

# Saga-Book of the Viking Club.

VOL. II. PART II.

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## ADDITIONAL GIFTS TO LIBRARY & MUSEUM.

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THE following additional gifts have been made to the Library and Museum :—

GIVEN BY

J. W. CURSITER.

“The Scottish Brochs: their Age and their Destruction.” By  
J. W. Cursiter, F.S.A. Scot.

ALEXANDER BUGGE.

“Gotlændingernes Handel paa England og Norge omkring 1300.”  
By Alexander Bugge.

REV. J. SEPHTON.

“What the Sagas say of Greenland.” By the Rev. J. Sephton.  
Reprinted from *The Transactions of the Literary and Philosophical  
Society of Liverpool*. (Fifty copies for distribution.)

ACQUIRED BY EXCHANGE.

Annual Reports of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, U.S.A. Nos. 13, 14,  
and 15.

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## SPECIAL DONATIONS TO FUNDS.

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					£	s.	d.
Lord Strathcona	...	...	...	...	1	0	0
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W. Sinclair, sen. ...	...	...	...	...	0	5	0
Alex. Sandison (1896-97) ...	...	...	...	...	0	10	0
T. Johnston ...	...	...	...	...	0	5	0
Basil Sievwright ...	...	...	...	...	0	10	0

### *PUBLICATIONS BY MEMBERS.*

AMONG publications by members of the Club during the year are the following :—

- “The Saint-Clairs of the Isles, being a History of the Sea-Kings of Orkney and their Scottish Successors of the Surname of Sinclair.” Arranged and Annotated by Roland William Saint-Clair. (Auckland, N.Z.)
- “The Scottish Brochs: their Age and their Destruction.” By J. W. Cursiter, F.S.A. Scot.
- “Gotlændingernes Handel paa England og Norge omkring 1300.” By Alexander Bugge. (Christiania.)
- “King Alfred's Viking. A Story of the First English Fleet and of the Campaign from Athelney.” By the Rev. C. W. Whistler, M.R.C.S., L.S.A.

### *FORTHCOMING WORKS.*

- “A Pilgrimage to the Saga-steads of Iceland,” with 13 coloured plates and 140 black and white illustrations. By W. G. Collingwood and Dr. Jón Stefánsson.
  - “The Life and Death of Cormac the Skald,” being a translation of Kormak's Saga. By W. G. Collingwood and Dr. Jón Stefánsson.
  - “Coniston Tales” (historical sketches of the Northmen and others in the Lake District). By W. G. Collingwood.
  - “The Early Sculptured Monuments of the Present Diocese of Carlisle” (the Gosforth and other Crosses and Remains of Saxon and Viking Ages). By the late Rev. W. S. Calverley, F.S.A. Edited by W. G. Collingwood, Local Sec. Soc. Antiq. London.
- Also, in the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society*, papers on “The Ormside Cup” (Anglian interlaced and scroll-work), by W. G. Collingwood; and on “Lost Churches in the Diocese of Carlisle” (survivals in place-names of Celtic *Kils*, etc., of the Viking Age), by W. G. Collingwood and J. Rogers.

*REPORTS OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE  
MEETINGS OF THE CLUB.*

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**SIXTH SESSION, 1898.**

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AL-THING, JANUARY 14TH, 1898.

The Rev. A. SANDISON (Jarla-man) in the Chair.

A reply from Dr. Karl Blind to the vote of condolence passed at the last meeting was read.

Mr. W. G. Collingwood, M.A., Herath-umboth-man for Hougoun (Furness) and Westmoreland, read a paper on "Gudrun's Grave and other Saga-Steads in Iceland," with relics and lantern-slide illustrations, in which he gave some account of the journey to Iceland, to visit the scenes of the Sagas, which he and Dr. Stefánsson have now recorded in "A Pilgrimage to the Saga-Steads of Iceland." A large collection of Mr. Collingwood's water-colour sketches of Icelandic scenery was also exhibited.

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AL-THING, FEBRUARY 4TH, 1898.

The Rev. A. SANDISON (Jarla-man) in the Chair.

Mr. A. Knox, Things-both-man, read a paper on "The Manx Tynwald Court," in which he traced the history, institutions, and customs of the Court from the earliest documentary evidences remaining. He said that his sketch must necessarily be to a certain extent fragmentary, because he discarded all mere tradition and assumptions, and the many books on the Court which take note of such traditions, and only regarded those ancient features for which we have documentary evidence.

After tracing the various features of the Court through the existing records, Mr. Knox gave a sketch of the Court in its present form, and described the circumstance and surroundings in which this lineal descendant of the Norse Things, or meetings of the whole people, still met in the old Norse kingdom of Man.

In moving a vote of thanks, Mr. Albany F. Major remarked that the name of the first of the Norse kings of Man was frequently given as "Orry," but there seemed no historical foundation for the name. Perhaps Mr. Knox could tell them if "Orry" was only a legendary character, or whether he had a real existence. It was to be hoped that the open-air Court on the Tynwald would not be done away with by modern iconoclasts.

Dr. Jón Stefánsson, in seconding the vote of thanks, asked what was the origin of the word "Keys," as the title of one of the Manx Courts, the "House of Keys." The word "sheading" was, he thought, Norse, derived from *skeið*, ship, and denoting a district which had to supply a ship. He should be glad to know the last instance of the use of the title of King of Man. In Cornwall there existed an open-air Court, the Court of the Stannaries, held by the miners. One ought to gather details both as to Norse and Celtic Courts to elucidate the Tynwald Court, for the Manx Courts were probably a mixture, like the Manx people, owing something to both elements. Man was now the only place in which the open-air Parliament survived. It was abolished in Iceland in 1800.

Mr. E. E. Speight said he should very much like to see a chart of the Tynwald. The lecture was very interesting, but it was not possible to visualise so much detail. A chart showing the Courts, with their relation to each other, their degrees, and the duties falling on them, would therefore be very useful.

Mr. F. T. Norris said that light would be thrown on the Tynwald by the constitution of the old Hus-Thing Court in London, which dated from Danish times, and was the

successor of Saxon open-air Courts. As to open-air Courts generally, they were a common feature of both early and late English procedure, and embraced the smallest ward, town, or hundred mote, to the great council of the realm. He should like to know if any meaning could be given to the name "taxiaxi."

Mr. Froude added his thanks to Mr. Knox for his valuable paper. In reply to Mr. Speight's complaint as to too much detail, he would point out that many long books on the Tynwald were focussed by Mr. Knox into his paper. He should like to ask if there were local Tynwalds, as in Iceland and Norway, where local questions were settled. In Man nowadays the Tynwald meeting was held under a tent. In the old records it was laid down that the lords and officers should sit in the face of the people. When does the tent date from? The use of it probably accounts for the lack of vitality in the Tynwald at the present day. The old custom was to strew rushes on the road to the meeting on Tynwald Day. Was this done elsewhere? In 1895 the Clerk of the Rolls moved that no future meetings should be held in winter, but this was lost, and very rightly. If once the custom were broken, summer meetings too might be affected, and it would be a great pity to break in upon the customs of the oldest Parliament in the world.

Mr. Knox regretted that his paper was not more compact and lucid. He had gathered his material from the Tynwald Acts themselves, instead of working from printed books. The use of rushes referred to was not a Tynwald custom. There was a legend that a certain farm was held rent free on condition of supplying the rushes, but this was not true. The Clerk supplied them, and probably the custom originated in the strewing of rushes in the chapel, to which the meeting adjourned on St. John's Day. The Deemster and jury formed the Thing, but there were local Things consisting of the parish priest and six laymen. The jurymen at the Tynwald Thing were 24 in number. He realised how valuable a chart would

be, but at present his idea of the Tynwald was too confused to enable him to frame one. King Orry was, he thought, Godred, first king of Man. It was said that the number of the taxiaxi was fixed at 24 in King Orry's days. Magnus, who was king at the time of the sale of the island, was the last king of Man. The Deemster and the House of Keys called Sir John Stanley king, but he himself never used the title. The title was last used in 1265. He could not throw any light on the origin of the word "sheading," and he thought it useless to speculate on the origin of the names "Keys" or "taxiaxi." The latter were generally called simply "the twenty-four."

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## JOINT MEETING

OF THE GAELIC SOCIETY OF LONDON, THE IRISH  
LITERARY SOCIETY, AND THE IRISH GAELIC  
LEAGUE, FEBRUARY 12TH, 1898.

LORD REAY in the Chair.

Dr. Jón Stefánsson read a paper on "The Norsemen in Scotland," which attracted a considerable audience and led to an interesting discussion. Owing to the temporary laying aside of the author through illness, the reproduction of his paper is deferred to a future occasion.

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## AL-THING, MARCH 18TH, 1898.

The Rev. A. SANDISON (Jarla-man) in the Chair.

The Rev. Pastor A. V. Storm, Danish Chaplain in London, read a paper on "The Revival of Old Northern Life in Denmark," which is reproduced on another page.

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## GREAT AL-THING, APRIL 22ND, 1898.

The Rev. A. SANDISON (Jarla-man) in the Chair.

The Great Al-thing was held at the King's Weigh House, on Friday, April 22nd, 1898, at 8 p.m. The

Law-Thing-Saga, or Annual Report of the Council, together with the Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet presented by the Treasurer, were laid before the meeting and unanimously adopted. The following resolution was passed as embodied in the Law-Thing-Saga :—

That the Viking Club was founded by Orkneymen and Shetlanders in recognition of the fact that their native land is Norse ; that its aim is to unite all those, whether within or without the British Empire, who claim the common bond of descent from the Scandinavian sea-kings, or their Anglo-Saxon kindred, and to promote the study of the ancient history and records of the Gothic race ; that, while glad to enrol among its members Scots who are in sympathy with its aims, or to join with Scottish Societies for objects of common interest, it can take no action which would conflict with the above standpoint, or stamp it as an exclusively Scottish Society.

Umboths-Vikings, or Officers of the Club, for the ensuing year were elected by ballot.

Mr. A. W. Johnston, Law-man, then gave a descriptive account of Orkney, illustrated by drawings and lantern slides, and by a selection of Orkney folk-melodies and song, rendered and accompanied on the piano by Mr. E. Home-Popham. The proceedings terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Johnston for his able and interesting paper, and to Mr. Popham for his skilful interpretation of the Orkney music.

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AL-THING, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1898.

The Rev. A. SANDISON (Jarla-man) in the Chair.

The Jarl, Dr. Karl Blind, expressed his thanks to the Club for the vote of sympathy conveyed to him during the previous Session. He also thanked the Club for continuing him in an office which he valued highly, though he had been of necessity an absentee for so long. He then delivered his inaugural address on "The Earliest Traveller to the High North," which is reproduced on another page.

AL-THING, NOVEMBER 25TH, 1898.

Dr. KARL BLIND (Jarl) in the Chair.

In the absence of the Rev. C. W. Whistler, the Hon. Secretary read his paper on "King Alfred's Campaign from Athelney," which is reproduced on another page.

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AL-THING, DECEMBER 16TH, 1898.

Dr. KARL BLIND (Jarl) in the Chair.

A paper by Miss Cornelia Horsford, Jarla-kona, on "Vinland and its Ruins: or some of the Evidences that Northmen were in Massachusetts in Pre-Columbian Days," was read. The lecturer dealt with the ruins of stone and other buildings belonging to some early settlers on the American Continent, which she offered considerations for believing were Norse. The paper was profusely illustrated by lantern slides.

In allowing that Miss Horsford had sent a very interesting paper, Mr. G. M. Atkinson said he feared no profitable discussion was possible, as very few had seen the Icelandic ruins. He himself had seen sections of the Roman rampart thrown up by Agricola between the Firths of Forth and Clyde, which appeared in some parts to resemble in character the black lines of the decayed vegetation of the walls shown in the illustrations. The path illustration also resembled part of the paved way from Chichester to London known as Stane Street, which is supposed to be Roman. But so much depended on the character of the stones in the American case that it was impossible for anyone who had not seen the remains to venture on an opinion. The presence of bricks was curious, but did not necessarily militate against the antiquity of the walls, as brick-making was a very ancient art, and known to the Romans and even to much earlier nations. The walls found by Miss Horsford were certainly very primitive in character, but he thought the illustrations showed that



they were built at different times, by people in different stages of culture. It was to be noted that the foundations of some of the walls differed in style from the upper portions.

Mr. F. T. Norris said the meeting was indebted to Miss Cornelia Horsford for a very interesting and lucid paper. It was her great desire to find the site of the landfall of Leif Ericsson, and, as far as her paper was concerned with tracing and identifying the localities of the events described in the Sagas, her work was excellent, and might be admitted to be conclusive. When, however, the attempt was made to identify structural remains with buildings erected by the Norsemen, the evidence appeared less substantial. At no period known had the Icelanders used bricks for building ; consequently, the presence of pieces of brick, if they could not be satisfactorily explained away, might be held to be important evidence against the theory that the remains were Scandinavian. In saying this he did not wish to accord too much weight to hereditary methods of building, which were very much governed by questions of climate, building material available, and local circumstances. It might perhaps be that with the abundance of wood they found in Vinland, the Icelanders abstained from the resort to stones and turf, and built their dwellings in the New World of the native wood. These in the course of time would, of course, wholly disappear. Whether this was so, or that they used more substantial or artificial substances, the failure to positively identify the remains did not detract from the interest aroused by Miss Horsford's investigations.

Mr. Albany F. Major said that he had much pleasure in seconding the vote of thanks to Miss Horsford. She had taken up work to which her father, Professor E. N. Horsford, had devoted much time and learning, and the results, if not conclusive, were certainly interesting and stimulating to the imagination. Without further evidence it was not possible for anyone in this country to say that no other place could be found on the east coast of North

America which would correspond to the descriptions of Vinland in the Sagas, but certainly Miss Horsford showed that the site she advocated answered the requirements of the Saga in a very remarkable degree. Further, she had shown that upon that site there existed ruins, whose origin was unknown, which could not be ascribed to any of the settlers of post-Columbian days, and were like no ruins of buildings erected by any of the natives, so far as we knew. These ruins were built in a style that closely resembled the building methods of the Norse settlers in Iceland and Greenland. There were some doubtful elements in the case, such as the presence of pieces of brick, possibly introduced subsequent to the erection of the buildings themselves, which prevented our saying conclusively that these ruins were Norse; but their presence at a spot answering to the requirements of the Saga was at least a very curious coincidence, and it seemed quite possible that they might be due to the Norse settlers. In discussing the question of the Norse discovery of America, the speaker thought that we must not assume too readily that the voyages of which records have reached us in the Sagas were the only expeditions to the new-found lands, and that no permanent settlements were made there. On the face of it, we might suppose that the settlers in Greenland, where wood was unknown, except as drift-wood, would not neglect the source of supply opened up to them by the forests of Vinland. Moreover, in the annals of Greenland there are indications of some permanent settlement having been made, such as the story of the Bishop who went to visit Vinland to re-convert the settlers there, who were reported to have relapsed into heathenism. It was much to be hoped that Miss Horsford would continue her researches, and be able to throw more light upon this interesting question.

The President observed that the geographical and historical identification of Vinland, as made by Miss Horsford, was complete. The identification of supposed ruins was not so easy, especially as the Icelandic Saga

spoke of wooden huts ("Leif's Buðir") of the earliest settlers. Still, it might be, as Mr. Major had said, that the stone remnants found were from houses of later Norse colonists. At any rate, the north-eastern coast of America—from Nova Scotia down to Boston and New York, perhaps even farther south—had been discovered by Northmen 500 years before Columbus. The last recorded voyage to Vinland took place, indeed, as late as 1347. With good reason, Humboldt, no mean authority, called that region "Normannic America," declaring that Columbus had "re-discovered the same Continent." Undoubtedly there had been even earlier discoveries in antiquity, as we know from the classic reports about the "Atlantis." Here Karl Blind mentioned the account of Platon as to what Solon had been told by Egyptian priests, as well as passages from Plutarch and Ælian. Though these reports were overlaid by fables, they contained some historical truth, and in Humboldt's opinion merited serious consideration. No doubt, there was some vague indication in those accounts of the Antilles, the Caribbean Sea, and the Mexican Gulf. There are Welsh and Irish tales also, pointing to an early knowledge of the great land beyond the sea. As to Columbus, he, as a skipper, had gone from Bristol to Iceland, and conversed there with priests and learned men in the Latin tongue, and had thus evidently been put on the track to America through what he had learnt in that Northern Thule. His son, who wrote his father's biography, mentions the fact of Columbus having visited such a far-off island. When Columbus was there, only 130 years had elapsed since the last voyage of the Norsemen to their American settlements, and undoubtedly there were men then still alive in Iceland, whose grandfathers had been on the other side of the Atlantic. The Norseman who first discovered the Western Continent was Leif, the son of Erik the Red, in the year 1000. With him was a German, named Tyrker, his foster-father. During one of their inland expeditions, Tyrker penetrated alone into the interior, and for a time

was held to be lost, but finally turned up with every sign of excitement. So great was his agitation that at first he spoke in German, but at last was made to explain himself in Norse, when he reported that he had discovered vines and grapes, some of which he brought. Being probably a Rhinelander, his excitement and his joy at having found that welcome fruit was easy to understand. Owing to those grapes, the settlement was called Vinland, or Wine-land. In the last century, a commissioner sent to America by the Swedish Academy, Peter Kalm, actually still found wild vines in Albany, and even in Canada. For the first time, the name of Vinland occurred in 1072, in a Latin work of a German priest, Adam of Bremen. He heard a description of that Transatlantic country during a visit to the Danish Court. The several Norse settlements were called Vinland, Markland, and Helluland, and they lasted until the year 1347. A Bishop of Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland was appointed in the twelfth century by Pope Paschal. The Bishop's name was Erik Upsi. There is a statue now, at Boston, of Leif Erikson, whose glory it was to have been the Norse discoverer of America, and who therefore merits the first place in the Walhalla of those forerunners of Columbus. In conclusion, Karl Blind said he was sure the audience would pass a hearty vote of thanks to Miss Horsford for her interesting paper, and signify the same in the usual way.

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*REPORTS OF HERATHS-UMBOTHs-MEN.*(DISTRICT SECRETARIES.)

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THE District Secretary for Cumberland and Westmoreland (Mr. W. G. Collingwood) writes :—

## THE FIRST DECIPHERER OF THE CROSSES.

WITH the death of the Rev. W. S. Calverley, F.S.A., F.R.Hist. Soc., etc., Vicar of Aspatria, we have to deplore the loss of a distinguished member, to whom we owe the discovery and interpretation of Edda myths on Christian crosses. It was in 1881 that he first pointed out the fact, in a paper on “Illustrations of Teutonic Mythology from Early Christian Monuments at Brigham and Dearham.” In 1882 he addressed the Archæological Institute, at their Carlisle meeting, on the Gosforth Cross, showing that the sculptures, never before understood, represented Loki and Baldr and other pagan subjects, carved to illustrate Christian teaching, just as the Orpheus of the Catacombs was made to stand for the figure of Christ. The statement found a warm supporter in Prof. George Stephens, of Copenhagen, and Mr. Calverley followed it up in a series of papers, including one for the Archæological Institute at Edinburgh, in 1891, on the “Sigurd” at Halton. Meanwhile, the Rev. G. F. Browne (Bishop of Bristol) had shown illustrations of the same “pagan overlap” in the crosses at Leeds and Kirk Andreas, Isle of Man, and the theory, which at first had been warmly disputed, won its way to general acceptance. Mr. Calverley, who was born at Leeds and educated at Oxford, was for twenty-six years one of the most active and energetic of Cumberland clergymen, finding time, nevertheless, for much antiquarian work, in the midst of which he died, on September 21st, 1898. The book on which

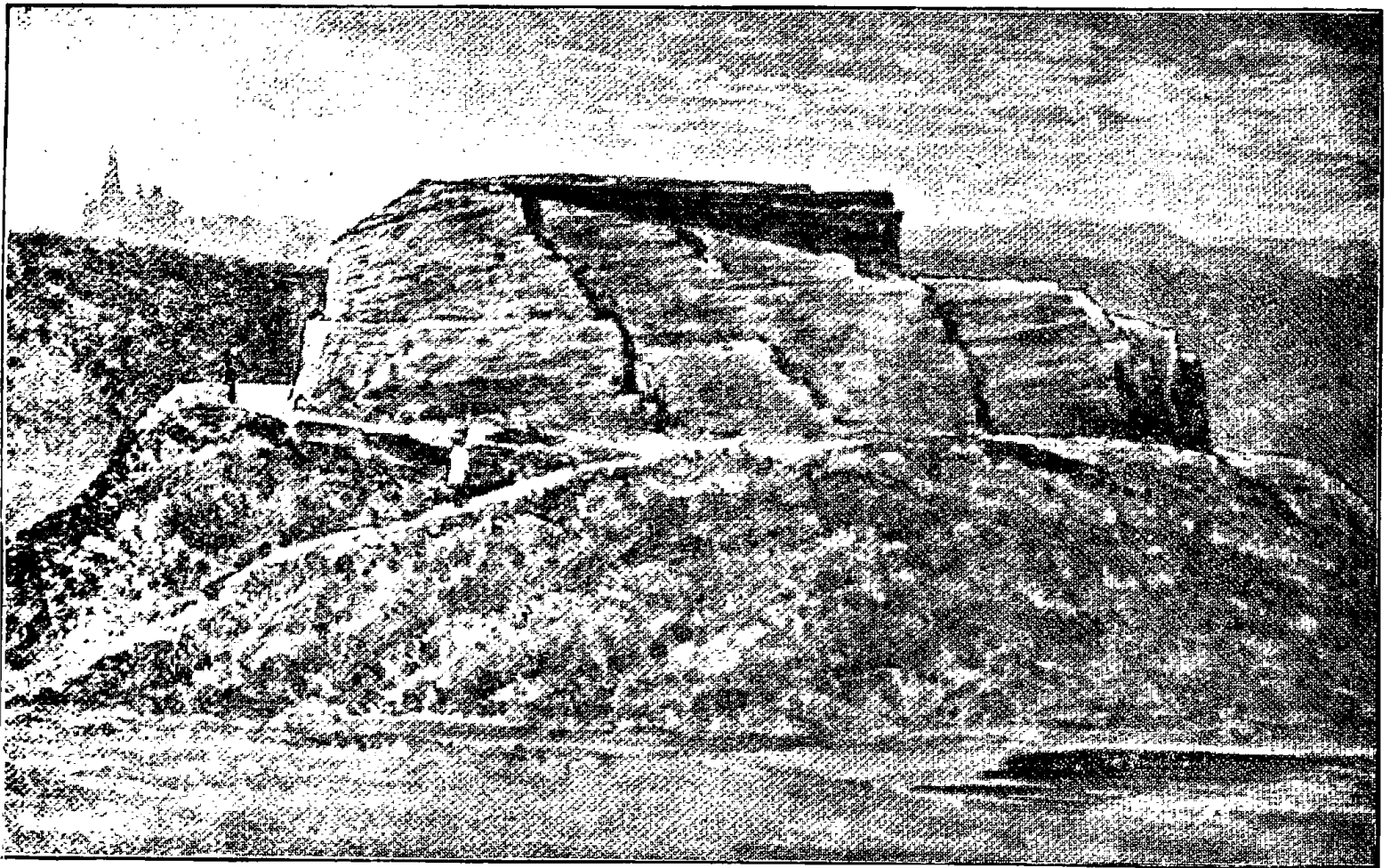
he had been long engaged, “Early Sculptured Crosses, Shrines, and Monuments of the Present Diocese of Carlisle,” has been prepared for publication by the present writer, and will shortly be issued by Mr. T. Wilson of Kendal.

#### THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORSE IN CUMBRIA.

We have also to regret the death of Mr. Robert Ferguson, M.P., F.S.A. (Lond. and Scot.), Vice-President of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian and Archæological Society, who, though not a member of the Viking Club, deserves our respect and remembrance for his work on “The Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland.” Published in 1856, this book was the first attempt to deal in any detail with the Viking settlement. So early as 1819, Thomas de Quincey had written, in the *Westmoreland Gazette*, a short series of articles, giving in general terms his opinion that the Lake district dialect was of Danish origin, and instancing a few words, such as *patten*, *neif*, and *attercop*, but hesitating over others, such as *fell*, *dale*, and *tarn*. But Worsaae’s “Danes and Norwegians in England” led Mr. Ferguson to reconsider the subject, and to work out place-names, dialect, and remains as thoroughly as the means at his disposal allowed. He was led to the belief that the ancestors of Lakeland folk were not the Danes of the East of England, but Norse coming in from the west, especially from the Isle of Man, and time has not shaken this theory, though the evidence now collected seems to fix the date earlier than that given by Mr. Ferguson, and accepted by no less a writer than Mr. Freeman. In the matter of place-names he has left room for more modern study in the historical and comparative method; but this book, and other books by him, are full of information and suggestion; he was the pioneer in a line of research which many of us are now following up, one of the great men on whose shoulders we sit, saying, “How far we can see!”

## THOR'S STONE, OR FAIR MAIDEN HALL.

In the *Saga-Book*, vol. i., part ii., p. 191, I noticed briefly the Viking colony of 900 A.D. on the Mersey, so closely akin to ours on Morecambe Bay. Recently revisiting the neighbourhood, I sketched what is now known as the "Thor's Stone," in Wirral, a favourite spot with excursionists, who, after making their flesh creep with tales of pirates and human sacrifices, proceed to cut their initials on the "Altar."



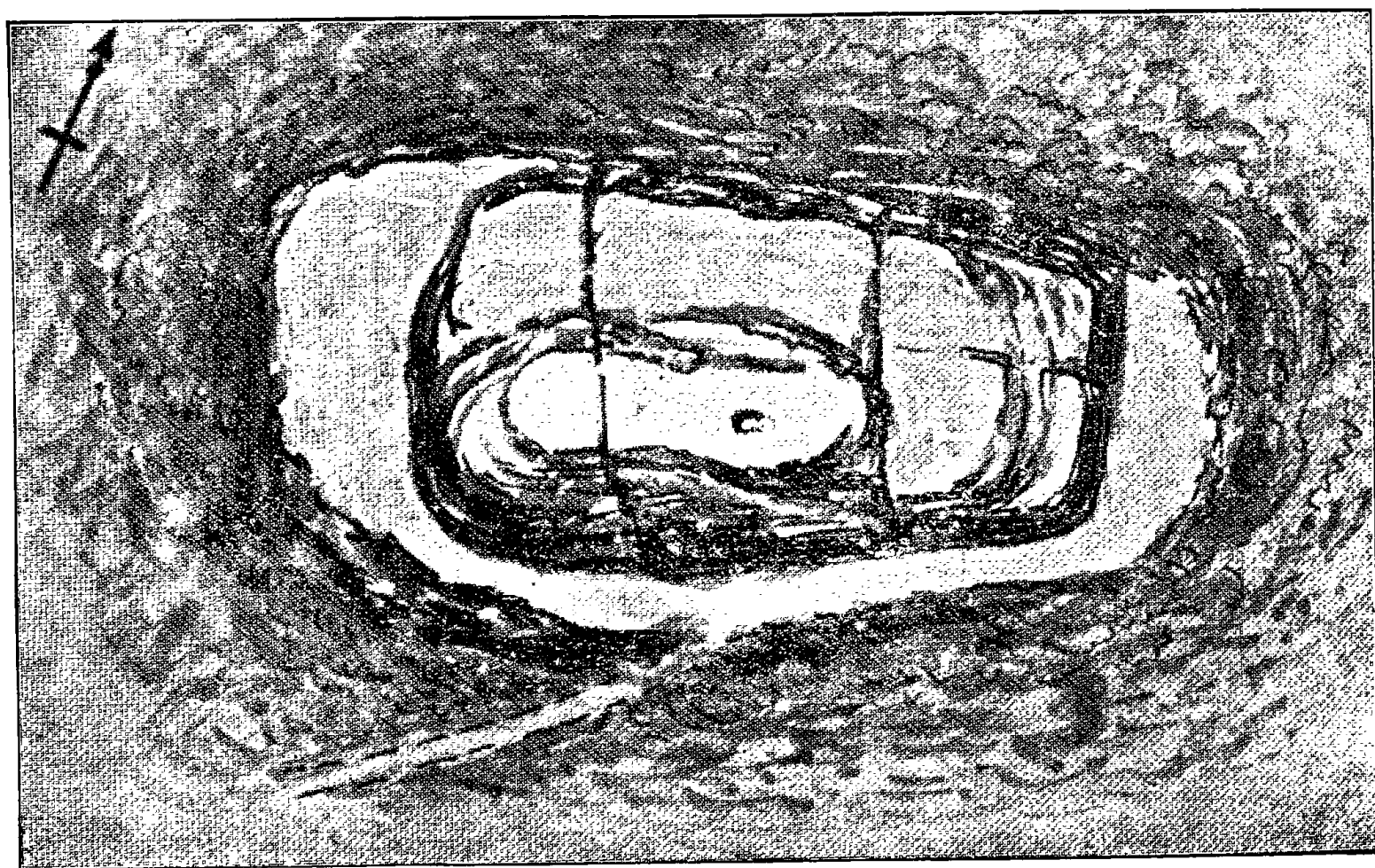
GENERAL VIEW OF THE SO-CALLED THOR'S STONE.

It is a hummock of Permian red sandstone, rising bare and conspicuous above its fern and gorse-covered pedestal, in a little dell (much misnamed an amphitheatre) with a swampy bit of flat bottom. The rock is flat on the top, which measures about 36 by 10 feet, with a slight basin holding rain water, as shown in the plan. There are two terraces, neither of them continuous, all round the rock ; but their apparent regularity and the steepness of the sides



remind one of the Manx Tynwald and other thing-mounts. A well-known local antiquary, connecting the rock with the village of Thurstaston (in Domesday Turstanetone, and in the fourteenth century Thurstaneston), which lies five-eighths of a mile to the south-south-east, thought it was the *Thórs-steinn* from which the place was called, and described it as a Norse altar.

*Thurstaneston*, however, matches *Thorstanes-watter* (A.D. 1196), the old name of Coniston Lake, Latinised *Turstini*



GROUND PLAN OF THE SO-CALLED THOR'S STONE.

*Watra*, and obviously containing the genitive case of a personal name, *Thórsteinn*. The ending in "ton" is not necessarily Anglo-Saxon, and *Thórsteins-tún* must have been the homestead of a Northman.

Two and a quarter miles west of the stone is the interesting site of Thingwall, in Domesday *Tingvella* (for the Norman scribes could not say *Th*), meaning *Thingvellir*. There is now no trace of a thing-mount; several hillocks which might be identified as such are built upon



or ploughed over, and the hill on which the mill stands has no resemblance to the thing-mounts we know. If the "Thor's Stone" had been at Thingwall we might have been tempted to fancy it another Tynwald, but that is out of the question.

The proper traditional name of the rock is "Fair Maiden Hall," and local legends describe it as a fairies' haunt.

Its form, though at first sight seeming artificial, is only a more pronounced development of the scarped and shelved knoll so commonly found in that sandstone formation. If the terraces had been cut by the hand of man they would surely have been continuous all round the hill. They are really the result of the weathering of level beds, cleft across by great joints, as shown in the plan and sketch.

#### OTHER ANTIQUITIES OF WIRRAL.

But though we must give up the Thor's Stone and its human sacrifices, there is much to interest the Viking Club in Wirral. Its pre-Norman cross-fragments are partly described by Mr. E. W. Cox in an appendix to "Early Christian Monuments of Lancashire and Cheshire," by Mr. J. Romilly Allen, F.S.A. Scot. (*Trans. Hist. Soc. of Lanc. and Ches.*, vol. ix., N.S., 1894), and deserve much study in connection with the Viking settlement. Of one relic in the little museum of St. Bridget's Church at West Kirby the legend is that it came from Ireland, and we have similar traces of Irish Christianity in the Viking age in Cumbria. Several cross-slabs have been found over graves in the post-Viking monastery on Hilbre island; one still is to be seen there, another has been taken away. Neston and other churches contain valuable fragments, of which some are earlier than 900, but some were doubtless carved while the Vikings and their children lived in Wirral.

#### NORSE PLACE-NAMES IN WIRRAL.

The place-names also are of great interest to us. The Norse origin of many among them has been long accepted,

and they have been much discussed. A paper by Mr. W. Fergusson Irvine (*Trans. Hist. Soc. of Lanc. and Ches.*, vol. vii., N.S., 1893) may be mentioned, but I venture to add a few notes on some left unexplained, for we have here a very neat and striking example of the Viking colony, and some leading features which these names illustrate are of importance with regard to the subject in general.

Ingimund's Lochlans (Norse) from Dublin asked for lands here "because they were weary of war." They did not come as conquerors, but as settlers. They did not blot out the existing churches, where pre-Viking crosses were left standing. There could have been no question of storming or creating strongholds: they wanted farms, not forts; agricultural, not strategical advantages. I think we can see plainly that each chief got a slice of land with a frontage to the fjord of Mersey or Dee,<sup>1</sup> and reaching back up the hills to waste land of the interior, just as the settlements were made in Iceland. In each landtake the *bóndi* fixed his homestead, neither on the exposed hilltop nor on the marshy flat. He made his *bær*, a group of buildings, in the *tún*, or homefield, which he manured and mowed for hay, and surrounded with a garth to keep the beasts out; so that *bær*, *heimr*, *staðr*, or *tún* would equally well express the place, and it might be distinguished by the name of the settler or by some natural feature. Þórsteins-*tún* must have been a Norse farm, though Bebbington was Anglo-Saxon, being the *tún* of the Bebbingas. A place called Brimstage, anciently Brunstath<sup>2</sup> or Brynston indifferently, shows that *staðr* and *tún* were convertible terms; the first part of the name, in which the *u* became *y* and *i*, must be *brunnr* (spring), and not *brún* (brow), so that the Norse name was *Brunns-staðr* or

<sup>1</sup> In which the most southern creek is Shotwick, the Domesday Sotowiche, *Suðrvík*.

<sup>2</sup> This, being inland, cannot be Anglo-Saxon *stæð*, bank or shore, as suggested by *The Reliquary* in a review of Mr. H. Harrison's "Place-Names of the Liverpool District," a book published since our article was written.

*Brunns-tún.* In Storeton I think we have the Icelandic *Storð*, found in the Lake district as Storth, Storthes, and Storrs, meaning coppice or scrub, which once covered the country, though it might have been *Stór-tún* (big field). Oxtun, which is a difficulty to those who derive all *tons* from Anglo-Saxon, seems to be good Norse. It lies on the saddle or col of a long ridge or yoke, Latin *jugum*, Icel. *ok*, the name of a mountain in Iceland; and *Oks-tún* would be the “farm on the yoke.”

Some of these are secondary settlements; for, as in Iceland, the younger sons of a chief, or his freedmen, would receive bits of less valuable ground inland. There is Irby, up the hills from *Þórsteins-tún*, which like Ireby and Irton, in Cumberland, would be *Ira-bær*, the “farm of the Irishmen,” perhaps Thorstein’s dependents. Raby, like Raby in Cumberland and the Isle of Man, Roby in Lancs., Vraaby in Denmark, etc., means a farm on a small holding wedged in between the greater estates—a wray, taken by some squatter. The Anglo-Saxon for such a place, as Mr. Henry Bradley has shown, is *unþances*, “without leave,” from which come the Unthanks of the North of England.

Around these farmsteads were the acres where they sowed bigg and barr and haver, and pastures of various kinds. Some were called *völlr* (plural, *vellir*), as Crabwall, *krapp-völlr*, “narrow field”; Heswell, in Domesday Eswelle, and mediæval Haselwell, *i.e.*, *hasla-vellir*, “hazel fields,” and many other names in wall (*völlr*) or well (*vellir*).

Each estate had its woods (*viðr*), such as Birket (*birk-with*), where firewood was cut, and charcoal burned in coalpits (*gröf*, genitive *grafar*), from which we get the “graves,” as Hargrave, and Greasby, in Domesday Gravesberie.

A field at some distance from the farm, especially one that sloped from the hill to the shore or swamp, was a *þveit*. Many, if not most, of our Lake district thwaites are sloping fields; and in Wallasey there are fields called

thwaites. The *hólmr* and *kjarr* (carr) and *mýrr* served for pasturing larger cattle; on the firmer ground they had special places for keeping lambs and calves. Near Windermere we have Calgarth, anciently Calvgarth, *Kálfa-garðr*. In Caithness is the burn of Calder, which in "Orkneyinga Saga" appears as *Kálfadalsá*, stream of the dale where calves were kept; just as we have many Swindales (*svínadalir*), Hestfells, etc. In Wirral is Calday near Þórsteinstún, which the Domesday scribe wrote Calders. There is no particular "cold water" there, and I suspect this to mean "calf dales."

The sheep were sent up to the moor, and the path up which they were driven was called the Rake, as at Eastham. In summer, cattle also were taken up the moor, and the herdsmen had huts like the Swiss *châlets* and Norse *sæters*. In the Lake district we have many examples of Satterhow and Satterthwaite, together with a short form, Seat-thwaite, Seat-scale, becoming Sea-thwaite and Sea-scale, which have nothing to do with the sea. In Wirral, Seacombe can hardly be the hybrid "Sea-cwm"; it is surely the *hvamnr* or combe of the seat or *sæter*.

Summerhill and Sellafield we have in the North, with the same meaning as *sæter*; and there is another word, *erg* or *ærg* (see the Icel. Dictionary), a loan-word, like so many others, from the Gaelic, in which *airidh* means "moor, summer pasture."<sup>1</sup> The *g* must have been very guttural, and so confused with the *dh*, and sometimes softened into a weak syllable, just as *borg* becomes "borough." We have Arrad near Ulverston, and at Coniston there is Little Arrow, formerly spelt Ayrey, like Aira Force, etc., and evidently this is *ergh* or *airidh*. In the translation of "Orkneyinga Saga" (p. 187, note), Dr. Anderson shows that *Asgrim's ærg* has become Askary. This must explain the Wirral name Arrow, which

<sup>1</sup> In Galloway the word is *aroch*, "a shieling," as in Lochnarroch. In *Trans. Lanc. and Ches. Antiq. Soc.*, 1890, Dr. H. C. March gives instances of the same word becoming *ergh*, *argh*, and *ark*.

may have been Thorstein's *ergh* on the inland wilds ; he, being presumably one of the settlers from Dublin, would use the Gaelic loan-word, which two or three centuries later became misunderstood and confused with *Arwe*, the Anglo-Saxon for an "arrow."

Right in the middle of Wirral, where the hinterlands of the old settlers met, was their Thingvellir, showing that they had some organisation of their own during the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is very curious to find, close to Thingwall, a place in a muddy dell called Landican, in Domesday Landechene, which, whether Welsh or Irish, denotes a chapel or kil ; not a Saxon kirk, such as also existed in Wirral, but a little place where a Celtic monk lived as a hermit. There are several such in Cumbria, and it seems certain that Irish monks came in with the Irish Vikings, who were not all heathens. The second syllable in Landican is short ; perhaps the original form might have been *Lann-Aedhagain*, the kil of "Athacan" as the name is written in runes at Kirkmichael, Isle of Man. Just up the hillside is Prenton, in Domesday Prestune, the priest's farm ; and it looks as though the hermit who had settled near the thing-stead, and had so often held up the Cross above debates of feud and strife, had become a recognised power, and—as often happened—had been endowed with a bit of land for his living.

It is only, I think, by comparison with other districts, and from the history of the old Danes and Norse—not merely as pirates, but as colonists—that we may hope to learn the facts and interpret the remains of the great Viking settlements.

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The District Secretary of East Anglia (Rev. W. C. Green) writes :—

#### THE NORSEMEN IN SUFFOLK.

THE inland part of Suffolk from which I write has probably not much that is Danish or Norse. East Anglia,

as is well known, was much overrun by the Danes; Norwich, Ipswich, and many other towns, felt their harrying. Thetford, ten miles distant from me, was twice sacked by them. There is a hill at Thetford, supposed of Danish origin, a sepulchral mound perhaps; but hitherto the excavations made have not revealed much, neither Viking nor longship. It is well known that traces of Scandinavian invasion and occupation remain in many names; *wich*, *by*, *toft*, etc., tell their tale. The mention of Thetford stirred me to search if the river Thet were likely to derive its name from the North. I find an Icelandic adjective *þettr*, "watertight." Well, a river is certainly in a sense watertight, the Thet as much so as others; it has a firm gravelly bottom in most parts. But I would not insist on this etymology if others know a better.

Viking keels, beyond doubt, came up our rivers; and some suppose that there was much more water in our waterways in old times. Suffolk and Norfolk are divided in one direction by the Waveney, in the other by the Ouse. It is about five miles from here, close to Redgrave village, that the Waveney and Little Ouse rise. You can pass on a road just between these hardly visible puddles of sources in Redgrave fen; from one side of you the water flows by Diss, Harleston, Beccles, and Breydon Water, to Yarmouth (part being diverted by a cut through Oulton Broad to Lowestoft), while from your other side the Little Ouse, joined by other streams, blends at Brandon Creek with the Great Ouse, and finds its issue in the Wash close by King's Lynn. A wetter state of things would, by no very great rise of water, have admitted vessels of shallow draught from either coast almost within speaking distance, and would have gone near to make Norfolk an island, past which Norse rovers may have rowed, as did Cnut past Ely's isle, when he listened to the monks' quiring. The inland navigation of the Broads district would certainly then be open to and used by fiercer mariners than the holiday yachters and honest wherry-men of to-day.

East Anglia has many words of Scandinavian origin. Glossaries would show this. But I will venture to point out one or two that have struck me. Very common on the Norfolk Broads and rivers is the word “staithe”—a landing place, quay, harbour for vessels. This is just the Icelandic *stöð*; the pronunciation is all but identical. Curiously enough, Vigfússon, in his *Lexicon*, while giving the English, “stead, roadstead,” appears to know nothing of the East Anglian “staithe,” which meets one’s eye to this day on the ordnance maps of the district.

There is a common word here in the East, “car,”—a small copse, wood, plantation. Especially is it used hereabouts of the small copses by our rivers. I got first knowledge of it years ago when perch-fishing along the Thet. This word is obviously the Icelandic *kjarr*. The word was new to me when I found it hereabouts; in Northamptonshire such a wood was a “copse” or “spinney.” Egil has one of his adventures in a “car.” And in the “Saga of Sigurd the Jerusalem-farer,” that king, in his boastful account of his exploits, tells how he swam over the Jordan, “and out on the bank there was a car,” into which he entered and tied a knot (in the rushes, reeds, or willows).

About the Icelandic verb *fara* and the Suffolk “to fare” there are some curious facts. The Icelandic word is very common, and the Suffolk “fare” meets you every day in the countryman’s mouth. *Fara* means “to go,” in almost every conceivable sense of going; it covers also the common English uses of “fare,” in well or ill-faring. But yet *fara* is not used as a Suffolk villager uses “fare” every day of his life. “To fare” here is almost invariably followed by a verb in the infinitive, and is a sort of auxiliary verb, qualifying, supplementary, almost superfluous. You cannot talk long with a Suffolk rustic without hearing expressions of this kind: “I don’t fare to like it”; “I fare to feel strange”; “He don’t fare to get any better”; “He fare to think so”; “I don’t seem to fare to know what to think.” In any of these sentences you

might bracket [fare to], and not lose much meaning, but the Suffolk flavour would be gone.

Vigfússon, in his Lexicon, puts the Icelandic *fara sofa*, *fara vega*, “to go to sleep,” “to go to fight,” as akin to the East Anglian use; but they are not exactly the same. He also says that in the East Anglian phrase, “to fare to do”=“to begin to do.” But, though it may have originated thus, “to go to do,” “to go about to do,” yet it certainly does not definitely now express “to begin” in this part of Suffolk. Vigfússon says, “No instance of this usage is recorded in old Icelandic, but the English usage shows that it must be old.” Old, certainly, the usage must be, but not necessarily old in Icelandic; nor need it have come from the Danish element in the ancestors of East Anglians, but from others. Indeed, there is in the Suffolk country speech much cautiousness and non-committal. The rustic’s expression of a wish to do is by, “I don’t mind if I do,” “I don’t object.” And this feeling may have led to the circumlocutory and less positive “fare to do.”

Now I cannot venture to speak authoritatively about the amount of Norse or Danish blood in Suffolkiens, but it is probably not nearly so much (at least inland) as in the Norfolk fen-dwellers, broad-men, and coast-folk. In their qualifying and cautious speech (exemplified by “fare” and otherwise) they differ much from the bluntness of the Norsemen.

And it may be remarked that going to sea is especially repugnant to your genuine Suffolk inlander. Hardly a boy ever goes to sea from the villages hereabouts; they think that those who go on the water are almost sure to be drowned. Certainly they do not recall or resemble the Egils, Ingolfs, or Gunnlaugs, of the Sagas: the “hardy Norseman” whose “house of yore was on the wave.”

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The District Secretary for Somerset (Rev. C. W. Whistler) writes :—

#### THE NORSEMEN IN SOMERSET.

THERE is not much to report from the Somerset district. It may be a question whether some further research might not prove the existence of pre-Saxon settlements of Northmen along our Severn coasts, as they undoubtedly existed on the opposite shore of “Demetia.” But we need more members in this somewhat wide district.

It may be possible that one or two names in the Quantock country, which are usually taken as referring to the British of Devon and westward, refer to such settlements, and I may specially mention “Williton” and “Will’s Neck,” and perhaps Wellington, though this last is not so certainly named from the “Wealas” as the other two. By the time that the Saxons had conquered Devon and Cornwall, the Briton was hardly so definitely foreign as to give his appellation to a town as being his special habitation in his own country, more especially as there can certainly have been no sort of extermination of the British here. It is far more likely that Williton, the “Town of the Wealas,” was the slightly inland settlement, on the ancient road, of Northern colonists, who held, and perhaps made, the port of Watchet, foreigners alike to Saxon and Briton.

“Will’s Neck” is a *col* of the Quantocks, and the name may be either a remembrance of the ancient traders who crossed it from west to east, or of the site of some battle against foreign invaders, not necessarily British. The old “way of the army,” the “Hare Knap,” runs, as its name implies, along a ridge of the hills far to the north of Will’s Neck.

#### SURVIVAL OF AN ODINIC RIDDLE.

I met with a very curious riddle not long since, asked me here by a village child, which, at all events, has an

identical Norse counterpart, and which may well be a relic of Norse settlement—

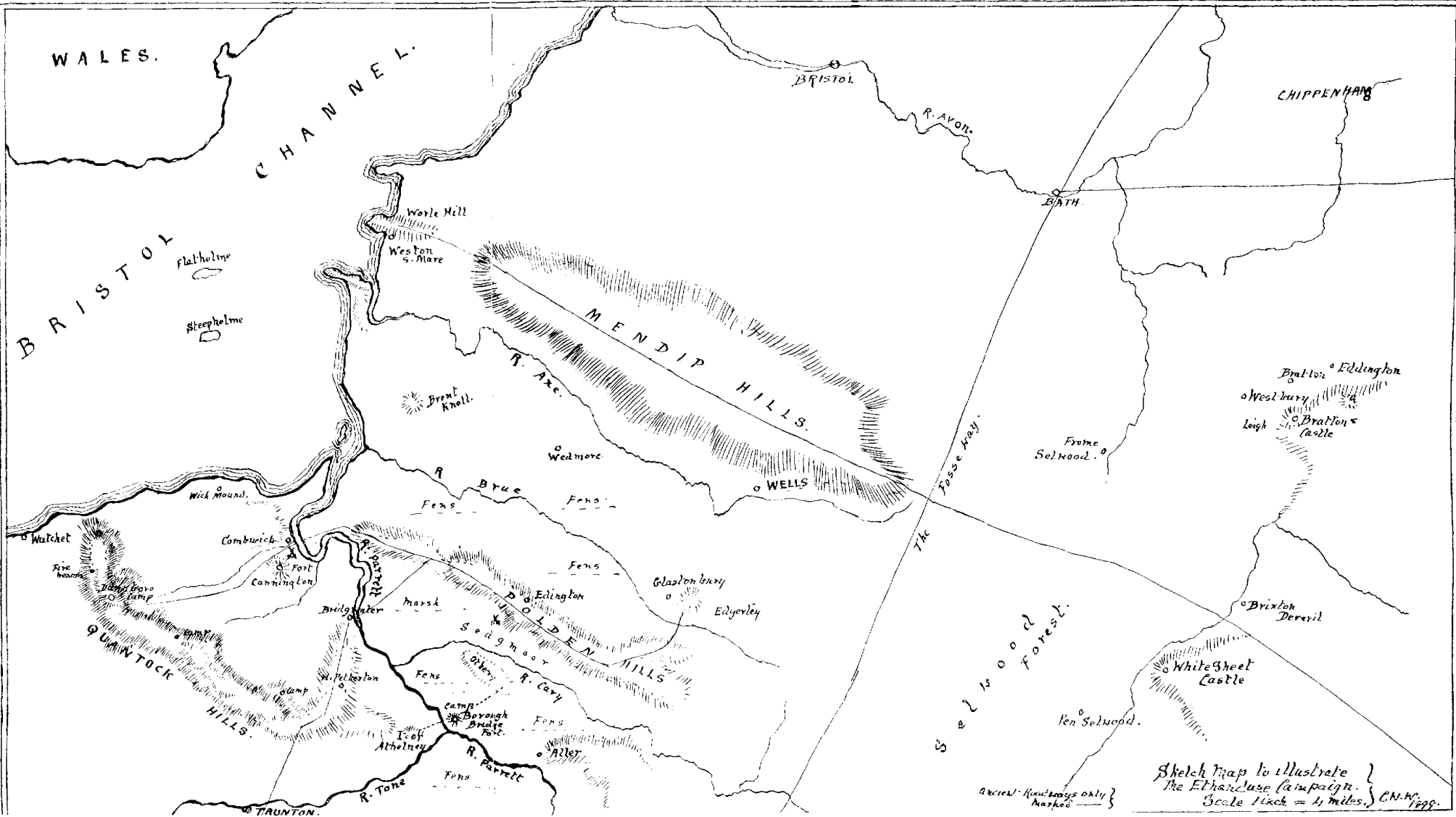
“ Four walkers,  
Two lookers,  
Two crookers,  
Four hangers,  
One wiggle waggle.  
What do her be ? ”

The answer is, of course, “ Her do be cow ! ”

The Norse riddle occurs in the series proposed by Odin, in the disguise of Gest, to King Heidrek, and runs thus—

“ Four are walking,  
Four are hanging,  
Two showing the way,  
Two keeping dogs off,  
One lags behind  
All his days,  
That one is always dirty.”

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# ETHANDUNE, A.D. 878—KING ALFRED'S CAMPAIGN FROM ATHELNEY.

BY THE REV. C. W. WHISTLER.

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It is not too much to say that the campaign from Athelney, which culminated in the decisive victory of Ethandune, and was followed by the "Frith of Wedmore" as its full reward, is one of the most important, and at the same time one of the most neglected, events in our own history, if not in that of the whole warlike North. For besides its effects on the result of the long struggle between Dane and Saxon, the fact that here for the first time recorded, victory, complete and enduring in result, was gained for a weak force by actual generalship, properly speaking, as opposed to the mere leading of a fighting line, marks a new stage in the progress of the art of war among our forefathers.

Certainly up to the date of Ethandune (878 A.D.) we are told of nothing to equal Alfred's achievement. The forces opposed to him were immensely superior to his own in every way, for England, in her long isolation, had by no means kept pace with the kindred nations in the matter of efficiency in warfare. Strategy and weapons alike were those of the days of the first wars that had won the land from the Welsh, and had sufficed for the settling of the question of supremacy among the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, while in the North there had grown, out of constant warfare, an advance in every point but that of actual generalship.

The long Saxon spear, however terrible it had been

against the half-Roman weapons of the Welsh, was no match for the axe and long sword, which could shear its shaft and repeat the blow before the short seax could be of any avail, and it seems certain that the defensive armour of the North was far more elaborate than that of England. Again, in the all-important matter of discipline the invaders were far advanced beyond the men of the hastily summoned levies who came up at the call of the Sheriffs, only hoping for speedy victory and return to their homes. However mixed a Danish host might be, it had always a steady and reliable nucleus in the men of the seaboard, whom annual Viking cruises had trained in the prompt obedience to orders and reliance on their leaders which makes a sea-trained force always formidable; while the permanent followers of the English chiefs, their housecarles, were few, and their organisation was of no use to the army as a whole.

And besides all these advantages, there was one thing which gave the invader an immense superiority over the invaded—the definite battle formation, the terrible “swine-array,” or wedge. This seems to have come into general use among the Northern nations about A.D. 700, the date usually given for the battle of Bravöll, for it is recorded that when the old king, Harald Hilditönn, saw his opponents, in the great duel that was to give him a hero’s ending, drawn up in a “swine-array,” he said, “I had thought this a secret known only to Odin and myself. It would seem that Allfather is deserting me at the last.” Maybe the old hero’s name, “The War-tooth,” bears witness that he was indeed the first to drive that irresistible fang, tipped with such warriors as that axeman who kept the whole English army at bay on Stamford bridge, into the heart of an opposing line and break it into two disorganised sections. But if it were the invention of one man, or the natural result of years of warfare, here in England our chiefs seem never to have learnt it, possibly because the national weapons, long spear and short seax, did not lend themselves to any formation but line or mass.

In itself the wedge formation is primitive, and but the first step in advance from the line—the Romans used it in the early days of their wars, but superseded it as time went on by the ordered line, in which every arm was represented and had its own part to play in every probable turn of a fight—yet it was the only real advance made in Northern warfare until the time of Alfred, and then, from despairing Wessex, came an as yet to the Danes unknown science, the craft of the general.

No wonder that Alfred's people thought that the wonderful plan of campaign that reduced the hitherto victorious Danes to entire submission was a direct inspiration from Heaven, sent in the dire need of Christian men against the heathen, for it was as wonderful to them as the "swine-array" to the men of the Norse king. To the Danes this new departure from the ancient ways of war was nothing short of bewildering. Doubtless to them also this craft seemed as a gift to Alfred from the God whom he served, and as such by no means to be withstood. They had no need to fear meeting the English forces in the open field, for even if by some turn of fate the actual battle went against them the result would be much the same. Whether in victory or defeat the levies would at once disperse after battle, and leave the way open for advance, and the hardest trial of an English leader was to keep any force, with which to strike the second blow that should secure an advantage gained, together. But from the day of Ethandune forward the fear of Alfred was on his foes in a new way. How or when he might strike next, or what unknown force he might have in reserve, was beyond calculation. No man had made war thus in all the time gone by, and they were powerless.

I have spoken rather of the campaign than of the battle, for the latter is not by any means the important point. In the case of other of our decisive contests, as, for instance, in the later case of Hastings, there had been no campaign as usually understood. The forces sought each

other and met, and the matter was ended on the one field. But from the day of his flight to the fens, no move made by Alfred was without its end to be served. One occurrence was possibly unforeseen, namely, the landing of Hubba, but not certainly so, and in the end may have been rather fortunate than otherwise, but in any case the great plan could hardly have failed in final success.

And I have said that this is one of the most neglected events in our history, for it is invariably passed over with a few words in any book that one may choose to take up. Yet in the case of any battle of equal or less importance fought subsequently to the Norman conquest we should certainly, were the records available, be given full details of the affair. And in the case of Ethandune there are, as the late Bishop Clifford pointed out to the Somerset Archæological Society in 1876, ample materials preserved by the older chroniclers for the reproduction of the whole campaign, if only some knowledge of the country involved is brought to bear on the research.

What our books have told us is practically this, that from his hiding in Athelney the king suddenly emerged at the head of a force sufficient not only to inflict a severe defeat on the Danes under a veteran and successful leader, but also to besiege the beaten force for a fortnight and compel surrender on his own terms; but how this remarkable stroke of generalship was carried out we are not told. Possibly our authority may speak of Chippenham as the stronghold of the Danish army, and complicate matters for us by-and-bye, when we realise that between there and Athelney some fifty miles intervene, so that, unless that intervening country swarmed with Danes, there would certainly have been no reason for Alfred, with all Devon behind him moreover, to have remained in hiding, while if he must needs do so, the very Danes who kept him in the fen would have taken the news of his new levy to headquarters, and the implied surprise must have been a failure.

Presently, as we pursue the subject further, we find that

Alfred must actually have had a strong force in the field at the time that he had been described as lost in the fenland, for he fought the mighty Hubba, and won the magic Raven banner from him, with the men of Devon. And one day, perhaps, the Great Western express, on its way past Bridgwater to Taunton, takes one within sight of Athelney, and there, plain to be seen, is the high, triply-walled earthwork at Borough Bridge which Alfred and his thanes raised while they lay in the tiny island a mile away across the river and marshes, an evidence to every Dane on the surrounding hills that some leader, if not the king himself, was yet in existence. Then one recalls the statement that from Athelney the king and his few followers continually harassed the Danes by sudden attacks, after which they would retreat to their fastness in the fen, and one realises that this was the base of these sorties, but at the same time, it becomes very evident that the enemy must have been in force somewhere close at hand on the borders of the wide-stretching fenland.

Putting all these evident details together, it is plain that some other explanation must be sought for the king's movements than the time-honoured and careless statements that we have grown accustomed to. We can hardly believe that Chippenham and Edington, in far-off Wiltshire, were the points at which Alfred aimed, and one is puzzled, perhaps, as to how they came to be pitched upon in the first place, though we know that a statement once made and noticed is usually followed, so long as it seems to come from a reliable authority. And in this case the original identification comes from Camden, and, of course, has been blindly followed, though he had a casual way of connecting these far-off historic events with places which he happened to know, if the name fitted, regardless of the possibility of a duplication of name, as in the case of Knut's last battle with Ironside, where he gives the far inland Ashdon as the scene of the fight, instead of Ashingdon on the coast—misled, one would think, by his acquaintance with the former, and the proximity of the Bartlow tumuli.



It is easy to see, too, how he has been misled in the case of the Athelney campaign, for the only town mentioned in the chronicles is Chippenham, and there is an Edington close at hand, whose distance from Athelney corresponds nearly enough with the recorded march made by the king.

But the duplication of names is rather a feature of Wessex generally, and if we can induce ourselves to abandon the old identifications, which can by no means be brought to harmonise with the facts of the campaign as given by the chroniclers, it is possible to bring out the progress of events most clearly, and with some more definite appreciation of Alfred's powers as a general. We can safely follow Dr. Clifford's lead in this matter, as he was perfectly acquainted with the country, and deeply versed in the various chronicles which relate to the period. His paper on the subject of the places named by them is, however, almost forgotten, as it would seem, although in trying to follow out the military aspect of the matter it soon becomes evident that he was right in what seemed a bold departure from received ideas. It may be as well to give at once the chief sources from which our knowledge of events come. The "Saxon Chronicle" and Asser's life of Alfred stand in the first place, as contemporary; the former possibly and the latter certainly so. Our dates are from the "Chronicle," whose account of events is curt and without detail, while Asser fills up the gaps in this respect. After these come the eleventh and twelfth century writers, who, no doubt, record the current traditions of the time, if they had not, as is most likely, access to records which have been lost. Some simply follow the "Saxon Chronicle," or Asser, but add incidents and details of the greatest interest to us, as they materially assist in clearing up difficulties here and there. Ethelweard, Henry of Huntingdon, Florence of Worcester, and Simeon of Durham, all wrote in the eleventh, and Ingulf, Matthew of Westminster, and Brompton belong to the twelfth century school of monastic writers, and all are worth collating for light on the Alfred period.

There is one point which comes out more or less clearly in tracing the course of events which led up to the retreat to the island, and that, one that is hardly noticed, if at all, and therefore may be worth mention, specially as it has its bearing on our subject. When the definite tide of invasion with intent to occupy England set in from Denmark in the year 865, the prime movers in the project were the three "sons of Lodbrok," Ingvar, Halfdan, and Hubba, and there seems little doubt that they had planned an equal division of the country they meant to conquer among them, Ingvar taking Mercia and East Anglia, Halfdan Northumbria, and Hubba Wessex. Other chiefs were of necessity associated with them, as "host-kings," but, with one exception, we hear little of them, Lodbrok's sons being evidently supreme. What relationship these actually held with the hero, Ragnar, it is almost impossible to say, for while Northern authorities claim actual sonship, their excuse for invasion of East Anglia after peace made was vengeance for the death of their father at the court of King Eadmund. Probably we may not be far wrong if we consider them grandsons of Ragnar, and sons of a second Lodbrok, who kept the old and honoured names alive in them. However this may be, the partition was, in the case of the two first-named brothers, duly carried out. There is no need for us to go through the events that followed the invasion; but by the year 876 the whole of the country north of the Thames was completely and beyond hope of recovery in the power of the Danes, and only Wessex, saved for the time by the nine pitched battles of 871, still kept her independence, and remained to be conquered for Hubba. Warned by her stout resistance, the invaders had turned back to make their footing sure in the already conquered country before again crossing the Thames, and had done their work thoroughly. Halfdan had gone to his kingdom, Northumbria, and was apportioning it among his followers in full settlement, while Ingvar, called to Denmark by some trouble that had, as the Danish authorities say, arisen in

his absence, had handed over the sovereignty of Mercia and the eastern counties to Guthrum, the one other of the host-kings whose name is only too well known to us. He, therefore, was left to co-operate with Hubba in any further operations, and suddenly, in 876, the invasion of Wessex began in earnest. The host surprised Alfred, who may have been at sea yet with his first few ships, as a cruise is recorded just previously, by a march from Cambridge through the heart of his country to Wareham, where they evidently expected the arrival of a new fleet from the eastward, if not from Denmark. Alfred besieged them, and made terms with them, and then, possibly for the first time, realised that a Danish host was composed of the followers of many independent chiefs, who were by no means bound to their "king" and his peace-makings, as were his own people. For, after oaths taken and hostages given for departure from Wessex, a strong section of the Danes, many of whom were new-comers to England, cut through the Saxon lines, after what seems to have been a sharp cavalry engagement, and plunged yet deeper into Wessex, establishing themselves in Exeter. Alfred followed them, leaving, for some reason, the remaining Danes in Wareham, possibly knowing that there were divided counsels at work, and trusting that the "frith" would be kept by these.

But there was the coming fleet to be guarded against, and, needing every man ashore, the king entrusted his ships "to certain Vikings," and sent them to intercept it. And here is a point of immense interest, for it is not hard for us to see who these Vikings were. Certainly they could not be Danes, and Frisians were traders rather than warriors. They must have been Norsemen, hereditary, and therefore trustworthy, foes of the Dane, and always ready to join any leader who would help them to a fight. And there were many Norsemen in the Channel just at this time, for in the previous year Rolf Ganger himself had wintered quietly in England, where he had had the vision which sent him across to "Valland" to win his

new dominion ; and the stream of emigration from Norway, where the high-handed methods of Harald Härfager and Jarl Rognvald were causing so much unrest, was still following him. Our sorely tried king could not be slow to make use of such formidable allies when the long ships put in to the southern havens to refit or to hear whither the mighty son of Rognvald had gone, if indeed he might not be busy in conquering England herself. If this was the first time that Norsemen fought at the side of English it was not to be the last, as Brunanburg is witness, and we might date the friendly rivalry between Härfager and the great Athelstan from this beginning.

For the king's servants, as the new allies are called, did well and valiantly, meeting the invading fleet, which had been delayed by storm—in which the vessels had suffered severely—off Swanage as they bore up for the Poole inlet, at the head of which Wareham stands, and annihilating it. We may gather that the Danes were unprepared to meet any opposing fleet, and were driven to sea, to meet a fresh gale on a lee shore, 120 ships being lost in battle or gale. The English fleet must have sheltered in Poole harbour from force of weather, and it is not surprising therefore that the Danes yet there made the best of their way to Exeter, following the other part of their force. Alfred did not hinder them, the risk of a front and rear attack if a sortie were made from the town being plainly too great ; but, once they were within the walls, he penned them there, and they surrendered. He must have been a master of leaguer, though of course no supplies would come into the town when once the raiding parties were ended.

This seemed to be the end. The king took what hostages he chose for the immediate departure of the host from Wessex, and they went back by the way they came, leaving the country in peace, at least for a time.

Then followed an unheard-of terror. In the depth of the following winter, which we incidentally learn was unusually severe, some time in the middle of January the

Danish host suddenly left Gloucester, their winter quarters, returned, and took Chippenham once more. The English had, of course, no force in the field, the Christmas-time feasting was hardly over, and the king fled to Athelney.

Where he was when the blow fell we are not told. Almost certainly, therefore, he was keeping the traditional open house at the "royal Vill" of Chippenham itself, and the Danes had hoped to take him there. If not at Chippenham, he must have been close at hand, for the enemy were hard on him when he fled. Had he been elsewhere, we should certainly have been told, moreover; while that the enemy sought him there would seem self-evident to the chroniclers.

In Athelney, for a time at least, Alfred seems to have given way to despair, and we hear of visions sent to comfort him. But however much his first flight to the fen was a matter of necessity, there is no doubt that before very long he chose to remain there for strategic reasons. He knew the country well, having private possessions of his own in the district, and it was impossible for him not to see that the advantages of his position were many. For Athelney is as it were an outpost on the southern frontier of the strongest natural "quadrilateral" in Wessex, and one can hardly find such another in England. Kenwalch had driven the Welsh into this refuge country to Petherton in 658, and even now the dialect retains traces of the mixed occupations by race after race, differing in some particulars from that of the rest of West Somerset.

Roughly speaking, this quadrilateral is some twelve miles in extent from the Bristol Channel, which forms its northern frontier, to the fens of the Tone which guard the southern; and in the other direction, the average distance from the camp-crowned Quantock Hills on the west to the tidal, and fen bordered, waters of the Parrett may be some eight miles. The great circular refuge camp of Dowsborough, or Danesborough ("Dinas-beorh," one would say, for the camp dates back to far British days,

and the Saxon who heard the place called "Dinas" would naturally take the term for a proper name, and add the duplicate in his own tongue), and a chain of lesser forts, some Roman, keep the line of the Quantocks, from which a defending force at the worst could retreat to the fastnesses of Exmoor and beyond, while where the hills inland slope to the Tone fens, Ina's strong town of Taunton completes the western frontier. From Taunton to what is now Bridgwater the southern line of defence is the deep belt of fenland along Tone and Parrett and around their junction—a mile or so from Athelney, which lies about midway between the two towns—while what we may call the eastern boundary is formed by the tidal waters of the Parrett, whose mouth is guarded by an ancient hill-fort at Comwich, about which there is more to say.

Here, then, Alfred had a new base, and a country unharried, in which he might gather the Devon men at least. Across the fens no force could make its way except by the tracks known only to the few serfs who dwelt among the meres and mosses on the ridges of firm ground here and there. The old Saxon town of Taunton kept the western causeway, and the older Roman works of "ad Pontem," now Bridgwater, guarded the one bridge across the Parrett, so that it needed but a few well-organised men to keep the Quantock sanctuary untouched. And here, therefore, Alfred began to make his preparations for one more attempt.

There were now two Danish forces to be reckoned with—that overrunning the country from Chippenham, under Guthrum, and that under the more terrible Hubba, which was now wintering, with the fleet which had presumably left the upper waters of the Severn in the preceding autumn, in the district of South Wales—Demetia—across the channel. With spring, this fleet might be looked for at any time, and that either as bringing reinforcements to Guthrum, or with the more dangerous intention of making a landing on the Devon coast, and co-operating by means

of a rear attack. That the latter was likely was to be inferred from the inactivity of the Chippenham host, which made no further advance into Wessex as the spring came on. At all events, Alfred prepared against it, and by March he had a strong western force in the field under Odda, the Devon earl, as is plain by the next move of the Danes. Where this force was gathered is not certain; it may have been at Exeter or at Taunton, or in the Danesborough camp on the Quantocks, which is, perhaps, as likely as anywhere, from its position with reference to Athelney and the line of coast to be watched as well.

The expected landing came with the first possibility. On or about the 21st of March, Hubba's fleet of 23 ships left Demetia and landed his men, under the terrible raven banner of Lodbrok, somewhere in Devon, in the immediate neighbourhood of a fortress called by the chroniclers, with varied spelling, Kinwith or Cymwich castle.

Here we need an accurate location for a forgotten battle that should have its place in our memory, for the sake of the name of Devon, and here again old conjectures have made a difficulty for us. The site of Hubba's landing is usually given, if mentioned at all, at a non-existent and presumably, therefore, submerged site at Apeldore, near Bideford. This identification began with Leland, and is quoted by Spelman, and followed accordingly by Camden, and after him by the rest. None of the chronicles mention Apeldore, however, and Dr. Clifford traced Leland's statement which Spelman copied to a reference to a battle at Apeldore in Kent in 893. There is no castle corresponding to that required in the neighbourhood of Bideford, whence the notion that it must have been submerged. Nor is it at all easy to see why Hubba should have landed at a point whence he must cross first the Taw and then the wilds of Exmoor in order to come to touch either with Alfred or Guthrum. Moreover, Brompton records the presence of Alfred himself at the first battle which followed the landing, and at that time he was in Athelney. It is evident that we have good grounds at least for seeking the

site of Hubba's landing elsewhere in the Devon of Alfred's time than so far west as the lost site on the Taw. And in those days Devon meant the last conquest of the Saxons, the Roman province of Damnonia, whose eastern border was the river Parrett, in whose waters the coming fleet must have at least been expected, if it was to co-operate with Guthrum.

We have no need to go further. At the first available landing-place in the Parrett we find the very name of the castle and the ancient fort itself, exactly corresponding to the description given by Asser from his own knowledge of the place. Combwich is the name to-day—and Kymwich is that given by one chronicler, the rest varying it from Kinwith to Cynuit—of the tiny port in the Parrett that is dominated by what we call Cannington Park, a new manorial title for the strange conical hill that yet has the crumbling remains of the ancient British walls around its crest, "fortified after our manner," Asser, who was a Welshman, says. Whoever planned the works was certainly a master of his art, for the fort is practically impregnable; but it is waterless, the formation being an outcrop of mountain limestone, and this one weakness is duly noted by the old writers as having much to do with the final event of the landing.

Here, then, at Combwich, Hubba landed with some 2,000 men—the complement, to be more exact, of 23 long ships—and at once Odda, the earl with the Devon levy, marched to oppose him. From the fen came Alfred and his thanes to join Odda, and, on the authority of his kinsman Ethelweard, had a narrow escape in the severe defeat that ensued on the first meeting of the forces, the Danes having possession of the field. In the rout that followed there were some, however, who held together, Odda, with about 600 men, taking refuge in the fort, where the victorious Danes at once proceeded to besiege them, not caring to waste men in a hopeless assault on a place that would be untenable immediately for lack of water, while it needed but three strong posts on the



rising ground east, west, and south of the fort to complete the investment, the fourth side being kept by the tidal stream that forms the harbour, or “Pill,” to use the local term, with the swamp of the “cwm wych” itself, through which it ran, wider and deeper then than now.

Then Hubba made the mistake of underrating the value of men driven to desperation, and, *perperam agens*, sent a body of his men across the river, as it would seem, to raid the fertile grazing land on the eastern bank, and the fall of the tide (some 15 to 23 feet) cut him off from them, the Parrett mud banks being impassable, except in one place where there is an ancient ford, impassable to any but a native, and that only at “low water springs.”

Odda saw, and was not slow to take, the advantage of more equal numbers. He addressed his men, reminding them that there was but a choice of deaths before them, and that it was better to die sword in hand than to perish slowly by starvation and thirst—and one may imagine what followed. The desperate Saxons came across their ramparts with no thought but to die, and fell on Hubba and his Danes, probably disposing of one of the besieging camps before the next knew that their lines were attacked, and then meeting the rest in detail. Hubba fell, and the local tradition records that the Danish force was exterminated, with the exception of one boy (the Danish boy of Wordsworth’s unfinished poem, written during his stay on the Quantocks).

To-day one may identify the spot where the banner—“the Raven”—stood and the last stand of the Danes was made, for the hill-top which is between the fort and the river, where Hubba himself would certainly have chosen his own station during the siege, is covered with the graves of the dead. They lie, stripped of all their arms, buried in shallow trenches, feet to head, and in some cases which I have lately found, face downward, and with the stones next the body—even on the face—evidences of hasty battle-field interment. One skull that I disinterred had the jawbone fractured in two places, but beyond the finding

of a broken spearhead, there is nothing left to help fix the date of the burials. I have, however, found a hip bone stained green with the presumable decay of some bronze buckle, or may be sword-hilt.

It is noteworthy too that, even now, the "wild hunt" is said to pass over the old camp and across to the Quantocks, as if there were some memory of the Valkyrie who should choose out the heathen heroes.

Odda did not wait for the return of the men from across the river, but made a rapid retreat. The tradition of the extermination of the Danes being referred to the Danesborough camp points to that as his next station, and there is no nearer refuge. At all events, the Danes on their return buried their fallen chief near the ships, and marched at once to join Guthrum, who was, as we shall see, on his way to meet the fleet from Chippenham.

Camden has been quoted as saying that Hubba's grave existed in his time, but he himself is quoting from Brompton. It is not known now, for the floods of the Parrett must have long ago swept it away, if it was near the river. There is, however, a large tumulus, mostly composed of stones, and so far corresponding to the description of that raised over Lodbrok's most mighty son given by Brompton, on a hillside overlooking what has quite lately been an inlet of the sea where the ships would be well berthed, slightly west of the Parret mouth, but in position relative to the fort quite possible as the landing-place. Hubba's name is not attached to it, but it is of sufficient note to have several definite legends attached to it. One in particular it shares with many Northern mounds—the old tale of the Pixies broken baker's "peel," and the cake made for the man who mended it. The mound is unsearched as yet, but its position halfway up the hillside seems to point to a burial from the ships that lay on the strand a stone's throw distant.

(Dr. Clifford points out another mound, on the level, and a mile or so distant from the shore, as a possible

“Hubbelowe,” but exploration proved it the site of a forgotten windmill. He believed also that the course of the river had left this vicinity, which would seem likely from all analogy, but last year the discovery of British pottery refuse on the marsh near the river proved that the outfall of the river has altered little, if at all.)

Now began Alfred's great planning, for at last he had the whole Danish host before him, and his men had learnt that the enemy was not altogether invincible. The moral effect of the death of their most terrible chief and the loss of the magic banner must have been very great on the Danes also. For once there was a Saxon force in the field which they had cause to fear, and which must be watched. The remainder of Hubba's men would not underrate the strength of the force which had inflicted on them a loss that is variously stated at from 800 to 1,200, the former being probably correct as the number accounted for in the two days' fighting.

Two main points were now in Alfred's mind—to keep the Danish force within striking distance, and to raise sufficient force of his own to crush it once for all. So long as Odda's men were within the quadrilateral they were not only safe as a nucleus of a western levy, but a constant danger to the Danes, who could only win their way into the refuge land at immense loss.

It therefor became necessary to make as much of the force already known as possible, and therefor, about Easter, the king and his thanes commenced the camp at the junction of the rivers Tone and Parrett which we now call “Borough Mump.” For this work the river had to be bridged, and a causeway led to it across the swamp from Athelney, the remains of both remaining at the present time. Asser describes the fort with much enthusiasm, and it is indeed very strong with its triple lines of earthworks encircling what seems to be a more or less natural mound. At all events, it is so large that a labourer of the place from whom I tried to gain some tradition of its building was of opinion that it could only

have been made "in them days when men worked for a penny a day." There was no remembrance of the royal hands that had toiled on the raising.

The position of the fort in itself is secure from attack from the Polden or Hamdon hills on east and south, owing to the wide fenland and swamps of several river systems, and Alfred, in placing his fort on the *eastern* bank of the Parrett, provided against a possible forcing of the Quantock district. An attack from that direction would be stopped by the river after the strip of fen around Athelney had been crossed.

But if any force from the "burgh"—Bridgwater—had attempted to march on Athelney from the north, it would have had to fight its way across the Petherton heights, where the Welsh turned to bay in the days of Kenwalch, before reaching a point whence to cross the fens. Here Odda's levies would meet them on the first sign of movement, and did he defeat them as he had defeated Hubba, their case would have been hopeless, as pent in the quadrilateral.

From this fort the next move was to make a causeway still eastward across the fens towards the bold line of the Polden Hills which, running from Glastonbury to the sea between the Parrett and Brue rivers, bound the level mosses of Sedgmoor, and were the most likely position to be chosen by Guthrum from which to watch the unlooked for rising of the strong fenland fort. This causeway gave Alfred access to the long island of Othery, which runs yet further towards the Poldens, and now it is certain began the continual harassing of the Danes from the fen of which we read. Now, too, they must have been massed on that long ridge, and we can name the bold height which they chose for their position—Edington Hill—the Ethandune which has been overlooked. There they made some slight earthworks which still remain, but it would seem from the chroniclers that they also held some fortress which is nameless, but strong enough to stand a long siege. It is quite possible that this was the old fortress

of "Burgh," which is now amplified to Bridgwater, for Guthrum would hardly leave the one exit from the quadrilateral open to Odda and his force, while he was quite strong enough to hold a *tête-du-pont* besides the Edington position, reinforced as he had been by Hubba's men, to whose help he must have advanced on the news of the defeat, even if he had not left Chippenham in order to meet the fleet before the landing actually took place.

It is now certain that he was watching Alfred, for, "seeing that there was danger in delay as the king's army increased daily," he called in his more distant outposts. And this strengthening of his forces was no doubt due to the constant (Ethelweard says daily) sallies from the fens, which would give the impression of a far more numerous gathering than existed on the west of the Parrett.

This position lasted for seven weeks, dating from Easter when the Athelney stronghold began to rise in full view from Edington Hill. The story of the king's visit in disguise to the Danish camp belongs to this period; but, if this is but legend (which is told also of Eadmund Ironside), Alfred was employed in sending messengers through the southern counties in preparation for his great stroke.

Guthrum's attention was fixed on the Quantock quadrilateral and the fen, and now there was a possibility of raising another force, unsuspected by him, in his rear. By Whitsuntide this was accomplished, the word had gone to the southern thanes, and the place of assembly was named. On May 11th the king left the fen and rode to "Ecgbyrht's stone on the east of Selwood," a place which is always and rightly identified with Brixton Deveril, on the borders of the three counties of Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, and here he was met by the men of those three counties and of Hants who had not yet fled across the seas. Dr. Clifford suggests that the ancient encampment known as "White Sheet Castle" may have been the actual gathering place; but, wherever the tryst was kept at Brixton, Alfred made no delay, but marched at once on the enemy.

Now there is actually no mention of a march towards Chippenham in any of the chronicles. The nearest approach to it is in the statement of Ethelweard, that "King Alfred fought against the host that was at Chippenham at a place called Ethandune"—an identification of the particular host, *i.e.*, the Chippenham host, that was the cause of the trouble at the time. The actual names given of the stages of the march are from Ecgbyrht's stone to Æcglea, or Iglea, or Okely, and thence to Ethandune. On the supposition that the route was towards Chippenham, the former place is only conjecturally identifiable; but with Guthrum at Edington on Poldens, the march is easily traceable.

One would expect that the halt to be made on the night before the battle would be at some place within easy striking distance of the Danish camp, and, following the ancient road from Brixton to the ridge of the Poldens, we come on the place at once. Hidden among the hills around Glastonbury are the level meadows of Edgarley, or Egerley, whence to Ethandune, along the gradually rising Poldens, is but eight miles, distance and position alike making the halt secure from observation. The place corresponds well with the description of it given in the "Life of St. Neot," as a day's march from Brixton, and protected in front by marshy ground. The twenty miles or less from Brixton would not be more than the Saxons, unencumbered by baggage, could cover in a forced march easily enough, and we shall hardly be wrong in identifying this position as that of the halt on the march.

What followed on the ensuing morning is inexplicable, unless our identifications are correct. The Danes were ready for battle, but on the other hand the Saxons surprised them by capturing the heights in their rear. Guthrum therefor must have left the Edington position and descended to the level westward, whence he had been so long expecting attack, and there may therefor have been a preconcerted arrangement that Odda, with the Western force, should make a feint on the fortress held by

the Danes, and into which they were eventually driven either from Taunton or the Quantocks. If we are right in thinking that this fortress was at the Bridge, the reason for the abandonment of the strong hill position is evident.

We may notice, in confirmation of this unmentioned co-operation, that in the first place Alfred rode from Athelney with no force behind him, and then that there is no mention of the men of Devon in the accounts of the gathering at Brixton. Odda and his men must therefore have been left on Quantock side with some definite intention.

The first intimation that Guthrum had of the fact that he was outgeneralled came from his own camp, as the Saxons cheered in defiance of the enemy, whom they saw crossing the level towards the fortress. His men were yet in loose order, another proof that Alfred's force was not that which he was advancing on, for when he heard the shouts he formed up his force "*juxta morem suam aciem disposuerunt*," says Simeon of Durham, in the terrible "swine-array," and turned back to regain the lost vantage ground. His position was, if between Edington and the Parrett, most critical, for he had no exit from the fens except across the Poldens, now barred to him, and the fortress was nothing but a trap, with Devon men on the far side and Alfred on this. Therefore the hills must be retaken at all costs.

Then the battle raged all day long, from the early morning to the evening, as the Danes seem to have tried to force passage after passage across the hills, only to be met and repulsed at every point, until Guthrum made one final charge on the main body of the Saxons, which was still on Edington hill, the men of Alfred's immediate surrounding lying down at the time of this great assault. The magnificent "shield-wall" of the freshly-formed wedge seems to have made an unforgotten impression on the king as he watched its advance, for *Aster* speaks specially of it. The usual arrow flights crossed from either side as the Danes came up the hill, and then,

*surgentes a solo*, Alfred's fresh men charged down and swept the "swine-array" out of existence into a head-long rout.

The Danes made, of course, for the "fortress," which one can only suppose to be Bridgwater, then only known as "Burgh," still probably held by some of Hubba's men to prevent sortie by Odda's force from the "quadrilateral," losing many men in the flight. So close indeed was the pursuit that the gates were closed in the face of many of the fugitives, and no time was given for driving in the cattle. Then Odda would close in from the west, and the siege began.

It lasted for a fortnight, a fact which only the supplies of a town can account for. The place must, therefore, have been more than some old fort strengthened by the Danes, though it may have been but a village within its quick-set "ham" and stockade when they took it in hand. We ourselves know the value of a thorn hedge as a first line of defence—the "zereba" of our desert warfare—but if Bridgwater was the place, there were already the ramparts of the Roman "ad Pontem" as citadel. They remain still, but only as the mound on which the castle of the Norman Walter who gave his name to the town as we know it. Yet even this late name of "Burgh Walter" may give us the clue to identification of the fortress that was but known as the "Burgh" until he owned it.

With the "frith of Ethandune," or Wedmore, that followed we have nothing to do, but there are one or two points that are worth notice. It does not seem to have been one of Alfred's conditions of surrender that Guthrum and his chiefs should become Christians. The suggestion came from themselves in the first place. It may have been prompted by a wish to please the victor who had them so completely in his power, but one would think that there was a deeper reason yet underlying the request. Guthrum, at least, was no stranger to the Faith after his long residence in England, and now at last he must have felt, as Harald Hilditönn had felt before, that the Asir



were no longer on his side. Certainly his Christianity, as evidenced by his strict adherence to the terms so solemnly ratified, was genuine.

Aller, where he was baptised, is close to Athelney, and was probably the one church that had escaped destruction, owing to its position in the fenland, where Alfred's men were masters. Wedmore lies toward the Mendips, and here was probably the one royal house left where Alfred could entertain his godson. There he gave, and Guthrum accepted, the gifts that proved to all men that Alfred was Overlord in very fact.

If one may make a comparison of a small campaign well planned and entirely successful with a far greater one, equally well planned, but without any decisive result, the Athelney campaign, as we have worked it out on the lines indicated by Bishop Clifford, is the same in strategic motive as that of Marengo. In both cases the plan was to hurl an entirely unsuspected force on the enemy as he watched an army already opposed to him.

Alfred's Alps were but the depths of Selwood forest; but the principle is the same, and the victory was that of a great general.

C. W. WHISTLER.

*May 3rd, 1898.*

The Hon. Secretary then exhibited a skull which Mr. Whistler had found in the graves on the outlying hill at Cannington Park, which might, he conjectured, be the burial place of Hubba's fallen host. The speaker had himself visited the spot in Mr. Whistler's company. The dead had apparently been buried in long trenches, which were now cut through by a quarry. He showed a sketch of the situation, and of a grave in which he and Mr. Whistler had seen the bones of two men, buried huddled together, and one of them lying on his face. This pointed to very hasty and irregular interment, and bore out the conjecture that this was a battle burial. Dr. J. G. Garson had examined the skull, and had given the following opinion :—

“ 64, Harley Street, W.,

“ 22nd Nov., 1898.

“ Dear Mr. Major,—The skull you sent to me for examination is that of a young person about 14 years of age. This being so, no reliable data can be obtained from it for determining race characters. I find that the cephalic index, or the relation which the breadth of the head bears to the length, expressed in terms per cent., is 76. This is not inconsistent with its owner being a young Dane, but I cannot say more.—I am, yours truly,

“ (*Signed*) J. G. GARSON.”

We know from the Sagas that lads went out on Viking cruises at a very early age, and the youth of the supposed Dane did not render the battle theory impossible.

A review of Mr. Whistler's paper, by Major A. F. Mockler-Ferryman, Oxfordshire L.I., Instructor in Topography at the Royal Military College, was then read, as follows :—

Apart from the fact that even after their supposed crushing defeat at Ethandune the Danes remained in undisputed possession of the whole of England to the north-east of the Thames and the Watling Street, it is a question in my mind whether Alfred really was a general, whether he actually worked out a plan of campaign, or whether he merely kept his head and took advantage of opportunities—though, perhaps, this would be generalship. With regard to the military organisation of the Saxons, or the want of it, surely the housecarles, who were doubtless small trained bands, would have formed a very valuable leaven of discipline, etc., to any army of the period. It is almost impossible to criticise satisfactorily military operations which took place 1,000 years ago, or to in any way compare them with modern operations. In the case of the Ethandune campaign, our knowledge of what took place is most imperfect; we know nothing about the nature of the country in the sphere of operations. Did

roads exist at the time? Was the country much intersected with fences? Were movements impeded in any way except by swamps and marshes? Many other such matters would enter into the tactical part of the campaign. Then, again, we do not know whether cavalry was employed by either side, though there is mention of a cavalry engagement at an earlier period of the war. If the Danes had cavalry scouts, it seems difficult to understand how Guthrum remained ignorant of Alfred's advance from Brixton, which, according to all accounts, appears to have been a complete surprise. The matter of arms also adds to the difficulty of comparing ancient warfare with modern, for when the actual fighting did not commence until the opposing forces were within 100 yards of each other, there must have been little scope for the "craft of generalship." Still, if we accept the opinion of great strategists, the principles of warfare never change so long as the opposing forces are *equally* armed, *i.e.*, armed with similar weapons, and Alfred's generalship may be therefor compared strategically with that of any other great commander. Rüstow, in his "Fundamental Laws of Strategy," lays down certain fixed principles which, he considers, should influence the plans of a commander, and a glance at the more important of these will, perhaps, assist in determining what claim Alfred had to be considered a great commander:—

(1.) A general should make his own army do as much work as possible, and hinder the enemy from operating, support his own army, and destroy the enemy's.

(2.) Battle is the one aim and object of all combinations of war.

(3.) Secure a victory; render it complete; provide for retreat in case of defeat.

(4.) Make certain of victory by superiority of numbers at the right moment; if necessary, by concentrating his own army and dividing the enemy's.

(5.) The first law of war forbids the division of force, as doing so exposes to the danger of being beaten in

detail. "To attempt to deceive the enemy by leaving a part of the force in his front, and to gain a position in his rear with the remainder of the force, renders the latter force liable to be cut off from its line of retreat in the event of defeat."

Now, let us see what Alfred did (as described in Mr. Whistler's paper) as far as these five laws or principles are concerned.

(1.) Alfred's army (by which is meant the quadrilateral force and the Brixton levies) probably did as much work as possible, and the Athelney party held the Danes in check by frequent sorties, while Alfred launched the Brixton levies to destroy the enemy.

(2.) Battle was Alfred's sole aim on leaving Brixton.

(3.) Alfred secured a victory, rendered it complete; but we have no record that he provided for retreat in the event of defeat.

(4.) We are not told whether the Brixton force was superior in numbers to the Danes.

(5.) If Alfred's Brixton force was not superior in numbers, then he was liable to have his line of retreat cut and to be beaten in detail.

So was Napoleon in the Marengo campaign; but he had come to the conclusion that he could not possibly suffer in this way (from the situation of the enemy). Rüstow's "Laws," and all other strategical theories, however, are doubtless often impossible to put into practice, and no general is worthy of the name unless he is prepared to run a certain amount of risk to gain an important end, even though he violates all the laws of war. Looking at the Ethandune campaign from Mr. Whistler's point of view, and accepting his filling up of details as correct, we find that Alfred left his Athelney force to occupy the attention of the Danes on the Polden Hills, while he secretly led the Brixton levies to cut in on the enemy's rear (or flank). Mr. Whistler says he actually got in on the enemy's rear and above them, *i.e.*, Alfred's force gained the Polden ridge, from which the Danes had

advanced towards Athelney. This seems most improbable. Where was the Danish base? However, accepting this, we come to the matter of the unnamed fortress into which the Danes retired. Mr. Whistler suggests Bridgwater as this fortress, though elsewhere in his paper he distinctly says that "Ad Pontem," which he identifies with Bridgwater, was in Alfred's possession, guarding the one bridge into the quadrilateral. I cannot see how Bridgwater can be identified with the nameless fortress into which the Danes retired, for if they were in possession of it all along, they held the most important entrance into the quadrilateral, and they might have turned the Athelney position whenever they wished. Why did the Danes sit down on the Poldens and watch Alfred building his fort? The distance was some seven or eight miles—could they see anything of what was going on at that distance? The highest point is apparently only 300 feet above Athelney. With regard to the identification of places, the location of the theatre of the operations rests on the identification of four points, one of which, "Ecgbyrht's stone," offers no difficulty. Without doubt this is Brixton, where the three counties (Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset) meet. The other places are all doubtful, viz., (1) Æglea, or Iglea; (2) Ethandune; and (3) the fortress of the Danes. The clues to identification are slight, and may be summarised as follows:—

- (1.) Æglea, or Iglea=a night's march from Brixton.
- (2.) Ethandune=a night's march from Æglea, or Iglea.
- (3.) The fortress=the place to which the Danes retreated after their defeat at Ethandune.

On the identification of these three places depends everything connected with the question of Alfred's generalship (as maintained by Mr. Whistler).

Knowing no more than is contained in Mr. Whistler's paper, I cannot see that there is any proof to establish the sites as he does (shown in blue; the usually accepted identifications are shown in red). Mr. Whistler's reasons are apparently these:—

(1.) Æglea, or Iglea = Edgarley, or Egerley (near Glastonbury); a night's march from Brixton, corresponds with St. Neot's description, protected in front by marshy ground.

(2.) Ethandune = Edington on Poldens; distance correct; corresponds with description.

(3.) Fortress = Bridgwater; surmise; no clue to go on.

Now as to what older authorities say:—

(1.) Æglea, or Iglea. Ingram (1823) and Thorpe (1861) say it is Iley, Wilts (*i.e.*, near Melksham). Ingram supplies a special map ("to illustrate the Iglea of the 'Saxon Chronicle'"), in which is shown "Iley mead," etc., in an angle formed by the Avon and a tributary; low hills around; Melksham and other marshes to westward; distance from Brixton = a possible night march.

(2.) Ethandune. Ingram (in frontispiece map) shows this place between Iley and Chippenham, and identifies it with Heddington, Wilts; distance from Iley, a short march. Thorpe says, "Ethandûn (Heddington?)"

(3.) The fortress. Ingram shows it on his map as Chippenham.

Comparing Whistler and (say) Ingram, without an intimate acquaintance with the geography of the rival localities, I, personally, am inclined to follow Ingram's identifications, chiefly because I do not like "Edgarley, or Egerley," as an interpretation of "Æglea, or Iglea." I think, therefore, that Mr. Whistler should strengthen his argument by stating his reason for converting Æglea into Edgarley. No doubt he has arrived at his identifications after due consideration, but his paper hardly convinces the reader.

I cannot see that there is any proof of Alfred having worked out anything in the nature of a plan of campaign, and, even if we admit Mr. Whistler's identifications, there is no evidence to show either that the Athelney people were intended to co-operate or that they ever *did* co-operate with Alfred and his Brixton levies. There may, of course, be evidence of this in Asser, etc., but Mr.

Whistler does not put it forward. The only things we know for certain are—that Alfred strengthened the Athelney position, which was watched by certain Danes; that seven weeks after Easter Alfred dashed off to Brixton, took command of the county levies, marched to Æglea (one night), thence to Ethandune (one night), fought a battle, defeated the Danes, drove them into a fortress, besieged them for a fortnight, and eventually received their submission.

I offer as a suggestion that Alfred had sent emissaries to the counties of Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset, and that the chiefs had agreed that on a certain day they would assemble their men at the place where the three counties meet, *i.e.*, Brixton. Alfred left Athelney (alone) and rode to Brixton, where he took over command of the levies. They then made a forced march to Iley (near Melksham), where they bivouacked. The Danes, hearing of the advance of Alfred's force, issued from the fortress of Chippenham and took up a position at Heddington. Alfred's force advanced next day from Iley, passing westward and taking the Danes in flank. Then followed the battle of Ethandune and the retreat of the Danes to Chippenham, which Alfred besieged, and, after a fortnight, captured.

It is possible that the levies of the three counties were raised principally (perhaps solely) for the attack of the Danish army at Chippenham, and that Alfred, knowing the difficulty of taking his followers from Athelney, decided to leave them in the quadrilateral to watch the Danish outposts, which were and had been for some time pushed forward from Chippenham.

Now, as to Alfred's generalship:—in the absence of any record, it seems doubtful if he ever really worked out any strategical plan of campaign which would entitle him to be considered a general. In the matter of Athelney and the quadrilateral, Alfred found himself in a position where he and his few followers could, with little labour, make themselves fairly secure from attack. The natural instinct

of self-preservation caused them to strengthen their position. That the Danes were in no great strength in the neighbourhood is perhaps vouched for by the fact that the Athelney fortifications were allowed to be built without opposition. Hence I arrive at the conclusion that the Danes in sight of Athelney were merely a line of outposts pushed forward from Chippenham. If they were anything more it is hardly likely that Alfred would have harassed them; in fact, the raids spoken of were probably only slight skirmishes between the Danish outposts and the men sent out by Alfred to cover the parties working at the fortifications. If the Danes had been in force opposite Athelney they **MUST** have attempted to stop the building of the fort.

We are not actually told that Alfred planned a great campaign against the Danes, and as far as I can see there is no reason to suppose that he did. I am inclined to believe that his first idea was to stand on the defensive at Athelney; he then, perhaps, heard that the men of Wilts, Dorset, and Somerset were ready to take up arms against the Danes at Chippenham, and he decided to lead them in person, leaving his Athelney people to take care of themselves for the time being. The campaign (*i.e.*, the march from Brixton to Iley, and the fight at Ethandune) lasted two days, concluding with a fortnight's siege of the fortress (Chippenham?) Regarding matters in the above light, it is impossible to say whether Alfred had any pretensions to being considered a general; that he was a *leader of men* is, however, certain. He arrived at Brixton, presumably alone; he assumed command of the levies of three counties, and led them within two days to victory. It is fair to imagine that these levies were well-trained and well-disciplined men under their own chiefs, and as we are given no idea as to the numbers of the opposing forces, we can take it for granted that the levies under Alfred were superior in numbers to the Danes. If they were not, it is impossible that they could have invested the fortress for a fortnight and have eventually reduced it to submission.



In the oral discussion which followed, Mr. F. T. Norris said that our gratitude was due to the lecturer for his learned and interesting paper, whatever views we might hold as to the theory he put forward. He himself had seen both positions, and was not at present prepared to give an opinion. He did not think, however, that the supposed Kynwich Castle was a fortification; its alleged ramparts seemed to him to be natural piles of stones covered with soil and overgrowth. Bratton Castle, near Heddington in Wiltshire, identified by Leland, Camden, and the older antiquaries, as the site of the battle, was, however, a most imposing fortification, the handiwork, obviously, of the same builders as those of Battlesden and Scantlebury, near Salisbury, and Maiden Castle, near Dorchester. What was most remarkable about it was its excellent military design, even according to modern notions, and its great strength, making it, well defended, very hard for either side to reduce. He felt bound to take exception to the lecturer's statement that the "swine-array" was only found among the Vikings. Tacitus describes it as the common battle-formation among the Germans, and it should have been well known to the Saxons, both by inheritance and from their sustained relations with the Germanic continent. He rather inclined to the opinion that Alfred's success was due to his bringing an overwhelming force to bear on the Danes at a critical juncture, and when they were weakened in numbers by the drawing off of the Danish forces to aid in the conquest of Neustria. He could not accept the statement that Guthrum was the only leader of note on the Danish side, with the exception of the sons of Lodbrok. The "Saxon Chronicle" records the names of many other Danish leaders, and among them that of "King Bacseg," wounded at the battle of Reading, and whose death left the way open for Guthrum himself to take the leadership of the Danish forces here. He also could not agree that Guthrum's conversion was any other than a diplomatic move due to Alfred's influence, and a stipulation to facilitate the

frith, or peace, arranged at Wedmore. In reply to Mr. Major, who questioned the likelihood of the Danes, an invading, conquering host, throwing up elaborate fortifications at Bratton, or elsewhere, to guard against a foe that had absolutely disappeared, Mr. Norris said that there were historical notices of the Danes building forts. Bratton Castle, too, was one of a series of camps which run along a range of hills facing that portion of Wessex which had not then been subdued by the Danes, and which thus had a distinct strategical value for a foe who, like the Danes, were advancing upon Wessex from the north and east.

Mr. G. M. Atkinson wished to know how it was possible to identify certain forts as Danish or Saxon. It was a point he had always wanted to ask with regard to various camps which antiquaries confidently ascribed to one or another race. As far as he knew you could not get beyond the identification of Danish barrows, and that only after an examination of the relics found therein.

Mr. J. Newmarch was rather disappointed not to have heard more about King Alfred's life in Athelney. The title of the lecture had led him to expect details about the island. For instance, it was hard to see where food supplies for the king and his followers were procured in an island among the marshes.

In proposing a hearty vote of thanks to the Rev. Mr. Whistler for his painstaking disquisition on moot and doubtful points of Alfred's campaign, the President (Karl Blind) said that though Alfred had not been king of England in the present meaning of the word, he yet had maintained and enlarged, amidst enormous difficulties, that corner and foundation stone on which the State structure of England was afterwards raised. Englishmen, Northmen, and Germans—Alfred's nearest kinsmen—were alike interested in everything connected with his memory. In war on land and on sea, in home government, as well as in literature, his name marks an epoch. He did a great deal for the upholding of the strong Anglo-Saxon speech.

Some of the most appreciative biographies and references concerning him were written by Germans, such as Count Stolberg, more than sixty years ago; by the distinguished historian, Lappenberg; and more recently, by Dr. Pauli.

As to the opinion of Mr. Whistler that the warriors of Alfred were mainly armed with the long Saxon spear, and had no axes, it had to be remembered that at the battle of Hastings the Anglo-Saxons had axes—and even stone axes were still used, as it seems to have been proved; which latter circumstance would mark the axe as a traditional weapon of theirs. Although defeated in that battle, they made strong use of their axes in it. The wedge formation of the Danish army—the “swine-head array,” as it had better be called, lest our Scandinavian friends should take offence at the expression “swine-array”—Mr. Whistler thought to be peculiar to the Scandinavians, who said that they had learnt it from Odin. The President, however, supporting a statement of Mr. Norris’s, showed that that battle-array had been already described as a German strategic custom by Tacitus (*acies per cuneos componitur*—“Germania,” vi.). This Roman historian wrote a thousand years before the Danish writer Saxo, in whose work the array in question is also explained as the wedge, cone, or pyramid formation. Even in ancient Vedic India there is a trace of a similar shape of military columns.

Passing to the important subject of the creation of a fleet by Alfred, Karl Blind showed from Asser, the Welsh Bishop, who wrote about the deeds of that king, that Mr. Whistler’s idea of Norsemen—“certain Vikings”—having had that fleet entrusted to them could not be supported by the Latin text. Asser has not the word “Vikings.” He simply says that Alfred had short and long ships built, and that he manned them with sea-rovers (*impositisque piratis*—“Annales Rerum Gestarum Aelfredi Magni”). Norwegians, Danes, and Swedes were certainly sea-rovers. But so were originally the Saxons, too, who even in Roman times harried the British shores. And so

were also other German tribes, like the Frisians. In very olden times the Frisians came over to this country. The Firth of Forth was once called the Frisian Sea (*mare Fresiacum*). Freswick Bay, on the east coast of Scotland, has its name from the Frisians. It is a very nice, clean, and convenient bay to push ashore at. He (the President) had recently seen it during his visit to Scotland, in September last. Freswick Bay, it need scarcely be said, is a twofold description—"wick" itself meaning "bay"; from which the Wickings, or Vikings, have their name. This word "wick," or "wiek," in the sense of bay, occurs in many cases on the German coasts as well as on the Scandinavian shores. Frisians were among the earliest Teutonic arrivals in this country. They came over with Jutes, Saxons, Angles, and other German war-sibs for the conquest of Britain. Prokopios, the Greek historian, who wrote in the sixth century—several hundred years before Alfred's time—says, in his book on the "Gothic War," that Saxons, Angles, and Frisians were then the three chief tribes that held Britain. Now Alfred, it is known, had Frisian shipwrights. Three of his sea captains were Frisians. These Frisians, among whom some Northmen had settled, were not—as the author of the paper read thinks—"traders rather than warriors." Since their first appearance in history the Frisians have been known for their martial qualities, and for their war fleets. Considering all these circumstances, it is certainly more likely that the "sea-rovers" whom Alfred put on his own navy were Frisians, and not Norsemen, and they fought under Alfred against the Danes. We know by clear testimony that though there were feuds between the different Scandinavian branches, they were both equally hostile to the Anglo-Saxons. Hence men of that Northernmost folk might have professed to accept the task of manning Anglo-Saxon ships, and then handed them over to their own countrymen. The Frisians being the nearer kinsmen of the Anglo-Saxons, it is easy to see the greater likelihood of some of them being accepted as a crew for the Anglo-

Saxon navy. Even in an otherwise valuable work, founded on good research, it is asserted that Alfred had a "hired fleet." The fleet was *not* hired, but—as mentioned before—built at the king's order. As to the crew, Richard Green, a trustworthy historian, writes:—"The Norwegian fiords, the Frisian sand-banks, poured forth pirate fleets such as had swept the seas in the days of Hengest and Cerdic." And again, Green states that Alfred did "man his vessels with 'pirates' from Friesland. In one of the battles against the Danes, the "Saxon Chronicle" records that Frisians fell at the side of Anglo-Saxons. In conclusion, the President said he was sure the meeting would unanimously express its best thanks to Mr. Whistler, and he asked those present to signify the same in the usual manner.

Mr. Albany F. Major said that, as far as he could, he would reply on behalf of Mr. Whistler, and before doing so he must express his regret that the lecturer had found it was not possible for him to come up from Somersetshire to read his paper. He himself had had the great advantage of going over the ground with Mr. Whistler in the summer, and entirely adopted his opinions. In one point the lecturer had, he thought, not fully explained the sequence of events according to his theory, namely, with regard to the nameless fortress, "Ad Pontem," which was held by Alfred at first as one of the gateways into the quadrilateral, but finally was the refuge of the Danes after their defeat. The fact was that the landing of Hubba forced the quadrilateral position, and, with the remains of his army on one side, and Guthrum's host on the Poldens on the other side, Alfred would be obliged to evacuate "Ad Pontem," or Bridgwater. But the situation of his Athelney position, among almost impassable marshes, rendered it virtually unassailable. Just as William the Conqueror found it impossible to drive Hereward out of Ely, till treachery came to his aid, so the Danes would be powerless to penetrate the belt of marshes and to interfere with the works by which Alfred strengthened and extended

his position. The Quantock Hills, with their line of camps, afforded a safe refuge to Odda and the Devon men, for the Danes, even though in possession of the river-passage at Bridgwater, could not advance beyond it, leaving Athelney in their rear. The Athelney marshes would supply plenty of fish, wild fowl, etc., for the support of Alfred's following. He disagreed with Mr. Norris as to the supposed fortifications in Cannington Park, and considered the remains were undoubtedly those of dry stone walls, now fallen, and very much overgrown. The lecturer considered the dry stone wall mode of building stamped the works as British, and agreed with the statement of the Welshman, Asser, that Kynwich Castle was fortified after the manner of the British; but he did not understand him to profess to distinguish between Saxon and Danish earthworks. With regard to the question of the manning of Alfred's fleet, the national enmity between Norwegians and Danes, which constantly recurs in the Sagas, would make the former allies, whom Alfred could fairly trust. This hostility did not disappear entirely in foreign warfare, for we read of the Danes and Norwegians waging war on each other in Ireland, and our President has suggested that it may partly account for the failure to entirely subdue that country. We meet with it again in English history when Olaf Haraldsson (the Saint) helps Ethelred against the Danes, captures London from them, and is known as the Protector of the land. Besides this, if Norsemen and Frisians were alike sea-robbers, Alfred could trust one as little as the other. But probably both nations were represented in his fleet. The upholders of the Wiltshire theory overlook one strong argument against it. If the battle of Ethandune was fought near Chippenham, and Guthrum forced to come to terms in that town, why should Alfred take him to Aller, some sixty miles away, to be baptised, and to Wedmore to conclude the peace? The selection of those places is on this theory against all probability; but if the Somersetshire Edington is the Ethandune of the chronicles, the close proximity

and the situation of Aller and Wedmore would explain their selection.

The following written reply to the criticisms offered has since been made by Mr. Whistler :—

It has been a great regret that I was not able to be present and read the paper on the Ethandune campaign personally, but my best thanks are due to Mr. Major for so kindly undertaking the task for me. In addition to the actual reading, he has had to submit to the fire of criticism which I ought to have stood myself; but I have to thank the various critics for their kindness in every respect. With notes of their remarks before me, I will do my best to make some reply, though I fear that the question of the site of the battle can hardly be settled by anything short of a visit to the ground itself. I should not in the least despair of converting the club bodily if they could meet on the spot—at Athelney or Ethandune.

With regard to the difference in weapons, it is quite true that the axe was used at Hastings, but the two centuries had made a vast difference in the English race itself with the coming in of the Danish monarchy of Cnut. The Danish methods of warfare had been adopted with their weapons. Harold's men were Anglo-Danes, and used the Danish axe. The axe is never found with Saxon interments, the arms of the dead chief consisting of spear and seax, and possibly sword, with the shield. Even the sword is not invariable, a peculiarity which has led to the notion that it was not used, but more probably points to the value of the weapon as an heirloom. Judging from this fact and the absence of mention of the axe as a weapon, it seems certain that it was unused by the Saxons until the Danes were incorporated in the nation. The same may be said of the wedge formation. Old as it was, it does not seem to have been used in England.

With regard to the minor point as to the manning of Alfred's first fleet, it is certain that his later vessels were manned by Frisians, but had they been present in this

earliest case they would doubtless, as in the later case, have been mentioned. The most evident pirates ("Vicingas" of the chronicles) of the time were certainly Rolf's Vikings, and the Irish annals will show that it was no unusual thing for Dane and Norseman to fight savagely on a foreign shore. Had the Frisians, if present, been long established settlers of the old migration, they would hardly have been named as pirates, or indeed otherwise than as Alfred's own men.

Combwich Fort, or Cannington Park, as the modern name has it, is certainly in a rueful state of dilapidation (literally) after its countless years of neglect, but it is unmistakably a once-walled fort of the type of Worle hill and some Welsh hill camps. It is marked as such on the ordnance maps, and my friend Mr. Norris is the first antiquary who has doubted it. The pretty plentiful fragments of pottery, of the type of the vessels found at the Glastonbury village, which may be found on the summit, seem to set back its age to far pre-Roman times. It would, of course, be used by any force that had need of a temporary stronghold.

From the very strength of Bratton Castle it would seem impossible that Alfred could take it unobserved by the Danes, or that if the Saxon force was overwhelming Guthrum should have left it. Nor does there seem any reason to account for his having done so in such a manner as to allow Alfred to take it without a struggle, as the chroniclers state was the case with the "Promontorium." It was impossible that the camp at Athelney, conspicuous from every point, could have been allowed by the Danes to remain as a constant menace to them. They must have attempted to stop its building, and to remain at Bratton or Chippenham was hardly the way to do so. Yet on arrival at Edington the fens absolutely prevented attack on it. This was no doubt the evidence of the growing strength of Alfred which made Guthrum call in his men from the towns, and it may be possible that Alfred had learnt (was it in that visit to Guthrum's camp



which is laughed at by our instructors ?) the day on which the fenland ways were to be forced from Edington, and so timed his gathering as to profit by that movement. There is no statement as to the relative numbers of the hosts, both being spoken of as "vast." One may take it that the Saxon was not less numerous, but it is certain that the Danish was the more efficient. It would not seem that Bratton could hold supplies for a vast host during fourteen days' siege, more especially as the Danes were in such hasty flight to their fortress that no cattle could have been driven in.

Guthrum and the sons of Lodbrok are the only leaders mentioned in connection with any campaigns after the battles in the Thames district. The rest of the host-kings seem to have found their places, and certainly never reached the power held by those four.

It would not seem certain that the Danes had need to throw up any camps in England, though they may have been the authors of some of those where no British or Roman remains have been found. The country was already camp-studded by the hosts of previous invaders who found the same lines of value. One can generally locate the Roman by his potsherds in the fosse, and the Briton by his on the summit. Both had a long occupation, and left their crockery in the usual places—one in the moat, being orderly, and the other outside the hut door, being primitive. The Dane had not time to leave anything to speak of, as he had not the need to occupy the camp permanently as had his predecessors. There is a marked type of camp met with in East Anglia, circular, and with horseshoe shaped earthworks beyond the moat, which is usually considered to be Danish, but it is not certainly so. The known Saxon camps, as that at Castle Acre in Norfolk, are circular, but without these outworks.

With regard to the food supplies in Athelney, the king was at first terribly straitened. Asser says, "He had none of the necessaries of life except what he could forage openly or by stealth from the pagans, or even from the

Christians who had submitted to them, by frequent forays."

After the victory over Hubba, the need for secrecy was gone, and supplies could come in from the Quantock side without hindrance. Athelney is only separated from the mainland, as one may call it, by a comparatively narrow stretch of marsh, the main fenland lying between the island and the Danes.

I have had the advantage of a criticism of the paper since it was read by Major Mockler-Ferryman, some queries in which have already been answered as anticipated by other questioners, and others need a few words of elucidation. As to the position of the housecarles as a possible nucleus of trained men for a Saxon force, I may add that they were simply attached to their lord as his immediate bodyguard, the "shield wall" as one might say. They had no such training in concerted action as had the crews of a Viking ship, nor any tendency to take orders from a head chief. Their sole duty was to live and die for their lord, and they did it. They were, therefore, scattered bands of well-armed men round each leader only.

No cavalry seems to have been used in actual warfare at this period. The Danes had used the horses from the eastern counties in their raids, and those who objected to the peace made at Wareham seized these horses and rode through the Saxon lines on them; but the Northman, whether Dane or Norse, at this time preferred to fight on foot.

With regard to Alfred's generalship, Major Mockler-Ferryman doubts whether the king's strategy can be justified by the unchanging principles of warfare. But his doubts only rest upon the last three of the five "Fundamental Laws" which he quotes from Rüstow, and I think I can justify Alfred with regard to these.

As to point 3, I owe explanation, possibly because my own knowledge of the country has led me to assume too much on the part of others. As to retreat. Given the

Somerset Ethandune, retreat is well and safely, and at any stage of the battle, provided for. The Polden ridge is a long peninsula, running through wide fens on either side, and crowned by a Roman road from the dip at Glastonbury, where the range commences, to the end at the Parrett mouth. Alfred's force could in no way be prevented from retreat into the fens, of which his men alone had the secret, and could thus join the force at Borough Bridge fort, or on the Quantocks beyond. At the same time the advance from Edgarley cut the only line of retreat possible to the Danes, who had only the "fortress" left as refuge.

Point 4 has already been answered as well as we are able. We may assume that the levy was not less in number. An alternative line of retreat would be back along the road to Glastonbury, where fresh and very strong positions could be taken, still hemming in the Danes.

Point 5. The Devon men were certainly not at the Brixton gathering, and the position they would hold in the Quantocks seems to justify the division of force. They had camp after camp to fall back on, and it was certain that in case of defeat the levies, after retreat across the fens, would join them immediately.

The "Laws" seem, therefore, to be far better carried out than could have been possible in the case of the Bratton site. The chroniclers are precise in the statement that Alfred occupied the hill position without a battle. Wallingford says: "Anticipavit montem, hostibus nimis aptum si precavissent." And the "Vita S. Neot": "Deposita seriatim acie, proximum anticipaverunt promontorium," which expression exactly fits Edington hill, but will certainly not do for the camp at Bratton.

My theory that there was some demonstration by the Quantock force under Odda that led Guthrum to leave his stronghold may not be necessary, as I have suggested that there may have been a march on the new fort; but it is in some degree upheld by the chroniclers. Guthrum was

expecting some attack which, from the quotations just given, was not that of Alfred. Simeon of Durham says that Alfred, "Venit cum immenso exercitu ad Adderandun, quo juxta paganorum immensas phalangas invenit ad bellum paratas;" but this expected attack was not yet at hand, for, on finding that the height was taken, "Protinus juxta morem suum acies disposuerunt."

Major Mockler-Ferryman asks for the oldest known name of Edgarley, and the earliest that I can give is Egerley, which is the present pronunciation, and is thus given by Dr. Clifford. The place is not mentioned in Domesday.

Two sites are given, as a rule, for "Iglea"—Iley mead, near Melksham, and Leigh, near Westbury, on the Chippenham theory. The Major prefers the name of Iley to Egerley as now representing the Saxon name, but it may be a question whether the hard G would not be preserved in modern speech. Asser gives the name as Okely, where the hard consonant could hardly be lost. But the name may have been given only to the place by reason of the halt, as descriptive, and not as permanent. Edgarley fulfils requirements, but there are many similar spots in the vicinity which would equally do so, and to which the name would equally apply as a description.

Longdown Hill, near White-sheet Castle, is visible from one point on the Quantocks, and it is remarkable that the only one of the known "signal pits," which is now known as the "Fire-signal," commands this view. Its light could not have been seen from the Poldens, and it seems as if deliberately placed for communication with the Brixton positions only. This may account for the choice of that special point in the fringe of Selwood as the gathering place, communication with Odda thus being simple.

In connection with this gathering I should like to call attention to a remarkable instance of the slipshod way in which the events of this campaign have been treated. Green, in his "History of the English People," says :

“With the first burst of spring Alfred called the thegns of Somerset to his standard, and still gathering his troops as he moved, marched through Wiltshire on the Danes.”

The chroniclers are precise and unanimous that there was a special day of meeting at a special point. No such gradual gathering is hinted at, and there was no time for it. Alfred left Athelney, came to Brixton apparently on the same day, left on the next day, and fought on the following morning.

One more point in the kind criticism may be mentioned. Is it certain that the baptism of the Danish chiefs was not part of the terms imposed by Alfred? It is nowhere stated in the chronicles that this was so. On the contrary, the “A. S. Chronicle,” Asser, Ethelweard, Florence, and Huntingdon state that they “also promised to be baptised,” the wording only varying slightly; while Simeon of Durham plainly says that “Guthrum bore witness that he wished to become a Christian.”

Perhaps I may sum up in a few words the points that seem to bear on the question of the sites.

Against the usual, or Camden’s, theory—

(1.) The distance of Chippenham, etc., from Athelney prohibitive of daily attacks on the Danes, unless on raiders only.

(2.) The existence of these raiders or other force between the two places prohibitive of the Brixton gathering in force, unhindered.

(3.) The entire absence of record of a march on Chippenham.

(4.) The absence of name to the fortress in which the Danes were besieged.

(5.) The distance from Chippenham to Aller and Wedmore.

(6.) The extreme difficulty of making the details of the campaign tally with the Chippenham localities.

Against the Somerset sites—

(1.) The vague and unsatisfactory statements of every historian since Camden.

(2.) The absence of any large camp as required by their theories.

For the Wiltshire sites, as given by Camden and since him—

(1.) The fact that Chippenham had been the base of the Danish force.

(2.) The existence of an Edington near that base.

(3.) The existence of a large camp.

(4.) The unsupported statements of Camden and of his followers.

(5.) The fair correspondence of distances and halt at Iley as required by the details of the march.

For the Somerset sites—

(1.) The accuracy with which they meet the details given by the chronicles, as to the strategic points involved.

(2.) Their being in the vicinity of Athelney. This also explaining the absence of need in the minds of the old writers for more definite statement of place than is given by them.

(3.) Had Chippenham been the place of the siege, one would have expected some attempt to have been made during the fortnight by the Mercian Danes to come to Guthrum's assistance.

(4.) This would have been impossible if Guthrum is penned up on the fen-girt end of the Polden peninsula.

(5.) The crushing nature of the defeat is fully explained in this case, as the whole of Wessex had risen in the rear of their enemies.

(6.) The choice of Aller and Wedmore evident if Edington on Poldens is the place of the victory.

(7.) The impossibility of Guthrum remaining at Chippenham while Alfred had defeated Hubba and was building the fen fortress.

(8.) The existence of a fortress with the indefinite name of "Burgh" in the only possible line of flight of the Danes, explaining the possibility of a fortnight's siege, and also the reason for no name beyond that of "the fortress" being given to their refuge.

(9.) The identity of names, as given, and accuracy of distances of the march.

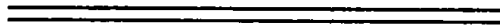
I may add that, while I can find no authority beyond that of Camden for the Chippenham sites, presuming that he has not been misled by the occurrence near there of the name of Edington, it is a remarkable coincidence that in the Athelney district itself, where we should expect naturally to find the sites of the campaign, we should meet with another Edington occupying such a definite "Promontorium" as is given as the site of the battle, and that in the best position for the Danes, if they had the sense to keep an eye on Alfred and his victorious Devon men, while in the one possible line of retreat thence existed a town and earthworks (with, in Saxon times, no definite place-name beyond that which its fortifications gave it) where the defeated Danes could stand a fortnight's siege, and whence the host could have had little fear in allowing their chiefs to retire for the baptism to Aller and Wedmore.

Guthrum's forces did not leave Chippenham, to which they must have retired after the peace was made from the fortress of the siege, until the next year. It would seem unlikely that they would have been allowed to stay there so long had the defeat taken place in the district. It would have been more in accordance with former arrangements that they should have been ordered back to some town on the line of march thither from the eastward. This would have been the case if they left the Athelney district for the Wiltshire town.

Further note from Mr. A. F. Major:—

Since this discussion took place I have had the opportunity of visiting, in Mr. Whistler's company, Edington hill, near Bridgwater, the conjectured site of the battle. The position fulfils all the requirements of the site upon this theory. The ridge of the Poldens rises abruptly from the marsh-land—practically on the sea level—facing Athelney, and is only some 30 or 40 yards broad, sinking away

not quite so abruptly on the other side towards Edington village. An ancient earthwork runs along the crest facing Athelney for several hundred yards, and there are clear indications of a second entrenchment midway between this and the marsh-land. The rear face may also have been protected, but the ground here has been broken up by cottages and gardens. The ridge commands a clear view of the works at Borough Bridge and Athelney, as well as of Bridgwater. Lower hills stand out into the marsh in front of it, which would have allowed of outposts being thrown out to guard the main body on Edington hill. The commanding position of this comparatively low hill rising from a dead level is very striking.





# THE EARLIEST TRAVELLER TO THE HIGH NORTH.

BY DR. KARL BLIND.

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NOT long ago the name of Dr. Frithjof Nansen was on everybody's lips, with words of high and well-deserved praise. As a true Viking of Scientific Exploration he had braved dangers with extraordinary courage, trying to reach a part of our globe, hidden in utter darkness, which no human eye has seen as yet. His bold venture remains one of the most notable deeds of daring and perseverance. Fortunately, Nansen's undertaking was facilitated by many modern appliances, which to the men of classic times would have seemed almost impossible, nay, wholly fabulous and fairy-like. He had built to himself a ship capable of withstanding the pressure of enormous masses of drifting ice that wedged her in. He had ample and excellent food on board, in the way of preserves, which even during the long years of his absence were not fully consumed. He had a fine library with him, to while away the dreariness of his and his companions' enforced captivity in that "Frozen Circle" of the Highest North. He had electric light, got out of the very surroundings of the Polar darkness, shedding powerful rays of civilisation, as it were, upon its otherwise impenetrable gloom. It is true, great were the sufferings of the hardy explorer on his coming back. Still, the very remembrance of the good use made, for so long a time, of these resources of modern science, may have steeled him for bearing the terrible hardships of his path-finding journey home across

the icy desert. The record of Nansen's voyage will stand for ever glorious in the history of Polar expeditions.

Now let us glance at what happened more than 2,200 years ago. Let us transport ourselves in thought to the time shortly after the death of the Makedonian conqueror, Alexander the Great. The whole of Northern, and even the greater part of Central Europe, then lay, to the highly cultured Greeks and the Romans, still hidden in the deepest darkness. Wild stories were afloat about those far-off lands and their barbarous inhabitants. Far down in the South there was then a Greek colony at Massilia, in Gaul—the present Marseilles in France. There, from the sunny shores of the Mediterranean, a man went forth, a great mathematician, astronomer, and philosophic scientist, a Greek by origin, who was bent upon exploring, by ship, those dim, unknown regions of the North, even up to the Antarctic Circle. Imagine the audacity of such a venture in those days!

Yet it was done. But how many are there, generally speaking, who have heard of, or at least know something more definite about, Pytheas, the Humboldt of Antiquity, as he has been called?—a proud title, which we might properly enlarge by calling him a Humboldt and a Nansen combined. Starting, about the year 320 before our era, from Marseilles, he sailed along the coast of Spain, and of what is now France, up to the British shores. There was then no England yet. That name only came up, with the Teutonic Anglo-Saxon conquest, nearly 800 years later.

From the coasts of Britain, Pytheas crossed the German Ocean. He then rounded the Skager Rack—once pre-eminently called the Wick, that is, the bay, from which the Vikings, the bay-men, have their name. Steering through the Cattegat, he entered the Baltic. There he seems to have gone beyond the mouth of the Vistula.

Turning back, he went up to the Scandinavian North, probably as far as the Orkneys and Shetland, and even farther. Some think he may have touched Iceland,

and that that was the *ultima Thule* of which the ancients spoke—evidently for the first time after the voyage of Pytheas.

Coming near the Arctic Circle, he met with masses of ice in a sea that appeared to him monstrous, nay, supernatural; which we can easily understand in one accustomed to the genial climate of the Mediterranean shore. It is difficult to say whether he sailed home by way of the German Ocean, or along the western coasts of the British Isles; but the former route seems the more likely one. At any rate he came back along the north-western and western coast of Gaul, which 800 years afterwards got the name of France from its German conquerors. This time he did not go into the Mediterranean—perhaps he had had enough of the Bay of Biscay—but he landed at the mouth of the Garonne, and so went home to Marseilles. It was an astounding feat.

Brehmer, in his work, “*Entdeckungen im Alterthum*” (“*Discoveries in Antiquity*”), says:—“Pytheas was a man that stood high above his contemporaries, and to whom astronomy seems to be not less indebted than the science of geography is.” Mr. Charles Elton, in his valuable work, “*Origins of English History*,” quoting Brehmer’s remarks more fully, holds an equally high opinion of the Hellenic explorer. Only those, however, who have gone carefully over all the passages which either clearly or probably refer to this discoverer—and I may say I have often done so for years—can fully feel the loss we have to deplore in his case. I know nothing in the domain of archæological research more fascinating, and at the same time more harrowing, to the student of antiquity, than the frequent flashes of light thrown upon British, German, and Norse prehistoric times—flashes as suddenly followed by utter darkness and uncertainty. For, unhappily, the book, or books, written by Pytheas, are no longer in existence. We only know him through scattered extracts—piecemeal—partly in very obscured form. Even invidious animosity, nay, calumny,

has not been spared him. So his memory has come down to us, in spite of his signal achievements, either in confused and indistinct shape or disgracefully traduced.

Yet it is through him that the land of the Britons became first known to the civilised nations of the Mediterranean. Centuries afterwards even, the Britons were still spoken of as “divided from the whole world”—*toto divisos orbe Britannos*. Yet he had found them. It is alleged that he had declared he had travelled over part of Britain on foot. Again, through Pytheas, to all appearance, the ancients must have heard for the first time of such German tribes as the Teutons, the Kimbrians, and the Goths, along the North Sea and the Baltic. Our own modern historians, strangely enough, often speak of the Teutons and Kimbrians having for the first time been mentioned in the century before our era, when they became such a terror to Rome. That is a curious oversight. The earliest knowledge, at least, of the name of these tribes, we owe to the Greek traveller, 200 years before the Kimbrian terror.

Through Pytheas, remarkable details were learnt of that amber trade in which, together with the tin trade, the Phœnikians were engaged. That trade was carried on also, even in prehistoric days, across the Continent, on what was called a “sacred road,” which lay from the northern coasts of Germany to the Adriatic Sea. Some of the most painstaking writers on Pytheas believe that a great deal that was known in antiquity about the North, especially in regard to the Baltic, was founded on his descriptions, though not acknowledged as being drawn from his lost book. He had explored the Baltic. No one, for centuries after, did so any more. It stands to reason, therefore, that, on that point, he had been the source for later classic writers.

Whether Pytheas did or did not travel on foot over Britain, this much is certain—that, in olden times, explorers mostly were able to get on much better with foreign or semi-barbarous races than is often the case in

our days. They seem to have used more humane means in their intercourse, and thus to have succeeded very well. Had they not done so, Herodotos could not have obtained, in his travels, so much useful knowledge, which he records in such calm and impartial language. Nor could the famous Phœnikian circumnavigation of Africa have been effected, which the Egyptian king Neko organised, 2,400 years ago—that is, about 2,000 years before Vasco da Gama. That Phœnikian expedition lasted two years. From the Red Sea these enterprising navigators started, going ashore now and then, in order to sow the land and to wait for the harvest. Having reaped the corn, they went to sea again. They must thus have been in very friendly intercourse with the African natives. These old explorers had no Maxim guns, nor any guns whatever. But they knew how to treat properly the dark races they met. In the third year only, doubling the Pillars of Hercules—the Straits of Gibraltar—they returned to Egypt through the Mediterranean. “They reported,” says Herodotos, “what does not seem credible to me, but may be to others—namely, that as they sailed round Libya (Africa), they had the sun on their right hand.”

That latter statement, which Herodotos doubted, is now credible enough. It is a fact which best proves this ancient Phœnikian circumnavigation of Africa. I will presently show that Pytheas had to suffer from similar unfounded doubts cast upon his statements.

This Greek scientist and traveller knew that Britain was of a three-cornered shape, like the head of a battle-axe. A glance at the map will prove the correctness of that description. He knew that this country was a land of little sunshine and much rain. I believe we know that. He knew that plenty of wheat grew in the southern parts of Britain, and that it was threshed out in covered barns. To him, the son of a warm climate, that was an unusual sight. He found that the inhabitants of Britain had a drink made by mixing wheat and honey. It is a beverage

still used here and there in this country, under the name of "metheglin."

Professor Ridgway, in an otherwise remarkable paper published in *Folklore*, has raised a doubt as to whether a particular passage, drawn by Strabon from Pytheas, which is generally held to refer to Britain, really does apply to this country. But if Britain were not meant, Thule (that is, probably, Iceland) would have to be substituted for it, and that appears impossible from what is said in the text. Evidently, the apparent obscurity is one of Strabon's making. He speaks of Thule "and neighbouring places," in a chapter concerning Britain and Ireland. Very unfairly, Strabon never gives a literal quotation from Pytheas, though he attacks him. Yet, in Book iv., c. v., even Strabon feels bound to acknowledge that, "as far as astronomy and the mathematics are concerned, Pytheas appears to have reasoned correctly" in regard to those Northern countries. That is certainly strong evidence in favour of the correctness of Pytheas' other statements. And in the same chapter Strabon speaks of a land which Pytheas asserted to have visited, where "a drink was made of corn and honey," and where the threshing of corn was done in the way mentioned, "on account of the rain and the want of sun" (Book iv., c. v., § 5). Do we not recognise the customs and the climate of the British Isles in this description?

What a gain it would be to our ideas concerning pre-historic Britain if the works of Pytheas were some day recovered! Unfortunately, it is not very likely that they will yet turn up, although similar recoveries have now and then been made most unexpectedly. Thus, a number of the historical works of Tacitus were only found in a cloister in Germany in the sixteenth century. The monks who destroyed much of our most ancient German literature, because it referred to heathen times, also often neglected reading what they possessed of classic works. No wonder the most valuable manuscripts should have lain forgotten in their little-used libraries.

From the Thames, Pytheas made his voyage to the Rhine. Going round Jutland into the Baltic, he came to a river called Tanais. This cannot, of course, have been the Tanais which is now called the Don. It may have been either the Vistula or the Dvina. "Tan," "Don," or similarly sounding names for rivers, are of frequent occurrence from Russia to this country. Pytheas, in going both through the German Ocean and the Baltic, had thus visited the shores of the two seas where the amber trade was largely carried on.

Roman writers, in speaking of the Baltic—of which they can only have had knowledge through Pytheas—mention an island called "Raunonia," or "Ravnonia," where amber was said to be cast up by the spring tides. To this day, in Danish, amber is called "rav." Ravnonia would thus mean the Amber Island. The same Germanic sounds which we hear even now, had already struck the ear of the Hellenic Humboldt.

Here something has to be said about the amber trade. In the Homeric and the pre-Homeric age, amber was most highly valued for purposes of ornament—almost like gold. In the *Odyssey*, its colour is compared to the radiant sun. A solar origin was long attributed to amber. In the graves of Mykenê, Dr. Schliemann discovered a mass of amber beads. They date back, in all probability, to the time of the Trojan war. Chemical investigation by Dr. Otto Helm, of Danzig, has proved them to be of that particular kind of amber which comes from the Baltic. Phœnikians, Greeks, Romans, and even more ancient nations, prized most highly that "Northern gold," as it has been called. It was largely used for ornament. Perhaps you will be astonished to hear also that Roman ladies were in the habit of holding amber balls in their hands, for the purpose of cooling themselves in summer. The best amber came to the Southern nations both from the Baltic and the German Ocean. The Emperor Nero, for purposes of the amber trade, once sent a knight, Julianus, through Germany to her Northern coasts. In

later times, the Arab Moors got hold of that important trade. As old fashions are often revived in our times, perhaps the golden-glittering material, which the ancients valued so greatly, may one day rise again in estimation.

Now there is a curious Greek amber story, or myth, about the Heliades, or daughters of the sun-god Helios. I mention it because it bears upon the amber which came from the North, about which Pytheas evidently made enquiries. You remember how Phæthon, the son of Helios, one day asked to be allowed to drive the sun-car, contrary to the strong warning of his father, and how that rash charioteer came to grief. The horses bolted; the orb of Heaven became unsteady: a revolution of the earth was the result. Vast forests were consumed by fire; whole generations of men perished. Phæthon himself, struck by lightning, found his end in the river Eridanus. His sisters, the Sun-daughters, wept his death so long, that they were changed into trees, when the tears running from their tree-forms became hardened in the water to electron, or amber.

Well, from the point of view of natural science, we have in this charming tale a very ancient and correct rendering of the production of amber from the resin of submerged fir and pine trees, and then found, in globular form, in the sea. Nature myths generally contain a good deal of early scientific speculation in poetic garb.

I have shown elsewhere that this tale about the Sun-daughters is, to all evidence, of Northern origin, and was only taken over into Hellenic mythology, as has been so often the case. The very name of the river, Eridanos—supposed to be the Po, in Northern Italy—at which the Greek myth was afterwards located, occurs, in similar form, near the Baltic, as an ancient river-name. It is the Radanus, a confluent of the Vistula. From the country near those rivers, amber came plentifully to Greece. The sound of “Radan” and “Eridan” is similar enough to bring about a confusion. The Greeks were great and very able adapters of foreign myths and words to



their own use and tongue. So they localised the Heliades, in their amber-engendering tree shape, at the Eridanos; for to that neighbourhood, or the Adriatic, amber was certainly brought from the North by an overland route, on the "sacred road" I have before mentioned. But as to the Eridanus, Pliny, the Roman scientist, already knew better. He says that there are no islands called Elektrides, or Amber Islands, in the Adriatic, as was alleged in Greece, but that amber is doubtless a product of the islands of the Northern Ocean, and called *gless(um)* by the Germans, and that it was originally the gum or resin of a pine tree. Pliny also mentions that Pytheas speaks of the amber trade of the Goths with the Teutons.

Amber, then, came largely from Baltic shores to the Mediterranean. If another tale of olden times can be believed, there were statues, made of tin and amber, on an island near the entrance, or rather outlet, of the "sacred road" along which amber was carried to the South. That outlet was probably in the neighbourhood of Venice and Trieste. It was said that all the barbarian nations—and here we come again upon friendly intercourse with natives—held that trade route in deep respect. It was for them a means of livelihood. Recent research has shown that Etruscans and Phœnikians must have been up to the Baltic. Graves were discovered there, in which things were found pointing to such intercourse. The last resting-place of those Southern traders contained their religious symbols, undisturbed by the Teutonic inhabitants. There was more religious tolerance then than is shown now sometimes at burials. As to the erection of a statue of tin and amber at the head of the Adriatic, it looks like an intended reminder to coming generations, in case the sources of the supply should be forgotten. Thus, at the time of Columbus, there was found on one of the Canary Islands a statue, mysteriously, but significantly, pointing with the finger towards the West.

If the interpretation of a cuneiform inscription by a friend, Professor Julius Oppert, at Paris, the distinguished

Assyriologist, to whom I owe a communication on the subject, is correct, even the middlemen of the Assyrians had already, in grey antiquity, been near the Baltic. The inscription says: "They fished up from that sea where the North Star stands, that which looks like copper." That is, no doubt, amber. There is a controversy, I know, among Assyrian scholars, about that passage. But the opinion of so eminent a scholar as Oppert certainly merits the fullest attention; and if his view holds good, the amber trade from the Baltic to the South again comes out, even in the direction of Assyria, perhaps through what is now Russia.

Now I mention all this because it bears upon the voyage of Pytheas. It has been asserted that the merchants at Marseilles, and other Greek colonists on the northern shore of the Mediterranean, wished to take the wind out of the sails of the Carthaginians, and to get themselves at the sources of the Phœnikian tin, amber, and lead trade. This would explain the voyage of Pytheas to the British coast, as well as to the North Sea and the Baltic. He was, as I said before, a great astronomer and mathematician. Even his antagonist, Strabon, acknowledged this. But though a great astronomer and mathematician, Pytheas was a man without private means. That is not seldom the case with eminent scholars, whose enthusiasm for science renders them neglectful of the opportunities for making their pile, as the Americans say. It has, therefore, been asserted that Pytheas went North at the request of a committee of merchants at Marseilles. So far as I am aware, however, there is no positive evidence to that effect; but the fact, or perhaps rather the surmise, is likely enough.

At all events, the Phœnikians sought to hide their trade connections most jealously from the remainder of the world. The Greeks were sharp enough, but it required many Greeks, or Romans, to catch a Phœnikian. Speaking of the commerce with the Kassiterides, or Tin Islands, Strabon, the Greek geographer, says:—

“Formerly, the Phœnikians alone carried on this traffic in tin and lead, from Gades (Cadiz), hiding the passage from everybody else. When once the Romans followed a certain Phœnikian shipmaster, so that they too might discover the market, the shipmaster, from jealousy, purposely ran his vessel upon a shoal, thus leading those who followed him into the same disaster. He saved himself by means of a piece of wreck, and received from the State an indemnification for the cargo he had lost. However, the Romans, by repeated efforts, at last found out the passage.”

In his voyage Pytheas touched at both the tin and the amber countries. Presumably it is through him that the earliest mention of a country called “Germara” was made: a name to be found in ancient but fabulously disfigured writings soon after the return of Pytheas. Evidently, by this “Germara,” stretching from the Rhine eastwards to Scythia, and northwards from the Orkynian Forest to the sea, Germany was meant. A blue-eyed people were said to dwell there. Odd stories were told about them, which may at first have arisen from the misunderstanding of words, and then may have been added to by ever-busy concocters of fanciful tales. We know how such tales often arise in folklore.

I will say here a word about the Orkynian, or, as it is also called, Herkynian Forest, which is first mentioned by Aristoteles. Strictly speaking, it means the German forest country in general. Although the expression was sometimes used for some particular forest, there are numerous passages in ancient writers which prove its more general meaning. From the Rhine, and from the sources of the Danube, the German Herkynian Forest reached beyond the Vistula. Cæsar says it took two months for a man to traverse it from west to east. But what does the word Herkynian mean? The question, I believe, is not difficult to solve. “Harug” is the old German, “hearg” the Anglo-Saxon, “hörgr” the old Norse word for a forest. Hence the Herkynian name.

“Hergenröther” and “Herkner” are, to this day, German family names. They mean Forest-clearer, and Forester, or Forster. In this way we come upon an old Teutonic word at the time of Pytheas, more than 300 years before the Christian era.

Between the Rhine and the Elbe Pytheas found a tribe called Ostions—to all appearance, Ost or East-men. Later Roman writers mention an island there, Austeravia, probably meaning East Island. More than a thousand years later, the merchants of the German Hansa were in England called Easterlings. From them the pound sterling has its name. East-men the Norwegians, Danes, and Frisians were also called, who penetrated into Ireland and held sway there between the ninth and the twelfth century. Besides Ostions, Pytheas, according to the fragmentary evidence which has come down to us, knew of Kimbrians and Teutons on the German coasts, also of Guthons, or Goths, in Baltic quarters. The Kimbrian peninsula (Schleswig-Holstein and Jutland) he described as reaching high up at the entrance of an immense bay. It is quite correct. This bay represents the Cattegat and the Baltic; for the ancients looked upon it as part of the Ocean.

In Bessell's work on “Pytheas of Massilia” there are strong arguments, showing that the Greek explorer must have seen that curious formation of the German Baltic coast which goes under the name of “Nehrungen”—small sandy strips of land which separate the sweet-water “Haffs” from the sea. As to manifestly Norse names like “Nerigon” and “Bergæ,” which appear to have first been reported by Pytheas in his voyage to Scandinavia, Bessell thinks they are not identical with Norway (or “Norge”) and Bergen, but that they must be sought for in Shetland. This, however, is not the general view of learned enquirers. For my part, I hold Norway and Bergen to be clearly indicated by the Nerigon and Bergæ of Pytheas.

After having visited the Ostions, the Kimbrians, the

Teutons, and the Goths, near the German Ocean and the Baltic, Pytheas made his way farther North to the Land of the Midnight Sun. Strange tales about that High North had been current already in Homeric times. You find them in the Odyssey. There a country is mentioned where there is light throughout the night, or night and day are close together—"Ἐγγὺς γὰρ νυκτὸς τε καὶ ἡματός ἐσι κελεύθου." There, says Homer, "a sleepless man could earn a twofold wage." It is a country peopled by tall, giant-like men and women. A ship landing there has to pass through a narrow firth, or *fjord*. A large stag with vast horns is also mentioned, apparently a reindeer. It is manifestly a country in the High North, as may be seen by comparing the tenth and the eleventh song of the Odyssey. It is a country near the Midnight Kimmerians, where the deep, world-surrounding Okeanos joins the sea.

In the Land of the Midnight Sun, Pytheas came upon Sun-worshippers. This is not to be wondered at. There is more cause for people in the cold North to worship the beneficent sun than for those in the South, where he is often a Destroyer. From Hellenic accounts about Apollo we even gather that the worship of that God originally came from the North, from the Hyperboreans—that is, those who dwelt behind the north wind.

To all primitive races the Sun is not merely a star, but also a Deity. German chieftains swore by the orb of heaven as by a God. So the Romans report. In the Edda, the Sun—who is there a female deity, whose celestial car is drawn by two stallions—gives birth to a daughter, "not less beautiful than she herself." In Low German folk-tales, Freia, once a Goddess of the Sun as well as of Love, still appears as the Little Sun (*dat Sönneken*). Among the Greeks there were daughters of Helios, the Sun-God—the Heliades before mentioned.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Northern barbarians should actually have shown to Pytheas the lair where the sun takes his rest—"ὅπου ὁ ἥλιος κοιμᾶ," in the

Greek text. The poetic and the prose Edda is full of references to the sun.

High up in the North, Pytheas came to an island, Thule. There has been much speculation as to whether this Thule meant Iceland, the Shetland, or Orkney, groups of islands. It has been pointed out that there is a Shetland island called Foula—of old, Fugl-oe, Fowl or Bird Island—and that by a well-known interchange of the “F” and “Th” sound, Foula, or Ful-oe, might have given rise to the name of Thule. If that were so, it would prove an early Scandinavian, Germanic, occupation of Shetland.

In those Northern regions, it was said, there were six months of day and six of night. In another passage it is stated that there is much cultivation of fruit in Thule. (*“Sed Thule larga et diutina pomona copiosa est.”*) So, at least, the sentence was once translated. But this certainly does not fit in with the nature of Shetland and the Orkneys, much less of Iceland. There is not much fruit there. Pomona, the Roman Goddess of fruit trees, could not have given her name to any Thule. However, the queer and altogether impossible Latin of the sentence is in itself evidence of a corruption of the text. Now, as Bessell justly remarks, one of the Orkneys, and the largest of them, is called Pomona. He might have strengthened his surmise by an additional argument. In the last letter of the Orkney isle, Pomona, there is contained a well-known Germanic word for island.

And if it were contended that at the time of Pytheas there was probably no Germanic population in the Orkneys, I would say that there is strong reason to believe in an immigration of Norse war-clans having taken place into Scotland and the Orkneys even in prehistoric times. Tacitus attributes to the Caledonians a Germanic origin, and describes them as large-limbed and with reddish hair. His statements are based on the reports of his father-in-law, Agricola, who, as General in North Britain, fought the natives and must have known them, both by sight and through interpretation.

Still higher up in the North, Pytheas came to a "crusty ocean," a frozen sea, where the earth, the water, the air, and all things seemed to be intermixed, and where one could neither sail nor walk, through the supernatural confusion. The whole elementary mass was compared to an enormous kind of sea-lungs: that is, sea-nettles, or a substance like jelly-fish. Ebb and flow—so one rather difficult passage attributed to Pytheas is interpreted—was brought about by the breathing of an immense marine animal that lived there.

Of course, we do not know how the Greek scientist expressed himself exactly on this subject. Still, we see clearly that he must have described the neighbourhood of the Arctic Circle—that "stiff and nearly immovable sea," as Tacitus, in his "Germania," calls it, and which he places beyond the land of the Suiones (Sweden), at the farthest end of the earth. It is what Hans Sachs, the German master-singer of the sixteenth century, still semi-fabulously calls the "Kleber Meer" (the Sticky Sea), or the "Leber Meer" (Liver Sea).

Now if Pytheas mentioned the explanation of the tide from the breathing of an immense animal, he can only have done so by way of quoting a Northern folk-tale, for we know as a fact that he himself explained ebb and flow from the action of the moon.

Curiously enough, the Northern folk-tale concerning an immense marine animal was still believed in by some people in Shetland in the beginning of the present century. This has been stated to me by Mr. Robert Sinclair, of Lerwick, who was a fisherman in his youth, and later on a merchant. He, as a young lad, got many "Finn" and "Sea-Kye" tales from an old man, John Georgeson, and that man also told him his version of the cause of the tides—namely, that "away far out in the sea, near the edge of the world, there lived a monstrous sea-serpent that took about six hours to draw in his breath, and six hours to let it out," which sufficiently accounted to him for the rise and fall of the waters. Thus the report of

Pytheas gets confirmation, even after more than 2,000 years, from ideas which were still in vogue in the Shetland Thule in our own days. Those who have studied the folk-tales of Shetland know well what weird and ancient notions, traceable to a long bygone cosmogonic creed, are still lingering in those storm-beaten islands.

I have now to say a few words about the bitterest enemy of Pytheas in classic antiquity. It is Strabon, the Greek geographer, who wrote nearly 400 years after him. Pliny, the author of the "Natural History," shows a greater sense of justice towards the Massilian scholar and explorer. It is difficult to get rid of an impression that Strabon, who otherwise states matters with much calmness and in a fair spirit, must have had some personal reason, perhaps a kind of scientific jealousy. Born in Asia Minor, he was a traveller himself, but he had never been up to the North. In Europe he even came only as far North as Etruria in Italy. It is somewhat noteworthy that he should attack Pytheas at once in the "Introduction" of his large work. He concludes that Introduction with another attack, which could not possibly be more baseless. Strabon says that "Pytheas has given us an 'Account of Thule.'" If that Account were only yet in existence, how much might we learn from which the adversary of the brave scientist could be confounded!

In trying to heap insult upon Pytheas, Strabon only shows by his own remarks how much mistaken he himself was on the very points on which he sought to convict the explorer of the High North.

For one thing, Strabon would not believe that there are inhabitable islands so far North as those mentioned by Pytheas under the name of Thule. These regions, Strabon imagined, were too cold for man to live there. The Orkney-men and Shetlanders, and the Icelanders, that may be present to-night, probably do not share that view.

Then Strabon placed Ierne (Ireland) "just north of Britain," and he said:—"People live there wretchedly, and like savages, on account of the extreme cold. It is



here, in my opinion, that the bounds of the habitable globe must be fixed." So Strabon was twice wrong, also about Ireland, putting her in the wrong geographical place, and saying that she is not habitable.

Again, he would not believe that the sea voyage from Cadiz to what is now Cape St. Vincent would take so long a time as Pytheas asserted. Strabon simply was not aware of the force of the south-eastern currents in those parts. He also ridiculed the statement of Pytheas that it is easier to pass from the northern parts of Spain into the Keltic country (France) by land than to go there by sea. Strabon knew not the "Bay of Biscay, oh!" Again, he declared the terrors of the storm-floods in the German Ocean to be a mere marine tale, a yarn of Pytheas. We know now the great historical island-devastations in that stormy sea, how many of those islands have gone under or been broken through by storm-floods, and in what danger the inhabitants of the "Halligen" still live.

Finally, Strabon thought that Pytheas could not have gone so far into the Baltic as he said he had done, because, if his report were true, he would have found there the mouth of the Caspian Sea! That was a false belief once prevailing in antiquity—perhaps a false belief founded on an old tradition of a prehistorical connection of the two seas, which some geologists really assume. But it is no wonder that Pytheas did not come upon the outlet of the Caspian Sea in the Baltic.

I will give another example of the wrong done to Pytheas, this time even by one of his best modern defenders, the German writer whom I have before quoted, Bessell. Pliny says, in a passage drawn from Pytheas, that the Guthons, or Goths, in the Baltic, did "use amber by way of fuel, and sell it to their neighbours, the Teutons." Now Bessell thought this a suspicious passage. He imagined that Pytheas, if he was on the island where he said amber was used for a fire, had probably mistaken a kind of hard peat or lignite—"Braunkohle" in German—for amber. Perhaps the mistake, Bessell adds, may,

however, be attributed to those who, in their quotations or shortening extracts from Pytheas, corrupted the text.

But there is no mistake in the passage in question! I have seen it stated in German newspapers that, to this day, a kind of dirty and otherwise useless amber, which is thrown up from the sea, is used, in some parts of the German Baltic coast, as firewood. Actually, the German word for amber, "Bernstein," literally means a "burning stone"; fire being kindled from it even under friction. "Bern" is the same word as the English "to burn."

Enough, I think, has been said to defend the memory of Pytheas. His case of unmerited obloquy, unfortunately, does not stand alone. Has not Herodotos also, the Father of History, sometimes been attacked as the "Father of Lies," and does not recent research more and more confirm many of those statements of his which were formerly set down as fabrications? Has not that African dwarf race, which was so long held to be a fable, been proved by explorers of our times to be a fact? Is not that man-ape of antiquity, whose existence had been looked upon as a myth, now known as the gorilla? If we had not the account of Herodotos as to the making of a Suez Canal, a canal which was only allowed to decay after the Mahommedan conquest of Egypt, would anyone believe that such a canal had been begun by Neko, the Egyptian king, 2,600 years ago, and completed by Darius, the king of Persia? Was there not some early Greek knowledge as to the sources of the Nile, although for about 2,000 years afterwards the reports in question were regarded as fibs or wild guesses?

In the same way the reputation of Pytheas has been unjustly dealt with, even in olden times. But through the darkness of ages the name of this earliest visitor of the English, German, and Scandinavian coasts now shines with undiminished glory, and our only regret is that his valuable record should no longer exist in its original shape—a loss to history which can never be enough deplored.

In the discussion which followed, Mr. Albany F. Major said that in thanking Dr. Blind for the paper he had just read, he wished to express on behalf of all present the pleasure they felt in seeing the Jarl among them once more. They looked forward to his presiding over their meetings during the coming Session, and aiding and enlightening the discussion of the papers by his valuable help.

The Rev. A. Sandison, in seconding the vote of thanks, said that he had always noticed that members were slow to rise to discuss a paper by Dr. Karl Blind, and he was not surprised that they were inclined to pay their President the homage of silence. He himself always found when Dr. Blind spoke how much he had to learn. For instance, at school and college he had learned to consider Pytheas a mere constructor of ill-made fable, but he had learned to-night something of the man Pytheas and how great he was. Not for the first time had he to thank the lecturer, to whom we of the Northern race especially owe so much that gratitude to him is enshrined deeply in our hearts.

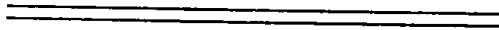
Mrs. Wyndham Hill wished to support the vote of thanks. She had heard in her youth, from a learned grandfather, of Pytheas and his voyages, and had listened with much pleasure to Dr. Blind's account of him.

Mr. G. M. Atkinson said he should much like to know if an early Suez Canal or waterway between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea had really existed. Some evidence of the early amber trade in this country was afforded by the amber and glass beads so often found in prehistoric graves. It was curious to note that in many instances the variegated glass beads had the ends rubbed down, so as to give a representation of the rays of the sun.

Mr. W. F. Kirby said that the knowledge which the ancients had of the world had been much underrated, because so few of their writings have come down to us. We look on them as in a very primitive, ignorant condition, yet the nations of antiquity, at the stage when we

know them, seem to have been in a decaying state of civilisation, and we may be quite ignorant of the heights to which they had previously attained. Plato, at any rate, says that owing to the destruction of Atlantis, civilisation suffered so great a blow that the Athenians lost their knowledge of literature and history, and doubtless other nations which survived the catastrophe would have been more or less severely checked in their progress in a similar manner.

Dr. Blind briefly thanked the meeting for the way in which they had received his paper, and for their kind reception of himself.



# THE REVIVAL OF OLD NORTHERN LIFE IN DENMARK.

BY THE REV. PASTOR A. V. STORM.

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FOR one who has always loved the old Viking life and been fostered upon it, it cannot but be a welcome opportunity to meet English friends who have formed a Club in connection with that interesting subject. I have, therefore, been looking forward to this evening, although, I must confess, with a slight fear lest I should not be able to read a paper interesting enough to men who far surpass me both in age and experience. However, I do not mean to deliver any great literary criticism upon the movements which have shaped the life of Denmark in this century, but only to tell you, ladies and gentlemen, as faithfully as possible, how that life has formed itself, and then leave the criticism and judgment to you. I venture to hope that you will be mildly disposed beforehand towards the small country that is so closely connected with your great nation, not only from olden times, but also in recent years. We have given to you not only a king, but a princess, of whom we often think with joy, and they, I am sure, have a share in your affectionate feelings for your own nation. In this hope of indulgence I include also my English pronunciation and style. It has been a matter of pleasure to learn your language, but you will throughout discover that, even if my speech resemble yours, my tongue is Danish.

The title of my paper, which alludes to a revival, presupposes a sleep. The old Viking spirit of our forefathers

was kept alive through the first part of the Middle Ages, but not by the same causes which stirred the Norman, French, English, and Teutonic races. While the crusades to the Holy Land found scope for their warlike energies, we also had our own crusades, but they were on the shores of the Baltic, where our rule was extended to the utmost limits of the Baltic shores. Without entering into details it may be sufficient to remark that while Denmark tried hard to subdue Sweden, and was partly successful, there arose a spirit of antagonism which has had most detrimental results to both the brother countries, and also to Norway, which was under the same king as Denmark. I count the period of the Reformation of the Church as a revival too; but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries our kings imported great numbers of German knights and adventurers, who trampled on our ideals and subjected our tongue to contempt. The manners at Court became foreign, our noblemen of ancient lineage were cast into the shade, and the people at large was subdued. This period of our history is one of the most disagreeable to think of. In the latter half of the eighteenth century the first signs of a coming spring-time became manifest with the advent of a national poet—Ewald—and with the grant, in 1788, of greater political freedom, accorded by the king, whose powers were still despotic. In the same period Danish commerce began again to flourish, especially during the great wars with France in the nineties, when Danish ships, as carriers or traders, were seen on every sea. Wealth also began to be accumulated on many hands, and to such a degree did our prosperity progress that it excited the attention and even envy of England. Despite this increase of material prosperity, the people in Denmark remained unaroused to any real corporate life.

It was, as has often been asserted, at the battle of the Baltic, on April 2nd, 1801, when the Danish nation first began to realise that it was asleep, but could be roused. We always call that battle the battle in the roadstead of

Copenhagen, because it was fought so close to the shore and piers of the harbour in Copenhagen that the citizens could view it closely. The reason for the battle was that England would not allow our men-of-war to convoy our trading vessels. After some few encounters an agreement was entered into between Denmark and England that the whole question should be discussed in London. It was in the year 1800. Meanwhile Denmark had been negotiating an understanding with Russia, and as it could not be friends with both Russia and England, open war ensued. In March, 1801, Admiral Sir Hyde Parker left Yarmouth with 53 ships, with Lord Nelson as Vice-Admiral, and the English fleet was soon sighted from Elsinore. Activity now showed itself in Copenhagen; willingness to sacrifice whatever was necessary was shown by all. The students formed a Volunteer Corps, the craftsmen a bodyguard for the king, and although our ships were quite incapable of meeting such a foe, they were rigged out as well as possible and made ready to meet the attack. Nelson was very eager for the fight, and proposed to Parker to destroy the whole Danish fleet in an hour. On Thursday, April 2nd, 1801, the battle was commenced; but the hour soon passed and Nelson was no nearer the end. At one o'clock Parker gave the signal to stop, but Nelson would not see it, and put his telescope to his blind eye and continued the fight. At 3-30 the situation became critical for him, but by means of a letter to the Crown Prince the Danish ships were ordered to stop firing, and a treaty was signed. We had lost the day; but, as a compensation, the nation had awoke. Nelson expressed his admiration for the courage of the Danes. It is worth noticing that the battle was fought in sight of the people of Copenhagen, for if it had been in the Baltic, far from the Danish shores, it might not have influenced our nation so much. Many took part in it who might not otherwise have been able. Thus those who in the coming years would be leaders were onlookers, and received the impression of national danger, and the

need for self-sacrifice if the nation was to maintain its liberties.

But it was only for a moment. The people soon sank back again among their pillows. Another shock was necessary. It came in the following year, 1802, from a young Dano-Norwegian, Henrik Steffens, who had been trained in the new Romantic school of Germany. He had sat at the feet of Schelling and the leaders of the new thought, which was to destroy the barren teaching of the preceding century. He came back to Copenhagen and delivered his lectures on these subjects. His efforts were, however, ill-received. He told them plainly that all the poets they had hitherto held in esteem were nothing at all. He pointed to Shakespeare and Goethe as the real poets. The meeting with him gave to a young man, Adam Öhlenschläger, the first impulse to break away from the old dry schools and enlist in the new victorious army. Öhlenschläger called on Steffens at an hour before noon, and discussed the new burning questions until three o'clock next morning. Then they had a short sleep, and Öhlenschläger, returning to his own rooms, wrote his first famous poem, "Guld Hornene"—*The Golden Horns*. The subject is interesting, because it treats of old Northern life, and of two golden sacrificial and festal horns, accidentally found by a girl and a yeoman respectively, in a field in Sleswick. They were sent to the Museum in Copenhagen, but were subsequently stolen thence in the beginning of this century. With this poem begins the modern literature of Denmark, with its harking back to the olden times for inspiration. A distinctive feature of it was that it was national in its origin, and continued thus for many years. Öhlenschläger, who began it, was and is its leader. His pen was very fertile, many of the Sagas and old Northern myths being treated by him. His style was also clear and elegant, and in many ways came near to the old Saga style. But he was always and everywhere the classical poet, who formed his Northern heroes partly, at least, according to the Greek ideal of beauty. For



many he will, therefor, not reach the shoulders of Grundtvig, who was indeed a genuine son of the Old North, and by whom the old mystic thoughts of our forefathers were understood and interpreted for our time. No man has ever done more for the revival of the old strong life than Grundtvig, who was himself a strong personality. Throughout a life of 90 years' duration, in poverty and misunderstanding, he went his way calmly, just as an old-time hero of the North. No man has influenced Denmark more, and his influence will go down to the latest days, if only because the foundations of his inspiration are so deep that there will always be some who will seek him for instruction.

I venture to give a few details of his life and his work. His forefathers were ministers in the Church, and through his mother he descended from some of the best men of the thirteenth century. He was born in 1783, and as a child was fed on the old-time myths, growing up with the history of his land ever before him. After tedious years spent in the Grammar School, the stirring events of the battle of the Baltic, in 1801, awoke in him some response. But his real revival came about by the reading of Öhlenschläger's new Northern poems in 1805. Grundtvig then took up the same subjects, and from 1808 till his death in 1872 he was always in the fore rank of writers. His first works were the "Scenes from the Last Days of the Heroic Period of the North," in which he depicts the old Northern heroes in their struggles with one another or against the "White God," Christ. Grand and majestic are his works, and they speak in solemn tones to the people of modern times. In 1808 appeared his "Northern Mythology," wherein he tried to explain the mystic meaning of the deep questions which exercised the minds of our earliest forefathers. In the three years to 1808 he became so permeated with the inspiration of the old Saga world that nothing would satisfy him but pilgrimages, in the company of a friend, to the several woodland sites of the old sacrificial places to Odin which were still to be found.

Their enthusiasm was such that they nearly worshipped the old gods.

But the memorable year in Grundtvig's personal development was his earnest conversion, in 1810, to the Christian faith of his forefathers, when he also preached a sermon on the subject, "Why has the Word of God disappeared from His House?" From that date he fought for Christ with an ardour and simplicity in faith and an endurance that was well worthy of the Old North. Nevertheless, I believe that it was just because of this that he understood better than before the deep longings and thoughts of our heathen forefathers. He translated Snorro and Saxo, and at the same time tried to sing his ideas into the people.

While Grundtvig was much occupied with these endeavours, he unexpectedly came to England in 1829-30-31. Let me translate what he himself has said about it. In 1838 he delivered some historical lectures, and, speaking of the English public spirit, he says that even many Englishmen themselves think that they owe this spirit to English stout or English roast beef.

It seems, therefor, a risky undertaking for me [he continues] to try with might and main to extricate them from this false opinion. But as the welfare of the North, and indeed of the whole of Christendom, depends upon England being awakened to a real understanding of itself, I will try. By the public spirit of a nation I understand the invisible strength of life whose element is the free use of all its forces, and whose breath is the mother tongue; and we thus understand why a nation becomes spiritless which loses its liberty and partly forgets its mother tongue. Is it not likewise true that the English public spirit is nothing else than the formerly well-known heroic spirit of the North? This being so, I do rejoice that the Englishman, as Governor for the Northern Spirit, has regained the sceptre of the world. [He alludes to the downfall of Napoleon.] The English language and spirit has undoubtedly made such progress that its victory is assured.

It is doubtful only whether the Englishman will remember his Northern origin; but this he should recognise, if by no other token than his poetical bequest in the Anglo-Saxon literary remains.

It was especially for their sake that I went to England in 1829, 1830, and 1831, and I went not only to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, but even to Exeter and Bristol, the frontiers of the Anglo-Saxons.

My aim was not only to study the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the British Museum, but wherever they were to be found, and, as honestly as possible, to steal them to the best of my abilities. Mine was, therefore, a Viking expedition on a small scale. My hope was, really, to be able to conquer England, or at least prepare for the only conquest the Danes from olden time had cared for.

I would conquer the English for the Anglo-Saxons, and thereby for the whole North. This seemed quite impossible, as the praise of "*Old England*," which is on everybody's lips, does not apply to what history calls Old England, but rather to New England since the Revolution of 1689. It is only a few of the historians of the British Isles who go farther back than to the Norman conquest, while they consider the Anglo-Saxon and Danish periods as woefully barbaric.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only was it that certain learned men studied and published a little Anglo-Saxon, but in the eighteenth century all these studies were quite overlooked. As an instance of this is the fact that the Anglo-Saxon poem "*Beowulf*," which is suitable to be the common Homer for England and the North, was only made known in 1815 by a man from Iceland, Thorkelin, who brought a copy to Denmark and published it in 1815, and it was translated into Danish by me in 1820, but not noticed at all in England.

The first summer I came to England the English looked upon me as a mad poet, who had got the idea into his head that great treasures were buried in the old barbaric manuscripts, and they laughed at me when they saw me daily sit down to study them, and they told me, with a haughty air, that there was nothing in them. The next summer when I came again, like a Viking, and when they saw that I began again, they got suspicious. I teased them, and showed how little taste they exhibited in choosing glass pearls for real jewels, and they began to fall off from what oracles like Hume had told them about their old treasures!

I may mention a characteristic story anent this. At Exeter there was an Anglo-Saxon book of poetry which had been in the archives of the see from the eleventh century, and the first question I asked at the British Museum was, of course, if they had a true copy of the famous book. With a haughty air they answered me that they did not care for such a thing.

Next summer it was my intention to go to Exeter, and I got an introduction to the episcopal library from the Archbishop of Canterbury. When I told them that, at the British Museum, they were far from laughing, but looked very serious, and asked me several times if I really would take so much trouble. Then I answered, with a smile, that I would do so, "*For what is dirt to you is a treasure to me.*" A couple of days later the secretary met me, saying, "*Now you need not go to Exeter, for we have written and asked for the famous manuscript, to copy it.*" "*Well,*" I said, "*it is very kind of you; but it will be tedious to wait so long, so I must go all the same.*"

The next step was that a publisher asked me to arrange the best Anglo-Saxon manuscripts for publication. I promised him to do so if he would publish a prospectus of the work. This was issued as follows: "*Biblio-*

theca Anglo-Saxonica. Prospectus and proposal of a subscription for the publication of the Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts illustrative of the Early Poetry and Literature of our Language, most of which have never yet been published. Edited by the Rev. N. F. S. Grundtvig of Copenhagen. London: 1831."

In this prospectus I had, of course, remarked that it was the Anglo-Saxons who Christianised Germany and the North, and that their literature was also the mother of the German and the Northern as well as of the English. Wherefore I used Shakespeare's words—

"And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed  
That roots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf,  
Wouldst thou not stir in this."

This was more than John Bull could stand, for when I returned next year to the British Museum I found them very busy in copying the Exeter book . . . and I rejoiced that the Englishman had himself undertaken the work.

I hope you will pardon me in reading this long extract, but you will easily gather from it how anxious Grundtvig was for the revival of the mighty Northern spirit, and that he sought to bring England over to his ideals.

### *Interest in the Olden Days.*

It was not only the poets, but the historians and philologists of Denmark who began to work. The nation, too, responded to all that they brought forth. It was a movement that did not last for a few years only. It took root in the national life. Let me remind you of what I can testify myself. While I was a student a great stream of people continually flowed to the Museums, where the old trumpets or horns, which were used in the old-time battles, were exhibited and sounded. It was not only the intellectual or academic classes of the nation that were concerned, but the whole people became interested. I remember, some 15 or 20 years ago, how our ploughed fields were searched to find the old stone axes, spears, etc., belonging to the era of our earliest forefathers. Every spot of earth where a little mound appeared was ransacked for relics. Every old grave, with the three upright stones in the ground and one on the top of them,

was hallowed and left untouched. In every town the relics discovered were stored up, and even in the small country place where I came from a nobleman built a Museum, so as to store up whatever was found in the locality. No reminiscence, however small it might be, was overlooked, no trace of the older life was left unsearched. Even in the Board Schools the boys and girls were brought up on the old stories and myths.

### *Results.*

“All this may be very nice, but what are the results?” it will be inquired. I am not afraid of saying that when the Danish nation can look back upon an honourable history in its fights and falls in the last 50 years, it must think of the old Northern spirit by which the people was regenerated. The nation felt it was one; the great differences between rich and poor became less, as they all felt themselves to be children of the same forefathers. This was demonstrated by the unity of the nation in the national crises in 1848 and 1864. In the former, which lasted three years and ended in 1850, Denmark was consolidated. The nation at large had borne the sacrifices which ensured victory; now they shared the common liberty granted in 1849 by their beloved king, Frederic VII. The grant of free constitutional government was then made without the bloodshed of innocent citizens, but by the free will of the king, before the threatening clouds from the south. It was a policy of give and take, whereby both the king and the people gained. The motto of the late king was, “My strength lies in the loving affection of my people.” The common law was given on the 5th of June, 1849. In the following 15 years Denmark built on this good and sound foundation, until the fatal year 1864. The German element in Holstein had always been dissatisfied with Denmark, and everybody feared the worst when King Frederic died in November, 1863. The fears were realised to the fullest extent, and the calamity which befell us was greater than anticipated. Our oldest part

of Denmark, Sleswick, was violently torn away by nations who had no more right to it than what the sword gave them.

But at no time in our former history did the Northern spirit show itself so strongly as after 1866. For, in spite of vexatious treatment, the Danish element in Sleswick fought stubbornly for and made progress in its aspirations towards the North. In this resistance of the Northern nations the Anglo-Saxons ought to rejoice, just as we acknowledge that the lead has now fallen to them. There are still in Sleswick 150,000 persons who recognise the North as their cradle-land, and still fervently hope, at some future time, to be given back to it. A distinguished English scholar, Prof. Dr. Stephens, who knew the North better than most men, said: "May the lands of the Northern nations, the sons of the fearless sea-kings, always hold together, and always hold their own."

Our present king, Christian IX., who celebrated his eightieth birthday on the 8th of April, did his best to meet the proposals of Prussia; but Bismarck had made up his mind that a war with Denmark would be a help in forming the German Empire, and Austria was willing too. What do you now think, gentlemen, of two great Powers attacking a small nation on a question which the small nation was willing to discuss? You have, no doubt, formed a judgment. I will only remind you that our men did their best. Their weapons were, I am sorry to confess, not good, the fortifications not satisfactory; but in spite of these depressing defects, which were inevitable, their spirit was not cast down. The upshot of the war was that we lost Sleswick and Holstein. Sleswick and Holstein are two separate divisions. Sleswick had always been an integral part of Denmark from the time history began. By the weakness of the Danish Government, the German language had been allowed to get hold of the people in the southern parts of the kingdom, and there is no doubt that there arose a wish in Holstein to be

joined to Germany. Many even in the southern part of Sleswick wished the same. There are only 200,000 Danish-speaking people in North Sleswick, and their right to be allowed to decide with their vote whether they would belong to Denmark or Germany was fully recognised at the peace of Vienna in 1866. This right was always to them, as to us, a morning-star that promised a brighter day. But in 1878 Prussia and Austria declared that Section 5 was not valid, and they simply nullified it, and since then Prussia has ejected the Danish inhabitants, and in every way vexed and persecuted those who preferred their old country to the new.

You will understand how bitter and hard this is to the national spirit of the Danes. But do not think we are cast down. We know that the cause we fight for is holy, because it is just. We know that there may be a long time to wait, but it is never in vain to endure for righteousness' sake. And this chastisement has been for us in Denmark a most profitable teaching. The good Old Northern spirit had not fallen asleep. It is now awake and working, as you will soon see. And we have, at least, this great advantage—that we have a real, a just, and a national cause to love, and to implant the same love into those who come after us. I belong to the generation after 1864, but my father took part in that war, and I can assure you that in the sons of the fathers that fought there is at least as much courage and stubbornness as was in them.

You will remember that Grundtvig came to England to find out the Anglo-Saxons, and you will not forget that he looked upon you as the real successors to those who, in olden time, were spokesmen for the Heroic spirit of the Old North. There is no doubt that the English flag waves in every breeze, and will go on increasing the area of its influence. But I need not remind you of the first and most important maxim of a Viking, namely, to protect the weak. Man against man was a lawful fight, but never trample on the weak! Therefor, when Eng-

land boasts of her great power, she must also remember her responsibility. I do believe that the English people are just ; and what a blessing for you that you have got the might, so that you need not care what anybody else says ! You can just mark out your own course and follow it. For the English-speaking race all over the world there is unlimited opportunity of manifesting the characteristics of the Old Northern spirit. You are absorbed in great undertakings, but do not forget the question of North Sleswick. It is so near to you.

But let me leave this political question, although it is not political but national, because it is the same to us as it would be to you if Prussia landed in Norfolk and took possession of English soil between the Thames and the Wash.

Let me rather turn your attention to Denmark after 1864. In the Syllabus you will see reference to the High School, and work on every side. But the latter ought to precede the former, as the former is only a part of the work.

It is now 35 years since the war, and in those years Danish national life has been established as never before in any century. Barren parts of the country have been cultivated, and in that way we have gained within our own boundaries what we lost in the war, our country has been ploughed and kept up so as to produce that amount of butter you know we send to England. In spite of agricultural depression we have managed so far that the education of the people is improved year by year. Our commerce has doubled ; we have built a free harbour in Copenhagen, whereby we seek to conquer the commerce of the Baltic ; our commercial fleet is many times bigger than before. We have had, I am sorry to say, a most hot constitutional conflict in our land, which I do not consider good, but I will not touch upon it here.

Only let me tell you a little about the High School. That word itself does not really express in English what



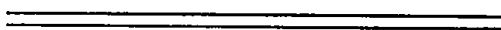
is meant. The High Schools are designed for boys and girls of all classes of the people above the age of 18. The young people stay there four months, or six months, or one or two years, according to their time and means. The schools are made and kept up on terms such as are suitable to all, and free grants are given. If you ask me what the young people are taught there, let me say that it is how to lead a useful and happy human life, active and energetic in every respect outwardly, and filled with noble thought and aim inwardly. These schools have sprung from Grundtvig's initiative, who founded the first one in the forties, but it was only after 1864 that they flourished. Many of our best young graduates at the Universities volunteered for the war. They returned and set to work to build up a new and strong generation, who would not give in. Therefor, instead of real weakness, national strength manifested itself. There are now such schools all over the country, and the best young men, after their University career, still go out and work amongst the people at large. In Denmark we do not know any very great differences between the several classes of the nation. We like every man—labourer, shopman, farmer, nobleman—to be a gentleman, in the genuine sense of the word, and as long as these forces are working I have no fear for my land.

Perhaps you think I have strayed from my subject, and cannot see where the old Northern life comes in; but every expression of new life in Denmark is influenced by the memories of the past. I have only mentioned Denmark, but I should tell you that the same can be said about Norway and Sweden, where the same forces have been at work.

And here is a remarkable historical fact—that when the old national spirit roused these people, they found that they were *one—one* in language and thought. So early as 1820 was this feeling of unity manifested, and the University at Lund in Sweden saw its expression, where our first poet, Öhlenschläger, was crowned as the king of poets

of the North, and thenceforth there was a growing connection between the three kingdoms. It was manifested clearly when the students from the four Universities held a great meeting at an arranged place and exchanged ideas, and their songs and speeches were echoed all over the North. The outcome of this was the springing up of friendship between those who had erstwhile been foes in arms, which in the subsequent Danish wars bore fruit, for young men of the best blood in the brother kingdoms came to our help, and shed their blood freely for their brother country.

I have kept you long, ladies and gentlemen, but to me it has been a pleasure to speak here.



## VIKING NOTES.

UNDER the name of Det Engelske Selskab (Anglo-Danish Club), a society has been formed in Copenhagen with the view of strengthening the mutual ties of sympathy between Denmark and the English-speaking race. The society proposes in every possible way to propagate a knowledge of England and everything English in Denmark; to encourage the study of the English language and literature, the institutions, political and social movements, etc., of England and America; and on the other hand to spread in these countries as far as possible an interest in Danish affairs. Lectures will be given and discussions held in the English and Danish languages, and it is proposed to have permanent club-rooms, where all the leading English newspapers and periodicals will be accessible to members, also to form a good English library. The preliminary Committee consisted of N. J. G. Carlsen, M.D.; A. Collstrop; R. Gram, Judge at the Criminal Court; Ad. Hansen, Ph.D., Lecturer at the Copenhagen University; Johan Hansen; Otto Jespersen, Ph.D., Professor at the Copenhagen University (Chairman); A. Peschcke Kjøedt, Member of the Danish Parliament (Vice-Chairman); and G. Rubin. Vikings desirous of joining the society should communicate with the Honorary Secretary, E. Staal, Vesterbrogade 3, Copenhagen V.

AN unexplored field, as far as I am aware, of Northern research is afforded by the writings of the Arabian voyagers of the eighth century. Of these voyagers, Omar-el-Hudri explored the north of Europe, and among other Scandinavian references he alludes to the presence of Northmen in Ireland. Speaking of the Irish he says:—"They submit to the rule of the Normans, and their principal article of luxury is a cloak. The price of one of these cloaks is a hundred pieces of gold, and those belonging to important personages are embroidered with pearls." Omar further adds that the principal amusement of the Irish was harpooning whales. They first attracted their attention by clapping their hands, then they gave them voluptuous sensations by tickling them under the chin, and finally they drove harpoons through their heads with hammers. This last observation points to the fact that the British seas were formerly much fuller of cetaceans than they are at present.

I EXTRACT the following from a review which appeared in the *Daily Chronicle* of "The Tale of Thronð of Gate" (Vol. II. of the "Northern Library": David Nutt), as offering a criticism that is worthy of attention. Alluding to the wizardcraft incident, where Thronð confronts Thorgrim and his sons with the wraiths of those they have murdered, the reviewer remarks:—

"And here it is that Professor Powell has misread his text. 'The method of conducting this operation,' he says in his preface, 'is but imperfectly described. The four lattices are apparently to prevent the spirits getting at the protective fire, and the wizard sitting by it within them, the nine squares drawn outside are

puzzling.' Not at all. The Icelandic text, though obscure, is intelligible. It runs thus: 'Ok grindr fjórar lætr hann gera með fjórum hornum og nú reita rístr Thrandr alla vega út frá grindunum'—that is to say, 'And he, Thrand, causes to be made a four-cornered lattice-work, and he draws nine circles out from the lattices in all directions.' Thus what really seems to have taken place was simply this:—The wizard, after lighting a fire, constructed a square screen out of four pieces of lattice-work joined together, from each angle of which he then proceeded to draw nine charmed circles in all directions, so as to cover most of the room, of course to make it demon-proof, so to speak. Then he sits down, not *inside the lattices*, but, as the Icelandic text distinctly says, *between the lattices and the fire*, to mutter his spells and await the result. The fire is *not* protective, but attractive—it attracts the cold, wet wraiths, who warm their hands by it. What then, it may be asked, was the use of the lattice-square? Why, surely, to be a receptacle for Thorgrim and his sons, from whence they can view the accusing spirits, themselves unseen, and thus be convicted of their crime."

THE visits of ghosts and wraiths and unearthly forebodings were firmly believed in by the early Northmen. The circumstantiality of the accounts of some of these visitations in the Sagas is somewhat staggering at times, and calls for something more than the explanation that they are the creations of the imagination or superstition. The following physical origin of certain unearthly sounds, and the explanation attached to them by a superstitious and ignorant peasant folk, are suggestive, maybe, of the probable explanation of some of the Saga cases. It relates to the bog-slide in the Ormacree Valley, Ireland, where a mass of peat, 700 acres superficial, and extending along an inclined plane a quarter of a mile wide, shifted a distance from its site, destroying dwellings and life in its course. Says the newspaper notice:—

"In the Killarney district it is stated that about a week before Christmas extraordinary noises were heard in the valley at night, which the people describe as resembling what is traditionally supposed to be the wailings of the banshee. These noises—a long-drawn, uncanny sound, with cries resembling the Irish keen—are said to have been heard by several persons residing in the valley. Large numbers of the people explained the nature of the cries to the priests, who succeeded in calming their fears. So widespread were the feelings which these sounds occasioned that numbers of old people sent for the clergy to visit them in their houses. The priests were busy for some days ministering religious consolation to the people and reassuring them. The noises undoubtedly were there, for numbers of the people heard the cries during the night, and in one instance they reached official ears also. The fact that these banshee-like cries, causing apprehension of some disaster amongst the people, should be so quickly followed by the great calamity that has befallen the district, is regarded by those who attach credence to the story as very singular."

A visitor, however, furnished a physical explanation for the banshee cries. The sliding bog, he remarked, made a noise during the night peculiarly weird, rumbling and continuous, which seemed to increase in volume as the day advanced. The constant falling of the rain and the howling of the wind added to the uncanny effect, the volume of the rainfall apparently facilitating the motion of the sliding bog.

As a slight addition to Mr. Knox's contribution to Manx history, I quote the following description of the Manxland people from the observations of a recent traveller :—

“In appearance and character the native Manx resemble the Highlanders of Scotland rather than the Welsh, or even the Irish ; perhaps, in the latter case, from the greater proportion of the Norse element in their nature. They are not a tall race, a tall man being a rarity among them ; but they are a broad, strongly-built race, so much so, indeed, that it was remarked that a body of Manxmen, raised as a militia during the Revolutionary War with France, occupied more ground than an equal number of men from any other British regiment. But small as the country is—only a little more than thirty miles from end to end—there is yet noticeable a marked distinction between the inhabitants of its two extremities, the island being in this respect, as in others, a strange parallel to its greater neighbour to the eastward. In the south, the natives are dark-complexioned, with black hair and eyes ; in the north, they are fair, with light, often red, hair. There are also marked differences in the native language of the two districts, differences so great as to affect their pronunciation of the English language, and amounting almost to dialectical peculiarities. So great, altogether, is the difference in appearance, in speech, and in habits, that it is commonly easy to distinguish between the natives of the two districts.”

ATTENTION may be called to the “ Report of Manuscripts in the Welsh Language,” the first volume of which has recently been issued by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The manuscripts are those of the famous Mostyn Hall collection, and may possibly be found of use in furnishing the earlier forms of Norse place-names now hidden beneath the later Cymric overlay.

AN interesting book is that written by Mr. H. Bullock Hall, and published by Macmillan, entitled, “ The Romans on the Riviera and the Rhine.” The writer champions the view first advanced by Baron de Belloguet in 1869 (“ *Ethnogénie Gauloise*”), that the “ fair Celts ” of the classic writers were of German stock, and a race different from the major portion of the population of ancient and modern France. The Welsh and Bretons are defined as Iberians, as are the Basques, and both Iberians and Ligurians are regarded as branches of an ancient race settled for upwards of three thousand years in their present possessions along the shores of the Mediterranean. If the “ yellow-haired Celts ” of Gaul are to be removed from the Gallic family, so must the “ yellow-haired ” *fionna*, and similar races of Ireland and Scotland, which is, of course, only what has been contended long since by myself and many others in this country.

THE “ champion of lost causes ” may have our admiration and our pity, but he can hardly have our praise. Therefor the words of Lord Russell of Killowen, in presiding at the meeting of the Irish Literary Society, are perfectly fit and proper. It is impossible to revive the Gaelic tongue in this day, and hence the futility of seeking to do so. The Gael in England, Scotland, and Ireland, when he lost the overlordship of his native land, lost the power of perpetuating his tongue. When, furthermore, he survives as a mere fraction in numbers, to the alien intruders, the attempt to revive his former language and predominance is absurd. In England the

unmixed Gael is found nowhere but in small isolated communities. In Scotland his proportion to the rest of the population is perhaps one-fifth. The rest of the population in the lowlands, in the northern highlands, and in the islands, is Saxon or Scandinavian. In Ireland the unmixed Gael forms hardly one-third the population, the rest being Danes and Saxons (of English or Scotch origin). In Wales likewise the non-Welsh element is nearly half the whole population. Forming, then, a mere fringe of the population of Great Britain, his cause undoubtedly is a lost one, as an independent entity, and his only possible future is incorporation into the dominant elements of the population, whether he likes it or not.

THIS natural conclusion makes the absurdity the greater, not only of the attempt to revive Gaelic, but to induce the disuse of the terms "English" and "England," and the substitution therefor of those of "British" and "Britain." If the term "English" applied to a Gael is a misnomer, so is the term "Briton" applied to an Englishman and a Lowland Scotchman equally incorrect. It is a greater fault, indeed, to use these suggested terms; because, as we have shown, the vastly larger proportion of the population of these isles is non-Gaelic. If prejudice is done by the use of an inexact term, it is surely less applied to a minority than to a majority. Moreover, the case for the Gaels is the weaker from the probable fact that numbers who signed the petition for the use of the terms "British" and "Britain" are, unknown to themselves, not Gaels, but Saxon Lowlanders. Ignorance as to the actual component elements of the population of Scotland is as widespread in England as it is in Scotland; hence the fact that many writers indiscriminately describe all Scotchmen as Gaels and all Irish as Celts or Gaels. As regards Scotland, the language of the lowlands, of Burns, Ramsey, and all the vernacular poets and writers, in short, the "Doric" itself, is a dialect of Anglo-Saxon but little mixed with Gaelic, and often purer English—that is, having more Teutonic or Gothic elements—than literary English. It is just as much English as the tongue of America is, and is so recognised by all sane Scotch writers, past and present, including Sir Walter Scott. Better teaching in the public schools of the history of the spoken language would do much to lessen the cloud of ignorance prevailing, and prevent misdirected efforts like the attempted Gaelic or Celtic revival, the substitution of "British" for "English," etc.

BUT what warrant has Mr. David Macrae to speak for Scotland? He says he represents 104,647 Scotchmen who signed his petition. But what are 104,647 to the total population of all Scotland? Mr. Macrae, in fact, speaks but for a minority, and that a Gaelic, as distinct from a Saxon or Lowland Scotch, one. It is the old story of the tail seeking to wag the head, the cart leading the horse. The answer made by the Queen, through Lord Balfour of Burleigh, to the petition, in which the agitation is dubbed as "ridiculous," is very just. I conclude my observations with quoting this:—" 'Britain' and 'British' are in not infrequent use, and are in some connections most appropriate; but while their use would satisfy us, it would not be an accurate obedience to any provision of the statute book, and it would give our Irish fellow-subjects a grievance in respect that their

rights were altogether disregarded. 'Briton,' in spite of one well-known instance, is quite out of date for general use, and is even slightly ridiculous." But Lord Balfour allows there is ground for charging Englishmen generally with an "unfair and aggressive feeling of national vanity" in this matter.

As a contribution to a future monograph on the "Danes in Ireland," and Viking remains there, which I trust some Viking will presently undertake, I give this additional cutting anent the artificial permutation of personal names in Ireland:—"At the time of the Union there was a rage among well-to-do Irishmen to put *de* before their names—the Lancys became De Lancys, plain Mullins became De Molyms, and the Baths, De Bathes."

THE entertaining journal *Modern Society* makes the following appreciative observations on the Viking Club:—

"When the promised history of clubs is written, it is to be hoped that its compiler will have included descriptions of those which exist, as it were, beneath the surface. There are in London innumerable associations conducted on the lines of quaint traditions that have no *locus standi* in the clubland of the West End, though they often serve for the bringing together of notable men distinguished in science, art, or, more generally, letters. Such is the Viking Club. The members are, of course, not real Vikings, or descendants of Vikings, but they preserve the social customs of the Scandinavian pirates, the President being called the 'Viking-Jarl,' the Secretary the 'Umboths-Man,' the Treasurer the 'Skatt-Master,' and the Editor the 'Saga-Master.' The idea is not to perpetuate the literary achievements of the legendary freebooter, but to unearth the folklore of the North, and to do something to keep the high time of the Vikings from being forgotten. The members meet and read papers, and otherwise amuse themselves in an icy, Arctic sort of way."

A slight error is contained in the statement that the members of the Viking Club are not "descendants of Vikings," as many, or most, of them, if genealogical, historical, and other evidence have weight, can certainly claim that honour.

To judge from his writings, Mr. Rider Haggard is no higher informed than the very average Englishman regarding the early facts of his nation's history and of his race. It is difficult to say whether the extracts below from "King Solomon's Mines" are satire or serious, and whether the text or the footnote is to be taken as expressing the author's own views. Certainly the footnote has a touch of Mrs. Malaprop about it, which is not also absent from this author's other lucubrations on kindred subjects in other of his works:—

"One a gentleman, of about thirty, was perhaps the biggest-chested and longest-armed man I ever saw. He had yellow hair, a thick yellow beard, clear-cut features, and large grey eyes set deep in his head. I never saw a finer-looking man, and somehow he reminded me of an ancient Dane. . . . And, by the way, it is a curious thing, and just shows how the blood will out, I discovered afterwards that Sir Henry Curtis is of Danish blood."

Mr. Rider Haggard then adds the following as a footnote:—

"Mr. Quatermain's ideas about ancient Danes seem to be rather confused; we have always understood that they were dark-haired people. Probably he was thinking of Saxons.—EDITOR."

"THE Saint-Clairs of the Isles," by R. W. Saint-Clair (H. Brett, Auckland, N.Z.), claims to be a history of the Sea Kings of Orkney and the Sinclairs, their Scottish successors. The claim is sufficiently comprehensive, but it must be admitted that Mr. St. Clair has performed the task he set before himself. The work gives a fairly complete account of the Norse period, and exhaustive pedigrees of the various lines of the Orkney Earls. The Saint-Clair line, with all its branches and allied families, are, of course, very fully dealt with, while a chapter is devoted to other leading Orcadian families. The work is fully illustrated by various charters and genealogical tables, as well as by quotations from the Sagas, histories, and legends bearing on the subject. It contains besides a map of Caithness and the Isles and nearly fifty engravings, some of them of great interest. The time and labour which the author must have spent on his work cannot possibly be adequately recompensed by any profit he may reap from it, for the work is produced in a style that does credit to our kinsmen in New Zealand, where it has found a publisher. But Mr. St. Clair will find his reward in the knowledge that his work will be invaluable to all students of the subject, and that he has done his task so thoroughly that no one is likely to try the vain task of gleaning in his footsteps.

THE *Globe* of the 5th July, 1900, had the following paragraph :—

"The East London Water Company, in excavating their new reservoirs at Tottenham marshes, have made a discovery of unique interest. A war vessel, 50 feet long with a beam of 26 feet, made of oak and elm, has been dug up in an almost complete state. From several special indications archæologists claim to give the exact date of the vessel. The form of the rivets proves that she is of Danish build, and it is not an outrageous inference to argue that the ship belonged to the Danes who were defeated by King Alfred in the Lea Valley in 894 A.D. At any rate, the conjecture is plausible, and—a somewhat rare occurrence—archæologists are in agreement."

The delight which this interesting discovery naturally evokes was subsequently rudely checked. In answer to enquiries, the Secretary of the East London Waterworks Company wrote :—

"I regret to tell you that the unfortunate publicity as to the discovery of the ancient ship in Tottenham Marsh caused a huge crowd to collect early on the Sunday morning following, who, in spite of the efforts of the Company's men and the police, smashed the whole of the uncovered portion and carried the fragments away as relics. This is one of the most scandalous pieces of vandalism I have ever known, but we were powerless to prevent it. The remaining portion of the boat will be excavated during the summer, but I have given the Contractors the strictest instructions to keep it perfectly secret."

No comment can express the feeling of horror which the terms of the above communication give rise to.

ONE of the very active representatives of the Viking Club in the United States is Miss Cornelia Horsford, Jarla-kona, who not only spends her money but her time and exertions in the furtherance of Viking research. On December 29th, 1898, she read a paper before the Tenth Annual



Meeting of the American Folklore Society, at Columbia University, New York, on "A Tradition of Shelter Island, N.Y.," which offers points of interest to others besides her then hearers. She said:—

"The eastern end of Long Island, New York, is divided into two long points which partially enclose a bay. The northern point is named Orient, and the southern, which is longer, is named Montauk. Between these points lies Gardiner's Island, and within the bay thus sheltered from the ocean is Shelter Island. One of the natural curiosities of Shelter Island is what appears to be a footprint in a rock. This footprint is that of a right foot. The impression of the heel and instep is deep and well formed, but the toe-prints are lost where the rock slopes suddenly away. The tradition about this is that when the Evil Spirit left the island he took three long strides—the first on Shelter Island, the second on Orient Point, and the third on Montauk, whence he plunged into the sea. The rock on which there was a corresponding footprint at Orient Point has been removed to the rooms of the Long Island Historical Society in Brooklyn. It is said on Shelter Island that if anyone makes a wish when he places his foot into this footprint for the first time, he will certainly get it. This, unfortunately, is not true; but another saying, that the footprint will fit the right foot of anyone, from a little child to the largest man, is a striking fact; for as the bottom is narrow and the top wide, and there is no limit in length, it supports comfortably any foot that is placed in it. Finally, it is said that no horse will pass this stone without being seized with terror on drawing near it, snorting, rearing, and trembling in every limb. A similar story is told about another rock on Shelter Island, where the notorious pirate, Captain Kidd, is supposed to have murdered and buried a young woman. This rock is also said to be an object of terror to horses, who, so the story says, cannot be safely ridden near enough to see it.

"It is these sayings about fear in horses to which I wish to draw your attention. Why should a horse be supposed to dread the scene of a crime, or the footprint of Satan? These traditions are evidently Old World stories transferred to a new and suitable scene. The opportunity to secure a wish, the footprint of the devil, and the three long leaps, are all familiar to us in English folklore. If we look for a more serious cause for some of these traditions than that of the gossip of the countryside in England, we must pass beyond the limits of what can be proved at present. A possible origin for these stories occurred to me lately while reading a paper in the *Saga-Book* of the Viking Club of London, named, 'Odinic Traces in Somerset,' by the Rev. Charles W. Whistler. Mr. Whistler says 'that the thing that is never forgotten in a district is a terror. Often the latest terror will absorb into its own story the legends of the older days,' and 'one can trace the remains of the past beliefs in many ways as colouring the thoughts of our people, and in nothing more than in the matter of the one terror of our faith—the fear of the spiritual enemy, the Power of Evil. The fear of the old gods has been, not replaced by, but transmuted into, the fear of Satan. And this is natural; for to the early converts from heathenism the sway of the pagan deities represented the power of evil from which they had escaped, and to their minds Satan was to a certain extent typified in the likeness and with the ways of them, as they had been wont to fear them.' Mr. Whistler then traces several of the Somerset traditions back to an Odinic origin. Among them is a story about footprints of the devil which are still to be seen on the rocks. Two stories are about the 'wild hunt.' Once a man saw it pass in the air over him. The rider stayed to speak to him, to his terror, for he saw that the huntsman was the devil, and that he rode a great sow. "'Good fellow, now tell me, how ambles my sow?" "Eh, by the Lord! her ambles well

now!" the man answered. But the pious emphatic was not to be withstood by the fiend, and he vanished in a flash of fire.' In this tradition Mr. Whistler sees Frey mounted on his golden-bristled boar, Gullinbursti, transmuted into the devil, while his boar, for the sake of the rhyme, is changed into a sow. In another story the appearance of a headless man riding on a black horse is supposed to have been the hooded Odin; and in a third, the wild huntsman riding on a headless horse suggests that the horse was headless from his sacrifice to Thor at the Vé. Horse sacrifice was the cause of much trouble in England in the old days, as it was to King Olaf Tryggvasson in the far North.

"Is it possible that these stories about the terror of horses for the scene of a crime, and for the footprint of Satan, may have come down from the time of the confusion of the Christian and old Norse faiths in England, when, if a crime had been committed, the wrath of the Æsir must be appeased by the sacrifice of a horse; and likewise when Satan, invested with the character of the northern gods, would be supposed to desire for himself their ancient sacrifice, a horse?"

For the furtherance of Norse research, the National Geographical Society of the United States offered in December, 1898, two prizes, of 150 and 75 dollars respectively, for the best and second best essays on the pre-Columbian discoveries and settlements of the Norsemen on the mainland of North America, and on the location of the lands mentioned in the Icelandic Sagas. The competition was to close on December 31st, 1899.

Two little volumes, published by Herra Björn Jónsson, Reykjavík, are worthy of being brought to the notice of the Viking Club. They are entitled "*Fornsögubættir*," and are by Pálmi Pálsson and Thórhallur Bjarnarson. They consist of extracts from Icelandic Sagas, Edda, etc., and supply amateurs of Icelandic with easy text-books at the small cost of 1 krone each, or for a postal order to the value of 1s. 6d.

"*THE Cult of Othin: an Essay on the Ancient Religion of the North*," by H. M. Chadwick (London: Messrs. C. J. Clay and Sons. Price 2s. 6d.), is an able attempt to ascertain the characteristics of the worship of Odin in the North, its identity with that of the ancient Continental Germans, and the date of its introduction to the Northern nations. As to the identification of the personality of Wodin, the writer, who of all things is independent, is unconvinced that "Woden is the deified Wode," and suspects an outside origination—Slavic or Gaulish. He places himself thus at issue with many leading German and Scandinavian authorities. With regard to the characteristics of Odin worship, human sacrifices are proven, both voluntary and involuntary, by hanging and stabbing. Female self-sacrifice, similar to, but not exactly identical with, the Indian suttee, is also shown to have existed. The date of the introduction of Odin worship, as also of the origin of runes, in the North, is very elaborately investigated, the author contending for a date hardly later than the end of the first century after Christ. On the theory of the tracing of certain phases of Odin mythology to Christian sources, the author declares himself at issue with the views of Munch and Bugge. The work is a valuable contribution to a subject on which little light has yet been thrown, the author's logical and clear style showing a thorough grasp of the main points at issue.

The popular price at which the work is got out should ensure alone, apart from its inherent recommendations, its acquisition by every Viking.

TITLE Page and Index of Vol. I. are unavoidably held over, and will be published at an early date.

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### DEATH-ROLL.

THE Club has to deplore the death of one of its Jarla-men, Sir Henry E. L. Dryden, Bart., which took place on July 24th, 1899. Sir Henry Dryden was a lineal descendant of the great poet, John Dryden, and was born on August 17th, 1818.

As an antiquary and archæologist Sir Henry Dryden was looked upon as one of the greatest authorities in the country, and, in fact, his skill and knowledge in that direction were most extensive and much sought in solving many problems in connection with antiquarian and archæological research, not only in his native county, but in various parts of the country. His lectures on prehistoric times always drew large audiences, and were of a most interesting and instructive character, and gave full proof of the fund of knowledge possessed by him in the particular subjects he dealt with. His annual lectures and talks in Northampton were looked forward to with great interest, and in these his facts and figures were always enlivened by a remarkable flow of wit and humour. Not only did he lecture in his own county, but he also annually visited Wolverton, Banbury, and Oxford. His style of delivery was unique, and truly his own, and whatever subject he dealt with, be it dry or otherwise, he never failed to make it attractive and generally acceptable. He had in the past taken his part in the annual meetings of the Archæological and the British Associations, and his views and criticisms on the various subjects discussed were closely watched. Sir Henry used for some years to spend the summer months in Orkney, where he was engaged in making measured drawings of the Cathedral Church of St. Magnus at Kirkwall. These drawings were published in a handsome folio, and formed the Transactions of the Architectural Institute of Scotland for the years 1868-71. Throughout the Islands of Orkney, and even as far as Shetland, Sir Henry's name was a passport. Sir Henry was an honorary member of the Scottish Society of Antiquaries, a position accorded to him in recognition of his work at Orkney, and for many years President of the Oxfordshire Archæological Society. He accepted in 1892 the office of Jarla-man of the Viking Club, in whose aims and doings he took considerable interest, although circumstances did not allow him to be present at its meetings.