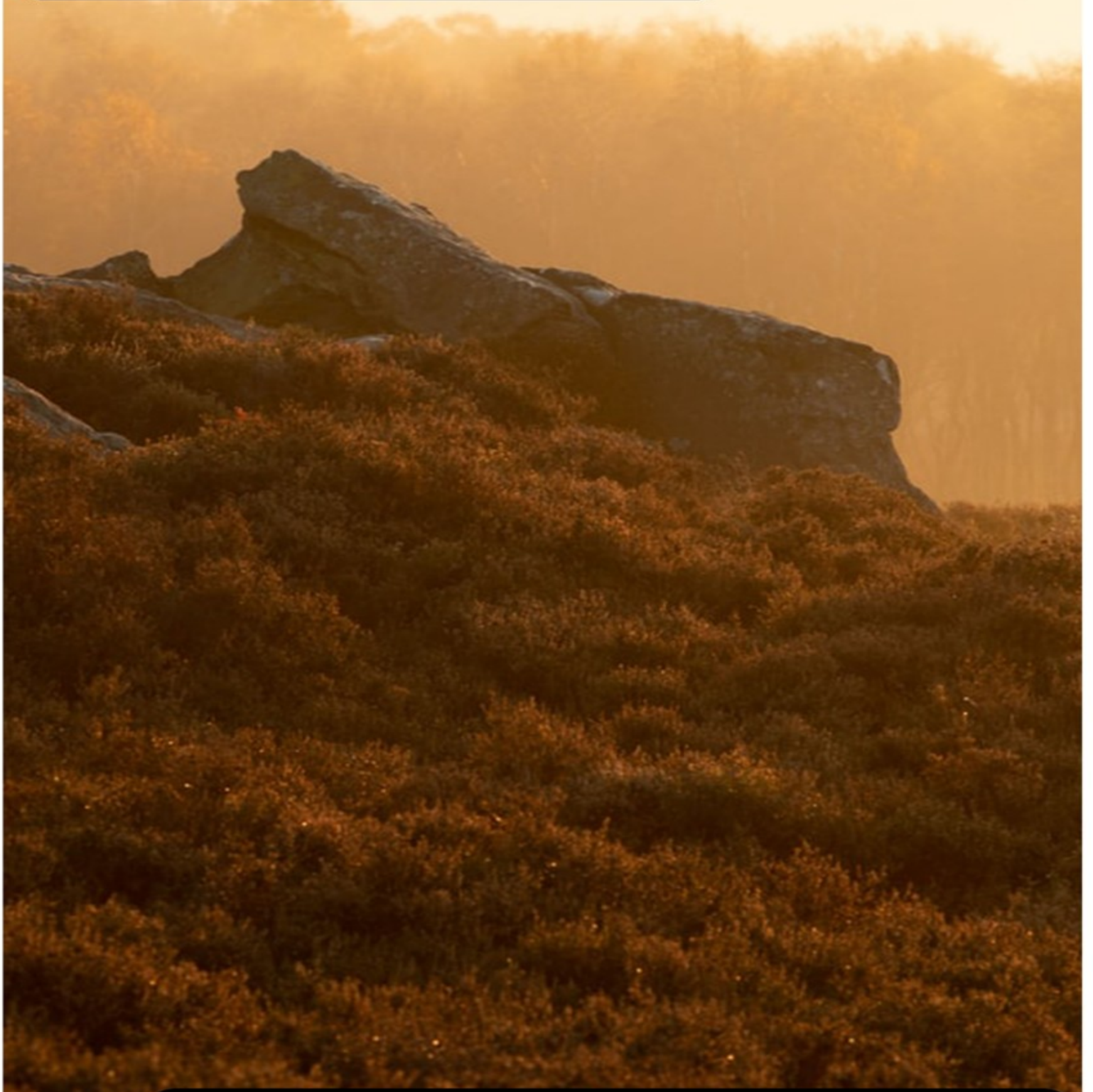
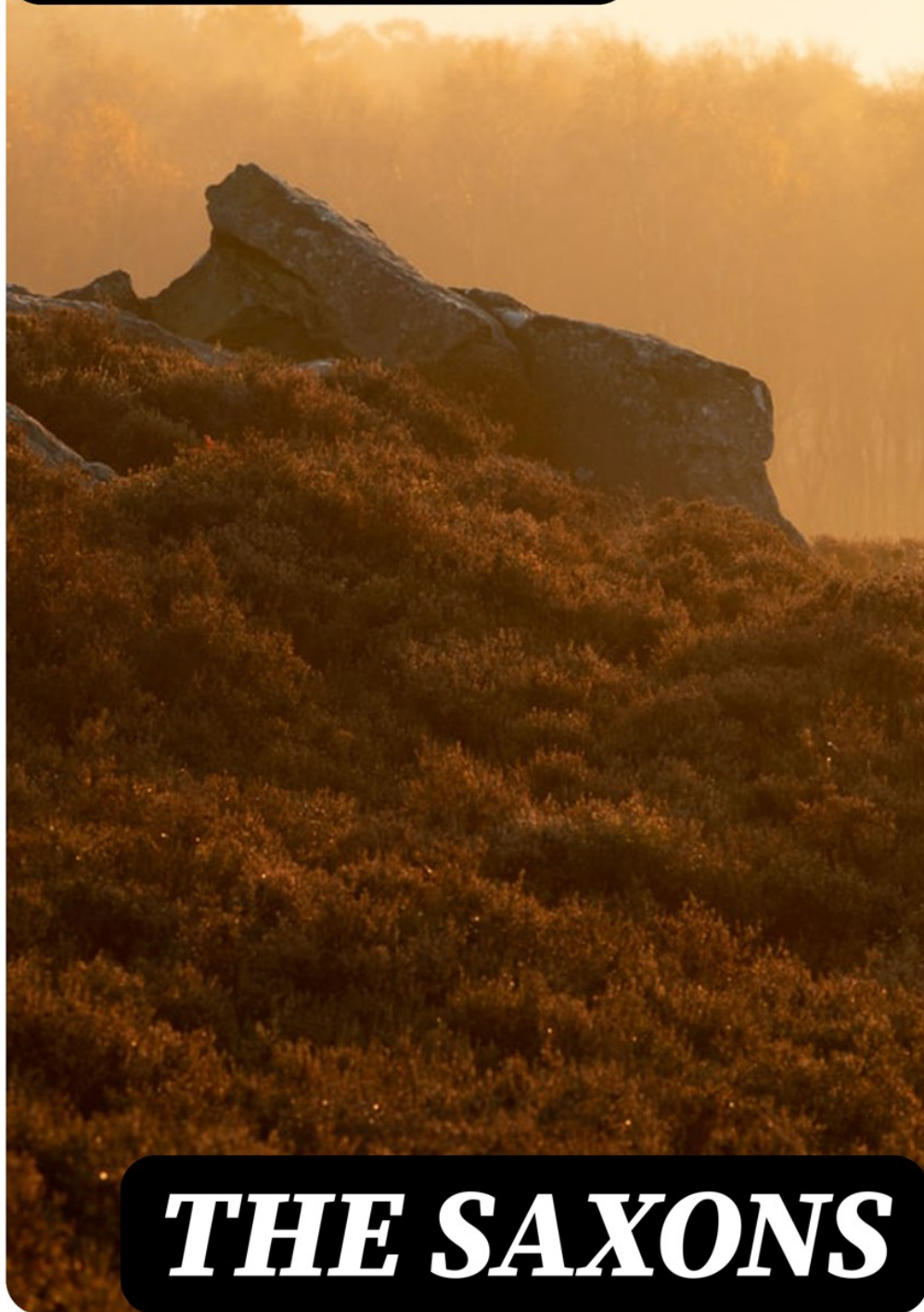


***EDWIN DAVIES
SCHOONMAKER***



THE SAXONS

***EDWIN DAVIES
SCHOONMAKER***



THE SAXONS

Edwin Davies Schoonmaker

The Saxons

A Drama of Christianity in the North

EAN 8596547042365

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE SAXONS A DRAMA OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE NORTH
PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ACT ONE.

ACT TWO.

ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR.

ACT FIVE.

THE SAXONS A DRAMA OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE NORTH

[Table of Contents](#)

BY EDWIN DAVIES SCHOONMAKER
THE HAMMERSMARK PUBLISHING
COMPANY, CHICAGO. ILL., 1905



JOHN F. HIGGINS PRINT 279-251 EAST MONROE ST

TO MY MOTHER

[PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.](#)

[ACT ONE.](#)

[ACT TWO.](#)

[ACT THREE.](#)

[ACT FOUR.](#)

[ACT FIVE.](#)

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

[Table of Contents](#)

THE SAXON UNIT.

- CANZLER, chief of the Saxons.
- FRITZ, a shepherd.
- RUDOLPH, }

- MAX, } foresters.
- CONRAD, }
- HARTZEL, an old man.
- WIGLAF, a gleeman.
- OSWALD, a shepherd, afterward a monk.
- SELMA, daughter of Canzler.

THE ROMAN UNIT.

- FATHER BENEDICT, the village priest.
- FATHER PAUL, a friar.
- JARDIN, the bailiff.
- JACQUES SAR, an old crusader.
- JULES BACQUEUR, the smith.
- HUGH CAPET, the barber.
- MADAM BACQUEUR, wife of Jules Bacqueur.
- MADAM VALMY, a country woman.
- RACHEL, aunt of Madam Valmy.
- ROSA, granddaughter of Rachel.
- A BOY.

THE GREEK UNIT.

- THE ABBOT OF ST. GILES.
- LOUIS, the prior of the abbey.
- PIERRE, the sacristan.
- ANDREW, an old acolyte.
- ELY, the porter.
- SIMON, }
- RENE, }
- BASIL, } monks.
- SOLOMAN, }

- LEO, }
- GUIDO, }
- MACIAS, a hunter attached to the abbey.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

- SIGURD, apparently a dwarf, really something else.
- HULGA, a witch.
- ZIP, }
- GIMEL, }
- KILO, } gnomes.
- SUK, }
- ZORY, }
- FAIRIES.

Other foresters, monks and villagers, men and women.

As for me,

Let a man be a man. Outside of that

There is no power on earth that dares ask more;

No power in heaven that will.

THE SAXONS

ACT ONE.

[Table of Contents](#)

SCENE ONE—A road through a forest. On either side trees stand thick and dark. Immediately in front the light sifts down upon a rude bridge spanning a narrow stream. At the roadside, to the right, a large crucifix, apparently new,

stands upon a post some ten feet in height. It is elaborately carved and is set in a deep frame to protect it from the weather. At the foot of the post, cut into the mossy bank which slopes toward the road, is a kneeling place with a white sheep's pelt lying upon it.

A sound of voices is heard. Fritz and Rudolph enter from the left and pause where a path leads off through the wood. The latter has an ax upon his shoulder. Far in the forest a faint sound of chopping is heard.

TIME—Mid-day in summer, in the early part of the thirteenth century.

RUDOLPH—He's worth six.

FRITZ— I'll give you five, you pick them.

RUDOLPH—I'll pick six.

FRITZ— I'll keep my ewes, then.

RUDOLPH— And walk
To the mountains?

FRITZ— We have not gone yet.

RUDOLPH— But—

FRITZ—And if I had my way we would not go.

RUDOLPH—Nor would we go had I mine, Fritz. But we
Have not our way. The dragon has his way.
As far as Niflheim the North is red.

FRITZ—Are we their sheep that we must follow them
Or be hung up on trees?

RUDOLPH— He follows us.

FRITZ—Who do these woods belong to, anyhow?

RUDOLPH—Where a man puts his foot the dragon puts
His belly, and the man's track disappears.
Where is the tree that has not felt the storm?
Have they not disappeared? Like leaves the tribes
Are scattered.

FRITZ— It has blown down trunk and all.

RUDOLPH—Forests and rivers and ten thousand graves
Lie under that red paw.

FRITZ— It stains the world.

RUDOLPH—The Weser rolls down bodies to the sea;
Their yellow hair is matted in the Rhine;
The deer that drinks the Aller in the night
Starts back from bloody faces in the stream.
They are our fathers, Fritz, who cannot sleep
While this coiled Hunger tracks us toward the north.

FRITZ—And we must feed it, eh? We must grub roots,
Fatten ourselves on acorns in the wood,
As swine do, and then waddle to the swamp
And stuff its belly so that it will sleep
And trouble us no more, we must do that?

RUDOLPH—No; we must leave, and starve it.

FRITZ— It don't starve.

More hunger means more flesh. Let's feed it steel.

RUDOLPH—Steel draws the blood and brings the hunger on.

FRITZ—Then draw the life. We don't feed it enough.

RUDOLPH—It eats the blade—

FRITZ— Then feed it hilt and all.

RUDOLPH—It eats our swords and they come out in claws.

As Canzler says, a thousand spears have but
Peeled off its poisonous scales, and where they fall
A deadly fire burns and the elves die.

FRITZ—We will call Wittikind.

RUDOLPH— From out the grave?

FRITZ—His spirit will hear.

RUDOLPH— Wittikind was baptized.

FRITZ—His head was baptized, but his heart was not.
A few drops here could not put out a fire
That scarred and seamed the dragon till it lashed,
Maddened and bleeding, all the tribes away.
A spark of him is in this forest.

RUDOLPH— Oswald.

FRITZ— Yes.

RUDOLPH— Silent and shy.

FRITZ— Their fate whom Woden loves.
He homes the lightning in the silent cloud.

RUDOLPH— Weak.

FRITZ— In himself, but strong by prophesy.

RUDOLPH— Can you or I or chief hasten the day
Wherein Val-father's voice shall wake the North?
What man can say unto the lightning, "Leap"?
Of Woden's race, a million summer leaves,
We are, as it were, the winter mistletoe,
A lone green sprig with barren woods all round.
Can we shake off the snow and say, "Appear,"
To the young race asleep within the trees?
Cry out above the dragon winter, "Die"?
You cannot hurry in its growth one leaf.
Yet you would thrust a sword in Oswald's hands,
Thinking to hurry Prophecy along.
If naked strength can save us, why not chief's?
Why Oswald, if the battle is to be now?
Without the aid of Woden, he is naught.

FRITZ— Without it, naught, and with it, everything.

RUDOLPH— Val-father calls to-day then?

FRITZ— Wiglaf's ears
Are where the whispers of the dead go by.

RUDOLPH—Heard he the word, "to-day"?

FRITZ— And Wiglaf's eyes
Blazed glee-fire and his lips spake Woden's word:
"In him shall be the strength of all your dead."

RUDOLPH—In Oswald?

FRITZ— In the seed of Wittikind.
"The seed of Wittikind shall put forth a sprout
Shall make the whole North green."

RUDOLPH— The "seed" of.

FRITZ— Yes.

RUDOLPH—There, Fritz, is where the whole great
purpose turns.

FRITZ—Eh?

RUDOLPH—Prophecy, you see, walks in the air.
No man can say on whom it will lay its hand.

FRITZ—Why?

RUDOLPH—Would not Oswald's seed be Wittikind's?
Do you not see that some child still unborn,
The issue of Oswald's loins, may be the one
To take the sword that Woden will hand down?

Meanwhile, suppose the Christians hear of this.
Their spies are all about us.

(Dropping his voice and pointing to the bridge.)

Who knows?

FRITZ—*(After looking under it.)* No.

RUDOLPH—Suppose they once get rumor of it. Then
Suppose they torture Wiglaf for the rest.
Will not a thousand trumpets sound the chase?
Will they not beat the forest through and through,
Set fire to it, and when the stag appears
Shall breed the fawn shall grow the golden horns—

*(As though drawing back a bow-string and letting spring
the arrow.)*

Then what? What then?

FRITZ— We—

RUDOLPH— We—?

FRITZ— We have our swords.

RUDOLPH—We have them now.

FRITZ— And we can keep them.

RUDOLPH— We

Can neither keep our swords nor keep ourselves.
Who is it plants the white cross in our land?

The Frank? The Wend? The Saxon; we ourselves.
No; in that fire that burns up from the south
Thousands of our swords have melted and become
Scales on the dragon's back and teeth and claws
That now tear out our hearts. To-day swords strike
For Woden, and to-morrow the strange god
With those same swords storms Valhal, and lays low
Its golden roof. Our ash Iggdrasil dies.
Its beautiful leaves fall far off on the sea.

FRITZ—Let's kill the worm that bites it, then.

RUDOLPH— That worm
Hath bit the Northman and the Northman bites
Val-father.

(A crash is heard in the forest.)

FRITZ— It was the tree fell.

RUDOLPH— So falls
Iggdrasil and the golden roof comes down.
When the North bites, Val-father dies. No, Fritz;
The South has thrown a snake upon the North,
And in its trail no fairy can be found.
They, too, have gone to the mountains.

FRITZ— Leave our homes?

RUDOLPH—For all of us it will be better there.
The slopes are thickly clothed with oak and pine.

There, too, your flock will find good grazing, Fritz.
Conrad and I saw ledges thick with grass.

FRITZ—It's thick here, too.

RUDOLPH— And torrents tumbling down
Fill to the brim the basins of the rocks.
There, in the dryest season—

FRITZ— Look down here. (*He points down in the stream.*)
And this mid-summer.

RUDOLPH— And game is plentiful.

FRITZ—It's plentiful here, too; deer and—

RUDOLPH— Chamois
And wild-goats browsing on the crags.

FRITZ— And here
Are wild-boars' lairs and—

RUDOLPH— The dragon's den.

FRITZ—His den is here, but he feeds everywhere.

RUDOLPH—Not on the mountains.

FRITZ— They are barren; but
He would feed there if we should go there.

RUDOLPH— No.

FRITZ—He ravages the whole wide—

RUDOLPH— (*Moving his hand horizontally.*)

This way, yes;

But that way?

(*Pointing up.*)

No. He dare not face the light
That father Woden pours upon the peaks.
Under Valhalla's eaves the dark elf died
When the dawn smote him; so the dragon there.
His paws would break off on the mountain sides.

FRITZ—We will stay here and cut them off.

RUDOLPH— Those paws?

Those huge, red, century-scarred paws? With what?

FRITZ—They want our woods and crofts, that's what
they want.

RUDOLPH—The Saxon sword is broken. The great shield
That covered all the North lies in the loam
Rusting, and the wild-flowers eat its stains.
Where are our fathers, Fritz? Heimdall, who sees
All races, sees not anywhere that race
That stood at bay when Swabian went down,
Frank and Bavarian and the great North fell.
A paw was put upon its breast and lo,
It is scattered, blood and bones and heart and brain!
Its hand is here; its heart is in the north;

Its head far off an island in the sea;
Its blood is everywhere, in grass, in leaves;
Its flesh still fronts the dragon in these trees.

FRITZ—And we, we men—

RUDOLPH— Our time has not yet come.

FRITZ—Must be the feet and run, eh?

RUDOLPH— We must wait
Until the heart calls from the silent north.

FRITZ—Wait?

RUDOLPH— You would have us—?

FRITZ— If we are the hand,
For the hand strikes.

RUDOLPH— Without the head? No, Fritz;
We must delay our battle with the beast.
A new shield we will shape us on the heights;
Temper it in the flashes of the sky
And boss it with the terror of the grave.
Of mountain metal on the mountain tops,
New armor we will forge. Let the old shield
Lie here upon the plain, covering the dead.
Let the leaves cover it. And for the sword
That broken lies between the dragon's paws,
Val-father will reach down and put the hilt
Of some great Fafnir's-bane in Canzler's hand,
Canzler, in turn, in Oswald's when he weds,

And Oswald and the girl will pass it on
Down to the hand of that child—

FRITZ— Canzler go?

RUDOLPH—Whom Woden shall bid seek the dragon's
den,
And Siegfried of the North shall slay the snake.

FRITZ—Canzler will not go. Canzler!

RUDOLPH— He will go.

FRITZ—Canzler will lay him in the grave first.

RUDOLPH— Fritz,
Who calls the fairies?

FRITZ— What of that?

RUDOLPH— Witchcraft.

FRITZ—You mean that they will burn her?

RUDOLPH— Do they not
Burn witches in the city...? We can die;
We on our swords can perish; but the girl...?

*(He goes off through the wood, leaving Fritz silent upon
the bridge.)*

FRITZ— *(To himself.)*
Canzler will lay his sword upon her throat.

(With bowed head he walks on across the bridge. As he passes into the deeper shadows the white sheep's pelt lying in the bank at the roadside catches his eye. He goes curiously toward it, when, seeing the post, he glances up and stops suddenly. For a time he stands as one appalled.)

Rudolph!

RUDOLPH—Ho!

FRITZ— Here!

(To himself.) This will break Canzler's heart.

(Rudolph reappears and joins Fritz, and the two stand in silence, Rudolph with his eyes fixed upon the crucifix, and Fritz with his eyes on Rudolph.)

FRITZ—What do you think?

RUDOLPH— It was put up last night.

FRITZ—You still think we should leave here?

RUDOLPH— Still think?

FRITZ— Yes.

RUDOLPH—Can there be any doubt of what this means?
Almost its eyeballs gleam between the trees.

FRITZ—And if we leave here, what?

RUDOLPH— We bear away
To some far mountain nest our eagle's egg.

We save our hope.

(Fritz points to the crucifix.)

Only proves what I say.

'Tis some poor burgher who refused to bow
And would not leave.

(Fritz goes toward the crucifix.)

And they have put it up

To mock us with the pains they will make us feel
If we don't bow.

FRITZ— *(Bending over the pelt.)*

Knee prints. He has knelt here;
Knelt here and prayed—

(Coming back to the road.)

to Woden, do you think?

You know the hand that carved that?

(Rudolph goes closer and scrutinizes the crucifix.)

Your great sword,

Where is it now, Rudolph? the Fafnir's-bane
Val-father should reach down to Canzler's hand;
To whose hand will the chief's hand pass it now?
Out of the dragon's belly will he come,
Our Siegfried, with the great heart of the beast?
Our hope, our eagle's egg, where is it now?

RUDOLPH—It can't be.

Fritz— Can't be?

Rudolph— Can't be.

Fritz— But it is.

At dusk last night I saw him in the wood
And he was wending this way carrying that.
And there are knee-prints on it.

(A pause.)

And that thing;
What other hand could have carved out that brow
And laid that sorrow there? Look at those knees.

RUDOLPH—This is why he has shunned us.

FRITZ— Say no word
To Canzler about this or to the girl.
Never will she be happy any more.
He will leave now.

RUDOLPH— *(Contemplating the knee-prints.)*
Under Val-father's trees!

FRITZ—Canzler has been a father to the boy.

(Rudolph comes toward the road, then turns and looks back at the Christ.)

So Balder looked lying on Valhal floor.
If the men hear this, they will vote to die.

RUDOLPH—He must go quietly and no word be said.

(They walk together along the road.)

FRITZ—The way he goes, the Saxon race has gone.

RUDOLPH—We must go to the mountains, not the grave.

FRITZ—Canzler has been a father to the boy.

RUDOLPH—He may return and bring the Saxon race.

FRITZ—Who will deliver him?

RUDOLPH— Val-father lives.

FRITZ—*(Bitterly.)* Lives with the dead.

(He goes out.)

RUDOLPH— He may yet be reclaimed.
The paths of Prophecy lead far away
But still the Powers of the air are bent
To guide it and their eyes are on its feet.
Let us not doubt Val-father's hand in this.
That eye in Mimer's fountain sees through all
The dark, gnome-haunted caverns of the earth;
The other under his calm brow watches heaven.

(He goes off through the forest.)

SCENE TWO—Under an old beech in the edge of the forest. A knoll, like the toe of a large boot shoved in from the rear, butts squarely against the trunk. Up under the boughs, left, lies a decaying log with here and there a tuft of

rank grass growing from the cores of old knots. Beside it is a small basket filled with berries. At the foot of the beech, bubbles a spring partly walled in with dark mossy rocks, on top of which lies a brown gourd dipper. Two worn foot-paths, one winding up the slope into the forest, the other entering from the left, meet at the spring. The ground is checkered with flakes of sunlight that fall through the leaves, and over all is the silence of the summer noon.

A crackle is heard as of a dry twig breaking under foot. The branches on the left swing apart and Selma pushes through backwards. She is a fairy-like creature dressed in green. Her hair falls loose about her shoulders and upon her head she wears a coronet of wild-flowers. Holding the boughs slightly apart, she stands peering intently to the left, then, turning quickly, she snatches up the basket and hides it behind the log, and after picking a few green burrs from the branches above her, darts to the right and conceals herself behind the trunk. For a time she stands motionless. Then, as if upon second thought, she stoops and removes the dipper from the rocks.

Along the foot-path, leading in from the left, Oswald enters. He stops and looks back and for a time stands thus, as one undecided, a forlorn expression upon his face. He then turns and proceeds to the spring. Not finding the dipper, he lays aside his staff and hat, and stretches himself out upon the flat stone at the entrance of the spring. While he is drinking, Selma leans cautiously from behind the trunk and raises her arm as if to drop something. Having evidently seen her shadow in the water, Oswald glances up, but seeing no one, lies down again and drinks. From behind the

hole Selma tosses a burr into the spring. Oswald continues to drink. Finally he rises, and, taking up his hat and staff, goes up the slope and sits down upon the log. The girl moves stealthily around the trunk.

OSWALD—Selma. (*After a pause.*)

Selma. I saw you in the spring.

SELMA—I'm there yet, then; you didn't take me out.

(She comes round the side of the trunk opposite the log and, stooping over, looks down into the spring.)

O you should see the fishes! two, three, four,
A troop of them! O Oswald, come and see!
They're round a splash of sunlight in the spring.
See how they twinkle and in the current stir
Their little crimson fins. Ah, I've scared them.
I really did; I scared them with my hair.
See how it fell.

(She points to a mass of hair that has fallen past her cheek.)

It would not hurt them, though.
We must be still; we must not say a word.
They never will play if they see us looking.

(Oswald points down into the spring.)

That little green thing? That's a beech-nut burr.
I threw it in to scare the water-sprite
That looked up at you when you stooped to drink.

You did not see her? Oh, I did. I peeped
Like this, softly, over, over the edge,
And saw her peeping from the mossy stones
Down in the spring. Her hair was loose like mine
And brown as buckeyes, and her lips were stained
With juice of berries. Then I raised my hand.
Thinks I: "I'll drop a beech-nut on his head."
Then she raised hers as if to say: "Be still!
I'll make the bubbles break against his nose."
Was that what made you jump? You scared her so.
I saw her hair fly up about her face
As I leaped back. She lives down in the spring.
This morning as I passed I stooped and said:
"I'm going after berries; won't you come?"
She beckoned to me, too, and seemed to say:
"I can't leave home; my little fish will stray.
You come down here; I have some pretty shells."
Oh, look! Be still! She's let them come again.
See them flash.

OSWALD— It's the green shell they're after.

SELMA—Why, there's no kernel in it. If there were
They could not eat it; it would break their gills,
They are so very thin.

OSWALD— We all do that;
We follow shells sometimes.

SELMA— O Oswald, look!
See how the little silver bubbles rise.

OSWALD—And we are like the fishes—

SELMA— Oh, do look!

You are not thinking of the fishes. See!

They follow it through the dimples round and round,
Paddling the current with their little fins,
And poising. They're afraid. They're drawing back.
There, by the green stone.

OSWALD— They are safer there
Than in the current.

SELMA— See, there's one that still
Nips at it in the eddies. See its scales.
You cannot carve like that. Look out! Oh, oh!

(She runs down to the outlet of the spring by which the minnow has passed out, and walks up and down, stooping occasionally to feel among the stones of the rill. Oswald goes back and sits down upon the log. After a while Selma rises and looks toward the spring. The trunk is between her and Oswald.)

'Twill grieve her so.

(In a low chant, abstractedly.)

She's sleeping in the spring
Under the dark rock where the white sand pours.
The moss is softer in the forest there,
And there the wood-doves coo.
He's going away; they told me yesterday.

The forest heard them moan: He will not come.
The chestnut burr shall break;
The wild bird, feeding, shake
Unpicked the purple hartcrops to the ground,
And the hushed forest only hear the sound
Of antlers knocking where the wild deer rubs.
He's going away—away—away.

(Staring vacantly into the forest, her back to Oswald, she unconsciously picks the green burrs from the branches above her.)

OSWALD—Selma. *(After a pause.)*
Come here; will you?

SELMA— I'm gathering mast.
My fawns, they like it so. It makes them sleek.

OSWALD—I want to tell you something.

SELMA— Tell me here.
If I had listened to the forest birds,
I'd have no berries. And my fawns must eat.

OSWALD—'Tis something serious.

SELMA— Ah, you've been to town.

(As she saunters toward the log she reaches up in the air.)

Gossamers, where do they come from, Oswald?
You never are gay when you've heard the bells.
We are going to the mountains, *may* be. Then
You will not hear them. Are there berries there?
Rudolph said he saw flowers in the ice.
Think of that. Blue-bells.—You are like my crow.

(She takes a berry from her basket and holds it up between her fingers.)

If you will talk, you may.—I must go home.

(She pulls down a bough and begins to pick the leaves off, one by one.)

OSWALD—I want you to go with me to the bridge.

SELMA—I can't. I must go home. Father will think I have been captured by the villagers.

(She removes her basket from the sun and lays the leaves upon her berries.)

He said: "You will not find them." But I did.

OSWALD—Sit down.

SELMA— I can't.—It makes my berries red.
Father will say: "You see? They are not ripe."

(She goes about under the boughs selecting the largest of the leaves.)

It makes them black, then makes them red again.

(After a pause.)

I heard bells ring last night. I dreamed I did.
I called and they called and you would not come.
I thought you could not hear me where you were.

OSWALD—In a great forest once two children lived.
They used to wander about the wood. One day,

Playing among the trees, suddenly they heard
Small voices calling: "Ho, children!" At that—

SELMA—Fairies. (*She comes to the log.*)

OSWALD— The children rose wide-eyed and let
Fall the wild-flowers they had gathered and stood
Listening. Again the cry: "Ho, children!"

(*Selma sits down.*)

Then
They, hand in hand, slowly, and half afraid,
Moved forward, and the voices, as they moved,
Moved onward, sometimes above them in the air
Singing, and sometimes in the fernshaws: "Ho,
Here we are!" And then a wisp of sun-bright hair
Flashed in the deeper shadows of the wood.
The children, shouting, "Catch her! There she goes!"
Darted in glee from trunk to trunk. At last
The voices died away. The children saw
The great trees glooming round them—

SELMA— Oh, I know!
They cried themselves to sleep, for they were lost,
And then the birds brought leaves and—Didn't they?
No.

OSWALD—As night came on, the elder of them, a boy,
Remembering to have heard a holy man
Speak of a house—a holy house—where men
Live as the angels live—