-of-mail, show the skill of the people in working iron. A great number of their early swords and other weapons are damascened even so far back as the beginning of the Christian era, and show either that this art was practised in the North long before its

introduction into the rest of Europe from Damascus by the Crusaders, or that the Norsemen were so far advanced as to be able to appreciate the artistic manufactures of Southern nations.

The remnants of articles of clothing with graceful patterns, interwoven with threads of gold and silver, which have fortunately escaped entire destruction, show the existence of great skill in weaving. Entire suits of wearing apparel remain to tell us how some of the people dressed in the beginning of our era.

Beautiful vessels of silver and gold also testify to the taste and luxury of those early times. The knowledge of the art of writing and of gilding is clearly demonstrated. In some cases, nearly twenty centuries have not been able to tarnish or obliterate the splendour of the gilt jewels of the Northmen. We find among their remains—either of their own manufacture or imported, perhaps as spoils of war—*repoussé* work of gold or silver, bronze, silver, and wood work covered with the thinnest sheets of gold; the filigree work displays great skill, and some of it could not be surpassed now. Many objects are ornamented with *niello*, and of so thorough a northern pattern, that they are incontestably of home manufacture. The art of enamelling seems also to have been known to the artificers of the period.

Objects, many of which show much refined taste, such as superb specimens of glass vessels with exquisite painted subjects—unrivalled for their beauty of pattern, even in the museums of Italy and Russia—objects of bronze, &c., make us pause with astonishment, and musingly ask ourselves from what country these came. The names of Etruria, of ancient Greece, and of Rome, naturally occur to our minds.

Other objects of unquestionable Roman and Greek manufacture, and hundreds and thousands of coins, of the first, second, third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, show the early intercourse the people of the North had with the western and eastern Roman empire, and with Frisia, Gaul, and Britain.

A careful perusal of the Eddas and Sagas will enable us, with the help of the ancient Greek and Latin writers, and without any serious break in the chain of events, to make out a fairly continuous history which throws considerable light on the progenitors of the English-speaking people, their migrations northward from their old home on the shores of the Black Sea, their religion, and the settlement of Scandinavia, of England, and other countries.

CHAPTER II.
ROMAN AND GREEK ACCOUNTS OF THE NORTHMEN.

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The three maritime tribes of the North—The fleets of the Sueones—Expeditions of Saxons and Franks—Home of these tribes—The tribes of Germania not seafaring—Probable origin of the names Saxons and Franks.

Roman writers give us the names of three maritime tribes of the North, which were called by them *Sueones*, *Saxones*, and *Franci*. The first of these, which is the earliest mentioned, is thus described by Tacitus (circ. 57–117 A.D.):—

> "Hence the States of the Sueones, situated in the ocean itself, are not only powerful on land, but also have mighty fleets. The shape of their ships is different, in that, having a prow at each end, they are always ready for running on to the beach. They are not worked by sails, nor are the oars fastened to the sides in regular order, but left loose as in some rivers, so that they can be shifted here or there as circumstances may require."[4]

The word *Sviar*, which is constantly met with in the Sagas to denote the inhabitants of Svithjod (Sweden), or the country of which Upsala was the capital, corresponds somewhat to the name Sueones, and it is highly probable that in *Sueones* we have the root of *Sviar* and of *Svithjod*.

The ships described by Tacitus are exactly like those which are described in this work as having been found in the North.

It stands to reason that the maritime power of the Sueones must have been the growth of centuries before the time of Tacitus, and from analogy of historical records we know that the fleets of powerful nations do not remain idle. Hence we must come to the conclusion that the Sueones navigated the sea long before the time of Tacitus, an hypothesis which is implied by the Eddas and Sagas as well as by the antiquities discovered.

That the Sueones, with such fleets, did not navigate westward further than Frisia is not credible, the more so that it was only necessary for them to follow the coast in order to come to the shores of Gaul, from which they could see Britain, and such maritime people must have had intercourse with the inhabitants of that island at that period; indeed, the objects of the earlier iron age discovered in Britain, which were until lately classed as Anglo-Roman, are identical with those of the country from which these people came, i.e., Scandinavia.

The Veneti, a tribe who inhabited Brittany, and whose power on the sea is described by Cæsar, were in all probability the advance-guard of the tribes of the North; their ships were built of oak, with iron nails, just as those of the Northmen; and the people of the country in which they settled were not seafaring.[5] Moreover, the similarity of the name to that of the Venedi, who are conjecturally placed by Tacitus on the shores of the Baltic, and to the Vends, so frequently mentioned in the Sagas, can scarcely be regarded as a mere accident.

“The Veneti have a very great number of ships, with which they have been accustomed to sail to Britain, and

excel the rest of the people in their knowledge and experience of nautical affairs; and as only a few ports lie scattered along that stormy and open sea, of which they are in possession, they hold as tributaries almost all those who have been accustomed to traffic in that sea….”

“For their own ships were built and equipped in the following manner: Their ships were more flat-bottomed than our vessels, in order that they might be able more easily to guard against shallows and the ebbing of the tide; the prows were very much elevated, as also the sterns, so as to encounter heavy waves and storms. The vessels were built wholly of oak, so as to bear any violence or shock; the cross-benches, a foot in breadth, were fastened by iron spikes of the thickness of the thumb; the anchors were secured to iron chains, instead of to ropes; raw hides and thinly-dressed skins were used for sails, either on account of their want of canvas and ignorance of its use, or for this reason, which is the more likely, that they considered that such violent ocean storms and such strong winds could not be resisted, and such heavy vessels could not be conveniently managed by sails. The attack of our fleet on these vessels was of such a nature that the only advantage was in its swiftness and the power of its oars; in everything else, considering the situation and the fury of the storm, they had the advantage. For neither could our ships damage them by ramming (so strongly were they built), nor was a weapon easily made to reach them, owing to their height, and for the same reason they were not so easily held by grappling-irons. To this was added, that when the wind had begun to get strong, and they had driven before the gale, they could better weather the storm, and also more safely anchor among shallows, and, when left by the tide, need in no

respect fear rocks and reefs, the dangers from all which things were greatly to be dreaded by our vessels."

Roman writers after the time of Tacitus mention warlike and maritime expeditions by the Saxons and Franks. Their names do not occur in Tacitus, but it is not altogether improbable that these people, whom later writers mention as ravaging every country which they could enter by sea or land, are the people whom Tacitus knew as the Sueones.

The maritime power of the Sueones could not have totally disappeared in a century, a hypothesis which is borne out by the fact that after a lapse of seven centuries they are again mentioned in the time of Charlemagne; nor could the supremacy of the so-called Saxons and Franks on the sea have arisen in a day; it must have been the growth of even generations before the time of Tacitus.

Ptolemy (circ. A.D. 140) is the first writer who mentions the Saxons as inhabiting a territory north of the Elbe, on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus.[6] They occupied but a small space, for between them and the Cimbri, at the northern extremity of the peninsula, he places ten other tribes, among them the Angli.

About a century after the time of Ptolemy, Franks and Saxons had already widely extended their expeditions at sea. Some of the former made an expedition from the Euxine, through the Mediterranean, plundered Syracuse, and returned without mishap across the great sea (A.D. circ. 280).[7]

"He (Probus) permitted the Bastarnæ, a Scythian race, who had submitted themselves to him, to settle in certain districts of Thrace which he allotted to them, and from thenceforth these people always lived under the laws and institutions of Rome. And there were certain Franks who had come to the Emperor, and had asked for land on which to

settle. A part of them, however, revolted, and having obtained a large number of ships, caused disturbances throughout the whole of Greece, and having landed in Sicily and made an assault on Syracuse, they caused much slaughter there. They also landed in Libya, but were repulsed at the approach of the Carthaginian forces. Nevertheless, they managed to get back to their home unscathed."

"Why should I tell again of the most remote nations of the Franks (of Francia), which were carried away not from those regions which the Romans had on a former occasion invaded, but from their own native territory, and the farthest shores of the land of the barbarians, and transported to the deserted parts of Gaul that they might promote the peace of the Roman Empire by their cultivation and its armies by their recruits?"[8]

"There came to mind the incredible daring and undeserved success of a handful of the captive Franks under the Emperor Probus. For they, having seized some ships, so far away as Pontus, having laid waste Greece and Asia, having landed and done some damage on several parts of the coast of Africa, actually took Syracuse, which was at one time so renowned for her naval ascendancy. Thereupon they accomplished a very long voyage and entered the Ocean at the point where it breaks through the land (the Straits of Gibraltar), and so by the result of their daring exploit showed that wherever ships can sail, nothing is closed to pirates in desperation."[9]

In the time of Diocletian and Maximian these maritime tribes so harassed the coasts of Gaul and Britain that Maximian, in 286, was obliged to make Gesoriacum or Bononia (the present Boulogne) into a port for the Roman fleet, in order as far as possible to prevent their incursions.

“About this time (A.D. 287) Carausius, who, though of very humble origin, had, in the exercise of vigorous warfare, obtained a distinguished reputation, was appointed at Bononia to reduce to quiet the coast regions of Belgica and Armorica, which were overrun by the Franks and Saxons. But though many of the barbarians were captured, the whole of the booty was not handed over to the inhabitants of the province, nor sent to the commander-in-chief, and the barbarians were, moreover, deliberately allowed by him to come in, that he might capture them with their spoils as they passed through, and by this means enrich himself. On being condemned to death by Maximian, he seized on the sovereign command, and took possession of Britain.”[10]

Eutropius also records that the Saxons and others dwelt on the coasts of and among the marshes of the great sea, which no one could traverse, but the Emperor Valentinian (320–375) nevertheless conquered them.

The Emperor Julian calls the

> “Franks and Saxons the most warlike of the tribes above the Rhine and the Western Sea.”[11]

Ammianus Marcellinus (d. circ. 400 A.D.) writes:—

> “At this time (middle of the 4th century), just as though the trumpets were sounding a challenge throughout all the Roman world, fierce nations were stirred up and began to burst forth from their territories. The Alamanni began to devastate Gallia and Rhætia; the Sarmatæ and Quadi Pannonia, the Picts and Saxons, Scots, and Attacotti constantly harassed the Britons.”[12]

> “The Franks and the Saxons, who are coterminous with them, were ravaging the districts of Gallia wherever they could effect an entrance by sea or land, plundering and burning, and murdering all the prisoners they could take.”[13]

Claudianus asserts that the Saxons appeared even in the Orkneys:—

> “The Orcades were moist from the slain Saxon.”[14]

These are but a few of many allusions to the same effect which might be quoted.

That the swarms of Sueones and so-called Saxons and Franks, seen on every sea of Europe, could have poured forth from a small country is not possible. Such fleets as they possessed could only have come from a country densely covered with oak forests. We must come to the conclusion that Sueones, Franks, and Saxons were seafaring tribes belonging to one people. The Roman writers did not seem to know the precise locality inhabited by these people.

It would appear that these tribes must have come from a country further eastward than the Roman provinces, and that as they came with ships, their home must have been on the shores of the Baltic, the Cattegat, and Norway; in fact, precisely the country which the numerous antiquities point to as inhabited by an extremely warlike and maritime race, which had great intercourse with the Greek and Roman world.

The dates given by the Greek and Roman writers of the maritime expeditions, invasions, and settlements of the so-called Saxons and Franks agree perfectly with the date of the objects found in the North, among which are numerous

Roman coins, and remarkable objects of Roman and Greek art, which must have been procured either by the peaceful intercourse of trade or by war. To this very day thousands upon thousands of graves have been preserved in the North, belonging to the time of the invasions of these Northmen, and to an earlier period. From them no other inference can be drawn than that the country and islands of the Baltic were far more densely populated than any part of central and western Europe and Great Britain, since the number of these earlier graves in those countries is much smaller.

Every tumulus described by antiquaries as a Saxon or Frankish grave is the counterpart of a Northern grave, thus showing conclusively the common origin of the people.

Wherever graves of the same type are found in other countries we have the invariable testimony, either of the Roman or Greek writers of the Frankish and English Chronicles or of the Sagas, to show that the people of the North had been in the country at one time or another.

The conclusion is forced upon us that in time the North became over-populated, and an outlet was necessary for the spread of its people.

The story of the North is that of all countries whose inhabitants have spread and conquered, in order to find new fields for their energy and over-population; in fact, the very course the progenitors of the English-speaking peoples adopted in those days is precisely the one which has been followed by their descendants in England and other countries for the last three hundred years.

It is certain that the Franks could not have lived on the coast of Frisia, as they did later on, for we know that the country of the Rhine was held by the Romans, and, besides, as we have already seen, Julian refers to the Franks and

Saxons as dwelling above the Rhine. Moreover, till they had to give up their conquests, no mention is made by the Romans of native seafaring tribes inhabiting the shores of their northern province, except the Veneti, and they would have certainly tried to subjugate the roving seamen that caused them so much trouble in their newly-acquired provinces if they had been within their reach.

From the Roman writers, who have been partially confirmed by archæology, we know that the tribes which inhabited the country to which they give the vague name of Germania were not seafaring people nor possessed of any civilisation. The invaders of Britain, of the Gallic and of the Mediterranean coasts could therefore not have been the German tribes referred to by the Roman writers, who, as we see from Julius Cæsar and other Roman historians, were very far from possessing the civilisation which we know, from the antiquities, to have existed in the North.

“Their whole life is devoted to hunting and warlike pursuits. From childhood they pay great attention to toil and hardiness; they bathe all together in the rivers, and wear skins or small reindeer garments, leaving the greater part of their bodies naked.”[15]

Tacitus, in recording the speech of Germanicus to his troops before the battle at Idistavisus, bears witness to the uncivilised character of the inhabitants of the country.

“The huge targets, the enormous spears of the barbarians could never be wielded against trunks of trees and thickets of underwood shooting up from the ground, like Roman swords and javelins, and armour fitting the body… the Germans had neither helmet nor coat of mail; their bucklers were not even strengthened with leather, but mere contextures of twigs and boards of no substance daubed over with paint. Their first rank was to a certain extent

armed with pikes, the rest had only stakes burnt at the ends or short darts."[16]

Now compare these descriptions with the magnificent archæology of the North of that period—as seen in these volumes—from which we learn that the tribes who inhabited the shores of the Baltic and the present Scandinavia had at the time the above was written reached a high degree of civilisation. We find in their graves and hoards, coins of the early Roman Empire not in isolated instances, but constantly and in large numbers, and deposited side by side with such objects as coats of mail, damascened swords and other examples of articles of highly artistic workmanship.

Three kinds of swords are often mentioned by the Northmen—the *mækir*, the *sverd*, and the *sax*, while among the spears there is one called *frakki*, or *frakka*.

The double-edged sword was the one that was in use among the Romans, and they, seeing bodies of men carrying a weapon unlike theirs—single-edged, and called Sax—may have named them after it, and the Franks, in like manner, may have been called after their favourite weapon, the Frakki; but we see that neither the *sax* nor the *frakki* was confined to one tribe in the North. There is a Saxland in the Sagas—a small country situated east of the peninsula of Jutland, about the present Holstein—a land tributary to the Danish or Swedish Kings from the earliest times, but far from possessing the warlike archæology of the North, it appears to have held an insignificant place among the neighbouring tribes.

In the Bayeux tapestry the followers of William the Conqueror were called Franci, and they always have been recognised as coming from the North.

The very early finds prove that the Sax was not rare, for it occurs in different parts of the North and islands of the

Baltic. The different swords and spears used were so common and so well known to everybody, that we have no special description of them in the Sagas, except of their ornamentation; but in the Saga of Grettir there is a passage which shows that the Sax was single-edged.

Gretti went to a farm in Iceland to slay the Bondi Thorbjorn and his son Arnor. We read—

> "When Gretti saw that the young man was within reach he lifted his *sax* high into the air, and struck Arnor's head with *its back*, so that his head was broken and he died. Thereupon he killed the father with his *sax*."

Whatever may be the origin of local names employed by the Roman writers we must look to the North for the maritime tribes described by them; there we shall find the home of the earlier English people, to whose numerous warlike and ocean-loving instincts we owe the transformation which took place in Britain, and the glorious inheritance which they have left to their descendants, scattered over many parts of the world, in whom we recognise to this day many of the very same traits of character which their ancestors possessed.

CHAPTER III.
THE SETTLEMENT OF BRITAIN BY NORTHMEN.

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The Notitia—Probable origin of the name England—Jutland—The language of the North and of England—Early Northern kings in England—Danes and Sueones—Mythical accounts of the settlements of England.

Britain being an island could only be settled or conquered by seafaring tribes, just in the same way as to-day distant lands can only be conquered by nations possessing ships. From the Roman writers we have the only knowledge we possess in regard to the tribes inhabiting the country to which they gave the vague name of Germania. From the Roman records we find that these tribes were not civilised and that they were not a seafaring people.

Unfortunately the Roman accounts we have of their conquest and occupation of Britain, of its population and inhabitants, are very meagre and unsatisfactory, and do not help us much to ascertain how the settlement in Britain by the people of the North began. Our lack of information is most probably due to the simple reason that the settlement, like all settlements of a new country, was a very gradual one, a few men coming over in the first instance for the purpose of trade either with Britons or Romans, or coming from the over-populated North to settle in a country which the paucity of archæological remains shows to have been thinly occupied. The Romans made no objection to these

new settlers, who did not prove dangerous to their power on the island, but brought them commodities, such as furs, &c., from the North.

We find from the Roman records that the so-called Saxons had founded colonies or had settlements in Belgium and Gaul.

Another important fact we know from the records relating to Britain is that during the Roman occupation of the island the Saxons had settlements in the country; but how they came hither we are not told.

In the *Notitia Dignitatum utriusque imperii*, a sort of catalogue or "Army List," compiled towards the latter end of the fourth century, occurs the expression, "Comes litoris Saxonici per Britannias"—Count of the Saxon Shore in Britain. Within this litus Saxonicum the following places are mentioned:—Othona, said to be "close by Hastings"; Dubris, said to be Dover; Rutupiæ, Richborough; Branodunum, Brancaster; Regulbium, Reculvers; Lemannis, West Hythe; Garianno, Yarmouth; Anderida, Pevensey; Portus Adurni, Shoreham or Brighton.

This shows that the so-called Saxons were settled in Britain before the Notitia was drawn up, and at a date very much earlier than has been assigned by some modern historians.

The hypothesis that the expression "litus Saxonicum" is derived from the enemy to whose ravages it was exposed seems improbable. Is it not much more probable that the "litus Saxonicum per Britannias" must mean the shore of the country settled, not attacked, by Saxons? The mere fact of their attacking the shore would not have given rise to the name applied to it had they not settled there, for I maintain that there is no instance in the whole of Roman literature of a country being named after the people who attacked it. If,

on the other hand, the Saxons had landed and formed settlements on the British coasts, the origin of the name “Litus Saxonicum” is easily understood.

Some time after the Romans relinquished Britain we find that part of the island becomes known as England; and, to make the subject still more confusing, the people composing its chief population are called Saxons by the chroniclers and later historians, the name given to them by the Romans.

That the history of the people called Saxons was by no means certain is seen in the fact that Witikind, a monk of the tenth century, gives the following account of what was then considered to be their origin[17]:—

“On this there are various opinions, some thinking that the Saxons had their origin from the Danes and Northmen; others, as I heard some one maintain when a young man, that they are derived from the Greeks, because they themselves used to say the Saxons were the remnant of the Macedonian army, which, having followed Alexander the Great, were by his premature death dispersed all over the world.”

As to how Britain came to be called England the different legends given by the monkish writers are contradictory.

The *Skjöldunga Saga*, which is often mentioned in other Sagas, and which contains a record down to the early kings of Denmark, is unfortunately lost: it would, no doubt, have thrown great light on the lives of early chiefs who settled in Britain; but from some fragments which are given in this work, and which are supposed to belong to it, we see that several Danish and Swedish kings claimed to have possessions in England long before the supposed coming of the Danes.

Some writers assert that the new settlers gave to their new home in Britain the name of the country which they had left, called *Angeln*, and which they claim to be situated in the southern part of Jutland; but besides the Angeln in Jutland there is in the Cattegat an Engelholm, which is geographically far more important, situated in the land known as the Vikin of the Sagas, a great Viking and warlike land, from which the name Viking may have been derived, filled with graves and antiquities of the iron age. There are also other Engeln in the present Sweden.

In the whole literature of the North such a name as Engeln is unknown; it may have been, perhaps, a local name.

In the Sagas the term *England* was applied to a portion only of Britain, the inhabitants of which were called *Englar*, *Enskirmenn*. Britain itself is called *Bretland*, and the people *Bretar*.

“Öngulsey (Angelsey) is one third of Bretland (Wales)” (Magnus Barefoot’s Saga, c. 11).

Another part of the country was called *Nordimbraland*.

It is an important fact that throughout the Saga literature describing the expeditions of the Northmen to England not a single instance is mentioned of their coming in contact with a people called *Saxons*, which shows that such a name in Britain was unknown to the people of the North. Nor is any part of England called Saxland.

To make the confusion greater than it is, some modern historians make the so-called Saxons, who were supposed to have come over with the mythical Hengist and others, a distinct race from the Northmen, who afterwards continued to land in the country.

In the Sagas we constantly find that the people of England are not only included among the Northern lands,