

THE STORY OF MAGNUS THE BLIND
AND HARALD GILLI.

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AND HARALD GILL

I have written this story for the purpose of showing the life of a blind man in the olden times. It is a true story, and I have written it in a simple and plain style, so that it may be read and understood by all.

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CHAPTER I. THE BEGINNINGS OF MAGNUS THE BLIND AND HARALD GILLI.

MAGNUS, son of King Sigurd, was taken to king over all the land at Oslo, even according as all the all-folk had sworn to King Sigurd. And a many men straightway then took service with him, and landed-men withal. Magnus was fairer than any men who were then in Norway. He was a man big-moody and grim; a man of great prowess was he, but the friendship of his father fetched him his most friendship with the all-folk. He was a great drinker, a wealth-luster, rough and ill to deal with.

Harald Gilli was a rightwise man, merry and playful, humble-minded, bounteous, so that he spared nought to his friends, and easy of rede, so that he would let others have their way with him in all matters they would. All these things stood him in stead for goodhap of friendship and good report, so that many mighty men were drawn to him no less than to King Magnus.

Harald was then in Tunsberg when he heard of

the death of King Sigurd his brother. And forthwith he had meetings with his friends, who made up their minds to hold a Howe-Thing there in the town. At that Thing Harald was taken to king over half of the land, and then was that called need-forced oaths whereby he had sworn away from his hand his father's heritage.

Harald took a court to him and made landed-men, and soon an host drew to him no less than unto King Magnus. Then fared men betwixt them, and so it stood seven nights. But whereas King Magnus gat much lesser folk, he saw nothing for it but to share the land with Harald. And in such wise was it shared, that each should have one-half against the other of the realm that King Sigurd had had. But ships, and board-array, and precious things, and all chattels that King Sigurd had had, King Magnus had; yet was he the worsor pleased with his lot. However, for a while they ruled over the land in peace, though each kept his counsels much to himself.

King Harald begat a son called Sigurd on Thora, the daughter of Guthorm Greybeard. King Harald gat Ingirid, the daughter of Rognvald, who was the son of Ingi, the son of Steinkel. King Magnus had for wife Kristin, daughter of Knut Lord, and sister of Valdimar the Dane-king. King Magnus grew nought loving to her, and sent her back south to Denmark, and sithence all went the heavier for him, and mickle unthank gat he from her kindred.

CHAPTER II. WAR BETWEEN HARALD AND MAGNUS THE KINGS.

WHENAS they had been kings for three winters, Magnus and Harald, they sat both the fourth winter north in Cheaping, and each gave other home-bidding, and yet was it ever at the point of battle with their folk. But toward spring King Magnus sought with a ship-host south around the land, and drew to him folk all that he might, and seeks of his friends if they would to get him strength hereto, to take Harald from his kingdom, and to allow him so much of dominion as might seem good to himself; and he sets it forth to them how Harald had afore-time forsworn the kingdom. King Magnus gat hereto the consent of many mighty men.

King Harald fared to the Uplands, and so by the inland road east unto Wick. He also drew folk to him, when he heard of King Magnus' doings. And wheresoever they went, each hewed the other's beasts and slew each other's men. King Magnus was mickle more manned, for he had all the main of the land for folk-getting.

Harald was in the Wick, on the east side of the firth, and drew folk to him; and then each took from other both men and goods. Was then with Harald, Kristrod, his very mother's brother, and many landed-men were with him, yet mickle more with King Magnus. Harald was with his host at a place called The Force, in Ranrealm, and went thence out towards the sea. On the eve of Lawrence Wake they ate their meat at night

whereas 'tis called Fyrileif, but the warders were a-horseback, and held horse-guard all ways about the stead. And therewithal were the warders ware of the host of King Magnus, that they fared now to the stead ; and King Magnus had nigh on sixty hundreds of men, while Harald had but fifteen hundreds. Then came the watch and bare the news to King Harald, and said that the host of King Magnus was come upon the stead. Harald answers : " What may our kinsman King Magnus will ? Never will it be that he shall will to fight with us ? " Then answers Thiostolf Alison : " Lord, thou wilt have to make rede for thee and this folk, as if King Magnus will have been drawing an host together all the summer to this end, that he will fight with thee so soon as he should find thee." Then stood the king up and spake to his men, and bade them take their weapons if Magnus will fight. Thereon was the blast blown, and all the host of Harald went out from the stead into a certain acre-garth, and there set up their banner.

King Harald had two ring-byrnies, but Kristrod his brother had never a byrny, he who was called the most valiant of men.

When King Magnus and his men saw the host of King Harald, they arrayed their host, and made so long an array that they might ring around all Harald's host. So says Haldor Gabbler :

More mickle long gat Magnus
The rank-wing : there he leaned on
A many folk. Warm slaughter
Did cover up the meadow.

CHAPTER III. BATTLE AT FYRILEIF.

KING MAGNUS let bear before him the Holy Cross in the battle; there was mickle battle and hard. Kristrod, king's brother, had gone with his company in the midmost array of King Magnus, and hewed on either hand, and men shrunk the two ways before him. But a certain mighty bonder, who had been in the host of King Harald, was standing at the back of Kristrod, and reared aloft his spear two-handed, and thrust it through his shoulders, and it came out through the breast of him, and there fell Kristrod. Then spoke many who stood by, why he did that ill deed. He answers: "Now he wotteth how that they hewed my beasts last summer, and took all that was at home, and had me perforce into their host. Such I minded for him erst, if I might but get the chance thereof."

After that came flight into King Harald's host, and he fled away himself and all his host. Then were fallen a many of King Harald's folk. There gat his bane-wound Ingimar of Ask, the son of Svein, a landed-man of King Harald's host, and nigh sixty of the bodyguard.

So King Harald fled east into the Wick to his ships, and fared sithence to Denmark to find King Eric Everminded, and besought him of avail when they met south in Sealand. King Eric gave him a good welcome, and the most for this sake, that they had sworn brotherhood between them. He gave to Harald Halland for maintenance and dominion, and gave him eight long-ships unrigged.

After that fared King Harald north over Hal-land, and then came folk to join him. King Magnus laid all the land under him after this battle; he gave life and limb to all the men who were hurt, and let tend them as his own men, for he called then all the land his; and now he had all the best choice of men who were in the land.

But when they took counsel together, then Sigurd Sigurdson and Thorir, the son of Ingrid, and all the wisest men would that they should hold the flock in the Wick, and abide there if Harald should come from the south. But King Magnus took the other way with his wilfulness, and went north to Biorgvin and sat there through the winter, and let the host fare from him, and the landed-men to their steads.

CHAPTER IV. BONDERS GIVE THEMSELVES INTO THE KING'S POWER.

KING HARALD came to King's Rock with the host which had followed him from Denmark. Then landed-men and townsfolk had a gathering there before him, and set their battle in array up above the town. But King Harald went up from his ships and sent men to the host of the bonders, and bade them that they should not battle him from his own land; and gave out that he would claim no more than he had right to have; and men fared betwixt. At last the bonders gave up the gathering, and went under King Harald's hand. Then gave King Harald for his hosting fiefs and grants to the

landed-men, and bettering of rights to the bonders, they who turned into the host with him.

After that much folk gathered to King Harald. He fared by the east round the Wick, and gave good peace to all men, save the men of King Magnus; them he let rob and slay wheresoever he came upon them. And whenas he came from the east unto Sarpsburg, then took he there two of King Magnus's landed-men, Asbiorn to wit and Nereid his brother, and gave before them the choice, that one should hang, and the other be cast into the force of Sarp, and bade them choose themselves betwixt them. Asbiorn chose to fare into Sarp, for he was the older, and that death was deemed the grimmer; and so was it done. This Haldor Gabbler telleth :

Asbiorn, who held evil words
With the king, must needs be striding
Forth into Sarp : wide feedeth
The king the hawks of battle.
The king let hang up Nereid
Upon the grim tree baneful
Of Sigar's foe : paid scatterer
Of wave-flame speech of house-thing.

After that King Harald went north to Tunsberg, and there had he good welcome, and mickle host gathered to him.

CHAPTER V. OF COUNSELS.

KING MAGNUS sat in Biorgvin and heard these tidings. Then he let call to talk with him all such lords as were then in the town, and asked them for rede as to what-wise things should be dealt with. Then answers

Sigurd Sigurdson : " Hereto can I lay good rede : Let man thee a cutter with good men and true, and get for a master thereof me, or some other landed-man, to fare to meet King Harald thy kinsman, and bid him peace, according as rightwise men here in the land may settle between you, such that he shall have one half of the realm against thee ; and this seemeth likely, that by the pleading of good men King Harald will take that bidding, and that thus there will be peace betwixt you."

Then answered King Magnus : " I will not have this choice ; or of what avail was it that we won under our sway the whole of the realm last autumn, if we shall now share away one half thereof ? Give some other rede hereto."

Then answers Sigurd Sigurdson : " So meseems, lord, that now thy landed-men sit at home, and will not come to thee, they who in harvest prayed thee for leave to go home. Thou didst that then much against my rede, to let drift so much that multitude which then we had ; for I deemed I wotted that Harald and his would seek back to the Wick, as soon as they should hear that it was lordless. Now is there another rede toward, and ill it is, yet maybe it will do. Do to fare home thy guests and other folk with them against such landed-men who will not now bestir them in thy need, and slay them and give their goods to such as be trusty to thee, though hitherto they have not been of much account. Let them whip up the folk ; have thou evil men, no less than good ; and then fare east against Harald with what folk thou mayst get, and fight him."

The king answered : “ Unbefriended will that be to let slay many great men, and to heave up little men instead ; for they have oft failed no less, and the land were worse manned than erst. I will hear yet more rede of thine.”

Sigurd answered : “ Now is rede-giving growing troublous to me, in that thou wilt not make peace and wilt not fight. Fare we north then to Thrandheim, where the land’s might is most for us, and take all the folk we may get on the way ; and perchance the Elfgrims will thus weary of drifting after us.”

The king answered : “ I will not flee before those whom we chased last summer ; so give me some better rede.”

Then stood up Sigurd and made him ready to go, and said : “ Then I shall rede the rede which I see thou wouldst have, and which will be followed : sit here in Biorgvin till Harald come with a crowded host, and then thou wilt have to thole either death, or shame else.” And Sigurd was no longer at this talk.

CHAPTER VI. OF KING HARALD’S HOST.

KING HARALD fared from the east along the land, and had an all-mickle host. This winter was called throng-winter. King Harald came to Biorgvin on Yule-eve, and laid his host into Floru-bights, and would not fight on Yule for its holiness’ sake. But King Magnus let array him in the town. He let rear a

slaughter-sling out in Holm, and let make iron chains with wooden spars betwixt, and lay them rightathwart the bight over from the King's-garth to Monkbridge on Northness. He let forge caltrops, and scatter them about over unto Jonsmeads, and only three days in the Yule-tide were holden holy from smith's work. But on the out-going day of Yule, King Harald let blow the host to give way. In Yule-tide nine hundreds of men had gathered to King Harald.

CHAPTER VII. KING MAGNUS TAKEN.

KING HARALD behight to King Olaf the Holy for victory, to let do an Olaf's church there in the town at his own cost only. King Magnus set his battle in array out in Christ's Churchyard, but King Harald rowed first over to Northness. But when King Magnus and his saw that, they turned up into the town and into Bightbottom. And as they fared up the street then ran many townsfolk into courts and to their homes, but those who fared over unto the Meads ran against the caltrops.

Then saw King Magnus and his folk that King Harald had rowed all the host over into Hernewick, and went there up on to the bents above the town. Then turned King Magnus out along the street, and then his host fled away from him, some up into the fell, othersome up past Nunseat, some into churches, or they hid them in other places. King Magnus went on board his ship, but there was no chance for them to fare away, for the iron

chains held them from without. Few men withal followed the king, and therefore were they good for nothing. So says Einar Skulison in Harald's drapa:

The Biorgvin wick
Week-long they lockèd ;
For the surf's thole-stiers
Was no departing.

A little thereafterwards came King Harald's men out aboard the ships, and then was King Magnus laid hand on, whereas he sat aft in the fore-room on the high-seat chest, and with him Hakon Fauk, his mother's brother, the fairest of men, albeit not called wise ; but Ivar, son of Ozur, and many other friends of his were then laid hand on, and some were slain straightway.

CHAPTER VIII. THE MAIMING OF KING MAGNUS.

THEN King Harald had a meeting with his council, and bade them take rede with him, and at the close of this meeting it was settled to take Magnus from kingdom in such wise that he might never thenceforth be called a king. So he was given into the hands of the king's thralls, and they gave him maiming ; stung out his eyes, to wit, and hewed from him one foot, and at last was he gelded. Ivar, son of Ozur, was blinded ; Hakon Fauk was slain.

After this all the land was laid under the sway of King Harald. And then there was much seeking after those who had been the greatest friends

of King Magnus, or who would most wot of his treasures or his precious goods.

King Magnus had had the Holy Cross with him ever since the battle befell at Fyrileif, and would not tell now where it was become. Reinald, Bishop of Stavanger, was an Englishman, and was called much wealth-yearning. He was a dear friend of King Magnus, and men thought it like that into his keep had been given much money and precious things. So men were sent for him, and he came to Biorgvin, and this privity was laid to his charge; but he denied it, and bade the ordeal thereto. King Harald would not that, but laid on the bishop to pay him fifteen marks of gold. The bishop said he will not make his see poorer by all that; he will rather risk life. Sithence they hanged Bishop Reinald out on Holm on the slaughter-sling. And when he walked up to the gallows, he shook the boot from his foot, and said and swore withal: "I know of no more of King Magnus' wealth than what is in this boot." And in it was a gold ring. Bishop Reinald was laid in earth in Michael's Church on Northness, and this deed was much blamed. After this Harald was sole king over Norway while he lived.

CHAPTER IX. WONDERS AT KING'S ROCK.

FIVE winters after the death of King Sigurd great tidings befell at King's Rock. At that time were rulers there Guthorm, the son of Harald Fletcher, and Sæmund Housewife, who had

for wife Ingibiorg, the daughter of Priest Andres, the son of Bruni. Their sons were these, Paul Flip and Gunni Fiss. Sæmund had a baseborn son hight Asmund. Andres, son of Bruni, was a man of great mark; he sang at Christ's Church; Solveig hight his wife. With them was then at fostering and rearing Jon, the son of Lopt, eleven winters old; Priest Lopt, the son of Sæmund, the father of Jon, was also there. The daughter of Priest Andres and Solveig his wife hight Helga, whom Einar had to wife.

Now it befell at King's Rock on the Lord's night the next after Easter week, that a great din was heard out in the streets throughout all the town, like as when the king fares with all his court, and hounds went on so ill that they might not be heeded, but broke out. And all who came out became mad, and bit all that was in their way, man or beast; but all that was bitten, and that the blood came out of, became mad, and all creatures with young lost their birth and became mad. Hereof was minding wellnigh every night from Easter unto Ascension day. Then men were much adrad of these wonders, and many betook themselves away and sold their garths, and went off to the country, or else into some other cheaping towns, and to all them who were wisest, these things seemed of the greatest weight, and they were afraid, as forsooth it befell, that this forewent some great tidings which were not come to pass. But Priest Andres spoke long and deft on Whitsunday, and turned his discourse to a close in such manner that he spake about the trouble of the townfolk; and he bade

men harden their hearts and not to void that glorious stead, but rather take heed to themselves, and look to their rede to guard them as far as in them lay against all things, fire and unpeace, and to pray to them the mercy of God.

CHAPTER X. THE BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE OF KING'S ROCK.

OUT of the town thirteen ships of burden were arraying them, and were minded for Biorgvin, and eleven were lost with men and goods and all on board; but the twelfth was broken, and men were saved, but the goods lost. Then fared Priest Lopt north to Biorgvin with all his belongings, and he had everything safe. The ships were lost on the vigil of Lawrence.

Eric the Dane-king and Archbishop Ozur sent word both to King's Rock, and bade them there to be wary about their town; said that the Wends had a great host abroad, and harried wide against Christian men, and ever had the victory. But the townsmen laid over-little mind on their affairs, and gave the less heed to it and forgat it the more the longer time wore on from that awe which had come upon them.

But on the day of Lawrence-wake whenas high mass was being said, came Rettibur the Wend-king to King's Rock, and had five hundreds and an half of Wend-cutters, and on every cutter were four-and-forty men and two horses. Dunimiz hight the king's sister's son, and Unibur hight a

lord who ruled over much folk. Those two lords rowed with some of the host up the east branch round Hising, and so came down upon the town, but some of the host they laid up the west branch to the town. They made land out by the stakes, and landed there the horse, and they rode up over Brentridge, and so up round the town.

Einar, Andres' son-in-law, brought these news up to Castle Church, for there were the folk of the town, and had all sought to high mass; and Einar came in whenas Priest Andres was at his reading. Einar told men that an host fared upon the town with a many warships, and some of the host was riding down over Brentridge. Then said many that that would be Eric the Dane-king, and people looked but for peace from him.

Then ran all the folk down into the town for their goods, and they weaponed them, and went down to the bridges, and saw straightway that it was unpeace, and an host not to be put to flight. Nine east-faring ships floated in the river off the bridges, which chapmen owned, and the Wends laid these aboard first and fought with the chapmen; the chapmen weaponed them, and fought long and manly. There was the hard battle ere the chapmen were overcome! In this brunt the Wends lost an hundred and an half of ships with all hands. While the battle was at its most the townsfolk stood on the bridges and shot at the heathen. But when the battle slackened, then fled the townsfolk up into the town, and sithence all folk to the castle, and men had with them their precious things, and all the goods they could take with

them. Solveig and her daughters and two other women went up country.

When the Wends had won the chapmen they went aland and kened their folk, and then was their scathe clear. Some ran into the town, other some aboard the chapmen, and took all the goods which they would with them; and next to that they set fire to the town, and burnt it altogether, along with the ships. After that they made for the castle with all their host, and arrayed them to besiege it.

CHAPTER XI. ANOTHER BATTLE.

KING RETTIBUR let bid them who were in the castle to walk out and have their life and limb, with their weapons and clothes and gold; but all they whooped against it, and went out on the burg. Some shot, some stoned, some cast logs, and then was mickle battle, and men fell on either side, but mickle more of the Wends.

But Solveig came up to the homestead hight Sunberg, and there told the tidings. Then was sheared the war-arrow and sent to Skurbaga. There was a certain gild-drinking toward, and a many men. There was that bonder, who hight Olvir Micklemouth. He leapt up straightway, and took his shield and helm and a mickle axe in his hand, and spake: "Stand we up, good fellows! take ye your weapons! and fare we to give help to the townsfolk; for that will be deemed a shame by every man that heareth thereof, if we sit here swilling us

with ale, while good men and true shall be laying their lives in peril on our behalf in the town."

Many answered and spake against it; said that they would tyne themselves and bring no help to the townsfolk. Then leapt up Olvir and said: "Though all other dwell behind, yet shall I fare myself alone; and certes the heathen shall lose one or two for me or ever I fall." So he runs down to the town.

Men fare after him, and will see his faring, and also if they might help him somewhat. But when he came so near to the castle that the heathen men saw him, there ran against him eight men together, all-weaponed. But when they met, the heathen ran round about him. Olvir reared up his axe, and smote the forward horn thereof under the chin of him who stood at the back of him, so that the jaw and the windpipe were smitten asunder, and this one fell aback face upmost. Then he swung the axe forth before him and hewed another on the head, and clave him down to the shoulder. Then they shot at each other, and he slew yet two, and was himself much wounded; and the four who were left fled therewith. Olvir ran after them, but a certain ditch was before them; two of the heathen leapt thereinto, and Olvir slew them both, and then he, too, stuck fast in the ditch. But two heathen out of the eight got away.

The men who had followed Olvir took him and flitted him back with them to Skurbaga, and he was healed whole, and that is men's say, that never has a man fared manlier faring.

Two landed-men, Sigurd Gyrdson, brother of

Philip, and Sigard came with six hundreds of men to Skurbaga; and there Sigurd turned back with four hundred men, and was thought sithence of little worth, and lived but a short while. But Sigard fared with two hundred men to the town, and fought there with the heathen men, and fell with all his folk.

The Wends sought to the castle, but the king and his captains stood without the battle. On a certain stead whereas the Wends stood, was a man who shot from a bow, and did a man to bane with every arrow; before him stood two men with shields and sheltered him. Then spake Sæmund to Asmund, his son, that they should shoot at the shooter both at once, "and I shall aim at him who bears the shield." And he did so. But that man shoved the shield before him. Then shot Asmund between the shields, and the arrow came on the brow of the shooter, so that it came out at the nape, and he fell aback dead. And when the Wends saw that, they all howled as dogs or wolves.

Then let King Rettibur call to them and bid them life and limb, but they would have none of it. Sithence gave the heathen a hard onset. There was one of the heathen men who went so nigh, that he went right up to the castle-door and thrust his sword at the man who stood within the door; but men bore on him shot and stones, and he was shieldless, but so much-cunning was he, that no weapon bit on him. Then Priest Andres took hallowed fire and signed it, and cut tinder and set fire thereto, and set it on an arrow-

point and gave it to Asmund; and he shot this arrow to the wizard-man, and so bit that shot, that he had enough, and fell dead to earth. Then let the heathen ill-like as erst, howled and gnashed. Then went all folk to the king, and it seemed to the Christian men that rede might be forward that they (the heathen) would get them gone. There-withal wotted an interpreter who knew Wendish, what that lord said who is named Unibur. So spake he: "This is a fierce folk and ill to deal with, and though we take all the wealth that is in this place, yet might we well give as much again that we had never come here, so mickle folk have we lost, and so many captains. Now first to-day when we fell to fighting with the castle, they had for their defence shot and spears; then next they beat us with stones, and now they beat us with sticks like dogs. So I see thereby that their stuff for warding them is drying up; therefore we shall give them a hard brunt, and try them."

So was it even as he said, that there they shot logs; but in the first brunt they had borne shot-weapons, nought recking, and stones withal. But when the Christian men saw that the much logs were minishing, they hewed atwain each log.

But the heathen set upon them, made a hard brunt, and rested between whiles. Now on both sides men got weary and wounded. And amidst of a lull the king let bid them life and limb, and that they should have their weapons and clothes and whatsoever they could themselves bear out of the castle. By then was fallen Sæmund Housewife, and that was rede of men, they who were left, to give

up the castle and themselves into the power of the heathen men ; and the unhandiest of redevs was that, whereas the heathen kept not their word ; they took all men, carles, queans, and bairns, slew a many, all that was hurt and young, and seemed to them ill to flit after them ; they took all the wealth that was in the castle ; they went into Cross Church and robbed it of all its plenishing. Priest Andres gave King Rettibur a staff done with silver and gilded, and to Dunimiz, his sister's son, a finger-gold ; whereby they deemed they wotted that he would be a man of rule in the stead, and held him of more worth than other men. They took the Holy Cross, and had it away. They took also the table which stood before the altar, which King Sigurd had let do in Greekland and had into the land, but they laid it down on the grades before the altar. Then walked they out of the church.

Then said the king : " This house has been wrought with mickle love to that God who this house owns ; but meseems this, that little heed has been had of this stead or house, for I see that God is wroth to those in whose keep it is."

King Rettibur gave to Priest Andres the church and the shrine, the Holy Cross, the book, Plenarium, and four clerks. But the heathen burnt the church and all the houses that were within the castle. But the fire which they kindled in the church slaked twice ; then they hewed down the church, and then it began to blaze all within, and burned even as the other houses.

Then fared the heathen with their war-catch to their ships, and kened their folk ; but when they

saw their scathe, then took they for war-catch all the folk and shared it between the ships. Then Priest Andres and his fared aboard the king's ship with the Holy Cross; then came dread over the heathen from this foreboding, that over the king's ship came so mickle heat, that they all deemed themselves nigh to burning. The king bade the interpreter ask the priest why that betid. He said that the Almighty God in whom the Christian men trowed, sent them a mark of his wrath, in that they were so overbold as to lay hands on the mark of his passion, they who would not trow in their own shaper; and so mickle might goeth with the Cross, that oft before have betid such tokens to heathen men, who have laid hands on it, yea, and some yet clearer.

The king let shove the clerks into the ship's-boat, and Priest Andres bore the Holy Cross in his bosom. They led the boat forth endlong of the ship, and forward about the beard, and aft along the other board to the poop, and sithence shoved forks thereat and thrust the boat away in towards the bridges. Sithence fared Priest Andres with the Cross by night to Sunberg, and there was both storm and rain. Andres flitted the Cross into safe keeping.

King Rettibur and his host, what was left thereof, fared away and back to Wendland; and a many of the folk that had been taken in King's Rock were for long afterwards in Wendland in bondage; but all they who were loosed out and came back to Norway to their heritage became all of less thriving. But the cheaping of King's Rock has never sithence gotten such uprising as was erst.

CHAPTER XII. OF MAGNUS THE BLIND.

MAGNUS, who had been blinded, fared thence to Nidoyce, and betook him to a cloister, and took monk's raiment. Then Much-Hernes in Frosta was made over to that cloister for his maintenance.

But the winter after Harald ruled the land alone, and gave peace to all men who would have it, and took many men into his bodyguard who had been with Magnus. Einar Skulison says so, that King Harald had two battles in Denmark, one at Hvedn, the other by Hlesisle :

Thou the toil-eager dyer
Of raven's mouth, thou lettest
On men untrusty redder
Thin edges neath high Hvedn.

And this withal :

Thou High's sark's hardy reddener,
Fight hadst thou off the flat strand
Of Hleseey, there where gales blew
The banners o'er the warriors.

CHAPTER XIII. OF KING HARALD GILLI AND BISHOP MAGNUS.

KING HARALD GILLI was the most bounteous of men. So it is said, that in his days there came from Iceland, for bishop's hallowing, Magnus Einarson, and the king was wondrous well with him, and gave him great honour. And when the bishop was outboun and the ship alboun, he went to the hall where the king

drank, and greeted him dearly and hailed him. The king welcomed him well and blithely. The queen sat beside the king. Then spake the king : " Lord bishop, art thou now boun to depart ? " He said that so it was. The king spake : " Thou didst not hit upon a good time, whereas thou art come when the boards are up ; now there is nought to give thee so worthy as should be ; or what is there to give the bishop ? "

The treasurer answered : " Given away now, we deem, are all the precious things."

The king said : " There is yet left this board-beaker here. Take that, bishop ; there is wealth therein." The bishop thanked him for the honour done him.

Then said the queen : " Fare hale and happy, lord bishop ! "

The king spake to her : " Fare hale and happy, lord bishop ! What noblewoman heardest thou so speak to her bishop and give him nought ? "

She answers : " What is thereto now, lord ? " The king said : " There is the bolster under thee."

Sithence that was taken ; it was sheared out of pall, and the dearest of things was that. And when the bishop turned away, the king let take the bolster from under him, and said : " Long have they been together."

Sithence the bishop fared away, and came out to Iceland to his chair, and then was it talked over what should be made of the board-beaker for the most honour of the king. The bishop asked for rede thereon, and men said it should be sold and the worth thereof given to poor people.

Then said the bishop : " Other rede will I take : a chalice shall be made thereof here at this see, and thereover will I so say, ' Avail it him ! ' and I would that sithence all they, the holy men, of whom are holy relics in this church the holy, would let it avail him whenever mass is sung over it."

And that chalice is there sithence at the stead Skalholt ; and of the pieces of the pall that were drawn over the bolsters which the king gave the bishop, there are they now made fore-song copes, and are there still in Skalholt. In this matter may one mark King Harald's greatness of mind, as in many other things, though here there be but little written thereof.

CHAPTER XIV. THE BEGINNINGS OF SIGURD SLEMBI-DEACON.

A MAN is named Sigurd who grew up in Norway, and was called the son of Priest Adalbrikt. The mother of Sigurd was Thora, the daughter of Saxi in Wick, and sister to Sigrid, the mother of King Olaf Magnusson and Kari Kingsbrother, who had to wife Borghild, the daughter of Day Eilifson. Their sons were these : Sigurd of Eastort and Day. The sons of Sigurd were these : Jon of Eastort, Thorstein, and Andres the Deaf. Jon had to wife Sigrid, the sister of King Ingi and of Duke Skuli. In his childhood Sigurd was set to books, and he became a clerk, and was hallowed a deacon. But when he was full-come to age and strength, he was of all men the most valiantest looked, and the strongest ; a

mickle man, and in all prowess was he beyond all of like years and wellnigh every other man in Norway. Sigurd was early a man mickle masterful and brawling, and he was called Slembi-deacon. He was the goodliest of men to behold, somewhat thin-haired, yet well-haired.

Now this came up before Sigurd, that his mother said that King Magnus Barefoot was his father; and so soon as he came to rule his ways himself, he thrust aside clerkly ways and fared away from the land, and in those farings he dwelt a long while. Then arrayed he his ways to Jerusalem, and came to Jordan, and sought to holy relics, as palmers are wont. And when he came back he dwelt in cheaping voyages. One winter he was stayed some while in the Orkneys, and was in the company of Earl Harald at the fall of Thorkel Fosterling, the son of Summerlid. Sigurd was also up in Scotland with David the Scot-king, and was held there of great account. Sithence fared Sigurd to Denmark, and that was his say, and the say of his men, that there he had flitted ordeal for his fatherhood, and it bore it out that he was the son of King Magnus, and that five bishops had been thereat. So says Ivar, son of Ingimund, in the Sigurd-balk :

Made ordeal
O'er the Shieldings' kin
Five bishops
The foremost deemed.
So went the trial,
That of this mighty
And bounteous king
Was Magnus father.

The friends of King Harald said it had but been the guile and lying of Danes.

CHAPTER XV. SIGURD IN ICELAND.

THAT is said of Sigurd Slembi that he had to do with chaffer-farings certain winters. One winter he was in Iceland, and was that winter with Thorgils Oddison in Saurby, and few men wotted who he was. It betid in harvest, whenas wethers were driven into the fold, and were had eye upon for slaughtering, that, as they were laying hands on the wethers, one of them ran towards Sigurd as if it sought thither for help. Sigurd reaches his hand towards it, and lifts it out of the fold, and lets it run up into the fell, and said: "No more seek trust to us now than that trust shall to them be."

That befell also in the winter that a woman had stolen, and Thorgils was wroth with her, and would punish her. She ran there for help whereas was Sigurd, and he set her down on the daïs beside him. Thorgils bade him hand her over, and tells him what she had done, but Sigurd bade peace for her, "since she has come for help to me, so forgive her her trespass." Thorgils said she should be pined therefor. And when Sigurd saw that he would not hear his prayer, he leaps up, and drew his sword, and bade him come on. And when Thorgils saw that he will ward her with fight, the man seemed to him to be of mickle countenance, and he misdoubted him who he might be, and so forbore to do aught to the woman, and gave her peace.

More outland-men were there, and Sigurd made the least show of himself. One day when Sigurd came into the chamber there was an Eastman playing at tables with a homeman of Thorgils, and he was a man of mickle bravery of array, and took much on himself. The Eastman called to Sigurd to give him rede of the game; he looked on it, and said he deemed it lost. Now the man who played with the Eastman had a sore foot, and his toe was swelled and ran. Sigurd sat down on the daïs and drew a straw along the floor. But kitlings were running about the floor; he draweth ever the straw before them till it came over the man's foot. But he sprang up and cried out withal, and the table was upset. So now they fell to wrangling which had it.

For this reason is this told, because Sigurd was deemed to have done a deft trick.

Nought wotted men that he was learned till the wash-day before Easter, when he sang over water, and all the more was thought of him the longer he tarried.

The next summer, ere they parted, Sigurd said that Thorgils might send men to Sigurd Slembi as one who knew him. Then answers Thorgils: "How far art thou from his kindred?" He answers: "I am Sigurd Slembi-deacon, the son of Magnus Barefoot." Thereupon he fared abroad.

CHAPTER XVI. OF GUILLE AGAINST SIGURD SLEMBI.

WHEN Harald had been king over Norway for six winters, Sigurd came to Norway and went to see King Harald his brother, and met him at Biorgvin, and went forthwith to the king and made clear to him his fatherhood, and bade the king take him as kinsman. The king gave no swift decision out on that matter, but bare it before his friends, and had talk and meetings with them. But from their talk came that up, that the king bare guilts at the hand of Sigurd concerning that, how he had been at the slaying of Thorkel Fosterer west beyond sea. Thorkel had followed King Harald to Norway then when he had first come into the land, and he had been the greatest friend of King Harald. Now this matter was followed up so fast that there was Sigurd cast for death; and by the rede of landed-men it came about that late of an evening certain Guests went whereas was Sigurd, and called on him to come with them, and took a certain cutter and rowed away from the town with Sigurd, and south unto Northness. Sigurd sat aft on the chest and thought over his case, and misdoubted him that this would be some treason. He was so arrayed that he had on blue breeches, and a shirt, and a mantle with cords for over-cloak. He looked down before him, and had his hands on the mantle-cords, and whiles did it off, whiles over his head.

But when they had come about the ness, they

were merry and drunken, and rowed at their utmost, and took little heed of their ways. Then stood up Sigurd, and went to do his easement overboard, but the two men who were gotten to guard him stood up and went to the board with him, and took the mantle both of them and held it before him, as is wont to be done with mighty men. But whereas he misdoubted him that they had hold of more of his garments, then gripped he each in either hand, and cast him overboard with all that; but the cutter sped far forward, and it was a slow work for them to turn, and long the tarrying before they gat their men taken up. But Sigurd took such a long dive away from them, that he was up aland before they had turned their ship after him.

Sigurd was of all men the swiftest afoot, and he takes his way upland, and the king's men fared and sought for him all night and found him not. He lay down in a certain rock-rift, and grew much cold; so he did off his breeches and cut a hole in the seat-gore and slipped it on, and took his hands through, and thus he helped his life for that while.

The king's men fared back, and might not hide their misadventure.

CHAPTER XVII. TREACHERY TO KING HARALD.

SIGURD thought he found that it would not help him to seek to find King Harald, and he was about in hiding-places all through the autumn and early winter. He was

in the town of Biorgvin in hiding with a certain priest, and laid plans if thereby he might be the scathe-man of King Harald, and in these redes with him were a much many men, and some who even then were of King Harald's court and household; but they had formerly been courtmen of King Magnus, but now they were in mickle goodliking with King Harald, so that there were ever some of them who sat over the board with the king.

Lucia-mass in the evening talked together two men who sat there, and one of them said to the king: "Lord, now have we put the decision of our quarrel to thy settlement; for we two have each of us laid wager of an ask of honey: I say that thou wilt lie to-night by Queen Ingrid, thy wife; but he sayeth that thou wilt lie by Thora, the daughter of Guthorm."

Then the king answered laughing, and was much unwitting that this asking was of such mickle guile, and said: "Thou wilt not win the wager."

And thencefrom they deemed they knew where he was to be found that night, but the headwatch was then holden before that chamber wherein most folk thought was the king, and wherein slept the queen.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE SLAYING OF KING HARALD.

SIGURD SLEMBI-DEACON and certain men with him came to that chamber whereas the king slept and broke open the door, and went in with drawn swords ; and Ivar Kolbeinson first won work on King Harald. But the king had laid down drunken and slept fast, and awoke therewith that men were smiting on him, and spake in his unwitting : "Sorely dealest thou now with me, Thora!" She leapt up thereat and said : "They deal sorely with thee, who will thee worse than I."

There lost King Harald his life ; but Sigurd with his men went away. And then he let call to him those men who had behight him their fellowship if he should get King Harald taken from his life-days. Then went Sigurd and his men aboard a certain cutter, and men dight them to the oars, and rowed out into the bight unto the King's Garth, and then the day began to dawn.

Then stood up Sigurd and spake to those who stood on the King's Bridges, and gave forth the slaying of King Harald at his hand, and bade them take him to them ; and this withal, to take him to king, as behoved of his birth.

Then there drifted thither on to the bridges a many of men from the King's Garth, and answered all, as if they spake with one mouth, and said that that should never be, that they should give obedience and service to the man who had murdered his brother ; "but if he were not thy brother, then hast thou no kindred to be king."

They smote their weapons together and judged them all to outlawry and out of peace. Then was the king's horn blown, and all landed-men and all the bodyguard were summoned together.

But Sigurd and his men saw that for their fairest choice, to get them gone. So then he went to North-Hordland and had there a Thing with the bonders, and they went under him and gave him king's-name. Fared he then into Sogn, and there had a Thing with the bonders, and there, too, he was taken to king. Fared he then north into the Firths, and there he was well welcomed. So says Ivar Ingimundson :

Took to the bounteous
Magnus' son
Hords and Sogners,
When fallen was Harald.
Swore there a many
Men at Thing
To the king's son
In his brother's stead.

King Harald was buried at Christchurch the old.