

THE STORY OF OLAF THE QUIET.

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CHAPTER I. OF OLAF THE QUIET.

OLAF was king alone over Norway after the death of Magnus his brother. Olaf was a man mickle of growth allwise, and well-shapen; that is the say of all men, that never a man hath seen one goodlier or more stately to behold; he had yellow hair like silk and wondrous well fashioned; a bright body; the best eyed of men, well-limbed; few-spoken oftenest, and at Things no talker, merry at the ale, a mickle drinker; fond of privy talk and sweet spoken; peaceful withal while his kingdom stood. This Stein, the son of Herdis, tells of :

The edge-bold king of Thrandfolk
All lands will lay in peace now
With full enow of wisdom ;
To menfolk well it liketh.
To the folk's mind 'tis, that the stout heart,
The awer of the English,
Bows down his thanes to peace-ways
—*A mickle deal the best-born*—

CHAPTER II. THE HIGH-SEAT SET UP
ATHWART THE DAIS.

THAT was the ancient wont in Norway that the king's high-seat was midst of the long-daïs, and ale was borne over the fire. But King Olaf was first let do his high-seat on the high-daïs athwart the hall ; he also was the first to build halls with ovens, and to bestraw the floor in winter as well as in summer. In the days of King Olaf the cheaping-steads of Norway hove up much, and some were set up from the beginning. King Olaf set up a cheaping-stead in Biorgvin, and there right soon was a seat of wealthy men, and the sailing thither of chapmen from other lands. He let rear from its ground-sill Christchurch, the great stone-church, but little was done of it ; but he let finish the wooden church, old Christchurch, to wit. King Olaf let set up the Great Gild at Nidoyce, and many others in the cheaping towns, but formerly there were turn-about drinkings. Then was Town-boon, the great bell of the Turn-about Drinking, in Nidoyce. The Drinking Brothers let build there Margaret's stone-church. In the days of King Olaf arose Scot-houses, and Parting-drinks in the cheaping-towns ; and then men began to take up new fashions, wearing pride-hosen, laced to the bone ; some clasped golden rings around their legs, and then men wore drag-kirtles laced to the side, sleeves five ells long, and so strait that they must be drawn by an arm-cord and trussed all up to the shoulder ; high shoes

withal, and all sewn with silk, and some embroidered in gold. Many other new-fangled fashions there were.

CHAPTER III. OF THE COURT CUSTOMS OF KING OLAF.

KING OLAF had these court-customs, to wit, that he let stand before his board trencher-swains, and they poured to him in board-beakers, and also to all men of high estate who sat at his table. He had also candle-swains, who held up candles before his board, and as many of them as men of high degree sat up there. Out away from the trapeza was the marshals' stool; there sat the marshals and other worthies looking up the hall towards the high-seat. King Harald and the kings before him were wont to drink out of deer-horns, and to bear ale from the high-seat across the fire, and to drink a health to whomso they chose. So says Stuf the Skald :

I knew the victory-happy
 Whetter of fight me welcome
 From good wind of the troll-quean ;
 Best was he of acquaintance,
 Whenas the blood-stare's feeder,
 Grim unto rings, went eager
 Himself with horn to-gilded
 At Howe to drink unto me.

CHAPTER IV. OF THE NUMBER OF THE KING'S BODYGUARD.

KING OLAF had one hundred of courtmen and sixty Guests, and sixty house-carles such as should flit to the garth whatso was needed, or work other matters which the king would. But when the bonders asked the king why he had more folk than law was thereto, or than former kings had had, whenas he fared to banquets which the bonders made for him, the king answered: "In no better way may I rule the realm; nor is there any more terror from me than from my father, though I have half as much again of folk as he had; and no wise thereby shall penalties come from me, nor am I minded to make your lot anywise heavier."

CHAPTER V. THE DEATH OF KING SVEIN WOLFSON.

KING SVEIN, the son of Wolf, died of sickness ten winters after the fall of the Haralds. Next after him was Harald Hone, his son, king in Denmark for four winters; then Knut, the son of Svein, for seven winters, and is a saint holy-proven; then Olaf, the third son of Svein, for eight winters; then Eric the Good, a fourth son of Svein, for yet eight winters. King Olaf of Norway got to wife Ingirid, the daughter of Svein, the Dane-king; but Olaf the Dane-king, son of Svein, got Ingigerd, the daughter

of King Harald, and sister to King Olaf, Norway's king. Olaf Haraldson, whom some called Olaf the Quiet, and many Olaf Bonder, begat a son on Thora, the daughter of Joan, who was named Magnus; that lad was most fair to look upon, and right manly-like; he grew up at the king's court.

CHAPTER VI. MIRACLES OF KING OLAF.

KING OLAF let build a stone minster at Nidoyce, and set it in that stead where first had been laid in earth the body of King Olaf, and the altar was set over there, whereas the grave of the king had been. There was hallowed Christchurch; and then the shrine of King Olaf was flitted thither and set up over the altar, and there befell many miracles straightway. The next summer, on the same day as the church had been hallowed the year before, there was a right great throng; and on the eve of Olaf's-wake a blind man gat his sight there. But on the mass-day itself, whenas the shrine and the holy relics were borne out, and the shrine was set down in the churchyard, as the wont was, a man gat his speech who for a long time had been dumb, and sang then praise to God and the holy Olaf with nimble turn of tongue. A third man there was, a woman who had sought thither from east away from Sweden, and had in that journey tholed mickle need by reason of blindness; yet she trusted in God's mercy, and came faring thither to this high-tide. She was led blind into

the minster that day at mass, but or ever the hours were done, she saw with both eyes, and was keen of sight and bright-eyed, though erst she had been blind for fourteen winters ; and in exalted joy she left that place.

CHAPTER VII. OF THE SHRINE OF KING OLAF.

THEN this befell in Nidoyce, as the shrine of King Olaf was borne down the street, so heavy the shrine grew that men might not bear it forth from the stead ; and so the shrine was set down, and the street was broken up, and it was sought what was under there ; and there was found a bairn's body, which had been murdered and hidden there. It was taken away, and the street was mended again as it had been before, and the shrine was carried on in the wonted way.

CHAPTER VIII. OF KING OLAF'S PEACEFUL WAYS.

IN the days of King Olaf there was right good year in Norway, and manifold plenty ; and through no man's days since Harald Hairfair was king, had there been so good seasons in Norway as through his. King Olaf softened down many of the ordinances which his father with masterfulness had set up and holden. He was bounteous of wealth, but he held fast his rule, and all through his wisdom. And this withal, that he saw what was of gain to his kingdom and best ;

and many are the good works of his to tell of. Herein may we mark what his goodness must have been, and how beloved of his people he was, whereas he spake on a day in the Great Guild, and he was merry and of good heart. Then spake his men: "It is a joy to us, lord, that thou art so merry." He answered: "Now shall I be merry, when I see glee on my people and freedom, and I sit in the midst of the guild which is hallowed to the holy King Olaf, my father's brother. In the days of my father this people lived amidst great turmoil and dread, and most men hid away their gold and good things, but now I see shine on every man what he hath; and your freedom is my glee."

Now forsooth throughout his days all was quiet from battles, and he wrought peace for himself and his people of the outlands; and yet his neighbours stood in great awe of him, though he were meek of mind. Even as the skald says:

Olaf his land so warded
With words of awe and peace-speech,
That never an all-wielder
Durst lay a claim thereunto.

CHAPTER IX. OF KING OLAF AND KNUT THE DANE-KING.

KING OLAF was a friend of Knut the Dane-king; and King Knut fared to meet him, and they met in the Elf, where, from of old, had been the trysting-place of kings. Talks then King Knut how that he would

that they should make an host west to England, such matters as they had to avenge, King Olaf to begin with, and the Kings of Denmark, moreover. "So now do thou one of two things," says King Knut; "either let me fetch thee sixty ships and thou be captain of that host, or else, fetch thou to me sixty ships, and I shall be captain thereof."

King Olaf answered: "The matter whereof thou speakest, King Knut, falls in with my mind; but much uneven it is. Ye kinsmen have borne more good luck hereto to win England by valour, witness King Knut the Rich; so now, it is most like that that goes with the race of you. But when King Harald Sigurdson went to England he fetched his bane, and so wasted was Norway of the best men, that of such like there has been no choice sithence in the land; that journey was arrayed in the bravest wise, yet now it turned out as ye wist. Now can I to mind of my matter how much more I fall short to be captain hereof, so thee will I choose, and that thou fare backed by my strength."

And he fetched him sixty big ships with brave array, and trusty crews, and set captains of his landed-men thereover; and it was said that in a lordly fashion all that host was found. In the story of Knut it is said that the Northmen alone brake not the hosting when it was come together; but the Danes abode not; wherefore Knut held the Northmen in good account therefor, and gave them leave to fare a-cheaping whithersoever they would, and sent to the King of Norway glorious

gifts for his aid; but he laid on the Danes his wrath and mickle money-fines.

CHAPTER X. OF A SOOTHSAYER.

IT came to pass on a summer, when King Olaf's men had fared to gather in his land-dues, that the king asked them where they were best welcomed. They said it was in one of the king's folk-lands. "There," said they, "is a certain ancient bonder-carle who knows many things beforehand, and we have asked him of many, and he has unravelled the same; and deem we that he knoweth the voice of fowl."

The king spake: "With what fare ye? this is but mickle folly."

But on a time it befell that the king was faring along the land, and spake as they were sailing through certain sounds: "What countryside is here up aland?" They answered: "This is the folk-land, lord, whereof we told thee that here we were best welcomed." Said the king: "What house may it be that standeth here by the sound?" "That house owneth that wise man of whom we told thee." But they saw a horse beside the house, and the king said: "Go ye now, and take the horse, and slay it." They say: "Nought will we, lord, to do him scathe." The king said: "I shall rule; cut ye the head off the horse, and let the blood not fall down, and bring the horse aboard my ship; fare thereafter to fetch the carle, and tell him nothing; and thereon your lives shall lie."

Sithence so do they, and tell the carle the king's message. And when he met the king, the king said: "Who owns the land on which thou dwellest?" He answered: "Thou ownest it, lord, and takest rent thereof." Then said the king: "Tell us the way past the land; it will be known to thee." He did so.

But as they rowed, flew a crow forth past the ship, and went on evilly. The bonder looked thereon, and the king spake: "Thinkest thou there be aught to heed therein?" "Yea, certes, lord," says he. Therewith flew another crow over the ship and screeched. Therewith the bonder heedeth no longer the rowing, and the oar became loose in his hand. Then said the king: "Much thou bodest of that crow, bonder, or of what it saith." The bonder said: "Lord, now it misgiveth me thereof."

A third time there flew a crow, and went on worst of all, and kept anigh the ship. The bonder stood up thereagainst, and heeded nought the rowing. The king said: "Of mickle weight thou deemest this, bonder; or what does she say now?" The bonder says: "That which it is unlike I should wot, or she." Said the king: "Out with it." Then sang the bonder:

The yearling says it,
Knows not she;
The twinter says it,
I trow't none the more;
The three-year-old saith it,
Unlike it methinketh:
Says, I am rowing
O'er a mare's head,

And that thou, king,
Be thief of my goods.

Spake the king: "What now, bonder? Wilt thou call me a thief?" Then the king gave him good gifts, and gave him up all his land-dues. So says Stein:

Kin-prop of kings the bounteous
Giveth the ships high-byrnied
And round-ships stained: gainsays he
The niggardness within him.
The folk the wealth enjoyeth
Of Olaf. Search king other
Who such fee to man giveth—
Olaf high-minded wots him

The gold-free king point-reddener,
The folk with rings he gladdens;
The lord of men he letteth
Be fain of gifts the bench-throng.
The nimble King of Norway
Giveth to Northmen bigly.
Bounteous is England's waster—
A mickle deal the best-born.

The kin-great king to men gives
Such store of helms and byrnies,
As if nought worth he deemed them;
Such gear the king's guard decketh.
The worthy king he letteth
The lads take heavy Half's gear
From him. Thuswise the lord-king
His guard their toil rewardeth.

CHAPTER XI. THE DEATH OF KING OLAF.

KING OLAF sat often in the countryside at his big steads which he owned. But whenas he was east in Ranrealm at Hawkby his stead, he took that sickness which brought him to bane. At that time he had been king over Norway for six and twenty winters; but he was taken to king one winter after the fall of King Harald. The body of King Olaf was flitted north to Nidoyce, and laid in earth at Christchurch, which he himself had let build. He was a king most well-beloved, and Norway had greatly waxen in wealth and beauty under his rule.