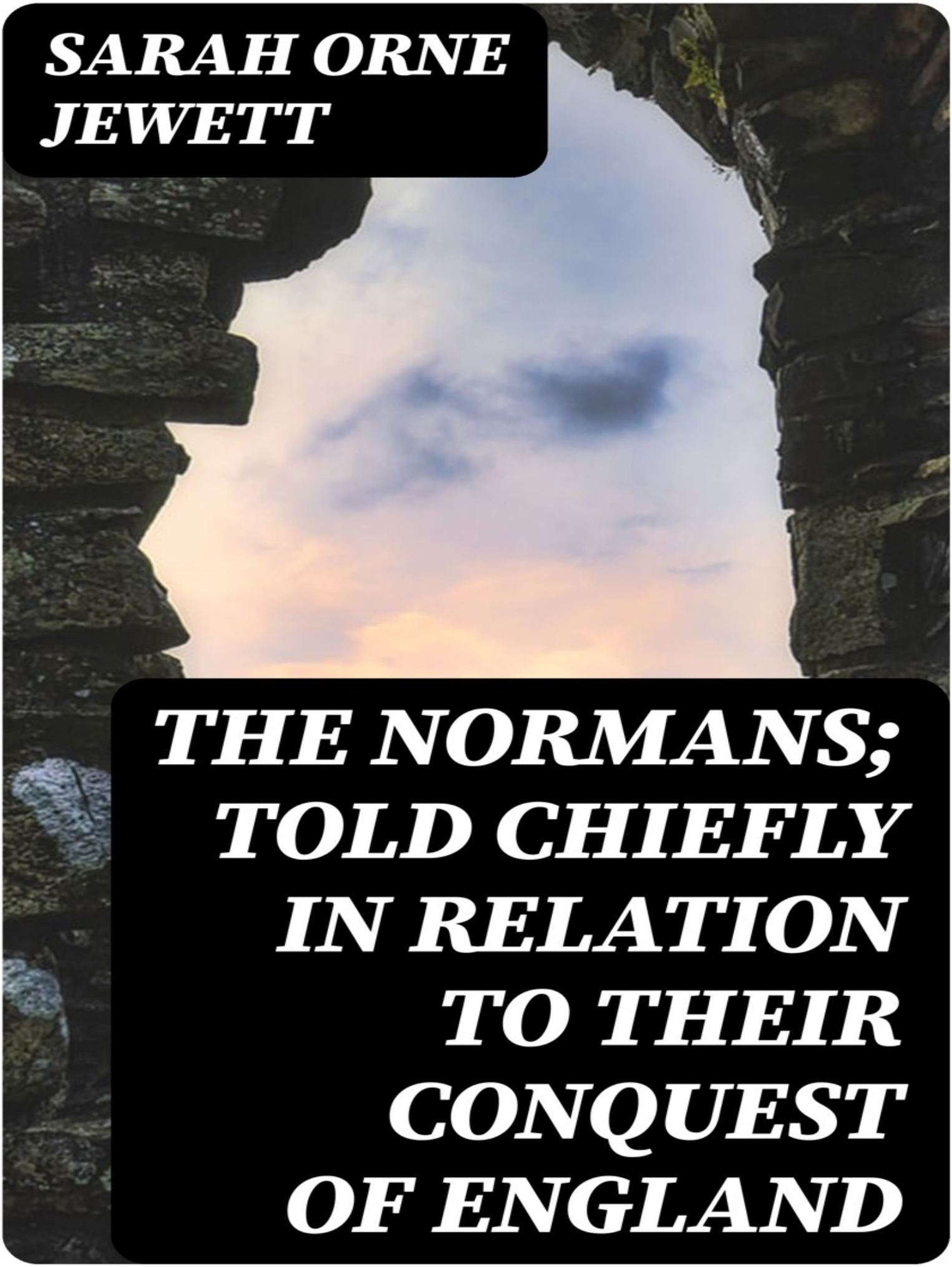

SARAH ORNE JEWETT

THE NORMANS; TOLD CHIEFLY IN RELATION TO THEIR CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

Sarah Orne Jewett

The Normans; told chiefly in relation to their conquest of England

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Table of Contents

Descendants of ROLF (DUKES OF THE NORMANS)

Table of Contents

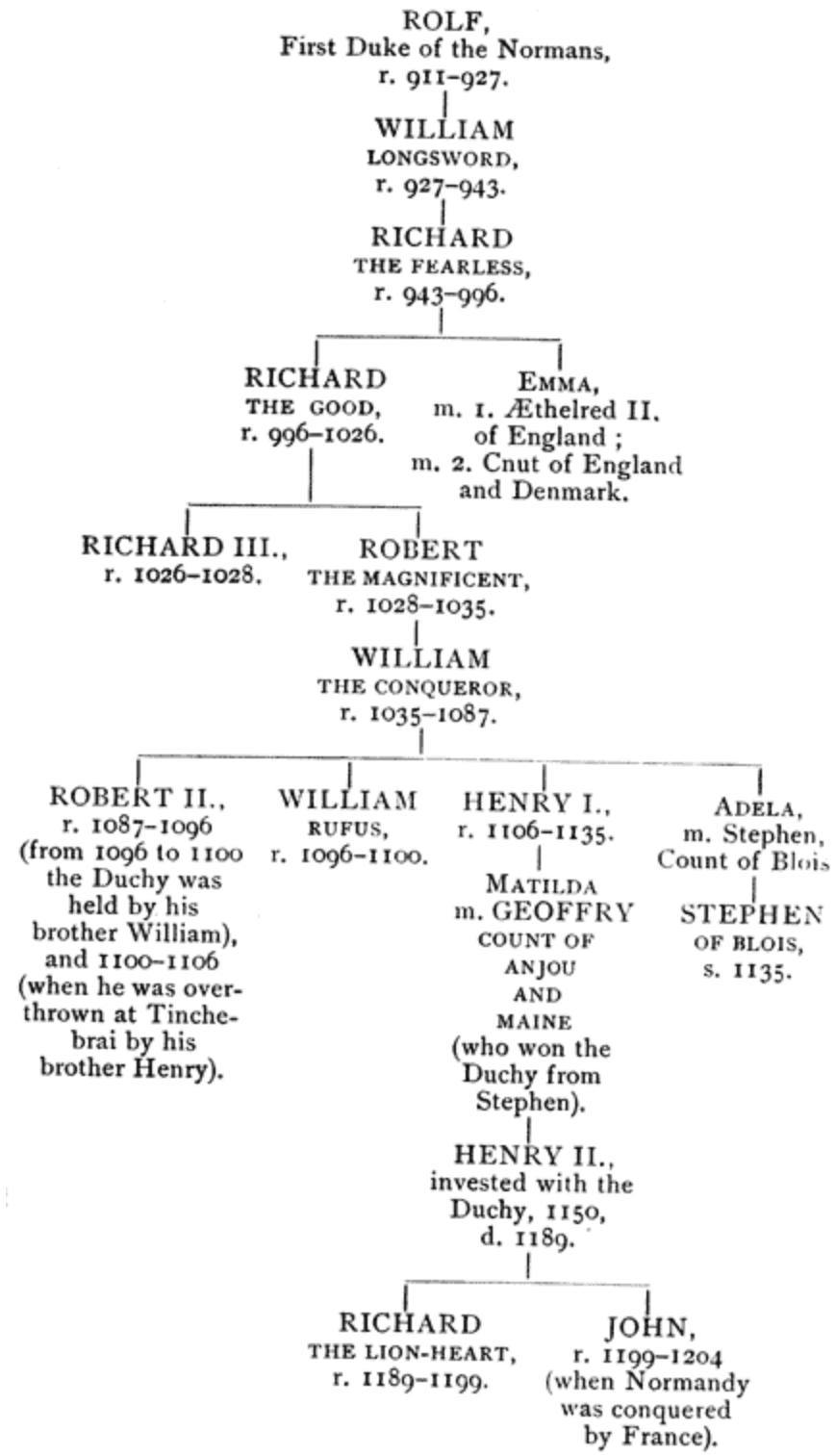
Parent	Child
ROLF, First Duke of the Normans, r. 911-927.	WILLIAM LONGSWORD, r. 927-943.
WILLIAM LONGSWORD, r. 927-943.	RICHARD THE FEARLESS, r. 943-996.
RICHARD THE FEARLESS, r. 943-996.	RICHARD THE GOOD, r. 996-1026.
	Emma, m. 1. Æthelred II. of England; m. 2. Cnut of England and Denmark.
RICHARD THE GOOD, r. 996-1026.	RICHARD III, r. 1026-1028.
	ROBERT THE MAGNIFICENT, r. 1028-1035.

ROBERT THE MAGNIFICENT, r. 1028-1035.	WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR r. 1035-1087.
	ROBERT II., r. 1087-1096 (from 1096 to 1100 the Duchy was held by his brother William), and 1100-1106 (when he was overthrown at Tinchebrai by his brother Henry).
WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR, r. 1035-1087.	WILLIAM RUFUS, r. 1096-1100.
	HENRY I., r. 1106-1135.
	ADELA, m. Stephen, Count of Blois.
ADELA, m. Stephen, Count of Blois.	STEPHEN OF BLOIS, s. 1135.
HENRY I., r. 1106-1135.	MATILDA, m. GEOFFRY COUNT OF ANJOU AND MAINE (who won the Duchy from Stephen).
MATILDA, m. GEOFFRY COUNT OF ANJOU AND MAINE (who won the Duchy from Stephen).	HENRY II., invested with the Duchy, 1150, d. 1189.

HENRY II., invested with the Duchy, 1150, d. 1189.	RICHARD THE LION-HEART, r. 1189-1199. JOHN, r. 1199-1204 (when Normandy was conquered by France).

Go to Illus. List

DUKES OF THE NORMANS.



DUKES OF THE NORMANS.

[Pg001]

I.
THE MEN OF THE DRAGON SHIPS.

Table of Contents

"Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire and behold our home."—BYRON.

TOC, INDX The gulf stream flows so near to the southern coast of Norway, and to the Orkneys and Western Islands, that their climate is much less severe than might be supposed. Yet no one can help wondering why they were formerly so much more populous than now, and why the people who came westward even so long ago as the great Aryan migration, did not persist in turning aside to the more fertile countries that lay farther southward. In spite of all their disadvantages, the Scandinavian peninsula, and the sterile islands of the northern seas, were inhabited by men and women whose enterprise and intelligence ranked them above their neighbors.

Now, with the modern ease of travel and transportation, these poorer countries can be supplied from other parts of the world. And though the [Pg002] summers of Norway are misty and dark and short, and it is difficult to raise even a

little hay on the bits of meadow among the rocky mountain slopes, commerce can make up for all deficiencies. In early times there was no commerce except that carried on by the pirates—if we may dignify their undertakings by such a respectable name,—and it was hardly possible to make a living from the soil alone. The sand dunes of Denmark and the cliffs of Norway alike gave little encouragement to tillers of the ground, yet, in defiance of all our ideas of successful colonization, when the people of these countries left them, it was at first only to form new settlements in such places as Iceland, or the Faroë or Orkney islands and stormiest Hebrides. But it does not take us long to discover that the ancient Northmen were not farmers, but hunters and fishermen. It had grown more and more difficult to find food along the rivers and broad grassy wastes of inland Europe, and pushing westward they had at last reached the place where they could live beside waters that swarmed with fish and among hills that sheltered plenty of game.

Besides this they had been obliged not only to make the long journey by slow degrees, but to fight their way and to dispossess the people who were already established. There is very little known of these earlier dwellers in the east and north of Europe, except that they were short of stature and dark-skinned, that they were cave dwellers, and, in successive stages of development, used stone and bronze and iron tools and weapons. Many relics of [Pg003] their home-life and of their warfare have been discovered and preserved in museums, and there are evidences of the descent of a small proportion of modern Europeans from that remote ancestry. The Basques of the north of Spain

speak a different language and wear a different look from any of the surrounding people, and even in Great Britain there are some survivors of an older race of humanity, which the fairer-haired Celts of Southern Europe and Teutons of Northern Europe have never been able in the great natural war of races to wholly exterminate and supplant. Many changes and minglings of the inhabitants of these countries, long establishment of certain tribes, and favorable or unfavorable conditions of existence have made the nations of Europe differ widely from each other at the present day, but they are believed to have come from a common stock, and certain words of the Sanscrit language can be found repeated not only in Persian and Indian speech to-day, but in English and Greek and Latin and German, and many dialects that have been formed from these.

The tribes that settled in the North grew in time to have many peculiarities of their own, and as their countries grew more and more populous, they needed more things that could not easily be had, and a fashion of plundering their neighbors began to prevail. Men were still more or less beasts of prey. Invaders must be kept out, and at last much of the industry of Scandinavia was connected with the carrying on of an almost universal fighting and marauding. Ships must be built, and there must be endless [Pg004] supplies of armor and weapons. Stones were easily collected for missiles or made fit for arrows and spear-heads, and metals were worked with great care. In Norway and Sweden were the best places to find all these, and if the Northmen planned to fight a great battle, they had to transport a huge quantity of stones, iron, and bronze. It is

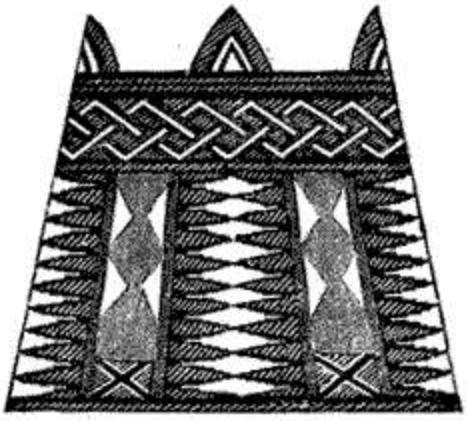
easy to see why one day's battle was almost always decisive in ancient times, for supplies could not be quickly forwarded from point to point, and after the arrows were all shot and the conquered were chased off the field, they had no further means of offence except a hand-to-hand fight with those who had won the right to pick up the fallen spears at their leisure. So, too, an unexpected invasion was likely to prove successful; it was a work of time to get ready for a battle, and when the Northmen swooped down upon some shore town of Britain or Gaul, the unlucky citizens were at their mercy. And while the Northmen had fish and game and were mighty hunters, and their rocks and mines helped forward their warlike enterprises, so the forests supplied them with ship timber, and they gained renown as sailors wherever their fame extended.

There was a great difference, however, between the manner of life in Norway and that of England or France. The Norwegian stone, however useful for arrow-heads or axes, was not fit for building purposes. There is hardly any clay there, either, to make bricks with, so that wood has usually been the only material for houses. In the Southern countries there had always been rude castles in which [Pg006] the people could shelter themselves, but the Northmen could build no castles that a torch could not destroy. They trusted much more to their ships than to their houses, and some of their great captains disdained to live on shore at all.

Go to Illus. List

IRON POINT OF A SPEAR WITH INLAID WORK OF SILVER, FOUND AT NESNE, IN NORDLAND.

IRON CHISEL FOUND IN AAMOT PARISH, OESTERDALEN.



Top Right: IRON CHISEL FOUND IN AAMOT PARISH, OESTERDALEN.

Left and bottom: IRON POINT OF A SPEAR WITH INLAID WORK OF SILVER, FOUND AT NESNE, IN NORDLAND.

There is something refreshing in the stories of old Norse life; of its simplicity and freedom and childish zest. An old writer says that they had "a hankering after pomp and pageantry," and by means of this they came at last to doing things decently and in order, and to setting the fashions for the rest of Europe. There was considerable dignity in the manner of every-day life and housekeeping. Their houses were often very large, even two hundred feet long, with the flaring fires on a pavement in the middle of the floor, and the beds built next the walls on three sides, sometimes hidden by wide tapestries or foreign cloth that had been brought home in the viking ships. In front of the beds were benches where each man had his seat and footstool, with his armor and weapons hung high on the wall above. The master of the house had a high seat on the north side in the middle of a long bench; opposite was another bench for guests and strangers, while the women sat on the third side. The roof was high, there were a few windows in it, and those were covered by thin skins and let in but little light. The smoke escaped through openings in the carved, soot-blackened roof, and though in later times the rich men's houses were more like villages, because they made groups of smaller buildings for store-houses, for guest-rooms, or for workshops all around, [Pg007] still, the idea of this primitive great hall or living-room has not even yet been lost. The later copies of it in England and France that still remain are most interesting; but what a fine sight it must have been at night when the great fires blazed and the warriors sat on their benches in solemn order, and the skalds recited their

long sagas, of the host's own bravery or the valiant deeds of his ancestors! Hospitality was almost made chief among the virtues. There was a Norwegian woman named Geirrid who went from Heligoland to Iceland and settled there. She built her house directly across the public road, and used to sit in the doorway on a little bench and invite all travellers to come in and refresh themselves from a table that always stood ready, spread with food. She was not the only one, either, who gave herself up to such an exaggerated idea of the duties of a housekeeper.

When a distinguished company of guests was present, the pleasures of the evening were made more important. Listening to the sagas was the best entertainment that could be offered. "These productions were of very ancient origin and entirely foreign to those countries where the Latin language prevailed. They had little or nothing to do with either chronology or general history; but were limited to the traditions of some heroic families, relating their deeds and adventures in a style that was always simple and sometimes poetic. These compositions, in verse or prose, were the fruit of a wild Northern genius. They were evolved without models, and disappeared at last without imitations; and [Pg008] it is most remarkable that in the island of Iceland, of which the name alone is sufficient hint of its frightful climate, and where the very name of poet has almost become a wonder,—in this very island the skalds (poets) have produced innumerable sagas and other compositions during a space of time which covers the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries."[1]

[1] Depping: "Maritimes Voyages des Normands."

The court poets or those attached to great families were most important persons, and were treated with great respect and honor. No doubt, they often fell into the dangers of either flattery or scandal, but they were noted for their simple truthfulness. We cannot help feeling such an atmosphere in those sagas that still exist, but the world has always been very indulgent towards poetry that captivates the imagination. Doubtless, nobody expected that a skald should always limit himself to the part of a literal narrator. They were the makers and keepers of legends and literature in their own peculiar form of history, and as to worldly position, ranked much higher than the later minstrels and troubadours or trouvères who wandered about France.

When we remember the scarcity and value of parchment even in the Christianized countries of the South, it is a great wonder that so many sagas were written down and preserved; while there must have been a vast number of others that existed only in tradition and in the memories of those who learned them in each generation.

If we try to get the story of the Northmen from [Pg009] the French or British chronicler, it is one long, dreary complaint of their barbarous customs and their heathen religion. In England the monks, shut up in their monasteries, could find nothing bad enough to say about the marauders who ravaged the shores of the country and did so much mischief. If we believe them, we shall mistake the Norwegians and their companions for wild beasts and heathen savages. We must read what was written in their own language, and then we shall have more respect for the vikings and sea-kings, always distinguishing between these

two; for, while any peasant who wished could be a viking—a sea-robber—a sea-king was a king indeed, and must be connected with the royal race of the country. He received the title of king by right as soon as he took command of a ship's crew, though he need not have any land or kingdom. Vikings were merely pirates; they might be peasants and vikings by turn, and won their name from the inlets, the viks or wicks, where they harbored their ships. A sea-king must be a viking, but naturally very few of the vikings were sea-kings.

When we turn from the monks' records, written in Latin, to the accounts given of themselves by the Northmen, in their own languages, we are surprised enough to find how these ferocious pagans, these merciless men, who burnt the Southern churches and villages, and plundered and killed those of the inhabitants whom they did not drag away into slavery,—how these Northmen really surpassed their enemies in literature, as much as in military achievements. Their laws and government, their history [Pg010] and poetry and social customs, were better than those of the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks.

If we stop to think about this, we see that it would be impossible for a few hundred men to land from their great row-boats and subdue wide tracts of country unless they were superior in mental power, and gifted with astonishing quickness and bravery. The great leaders of armies are not those who can lift the heaviest weights or strike the hardest blow, but those who have the mind to plan and to organize and discipline and, above all, to persevere and be ready to take a dangerous risk. The countries to the southward were

tamed and spiritless, and bound down by church influence and superstition until they had lost the energy and even the intellectual power of their ancestors five centuries back. The Roman Empire had helped to change the Englishmen and many of the Frenchmen of that time into a population of slaves and laborers, with no property in the soil, nothing to fight for but their own lives.

The viking had rights in his own country, and knew what it was to enjoy those rights; if he could win more land, he would know how to govern it, and he knew what he was fighting for and meant to win. If we wonder why all this energy was spent on the high seas, and in strange countries, there are two answers: first, that fighting was the natural employment of the men, and that no right could be held that could not be defended; but beside this, one form of their energy was showing itself at home in rude attempts at literature. It is surprising enough to find that both the quality and the quantity [Pg011] of the old sagas far surpass all that can be found of either Latin or English writing of that time in England. These sagas are all in the familiar tongue, so that everybody could understand them, and be amused or taught by them. They were not meant only for the monks and the people who lived in cloisters. The legends of their ancestors' beauty or bravery belonged to every man alike, and that made the Norwegians one nation of men, working and sympathizing with each other—not a mere herd of individuals.

The more that we know of the Northmen, the more we are convinced how superior they were in their knowledge of the useful arts to the people whom they conquered. There is

a legend that when Charlemagne, in the ninth century, saw some pirate ships cruising in the Mediterranean, along the shores of which they had at last found their way, he covered his face and burst into tears. He was not so much afraid of their cruelty and barbarism as of their civilization. Nobody knew better that none of the Christian countries under his rule had ships or men that could make such a daring voyage. He knew that they were skilful workers in wood and iron, and had learned to be rope-makers and weavers; that they could make casks for their supply of drinking-water, and understood how to prepare food for their long cruises. All their swords and spears and bow-strings had to be made and kept in good condition, and sheltered from the sea-spray.

It is interesting to remember that the Northmen's [Pg012] fleets were not like a royal navy, though the king could claim the use of all the war-ships when he needed them for the country's service. They were fitted out by anybody who chose, private adventurers and peasants, all along the rocky shores. They were not very grand affairs for the most part, but they were all seaworthy, and must have had a good deal of room for stowing all the things that were to be carried, beside the vikings themselves. Sometimes there were transport vessels to take the arms and the food and bring back the plunder. Perhaps most of the peasants' boats were only thirty or forty feet long, but when we remember how many hundreds used to put to sea after the small crops were planted every summer, we cannot help knowing that there were a great many men who knew how to build strong ships in Norway, and how to fit them out

sufficiently well, and man them and fight in them afterward. You never hear of any fleets being fitted out in the French and English harbors equalling these in numbers or efficiency.

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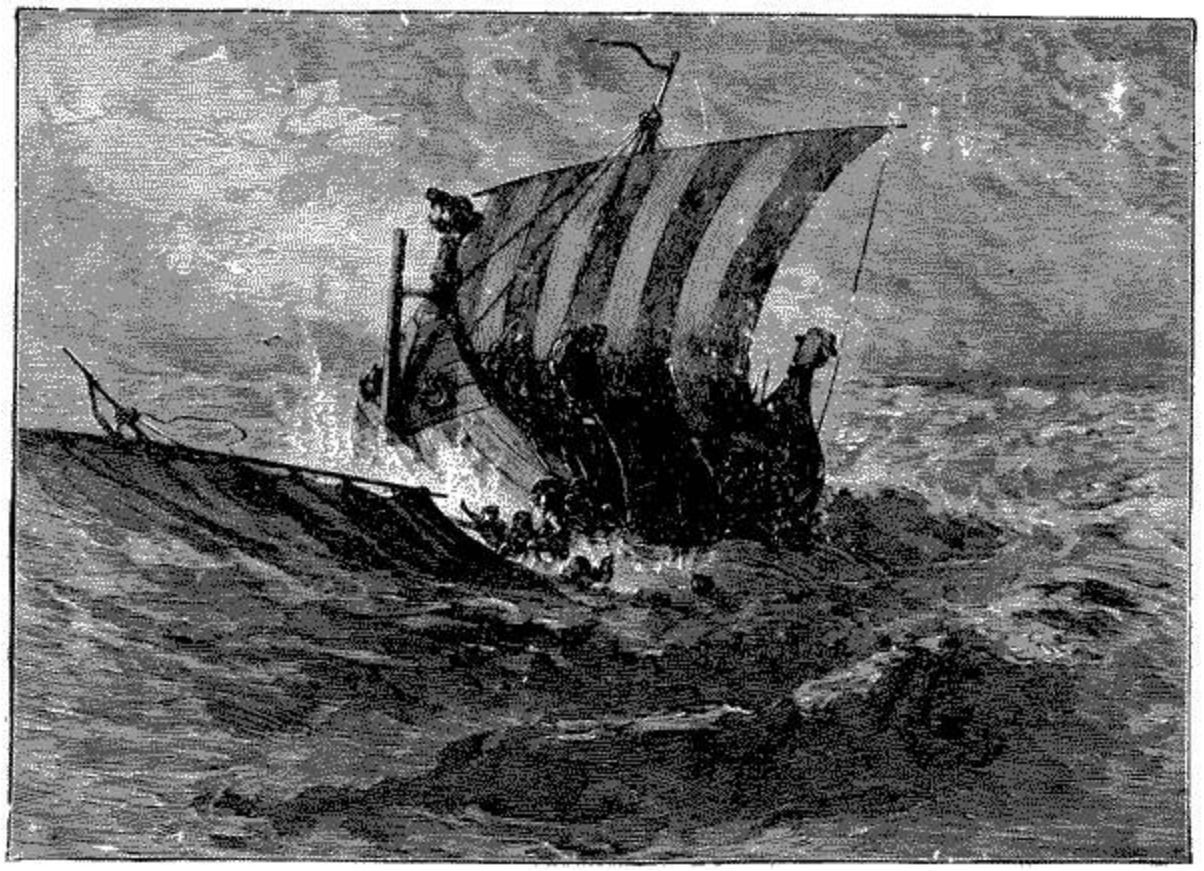

VIKING SHIP.

When we picture the famous sea-kings' ships to ourselves, we do not wonder that the Northmen were so proud of them, or that the skalds were never tired of recounting their glories. There were two kinds of vessels: the last-ships, that carried cargoes; and the long-ships, or ships-of-war. Listen to the splendors of the "Long Serpent," which was the largest ship ever built in Norway. A dragon-ship, to begin with, because all the long ships had a dragon for a figure-head, except the smallest of them, which were

called cutters, and only carried [Pg014] ten or twenty rowers on a side. The "Long Serpent" had thirty-four rowers' benches on a side, and she was a hundred and eleven feet long. Over the sides were hung the shining red and white shields of the vikings, the gilded dragon's head towered high at the prow, and at the stern a gilded tail went curling off over the head of the steersman. Then, from the long body, the heavy oars swept forward and back through the water, the double thirty-four of them, and as it came down the fiord, the "Long Serpent" must have looked like some enormous centipede creeping out of its den on an awful errand, and heading out across the rough water toward its prey.

The crew used to sleep on the deck, and ship-tents were necessary for shelter. There was no deep hold or comfortable cabin, for the ships were built so that they could be easily hauled up on a sloping beach. They had sails, and these were often made of gay colors, or striped with red and blue and white cloths, and a great many years later than this we hear of a crusader waiting long for a fair wind at the Straits of the Dardanelles, so that he could set all his fine sails, and look splendid as he went by the foreign shores.

To-day in Bergen harbor, in Norway, you are likely to see at least one or two Norland ships that belong to the great fleet that bring down furs and dried fish every year from Hammerfest and Trondhjem and the North Cape. They do not carry the red and white shields, or rows of long oars, but they are built with high prow and stern, and spread a great [Pg015] square brown sail. You are tempted to think that a

belated company of vikings has just come into port after a long cruise. These descendants of the long-ships and the last-ships look little like peaceful merchantmen, as they go floating solemnly along the calm waters of the Bergen-fiord.

The voyages were often disastrous in spite of much clever seamanship. They knew nothing of the mariner's compass, and found their way chiefly by the aid of the stars —inconstant pilots enough on such foggy, stormy seas. They carried birds too, oftenest ravens, and used to let them loose and follow them toward the nearest land. The black raven was the vikings' favorite symbol for their flags, and familiar enough it became in other harbors than their own. They were bold, hardy fellows, and held fast to a rude code of honor and rank of knighthood. To join the most renowned company of vikings in Harold Haarfager's time, it was necessary that the champion should lift a great stone that lay before the king's door, as first proof that he was worth initiating. We are gravely told that this stone could not be moved by the strength of twelve ordinary men.

They were obliged to take oath that they would not capture women and children, or seek refuge during a tempest, or stop to dress their wounds before a battle was over. Sometimes they were possessed by a strange madness, caused either by a frenzy of rivalry and the wild excitement of their rude sports or by intoxicating liquors or drugs, when they foamed at the mouth and danced wildly about, swallowing burning coals, uprooting the very rocks and trees, destroying [Pg016] their own property, and striking indiscriminately at friends and foes. This berserker rage seems to have been much applauded, and gained the

possessed viking a noble distinction in the eyes of his companions. If a sea-king heard of a fair damsel anywhere along the neighboring coast, he simply took ship in that direction, fought for her, and carried her away in triumph with as many of her goods as he was lucky enough to seize beside. Their very gods were gods of war and destruction, though beside Thor, the thunderer, they worshipped Balder, the fair-faced, the god of gentle speech and purity, with Freyr, who rules over sunshine and growing things. Their hell was a place of cold and darkness, and their heaven was to be a place where fighting went on from sunrise until the time came to ride back to Valhalla and feast together in the great hall. Those who died of old age or sickness, instead of in battle, must go to hell. Odin, who was chief of all the gods, made man, and gave him a soul which should never perish, and Frigga, his wife, knew the fate of all men, but never told her secrets.

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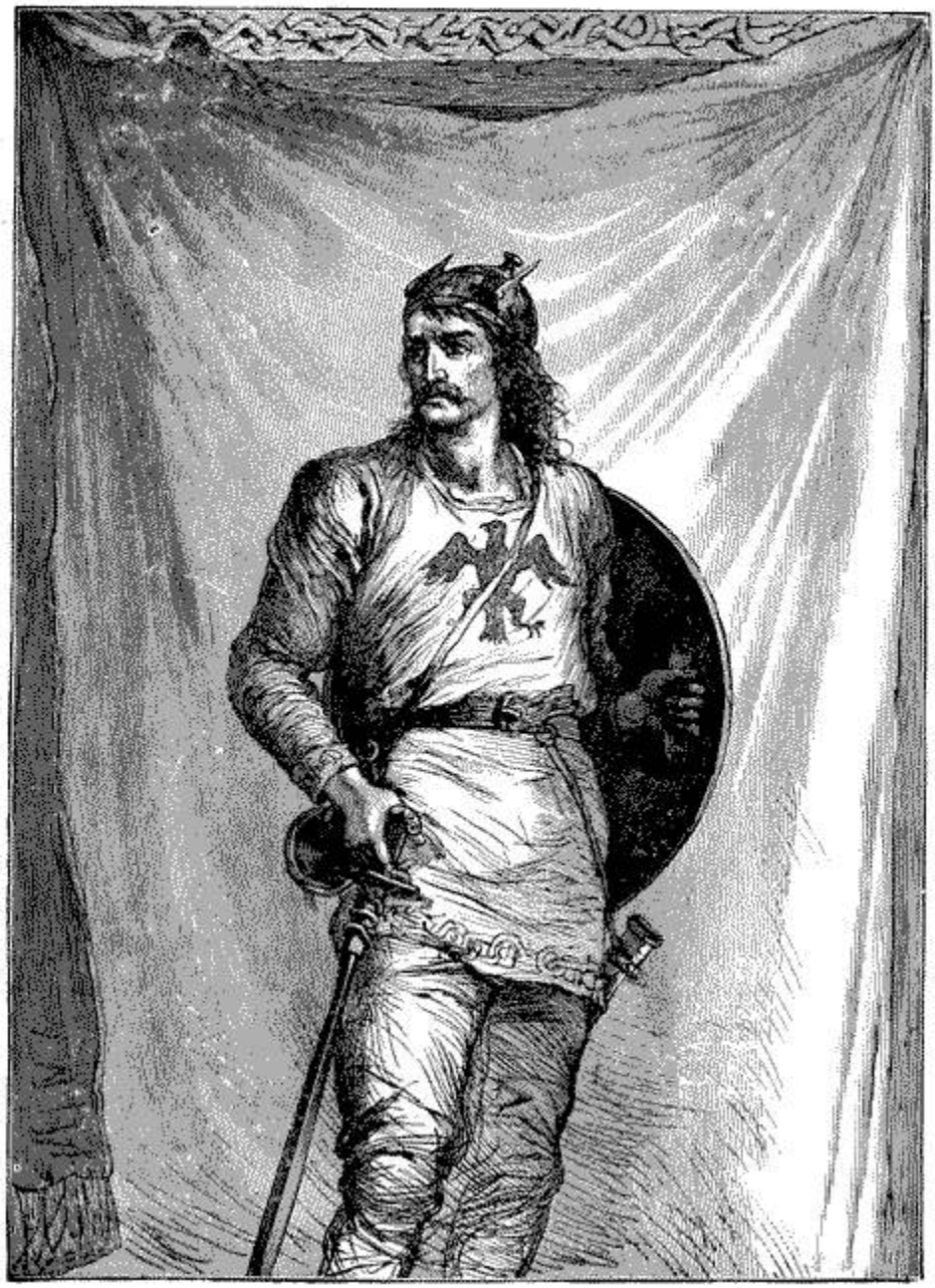

VIKING.

The Northmen spread themselves at length over a great extent of country. We can only wonder why, after their energy and valor led them to found a thriving colony in Iceland and in Russia, to even venture among the icebergs and perilous dismal coasts of Greenland, and from thence downward to the pleasanter shores of New England, why

they did not seize these possessions and keep the credit of discovering and settling America. What a change that would have made in the world's history! Historians [Pg018] have been much perplexed at the fact of Leif Ericson's lack of interest in the fertile Vinland, New England now, which he visited in 986 and praised eloquently when he left it to its fate. Vinland waited hundreds of years after that for the hardy Icelander's kindred to come from old England to build their houses and spend the rest of their lives upon its good corn-land and among the shadows of its great pine-trees. There was room enough for all Greenland, and to spare, but we cannot help suspecting that the Northmen were not very good farmers, that they loved fighting too well, and would rather go a thousand miles across a stormy sea to plunder another man of his crops than to patiently raise their own corn and wool and make an honest living at home. So, instead of understanding what a good fortune it would be for their descendants, if they seized and held the great western continent that stretched westward from Vinland until it met another sea, they kept on with their eastward raids, and the valleys of the Elbe and the Rhine, of the Seine and Loire, made a famous hunting-ground for the dragon ships to seek. The rich seaports and trading towns, the strongly walled Roman cities, the venerated abbeys and cathedrals with their store of wealth and provisions, were all equally exposed to the fury of such attacks, and were soon stunned and desolated. What a horror must have fallen upon a defenceless harbor-side when a fleet of the Northmen's ships was seen sweeping in from sea at daybreak! What a smoke of burning houses and shrieking of

frightened people all day long; and as [Pg019] the twilight fell and the few survivors of the assault dared to creep out from their hiding-places to see the ruins of their homes, and the ships putting out to sea again loaded deep with their possessions!—we can hardly picture it to ourselves in these quiet days.

The people who lived in France were of another sort, but they often knew how to defend themselves as well as the Northmen knew how to attack. There are few early French records for us to read, for the literature of that early day was almost wholly destroyed in the religious houses and public buildings of France. Here and there a few pages of a poem or of a biography or chronicle have been kept, but from this very fact we can understand the miserable condition of the country.

In the year 810 the Danish Norsemen, under their king, Gottfried, overran Friesland, but the Emperor Charlemagne was too powerful for them and drove them back. After his death they were ready to try again, and because his huge kingdom had been divided under many rulers, who were all fighting among themselves, the Danes were more lucky, and after robbing Hamburg several times they ravaged the coasts and finally settled themselves as comfortably as possible at the mouth of the Loire in France. Soon they were not satisfied with going to and fro along the seaboard, and took their smaller craft and voyaged inland, swarming up the French rivers by hundreds, devastating the country everywhere they went.

In 845 they went up the Seine to Paris, and plundered [Pg020] Paris too, more than once; and forty years later,

forty thousand of them, led by a man named Siegfried, went up from Rouen with seven hundred vessels and besieged the poor capital for ten months, until they were bought off at the enormous price of the whole province of Burgundy. See what power that was to put into the hands of the sea-kings' crews! But no price was too dear, the people of Paris must have thought, to get rid of such an army in the heart of Gaul. They could make whatever terms they pleased by this time, and there is a tradition that a few years afterward some bands of Danish rovers, who perhaps had gone to take a look at Burgundy, pushed on farther and settled themselves in Switzerland.

From the settlements they had made in the province of Aquitania, they had long before this gone on to Spain, because the rich Spanish cities were too tempting to be resisted. They had forced their way all along the shore of the sea, and in at the gate of the Mediterranean; they wasted and made havoc as they went, in Spain, Africa, and the Balearic islands, and pushed their way up the Rhone to Valence. We can trace them in Italy, where they burned the cities of Pisa and Lucca, and even in Greece, where at last the pirate ships were turned about, and set their sails for home. Think of those clumsy little ships out on such a journey with their single masts and long oars! Think of the stories that must have been told from town to town after these strange, wild Northern foes had come and gone! They were like hawks that came swooping down out of the sky, and though [Pg021] Spain and Rome and Greece were well enough acquainted with wars, they must have felt when the Northmen came, as we should feel if some wild beast from

the heart of the forest came biting and tearing its way through a city street at noontime.

Go to Illus. List

NORSE BUCKLE WITH BYZANTINE DECORATION.

The whole second half of the ninth century is taken up with the histories of these invasions. We must follow for a while the progress of events in Gaul, or France as we call it now, though it was made up [Pg022] then of a number of smaller kingdoms. The result of the great siege of Paris was only a settling of affairs with the Northmen for the time being; one part of the country was delivered from them at the expense of another. They could be bought off and bribed for a time, but there was never to be any such thing as their going back to their own country and letting France alone for

good and all. But as they gained at length whole tracts of country, instead of the little wealth of a few men to take away in their ships as at first, they began to settle down in their new lands and to become conquerors and colonists instead of mere plunderers. Instead of continually ravaging and attacking the kingdoms, they slowly became the owners and occupiers of the conquered territory; they pushed their way from point to point. At first, as you have seen already, they trusted to their ships, and always left their wives and children at home in the North countries, but as time went on, they brought their families with them and made new homes, for which they would have to fight many a battle yet. It would be no wonder if the women had become possessed by a love for adventure too, and had insisted upon seeing the lands from which the rich booty was brought to them, and that they had been saying for a long time: "Show us the places where the grapes grow and the fruit-trees bloom, where men build great houses and live in them splendidly. We are tired of seeing only the long larchen beams of their high roofs, and the purple and red and gold cloths, and the red wine and yellow wheat that you bring away. Why should we not go [Pg023] to live in that country, instead of your breaking it to pieces, and going there so many of you, every year, only to be slain as its enemies? We are tired of our sterile Norway and our great Danish deserts of sand, of our cold winds and wet weather, and our long winters that pass by so slowly while the fleets are gone. We would rather see Seville and Paris themselves, than only their gold and merchandise and the rafters of their churches that you bring home for ship timber." One of the old ballads

of love and valor lingers yet that the women used to sing: "*Myklagard and the land of Spain lie wide away o'er the lee*." There was room enough in those far countries where the ships went—why then do they stay at home in Friesland and Norway and Denmark, crowded and hungry kingdoms that they were, of the wandering sea-kings?

As the years went on, the Northern lands themselves became more peaceful, and the voyages of the pirates came to an end. Though the Northmen still waged wars enough, they were Danes or Norwegians against England and France, one realm against another, instead of every man plundering for himself.

The kingdoms of France had been divided and weakened, and, while we find a great many fine examples of resistance, and some great victories over the Northmen, they were not pushed out and checked altogether. Instead, they gradually changed into Frenchmen themselves, different from other Frenchmen only in being more spirited, vigorous, and alert. They inspired every new growth of the [Pg024] religion, language, or manners, with their own splendid vitality. They were like plants that have grown in dry, thin soil, transplanted to a richer spot of ground, and sending out fresh shoots in the doubled moisture and sunshine. And presently we shall find the Northman becoming the Norman of history. As the Northman, almost the first thing we admire about him is his character, his glorious energy; as the Norman, we see that energy turned into better channels, and bringing a new element into the progress of civilization.

The Northmen had come in great numbers to settle in Gaul, but they were scattered about, and so it was easier to